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COMPLETE REFERENCE BOOK

The Righteous Woman

الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ

A complete reference for the Muslim woman — as a servant of Allah, daughter, wife and mother: rights, responsibilities, etiquette, what to do and what to avoid, and guidance on caring for herself

... فَٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ قَٰنِتَٰتٌ حَٰفِظَٰتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ ٱللَّهُ ...

English edition · 2026 · v1

An-Nisa' 4:34

How to use this book

This book is written for Muslim women and girls, and for everyone who supports them: husbands, parents, teachers and friends. It discusses a woman's role as a servant of Allah, as a daughter, a wife and a mother, alongside how to care for her body, her soul and her own rights.

You may read it from beginning to end, or keep it as a reference: open the relevant chapter when a question arises. Every chapter begins with a verse of the Qur'an, followed by a short explanation, practical steps and a checklist.

Every chapter has a **Do & Avoid** page as a quick guide, and ends with **Common questions** answering the questions most often asked. The appendix at the end of the book holds a summary, daily and weekly checklists, a glossary of terms and helplines.

The fiqh follows the Shafiʿi school (madhhab) as it is practised in Malaysia, and important differences of opinion are noted briefly. References to the law are general summaries.

This book is not a fatwa, nor is it legal or medical advice. For particular circumstances, consult your state Islamic religious office, the Syariah Court, a syarie lawyer or a doctor. May every page make your steps towards the pleasure of Allah a little easier.

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Every chapter opens with a verse of the Qur'an and closes with a **Do & Avoid** page and common questions. Further reference at **mypolygyny.com**.

01

CHAPTER 1

Who Is the Righteous Woman?

A heart devoted to Allah, a strong character, a presence that brings mercy.

... فَٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ قَٰنِتَٰتٌ حَٰفِظَٰتٌ لِّلۡغَيۡبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ ٱللَّهُ ... ﴿٣٤﴾

"...So the righteous women are those devoutly obedient (to Allah) and guarding themselves in their husbands' absence, with the guarding that Allah has enjoined."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:34

What 'righteous' means

The word **solehah** comes from a root meaning good, sound and fit for purpose. A righteous woman is a woman whose relationship with Allah is sound, and that soundness then shows in her character and in her dealings with people.

The Qur'an describes her with two qualities in Surah an-Nisa' 4:34. First, **qanitat**: devoutly obedient to Allah, willingly and with awareness, not under compulsion. Second, **hafizat lil-ghaib**: guarding herself, her dignity, confidences and whatever is entrusted to her, even when no one is watching.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “This world is an adornment, and the best adornment of this world is a righteous woman.” (reported by Muslim, Kitab ar-Radha')

Righteousness is not a title for a woman who never errs. It is a direction of travel: striving, falling, repenting and rising again.

- Righteousness begins in the heart, and then shows in worship, character and action.
- It is open to every woman: single, married, a mother, a widow or divorced.

Marks of a righteous woman

🤲

Devoted to Allah

Keeps her prayers, her covering and Allah's commands sincerely, not for the sake of praise.

🛡️

Keeps a trust

Guards her own dignity, the household's confidences and any property entrusted to her.

💬

A guarded tongue

Speaks the truth courteously, keeping clear of backbiting, insult and words that wound.

📖

Loves knowledge

Studies religion and worldly knowledge to better herself, her family and her community.

🌿

Gentle yet firm

Loving and forgiving, yet brave enough to say no to sin and to injustice.

🤝

Brings benefit

Her presence makes things easier for others: family, neighbours, friends and community.

Great women as examples

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ named Maryam bint ʿImran and Asiyah the wife of Pharaoh among the women who attained perfection (reported by al-Bukhari, no. 3411; Sahih Muslim, Kitab Fadha'il as-Sahabah).

- **Khadijah bint Khuwailid:** a successful merchant, the first to believe, who steadied and supported the Prophet ﷺ with her spirit and her wealth.
- **Aisyah bint Abu Bakar:** a great scholar; the Companions turned to her in fiqh, hadith and Qur'anic commentary.
- **Fatimah az-Zahra':** the Prophet's ﷺ daughter, patient through hardship, named as foremost among the women of Paradise (reported by al-Bukhari).
- **Maryam bint ʿImran:** chosen and purified by Allah (Surah Ali ʿImran 3:42); steadfast in the face of her people's slander.
- **Asiyah the wife of Pharaoh:** a believer inside a tyrant's palace, who prayed for a home with Allah (Surah at-Tahrim 66:11).

Myths and facts about the righteous woman

Myths

- ✗ A righteous woman must stay silent and may not speak up.
- ✗ Obedience means complying with anything at all, including sin.
- ✗ Righteous means weak, unlearned and powerless.
- ✗ Righteousness is measured by looks and clothing alone.
- ✗ A woman earns less reward than a man.

Facts

- ✓ Khaulah brought her complaint to the Prophet ﷺ and Allah heard her (al-Mujadilah 58:1).
- ✓ There is no obedience in sin (al-Bukhari 7257; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah).
- ✓ Khadijah traded; Aisyah was the Companions' reference in knowledge.
- ✓ Allah looks at the heart and the deed, not the appearance (reported by Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa as-Silah wa al-Adab).
- ✓ Allah weighs the deeds of men and women alike (Ali ʿImran 3:195; an-Nahl 16:97).

Steps to begin the journey

1. **Put your intention right**
   Make the pleasure of Allah your aim, not people's praise or the pressure around you.

2. **Secure the obligations**
   Keep the five prayers, fasting, your covering and others' rights before chasing the voluntary.

3. **Learn a little at a time**
   Attend classes, read well-regarded books and ask a teacher you trust.

4. **One trait each month**
   Patience, honesty or guarding the tongue, say; practise it and review it weekly.

5. **Find good companions**
   Keep company that reminds you of Allah and where you support one another.

6. **Repent without despair**
   When you slip, seek forgiveness, put it right and carry on. Allah is ever-accepting of repentance.

7. **Be grateful and pray**
   Ask for steadfastness, for guidance and strength come from Allah.

Do & avoid: building righteousness

Do

- ✓ Put the obligations first and keep at them, however little.
- ✓ Learn from teachers and sources of standing.
- ✓ Think well of yourself and of others.
- ✓ Value your own strengths and use them for good.
- ✓ Balance the right of Allah, your own rights and the rights of others.

Avoid

- ✗ Measuring yourself against other women on social media.
- ✗ Judging other women to be unrighteous.
- ✗ Worship so excessive that other duties are neglected.
- ✗ Assuming righteousness means having no opinion.
- ✗ Despairing because of past sins.

Common questions

I do not cover my hair properly yet. Can I still be counted righteous?

Righteousness is a journey. Covering remains obligatory, so keep working towards it and do not despair. The other good you do still carries weight with Allah. Begin with the step you are able to take, ask Allah for strength, and let no one make you feel unworthy of changing.

Is being a righteous woman only for those who are married?

No. Devotion to Allah and keeping a trust are required of every woman. A daughter, a student, a working woman, a single mother or a widow can each be a righteous woman within her own role.

May a righteous woman disagree with her husband or her parents?

She may, in a courteous manner. The women Companions offered their views to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Disagreeing respectfully is not disobedience. What is forbidden is harsh speech and refusal in what is right, while in matters of sin there is no obedience owed to anyone at all.

02

CHAPTER 2

A Servant of Allah First

Before she is a daughter, a wife or a mother, she is a servant of Allah.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

“And I did not create jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me.”

Surah adz-Dzariyat 51:56

Creed: the ground of everything

Every role a woman holds rests on one foundation: her relationship with Allah. A sound creed gives her calm, self-worth and direction. She knows her value is set by Allah, not by what people think.

The creed of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah takes in the six articles of faith: belief in Allah, the angels, the revealed books, the messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree and destiny.

- Affirming the oneness of Allah: He alone is worshipped, asked and hoped in.
- Keeping clear of shirk and superstition: charms, amulets, fortune-telling and divination. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned against consulting fortune-tellers (reported by Muslim).
- Life's tests — marriage, children, provision — are accepted as decreed, while she keeps striving and praying.
- Learning creed from qualified teachers and recognised sources, such as JAKIM material and state religious departments.

Prayer: the pillar that holds the day up

Prayer is the first act of worship to be reckoned. Asked which deed Allah loves most, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ answered: “Prayer at its proper time” (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

For a woman busy with work, children and home, praying early in the time is a resting place for the soul, not one more burden. Allah says: “Establish prayer for My remembrance” (Surah Taha 20:14).

- **Early in the time:** keep your prayer garment and mat somewhere easy to reach, including at work.
- **Presence of heart:** understand the meaning of al-Fatihah and the words of the prayer; pause a moment before the opening takbir.
- **Composure:** perform each part calmly (tamaʿninah), without rushing.
- **The regular sunnah prayers:** begin with the two units before Subuh, then add gradually.
- A woman may pray in congregation at the mosque with due decorum, but prayer at home carries great reward too.

The pillars of Islam in a woman's life

Shahadah

Renewed through knowledge and action; the ground of every decision in life.

Prayer

Five times a day; left only during haid and nifas, and not made up afterwards.

Fasting

Fasts missed through haid, nifas, illness or travel must be made up.

Zakat

Zakat on fitrah, savings, income and gold; ask your state zakat centre about the calculation.

Hajj & umrah

Obligatory once in a lifetime for those able (Shafiʿi school), provided it is safe.

Fasting, zakat, hajj & umrah

Fasting: Allah intends ease for you, not hardship (Surah al-Baqarah 2:185). A woman in haid or nifas does not fast and must make the days up. An expectant or nursing mother who fears for her health may break her fast and make it up; if she fears only for the child, the Shafiʿi school requires both making it up and fidyah.

Zakat: a woman's property is her own, so its zakat is her own responsibility. Gold jewellery worn within customary limits is not subject to zakat in the Shafiʿi school; what counts as customary differs from state to state.

Hajj & umrah: obligatory for those with the means (Surah Ali ʿImran 3:97). A woman needs a mahram or her husband; the Shafiʿi school permits the obligatory hajj in the company of trustworthy women if the journey is safe. Follow the conditions set by Lembaga Tabung Haji. A woman in ʿiddah does not travel for hajj. If she is menstruating, she performs every rite except the tawaf.

Qur'an, remembrance & daily intention

- ✓ Read the Qur'an every day, even a few verses, together with the translation.
- ✓ Improve your recitation with a qualified teacher; it is never too late to learn.
- ✓ Morning and evening dhikr; remembrance settles the heart (Surah ar-Raʿd 13:28).
- ✓ Send blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ, especially on Friday.
- ✓ Istighfar while cooking, driving or hanging out the washing.
- ✓ Intend housework, your career and caring for your family as worship.
- ✓ Give in charity however little, in secret where you can.
- ✓ Pray for yourself, your family and the ummah after each prayer.
- ✓ A brief self-examination before sleep: gratitude, apology and resolve for tomorrow.

Do & avoid: daily worship

Do

- ✓ Pray early in the time and plan the day around it.
- ✓ Make up missed Ramadan fasts as soon as you can.
- ✓ Begin voluntary acts that are small but steady.
- ✓ Learn the fiqh of worship from sound sources.
- ✓ Keep your intention sincere in everything you do.

Avoid

- ✗ Delaying prayer to the end of its time without excuse.
- ✗ Putting off missed fasts until the next Ramadan.
- ✗ Worshipping to be seen or to be spoken of.
- ✗ Believing in charms, fortune-telling or superstitious practices.
- ✗ Neglecting your family's rights in the name of voluntary worship.

Common questions

I am busy with small children. How can I pray with any presence of heart?

Allah does not burden anyone beyond their capacity (Surah al-Baqarah 2:286). Perform the obligatory prayers as calmly as you can, early in the time while the children sleep or are with someone else. Presence of heart is trained a little at a time. Caring for children with the right intention is itself worship.

May a woman perform umrah without a mahram?

In the Shafiʿi school umrah is obligatory once in a lifetime, and some Shafiʿi scholars permit a woman to travel with a group of trustworthy women when the journey is safe. Saudi and agency rules can change, however. Consult your religious office and a licensed agency before deciding.

May I take medication to delay my period for an act of worship?

Many scholars permit it for purposes such as hajj and umrah, provided it does no harm. Seek a doctor's advice first, as the effects differ from woman to woman.

03

CHAPTER 3

Fiqh for Women

The knowledge of purity that makes worship easier and settles the heart.

... إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلتَّوَّٰبِينَ وَيُحِبُّ ٱلْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

"...Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and He loves those who purify themselves."

Surah al-Baqarah 2:222

Taharah: the key to worship

Taharah (purification) is a condition for the validity of prayer, tawaf and several other acts of worship. This knowledge is a personal religious obligation (fardu ain) for every woman, because the cycles of menstruation (haid), post-natal bleeding (nifas) and ordinary discharge bear directly on whether her worship is valid.

