



A GUIDE FOR HUSBANDS

The Qawwam Man

Leadership as trust and mercy — maintenance, protection, consultation (syura), character at home, family worship and conflict without harm, with one wife or more

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ...

To husbands

The word **qawwam** (provider/protector) is often mentioned, but rarely fully understood. Some interpret it as a right to rule. The Qur'an and Sunnah interpret it as a trust: to bear responsibility, to protect, to listen, and to guide the family towards Allah—and this trust will be questioned.

This book elaborates on the husband's leadership point by point: provision and protection, consultation (syura), gentleness at home, self-control, family worship, how to handle conflict without harm, and justice in a household with more than one wife.

Chapter 6 reads Surah an-Nisa' 4:34 along with its clear boundaries, because this verse is too often misused. Chapter 8 is written for the wives: how they can support the husband in bearing this trust without covering up any injustice.

Evidence is drawn from verses and hadith reviewed on the MYPolygyny website. In matters detailed differently by scholars, this book only provides general principles; for your specific situation, the state Islamic religious office, the mufti's office or a family counsellor will gladly help.

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This book is for husbands — with one wife or more. **Chapter 8 is written for wives.** Each chapter opens with a verse of the Qur'an and ends with a **Summary & reflection** page. Further reference at mypolygyny.com.

01

CHAPTER 1

Qawwam: A Trust, Not Lordship

Leadership that comes with a burden, and questions in the Hereafter.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا
مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ... ﴿٣٤﴾

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given some of them more than others, and because they spend of their wealth..."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:34

What does qawwam mean?

Allah says: "Men are the protectors and maintainers (qawwamun) of women, because Allah has given some of them an advantage over others, and because they (men) spend from their wealth..." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:34). The scholars of tafsir link this leadership to two reasons mentioned in the verse itself: the advantage Allah has given, and the husband's obligation to provide maintenance (nafkah).

So leadership comes with a burden: to protect, provide, guide, and make decisions through consultation. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock... the man is the leader of his family... and the woman is the leader in her husband's house" (Sahih al-Bukhari 893). Both will be questioned.

The Quran also mentions "...And they (wives) have rights similar to the obligations upon them, according to what is right (ma'ruf)...", and men have "a degree" over them (Surah al-Baqarah 2:228). Ibn Abbas r.a. interpreted that degree as the husband's responsibility to be more accommodating and to fulfil the wife's rights (Tafsir at-Tabari).

Qiwamah is... and not...

Qiwamah is

- ✓ Providing maintenance (nafkah) sincerely
- ✓ Protecting the safety and dignity of the family
- ✓ Listening and consulting
- ✓ Being a role model in worship and character
- ✓ Being accountable before Allah

Qiwamah is not

- ✗ Lordship, or a right to insult
- ✗ Excessive control over money, phones, or social life
- ✗ A license to hurt
- ✗ Silencing the wife from expressing opinions
- ✗ An excuse for not helping at home

Summary & Reflection

Qawwam means leader, protector, and provider. It is based on the advantage Allah has given and the obligation of maintenance (nafkah), and it is a trust that will be questioned—not lordship.

Reflection Questions

- When I hear the word "family leader," what comes to my mind: power or responsibility?
- In what areas does my wife most need my protection and support right now?
- If I were questioned tomorrow about my leadership at home, what would my answer be?

02

CHAPTER 2

Providing and Protecting

Maintenance, safety, and peace of mind.

لِيُنْفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ^ص وَمَن قُدِّرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا ءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ ^ج
لَا يَكْلَفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَّا ءَاتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾

"Let the one who has means spend according to his means; and whoever has his provision restricted, let him spend from what Allah has given him."

At-Talaq 65:7

Maintenance: worship, not a favour

Maintenance is not a monthly gift that depends on one's mood. "Let the one who has means spend according to his means; and whoever's provision is restricted, let him spend from what Allah has given him" (Surah at-Talaq 65:7). The Prophet ﷺ mentioned that the dinar with the greatest reward is that spent on one's family (Sahih Muslim, Kitab az-Zakah).

