

Search of Truth, Series-16

CRIME AGAINST **WOMEN** CAUSES & ITS **ISLAMIC** **SOLUTION**



JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI HIND

Dawat Nagar, Abul Fazl Enclave, New Delhi-25

+91-9810032508, 9650022638

www.islamic-videos.com

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The brutal gang-rape of 23-year Nirbhaya in New Delhi (2012), the Shakti Mills gang-rape of a 22-year old photojournalist in Mumbai (2013) and the sexual abuse of a 6-year old girl at a school in Bangalore (2014) are some of the gruesome incidents that have shocked the country. These dismal episodes roused the collective conscience of a traumatized nation and issued a stark reminder on the indifferent attitude of society towards the continual deterioration in moral values and delinquent behavior. Crime against women should be condemned and we all should think about ways and means to control and get rid of this obnoxious menace from our society.

RAPE

According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India a crime is committed against a woman every 3 minutes. She is raped every 29 minutes. Rape is one of the most common crime against women in India. The number of reported cases of rape is increasing but still the number of unreported cases is also very high. In many cases the complaint files are withdrawn due to the perception of family honor being compromised. The physical and mental trauma experienced by the rape victim is unimaginable and in spite of a plethora of laws, there has been a steady growth in the number of rape incidents across the country.

FEMALE FETICIDE

Female feticide is defined as the selective abortion of a female fetus. Sonography aids pre-natal sex determination and then male-obsessed parents and unscrupulous doctors abort the female fetus. This inhuman crime has resulted in a declining sex ratio and snatched the lives of millions of girls who could have become productive assets for their parents and our country. Despite stringent laws and public awareness the despicable propensity to terminate the lives of unborn girls continues unabated.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Women are always at the receiving end of man's ire. Not only does she suffer the indignation of being mentally tortured, she is often physically abused and battered. Under pressure to adhere to societal norms and prevent jeopardizing the future of her children she endures this tyranny silently but with immense damage caused to herself esteem and a complete loss of confidence in the family system. Divorce and single motherhood might follow this vicious scourge of domestic violence.

ACID THROWING

One of the worst kinds of sadistic crimes committed against women. It reveals a pathetic mindset and the total absence of the slightest reverence for human dignity and the lack of respect for the inviolability of a woman's body.

HONOR KILLING, ABDUCTION AND KIDNAPPING

Family disputes, tribal feuds, inter-caste rivalry and assertion of feudal power are some of the evils that find manifestation in the most horrendous crimes most of which are directed against women. Being easy targets that provoke maximum backlash, women have to suffer violence and intimidation that needs to be stopped immediately.

OUTRAGING MODESTY & EVE-TEASING

Modesty related crimes against women include attempts to attack her dignity, her femininity and insult her persona with lewd comments or actions. Eve-teasing is the making of unwanted sexual remarks or advances by a man to a woman. We all know how common this vicious crime has become and needs to be addressed with a comprehensive approach.

DOWRY DEATHS

In spite of the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) bride burning cases continue to occur. The demand for dowry exposes the sick mindset of some people who value human relationship as a commodity. By demanding cash and other valuables in lieu of their son's hand in marriage, they scout around for the highest bidder and if the bride's father is unable to pay the required dowry for her daughter, they indulge in the worst kind of violence and torture against the poor girl.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & PROSTITUTION

In India, prostitution is not illegal, but a number of related activities, including soliciting in a public place, are crimes. No wonder this atrocious crime against women continues

unchecked. Studies indicate that a majority of prostitutes are forced into this trade due to lack of resources to support themselves or their children, often after the breakup of a marriage or after being disowned and thrown out of their homes by their families. Surely this is not only a crime against women but a human rights issue as well!

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Objectification of women involves the act of disregarding the personal and intellectual abilities and capabilities of a female; and reducing a woman's role in society to that of an instrument of sexual pleasure. Typical examples include the film industry, the advertising and modeling industry that utilize women commercially.