Allah does not wish to burden you, but to purify you and complete His favour upon you (Surah al-Ma'idah 5:6). The fiqh in this chapter follows the Shafiʿi school (madhhab) as it is practised in Malaysia.

- **Impurity:** the blood of haid, nifas and istihadah is impure; clean your clothing and body before praying.
- **Minor ritual impurity:** lifted by wuduk.
- **Major ritual impurity:** seminal discharge, haid, nifas and childbirth; lifted by the obligatory bath (ghusl).
- **Tayammum:** stands in for wuduk or the bath when there is no water or water would be harmful.
- **Ordinary discharge:** it breaks wuduk, but on the settled view of the Shafiʿi school it is not impure. If there is odour, itching or a change of colour, see a doctor.

Haid, nifas & istihadah

Haid

- Natural blood from the womb of a woman who has reached puberty.
- At the shortest, a day and a night (24 hours).
- Usually 6 or 7 days.
- At the longest, 15 days and 15 nights.
- The clear period between two cycles is at least 15 days.

Nifas

- The blood that comes after childbirth.
- At the shortest, the blink of an eye.
- Usually 40 days.
- At the longest, 60 days.
- If the bleeding stops sooner, bathe and resume worship.

Istihadah

- Blood of illness, outside the times of haid or nifas.
- Prayer and fasting remain obligatory as usual.
- Clean yourself, use a pad, make wuduk after the time enters.
- One wuduk for each obligatory prayer.
- See a doctor if the bleeding is prolonged.

How to perform the obligatory bath

1. **Intention (essential)**
   For example: "I intend to bathe to lift the impurity of menstruation, for Allah Most High," as the water first reaches the body.

2. **Basmalah & wash the hands**
   Begin with bismillah and wash both hands (recommended).

3. **Remove impurity**
   Wash the private parts and anywhere blood or impurity has touched, first of all.

4. **Perform wuduk**
   Make a complete wuduk before bathing (recommended).

5. **Pour over the head**
   Pour water over the head three times, making sure it reaches the scalp and the roots of the hair.

6. **Cover the whole body (essential)**
   Let water reach every part, starting on the right, including between the fingers, the navel, the armpits and skin folds.

7. **Leave nothing in the way**
   Remove ordinary nail polish, glue or anything else that keeps water from the skin.

What is not permitted during haid & nifas

- ✓ Prayer, obligatory or voluntary; it is not made up afterwards.
- ✓ Fasting; it must be made up once she is clear.
- ✓ Tawaf, whether for hajj, umrah or voluntarily.
- ✓ Touching and carrying a copy of the Qur'an.
- ✓ Reciting the Qur'an as recitation (Shafiʿi school; other scholars permit it).
- ✓ Remaining or making a spiritual retreat inside a mosque.
- ✓ Marital relations, and skin contact between the navel and the knees.
- ✓ The husband is forbidden to pronounce talaq while his wife is in haid or nifas.
- ✓ Still allowed: dhikr, supplication, salawat, hearing the Qur'an, attending classes.

Making up prayers & fasts

Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: “We were ordered to make up the fasts and were not ordered to make up the prayers” (reported by Muslim). Even so, in the Shafiʿi school there are situations in which a prayer must still be made up.

- **Becoming clear before the time ends:** if there is time enough for the opening takbir, that prayer must be made up.
- **Prayers that may be joined:** becoming clear in the time of Asar, make up Zohor as well; clear in the time of Isyak, make up Maghrib as well.
- **The period beginning after the time has entered:** if there was time to pray and she had not yet done so, that prayer must be made up.
- **Becoming clear before Subuh in Ramadan:** make the intention and fast; the fast is valid even if she bathes after Subuh, but she must not let the Subuh prayer slip.
- **Making up fasts:** do it before the next Ramadan. If delayed without excuse, the Shafiʿi school requires making it up together with fidyah.

Do & avoid: matters of purification

Do

- ✓ Note the date and length of your period each month.
- ✓ Check the signs of being clear: dryness, or a clear white discharge.
- ✓ Take the obligatory bath as soon as you are certain you are clear.
- ✓ Make up the prayer whose time you caught when becoming clear, or when the period began.
- ✓ Ask a woman teacher or the religious office if you are unsure.

Avoid

- ✗ Delaying the bath until a prayer is missed.
- ✗ Treating yellow or cloudy spotting within the period as being clear.
- ✗ Resuming prayer without making sure the bleeding has truly stopped.
- ✗ Letting istihadah keep you from prayer and fasting.
- ✗ Keeping to taboos that have no basis in the religion.

Common questions

May I cut my nails or hair during my period?

No sound evidence forbids it, so it is permitted. Some scholars suggest it is better left until after the bath, but this is not an obligation and it does not affect the validity of the bath.

The bleeding has gone past 15 days. What should I do?

Bleeding beyond 15 days is no longer menstruation alone; part of it counts as istihadah. How it is reckoned depends on your usual pattern and the character of the blood. Throughout the istihadah, prayer and fasting remain obligatory. Ask a woman teacher or the religious office about the reckoning, and see a doctor for a medical check.

May a menstruating woman read the Qur'an on her phone?

In the Shafiʿi school reading with the intention of recitation is still not permitted, but a phone is not ruled a copy of the Qur'an. She may read Qur'anic remembrance and supplications with the intention of dhikr, listen to recitation, and read a translation. A teacher of the Qur'an may follow the views that allow more latitude.

04

CHAPTER 4

Covering, Dress & Dignity

Covering is not about hiding who you are, but about honouring her.

وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَٰرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا ۖ وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ ... ﴿٣١﴾

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze, to guard their chastity, not to display their adornment except what ordinarily appears, and to draw their head-coverings over their chests..."

Surah an-Nur 24:31

Covering as honour

Covering the aurat is a clear command of Allah, not merely culture or fashion. In Surah an-Nur 24:31, believing women are told to lower their gaze, guard their chastity and draw their head-coverings over their chests. The command to lower the gaze is given first to men, in the verse before (24:30). Dignity is a shared responsibility.

Allah speaks of clothing as a favour: to cover and to adorn, yet "the garment of God-consciousness is best" (Surah al-A'raf 7:26). Outward dress and a heart of taqwa go together.

Surah al-Ahzab 33:59 gives the wisdom behind it: that believing women be known, and not be troubled.

- Covering is worship: intend it for Allah, not for how people look at you.
- It is a process. A woman just beginning deserves support, not scorn.
- Covering does not make a woman less clever, less active or less lovely.

The limits of a woman's aurat (Shafiʿi school)

Before unrelated men

- The whole body except the face and the two palms (as practised in Malaysia)
- Hair, neck, arms and feet must be covered
- Some Shafiʿi scholars recommend covering the face where temptation is feared
- These are also the limits of the aurat in prayer

Before mahram & Muslim women

- The settled view: between the navel and the knees
- Good manners: keep to modest dress as usual at home
- Mahram includes father, siblings, children, father-in-law (24:31)
- Non-Muslim women: scholars differ; be careful and modest

With your husband

- ✓ There is no limit of aurat between husband and wife
- ✓ Adorning yourself for your husband is worship and affection
- ✓ Decency, cleanliness and mutual respect are still kept

Marks of lawful dress & adornment outdoors

- ✓ Covers the whole aurat, including the feet and the wrists
- ✓ Loose, not outlining the shape of the body
- ✓ Thick, not so sheer that the colour of the skin shows
- ✓ A long head-covering over the hair, neck and chest (24:31)
- ✓ Not resembling men's dress
- ✓ Not meant for display or for showing off
- ✓ Not drawing excessive attention in public
- ✓ Clean, neat and suited to the occasion
- ✓ Colour, cut and fashion are allowed so long as the above conditions are met
- ✓ Outdoors: neat without display; light make-up if any; voice and manner not alluring

Clear prohibitions in the hadith

🚫

Tattoos

Allah has cursed the one who tattoos and the one who asks for it (reported by al-Bukhari 5931 and Muslim, Kitab al-Libas wa az-Zinah).

✂️

Plucking the eyebrows

An-namisah: plucking the brows to reshape them. Unusual hair, such as a moustache, may be removed.

💇‍♀️

Hair extensions

Allah has cursed the one who adds hair and the one who asks for it (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

🦷

Filing the teeth apart

Altering Allah's creation for beauty is forbidden; dental treatment for a genuine need is allowed.

🌸

Perfume in public

Wearing scent so that unrelated men catch it is strongly censured (reported by Abu Dawud and at-Tirmizi, hasan).

Mixing, social media & photographs

Islam does not forbid a woman from dealing with men for genuine needs such as study, work, trade and medical care. What is kept is the manner of it: lowering the gaze, speaking courteously and clearly, not being alone together (khalwat), and not joking excessively.

Social media is a public space. What is uploaded can be saved, spread and misused for ever. The limits of covering and dignity in the real world apply on the screen as well.

- Photographs: make sure the aurat is covered and the pose is not alluring.
- Avoid giving away your location, daily routine, your children's school or your home address.
- Do not share other people's photographs without permission, especially those of other women.
- Private messages with unrelated men: brief, necessary and courteous.
- Ask yourself: "Would I be comfortable if Allah and my family saw this?"

Do & avoid: covering and dignity

Do

- ✓ Cover with the intention of pleasing Allah
- ✓ Choose clothing that is loose, thick and comfortable
- ✓ Adorn yourself fully for your husband at home
- ✓ Guard your privacy and your location on social media
- ✓ Guide your daughters gradually and with affection
- ✓ Support a friend who is learning to cover

Avoid

- ✗ A head-covering that leaves the chest or neck uncovered
- ✗ Clothing that is tight, sheer or body-hugging
- ✗ Tattoos, hair extensions and plucking the eyebrows
- ✗ Strong perfume when going out in public
- ✗ Alluring selfies or sharing your location in real time
- ✗ Belittling a woman who does not yet cover

Common questions

May I remove my head-covering in front of a male cousin or my brother-in-law?

No. Cousins and in-laws are not mahram, so the limits that apply before unrelated men apply here too. This is often taken lightly at family gatherings. Wear your covering calmly, and explain kindly if you are asked.

Do henna and nail varnish prevent wuduk?

Henna only stains the skin and does not keep water out, so the wuduk is valid. Ordinary nail varnish forms a layer that water cannot pass, so it must be removed before wuduk and the obligatory bath. Varnish said to be water-permeable should be checked carefully.

I am not ready to wear a head-covering. Is my effort wasted?

No. The obligation remains an obligation, but every step towards Allah counts. Begin with intention, knowledge and prayer; choose friends who support you. Do not despair, for Allah's mercy is vast, and let no one belittle your effort.

05

CHAPTER 5

Character & Personality

True beauty lies in the heart and in how one behaves.

ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ فِى ٱلسَّرَّآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ وَٱلْكَٰظِمِينَ ٱلْغَيْظَ وَٱلْعَافِينَ عَنِ ٱلنَّاسِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

"(The God-conscious are) those who give in times of ease and of hardship, who restrain their anger and pardon people. And Allah loves those who do good."

Surah Ali 'Imran 3:134

Character: the mirror of faith

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that Allah does not look at your appearance or your wealth, but looks at your hearts and your deeds (reported by Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa as-Silah wa al-Adab). A righteous woman is known not by her appearance alone, but by how she speaks, bears things patiently, forgives, and treats the people around her.

Character is not a fixed, inborn quality. It is shaped little by little through knowledge, practice, prayer and good company. Each time we fail, we repent and try again.

- **Modesty (haya')**: part of faith (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim). Healthy modesty holds you back from sin, not from asking, learning or standing up for your rights.
- **Honesty**: truthfulness leads to goodness, and goodness leads to Paradise (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- **Patience and gratitude**: the two wings of a believer; every turn of affairs is good for her (reported by Muslim).

Patience and gratitude in daily life

🤲

Patience with prayer

"Seek help through patience and prayer; Allah is with the patient" (al-Baqarah 2:153).

🌱

Gratitude increases blessing

"If you are grateful, I shall surely increase you" (Surah Ibrahim 14:7).

⏳

Patience is threefold

Patience in obedience, patience in leaving sin, and patience through trials.

📝

Note the day's blessings

Write down three things you are grateful for each night. The heart learns to see the good.

💬

Patience is not silence

Patience does not mean accepting injustice. Speaking up and seeking help are allowed too.

Guarding the tongue: backbiting, talebearing & mockery

Ghibah (backbiting)

- ✗ Saying about your brother or sister what they would dislike (reported by Muslim)
- ✗ If it is true, it is backbiting; if untrue, it is slander
- ✗ Likened to eating the flesh of a dead brother (49:12)
- ✗ It includes writing, posts and screenshots

Namimah (talebearing)

- ✗ Carrying people's words about so as to spoil a relationship
- ✗ The talebearer will not enter Paradise (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)
- ✗ It often happens in family WhatsApp groups
- ✗ If a tale reaches you, let it stop with you

Replace it with

- ✓ Say something good or stay silent (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)
- ✓ Do not mock; she may well be better than you (49:11)
- ✓ Advise in private, not in front of others
- ✓ Change the subject, or pray for the one being discussed

Handling anger and emotion

1. **Name what you feel**
   Name the emotion: anger, disappointment, exhaustion, hurt. Emotion is not sin; what you do with it is.