His warning is also clear: "It is sin enough for a person to withhold food from those in his care" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab az-Zakah). Furthermore, a wife's property is entirely hers: "For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned" (Surah an-Nisa' 4:32). Her salary does not diminish her maintenance rights.

Protection is also broader than just guarding the house. It means the wife and children are safe from harm—including harm from the husband himself. Allah forbids: "do not retain them to harm them" (Surah al-Baqarah 2:231). The level of maintenance can vary depending on the circumstances; if there is any doubt, the state Islamic religious office or the Syariah Court can help clarify it.

Signs that a wife feels provided for and safe

- ✓ Maintenance arrives on a fixed date, without having to be asked for.
- ✓ She is aware of the family's financial situation, including debts.
- ✓ She has her own pocket money for small necessities.
- ✓ She does not fear expressing an opinion or saying "no".
- ✓ There are no threats, shouting, or throwing of items in the house.
- ✓ She knows her husband will stand by her when others shame her.

Summary & Reflection

Maintenance is an obligation and an act of worship, measured by ability and sufficiency. Withholding it is sinful, and a wife's property remains hers.

Protection means the family is safe from harm, including from the husband himself.

Reflection Questions

- Does my wife have to ask for her basic needs?
- Is there anything in my behaviour that makes the family feel unsafe?
- What is one step I can take to make the maintenance more regular this month?

03

CHAPTER 3

Consulting: Shura in the Household

A good leader listens first.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ... ﴿٧١﴾

"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..."

Surah at-Taubah 9:71 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

Decisions Made Together

Allah praises the believers, "...and their affairs are decided by mutual consultation among them" (Surah ash-Shura 42:38). Even in the most private family matter, such as weaning a child, the Qur'an mentions that decisions are made "by mutual consent and consultation between the two" (Surah al-Baqarah 2:233).

The Prophet ﷺ himself accepted his wife's advice. Ummu Salamah r.a. advised him calmly and concisely in Hudaibiyah, and her advice was accepted (Sahih al-Bukhari 2731). A leader who listens does not lose authority; he gains trust.

Conversely, harshness distances hearts: "Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you" (Surah Ali 'Imran 3:159). Decisions that change finances, living arrangements, or family time should not be announced after they have been made. If a decision cannot be discussed with your wife, that in itself is a sign worth reflecting on.

Weekly Family Meeting

1

Set a Time

Once a week, for about 20 minutes, at a time when both parties are not tired. Put away phones.

2

Start with Gratitude

Everyone mentions one good thing about their partner or the family this week.

3

Finances and Schedule

Review expenses, bills, the children's schedules, and, if applicable, next week's turns (giliran).

4

Listen Before Deciding

Let the wife speak until she is finished. Repeat what you understood before giving your opinion.

5

End with Prayer

Note down the decisions, postpone heated issues to another time, and conclude with a joint prayer.

Summary & Reflection

Shura (consultation) is a characteristic of the believer and is taught in one's own family matters. The Prophet ﷺ accepted his wife's advice. A listening leadership builds trust; harshness distances hearts.

Reflection Questions

- When was the last time I changed a decision because I listened to my wife's view?
- What major decision have I made without consulting first?
- When is the appropriate time to start this week's family meeting?

04

CHAPTER 4

Gentle at Home, Firm in Self

The Example of the Prophet ﷺ in His Family.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow, for whoever hopes for (the mercy of) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often."

Surah al-Ahzab 33:21

The Measure of Character is Seen at Home

'A'ishah r.a. was asked what the Prophet ﷺ did at home. She replied: "He was always in the service of (helping) his family, and when the time for prayer came, he went out to pray" (Sahih al-Bukhari 676). He also said: "The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family" (Sunan at-Tirmidhi 3895 — sahih).

