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Response to the lies and distortions of christian missionaries about the position of women in islam



Part 3, Written by Kevin el-Karim

"The most perfect of believers are those most perfect of character; and the best of you are the best of you to your spouses." Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban

"None but a noble man treats women in an honourable manner. And none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully" At-Tirmithy

He wrote:

Al-Ghazali writes: Don't sport with wife so much that her conduct is ruined and fear goes out of her mind, but take to middle course. Don't give up your duties and strike some sort of fear in her mind at the time of doing evils. Hazrat Omar said: Act opposite to women as there is blessing in opposing them. Some one said: Take advice from them but act to the contrary. The Prophet said: He who becomes a slave of women is ruined. He said for this reason that if a husband acts according to the wishes of his wife, he becomes her slave and is thus ruined as God has made him her master. The right of the husband is that the wife should follow him and the husband should not follow her. God termed the husbands as the maintainers of women and husbands as masters. God says: Both (Zulaikha and Joseph) found the master (husband) of Zulaikha near the door. Imam Shafeyi said: If you honour three kinds of men, they will disgrace you and if you disgrace them, they will honour you -wife, servant and Nabati. Evils and little intelligence are strong over them. The Prophet said: The example of a religious woman among general women is that of a crow with white belly among one hundred crows. The wise Luqman advised his son: O dear son, fear unchaste wife, as she will make you grow old before you grow old. Fear the harms of women as they do not call towards good. Beware of unchaste women. The Prophet said: Seek refuge to God from three calamities. An unchaste wife will make you old before you get old. In another narration-If you go to her, she will rebuke you. If you don't go to her, she will be treacherous to you. When the Prophet fell seriously ill and could not come to the mosque for prayer, he said to Abu Bakr to lead the prayer, Hazrat Ayesha said: The mind of my father is soft. When he will find your place vacant, he will be perturbed. The Prophet said: When you prevent Abu Bakr to lead the prayer, you have swayed towards your low desires being misguided from the right path. When the wives of the Prophet disclosed the secret talks of the Prophet, God said: If both of you make repentance to God, he will unite your hearts. He said this regarding his good wives. The Prophet said: No nation prospers over whom a woman rules. (Ihya' 'Ulum-Ud-Din,V.II, pp. 32-33)

Response:

On the next pages i will discuss the hadith to which the christian missionaries pay attention here in al-ghazali's work. Like always they misquote this work to mislead readers about the position of women in islam. First i want to make clear that Imam Ghazali in the beginning of this quotation by the christian missionary talks about fear of God. When a wife commits some evil, then the husband should do his best to let her fear god. In other words he should make her consious of her evil in an islamic polite way. The same applies also to men. A wife should make her husband also fear god, by pointing out his evil habits and proving him that it is a violation of allah's laws. This is one of the duties of couples in marriage. They must keep each other on the right path and god fearing. All this must be done in the light of the sunnah, which means doing such things out of love , with respect and politeness. Couples in marriage should always point out the mistakes and sins of each other in a polite islamic way. This because the Prophet told us not to become angry at each other or furious, which proofs that we always have to stay polite and calm, see:

Sahih Bukhari, Good Manners and Form, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 137

The Prophet said, ' Do not become angry and furious.' The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, ' Do not become angry and furious.'

Moreover the Prophet said: "God detests the ja'zari al jawwaz", that is, one who is harsh toward his family and who is arrogant. Abu Bakr b. Lal related this hadith in "Makdrim al-Akhldq" from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah. It is also stated in the two Sahihs from the hadith of Jariyah b. Wahab al-Khazad and Abu Da'tid. Therefor these two hadith clearly shows us that a husband must never be harsh or angry towards his wife, he must always be kind and correct her mistakes (if needed) in a polite islamic way, according to the sunnah of our Prophet !

