

INSIGHT

Egypt's Dar al-Ifta Combats Extremism

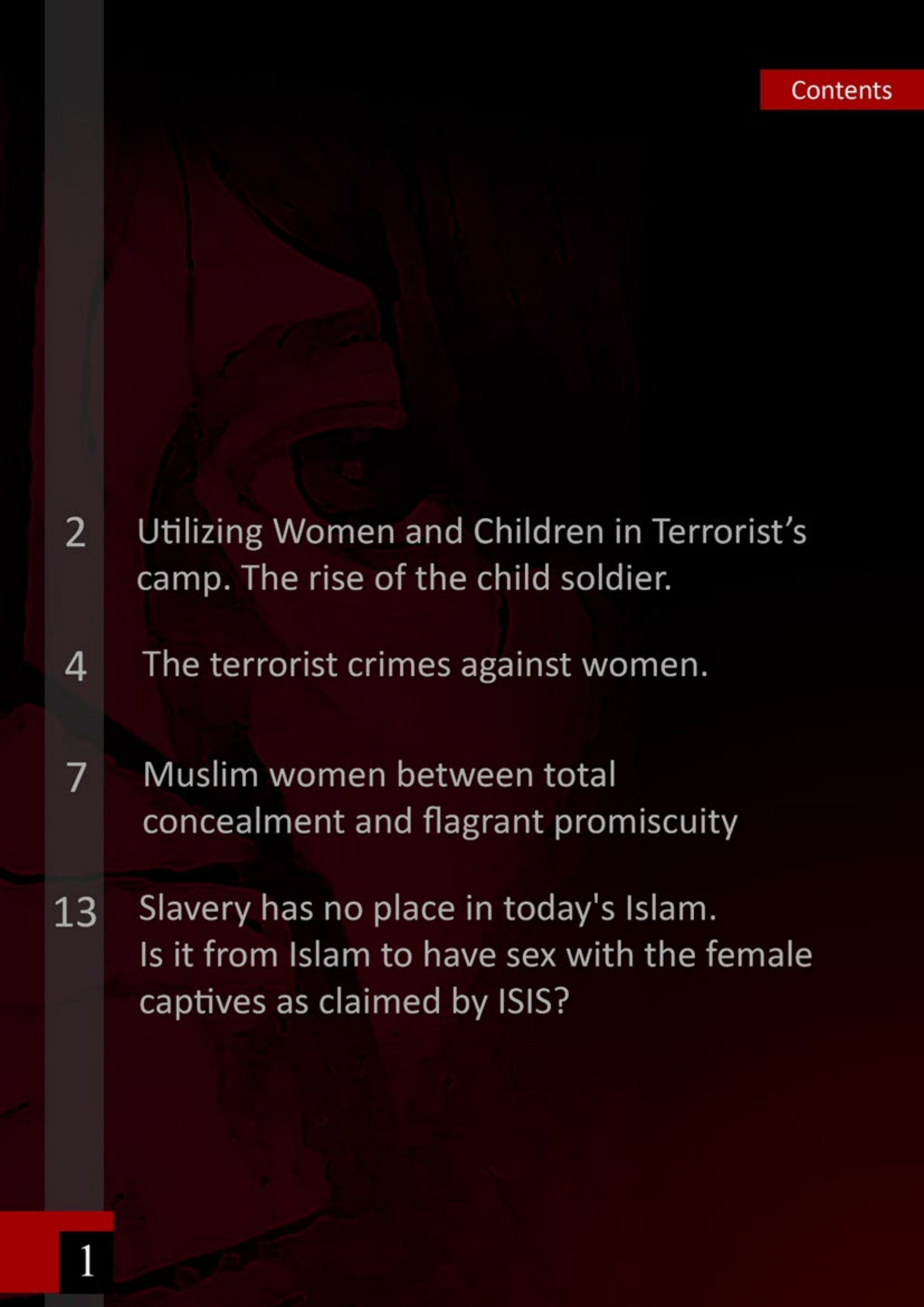
ISSUE # 2

WOMEN

in the TERRORIST'S

CAMP



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A woman wearing a dark headscarf is shown from the chest up, her face partially obscured by her hands and the fabric of her headscarf. She appears to be in a state of distress or grief, with her mouth open as if crying or shouting. The background is a solid dark color.