2. **Stop and stay quiet**
   "Do not become angry" (reported by al-Bukhari 6116). Hold back your words and your decisions.

3. **Seek refuge in Allah**
   Say a'uzubillahi minasy-syaitanir-rajim, as the Prophet ﷺ taught (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

4. **Change the setting**
   Sit down, make wuduk, drink some water or step out of the situation for a moment.

5. **Speak once you are calm**
   Use "I feel..." and state what you need clearly, rather than attacking.

6. **Review and repair**
   If you went too far, apologise sincerely. The strong are those who master themselves in anger.

Envy and forgiveness

Envy is resentment at another's blessing and the wish that it be taken away. Allah forbids us to covet what others have been given in greater measure, and tells us to ask for His bounty instead (Surah an-Nisa' 4:32). We also seek refuge from the harm of the envious (Surah al-Falaq 113:5). Social media, with its display of "perfect" lives, feeds envy readily.

Forgiveness is a quality of the God-conscious (3:134). Forgiving frees our own hearts; it does not mean forgetting, excusing injustice or returning to danger.

- The cure for envy: pray for good for the person you envy.
- Compare yourself less; count your own blessings.
- Repel evil with good (Surah Fussilat 41:34), so far as it is safe to do so.
- Forgive by degrees; ask Allah's help in letting go of resentment.

Do & avoid: everyday character

Do

- ✓ Smile, give greetings and say thank you
- ✓ Be honest in small things, including in trade
- ✓ Hold your anger and delay your reaction
- ✓ Forgive others and pray for them
- ✓ Correct people privately and wisely
- ✓ Own your mistakes and apologise

Avoid

- ✗ Backbiting, even when it is "only sharing"
- ✗ Passing on screenshots of people's conversations
- ✗ Mocking anyone's looks, weight or standing
- ✗ Comparing yourself and your family with others
- ✗ Nursing a grudge for years
- ✗ Lying to protect your image

Common questions

Can I speak about a problem with someone without it counting as backbiting?

Scholars permit mentioning another's faults for legitimate purposes: reporting a wrong to those in authority, seeking advice or a ruling, and warning others for their safety. Keep it to those who can actually help and to what is necessary, rather than venting in public.

I am easily hurt and quick to anger. Does that mean I am not a righteous woman?

Not at all. Feelings are part of our nature; what is weighed is the effort to govern them. Identify the triggers, such as tiredness, hunger or stress, and protect your rest. If anger or sadness is often beyond your control, talk to a counsellor or a doctor. That is effort too.

Must I forgive someone who hurts me again and again?

Forgiveness is strongly encouraged, but you are not obliged to stay in a situation that endangers you. You can forgive in your heart while keeping your distance, setting limits, and claiming your rights through the proper channels.

06

CHAPTER 6

As a Daughter

Dutifulness to one's parents is the short road to Allah's pleasure.

۞ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَٰنًا ۚ إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِندَكَ
ٱلْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَآ أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُل لَّهُمَآ أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُل لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا
كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

"Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be good to your parents. If one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say "ugh" to them nor rebuke them, but speak to them with honour."

Surah al-Isra' 17:23

Birrul walidain: dutifulness to parents

In Surah al-Isra' 17:23–24, the command to be good to one's parents comes immediately after the command to worship Allah alone. We are forbidden to say "ugh" to them, told to lower ourselves to them with affection, and to pray: "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they raised me when I was small."

When a man asked who has the greatest claim to good treatment, the Prophet ﷺ answered "your mother" three times, and then "your father" (reported by al-Bukhari 5971 and Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa as-Silah wa al-Adab). The Qur'an also speaks of the mother carrying her child in weakness upon weakness (Surah Luqman 31:14).

- Dutifulness takes in words, time, effort, prayer and material support.
- It continues after they have passed away: prayers, charity, settling their debts and keeping up ties of kinship.

Daily devotion to your parents

- ✓ Speak gently; no "ugh" and no raised voice
- ✓ Call or visit regularly, not only when you need something
- ✓ Listen to their stories even when you have heard them before
- ✓ Ask their opinion and value their experience
- ✓ Help with the house, their health and their paperwork
- ✓ Give gifts or money as you are able, without holding it over them
- ✓ Pray for them in every prayer (17:24)
- ✓ Guard the family's good name in your conduct and on social media
- ✓ When you disagree, discuss it respectfully rather than quarrelling

Caring for parents who are old or ill

1. **Discuss it as a family**
   Involve all the siblings. Care is a shared responsibility, not the daughters' alone.

2. **Understand their health**
   Keep to appointments, note the medication and ask the doctor about suitable care.

3. **Share the tasks fairly**
   Some give care, some pay, some organise. All of it earns reward.

4. **Preserve their dignity**
   Involve them in decisions. Help with washing and with worship considerately.

5. **Help them worship**
   Teach the concessions: praying seated, tayammum, joining prayers where the conditions are met.

6. **Care for the carer**
   Rest, ask for help and know the signs of burnout. A healthy carer can care for longer.

After marriage, and particular situations

After marriage, a wife's obedience in what is right is to her husband, yet her love and devotion to her parents are not severed. A good husband does not, without reasonable cause, stop his wife from visiting and doing good to her parents. Plan visits and support together with your husband, openly.

If your parents are not Muslim, continue to treat them well in this life, but do not obey them in matters of shirk (Surah Luqman 31:15). Asma' bint Abu Bakar was permitted by the Prophet ﷺ to keep ties with her mother who had not accepted Islam (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

If your parents are divorced, both remain your parents. Do not become a messenger in their quarrels or take sides unjustly.

- There is no obedience in sin (reported by al-Bukhari 7257 and Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah), but decline courteously.
- A daughter with the means may help maintain parents who are in need.

A daughter's rights in Islam

🎓

Education

Fardu ain knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim, male and female. Parents must make it possible.

🍲

Maintenance

A father must maintain his daughter; a maintenance order lasts until she marries (Act 303 s.79).

💍

Consent to marriage

The Prophet ﷺ ordered that her permission be sought (al-Bukhari and Muslim); the law requires it.

🤝

Wali

A wali (guardian) protects, he does not compel. If he refuses without lawful cause, go to the Syariah Court.

💰

Mahr & property

The mahr (dower) belongs entirely to the bride. She is also entitled to her faraid share (Chapter 16).

🌷

Love & honour

Raising daughters well is promised a great reward (reported by Muslim).

Do & avoid: as a daughter

Do

- ✓ Honour your parents with words spoken kindly
- ✓ Share the duty of care with your siblings
- ✓ Agree a visiting schedule with your husband
- ✓ Pray for your parents, whether living or passed away
- ✓ Decline a request to sin, gently
- ✓ Give your view on a prospective husband courteously

Avoid

- ✗ Raising your voice or recounting what you have given up
- ✗ Leaving elderly parents alone with no word from you
- ✗ Taking sides in divorced parents' disputes
- ✗ Comparing your parents with your in-laws in front of others
- ✗ Marrying in secret, without a wali
- ✗ Cutting off ties over a difference of religion

Common questions

My parents want me to marry the man they have chosen. May I refuse?

You may. Your consent is required for the marriage to be valid under Islamic family law in Malaysia. Listen to their reasons, pray istikharah, and decline respectfully if your heart does not accept him. Conversely, if a wali refuses without lawful cause, the Syariah Court can help.

My husband and my mother need me at the same time. Who comes first?

In household matters, the husband's right comes first. Yet this rarely has to be an absolute choice. Talk with your husband, find a middle way, and ask your siblings for help. An understanding husband will support his wife in serving her mother.

My parents have passed away. How can I keep serving them?

Pray for them, give charity on their behalf, settle their debts and any valid bequest, and keep up ties with their friends and relatives. A righteous child who prays for them is among the deeds whose reward continues (reported by Muslim).

07

CHAPTER 7

Knowledge, career & safety

Learned, capable and safe: the righteous woman steps out with confidence and good manners.

... يَرْفَعِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مِنكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمَ دَرَجَٰتٍ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

"...Allah will raise in rank those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. And Allah is fully aware of what you do."

Surah al-Mujadalah 58:11

Knowledge: a woman's right and duty

The call to seek knowledge is addressed to men and women equally. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise” (Sahih Muslim, Kitab adh-Dhikr wa ad-Du'a).

The women Companions once asked for a day set aside for their learning, and the Prophet ﷺ appointed one (reported by al-Bukhari). Aisyah praised the women of the Ansar, because modesty never kept them from understanding their religion (reported by Muslim). Aisyah herself became a reference in knowledge for the Companions, and Umm Salamah was often asked about rulings. Knowledge is the light that makes worship correct, character mature and life's decisions wiser.

- **Fardu ain:** creed, prayer, purification, fasting and the everyday rulings each individual must know.
- **Fardu kifayah:** medicine, education, law, science and the fields the ummah needs, including women doctors and midwives.
- Learning does not stop at marriage or childbirth; a learned mother is her child's first school.
- Intend your study for Allah, and then for the benefit of your family and your community.

A map for lifelong learning

1. **Put your intention right**
   Study to know Allah, to fulfil a trust and to be of use, not to boast.

2. **Master the fardu ain**
   Make sure prayer, purification, the fiqh of menstruation and creed are understood correctly from a qualified teacher.

3. **Choose sound teachers**
   Favour qualified teachers, classes at the mosque or surau, and material that cites its sources clearly.

4. **Build a career or a skill**
   Continue your studies, or take a qualification or skill that is lawful, useful and suited to your situation.

5. **Set a realistic schedule**
   Little but steady: 15–30 minutes a day beats a great deal that soon stops.

6. **Practise it and pass it on**
   Knowledge acted upon and taught to your children and friends becomes a reward that continues.

Women in work: permitted, with conditions and good manners

Islam does not forbid women to work. Khadijah was a successful merchant; Zainab, the wife of Ibnu Mas'ud, worked and gave in charity from what she earned (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim); women Companions tended the wounded on the battlefield (reported by al-Bukhari). The Qur'an states plainly: “for women is a share of what they have earned” (Surah an-Nisa' 4:32).

A wife's income is her own. Maintaining the family remains the husband's obligation.

- The work is lawful and involves nothing sinful.
- Covering, decorum and dignity are preserved at work.
- For a wife: discuss it with her husband and have his agreement, particularly about hours and being out of the house.
- Primary responsibilities towards children and the home are well managed, together with the husband.
- Avoid being alone with an unrelated man, and settings that invite suspicion.
- Make sure you understand your contract, your pay and your rights as an employee; ask if anything is unclear.
- Mind your health and your limits; a career is a trust, not a burden that wears you out.

Leaving the house, mixing & travel

The Prophet ﷺ said to the women: “Allah has permitted you to go out for your needs” (reported by al-Bukhari). He also forbade preventing women from going to the mosque (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim). What is preserved is the manner of it, not the closing of life's doors.

Travel: a sound hadith forbids a woman from travelling a day and a night without a mahram (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim). The Shafiʿi school permits the obligatory hajj in the company of a group of trustworthy women. Some contemporary scholars allow latitude for obligatory journeys that are genuinely safe; consult your religious office or mufti for your own situation.

- A wife leaves the house with her husband's permission (a general permission suffices), except in an emergency.
- Mixing is permitted for genuine needs such as work, study or medical care, with the gaze lowered and speech kept courteous.
- **Khalwat** (being alone with someone who is not a mahram) is forbidden (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Personal & online safety

📍

Tell someone your plans

Tell your family where you are going, with whom and when you will be back. Share your location on long journeys.

🚕

Safe transport

Check the plate number and the e-hailing driver's name, sit in the back and share your trip details.

🆘

Emergency numbers

Call 999 (or 112 from a mobile) if you are threatened. Keep the important numbers in your phone.

🔐

Digital accounts

Use strong passwords and two-step verification, and never share an OTP code with anyone at all.

📸

Photos & personal details

Avoid posting your address, your real-time location, photos of documents or photos that compromise your dignity.

⚠️

Scams & harassment

Ignore suspicious messages. If you are scammed, call NSRC 997. Keep evidence of harassment and report it to the police.

Do & avoid: learning, work & company

Do

- ✓ Learn the fardu ain from a qualified teacher
- ✓ Discuss your career and your schedule with your husband or family
- ✓ Dress so your aurat is covered and speak professionally
- ✓ Verify news before you share it (al-Hujurat 49:6)
- ✓ Set clear boundaries with male colleagues
- ✓ Keep part of your income as your own savings

Avoid

- ✗ Learning religion only from videos with no clear source
- ✗ Being alone with a non-mahram in a room or a car
- ✗ Over-familiar talk or excessive joking at work
- ✗ Sharing passwords, OTPs or private photographs
- ✗ Letting prayer slip because of meetings or a busy day
- ✗ Meeting an online acquaintance on your own

Common questions

Is it better for a woman not to work?