1:

Strange Hadith:

Hazrat Omar said: Act opposite to women as there is blessing in opposing them. Some one said: Take advice from them but act to the contrary

Comment:

This hadith attributed to Umar is in-authentic, and no chains of transmission exist for this hadith. Moreover we can see easily see that this hadith attributed to Umar a clear forgery is. Umar had a complete different attitude towards women then the one mentioned in the hadith, which is false attributed to him. Further it should be noted that the hadith false attributed to Umar Ibn Khattab contradicts the authentic sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad and the words of Allah swt in the glorious Qur'an. Shayk Yusuf al-Qaradawi in one of his writings points this out:

Sheikh yusuf al-qaradawi writes:

The woman in Islamic law is equal to her male counterpart. She is as liable for her actions as a male is liable. Her testimony is demanded and "valid in court. Her opinions are sought and acted upon. Contrary to the pseudo hadith: "Consult women and do the opposite," the Prophet consulted his wife, Um Salama on one of the most important issues to the Muslim community¹

Umm Salama:

Umm Salama, one of the Prophet's wives, was instrumental in advising the Prophet during the crisis at Hudaibiya in 628.A.D. Her advice prevented disunity among the Muslims after the Treaty of Hudaibiya and her opinion prevailed over that of many men, including Umar ibn al-Khattab.²

Sheikh Salman al-Oadah writes:

Thirdly, women are still viewed in some circles as not being entitled to have their own opinions or to make their own decisions. There is a saying: "Consult with them but do not heed what they say." Some people might even have gotten the notion in their heads that this blatant lie is a saying of our Prophet (peace be upon him) ! ...

A woman, just like a man, needs to have her importance acknowledged, her grievances heard, and her aspirations fulfilled.³

Here we clearly see that it is sunnah to follow the good advise of your wife, which proofs the hadith in question here attributed to Umar is false and cannot be true. Shayk Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Shayk Salman al-Qadah moreover confirm that statements like the one attributed to Umar don't represent Islam and are not part of Islam. Umar Ibn Khattab as a true follower of the sunnah would never contradict the sunnah of our beloved Prophet. Moreover in the next story Umar was opposed by a woman, instead of opposing her he told her she was right and accepted her statement !

Umar Corrected by a woman:

One day, Umar ibn al-Khattab declared in public: "Anyone who pays more for their dowry than what the Prophet [peace be upon him] used to pay, will put the excess amount in the Public Treasury."

A woman from the Quraish came to him and said: "O commander of the Believers, which have more right to be followed, the Book of Allah [the Qur'an] or your statement?" He answered: "The Book of Allah." So she told him, "You have just prohibited the people from giving the excess amount from the dowry, but Allah Taalah has revealed in His Book: "And if you have given them a great amount of gold as dower, take not the least bit of it back." [4:20]?" Therefore Umar said a few times: "The Woman is correct and Umar is mistaken." He addresses people again, and said: "Verily a man may do whatever he sees fit with his wealth."

Source:

Sunan al Kubra, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr, nd., vol 7, p 233

Umar's view towards women:

Umar ibn al-Khattab said that a man came to his house to complain about his wife. On reaching the door of his house, he hears Umar's wife shouting at him and "reviling him. Seeing this, he was about to go back, thinking that Umar himself was in the same position and, therefore, could hardly suggest any solution for his problem. Umar saw the man turn back, so he called him and enquired about the purpose of his visit. He said that he had come with a complaint against his wife, "but turned back on seeing the Caliph in the same position. Umar told him that he tolerated the excesses of his wife for she had certain rights against him. He "said, "Is it not true that she prepares food for me, washes clothes for me and suckles my children, thus saving me the expense of employing a cook, a washerman "and a nurse, though she is not legally obliged in any way to do any of these things ? Besides, I enjoy peace of mind because of her and am kept away from indecent "acts on account of her. I therefore tolerate all her excesses on account of these benefits. It is right that you should also adopt the same attitude."

Source:

Rahman, Role of Muslim Women page 149

Umar consulted women and didn't oppose them:

Ibn Sirin states that Umar consulted eminent people when faced with problems, including women of integrity. Many times when he found an aspect of goodness and commendability in a woman's opinion, he adopted it.