UTILIZING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE TERRORIST'S CAMP. THE RISE OF THE CHILD SOLDIER.

By Doaa Baumi

There has been recent news of a large number of women and children being mistreated in terrorist camps. According to Human Rights Watch, women are being forced to convert to Islam, marrying ISIS members, being brutally raped, kept in sexual slavery, and bought and sold in slave markets. In addition, some of those who were interviewed reported restricted access to education and health care. Human Rights Watch also states that about 1,100 children under the age of sixteen have been recruited by ISIS. Many children are trained as spies, preachers, soldiers, executioners, and suicide bombers. Presumably, children are easier to indoctrinate and less likely to resist since they do not yet fully understand their morality or the tenets of the religion.

Islam forbids all kind of abuse against women and children

Islam came with a revolutionary message for women, this message was in contrast to the miserable life that women used to live in the Arabian peninsula before the advent of Islam. The teachings of Islam brought about liberation for women and gave them equal rights. Islam forbids all practices which debase women to the level of property and disregard their freedom. The Quran speaks to both male and female and highlights that both male and female are equal before God. In the story of Adam and Eve, both took the sin of their action and no special or extra sin was given to Eve. God then asked both of them to do repentance. Islam has also given great importance to knowledge. The Prophet Muhammad said: "Seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim." I.e. male and female.

The application of these principles emerged very clearly during the early period of Islam. There are many luminous female models which lived during the time of the Prophet who were actively involved in their society. 'Aisha, the Prophet's wife, was a very knowledgeable woman and she was the one who transmitted the majority of his sayings. After the Prophet's death she was allowed to sit in his mosque in order to teach Muslims about religion. Islam also granted equal rights to both male and female in choosing their spouse and so women have complete freedom to accept or reject any proposal presented to her.

Children are also given rights that must be observed by their parents and also by society. Due to the fact that children are unaware of the reality of morality, and ultimately what God calls them to do, Islam puts the responsibility on the parents. Children are considered a trust and they must be protected by their parents and by society. Children have the right to be fed, clothed, and protected until they reach adulthood. Islam forbids any kind of physical or moral harm towards human beings. In Islam there is a general rule known as the rule of preventing harm. As stated in the narration of the Prophet: "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm". This rule applies to every act or behavior that may cause harm not only to humans but also to other creatures. Therefore each action that adversely affects the chance of the child leading a normal life or that harms its body or psychology is prohibited.



A man with a beard, wearing a white turban with a red band and a dark blue suit, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to his right and speaking into a microphone. His right hand is raised near his chin.

-The TERRORIST CRIMES against WOMEN.

Dr Ibrahim Negm

Advisor to the Grand Mufti of Egypt

Of the many terrifying crimes emerging from the self claimed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the violence directed toward women is perhaps the most difficult to contemplate.

The self claimed Islamic State's fighters are committing horrific sexual violence on a seemingly horrifying scale: For example, the United Nations estimated that IS has forced some 1,500 women, teenage girls, and boys into sexual slavery. Amnesty International released a blistering document noting that Daesh abducts whole families in northern Iraq for sexual assault and worse. Even in the first few days following the fall of Mosul, women's rights activists reported multiple incidents of fighters going door to door, kidnapping and raping women.

They claim to be establishing what they call "Islamic caliphate", thus eliminating mainstream interpretations of Islam and the opinions of genuine Muslim scholars whom they do not recognise as Muslim.

They never explain, however, what an "Islamic state" got to do with their terrorist actions of oppressing women and killing religious minorities, terrorizing and violating the human rights of people in the most blatant manner possible.