Working is permitted: neither obligatory nor forbidden. Some women choose to devote themselves to the home, others need or wish to work. Both are honourable if intended for Allah, pursued lawfully, and the family's trust is kept. What matters is a good conversation with your husband or family, not a comparison with other people.

May I study or work abroad?

It calls for thought about safety, a mahram, accommodation and the permission of your wali or husband. Many contemporary scholars permit it where the journey and the placement are genuinely safe and there is a real need. Discuss it with your family and consult your religious office or state mufti for specific guidance.

What should I do if I am sexually harassed at work?

You are not at fault. Note the dates, times and evidence, report it to your employer or human resources, and make a police report if necessary. Seek support from your family or Talian Kasih 15999. If you are in danger, call 999.

08

CHAPTER 8

Preparing to marry

A marriage begins long before the contract: with intention, knowledge, a wise choice and mature preparation.

وَمِنْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦٓ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَٰجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ... ﴿٢١﴾

"And among the signs of His power is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy..."

Surah ar-Rum 30:21

Intention, readiness & istikharah

Marriage is an act of worship and “a solemn covenant” (Surah an-Nisa' 4:21). The right intention: to guard yourself, to build a family pleasing to Allah and to help one another towards Paradise — not simply to keep pace with your age, with pressure or with the wedding itself.

Readiness is not only a matter of age. Ask yourself: do I understand the rights and responsibilities, can I manage my emotions, and am I ready to share a life?

Istikharah was taught by the Prophet ﷺ for every important matter (reported by al-Bukhari): two units of voluntary prayer, then the istikharah supplication, naming what you seek. The answer is not necessarily a dream; it is calm, or an affair made easy, or one blocked. Pair it with **istisyarah**: asking your parents and people you trust.

- Readiness in knowledge: the fiqh of marriage, purification, the rights of husband and wife.
- Readiness in emotion: communication, patience and forgiveness.
- Readiness in money: discussed together, not shouldered alone.
- Readiness in spirit: prayer kept, and your relationship with Allah as the foundation.

Choosing a spouse: what comes first

Religion

Wealth, lineage, looks and religion: the Prophet ﷺ advised putting religion first (Bukhari 5090; Sahih Muslim, Kitab ar-Radha').

Character

"If someone comes whose religion and character please you, marry him" (reported by at-Tirmidhi, hasan).

Responsibility

Look at how he treats his parents, keeps his word, works and handles money.

Compatibility

Shared aims in life, a way of communicating and family values that fit make the road easier.

Health

Be open about significant illness. Pre-marital screening helps both sides.

Warning signs

A fierce temper, excessive control, isolating you from your family, or treating prayer lightly.

Khitbah (engagement) & its limits

Khitbah is a promise to marry, not the marriage contract. The man and woman remain unrelated (not mahram) until the contract. Looking at the face and hands of the woman one intends to propose to is encouraged, because “it is more likely to make the bond last” (reported by at-Tirmidhi, hasan).

A woman has the right to accept or refuse a proposal. The Prophet ﷺ forbade proposing to a woman who has already accepted another's proposal (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim). A woman in the ʿiddah of a revocable talaq may not be proposed to; in the ʿiddah of bereavement, only by allusion (Surah al-Baqarah 2:235).

- The engagement is best not drawn out too long.
- Meet accompanied by a mahram or in an open place; no touching and no being alone together.
- Messages and calls for matters that need settling, not conversation without limits.
- Use this time to discuss the things that matter: where you will live, careers, money, children.
- Breaking an engagement calls for good manners; gifts and compensation follow custom and the state enactment.

Your rights in the contract

A marriage contract is valid with a wali, two witnesses, the offer and the acceptance. “There is no marriage without a wali” (reported by Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi, sahih). Yet the woman's consent matters greatly: the Prophet ﷺ annulled the marriage of Khansa' bint Khidam, who had been married without her willing agreement (reported by al-Bukhari). Islamic family law in Malaysia likewise requires the consent of both parties.

- **Mahr (mas kahwin):** the wife's absolute right (Surah an-Nisa' 4:4); distinct from the hantaran, which is customary. A modest mahr is encouraged.
- **A wali who refuses:** if the wali refuses without lawful cause, a woman may apply for a judicial wali (wali hakim) through the Syariah Court.
- **Taʿliq:** the taʿliq pronounced after the contract protects the wife; if it is breached, she may apply to the court for divorce on that ground.
- **Additional conditions:** lawful conditions may be agreed. “The conditions most deserving to be fulfilled are those by which marriage is made lawful” (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Checklist before the contract (Malaysia)

- ✓ Attend the Islamic pre-marriage course and keep the certificate
- ✓ Undergo pre-marital health screening (including HIV) as your state requires
- ✓ Apply for the marriage at the district or kariah religious office with the documents
- ✓ Make sure a qualified wali and two qualified witnesses have been identified
- ✓ Agree on the amount of the mahr, the hantaran and a modest budget for the celebration
- ✓ Discuss where you will live, the wife's career and how expenses will be shared
- ✓ List each other's debts honestly
- ✓ Learn the fiqh of marriage, the obligatory bath and the manners of husband and wife
- ✓ Discuss your hopes about children, in-laws and how you will resolve conflict
- ✓ Keep up istikharah and prayer until the day of the contract

Do & avoid: on the way to marriage

Do

- ✓ Involve your parents and wali from the start
- ✓ Ask the important questions before the engagement, not after the wedding
- ✓ Be open about health, debts and dependants
- ✓ Choose a celebration that is modest and not burdensome
- ✓ Put religion and character first in your choice
- ✓ Learn together through courses and reading

Avoid

- ✗ Marrying under pressure, on feeling alone, or out of embarrassment about your age
- ✗ A long engagement spent freely going out as a couple
- ✗ Taking on large debts for the hantaran and the celebration
- ✗ Hiding important matters from your future spouse
- ✗ Dismissing warning signs such as a fierce temper or controlling behaviour
- ✗ Marrying without a wali or outside the lawful procedure

Common questions

Can my father force me to marry?

In the Shafiʿi school a father or grandfather (wali mujbir) holds a certain authority over a daughter who has not been married, under strict conditions, though seeking her permission is recommended. Islamic family law in Malaysia requires the consent of both parties. If you are being forced, talk it through calmly, seek help from an intermediary, or go to the religious office and the Syariah Court.

How will I know the answer to my istikharah?

You need not wait for a dream. Perform the istikharah, seek the views of people you trust, and then take the most sensible step. If matters are made easy and your heart is at rest, that is a good sign; if there are many obstacles or clear warning signs, that too is an answer.

Is the hantaran obligatory?

No. What is obligatory is the mahr, which is the wife's right. The hantaran is a custom, permitted so long as it is not burdensome. The Prophet ﷺ once told a Companion: “look for even a ring of iron” as a mahr (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

09

CHAPTER 9

As a wife (1): rights & responsibilities

A peaceful home rests on rights fulfilled, duties kept and kindness in how we treat one another.

... وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تَكْرَهُوا۟ شَيْـًٔا
وَيَجْعَلَ ٱللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

"...And live with them in kindness. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:19

Marriage: a trust running both ways

Allah describes marriage as “a solemn covenant” (Surah an-Nisa' 4:21) and husband and wife as “garments” for one another (Surah al-Baqarah 2:187): each covering the other's faults, protecting and bringing ease.

A wife has rights balanced with her duties “in a fair manner”, and the husband is given one degree of responsibility in leadership (Surah al-Baqarah 2:228). This leadership is a trust and a service, not a licence to oppress.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Each of you is a shepherd… and a woman is a shepherd in her husband's house and is answerable for her charge” (Bukhari 893; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah).

- Rights and duties go together; claim your rights with grace, fulfil your duties sincerely.
- The measure of a marriage's success is the pleasure of Allah, not who wins.

A wife's rights

💍

Mahr

The wife's full right, given willingly (an-Nisa' 4:4). It may not be taken without her consent.

🍲

Maintenance

Food, clothing, medical care and reasonable needs according to the husband's means (at-Talaq 65:7).

🏠

A home

Suitable and safe accommodation according to the husband's means (at-Talaq 65:6).

🤲

Kind treatment

Not struck in the face, not reviled, and not shunned outside the home (reported by Abu Dawud, hasan).

📖

Knowledge & worship

Taught, or given the chance to learn her religion and to perform her obligatory worship.

👛

Her own property

A wife's salary, inheritance and savings are hers. She is under no duty to maintain the family.

A wife's duties: obedience in what is right

The Qur'an praises righteous women as “qanitat” (devoutly obedient) and “hafizat lil-ghaib” (guarding themselves and what is entrusted to them in their husband's absence) (Surah an-Nisa' 4:34). This obedience is limited to what is right: “There is no obedience in sin; obedience is only in what is right” (Bukhari 7257; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah).

- Guarding her own dignity, her chastity and the household's confidences.
- Looking after her husband's property and home; not admitting anyone he would not wish admitted.
- Leaving the house with her husband's permission (a general permission suffices), except in an emergency or where the religion requires it.
- Asking permission before voluntary fasting while her husband is present (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- Meeting her husband's intimate needs, unless there is a lawful excuse such as menstruation or illness.
- **Housework:** on the settled view of the Shafiʿi school, cooking and cleaning are not a religious obligation upon the wife. They are a kindness and a charity of great reward, and the husband is encouraged to help.
- Obedience does not mean accepting injustice or violence; that is not what is right.

Muʿasyarah bil-maʿruf: living together in kindness

The command “live with them in kindness” (Surah an-Nisa' 4:19) is the foundation of married life. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The best of you is the one who is best to his family, and I am the best to my family” (reported by at-Tirmidhi, sahih). He himself helped with the housework (Sahih al-Bukhari 676).

Living well together is a shared responsibility. The wife contributes too, with gentle words, appreciation and support.

- Greet your spouse coming and going with a smile and the salam.
- Value small efforts: thank you builds affection.
- Adorn yourself for your spouse, and let him keep himself well presented too.
- Raise a concern privately and at a suitable moment, not in front of others.
- Remember your spouse's good qualities when something displeases you (an-Nisa' 4:19).
- Spend time together without the interruption of a phone.

The home as a trust

- ✓ Bring prayer in congregation, Qur'an recitation or a short reminder into the home
- ✓ Make the home calm, clean and safe for everyone
- ✓ Manage spending together, openly, and discuss large purchases first
- ✓ Identify who may enter the home, and agree on it
- ✓ Keep marital confidences; never recount a spouse's faults (Muslim, Kitab an-Nikah)
- ✓ Divide the household tasks fairly, according to circumstance and capacity
- ✓ Honour both families without letting interference do damage
- ✓ Keep the home clear of what is unlawful and of entertainment that distracts from Allah
- ✓ Set a regular family time each week

Do & avoid: a wife's rights & responsibilities

Do

- ✓ Obey in what is right, with a willing heart
- ✓ State your needs and your rights calmly and clearly
- ✓ Value your husband's maintenance even when it is modest
- ✓ Give in charity or help your family from your own property, willingly
- ✓ Learn the fiqh of married life together with your husband
- ✓ Get help if there is violence or abuse

Avoid

- ✗ Comparing your husband or your marriage with others
- ✗ Exposing your spouse's faults to outsiders or on social media
- ✗ Holding a gift or a contribution over someone
- ✗ Demanding maintenance beyond your husband's means
- ✗ Obeying in sin out of fear
- ✗ Staying silent while basic rights are denied for a long time

Common questions

Must a wife hand her salary to her husband?

No. A wife's income is her own property. If she willingly helps with the family's expenses, that is a charity of great reward, as with Zainab the wife of Ibnu Mas'ud (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim). It is best for any agreement about her contribution to be made clearly, and recorded where large sums or jointly bought assets are involved.

What if my husband does not provide maintenance?

Begin with a conversation and with family intermediaries. Unpaid maintenance becomes a debt owed by the husband. A wife may apply for a maintenance order at the Syariah Court (Act 303 s.59; arrears are claimed as a debt, s.69), and failure to maintain can be among the grounds for judicial dissolution (fasakh) (s.52). Hind bint Utbah was permitted to take what was sufficient in a fair manner (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Does obedience mean I may not disagree?

No. The Prophet's ﷺ wives discussed matters with him and offered their views. Disagreeing respectfully and consulting one another is healthy. Obedience means respecting your husband's decisions in what is right and within his responsibility, not erasing the wife's voice.

10

CHAPTER 10

As a Wife (2): The Art of the Relationship

Love kept safe by knowledge, good manners and patience on both sides.

وَمِنْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦٓ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَٰجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ... ﴿٢١﴾

"And among the signs of His power is that He created spouses for you from among yourselves so that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed love and mercy between you…"

Surah ar-Rum 30:21

Speaking, listening & making peace

1. **Choose a calm moment**
   Avoid heavy matters when hungry, tired or in front of the children. Ask first: "May we talk tonight?"

2. **State your needs clearly**
   A husband is not a mind reader. Say "I feel… I need…", not "You always…".