"Gentleness is not found in anything except that it adorns it, and it is not removed from anything except that it disfigures it" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa as-Silah wa al-Adab). He was sensitive to his wives' feelings, racing with 'A'ishah (narrated by Abu Dawud 2578 — sahih) and calling her by a pet name (Sahih al-Bukhari 3768).

Emotional leadership begins with leading oneself. A man said to the Prophet ﷺ: "Advise me." He replied: "Do not get angry." The man repeated it several times, and he kept saying: "Do not get angry." (Sahih al-Bukhari 6116). A strong person is not the one who wins a wrestling match, but the one who controls himself when angry (Sahih al-Bukhari 6114).

When anger flares up

1

Stop and be silent

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6018; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman).

2

Change your state

Sit down if you are standing, perform ablution (wudu'), or leave for a short while after saying when you will be back.

3

Decide nothing now

No major decisions, no pronouncement of divorce (talak), no threats while angry.

4

Return and listen

When calm, ask: "What were you feeling just now?" Listen first before defending yourself.

5

Apologise without a "but"

Admit your own mistake. If anger frequently gets out of control, seek counselling help.

Summary & Reflection

The Prophet ﷺ helped his family, being gentle and sensitive. Emotional leadership begins with self-mastery when angry. A husband's strength lies in self-control, not in a loud voice.

Reflection Questions

- What household chore can I take over permanently starting this week?
- In what situation am I most likely to get angry, and what are the early signs?
- How do my wife and children describe me when I am not around?

05

CHAPTER 5

Leading the Family Towards Allah

An imam at home, not only at the mosque.

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ
وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى ﴿١٣٢﴾

"Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance: We provide it for thee. But the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness."

Surah Taha 20:132 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

Starting with oneself, then the family

Allah says: "O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones..." (Surah at-Tahrim 66:6). This command begins with oneself. Allah also says: "And enjoin prayer upon your family and be steadfast in it" (Surah Taha 20:132). Educating requires long patience, not a single reprimand.

A living home is a home where prayer is observed. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Perform some of your prayers at home, and do not make your home like a grave" (Sahih al-Bukhari 432). He also prayed for blessings (rahmah) for husbands and wives who remind each other to pray at night (Sunan Abu Dawud 1308; graded as hasan sahih by al-Albani).

Example is stronger than instruction: "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example" (Surah al-Ahzab 33:21), and Allah rebukes: "O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do?" (Surah as-Saff 61:2). A husband who wants his family to pray must first be seen praying himself.

Weekly Family Worship

- ✓ At least one congregational prayer at home every day.
- ✓ 15-minute family circle (halaqah) weekly: discuss one verse or hadith, its meaning, and choose one action to implement.
- ✓ Reading the Qur'an together, even if only a few verses.
- ✓ Giving charity (sadaqah) as a family, involving the children.
- ✓ Praying for the wife and children by name.
- ✓ Inviting gently, without embarrassing anyone in front of others.

Summary & Reflection

A husband leads his family towards Allah by starting with himself, by praying at home, through a short circle (halaqah), and by setting an example. Education requires long patience.

Reflection Questions

- What acts of worship do my family see me doing consistently?
- How can I start a simple and enjoyable family circle (halaqah)?
- Does the way I invite my family to worship bring them closer or push them further away?

06

CHAPTER 6

Conflict without Harm

Reading 4:34 correctly, and its clear boundaries.

... وَعَاشِرُوهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُمْ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

"...on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:19 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

A verse often misread

Nusyuz is disobedience to the rights of marriage, and it can come from either the wife or the husband: "And if a woman fears disobedience (nusyuz) or turning away from her husband, then there is no blame upon them for making a true reconciliation, and reconciliation is better..." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:128). Not every disagreement is nusyuz.