We the mainstream Muslims should not leave the field open for prejudices to be formed against all of us and our religion. I personally find it difficult to blame the average people of non-Muslim world who are fast developing Islamophobic tendencies. While there indeed are forces who are exploiting the situation to further their own vested interests, I feel that it is the total passivity of mainstream Islam, the nonchalance of the moderate Muslims that is largely to blame for this state of affairs. I hope the time has not passed for us to do something about it and join the struggle in earnest. The war against terror has to be fought and won by us Muslims on the ideological front.

The crux of the problem is not Islam but extremists who distort the truth for personal gain and subject women to undeniable oppression and cruelty. While it is evident that these severe practices have nothing to do with Islam, it is important that we stand together against extremism — not the religion — to promote the true picture of Islam.

In this essay I offer a counter argument to the opportunistic treatment of women by Daesh with the aim of putting things into perspectives in regards to how women are treated in

Islamic Law and culture. I will also dispel a number of misconceptions the extremist groups seek to propagate in the minds of their followers particularly the notion that woman is subordinate to man.

First of all, Islam has never restricted women's roles in society to some domains at the expense of others. A woman was the first to accept the message of the Prophet (May God shower His peace and blessings upon him). The first martyr in the cause of Islam was a woman, as was the first emigrant (muhajira). And women have continued to occupy lofty positions throughout the centuries: they have been rulers, judges, warriors, teachers, muftis, etc. Any honest student of Islamic history can testify to this.

Misconceptions surrounding the treatment of Muslim women arise from two sources; from Muslims who may justify their oppression and mistreatment of women on the basis of Islam. Also, some manipulators who have an agenda to take the Islamic teachings and want to depict Islamic civilisation as backward and oppressive.

If we analyze the issue of Qawamah as a case study, we can easily find it as one of the topics which formulate the core of research fields in family issues. The terminology of Qawamah occurred three times in the Quran and was not confined to only one verse as some people claim. The three positions are "Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth". (4:34)

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah ,

even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted". (4:135)

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do." (5:8)

Therefore maintaining justice and bearing responsibility is a common attribute asked of both men and women alike and is related to giving testimonies on people's actions and sayings and requires total commitment to justice and equality. More importantly the attribute of (al Qai-yumeyah) or bearing the responsibility of and taking care of peoples and matters is actually one of the divine attributes of God which Muslims are encouraged to emulate.

If the concept of Qawamah or bearing responsibility is a general attribute on the level of the Muslim nation as a whole, it takes a particular importance in matrimonial relationships as the man in his family is taking an obligatory responsibility of his household. In the context of marriage and man's responsibility over his family, the term Qawamah indicates two essential meanings:

1- The man takes on his shoulder the responsibility of providing for his woman her materialistic and emotional needs in a way that grants her satisfaction and makes her feel safe and secured.

2- The man should provide her with protection and care and act justly in solving family issues.

Some people unfortunately misunderstood the true meaning of Qawamah and mistakenly thought of it as some sort of higher authority bestowed to men over women and this is a pure fallacy. It is rather a responsibility and an obligation placed on men to take care of their families and to maintain justice in dealing with them. He is asked to provide for his family all what they need emotionally and materialistically with love and compassion without any sense of arrogance or conceit. Also in running the affairs of this small familial institution, the man is asked to maintain its course with understanding, sharing responsibility, taking advice, listening and completing each other. For the man to be responsible for his wife's financial needs are an obligation which does not necessarily indicate any sort of denigration or underestimation of the status of his wife.



MUSLIM WOMEN

— between —
TOTAL CONCEALMENT
— and —
FLAGRANT PROMISCUITY

By Omneya Ayad

The Muslim woman has been the subject of severe debate among the extremist thinkers both Muslims and non-Muslims. The rigorous understanding and the rigid mentality of Muslim extremists imagine women in and of themselves as the source of evil and temptation which should be contained and confined in its home to limit its poisonous nature from seducing men who can't help but fall prey to every woman who walks down the street. This kind of mentality led to the belief that women should be fully covered from head to toe including her face and hands and should be donned in black drapes in a desperate attempt not to grab attention. Women should consequently be segregated from men in all fields of work as being in a mixed environment opens all doors of evil. Walking down the street alone without a male guardian is unquestionable as it is seen as an inviting gesture to lonely wolves out there.