3. **Listen to understand**
   Repeat back his meaning before you reply. The Prophet ﷺ was alert to Aisha's feelings (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

4. **Hold your anger; pause if needed**
   The Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not become angry" (Bukhari 6116). Perform wudu, fall silent, resume once calm.

5. **Address the issue, not the person**
   Discuss one matter only. Do not drag up old faults or insult your spouse's family.

6. **Put reconciliation first**
   "Peace is better" (an-Nisa' 4:128). Leave room to give way and to forgive.

7. **Find a trustworthy mediator**
   If deadlocked, appoint an arbiter from each family (an-Nisa' 4:35) or a religious department counsellor.

Intimacy & keeping confidences

Intimacy is an act of worship and a shared right, not a duty owed by one side alone. The Qur'an describes husband and wife as "garments" for one another (al-Baqarah 2:187): covering, protecting and giving comfort.

A wife should answer her husband's call when there is no valid religious excuse (al-Bukhari and Muslim). The husband, in turn, must be gentle, mindful of his wife's condition, and attentive to her needs too.

- Begin with bismillah and the supplication the Prophet ﷺ taught (al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- Intercourse is forbidden during menstruation (haid) and post-natal bleeding (nifas) (al-Baqarah 2:222), and anally.
- The obligatory bath (ghusl) follows; it may be delayed so long as no prayer time is missed.
- Unwell, exhausted or uncomfortable? Say so kindly; a husband should understand.
- **What happens in the bedroom is a trust.** Telling others of it is gravely blameworthy (Muslim, Kitab an-Nikah).
- Serious difficulties (illness, trauma, coercion) can be taken to a doctor or counsellor in confidence.

The wife's property & shared finances

The wife's own rights

- The mahr (dower) belongs wholly to the wife (an-Nisa' 4:4).
- Her salary, gifts, inheritance and savings remain hers.
- She need not fund household costs even if she earns.
- Zakat on the wife's wealth is paid by the wife herself.

The husband's liability

- Maintenance (nafkah) of food, clothing and housing to his means (at-Talaq 65:7).
- Maintenance of the children.
- Basic household needs according to custom.
- It does not lapse merely because the wife works.

Shared, given willingly

- A wife's contribution is charity that is rewarded, not a duty.
- Discuss budget, savings and debt openly.
- Record large contributions (house, car); see jointly acquired matrimonial property (harta sepencarian) (Act 303 s.122).
- Respect each other's rights; take nothing without permission.

The test of polygyny: rights & manners, with knowledge

Polygyny is permitted on condition of justice (an-Nisa' 4:3); if a man fears he cannot be just, one wife is enough. The Qur'an also warns a husband not to incline wholly to one wife and leave another "suspended" (an-Nisa' 4:129). In Malaysia, a husband must first obtain the permission of the Syariah Court (Act 303 s.23 and the state enactments).

Sorrow, jealousy or fear are natural, not a sign of weak faith. What is required is good conduct and justice from everyone involved.

- The existing wife's rights (maintenance, the turn (giliran), fair treatment) remain fully protected.
- In most States, the existing wife is summoned to court and may state her views.
- Taʿliq and the right to judicial dissolution (fasakh) (Act 303 s.52) may be invoked if she is wronged.
- Guard your tongue: do not shame the co-wife or the husband, including on social media.
- Seek advice from the religious department or a syarie lawyer before any major decision.

Nushuz: a balanced understanding

Nushuz means refusing the duties of marriage without lawful excuse. It can occur on the wife's part (an-Nisa' 4:34) and equally on the husband's (an-Nisa' 4:128).

A wife is not in nushuz when she refuses something sinful, leaves the house out of necessity, claims her rights, or declines because of illness or incapacity. There is no obedience in sin (Bukhari 7257; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah).

- Maintenance may be suspended during established nushuz (Act 303 s.59) and resumes when she relents.
- The Qur'anic sequence begins with counsel; its aim is to mend, not to punish or to hurt.
- The Prophet ﷺ never struck a wife or a servant with his hand (Muslim).
- Domestic violence is an offence under the Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521).
- In danger? Call 999 or Talian Kasih 15999.

Do & Avoid: the art of the relationship

Do

- ✓ Say thank you and value your spouse's small efforts.
- ✓ Spend time alone together each week, without phones.
- ✓ Name your emotional and physical needs gently and honestly.
- ✓ Talk about money openly and record large contributions.
- ✓ Pray for your spouse and your home after each prayer.
- ✓ See a counsellor early when problems keep recurring.

Avoid

- ✗ Exposing your husband's faults or confidences to friends or online.
- ✗ Prolonged silence used as a punishment.
- ✗ Comparing your husband with other men.
- ✗ Making major decisions while angry.
- ✗ Handing over large assets with no record or clear agreement.
- ✗ Staying silent about abuse; safety comes first.

Common questions

May a wife decline her husband's advances?

Yes, where there is a lawful excuse: menstruation, post-natal bleeding, illness, severe exhaustion or harm. Say so gently and suggest another time. Refusing continually without reason is not right, just as a husband must mind his wife's feelings and needs. If there is a medical problem or trauma, see a doctor.

Must a wife put her salary towards the household?

No; maintenance is the husband's responsibility. Yet a wife's willing contribution is charity of great reward (the account of Zainab, wife of Ibn Mas'ud, al-Bukhari and Muslim). Discuss and record large contributions so that both parties' rights stay clear.

My husband wants to take another wife. What should I do?

Steady yourself, pray istikharah and seek knowledge. Talk honestly about justice, maintenance and the turn. The application must go through the Syariah Court, and in most States the existing wife will be summoned. Seek advice from the religious department or a syarie lawyer to understand your rights, including taʿliq.

11

CHAPTER 11

As a Mother (1): Pregnancy to Breastfeeding

Every hardship a mother bears is recorded and honoured by Allah.

وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُۥ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَـٰلُهُۥ فِى عَامَيْنِ ... ﴿١٤﴾

"And We enjoined upon man (goodness) towards his parents; his mother carried him through weakness upon weakness, and weaned him over two years..."

Surah Luqman 31:14

Pregnancy: worship in every hardship

The Qur'an speaks of a mother's hardship in carrying and delivering her child (al-Ahqaf 46:15). With the right intention, every ache, bout of nausea and pain becomes worship and an erasing of sin.

Prayer remains obligatory. If standing is hard, pray seated; if sitting is hard, pray lying down. In the Shafiʿi school (madhhab), blood during pregnancy may count as menstruation (haid) if the conditions are met; ask a qualified teacher if unsure.

- **Fasting:** pregnant and nursing women are granted leeway (Abu Dawud and at-Tirmizi, hasan).
- Fearing for herself (or for herself and the child): she makes up the fasts only.
- Fearing for the child alone: she makes up the fasts and pays fidyah (Shafiʿi school).
- Supplicate often, as the Prophet Zakariya did (Ali 'Imran 3:38) and al-Furqan 25:74.
- Attend every antenatal check-up at the health clinic.
- Bleeding, severe abdominal pain, bad dizziness or reduced fetal movement: go to hospital at once.

Childbirth & the first week

1. **Prepare early**
   Register with the hospital, pack the birth bag, arrange transport, and settle who will accompany you.

2. **Meet the pain with dhikr**
   Supplication, istighfar and dhikr. Maryam too was tried by labour pains and given dates (Maryam 19:23–25).

3. **Follow medical advice**
   Pain relief, induction or surgery are permitted when needed. Preserving life is a demand of the Shariah.

4. **Welcome with the sunnah**
   Tahnik with a date (al-Bukhari and Muslim) and pray for blessing upon the child.

5. **A good name & aqiqah**
   Aqiqah, shaving the hair and naming on the seventh day are recommended (Abu Dawud, sahih).

6. **Start nursing early**
   Place the baby on the mother's chest as soon as possible. The first milk (colostrum) is excellent for the baby.

7. **Rest & accept help**
   Let your husband and family take over the housework. A mother's body needs time to heal.

Nifas: the rulings to know

Post-natal bleeding (nifas) is the blood that follows childbirth, including after a miscarriage once what is passed has formed into a clot or flesh ('alaqah or mudghah). In the Shafiʿi school the usual period is 40 days and the maximum 60. Delivery (wiladah) itself makes the obligatory bath (ghusl) necessary, even with no blood.

- Bleeding stops before day 40? Perform ghusl and resume prayer and fasting; there is no need to wait out 40 days.
- Bleeding stops and then returns within the 60 days: ask a qualified teacher for the ruling.
- The same restrictions as menstruation: prayer, fasting, tawaf, touching the mushaf, staying in the mosque and intimacy.
- Missed fasts must be made up; prayers need not be.
- Bleeding beyond 60 days counts as istihadah; ask a qualified teacher how to purify and pray.
- Dhikr, supplication and salawat may be kept up throughout nifas.

Do & Avoid: a safe confinement

Do

- ✓ Eat a balanced diet: protein, vegetables, fruit and enough water.
- ✓ Move gently, as your doctor advises.
- ✓ Keep stitches or surgical wounds clean.
- ✓ Attend the post-natal check-ups for mother and baby.
- ✓ Gentle massage by someone trained, once your doctor agrees.
- ✓ Rest and sleep when the baby sleeps.

Avoid

- ✗ Severely restricting how much water you drink.
- ✗ Hot compresses or heat so intense that it burns.
- ✗ Cutting out nourishing foods with no medical reason.
- ✗ Medicines or tonics without medical advice, especially while nursing.
- ✗ Ignoring fever, heavy bleeding, or leg and chest pain.
- ✗ Treating particular confinement customs as religious obligations.

Breastfeeding: the child's right, the mother's reward

🤱

Up to two years

A mother may nurse her child two full years if she wishes to complete it (al-Baqarah 2:233).

🤝

A joint decision

Weaning earlier is allowed by the agreement and consultation of both parents (2:233).

🍼

Exclusive breast milk

The Health Ministry and WHO advise breast milk alone for the first six months, where possible.

🍲

The nursing mother's upkeep

The father provides the mother's food and clothing in a fitting manner (2:233).

🧊

Expressed milk & mahram

Five full feeds before the age of two create a mahram tie (Shafiʿi). Keep a record.

💛

Without guilt

If you cannot nurse, formula is permitted. Allah does not burden beyond capacity (2:233).

A mother's mental health

Many mothers feel low, tearful or anxious in the first days after birth (the "baby blues"). It usually settles within two weeks with rest and support.

If the feelings persist or deepen, it may be post-natal depression: an illness that can be treated, not a sign of weak faith or of a mother who has failed. Seeking treatment is the effort the Shariah asks of us.

- Warning signs: sadness beyond two weeks, loss of interest, sleeplessness even when the baby sleeps, feeling worthless.
- Thoughts of harming yourself or the baby? Call 999 at once or go to the hospital emergency unit.
- Speak to the doctor or nurse at the health clinic; screening is available.
- Talian Kasih 15999 for support and referral.
- Husbands and families: take over the night duties, listen without judging, never belittle.
- Dhikr settles the heart (ar-Ra'd 13:28), alongside treatment.

Common questions

Must I fast while pregnant?

If you can do so without harm, fasting remains obligatory. If you fear harm to yourself, break the fast and make it up later. If you fear for the baby alone, break it, make it up and pay fidyah (Shafiʿi school). Get medical advice, especially with diabetes or any complication of pregnancy.

My nifas stopped on day 20. May I be intimate with my husband?

Once the bleeding has stopped and the wife has performed the obligatory bath, intimacy is permitted as a matter of law. Even so, make sure the body has truly healed; a doctor usually assesses this at the post-natal check-up. Discuss the spacing of the next pregnancy too.

May I give my expressed milk to someone else's baby?

Yes. But five full feeds before the age of two make that baby a milk child and a mahram (Shafiʿi school), with consequences for covering and for marriage. Record the baby's name, the dates and the number of feeds, and tell both families.

12

CHAPTER 12

As a Mother (2): Raising Children

The home is the first school, and the mother its closest teacher.

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلْحِجَارَةُ ...

﴿٦﴾

“O you who believe, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is people and stones…”

Surah at-Tahrim 66:6

The trust of raising children

A child is a trust, not a possession. Allah commands us to guard ourselves and our families against the Fire (at-Tahrim 66:6), and the Prophet ﷺ said that a woman is a shepherd in her husband's house and over his children, and will be asked about her charge (Bukhari 893; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah).

Raising children is work for two. Father and mother complete one another; a mother does not carry it alone.

- Example speaks louder than scolding: children copy what they see.
- Begin with tawhid, as Luqman counselled his son (Luqman 31:13).
- Enjoin prayer upon your family and be steadfast in it (Taha 20:132).
- Teach manners: no arrogance, and lower the voice (Luqman 31:18–19).
- Pray for your children every day (al-Furqan 25:74; Ibrahim 14:40).
- A righteous child who prays for their parents is a deed that continues after death (Muslim).

