

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## TALK 6

### TURKEY

# Saving the Family through the Islamic Social System

Assalamu Aleykum wa Rahmetullahi wa Barakatuh...

Dear sisters...

When the Lord of the Worlds says, ﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ﴾ **“We have certainly created man in the best of stature”** [at-Tin: 4], He (swt) also asks, ﴿أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى﴾ **“Does man think that he will be left neglected/stray?”** [Al-Qiyamah: 36] The reason for why societies across the world, including the Muslim societies, are struggling with a crisis that effects the harmony and unity of marital and family life are the egoistic, limited and harmful man-made systems, produced from stray minds.

“Family is the essence and foundation of society”. Society and family is comprised of women and men. Consequently, to ‘Save the Family’, we are in need of a system that effectively regulates the relationship between men and women in a beneficial and productive manner for the society which ensures healthy cooperation between the genders in the activities of life while also ensuring and safeguarding strong family units. It should also be a system which effectively organises the rights, roles and duties of each member of the family so that all responsibilities complement one another, ensuring that the family unit is strong and a place of tranquillity, happiness and comfort. This system is without doubt the Social System of Islam that is comprised purely of divine rules, which have come to prevent the corruption which is generated through the stray and limited human mind.

The consequences of not having a social system with effective laws and regulations are manifold. Free relationships between men and women led to chaos and huge problems, like a huge rise in extramarital relationships causing the breakdown of families; countless children who are born not knowing their fathers; an epidemic of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases; hundreds of thousands of single mothers who struggle to bring up their children alone; and shocking levels of rape and other sexual crimes against women. Additionally, attempts to ‘equalize’ the rights, roles and duties of men and women under the flawed concept of ‘Gender Equality’, and subjectivity and lack of clarity in the responsibilities of the genders, led to confusion, competition and discord between husband and wife in marital and family life, which also contributed heavily to the tsunami of family breakdowns across the world, including the Muslim lands.

Today's dominating capitalist, communist and socialist ideologies and regimes do not see the need to regulate the relationships between men and women. Capitalism rejects regulations in the interaction of the genders, believing erroneously that this is restrictive for society, and espousing instead that it should be based on liberties and personal freedoms, and enshrining the satisfaction of selfish individualistic desires, like materialism, hedonism and egoism. Individuals within societies molded with capitalist culture often regard marriage and having children as an obstacle to their material interests and instincts. As to communist and socialist ideologies; they not only abnegate the existence of a Creator but regard the created human as indifferent from any material item in nature. Communist China pursued the "single family single child" policy for over 35 years, in fear of being unable to provide for the nutritional and other material needs of a growing population. It sought to achieve development and progress through the castration of its people. In fact both the capitalist culturing policies as well as the communist castration policies only led to an extreme ageing of the population and to increasing social and economic problems. All their regulations had a negative effect on the institution of marriage and the family. With the absence of sound

regulations, the human being living under these ideologies became the guinea pig of constantly changing views, laws and lifestyles.

In contrast, Islam is the only way of life and ideology that has a comprehensive social system that embodies a complete set of values, laws and limits which effectively regulate the relationship between men and women in society and organise their marital and family duties to create and maintain strong, harmonious family units. This Islamic social system is purely based upon the Islamic Aqeedah and aims at regulating the meeting between men and women to achieve cooperation between the genders in society and a productive, beneficial and safe environment where the dignity of both men and women are protected, and which safeguards strong and tranquil marriages and families.

Healthy cooperation between men and women is neither achieved by allowing them to interact freely nor by secluding women from society. Rather it is achieved by the application of a set of laws and regulations which are based upon the correct view of the sexual instinct and which direct the fulfilment of the sexual aspect of the relationship that can arise between a man and woman to marriage alone. The Islamic social system is based upon this correct viewpoint – a viewpoint that embodies purity, righteousness and chastity which ensures healthy cooperation between the genders and protects the family unit, hence establishing tranquillity within societies and ensuring the continuation of the human race.

In liberal capitalist, communist or socialist societies, as well as non-Islamic eastern cultures the relationship between men and women is focussed on the sexual element and aspect of pleasure instead of the correct purpose of the sexual instinct which is preserving the human race. These societies regard the stimulation of the sexual desires as indispensable. Hence, they purposely create and offer various realities, means and materials in their societies which trigger sexual thoughts in order to excite the sexual instinct within men and women. Thus free-mixing in their homes, parks, roads, and swimming pools, or parties, the dating scene, clubs, movies, music, books, magazines, etc. which stimulate the sexual instinct are products of this view and seen as normal in these societies which are obsessed with the pleasure element of the relationship between the sexes. All of this is a significant causal factor of the “family crisis” in liberal, socialist and communist societies. Thus, the rational solution should be to eradicate realities which trigger the sexual instinct and evoke sexual thoughts in public life, and to instead direct society’s view on the sexual aspect of the relationship between men and women towards the correct purpose for its existence: procreation and marriage.