Source:

Al Sunan al Kubra, Baihaqi, Vol 10 p 113

Umar consulted women:

Shifa was an intelligent woman, Umar put her opinion ahead in consultation and gave her preference over other's opinions.

Source:

Al istiab fi Asma al Ashab

These hadith moreover show us that Umar respected women, consulted them, and adopted their opinion if it was good. So Umar clearly never opposed women, and he clearly never saw it as a blessing to oppose them. On the contrary he respected, consulted, and adopted their good opinions. Here again we clearly see that the hadith quoted by the christian missionary attributed to Umar Ibn khattab is a clear forgery. Further it is known that this hadith attributed to Umar (quoted by the christian missionary) is in-authentic, which moreover proofs that the hadith is clear a forgery which can be put in the trashcan. Moreover the Qu'ran tells us that:

Qu'ran 9:71

The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise.

The arabic word which is translated as protectors in this verse is "awliyya" which means: helpers, supporters, friends, protectors. Allah in this ayah gives women the right to correct men when they are wrong. What would have been the use of revealing this ayah if men should always oppose women ? What would have been the use of this ayah to call and describe women as helpers and protectors of men, if men should oppose them ? What would have been the use to give women the right to correct men when they are wrong, if men should oppose them ? This quranic ayah moreover proofs that the story / hadith attributed to Umar ibn Khattab, which is quoted by the christians missionary, is false, untrue and a clear forgery ! The quran here clearly tells us that men and women are helpers, protectors and friends of each other. This means they are a team, and should work together as a team instead of opposing each other. Moreover this means they should listen to each other, and take good advice from each other (instead of opposing each other, which would violate this quranic command).

Finally i would like to quote Sheikh Abdullah Adhami's comments on how to treat you wife in marriage. The comments in his article are based on the Qu'ran and sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammed. These comments again proof that the hadith attributed to Umar Ibn Khattab is a clear forgery, and doesn't represent islam and it's true teachings. We must also remember that Allah swt in soerah 4:19 us men commands to live in kindness and honor with women, which includes just treatment, team-work and respect for women.

Sheikh Abdullah Adhami comments:

Always try your best to be good to your wife by words and by deeds. Talk to her, smile to her, seek her advice, ask for her opinion, spend quality time with her and always remember that the Prophet Salallaahu 'alaiahi wa'sallaam said "the best of you are those who are best to their wives"

Finally, it is common that spouses vow to love and honor their spouses until death do them part. I do believe that this vow is good or even great, but not enough! It is not enough that you love your wife. You have to love what she loves as well. Her family, her loved ones must also become your loved ones. Don't be like my colleague who was unhappy about his wife's parents coming to visit for few weeks. He candidly said to her "I don't like your parents" Naturally she angrily looked at him straight in the eye and said " I don't like yours either"...

Also, it is not enough that you love her until death do you part. Love should never end and we do believe there is life after death where those who did righteousness in this world will be joined by their spouses (Surah Al Zukhruf 43:70) and offsprings. ⁴

2:

Misquoted Hadith:

The prophet said: “The example of the religious women among general women is that of a crow with a white belly among one hundred crows “

Comment:

This narration again uses the rhetorical figure of hyperbole to say that the virtuous woman is incomparable and exceptional, as stated literally in al-Tabarani's version of the very same narration. This is also the condition of virtuous men as established by the narrations:

Sunan Abu Dawud Book 32, Number 4078:

The prophet said: “stand out among the people (due to your excellence) like a mole on the face”

Reported by Al-Bukhari

The prophet said: “ the likeness of one who remembers Allah and one who does not is like the difference between the living and the dead “

Sahih Muslim Book 001, Number 0427:

Abdullah b. Mas'ud reported: The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) addressing us said: Aren't you pleased that you should constitute one-fourth of the inhabitants of Paradise? He (the narrator) said: We glorified (our Lord, i. e. we called aloud Allah-o Akbar, Allah is the Greatest). He, then, again said: Aren't you pleased that you should constitute one-third of the inhabitants of Paradise? He (the narrator) said: We glorified (our Lord) and he (the Holy Prophet) then again said: I hope that you would constitute half of the inhabitants of Paradise and I shall explain to you its (reason). The believers among the unbelievers would not be more than a white hair on (the body of a) black ox or a black hair on (the body of a) white ox.

