

### ***Introduction***

Imagine a poor family in a remote village who struggle to fulfil their daily needs. They are nonetheless content, at peace and happy. The family is subsequently informed of a large treasure located in a distant place. If the treasure is obtained, it will make their condition at home more cheerful and significantly happier.

The route to the treasure is, however, a treacherous path filled with wild beasts, cannibals, snakes, serpents, vast thorny bushes, jungles, murderers, thieves, bandits, kidnappers, paedophiles, unscrupulous and perverted people.

Under these circumstances would any sensible individual dare to send his daughter or sister to struggle or pursue such a treasure no matter how lucrative? Definitely not! Obviously no one would risk the life and honour of his daughter or sister for the sake of wealth.

Analogies are easy to understand ...

### ***Applying the analogy***

Similarly Islam prohibits certain things because the harms far outweigh the benefits. For example, the temporary enjoyment of alcohol is a given, but the grave repercussions of drinking with its long term and grievous effects to both the individual and others cannot be denied. It is therefore prohibited.

Islam is a complete system and code of life. A code that has been formulated by the All Knowing and Most Wise. Consequently, all those things that are harmful to a person have been prohibited. Our Merciful Creator wants the best for us in this world and the hereafter.

### ***Education in general***

Islam does not prohibit permissible education. Especially when it relates to serving humanity. Such education is in fact encouraged. Serving and assisting humanity and foregoing one's rights and seeing to the rights of others are specialties of Muslims, be it in any form, physically, morally or financially.

### ***Education for women***

Our Ulama discourage education for women due to the various external factors and evils that are generally associated with such studies. These evils stem from the fact that most educational institutes are western oriented. They therefore promote western mindsets and values. These generally include but are not limited to atheism, irreligiousness, immorality and immodesty.

Peer pressure makes it virtually impossible for anyone to remain free from these influences. The following are some examples:

- Recently a female Matriculant, boldly and boastfully rejected Islam claiming that her tutors had presented 'very convincing' arguments to show the non-existence of God (May Allah Ta'ala protect and save us all). Some students believe in Darwin's theory of evolution etc. (May Allah Ta'ala protect us all). This is completely against clear verses of the Qur'aan Shareef.
- In an entire grade of a Muslim school in South Africa, every female pupil confessed to having had some intimate contact with the opposite gender.
- In another Muslim (girls only) school, girls were being intimate with each other.
- Many pupils leave high school with serious doubts and uncertainty about basic and elementary Islamic beliefs, thereby jeopardizing and risking their Imaan

Universities pose a significantly greater challenge. Students having left school consider themselves to be more mature and independent. The seeds of destruction sown in the earlier years of secondary education now blossom unchecked.

Though men are also prone to the above mentioned harms, however, they are divinely required to venture out into the world to seek a halaal livelihood and be supportive to their subordinates. If each individual has to abide by the laws set out in the Qur'aan then we would not be facing the present situation that we presently experience.

Furthermore, women by nature are weaker than men, both physically and mentally as stated in the hadeeth, and are thus more vulnerable to the evil influences of the environment. Men should be able to face up to such challenges and respond to them in a more cultured and positive manner.

## ***The technology trap***

The easy access to and widespread use of technology such as the cellular phone, internet, etc lead to most people becoming entangled in the web of shaytaan. The significant number of females on Mixit, face book, twitter and other chat sites is staggering. While this may not be confined to those seeking education, it is far more prevalent amongst them. Common sense dictates that one should abstain from this virtual environment as far as possible.

## ***Moral upbringing***

Closing the door after the horse has bolted is too late. Parents generally adopt a lenient approach regarding the moral conduct of their children. Many daughters have been lured and duped into haraam activity, for example, drugs, prostitution, nude pictures, etc. When a hushed and rushed secret Nikaah follows only then do these parents make a huge hue and cry. But by then it is too late.

Such parents are equally guilty of allowing their children such freedom and allowing them into a dangerous and immoral environment.

## ***Initiating evil***

Whoever initiates an evil bears the complete brunt of the sin of the followers without their sins being lessened in any way. Generally, for one professional female produced in society, the Deen, character and morals of at least 75 to a 100 women is also sacrificed. A class of 1 is not a viable proposal, so additional students need to be recruited to increase the class size and all will follow the same process. Once a course opens and commences, others who may not have considered it are now tempted to register. This is exacerbated by the prevalent and targeted marketing campaigns initiated by the various institutions.

## ***The worst case scenario***

It is sad and disheartening that our Muslim sisters want to adopt and follow a potentially destructive and insecure path. Many parents make their daughters feel insecure in order to encourage them to attend university. They then train them to become independent, in the event they get divorced or need to fend for themselves.

If we accept this argument, then let's objectively compare the two worst-case scenarios viz:

- One is the apparently materially constrained life of the woman who didn't study that will inevitably end when she dies. The reward for her following the dictates of Islam will be that she will be a queen in Jannah, the place of eternal delight.
- The other is the life of luxury of the educated woman, which will also end when she dies. The punishment for her following the dictates of her nafs and desires will be punishment in the raging fire for an indeterminably long period, perhaps forever.

Which is the smart choice even in this worst-case scenario?