This humiliating look at women as a potential sexual object which should be concealed from all eyes and confined in home detention is very similar to another bleak look at women by non-Muslim extremists who think that women should be liberated from all social norms and unleashed from the fear of becoming sexual object and thus her body becomes totally lawful to be exposed, manipulated, plastered and exploited. This extreme idea of liberating the woman's body from the confinement of thick clothes led to the dangerous idea of thinking of women with little or no clothes. They failed to look at women as human beings who enjoy intellectual abilities and can reach out to its full potentials in different fields of life. They rather turned women to be part of the world of "matters",

a "soulless object" which can be plastered for product advertisement to guarantee the success of top-edge marketing plans, posing either nude or in revealing clothes for magazines to assure higher circulation, become an actress in movies which displays sensual hot sex-scenes to gain higher ratings and make block-busters. Not to mention the top professional fashion designers, who are mostly men, and who are eager to reveal the woman's body by designing low cut tops, mini-skirts and hot shorts.

This obsession with the woman's sexuality and this mania of total concealment or extreme promiscuity represent a distorted understanding and degrading evaluation of the woman as a human being who is a lot more than only her assumed "sexuality". The consistent effort and relentless persistence of combating the potential sexual hazard of every female led to the establishment of unhealthy environment where the two integral parts of the society are totally segregated in a fashion which is in total opposition to the natural composition of societies. By the same token, thinking of the woman's body as an object which can be lawfully manipulated and legally exposed is no less humiliating to women. Such way of dealing with the woman's body strips her off her basic right of becoming more than just a beautiful body or a cheap means of promoting lustful desires.

The balanced approach of Islam towards human sexuality

Islam took a balanced approach which assured the woman's right as a full human being who enjoys a dignified social status, equal

religious obligation and same contribution to the development of the world both on the intellectual and functional levels. At the same time Islam acknowledges the created sexuality of both men and women and did not call for suppressing such sexual drive but rather guided us to lawful ways of handling our human sexuality without feeling ashamed of our sexual zeal and at the same time protected humans from falling prey to sexual obsession which strips human off their dignified status of intellectual beings to the degraded status of sexually-driven animals.



By the same token women are asked not to reveal their sexuality and to prevent others from thinking of them in terms of sexual objectification. Therefore adult Muslim women are asked to cover their hair and body except for her face and hands. The reason for revealing the face and hands in public is to ensure the woman's full ability to interact and to reach the maximum level of communication with people and production at work without feeling any hindrance. This way she is assured to be an active participant in society

while keeping her dignity intact.

There are claims that one of the benefits of total exposure of women's body and free sexuality is the guarantee of the safety of women from any sexual harassment as men are not teased to look behind the covered body, but these claims lack authenticity. Checking facts revealed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women states that Between 40 and 50 percent of women in European Union countries experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work. Across Asia, studies in Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea show that 30 to 40 percent of women suffer workplace sexual harassment. In the United States, 83 percent of girls aged 12 to 16 experienced some form of sexual harassment in public schools.

By the same token, places where women are thought of as a potential sexual danger and should be having limited or no access to public life prove to create a filthy environment of illicit sexual acts as a reaction to the abnormal notion of women's potential sexual promiscuity.

These two extremist views of women represent a deviant understanding of the Islamic teachings and goes directly against the numerous Prophetic traditions which state that "Women are the twin halves of men" and this statement establishes the law of equity between men and women in terms of the appointed legal responsibilities and religious obligations and the legal rights they enjoy and the religious rewards they receive.