3:

Misquoted Hadith:

The Prophet said: "He who becomes a slave of women is ruined"

Comment:

This hadith is by some interpreted out of context. The correct meaning and context of this hadith can be found when we look at other hadith that use the same "word expression". We see that the Prophet also said those who become a slave of clothes are ruined, and those who become a slave of money are ruined.

Fayd al-Bari, 6/81, Kitab al-jihad, bab al-hirasah fi'l-ghazw fi sabil-Allah.

The Prophet said: "Wretched is the slave of the dinar, dirham and fancy clothes of velvet and silk! If he is given, he is pleased, and if he is not given, he is displeased. "

By this we now understand that the hadith in question refers to the "extreme desire for women". To be a slave of them means to be extreme fixated on it and give it undue attention in one's life, which will result in disobedience of Allah. Moreover those who are fixated on the "extreme desire for women" are ruined, because they reject / disobey Allah's command for women, this is what the prophet ment with "slaves of women." The hadith talks about the real extreme desire for women, in such a way that Allah's commands are disobeyed for them. The same applies to those who are slaves of money. Such people care more about business and money making instead of praying at the right times and obeying Allah swt. Also men who have a real extreme desire for women can easily be seduced by shaytan to commit adultery / fornication, which would ruin them. The hadith in question does certainly not mean that men should never act on the wishes of their wives. On the contrary the Quran commands men to live just and honorable with women, which also includes the fulfillment of the wishes of their wives.

Ustadha Zaynab Ansari comments:

Furthermore, a man's leadership is supposed to be characterized by wisdom and compassion. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Allah will ask every caretaker about the people under his care, and the man will be asked concerning the people of his household." (Ahmad, Nisai and Abu Dawud). So, according to the words of the Noble Prophet, the man is the caretaker of the household. What does caretaking imply? It implies loving concern. I have also heard scholars say that the woman is the queen of her household, meaning that it is not necessary for the husband to control every aspect of the household.

What husbands and wives should do is strike a balance in terms of qawamah and shura, or leadership and partnership. There are certain matters where the husband should get the ultimate say. There are certain matters where the wife should get the final say. It is up to the couple to determine which issues they feel they should have the final say in, and which issues are the province of the other spouse. ⁵

A husband should also do his best to fulfill the wishes of his wife, since this creates a bond of mutual respect, love and understanding in marriage. The Qur'an moreover clearly teaches us that the relations between the spouses in Islam should be based on mutual tranquility, love and mercy.

Ar-Rum: 21

Allah says: "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect."

Al-Baqarah: 187

And He says: "Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments...."

Commentators on the Qur'an understand this to mean that husbands and wives are for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection. Tranquility, love, and mercy summarize the ideals of Islamic marriage. It is the duty of the husband and wife to see that they are a source of comfort and tranquility for each other. They should do everything physically, emotionally and spiritually to make each other feel happy and comfortable. They must care for each other. They should not harm or injure each other, either physically or verbally. In order to increase the tranquility and comfort in their relations and in their home, they should love each other and be merciful and kind to each other.⁶ This commentary and quranic verses prove the commentary made by Imam Ghazali on the hadith wrong, since the Qur'an teaches us that marriage must be based on mutual comfort and love. Soerah 2:228 teaches that men and women have equal rights to each other. Therefore a husband should also do his best to fulfill the wishes of his wife, since this creates a bond of mutual respect, love and understanding in marriage (which Islam requires). Muslim scholar Zainab Al-Alwani (Instructor, School of Islamic Social Sciences, Leesburg, Virginia), who studied Islamic Studies in Muhammad ibn Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, adds:

