

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Talk 1

TUNISIA

The Crisis in the Family Unit: Its Causes & Consequences

As-salamu Aleykum wa Rahmetullahi wa Barakatuh... Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim...

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.” [Ar-Rum 21]

Allahumma salli ala Seyyidina Muhammedin abdike wa Rasulike wa alel'muminine wal'muminati wal'muslimine wal'muslimati...

O sisters! Mankind is on the brink of an abyss! The cornerstone of society, the institution of the family is being lost... The whole world is facing a family crisis. The family crisis and its related social, psychological and many other problems which deeply shake the West, have now also got the Islamic Ummah - the best Nation for mankind - in its clutches!!!

Each year the number of marriages decreases while the number of divorces increases. In Turkey for example, the divorce rate has increased by 82% over the past 10 years¹, and while one in 6 families got divorced in 2001, in 2008 one in 3 families got divorced.² Today Jordan has the highest divorce rate in the Middle East. The number of registered divorces increased to almost 22,000 in 2016 from 1000 in 2011. Moreover 8.2% of the couples got divorced within the first year of their marriage!³ In Egypt, the divorce rate increased by 83% in the past 20 years and there are around 260 divorces a day⁴. In Indonesia there were over 380,000 divorces involving Muslim marriages in 2014 – equivalent to 44 every hour and more than 1000 every day and the divorce rate increased 10 fold from 1999 to 2009⁵. And in Iran, around 20 divorces were registered every hour until March this year.⁶ In Tehran Province alone divorce rates shot up by 22% within a year.⁷

Accompanying this has been the reduction in marital rates and delay in age of marriage amongst the Muslim Ummah. The number of officially registered marriages in Egypt for example decreased by 70.4% between 2004 and 2016⁸, while the Marriage Rate in Palestine decreased by 8 % just between 2015 and 2016⁹. In Lebanon, 47% of women in the age group 35-39 are not married¹⁰, and in Malaysia in 2010, the population aged 15 years and over who were never married was 35%¹¹. In addition, the average age of first marriage has approached the 30's throughout the Muslim lands.¹²

1 General Directorate of Criminal Records and Statistics (2016)

2 Turkey Statistical Institute (TUIK) www.tuik.gov.tr(594 thousand marriages, 125 thousand divorces last year, corresponding to 20% of marriages.)

3 <http://en.royanews.tv/news/11987/2017-10-23>

4 The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and Egypt's National Center for Social and Criminal Research

5 High Court of Religious Affairs and Religious Affairs Ministry

6 <https://iranian.com/2017/11/12/ranking-irans-divorce-rate-middle-east/>

7 <https://financialtribune.com/articles/people/69938/marriage-divorce-rates-up-in-tehran-province>

8 Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt

9 President of the Supreme Council of Forensic Justice

10 Lebanese Government Statistics

11 Department of Statistics, Malaysian Government

12 The average age of first marriage according to TUIK was 27.7 for men and 24.6 for women last year

We witness the weakening of the importance of family within the social structure, shrinking family sizes, increasing number of single person families, and families refraining from having children. The number of families with three and more children is rapidly falling. At the same time the number of families with 1-2 children increased rapidly. In 2016, Turkey's fertility rate for example, hit the replacement level of the population, at 2.1 children¹³. Up until 2016, the TÜİK always used the term "above the replacement level of population" for Turkey's fertility rate. The country therefore risks rapidly becoming an ageing population. In Bangladesh, the total fertility rate dropped from 6.3 in 1975 to 2.3 in 2011, which represents a 63% reduction¹⁴. Pakistan, Egypt and other Muslim countries show the same worrying demographic developments. We therefore face a social move towards singleness and childlessness. One of the main reasons for this is the increase in the average age of first motherhood and the devaluation of motherhood.