Article

Differences in some Juristic rulings and social responsibilities between men and women are directly related to their different natural characteristics such as motherhood for women and hard labor for men. The relationship between men and women are not based on severe competition where survival is for the fittest but it is rather built on a shared responsibility and complementarity of each other's social roles.

Women and the concept of "Fitna"

Some people developed a false understanding of women to be some source of "fitna" or "temptation" in and of itself and thus should be treated with utmost caution and be under constant surveillance. This warped logic goes against the merciful teachings of Islam which granted women equal rights and dignified their status through granting them a share in inheritance, the right of financial independency, right to vote and to hold political, scientific, and social leading positions. Islam encouraged women's civic engagement and praised its role as an active part of the civil society. The misinterpreted hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in which he says, "I did not leave after me a more dangerous temptation on men than women", is taken by extremists as a slogan for thinking of women as a serpent who seduces men at every corner. Having a closer look at the hadith, we would discover that the problem does not lie in women in and of themselves but it lies in men's thinking of women as a potential temptation which might lead them to commit erroneous acts. Therefore the hadith revolves around men and how, according to their natural inclination, may view women and thus has nothing to do with women as equal human

beings with full potentials. The concept of "fitna" is not only about men who can be tempted by women to do erroneous acts but actually the lexical meaning of the verb "f t n" means to overwhelmingly capture the attention and it has another meaning of testing and examining.



According to these two meanings, it would be easy to understand that the concept of "fitna" could apply on many notions such as money for example, it is a huge source for temptation as it is desired and thus forms a test for human beings which they ought to pass through being honest and not to steal, take bribe etc.. This explains the Quranic verse in which God the Almighty says, "And know that your properties and your children are but a trial (fitna) and that Allah has with Him a great reward." (8:28)

Also other elements which are seen as the sources of fitna or temptation is revealed in the verse in which God says "Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return." (3:14)

The listed items in the verse such as women, children, wealth, food and drinks, prestige and status are not sources of temptation in and of itself but actually carries the potentiality of becoming a source for misguidance if people failed the test of using them wisely. The excessive zealotry and intense love of these sources of happiness could very well be correspondent to the seven deadly sins in Christianity which are warned against such as

- Lust – to have an intense desire or need

- Gluttony – excess in eating and drinking.
- Greed - excessive or reprehensible acquisitiveness
- Laziness – disinclined to activity or exertion: not energetic or vigorous
- Wrath – strong vengeful anger or indignation
- Envy – painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage
- Pride - quality or state of being proud

Therefore waiving the card of "fitna" against women as a potential source of evil is a flagrant attempt to degrade women and their noble status in Islam.

Are women seen as a bad omen?

Another famous Prophetic tradition which is widely misquoted is the narration of Abu Hurairah in which he reports that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Bad omens do not exist except for three things; women, houses and horses"; this hadith was collected by al- Bukhari. In the luminary book of "Umdat al- Qary" for Sheikh Abu Muhammad Badr al- Din al- 'Ayni, he elucidated al- Bukhari's reported tradition and explained that this hadith is not complete and was only partially heard by Abu Huraira. He reported through an authentic chain of narration that when Lady 'Aisha heard about Abu Huraira's narration, she was infuriated and said "By the one who revealed the Quran on Muhammad, peace be upon him, the Prophet never said that. The Prophet rather said, "The people at the time of Jahiliyya (pre-Islam error) used to think of these three things as ominous". This means that Prophet Muhammad was only narrating what the people of Jahiliyya used to think and not that the Prophet believed in it. The narration of Lady 'Aisha was authenticated by Ibn 'Abd al- Barr who received the narration from Abu Hassan al- A'raj. Abu Hassan is authenticated by Yahya and Ibn Hibban and a group of hadith collectors including al- Bukhari who authenticated his narrations.