Zainab Al-Alwani writes:

a marriage relationship in Islam is not where one party dominates the other. On the contrary, the relationship is built on concepts of Shura (consultation), Waliyah (mutual protection), Sakeenah (tranquility), Amanah (trusts), Rahmah (mercy).⁷

Moreover the Prophet told us in a famous authentic hadith that: "The best believers are those who are the best towards their wives." These sayings moreover prove that the hadith in question quoted by the Christian missionary doesn't refer to men's behaviour towards their wives, but refers to the extreme desires some men have for women. Extreme in such a way that they even disobey Allah SWT for them. Moreover the context of the hadith does not refer to marriage, but to extreme desire for women in general.

Finally i would like to point out that is a sunnah to help your wife in household work. Therefor the hadith in question does also certainly not refer to husbands who help their wives in household work, or other things.

The sunnah of helping your wife in household work:

There was no type of household work too low or too undignified for him. Aiysha has stated: He always joined in household work and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, tether, and feed his animals and do the household shopping.

Source:

Qazi Iyaz: Shifa; Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, Chapter: Kitabul Adab

4:

Strange Hadith :

Imam Shafi said: If you honour three kinds of men, they will disgrace you and if you disgrace them, they will honour you -wife, servant and Nabati. Evils and little intelligence are strong over them.

Comment:

Shayk Gibril Fouad Haddad comments: “the above is a spurious attribution to al-Shafi`i along with other racist and sexist clichés falsely attributed to him without chains of transmission”⁸

5:

Misquoted Hadith:

The wise Luqman advised his son: O dear son, fear unchaste wife, as she will make you grow old before you grow old. Fear the harms of women as they do not call towards good. Beware of unchaste women.

Comment:

Statements like “women do not call towards good” are not supported in the quran nor in the authentic hadith of our beloved prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him. On the contrary the quran rebukes this statement.

Qu’ran 9:71:

“And as for the believers, both men and women – they are friends and protectors of one another: they [all] enjoin the doing of what is right and “forbid the doing of what is wrong, and are constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and pay heed unto God and His Messenger”

Women are clearly also viewed as the protectors of men. If women did not ‘call towards good’ then certainly the quran would have never describe them as protectors of believing men, and the quran would never have give them the right to enjoin good, if they never would call towards good, or were bad in nature. In Surah 2:187 Allah says:

Qu’ran 2:187

“They are garments for you and you are garments for them”

Women are viewed as men’s garments, and men are viewed as women’s garments. Just like a garment, a husband and wife give each other protection, comfort etc.

Shayk Yusuf Estes comments :

Islam does not consider woman an instrument of the devil, but rather the Qur'an calls her *muhsana*, a fortress against Satan. This is because a good woman, by marrying a man, helps him keep to the path of rectitude in his life. It is for this reason that Prophet Muhammad (saw) considered marriage as a most virtuous act.⁹

This clearly rebukes the statement attributed to Luqman quoted by imam ghazali, which is clearly in contradiction with the authentic hadith of our beloved prophet and the qu'ran. The next hadith moreover proves that the statement "women do not call towards good" is not islamic:

Reported by at-Tirmidhee no. 3094 , Ibn Maajah no. 1856, Ahmad 5/282 :

The Prophet said: "Let one of you have a heart which is thankful, a tongue which makes mention of Allaah, and a believing wife who helps one of you upon the affairs of the Hereafter"

Reported by At-Tabarani and Al-Hakim

The Prophet said: "If Allah grants a Muslim a righteous wife, this helps him preserve half of his religion. He should, therefore, fear Allah as regards the other-half"

Sahih Muslim 10/56, Kitab al-rida', bab istihbab nikah al-bikr:

The Prophet said: "This world is just temporary conveniences, and the best comfort in this world is a righteous woman"

Al-Tirmidhi no. 3978

The Prophet said: "A woman acts for the people," i.e. she gives protection on behalf of the Muslims.