Unravelling Islamic moral and cultural values promoted discord, unhappiness and violence in marital life. For example, violence against women in Turkey increased by 1400% during the last decade. Last year alone, more than 400 women were killed due to divorce in Turkey. Alongside this, divorces created another horrible picture in Turkey... Killing one's own child unfolded as a "new system" of revenge against the mother... In 2017, 20 children were murdered by their own fathers...¹⁵

The rise in divorce rates has led to problems which affect the children and young generations. Scientific researches have proven that the increase in the rate of child crimes, alcohol and drug addiction, school failure and dropouts, psychological problems, prostitution and childbirth out of wedlock, gambling, suicide and other problems is directly linked to the divorce rates in a country. For example, since divorce rates in Turkey started increasing, the child crime rates have more than quadrupled from 2008-2013.¹⁶

Dear sisters; there is no end to citing of terrible statistics... In fact, these are the symptoms of poisoning at epidemic levels. The spread, promotion and implementation of capitalist, liberal, feminist and secular values, norms, laws and systems from the West have poisoned the Ummah. These have shaped the mentality, tastes, and concepts and criteria about life along western lines and away from Islam. The Western values and laws implemented upon us did not bring progress as claimed... On the contrary, they pushed us into the moral corruption and abyss of the West and a mass of unsolvable problems...

Promoting "**Liberal Freedoms**" removed the limits of socialisation/relations between men and women, thus assimilating Muslim society to non-Muslim societies. With liberalisation "chastity and *hayah*" became regarded as backward and irrelevant, while, as reported from Anas (ra); Rasulallah (saw) says: « إِنَّ لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا وَخُلُقُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ » "**Every religion has its characteristic, and the characteristic of Islam is modesty/hayah.**"¹⁷ Also, as reported from Abu Mas'ud al-Badri (ra), Rasulallah (saw) determines *hayah* as the very basis of Islamic morals: « إِنَّ مِمَّا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسُ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُولَى إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحْيِ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ » "**Part of what people know of the words of first prophethood is: Do as you wish if you are not ashamed!**"¹⁸ And this is exactly what liberal freedoms indoctrinate: "Everybody is free to do whatever he/she wants. Shame condemns you to bigotry and failure!"

Women go out without the Islamic dress code and beautified, men do not turn away their eyes, extramarital relationships and sexual promiscuity increases day by day, which undermines marriage and also creates an aversion towards the institution of marriage and

13 Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK)

14 Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey 2011

15KADIN CinayetleriniDurduracağızPlatformu (Platform We Will Stop Women Murders)

16The total number of juveniles received into security units between 2008-2013 was 62,430, and already333,435 in 2016 with an increase by 10% as compared to 2015. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/HbPrint.do?id=24680> This corresponds to an increase of around 434%.

17Ibn Majah, Zuhd

18Buhari, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad

the commitment and responsibility in marriage and family life... Rasulallah (saw) defined a method to prevent this decay and to ensure marriage for the protection of morals and peace. As reported by Aisha (ra) Rasulallah (saw) said: «النِّكَاحُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي» **“Marriage is part of my sunnah, and whoever does not follow my sunnah has nothing to do with me.”**¹⁹

It is these liberal freedoms that distanced the Ummah from the Sunnah of Rasulallah (saw). It focussed the relationship between men and women on pleasure and enjoyment, while in Islam it is supposed to be one of healthy cooperation between the genders in society. This resulted in the sexualisation of societies, and an increase in extramarital relations and even homosexuality, as well as tolerance towards these things, which naturally undermined and harmed marriage and the health of the family unit. This corrosive liberal culture of pursuing one's desires afflicted the Muslim Ummah, while Allah (swt) said, «أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكَيْلًا * أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا» **“Have you (O Muhammad) seen him who has taken as his ilah (god) his own desire (Hawah)? Would you then be a Wakil (disposer of his affairs) over him? Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle; nay they are even farther astray from the Path.”** [Al-Furqan: 43-44]

Dear Sisters,

Capitalist values are also one of the major reasons for the Family Crisis within the Muslim Ummah. While Islam guides the believers and even non-Muslims in society to do what is best for marriage, children and the family unit; capitalism promotes **individualism** which creates a mindset of focussing on selfish individual needs and desires. Materialism also praised the promotion of corrupt sexual images and material for consumption for the sake of profit, for example through the entertainment, beauty and pornography industries. For this cause, it turned the woman into a commodity, while capitalist economic policies based upon these principles and the humbug of *"the woman as the economic driver of society and state"* detracted the woman from motherhood and pushed her into the labour market. Materialism also made the focus of individuals the pursuit of wealth, possessions and status rather than what is best for the family, children, and society. This lifestyle that destroys parent-child relations, disturbs all social balances and orders, and constitutes a serious threat to social harmony.