Dear Sisters,

For us as Muslims, our true concern and only reference should be the Islamic viewpoint. We as Muslims must consider the sexual instinct and the sexual aspect in men-women relations only in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah. And we must embrace this correct perspective. When doing so we clearly see that the Qur'anic verses establish that the purpose of the existence of the sexual instinct is for procreation and marriage only, while the pleasure element that arises from the fulfilment of this instinct is natural but should be restricted to the framework of marriage alone. Furthermore, it should not be the focus of the view towards the relationship between men and women. Our Lord (swt) states the following: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ **“O mankind, Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from one soul, and from him created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women.”** [An-Nisa: 1]

And He (swt) said: ﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ **“And among His signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy.”** [Ar-Rum: 21]

And He (swt) said: ﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ﴾  
“And Allah has made for you wives of your own kind, and has made for you, from your wives sons and grandsons and has made of provision good things for you.” [An-Nahl: 72]

This is the viewpoint that the Islamic Social System is based upon, and its various laws effectively regulate the relationship between men and women so that the triggering of the sexual desires and fulfilment of the sexual aspect is restricted to marriage alone. Allow me to give you some examples Insha Allah:

1. Firstly, Islam orders every man and every woman to avert their gaze away from the Awrah of the opposite sex – the parts of the body that they are forbidden from seeing. Allah (swt) orders: ﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ﴾ “**Tell the believing men to lower from their gaze and guard their private parts.**” [an-Nur: 30] And then He (swt) addressed the women, ﴿وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ﴾ “**And tell the believing women to lower from their gaze and guard their private parts...**” [an-Nur: 31]

Islam also obliges the man and woman to avoid the look of lust and to look away when there is attraction to someone other than one’s husband or wife. It has been narrated from Ali (ra) that he said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) told me, «لَا تُشَبِّعِ النَّظْرَةَ النَّظْرَةَ فَإِنَّ لَكَ الْأُولَىٰ وَلَيْسَتْ لَكَ الْآخِرَةُ» “**Do not follow up the (first) glance with a second look. The first is permitted for you but not the second.**”

2. Secondly, Allah (swt) ordered women to cover their entire body, except their face and hands in the presence of non-Mahrem men (men whom they can marry). He (swt) also ordered women to wear the Khimar (the headscarf) and the Jilbab (a one piece outer garment which drapes to the floor and which covers their home clothes, their adornments, and their entire bodies except their face and their hands) when they leave their homes and enter the public life. The Prophet (saw) said, «إِنَّ الْجَارِيَةَ إِذَا حَاضَتْ لَمْ يَصْلُحْ أَنْ يَرَىٰ مِنْهَا إِلَّا وَجْهَهَا وَيَدَاهَا» “**When a young girl begins to menstruate, it is not correct that anything should be seen of her except her face and hands up to the wrist.**” [Reported by Abu Dawud]

And Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ﴾ “**[Tell them] not to expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof. And to wrap their Khumar (headcovers) over their chests.**” [an-Nur: 31] ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَبَنَاتِكُمْ﴾ “**Oh Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (Jalabeeb) all over their bodies.**” [al-Ahzab: 59]

3. Thirdly, Allah (swt) prohibits the woman from beautifying herself (tabarruj) in the presence of non-Mahrem, which can incite the sexual instinct in men. Allah (swt) says, ﴿مَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ﴾ “**[but] not displaying adornment.**” [An-Nur: 60] ﴿وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ﴾ “**And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment.**” [An-Nur: 31]

4. Fourthly, Islam prohibited Khulwa - a man and a woman from being alone with each other without a Mahrem. Rasulallah (saw) said: «لَا يَخْلَوْنَ رَجُلٌ بامرأةٍ إِلَّا وَمَعَهَا ذُو مَحْرَمٍ» “**No person (man) should be alone with a woman except when there is a Mahram with her.**”

4. Fifthly, Islam attaches great importance to the segregation of non-Mahrem men and women in private and public life, prohibiting their socialising and allowing their meeting only for a reason specified by the Shariah such as trade, education, employment, medical treatment, political activities, keeping ties with relatives or carrying the Islamic dawah. The Messenger (saw) separated the men from the women when organising the lines of prayer. When the Prophet (saw) saw men and women mingling when they were leaving the mosque, he ordered them to separate and even made different entrances for men and women in the

mosque to ensure separation. Abu Usayd (ra) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say when he (saw) was coming out of the Masjid, and men and women were mingled in the road: «اسْتَأْخِرْنَ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَكُنَّ أَنْ تَحْفَقْنَ الطَّرِيقَ عَلَيْنَنَّ بِحَافَاتِ الطَّرِيقِ» **“Draw back! For you must not walk in the middle of the road; keep to the sides of the road. Then women were keeping so close to the wall that their garments were rubbing against it.”** [Reported by Abu Dawood]. Ibn Umar (ra) said that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, «لو تركنا هذا الباب للنساء» **“We should leave this door (of the mosque) for women.”** [Reported by Abu Dawood]. The Prophet (saw) also organised separate classes to teach men and women about Islam.

5. And finally, Islam prohibited displaying lewdness in society or sexualisation of the woman or man in society - whether in adverts, dramas, films, books, music or any other means! It also obliged chastity and prohibited any sexual relationship outside of marriage, as well as those actions which may lead to it – such as embracing, holding hands with or kissing non-Mahrem men. It also prescribed severe punishments for extramarital relationships, including the death penalty for adultery.