Tarbiyah by stage of age

0–7 years: love & foundations

- Plenty of holding, stories and playing together.
- Introduce Allah, the Messenger and short supplications.
- Build routines for sleep, meals and cleanliness.
- Correct gently; the child is not yet accountable.
- Invite them to join the prayer as an example, never by force.

7–14 years: teach & train

- The five daily prayers become habit from age seven.
- Teach purity, modesty and the changes of puberty.
- Give household tasks suited to their ability.
- Set rules that are clear and consistent.
- Know their friends and what they read.

Teens: befriend & guide

- Listen more, lecture less.
- Explain the wisdom behind a ruling, not just the prohibition.
- Extend trust by degrees, with clear limits.
- Respect their privacy, but stay alert to warning signs.
- Be the first person they turn to, not the last.

Settling a child into prayer

1. **Be the example from the start**
   Pray where your child can see, and invite them to stand beside you. Children learn by watching.

2. **Begin at age seven**
   "Instruct your children to pray when they reach seven" (Abu Dawud, hasan).

3. **Teach wudu step by step**
   Show, do it together, then let the child try. Praise the effort, not only the result.

4. **Build a routine & reminders**
   Tie prayer to the daily rhythm: after coming home from school, before dinner.

5. **Firmer as puberty nears**
   From age ten, be firmer and more consistent, without hurting or humiliating.

6. **Celebrate progress**
   Praise, small gifts and supplication. Make the family prayer a time they look forward to.

7. **Patience & persistence**
   "Enjoin prayer upon your family and be steadfast in it" (Taha 20:132).

Love, discipline & fairness between children

The Prophet ﷺ kissed his grandson al-Hasan and said, "Whoever shows no mercy will be shown none" (al-Bukhari and Muslim). Discipline in Islam is rooted in love, not in venting anger.

- Allah is Most Gentle and loves gentleness in every matter (al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- Set rules and consequences that are clear, fair and consistent.
- Never strike the face, berate, shame in public or threaten.
- Correct the act, not the person: "That was wrong", not "You are bad".
- Be just between your children in what you give and in your attention (al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- Daughters: whoever raises two daughters to adulthood is promised nearness to the Prophet ﷺ (Muslim).
- Sons: raise them to respect women and to help at home, as the Prophet ﷺ did (Bukhari 676).
- Violence that injures a child is an offence; get help if your anger is hard to control.

Children & the digital world

- ✓ Avoid screens for babies; keep strict time limits for young children.
- ✓ Keep devices in the family room, not in bedrooms.
- ✓ Turn on parental controls and review the apps together with your child.
- ✓ Teach: never share your address, school name or personal photos with strangers.
- ✓ Teach your child to tell you about any frightening message or request for photos.
- ✓ Discuss cyberbullying, online gambling and pornography calmly.
- ✓ Parents too put the phone away at meals and when with the children.
- ✓ Think before uploading photos of your child; guard their modesty and privacy.
- ✓ Replace screen time with physical activity, books and the Qur'an.

Do & Avoid: raising children

Do

- ✓ Hug, listen and give quality time every day.
- ✓ Apologise to your child when you get it wrong.
- ✓ Agree the house rules with your husband.
- ✓ Teach the Qur'an and daily supplications step by step.
- ✓ Praise effort and character, not looks or marks alone.
- ✓ If you work, plan time together and a trustworthy carer.

Avoid

- ✗ Comparing your child with siblings or other people's children.
- ✗ Berating, insulting or hitting in anger.
- ✗ Favouring sons or daughters without reason.
- ✗ Leaving their upbringing entirely to screens or carers.
- ✗ Blaming yourself excessively; no mother is perfect.
- ✗ Neglecting yourself to the point of exhaustion.

Common questions

I am a working mother. Am I neglecting my children?

Not necessarily. A mother may work with her husband's agreement and trustworthy childcare in place. What counts is the quality of the time: meals together, praying in congregation, a bedtime story, and weekends without phones. Share the housework with your husband, and reassess if your child shows signs of being neglected.

May I strike a child who will not pray?

The hadith mentions firmness at age ten (Abu Dawud, hasan), but the scholars stipulate that it be light, not injurious, never to the face, and only after long counsel. Example, routine and praise work far better. Striking in anger, or to the point of injury, is forbidden.

How do I reach a teenager who is pulling away?

Spend time with no agenda: a meal for two or a drive together. Listen before advising and resist lecturing. Show interest in their world. If there are signs of depression, self-harm or substance misuse, get help at once from the school counsellor or the health clinic.

13

CHAPTER 13

The Extended Family & Society

Her love overflows from the home to kin, neighbours and the wider ummah.

... وَٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا۟ بِهِۦ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَـٰنًا وَبِذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَـٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَـٰكِينِ وَٱلْجَارِ ذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْجَارِ ٱلْجُنُبِ وَٱلصَّاحِبِ بِٱلْجَنۢبِ ... ﴿٣٦﴾

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be good to parents, to kinsfolk, to orphans, to the poor, to the near neighbour and the distant neighbour, to the companion at your side..."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:36

Silaturahim: the bonds Allah commands

A righteous woman does not live in isolation. After Allah, her parents and her husband come wider circles: kin, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, brothers and sisters, neighbours and society. Surah an-Nisa' 4:36 sets them all in one verse alongside the command to worship Allah, a sign of how much these ties matter.

The Prophet ﷺ said that whoever wishes for his provision to be widened and his life lengthened should maintain the ties of kinship (al-Bukhari and Muslim). He also explained that the one who truly maintains them is not the one who merely returns kindness, but the one who restores a tie that others have cut (al-Bukhari).

Brothers and sisters are the closest kin. This bond is tested by inheritance, by distance and by differences of opinion, yet it deserves to be defended.

- Keep in touch regularly, even briefly: a message, a call, a visit.
- Settle family property matters with knowledge and fairness, not emotion.
- Do not let small disagreements drag on; be the first to greet.
- Visit relatives who are elderly, ill or alone; they need it most.

In-laws: respect with boundaries

A husband's parents are the people who raised your life companion. Treating them with respect, visiting them and praying for them is part of noble character, and it helps your husband be dutiful to his parents. A father-in-law is a permanent mahram to his son's wife.

A brother-in-law, however, is **not a mahram**. Modesty is still observed and being alone together (khalwat) is avoided. The Prophet ﷺ gave a stern warning about a husband's non-mahram relatives, saying, "The brother-in-law is death" (al-Bukhari and Muslim), because family familiarity so often makes people careless.

Respect does not mean carrying every burden. Service to parents-in-law is an ihsan of great reward; a wife's right to suitable housing and privacy still stands. If tension arises, discuss it calmly with your husband and let him be the one to raise it with his family.

- Use warm, respectful forms of address; remember their important days.
- Never compare your husband's family with your own in front of him.
- Marital confidences are not brought to the extended family's table.
- Build your own bond with your sisters-in-law: mutual help, not rivalry.

The rights and manners of neighbourliness

🏠

A neighbour is near kin

Jibril kept urging care for the neighbour until the Prophet ﷺ thought they would inherit (al-Bukhari).

🎁

A gift, however small

The Prophet ﷺ told women never to belittle a gift to a neighbour, even a sheep's trotter.

🤐

Cause no harm

Mind noise, rubbish, parking and your tongue. Faith and harming a neighbour do not belong together.

🍲

Share your provision

The Prophet ﷺ advised adding extra broth to the pot and sending some to the neighbour (Muslim).

🩺

Be there in hardship

Visit a sick neighbour, help at a death or disaster, and send food round.

🛡️

Keep each other safe

Know your neighbours, tell each other when you travel, and report anything suspicious.

Friends, society & dakwah

🌸

Choose good companions

A good friend is like a perfume seller; the scent reaches you even if you buy nothing (al-Bukhari, Muslim).

🤝

Help one another

Believing men and women support each other, enjoining good and forbidding wrong (at-Taubah 9:71).

📖

Dakwah with wisdom

"Convey from me, even a single verse" (al-Bukhari). Begin with character and example.

🕌

Active in surau & community

Religious classes, kindergartens, welfare and the parish need women's effort and expertise.

💗

Defend the vulnerable

The orphans, single mothers, elderly and disabled around us are a field of reward.

⚖️

Keep the balance

Community service must not crowd out the family; set aside time for husband and children.

Manners of guest and host

- ✓ Guests: give notice and come at a suitable hour, not at rest time.
- ✓ Greet and ask permission before entering; if no answer comes, go home (an-Nur 24:27–28).
- ✓ Guests: lower your gaze, do not peer into rooms and do not overstay.
- ✓ Bring a modest gift; it nurtures affection.
- ✓ Hosts: honour your guest, a mark of faith in Allah and the Last Day (Bukhari, Muslim).
- ✓ Greet them with a kind face; a simple, sincere meal means more than extravagance.
- ✓ Observe modesty and arrange the room when non-mahram male guests come.
- ✓ Do not burden yourself with gatherings beyond your means or that put you in debt.
- ✓ See guests to the door and pray for their safe journey.

Do & Avoid: extended family & society

Do

- ✓ Visit and call relatives regularly, above all the elderly
- ✓ Respect your in-laws and help your husband be dutiful to his parents
- ✓ Be good to neighbours whatever their religion or race
- ✓ Reconcile quarrelling relatives with gentle words
- ✓ Give time and expertise to the surau and the community
- ✓ Repay an evil with a good (Fussilat 41:34)

Avoid

- ✗ Severing kinship over property, ego or a small misunderstanding
- ✗ Gossiping about in-laws or neighbours in WhatsApp groups
- ✗ Being alone with, or relaxing your modesty before, a brother-in-law
- ✗ Airing marital faults to the extended family
- ✗ Calling round without permission, or staying so long it becomes a burden
- ✗ Being so busy with society that the family's rights are neglected

Common questions

Must I live with my parents-in-law?

In fiqh, a wife is entitled to suitable housing and her own privacy. Living with parents-in-law is permitted where it is agreed and causes no harm. If it is making life difficult, raise it kindly with your husband; many couples choose a home nearby so that dutifulness to parents continues.

My relatives often hurt my feelings. Must I keep in contact?

The tie of kinship is kept, but its form can be adjusted: a greeting, a supplication, a gift or a short visit at Eid. You are not obliged to expose yourself to insult or danger. Keep a minimum contact graciously, and pray for their guidance.

May I shake hands with my brother-in-law?

In the Shafiʿi school a brother-in-law is not a mahram, so there is no skin contact and modesty is observed before him. Courteous, respectful greetings remain encouraged. Explain gently; most families respect a position held with tact.

14

CHAPTER 14

Caring for Yourself: The Body

A healthy body is a trust, and provision for worship and for service.

يَٰبَنِيٓ ءَادَمَ خُذُواْ زِينَتَكُمۡ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسۡجِدٖ وَكُلُواْ وَٱشۡرَبُواْ وَلَا تُسۡرِفُوٓاْۚ
إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُسۡرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

"O children of Adam, wear your fine clothing whenever you go to the mosque, and eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed Allah does not love those who are excessive."

Surah al-A'raf 7:31

The body: a trust, not a burden

Many women look after everyone but themselves. Islam does not praise sacrifice that wrecks the body. The Prophet ﷺ corrected a companion who fasted every day and stayed awake all night, telling him that his body had a right over him (al-Bukhari).

He also said, "A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, and in both there is good" (Muslim). In another hadith, health and free time are named as two blessings in which many people are deceived (al-Bukhari).

Caring for the body is worship when it is intended as strength for prayer, for raising children, for work and for service. It is not a luxury, nor is it selfishness.

- Intend every effort to stay healthy as an act of worship.
- Heed the body's signals: lasting fatigue, pain or any unusual change needs checking.
- Seeking treatment is sunnah; Allah sends down no illness without also sending its cure (al-Bukhari).
- See a doctor for any health problem; this book is general guidance only.

Balanced nutrition

A third of the stomach

A third for food, a third for drink, a third for breath (at-Tirmizi, hasan sahih).

A balanced plate

Half vegetables and fruit, a quarter rice or wholegrains, a quarter protein such as fish, chicken, pulses.

Plain water

Make plain water your main drink; cut down on sugary and caffeinated drinks.

Iron & folate

Vital through menstruation, pregnancy and nursing. Meat, greens, pulses; ask your doctor about supplements.

Calcium & vitamin D

Milk, anchovies, tofu and morning light support the bones, especially as menopause approaches.

Less sugar, salt, oil

Cut back on fried food, sweet cakes and processed food; cook at home where you can.

Sleep, exercise & daily rest

1. **Sleep early after Isyak**
   Most adults need 7–9 hours. An early night makes waking for Subuh and tahajud far easier.

2. **Sleep in the sunnah way**
   Perform wudu, read the supplications and dhikr for sleep, lie on your right side, and keep the phone off the bed.

3. **Qailulah (a short nap)**
   A 15–20 minute midday rest restores energy for the afternoon and for night worship.

4. **Move every day**
   Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, for example a brisk 30-minute walk.

5. **Strengthen muscle & bone**
   Light resistance training twice a week; choose modest clothing and a private place.