Contrary to that, Rasulallah (saw) advises us as reported by Abu Hurayra (ra) the following: «لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرَضِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى غِنَى النَّفْسِ» **“Riches does not mean, having a great amount of property, but riches is self-contentment.”**²⁰ Today, one of the major factors causing divorce, preventing marriage, and damaging the harmony of family life is the lack of time between spouses and parents and children due to long and heavy working hours and the pursuit of other materialistic goals.

Feminist ideas such as gender equality have additionally had a huge devastating impact on the family and social structure within the Muslim Ummah. These ideas created confusion and conflict in marital roles, duties and rights, undermined marriage and devalued motherhood. It produced women who deny the man's duty of guardianship as ordered by our Lord, and it produced men who neglect their duties and responsibilities towards their family. Islam however gives no superiority of one gender or their Islamic marital roles over the other, neither does it give any regard to gender equality when defining rights and duties in family life. Allah (swt) said, «وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْتُ لِلنِّسَاءِ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْتُ لِّلرِّجَالِ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا» **“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of his bounty. Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing.”** [An-Nisa 32]. «الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ

¹⁹Buhari, IbnMajah, Muslim

²⁰Bukhari, Muslim, and Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah,

﴿مَنْ أَمَّا نَفَقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَأَلْصَلِحَاتٌ قَاتِنَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ﴾ "Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard." [An-Nisa: 34]

Alongside the impact of these Western liberal, secular and capitalist values upon the Muslim Ummah, is the seclusion of women from society or public life, or depriving them from some of their rights and activities granted by Islam, or forced marriages, Hindu dowry customs, and other incorrect views and expectations of marriage which cause oppression on women in many of the Muslim lands which are also a phenomena affecting the harmony of family life today. These are not from Islam! ***These are the practices of non-Islamic traditional attitudes and customs.*** In particular the false views and expectations towards marriage originating from this non-Islamic traditional culture, have caused dissatisfaction, discontent and anger, such, that women and men, who associate this backward culture and traditions to Islam, turn to the western culture and rebel against the Islamic Shariah laws.

All this, sisters, resulted from the fact that we as an Ummah lost our understanding and clarity of the Islamic Shariah rules related to how to effectively regulate the relationship between women and men and how to organise marriage and family life in the best manner to ensure harmony. It caused the loss of the Islamic character of our family structure as an Ummah as well as creating numerous disputes and division between husband and wife and other family members. But most importantly we've been left without a clear way to resolve these problems.

Dear Sisters,

It must be clear that these are the results of the imperialist power's cultural colonialism and their project of destroying Islam. And they succeeded with the support of the puppet regimes of the Muslim world upon us. It is these regimes with their various non-Islamic systems and institutions who promoted and implemented the harmful western and non-Islamic values that fuel the family crisis, for example through their education systems; support of various feminist organisations and programs; ratifying of international conventions which aim to secularise and destroy the Islamic social laws and family structure; enactment of various liberal and gender equality laws and policies nationally; and providing an open platform to media to broadcast material which sexualises society, undermines marriage, and harms the tranquillity of family life.