Verse 4:34 mentions gradual steps: gentle advice, followed by separation in bed within the home. The third step is given very strict boundaries by the scholars: it must not injure, must not touch the face and must leave no mark. Many jurists (fuqaha) state that leaving it altogether is better, and some contemporary scholars believe it is no longer applicable. The scholars' views on these details differ; the state mufti's office can explain this further.

What is undisputed: harm and violence are forbidden. "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never struck anything with his hand, neither a wife nor a servant, except when fighting in the cause of Allah" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Fadha'il). For severe disputes: "...then appoint an arbitrator from the men's family and an arbitrator from the women's family..." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:35).

The Way Taught, and the Way Never Permitted

The Way Taught

- ✓ Speaking calmly and listening to the real reason
- ✓ Giving calm space, while staying within the home
- ✓ Family counselling at JAIN
- ✓ Arbiters (hakam) from both families
- ✓ Sulh (mediation) at the Syariah Court

Never Permitted

- ✗ Harming, slapping, or pushing
- ✗ Threatening, confining, or chasing away
- ✗ Restricting household funds or maintenance (nafkah)
- ✗ Insults and abuse, including on social media
- ✗ Coercion in intimacy

Summary & Reflection

Nusyuz can come from either spouse, and the path prescribed by the Qur'an is advice, arbitration (hakam), and reconciliation. The Prophet ﷺ never struck his wife. Harm is forbidden, and anyone in danger is entitled to immediate protection: 999 or Talian Kasih 15999.

Reflection Questions

- When disagreements arise, do I listen to the true reason or do I immediately judge?
- Are there any actions of mine when angry that make my wife feel afraid?
- Who is the just person from our family who can act as an arbitrator (hakam) if necessary?

07

CHAPTER 7

The Qawwam in a Polygynous Home

One leadership, and every home deserves justice.

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ
فَتَذَرُوهُنَّ كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

﴿١٢٩﴾

"And you will never be able to be just between your wives, even if you strive earnestly; so do not incline excessively towards the one you love, so that you leave the other like something suspended."

An-Nisa' 4:129

Justice is a Requirement

For a husband with more than one wife, qiwamah grows heavier. The permission comes with a condition: "...And if you fear that you will not be just, then (marry) only one..." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:3). Allah also reminds us: "You will never attain perfect justice... even if you strive for it; do not be excessively inclined" (Surah an-Nisa' 4:129).

The required justice pertains to the visible aspects: maintenance (nafkah), residence, turns (giliran), and treatment. Emotional inclination is not required to be equal, but the heart cannot allow any wife to feel neglected. Every home deserves a present, visible leader, not just a name on paper.

The example of the Prophet ﷺ is clear: he would draw lots among his wives when travelling (Sahih al-Bukhari 2593), and when jealousy arose, he would calm the situation by saying, "Your mother is jealous," without embarrassing anyone (Sahih al-Bukhari 5225). Details regarding turns (giliran) and maintenance (nafkah) can vary according to circumstances and scholarly opinion; the Syariah Court or the state Islamic religious office can assist in clarifying these matters.

Signs of Just Leadership in Two Households

- ✓ A written, shared, and adhered-to schedule for turns (giliran).
- ✓ Full maintenance (nafkah) for every household, not partial amounts.
- ✓ No secrets: every wife knows the true standing of the family.
- ✓ Not comparing wives or children amongst themselves.
- ✓ Being present with full attention in every home, not just spending the night.
- ✓ Drawing lots or reaching mutual agreement for travel and family gatherings.

Summary & Reflection

In polygyny, qiwamah becomes heavier. Visible justice is mandatory; the heart cannot allow anyone to feel neglected. Every home deserves a present, transparent, and just leader.

Reflection Questions

- If each of my wives were asked separately, would their accounts of my justice be the same?
- Is there any household that receives less of my attention without me realising it?
- What should I write and share to make the turns (giliran) and maintenance (nafkah) more transparent?