6. **Rest without guilt**
   Keep time for yourself: reading, gardening, a hobby or a chat with a friend. It refills your energy.

7. **A weekly review**
   Check your sleep, food and movement each week; change a little at a time, not all at once.

Personal hygiene & the sunnahs of fitrah

- ✓ Purification (at-tuhur) is half of faith (Muslim); intend it as worship.
- ✓ Sunnahs of fitrah: trim the nails, remove underarm and pubic hair (Bukhari, Muslim).
- ✓ Do not let nails or underarm and pubic hair go beyond 40 days (Muslim).
- ✓ Clean the teeth with a siwak or toothbrush, especially before prayer and sleep.
- ✓ Change sanitary pads often during menstruation and nifas to prevent infection.
- ✓ Wash the private area with clean water; avoid perfumed products and internal douches.
- ✓ Choose cotton underwear, dry and clean; change it daily.
- ✓ Bathe and wash hair and scalp often, especially after sweating.
- ✓ Keep bedding, towels and your telekung clean; wash them and dry them in the sun.

Reproductive health & screening

The menstrual cycle, fertility, pregnancy and menopause are part of the nature Allah created. There is no need for embarrassment; asking a doctor or a religious teacher is part of seeking knowledge.

Screening helps catch problems early, when treatment is simpler. Government health clinics and family doctors can advise on a schedule that suits your age and medical history.

- Keep a record of your cycle; it helps with worship and flags any change.
- See a doctor if periods are very heavy, very painful, irregular or stop without cause.
- Bleeding after menopause or after intercourse needs prompt investigation.
- Examine your breasts yourself each month; report any lump or change.
- Ask the clinic about a Pap smear or HPV test, and mammograms as your doctor advises.
- Have your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol checked periodically.
- If planning a pregnancy, get pre-conception advice, including folic acid.
- Menopause brings changes of body and mood; seek support, do not bear it alone.

Do & Avoid: beauty & body care

Do

- ✓ Choose cosmetics and skincare with a halal mark recognised by JAKIM
- ✓ Check that products are registered with the Health Ministry; shun unnotified ones
- ✓ Adorn yourself for your husband at home; Allah is beautiful and loves beauty (Muslim)
- ✓ Remove nail polish before wudu; it stops water reaching the nail
- ✓ Use henna, kohl and hair oil within the bounds of the Shariah
- ✓ Care for your skin with sun protection, water and enough sleep

Avoid

- ✗ Tattoos, plucking the eyebrows (Bukhari 5931; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Libas wa az-Zinah) and hair extensions
- ✗ Unapproved whitening or slimming creams; some contain dangerous substances
- ✗ Extreme diets and slimming pills without a doctor's prescription
- ✗ Aesthetic treatments by unqualified practitioners
- ✗ Adorning yourself and wearing scent to draw the attention of unrelated men
- ✗ Comparing your body with edited images on social media

Common questions

May I exercise at a gym?

Yes, provided your modesty is kept, mixing is controlled and the place is safe. A women-only gym or class suits better. Exercising at home, walking in the park or cycling with the family are also good options, and free.

Is wudu valid with 'breathable' or 'halal' nail polish?

In the Shafiʿi school, any layer that stops water reaching the nail makes wudu invalid. Claims of being water-permeable need careful assessment; many scholars advise caution. Safest is to wear it during menstruation, or remove it before wudu. Henna does not block water.

I am too busy to look after myself. Where do I begin?

Begin with three small things: sleep earlier, drink enough plain water, and walk for ten minutes after a meal. Consistency matters more than perfection. Ask your husband and children for help so that you have time to rest too.

15

CHAPTER 15

Caring for Yourself: Soul & Emotions

A settled heart, a soul that is tended, and the courage to ask for help.

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَطۡمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِۗ أَلَا بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطۡمَئِنُّ ٱلۡقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Know that it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest."

Surah ar-Ra'd 13:28

Mental health in Islam

Sadness, worry and weariness of soul are not signs of weak faith. The Prophet Yaakub عليه السلام said, "I only complain of my anguish and my sorrow to Allah" (Surah Yusuf 12:86). The Prophet ﷺ himself sought refuge in Allah from anxiety and grief (al-Bukhari).

A woman carries many roles at once: daughter, wife, mother, worker and carer. Hormonal shifts during menstruation, after childbirth and at menopause can affect the emotions too. All of this is real and deserves attention.

Islam joins two paths: spiritual care (prayer, supplication, dhikr, the Qur'an) and outward effort (rest, support, medical treatment). The two do not conflict. Every weariness, worry and sorrow that befalls a believer becomes an erasing of sin (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

- Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity (al-Baqarah 2:286).
- With hardship there comes ease (asy-Syarh 94:5–6).
- Never despair of the mercy of Allah (az-Zumar 39:53).

When professional help is needed

- ✓ Sadness, emptiness or loss of interest nearly every day for two weeks or more.
- ✓ A marked change in sleep or appetite, or constant tiredness for no reason.
- ✓ Trouble concentrating, so that work, worship or the household suffers.
- ✓ Feeling worthless, excessively guilty or without hope.
- ✓ Anxiety or panic that disrupts daily life.
- ✓ After childbirth: low mood, prolonged crying or difficulty caring for the baby.
- ✓ Withdrawing from family and friends.
- ✓ **Any thought of harming yourself or ending your life: call 999 at once.**
- ✓ First step: the health clinic, a family doctor, or a counsellor; Talian Kasih 15999.

Managing stress & loneliness

1. **Name the feeling**
   Admit what you feel: tired, angry, sad or lonely. Recognising it is the first step to managing it.

2. **Be patient and pray**
   "Seek help through patience and prayer; Allah is with the patient" (al-Baqarah 2:153).

3. **Rest the body**
   Sleep enough, eat regularly, move and get some air. Body and soul act upon each other.

4. **Reduce the triggers**
   Limit news, social media and comparison with others. List what is actually within your control.

5. **Do not stay alone**
   Call a trusted friend, join a religious class or a community; loneliness eases once it is shared.

6. **Share the load**
   Ask your husband, family or a helper for help. Admitting you cannot do everything is no failure.

7. **Effort and tawakkul**
   "Tie your camel, then put your trust in Allah" (at-Tirmizi, hasan). Act first, leave the outcome to Allah.

Supplications & dhikr that settle the heart

🤲

Against anxiety

Allahumma inni a'udzu bika minal hammi wal hazan: refuge from worry and sorrow (al-Bukhari).

🐳

The prayer of Yunus

La ilaha illa anta, subhanaka inni kuntu minaz-zalimin (al-Anbiya' 21:87).

🛡️

Allah is sufficient

Hasbunallah wa ni'mal wakil: Allah is enough for us, the best Protector (Ali 'Imran 3:173).

🌿

Expand the breast

Rabbisy-rahli sadri, wa yassirli amri: my Lord, expand my breast, ease my task (Taha 20:25–26).

💔

At a time of calamity

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un: we belong to Allah, and to Him we return (al-Baqarah 2:156).

📿

Daily dhikr

Istighfar, salawat, tasbih, tahmid and tahlil; and reading the Qur'an with reflection each day.

Healthy boundaries & toxic relationships

Boundaries are the limits that protect your dignity, your time and your health. They are neither arrogance nor disobedience. Islam rejects harm: "There shall be no harming oneself and no harming others" (Ibn Majah, hasan).

A toxic relationship can arise with a spouse, family, friends or colleagues. The signs include constant insult or belittling, extreme control (money, phone, who you see), being cut off from your family, being threatened, or being hurt. Patience in Islam does not mean letting yourself be wronged.

Where there is physical or sexual violence, or threats, safety comes first. Call 999 or Talian Kasih 15999, and see Chapter 16 for the legal protections.

- Say "no" politely but firmly; you owe no long explanation.
- Limit the topics, the timing or the channel with someone who hurts you.
- Keep evidence and tell someone you trust if there are threats.
- A believer is not stung twice from the same hole (al-Bukhari, Muslim).

Do & Avoid: tending the soul & emotions

Do

- ✓ Pour out your feelings to Allah in supplication and in prostration
- ✓ Share the burden with someone trustworthy and knowledgeable
- ✓ Get professional treatment when the signs persist
- ✓ Set clear boundaries, in a good manner
- ✓ Mark small progress and give thanks every day
- ✓ Support other women under trial, without judging

Avoid

- ✗ Treating depression as nothing but a sign of weak faith
- ✗ Bottling up every feeling until you break or fall ill
- ✗ Stopping medication prescribed by your doctor without their advice
- ✗ Depending on social media to feel valued
- ✗ Staying on in a relationship that endangers your life
- ✗ Following 'cures' that contradict belief or that cause harm

Common questions

Does seeing a psychiatrist mean my faith is lacking?

No. Seeking treatment is sunnah, and illness of the soul is like illness of the body: it needs care. Supplication and dhikr strengthen the heart, while doctors and counsellors help on the medical side. Many righteous people benefit from both.

May I reduce contact with a toxic family member?

The tie of kinship is kept, but you may set its form and frequency: a greeting, a supplication, a short visit, or contact through an intermediary. Keeping away from harm is permitted. The rights of parents are still honoured; talk to a religious teacher or counsellor about your particular case.

I feel lonely even surrounded by family. What can I do?

Loneliness often comes from feeling unheard. Speak honestly to your husband or a friend, join a class or community activity, and build your bond with Allah through the night prayer and the Qur'an. If it persists and comes with low mood, get professional help.

16

CHAPTER 16

Rights, property & protection

Knowing your own rights is part of the trust, not a mark of defiance.

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا۟ مَا فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ بِهِۦ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا ٱكْتَسَبُوا۟ ۖ وَلِلنِّسَآءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا ٱكْتَسَبْنَ ... ﴿٣٢﴾

"And do not covet that in which Allah has favoured some of you over others. Men shall have a share of what they have earned, and women shall have a share of what they have earned..."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:32

A woman's property is her own

Islam recognises a woman as the full owner of her property. Her mahr (dower), salary, business profits, gifts and inheritance are hers. She is not obliged to fund her husband's upkeep or the household; if she helps willingly, that is charity and a good of great reward, not a debt and not a duty.

Ownership also brings responsibility: manage property faithfully, avoid waste, and pay zakat once the conditions are met.

- **Zakat on savings:** money reaching the nisab (the value of 85 grams of gold) and held a full haul (one year) is charged at 2.5%.
- **Zakat on gold:** stored gold must be zakated; worn gold above the customary allowance must be zakated too. That allowance is set by each state zakat centre.
- Use your state zakat centre's calculator or counter for an exact figure; the detailed rulings vary with circumstance.
- Keep records: bank statements, gold receipts, title deeds and agreements.

Financial rights in marriage

Mahr

The wife's in full. If deferred or owed, it remains the husband's debt until paid.

The wife's maintenance

Food, clothing, housing and medical care according to the husband's means (Act 303 s.59, s.61).

Housing

A right to suitable housing; after divorce, the right to stay in the matrimonial home (Act 303 s.71).

Matrimonial property

Property acquired together during the marriage may be divided by the court (Act 303 s.122).

Child maintenance

The father's responsibility, even after divorce. Arrears can be claimed in the Syariah Court.

Documents & records

Keep the marriage certificate, the taʿliq deed, and records of money put into the house, car and loans.

Faraid, hibah & wasiat

Faraid gives women a fixed share (an-Nisa' 4:7). The larger male share in certain cases is balanced by the duty of maintenance he carries, while a woman's property remains entirely hers.

- **Daughters:** one receives 1/2; two or more share 2/3. Alongside sons, the ratio is 1 : 2.
- **Wife:** 1/4 if the deceased left no children; 1/8 if there are children (shared if there is more than one wife).
- **Mother:** 1/6 if the deceased left children or two or more siblings; otherwise usually 1/3.
- **Hibah:** a gift made during life; valid with offer, acceptance and delivery. Useful for protecting a wife and daughters.
- **Wasiat:** not exceeding 1/3 of the estate, and to a non-heir. A bequest to an heir needs the other heirs' consent.
- Real cases can be more complex; obtain a faraid certificate and advice at the Syariah Court or the religious department.

Rights after divorce: step by step

1. **Confirm and register the divorce**
   A divorce must be confirmed and registered at the Syariah Court. Keep a copy of the court order.

2. **Claim ʿiddah maintenance**
   For a revocable talaq, the wife is entitled to maintenance and housing throughout the ʿiddah. If pregnant, until delivery.

3. **Claim mutʿah**
   A consolatory gift for a wife divorced without reasonable cause (Act 303 s.56; al-Baqarah 2:241).

4. **Claim arrears**
   Outstanding mahr and maintenance unpaid during the marriage can be claimed.

5. **Jointly acquired property**
   List the property acquired during the marriage together with evidence of your contribution (Act 303 s.122).

6. **Custody & child maintenance**
   The mother has the first right to custody (hadhanah) of young children (Act 303 s.81); the father still must maintain them.