## ***The typical worldly outcome***

### Astray and leading others astray

Eventually when these women do graduate, their weakened loyalty to Islam and the quality of their Islamic values is no longer hidden. Many have a warped understanding of Islam and tend to believe anything and everything that they can pick up from the media and people who have no authority on Deeni matters. This is further complicated when these professionals now feel they are intellectually qualified to discern matters of Deen and make authoritative statements on Deen. This is merely based on the fact that the public looks up to them and they are influential members of society and are considered a cut above the rest because of their education.

### Failed marriages, 'lost' children

Many professional women sacrifice and neglect their family and household duties and other primary obligations. Our experience is that a very large percentage of these women at some point compromise their deeni values and honour while pursuing their career. Sometimes these women do see to the physical welfare of the world but neglect the physical, spiritual and Deeni welfare of their own husbands and children. As a result, we thus find that we are daily witnessing failed marriages, children being neglected and deprived of motherly love, support and upbringing.

When these very same children end in vice-dens and wrong habits then we cry and regret. In this manner the fabric of society is systematically destroyed. Even the kuffaar systems acknowledge that the Mother is the primary support for the upbringing of children. For example, custody in most cases is awarded to the mother. However, these children are then lost and placed in crèches and day care centres, whilst their real 'carer' is occupied in her worldly pursuits. Ultimately, such children are left with no proper direction in life.

### Orphaned best intentions

The women eventually adopt an independent mindset and attitude that is not in line with the Islamic ethos and spirit. They forgo a happy Islamic family unit and an environment of contentment, chastity, honour and respect. Such women often turn their attention to the accumulation of wealth and savings. This could be in the guise of repaying of student loans, securing a future, planning for retirement etc. The primary intention of serving humanity is now sacrificed. At some stage she will definitely compromise either her intention to serve humanity or secure her future.

### Enslaved to the nafs

All the above are occurring despite the fact that women have been emphatically commanded to remain within the confines of their homes, unless there is a compelling need to emerge. In this case they must not make a display of themselves. The Hadith has prohibited women from using perfume when leaving their homes, commanding them to wear loose unattractive clothing outdoors. It is obvious that when women work in the corporate and professional field then all these laws of the Shariah are sacrificed. It is unthinkable to them to appear in public without perfume and in unattractive clothing.

## ***Taqdeer and pre destiny***

Our basic belief is that our sustenance has been pre ordained. We can permit such sustenance to come either with the full blessings and barakaat or with difficulty. Professional women are willing to serve numerous individuals in the corporate environment for material gain but find it difficult to serve a handful of individuals at home for the pleasure of their Creator. Often it becomes clear that with a little patience, the fulfillment both spiritually and materially of a woman who has subjugated her desires to the Shariah, far exceeds the average life of a professional who is required to keep up with her colleagues lifestyle. Often this lifestyle requires the accumulation of debt and dressing for show. Both result in a vicious debt trap that can take years to escape from.

With a little lateral thinking it is easy to reason that our Sustainer has taken care of generations of females prior to us who did not venture into the open work place. Similarly if we trust in Him surely He will take care of us. We are the representatives of Deen and yet we choose to behave like the sheep of the kufaar.

## ***Equal, not identical***

Our Deen has clearly identified that men and women have different roles and responsibilities. These can be highlighted as follows:

- Men have been by divine command ordained to venture out in the public domain, to earn a livelihood, serve humanity and look for solutions in that regard.
- Women have been divinely ordained to be responsible for the home and children.

Accordingly the treatment by parents should be equal but not identical. As we require the duas of our sons we also require the duas of our daughters. Consider the following:

- The affection and attention granted to children should be identical.
- The mindset and focus between boys and girls should be programmed differently. Obviously a boy will never be able to bear or deliver a child or run a home as a girl would.
- The investment in children should be similar. For example, the average university cost of tuition and related expenditure can reach as high as R75,000 per annum. The expenditure should be spent directly on boys. While for girls, it can be saved indirectly in an investment. This can act as a form of security for the child in her future marriage that will not necessitate her leaving her home and compromising on the upbringing of her children.
- Children and boys specifically should from an early age be encouraged to be responsible for the females, young and elderly, married or unmarried in their immediate family while maintaining a balance between their own wives and children.
- The mindset, role models, friends and environment should be monitored consistently.

## ***In conclusion***

In the whole scenario we conclude that the harms of educating women far outweigh the benefit. Hence, if basic community needs can be fulfilled through other avenues, such as non-Muslim female doctors, then there is no need for us to open the door of education. This door could and is ruining many of our sisters and daughters.

It is recommended that we discourage women from seeking professions. If a woman does acquire an education it should only be out of absolute necessity. For example, when there is no family support structure. In that event education should be acquired as a patient needing haraam medication. It should only be taken to the extent of necessity and left as soon as other arrangements are made e.g. she gets married etc.

Those women who are working should simultaneously engage in activities that strengthen their Imaan. They must not beautify themselves for the workplace. This does not mean that they must be untidy or repulsive. Rather that they should dress modestly in clothing that will not attract attention. Conversations with male colleagues must only be held when deemed necessary.

May Allah Ta`ala guide us all to His pleasure. Ameen.