If women did not call towards good, then how in the world could the prophet call women 'the best comfort in this world' ? and 'a help for men to preserve half of his religion' etc. ? These hadith and quranic verses clearly refute and proof that the statement 'women do not call towards good' is not islamic and clearly a forgery attributed to Luqman. Or Luqman made a statement based on his own opinion instead of the qu'ran and sunnah, which would be very strange and alien. The prophet in the last hadith even states that a woman gives protection on behalf of the muslims. If women do not call towards good , then how can she give protection on behalf of the muslims ? These hadith are enough proof to silent the lie that women do not call towards good, which is clearly a forgery attributed to Luqman ! There are even no chains of transmissions for this saying, which moreover proofs that we are dealing with a forgery. Stories like this can be put in the trash can. Further islam is the quran and authentic hadith of our beloved prophet, and not the opinions of other men which are not based on the quran and the authentic sunnah. Such opinions are not part of islam.

Imam Ghazali , by Dr. Mohammad Omar Farooq

Imam Ghazali is one of the towering figures in Islamic history, whose influence on the Muslim world continues to remain strong and deep. The rich spiritual dimension of his contribution is indisputable. His legacy of sagacity, wisdom, and enlightenment is a veritable treasure for many.

Yet, truth seekers and conscientious people who believe in Islam don't revere any individual scholar, however great and towering he is, with an absolutist mindframe. Hence, reading the following chapter from one of his notable works one would find remarks and views about women that are utterly degrading, verging on misogyny. Several years ago when an Islam basher cited some of these aspects from Imam Ghazali's writings I could not believe it.

After reading his views about women, it seems reasonable to say that, despite his all other contributions to the Islamic history, his views at least in this area are more his own than based on Islam, i.e., the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Even though the entire presentation of thoughts by Imam Ghazali here projects an Islamic veneer, yet the hadiths that he reports are often without any source, or only selective hadiths that are more restrictive of women are mentioned without taking into consideration other ones that directly contradict these.

His weakness in the science of Hadith is well-known. Taj-ud-Din Subki has collected such traditions in *Tabaqat-Shafeiyya* that have been cited by the Imam in his *Ihya-ul-Uloom* but which cannot be traced to any source. (See *Tabaqat*, vol. IV, pp. 145-182).

[Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, Lahore, Islamic Publications, 5th edition, 1981; footnote on p. 66] Also, for specific example, see Appendix note #6 in Dr. Suhaib Hasan, *An Introduction to the Science of Hadith*, London, Al-Qur'an Society, 1994.]

Note:

Keep in mind dear reader that the christian missionary sham shamoun all the time quoted from the book 'Ihya-ul-Uloom' of Imam Ghazali, which as we now know from the scholar Taj-ud-Din Subki contains stories / hadith which cannot be traced to any source, which explains why these stories contradict the authentic hadith and qu'ran. Therefor these stories that contradict the authentic hadith and qu'ran are clear forgeries.

Predictably, Islam bashers have a field day with such works and thoughts. But conscientious Muslims should be less worried about the Islam bashers than the negative influence such Imams' views and opinions have on the Muslims minds and societies.

Muslims need to be proactive in self-critical reexamination of many such classical works. Such reexamination is not for wholesale repudiation and discrediting of the past contributions of many noble Islamic personalities. Rather, we must accept the fact that they were human beings and not without their personal biases or various influences and experiences that had shaped their positions. Conscientious Muslims would engage in critical reexamination like divers seeking pearls. In the deep ocean of knowledge and understanding, those who seek pearls must sift through more than just piles, separating pearls from empty shells and also watch out for shells that can be harmful.

As we cherish and utilize the pearls of wisdom from the works of scholars, such as Imam Ghazali, we also ignore the empty shells as well as anything potentially harmful. Noble souls, such as Imam Ghazali, never taught us to blindly follow and revere anyone, including himself, and he never would have endorsed and encouraged an uncritical acceptance of his views, especially when some views are simply unfounded from Islamic viewpoint or stand contradicted by the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Seerah.

Source:

Counsel for Kings [Nasihat al-Muluk] , London, Oxford University Press, pp. 158-173

Sources:

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