7. **Get legal assistance**
   Go to the Legal Aid Bureau or Department, or a syarie lawyer, if you need representation in court.

Domestic violence: you have a right to protection

Violence is no part of obedience. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never struck a woman or a servant with his hand (Muslim). The Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) protects victims from physical, sexual and psychological abuse, including threats and control.

A victim may apply for a protection order barring the abuser from approaching, harassing or contacting her.

- **Immediate danger:** call the police on 999. Your safety and your children's comes first.
- **Talian Kasih 15999** for advice and referral to the Social Welfare Department.
- **The One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC)** in a government hospital's emergency department: treatment, a medical report and support.
- Types of protection: Emergency Protection Order, Interim Protection Order and Protection Order.
- Violence can also be grounds for judicial dissolution (fasakh) in the Syariah Court (Act 303 s.52).
- Keep evidence: photographs of injuries, messages, police reports and hospital records.

Do & Avoid: rights, property & protection

Do

- ✓ Keep the marriage certificate, taʿliq deed and property papers somewhere safe
- ✓ Record the money you put into the house, the car and the loans
- ✓ Pay zakat on savings and gold once the conditions are met
- ✓ Plan a hibah or a wasiat with proper advice
- ✓ Report violence and obtain a protection order
- ✓ Know your rights to ʿiddah, mutʿah, custody and child maintenance

Avoid

- ✗ Signing a loan or a guarantee without understanding the risk
- ✗ Handing over all your property with no record or agreement
- ✗ Treating a claim of rights as disobedience to your husband
- ✗ Divorcing outside the court, without confirmation and registration
- ✗ Hiding abuse out of shame or fear of family disgrace
- ✗ Relying on hearsay for the rulings on faraid and maintenance

Common questions

Must a wife's salary go towards household expenses?

No. Maintaining the family is the husband's responsibility. A wife's salary is her own. If she contributes willingly, that is charity and is rewarded. Couples are encouraged to talk openly and to record large contributions, such as payments on the house, because these matter in any later claim for jointly acquired matrimonial property.

Can jointly acquired property be claimed after the husband dies?

Yes. In Syariah Court practice in Malaysia, a claim for jointly acquired matrimonial property may be made after a spouse's death, before the remainder of the estate is distributed under faraid. Get advice from a syarie lawyer or the Legal Aid Bureau, as evidence of contribution is critical.

I am afraid to report a husband who hits me. What is the first step?

If you are in danger, call 999 and get to a safe place. Seek treatment at a government hospital OSCC so that the injuries are recorded. Call Talian Kasih 15999 for support. Protecting yourself is not disobedience; Islam forbids oppression.

17

CHAPTER 17

Trials, resilience & daily practice

Trials come in turn; small acts kept up steadily become the heart's anchor.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَنفُسِ
وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

"And We shall surely test you with something of fear, hunger, and loss of wealth, lives and fruits. And give glad tidings to those who are patient."

Surah al-Baqarah 2:155

After divorce or a husband's death: ʿiddah & ihdad

The ʿiddah is the waiting period after a separation. It safeguards lineage, leaves room for reconciliation, and honours the bond that has passed. It is not a punishment.

- **Divorced, still menstruating:** three purifications (quru') in the Shafiʿi school.
- **Divorced, not menstruating** (not yet begun, or periods ceased): three months (at-Talaq 65:4).
- **Pregnant:** until delivery, whether by divorce or by death (65:4).
- **Death of the husband:** four months and ten days (al-Baqarah 2:234).
- **Marriage unconsummated:** divorce before intercourse carries no ʿiddah (al-Ahzab 33:49).
- **Ihdad** (mourning) is obligatory for a widow throughout the ʿiddah: no adornment, no perfume or jewellery, and she stays in the ʿiddah home. Going out for needs such as work, treatment or shopping is allowed.
- Mourning for anyone other than a husband does not exceed three days (al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- Register the divorce or the death, and check your rights in Chapter 16.

Other trials in life

🤒

Illness

Pain erases sin. Seeking treatment is sunnah; follow your doctor's care and keep praying.

🕊️

Loss

Tears and grief are natural. The Prophet ﷺ wept at the passing of his son, Ibrahim.

🤲

Not yet given a child

No sign of lesser righteousness. Pray, seek fertility care within the Shariah, and guard your heart.

💔

A marriage that has ended

Divorce is not personal failure. Focus on healing, on your rights and on the children's welfare.

💸

Hardship of means

Live simply; apply for zakat aid if eligible. Allah provides from where you least expect.

🧠

A weary soul

Depression is no sign of weak faith. Get professional help (see Chapter 15).

Patience & contentment: a quiet strength

Patience is not silence before injustice, nor is it denying that you grieve. Patience is holding yourself back from despair and from what angers Allah, while continuing to strive. Contentment is a heart that accepts Allah's decree even while the eyes are still wet.

The patient say: Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un, indeed we belong to Allah and to Him we return (al-Baqarah 2:156).

- Seek help through patience and prayer; Allah is with the patient (al-Baqarah 2:153).
- Indeed, with hardship there comes ease (asy-Syarh 94:5).
- Hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah (ar-Ra'd 13:28).
- All of a believer's affairs are good: thankful in ease, patient in hardship (Muslim).
- Patience does not stop you seeking a way out: treatment, claiming your rights, or asking for help.

A righteous woman's day (an example)

1. **Subuh: prayer & morning dhikr**
   Pray early in its time, the morning dhikr, Ayat al-Kursi, al-Ikhlas, al-Falaq and an-Nas.

2. **Morning: intention & main tasks**
   Intend your work, the household and the children as worship. Begin with the most important task.

3. **Midday: Zohor & rest**
   Pray, eat something nourishing and rest a while. Call your parents if there is time.

4. **Afternoon: Asar & evening dhikr**
   The evening dhikr, some movement or light exercise, time with the family.

5. **Maghrib: the Qur'an**
   Read a few verses with the tafsir, however little. Bring the children along.

6. **Isyak: self-reckoning**
   Look back over the day: gratitude, apology and tomorrow's plan. Istighfar before sleep.

7. **An early night**
   Wudu, the verses and the supplication before sleep. Enough sleep is your body's right too.

Selected supplications from the Qur'an

- ✓ Good in this world and the next, and deliverance from the Fire (Surah al-Baqarah 2:201)
- ✓ Do not burden us beyond our capacity; forgive us and have mercy (Surah al-Baqarah 2:286)
- ✓ Do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us (Surah Ali 'Imran 3:8)
- ✓ Expand my breast, ease my task, loosen my tongue (Surah Taha 20:25–28)
- ✓ Make me and my offspring keepers of prayer; forgive my parents (Surah Ibrahim 14:40–41)
- ✓ Goodly offspring from Your presence (Surah Ali 'Imran 3:38)
- ✓ Do not leave me alone without an heir (Surah al-Anbiya' 21:89)
- ✓ A spouse & offspring who are a comfort to the eyes (Surah al-Furqan 25:74)
- ✓ Asiyah's prayer: build me a house with You in Paradise, save me (Surah at-Tahrim 66:11)
- ✓ When calamity strikes: Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un (Surah al-Baqarah 2:156)

Do & Avoid: when you are tested

Do

- ✓ Say the istirja' and allow yourself to grieve within reason
- ✓ Keep up your prayers even when the heart is heavy; they are a source of strength
- ✓ Observe the ʿiddah and ihdad with knowledge, not by custom alone
- ✓ Seek treatment and counselling when you need it
- ✓ Hold on to small daily practices, done consistently
- ✓ Accept help from family, friends and community

Avoid

- ✗ Wailing, railing against destiny or blaming Allah
- ✗ Blaming yourself without end
- ✗ Carrying everything alone and in silence
- ✗ Rushing a major decision while emotions are at their peak
- ✗ Trusting a bomoh or an amulet to 'remove bad luck'
- ✗ Comparing your own trial with other people's lives on social media

Common questions

May a widow in ʿiddah go out to work?

Yes, where there is a need such as work, obtaining treatment or buying necessities, especially during the day, returning to spend the night at the ʿiddah home. She still observes ihdad: no adornment and no perfume. For particular situations, consult the state religious department.

Does weeping mean I am not content with Allah's decree?

No. The Prophet ﷺ shed tears when his son Ibrahim died and said that the eye weeps and the heart grieves, yet we say only what pleases Allah (al-Bukhari). What is forbidden is wailing and protesting against the decree.

I have not yet been given a child. Is fertility treatment permitted?

In general it is permitted using the gametes of the lawfully married husband and wife, while the marriage subsists, with no third party. Consult a specialist and the state fatwa for particular methods. Keep praying with the supplication of the Prophet Zakaria (3:38, 21:89).

Do & Avoid at a glance

Do

- ✓ Put prayer, knowledge and your relationship with Allah first
- ✓ Be good to your parents for as long as they live
- ✓ Live with your spouse in kindness and talk things through calmly
- ✓ Raise your children with affection, example and discipline without harshness
- ✓ Care for your body and your soul; rest is worship too
- ✓ Know your rights and keep important documents somewhere safe

Avoid

- ✗ Obedience in sin, to anyone at all
- ✗ Backbiting, talebearing and exposing the household's private affairs
- ✗ Neglecting yourself until you fall ill or are utterly worn out
- ✗ Making big decisions while angry
- ✗ Carrying abuse in silence
- ✗ Taking religious rulings from unreliable sources

Daily checklist

- [x] The five daily prayers, best of all early in their time
- [x] Morning and evening remembrance (dhikr)
- [x] Reading the Qur'an, even a few verses, together with its meaning
- [x] One kindness for your parents: a prayer, a call or a helping hand
- [x] Good words and quality time with your spouse and children
- [x] Nourishing food, enough water and some movement
- [x] Guarding your tongue: no backbiting, no coarse words
- [x] One act of charity, however small, even a smile
- [x] Self-examination and istighfar before sleep
- [x] Enough sleep

Weekly & monthly checklist

- ✓ Weekly: reading Surah al-Kahf on Friday
- ✓ Weekly: attending a class or listening to a lecture
- ✓ Weekly: talking with your spouse about family, finances and plans
- ✓ Weekly: visiting or calling parents, parents-in-law and relatives
- ✓ Weekly: time to rest and time for yourself
- ✓ Monthly: voluntary fasting, such as Mondays and Thursdays or the white days
- ✓ Monthly: reviewing your budget, savings and zakat
- ✓ Monthly: updating records of important documents and property
- ✓ Monthly: checking your health; regular screening as your doctor advises
- ✓ Monthly: contributing to the community or to charitable work

Glossary (1)

- ✓ Qanitat — women devoutly obedient to Allah (an-Nisa' 4:34)
- ✓ Hafizat — women who guard themselves and their trust in their husband's absence
- ✓ Nushuz — refusal, without lawful cause, of the duties of marriage
- ✓ Nafkah — maintenance: the food, clothing and housing that must be provided
- ✓ ʿIddah — the waiting period of a woman after divorce or the death of her husband
- ✓ Ihdad — a widow's mourning during ʿiddah: no adornment and no perfume
- ✓ Mutʿah — a consolatory gift to a wife divorced without reasonable cause
- ✓ Harta sepencarian — matrimonial property jointly acquired during the marriage
- ✓ Hadhanah — the right of custody of a young child

Glossary (2)

- ✓ Birrul walidain — dutifulness and devoted service to one's parents
- ✓ Mahram — a man one may never marry, such as a father or a brother
- ✓ Aurat — the parts of the body that must be covered
- ✓ Istihadah — non-menstrual bleeding, outside the times of haid and nifas
- ✓ Taʿliq — the husband's undertaking after the contract; a breach can lead to divorce
- ✓ Khulʿ — divorce at the wife's request, in return for a payment from her
- ✓ Fasakh — judicial dissolution of a marriage by the Syariah Court on recognised grounds
- ✓ Hibah — a voluntary gift of property made during one's lifetime
- ✓ Faraid — the distribution of an estate under Islamic law

Helplines

Police 999

Emergencies and immediate danger. The safety of you and your children comes first.

Talian Kasih 15999

Support and referral for domestic violence, abuse and family crises.

One Stop Crisis Centre

In government hospital emergency departments: treatment, medical reports and victim support.

Islamic Religious Office

Family Counselling Unit: marriage counselling and advice on religious rulings.

Syariah Court

Confirmation of divorce, maintenance, mutʿah, matrimonial property, custody and fasakh.

Legal Aid

Legal Aid Bureau / Legal Aid Department: advice and representation for those who qualify.

CLOSING

Closing

Being a righteous woman is not about being perfect. It is the work of a lifetime: falling and rising, learning and mending, with a sincere intention for the sake of Allah.

Begin with one small step from this book, and keep to it steadily. The deeds most beloved to Allah are those done consistently, even if they are few (reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

May Allah show mercy to every woman who reads this book, strengthen her heart when she is tested, and make her home a place of calm and affection.

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَٰجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَٱجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

"Our Lord, grant us joy in our spouses and our offspring, and make us an example for those who are mindful of You."

Surah al-Furqan 25:74