Alongside all this, Islam highly recommends marriage, as well as marriage at an early age which ensures fulfilment of the sexual instinct in the appropriate way and prevents the corruption that can arise in society due to delay or aversion to marriage. The Prophet (saw) said, «يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصْرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ» **“O you who are young. Whoever amongst you who can afford to marry should marry, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding one's chastity.”** [Bukhari, Ibn Majah, Muslim]

Dear sisters, all of this maintains a pure relationship between the genders, ensures healthy cooperation between them, maintains the sanctity of marriage, protects family life and enables men and women to successfully focus on their ultimate goal in life, to please Allah (swt).

### **Dear Sisters,**

The Islamic social system is not only vital in effectively regulating the relationship between men and women in society. It is also vital in effectively organising the roles, rights and responsibilities of men and women within marriage and the family unit in a manner which achieves tranquillity in marriage and harmony in family life and between family members, rather than confusion, disputes, division and neglect of each other's rights. In contrast to man-made systems, the roles, rights and duties in Islam are neither defined on the basis of gender equality or freedom of choice, which create a harmful individualistic approach to family life, NOR are they defined upon non-Islamic traditions which deprive women of certain rights and activities that Islam provides them. On the contrary, Islamic marriage and family law are prescribed by Allah (swt) alone Who knows what is best for all members within the family structure - men, women, children, the elderly, and extended family alike. It is the fact that these rights and duties are divinely legislated in the Islamic social system that ultimately generated healthy family structures and a healthy society overall as seen from our history as an Ummah.

Münevver Ayaşlı Hanımefendi for example, an "Ottoman aristocrat", and author (1906-1999), describes as following her experience as a child born into an Ottoman family (1906) under the Islamic rule of the Uthmani Khilafah: *"I don't believe that the beauty, purity and sincerity of Ottoman family life have existed anywhere else. The Ottoman Islamic life was life at the pinnacle of beauty. [...] If you ask me what Ottoman life was, I would answer that it was a beautiful, flower-embellished poem."*

This is the desired status of a family! A Muslim family should be like this beautiful embellished poem she speaks about! The harmony in this poetical family life arose from the fact that the various roles, duties and rights prescribed by Islam for men, women and children in marriage and family life were complementary to each other. Furthermore, distinct marital and family responsibilities are distributed to men and women according to the diversity of their nature and characteristics. In this structure organized by Allah (swt), the man is the

guardian and provider of the family, while the woman is the manager of the household and caretaker of the children and has the obligation to obey her husband. Hence custody of the children is given to the woman, while in some circumstances men are given a greater share of inheritance than the woman since he is responsible for the financial maintenance not just of his wife and children but also many of his female relatives, while the woman has no duty to spend her wealth upon her family. Given that the work of the woman at home requires a great deal of her attention, effort and time, the Shariah has not required from her the responsibility of earning for her family but rather lifted this burden from her and made it an obligation upon the man. These differences in gender rights and duties do not reflect any hierarchy or superiority of the man over the woman. Rather they are simply responsibilities which ensure that all needs of the family life are taken care of effectively, and where each family member knows their duties, hence minimising disputes over duties, and providing a means to resolve disagreements effectively to prevent escalation as much as possible. Hence, these divine rules which govern the relationship between the spouses are the pillars of the Muslim family. Furthermore, both the man and woman are promised rewards from Allah (swt) for fulfilling their specific prescribed tasks within the family unit. He (swt) says, ﴿وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۗ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا لَهُمْ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا لَهُنَّ مِمَّا كَسَبْنَ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا ۝﴾ **And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men there is a reward for what they have earned, and (likewise) for women there is a reward for what they have earned. And ask Allah of his bounty. Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing.**” [An-Nisa: 32]

**Dear Sisters,**

It was this successful Islamic model for the organization of family life that led to those in other nations admiring the harmony of the Muslim family life. Edmondo de Amicus for example, an Italian traveller who visited the lands of the Khilafah in the 19th century stated, *"The Turk is kind and just toward his family. He is generally more respectful of marriage and family ties than are Europeans..."*, while La Baronne Durand de Fontmagne, French Ambassador to Istanbul in 1856, said: *"Men behave like a very polite friend to their wives. Their respect toward their mothers is infinite."*

Thus dear sisters, it is obvious that if we as Muslims want to prevent the disintegration of our families, and if we want to achieve success in this world and the Hereafter, we must reject any western or eastern non-Islamic culture, values and lifestyles within our marriages, family life and society at large. We must re-embrace the Islamic values, laws and social system that will regulate the relationship between men and women correctly within a society, and that will effectively organise marriage and the family unit to achieve the tranquillity and happiness that we are all seeking in our families. This is the path to saving the family from destruction! And Allah (swt) says, ﴿فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَىٰ \* وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنِّي فَسَأَلَ لَعْنَةُ رَبِّهِ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَىٰ﴾ **Whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery. But whoever turns away from My Reminder (That is, neither believes in the Qur'an nor acts on its orders) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.**” [TMQ Ta-Ha: 123-124]

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