08

CHAPTER 8

For Wives: Supporting a Husband in His Trust

Supported leadership is easier to fulfil.

... وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ^ط وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ...



"Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment."

Surah al-Ma'idah 5:2 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

A partner, not a spectator

This chapter is for wives. A husband's leadership is a heavy trust, and a household is a partnership. Khadijah r.a. comforted the Prophet ﷺ when he returned from the Cave of Hira in fear: "No, by Allah, Allah will never disgrace you; you maintain the ties of kinship, you bear the burdens of others..." (Sahih al-Bukhari 3). Comfort that reminds the husband of his own goodness is a great support.

Appreciation is also part of religion: "Whoever does not thank people has not thanked Allah" (narrated by Abu Dawud 4811 and at-Tirmidhi — sahih).

Obedience does not mean one cannot have an opinion; Ummu Salamah r.a. offered her view, and the Prophet ﷺ followed it.

Support has its limits: "There is no obedience in sin; obedience is only in what is right" (Sahih al-Bukhari 7257). Supporting a husband does not mean covering up injustice or enduring injury in silence. If you are in danger, call 999 or Talian Kasih 15999; if you need advice, the JAIN family counselling unit is ready to listen.

How a Wife Can Support Her Husband

- ✓ Express gratitude for his maintenance (nafkah) and efforts, even if they are small.
- ✓ Offer your views calmly, at an appropriate time.
- ✓ Remind him gently when he forgets, not in front of others.
- ✓ Guard his secrets and his honour, just as he guards your honour.
- ✓ Pray for him during prostration—he doesn't need to know.
- ✓ State clearly when a right has not been fulfilled.

Summary & Reflection

A wife is a partner who supports her husband's trust through appreciation, advice, and prayer. This support is limited to what is right (ma'ruf); it never means covering up injustice.

Reflection Questions

- When was the last time I expressed specific appreciation to my husband?
- How can I offer my views so that they are more easily heard?
- Are there any issues I have kept bottled up that should be discussed properly?

The Qawwam Husband Checklist

Check once a month. Be honest with yourself, and if you dare, ask your wife.

Item	For Whom	Chapter
☐ Nafkah (financial maintenance) is paid fully, on time, and recorded	Every wife and child	2
☐ The house feels safe—no threats, shouting, or withholding of money	The entire household	2, 6
☐ Major decisions are discussed before being made	Wives	3
☐ Weekly family meetings are held	The entire household	3
☐ Helps with housework without being asked	Wives	4
☐ Anger is managed: stop, perform ablution (wudu'), and speak later	Self	4
☐ Congregational prayer and family circle (halaqah) are held	The entire household	5
☐ Conflicts are resolved gradually, without harm	Wives	6
☐ The schedule and nafkah (financial maintenance) for each household are clear and transparent	Every wife	7
☐ Ready to hear your wife's correction calmly	Self	8

Getting help



In danger right now?

Call the Police on 999. Your safety and your children's comes first; everything else can follow.



Talian Kasih 15999 (24 hours)

For urgent cases involving the safety or welfare of a family. Talian HEAL 15555 and Befrienders KL 03-7627 2929 for emotional support.



Family Counselling Unit, state JAIN

Every state Islamic Religious Department has a family counselling unit, and it is free. There is no need to wait until a problem grows — coming early is welcome.



Sulh Officer, Syariah Court

Mediation before a full hearing, also free. Rights, procedures and rules can differ from state to state; the Syariah Court or the state Islamic religious office can explain what applies in your situation.

CLOSING

A leader who will be asked

A husband's leadership is not measured by the loudest voice in the house, but by the sense of peace felt by his wives and children when he returns.

May Allah make us husbands who bear responsibility sincerely, lead gently, listen before deciding, and fulfil this trust until we meet Him.

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

"And those who pray: "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and our offspring a comfort to our eyes, and make us leaders of those who are mindful of You.""

Surah al-Furqan 25:74

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