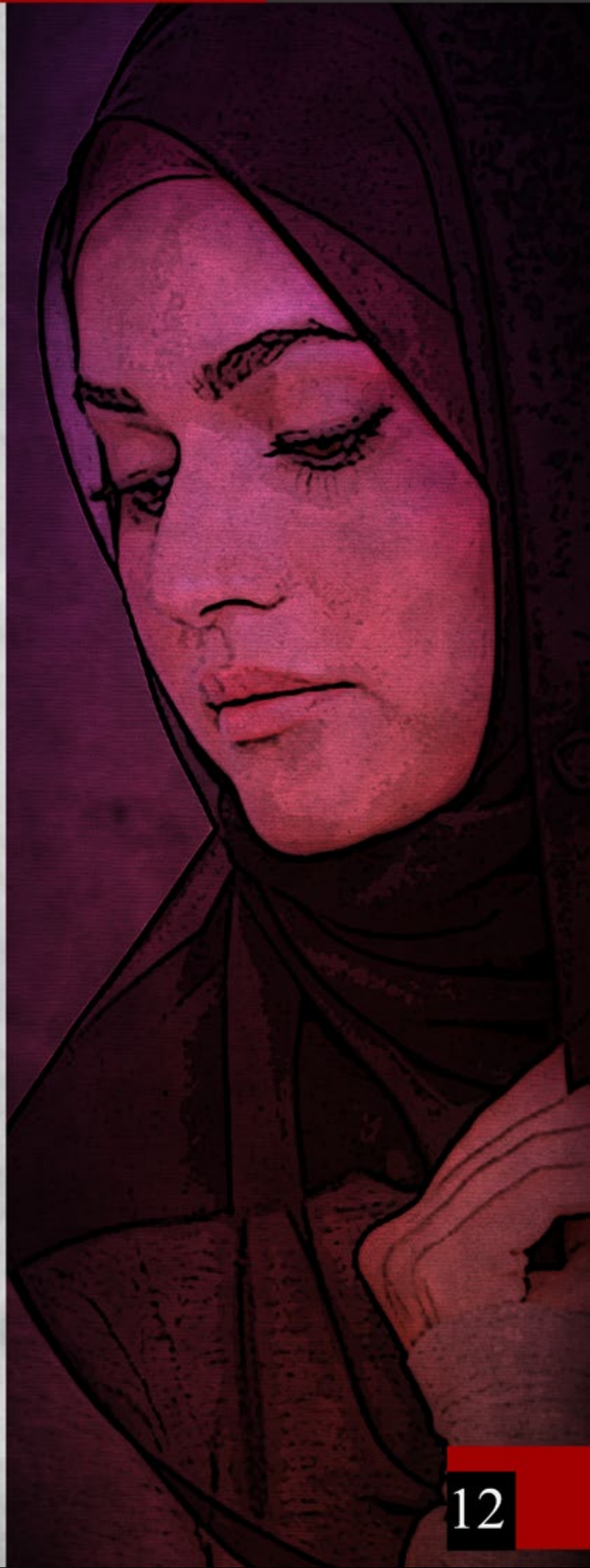
This elucidation of the reported hadith corresponds with the Quranic verses which states, Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector." And upon Allah let the believers rely." (9:51)

Article

And another verse says,” No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah , is easy –(57:22)

Also this elucidation of the hadith corresponds to another Prophetic tradition in which the Prophet emphatically negated the existence of bad omens or the permissibility of believing in superstitious omens.

In conclusion, the extremist look at women as a potential source of seduction which deserves total concealment is no less degrading than the flagrant look at women as an “object” which her body can be the subject of harassment, exploitation and abuse under the false guise of freedom. The truth of the matter is that women have the right to have a choice of concealing her body and not to expose it to others except to the one whom she chooses to share her life with. The woman has the right to be treated as an intellectual human being and not as a sexual seductive object. Islam raised the intellectual status of women and granted her the full right to be a full human being without being condemned as a serpent evil or exploited as a sex object due to her body and sexuality.



SLAVERY

has no place in today's

ISLAM.