We see for example that constitutions in the Muslim world contain the obligation to regulate their domestic laws according to international agreements.²¹ Every policy, law and judicial regulation regarding women and family is made in accordance with **international agreements** based upon "**Gender Mainstreaming**" policies. CEDAW for example was signed by every Muslim country except Palestine, Iran, Sudan, and Somalia.²²

Turkey introduced its "New Civil Code" in line with these agreements. The law removed the clause stating that "*The husband is the head of the family*", and replaced it through the statement, "*the spouses jointly make decisions regarding the marriage union*". Article 41 of the Constitution stating, "*The family is the foundation of the Turkish society*" was extended with "*and based on the equality between the spouses*". Furthermore, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies uses the sentence "*Family is no safe environment for women*" and defines "*marriage*" as the reason for violence in its publications.

Feminist Institutions are given much voice and influence in our countries. And we face another phenomenon called "Muslim Feminists", who accuse the Islamic rules regarding family and women of humiliating women, and thus call for a modern, or rather secular,

21 The Republic of Turkey clearly expresses this principle in article 90 of its constitution.

22 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; described as an international bill of rights for women, it was instituted on 3 September 1981 and has been ratified by 189 states.

reinterpretation through the eyes of the woman. Their demands receive immediate acceptance even in the parliaments.

Furthermore, the existing **secular education systems** in our lands are focussed on implementing the "Gender Mainstreaming" principles through their curriculum, books, teachers and other means. The aim is to raise generations who neglect their own Islamic marital and family responsibilities and fight to take over the responsibilities of the other sex, regarding this as liberation; generations who instead of obeying, teach their parents lessons of gender equality. And this is all through the hands of the education ministry.²³

Alongside all this, the **Secular judicial systems** in our lands no longer function as an arm of the state to protect the unity of marriages and the family structure as it used to under Islamic rule of the past. Courts no longer act as an effective means to arbitrate in marital disputes to keep the marriage together, or domestic violence to protect the woman, or ensure the man provides for the family properly, or to ensure the husband and wife fulfil their duties to one another. On the contrary, every reform in family law addresses issues occurring after the destruction of the family. Alimony payments, libel suits, child custody and further subtitles are projects to deal with issues after the end of a marriage. Furthermore, the laws do not protect the 'family' but often exacerbate divorce rates. For example, Turkey's "**Nr. 6284 Law to Protect Family and Prevent Violence Against Women**" which was issued on the basis of the Istanbul Convention became known amongst the people as the "*Law to The Subversion of Family and The Oppression of The Husband*". This is because all the definitions contained in the law - beginning with the definition of violence to the implementation of the regulations - ensure the destruction of the family, rather than its protection. For example, the statement, "*No evidence or report proving the violence is required in order to take cautionary decision*" annihilates the "presumption of innocence" for the husband. Women who abuse this law as a weapon can arbitrarily get their husbands removed from their homes. Feminist or gender equality approaches of lawyers, family psychologists or family counselling centres easily turn simple family problems into divorce cases. Today it is estimated that about 1.5 million people are victims of this law.²⁴ In essence, the judicial systems in our Muslim lands lack the ability to redress grievances in a swift and effective manner, failing to solve the problems faced by women and family units. Hence, they allow problems to fester and worsen, leading to more intractable divisions in marriages and family life. Furthermore, they are often overloaded due to inadequate government spending to provide sufficient courts and judges to address issues, as well as due to the scale of problems that affect the society under flawed systems. Additionally, court cases are extortionately expensive and often influenced by power and money – all prohibitive factors in effectively and justly resolving marital and family disputes.

Dear Sisters,

If we want to tackle this crisis sincerely, we as an Ummah have to find a radical solution to the causes of this problem and what is fuelling these causes. Allah (swt) equipped us with all the necessary ideas and methods to save mankind from the brink of the abyss and to lead it from darkness into light. Therefore, we must spread the Islamic solutions and work with all our power to re-implement them as a whole.

Allah (swt) said, **﴿الرَّحْمَٰنُ أَنْزَلَ نَارَهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ﴾**
“Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring mankind out of darkneses into the light by permission of their Lord - to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy” [Ibrahim 1].

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232014 Turkey initiated the project "*Promoting Gender Equality in Education*" (ETCEP) funded by the European Union and the Government of Turkey.

24<https://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/1529676/devlet-aileyi-neden-korumuyor>