Is it from

ISLAM

—to have **Sex** with —
the female **captives**
as Claimed by **ISIS?**

Answer

Islam came to find slavery existing in every part of the world. At that time, slavery was practiced through different means; people were enslaved through kidnapping and abductions, wars, and debts. Islam abolished all of these means with the exclusion of the enslavement of war prisoners. In its characteristic manner of introducing rulings, Islam did not abruptly abolish slavery but banned it by degrees to maintain social stability. The phenomenon of slavery existed in all the communities around the world and slaves were considered an important manpower resource in the social and economic life of ancient times.

Available
For anyone

Enslavement [in general] and the enslavement of prisoners of wars were legal institutions worldwide. Islam limited the sources of slavery with the aim of abolishing it; Islam prohibited enslaving anyone except those captured in battles when Muslims fought and defended themselves against tyrant enemies. This prohibition included the offspring of previously taken slaves. Islam allowed the enslavement of those who fought against Muslims in non-Muslim countries including women and children. However, it is only the Muslim ruler who was entitled to decide this according to what he sees as being in the best interest of Muslims. It was categorically forbidden to enslave anyone who did not fight Muslims. Enslaving a warrior is less evil than killing him. Islam prohibited the killing of female captives of war and substituted this with enslavement. In spite of this, Islam set certain ethics for the good treatment of slaves. It urged Muslims to treat them kindly and not harm them and prohibited any aggression against them.

Out of its eagerness for freeing all people, Islam expanded the means for emancipating slaves by making the manumission of a slave an expiation for multiple acts of worship that Muslims violate. These include breaking the fast in the month of Ramadan, zihar (wherein a husband deems his wife as unlawful to him as his mother), involuntary manslaughter, breaking oaths and the like. At the outset, Islam urged its followers to emancipate slaves and then limited the sources of slavery which resulted in its gradual abolishment.

Islam commanded Muslims to treat slaves kindly until they obtained their freedom.


This was stated in multiple texts of the shari'ah in which slaves were described as brothers to their masters since they shared with them the brotherhood of humanity which necessitated being merciful towards them and respecting their dignity. Mercy towards slaves was expanded and their emancipation was prescribed as an expiation for beating or abusing them. In the consequence of such great mercy towards slaves, people entered Islam in multitudes.

Islam's stance on slavery

Islam observed a noble stance towards the institution of slavery; it limited its sources, increased the means towards their freedom, and exhorted Muslims to treat them kindly and emancipate them. This differed from what prevailed worldwide at that time and [the evil practices] of slave traders in later centuries after the discovery of the discovered new world.

The Quranic verses on female slavery were meant to deal with an existing fact that Islam tried to change as previously mentioned. The entire world signed the anti-slavery treaty which was ratified by Muslim scholars and Islamic countries and the rest of the countries of the world at a time when there was a fierce competition for slaves. Consequently, slavery ended worldwide after the international treaty for the abolishment of slavery was signed in Berlin in 1860 AD.

Today, the enslavement of war captives is replaced by imprisonment and other practices stated in international agreements that Muslims and all world countries abide by. This has become a binding system that disallows anyone to enslave another.



Radical groups distorted correct beliefs

One of the distinctive challenges of the period we live in is the significant presence of violence in our societies stirred by radical groups. These acts of violence—killing the innocents, displacing people and rapping women—stem from a doctrine of hatred and intolerance that fracture societies into constant turbulence and upheaval. For violent organizations, this ideology of hatred is based on an extreme interpretation of Islam that divides the world into the realm of Islam and the realm of war.

Essentially, the extremists fail to understand the peaceful message of Islam, leading them to believe that, at the core, the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims must be driven by enmity and hostility. Consequentially, it solicits revulsion of anyone or anything that they perceive as infidel. The perception is craftily tweaked to advocate and legitimize unrelenting war and aggression, all of which stem from the overwhelming and uncontrolled feelings of hatred.



INSIGHT

Magazine