CAUSES OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

SEARCHING FOR THE ROOT CAUSE

Some of the most commonly cited reasons for the increasing rate of crime against women include lack of stringent laws, wide lacuna in law enforcement process and slow dispensation of justice. A male chauvinistic culture that disparages women, has scant respect for women's dignity and women rights is also blamed along with growing immodesty, parental negligence and the ever increasing alcohol consumption for the sufferings of the Indian woman. But these apparent reasons too have a common origin and must be explored to arrive at the root cause of the problem.

THE OVERBURDENED WOMAN

The doctrine underlying contemporary culture based on gender equality, financial independence of women and their free and open intermingling with men has led to the following consequences. Marital relations are strained because of the excessive demand on the woman to triple up as an ambitious and successful professional on the one hand and as an affectionate mother and doting wife on the other. A strained relationship often results in domestic violence.

FEMALE MODESTY OR MALE RESTRAINT

When a woman attains financial independence it means that she no longer feels threatened to opt out of a strained marriage and this compels her to lead life as a single woman vulnerable to the lust of perverted men out to exploit her physically and blackmail her emotionally. Indian women under pressure to conform to the all pervasive westernized liberal attitude towards dressing but which is still considered, titillating is creating a seemingly explosive situation in which women refuse to dress modestly charging that the onus of decent behavior lies entirely with men.

GIRL AS A FINANCIAL BURDEN

With unbridled materialism and scant respect for the sanctity of human life, a very large section of our society still considers the girl child a financial burden and an unwanted nuisance. They feel no contrition in getting rid of their own daughters through the most heinous method of abortion. This mentality has also given rise to the despicable tradition of demanding dowry from the girl's parents and the crime of bride burning.

OBJECTIFYING WOMEN

With religious and moral values on the back burner the entire entertainment industry and mass media is brazenly exploiting the woman's body for the sake of increasing their business and we can see the vulgarity and indecency in films, advertisements and posters that treat women as commodities and objects of desire who have no other utility except male gratification. But this attitude and behavior is actually a result of the overall worldview that we have towards life itself and its existential questions in which the status of the woman is a very fundamental issue.

ISLAMIC SOLUTION TO CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW

In Islam the world is not something that came into existence by chance and evolved into its present status by some coincidental permutations and combinations of chemical reactions and through the evolution of the strongest species in a struggle of survival for the fittest. Rather this world was created purposefully and in perfection by a Creator Who is All-Knowing, All-Powerful and who is running its affairs with complete control and precision. God created man and endowed him with the best faculties of acquiring knowledge and wisdom and also gave him guidance in the form of divine revelation through a series of Messengers and Prophets. God will bring an end to this world and then will start the eternal life of man either in Paradise or the Hellfire. But this outcome will be based on how diligently man followed the Guidance of his Creator.

SOCIAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

Islam is the way of life to be followed by mankind as it is divinely ordained and caters to all natural human requirements. Islam has its own distinct social system that is based on ethics and morality. Difference in gender is merely for creating the necessary roles and functions required to run a family and the wheels of civilization. Thus the man is expected to support the family financially and play the role of breadwinner. The woman is charged with the responsibility of being the 'homemaker' and looking after the children and molding them into responsible

citizens and obedient servants of God. Such a noble and vital role, which largely shapes the future of nations, cannot be regarded as a waste of time and talent.

NOTE OF CAUTION

This division of responsibility does in no way dilute the stature and position that Islam accords to women. The Qur'an provides clear-cut evidence that a woman is completely equal to man in the sight of God in terms of the reward she will receive upon diligently discharging her duties and responsibilities. **"So their Lord accepted their prayers, (saying): Never will I discredit the work of any of you whether male or female".** (Quran 3:195). Islam allows women the right to possess and run her own finance, real estate, or other properties. With regard to the woman's right to seek employment it should be stated that there is no decree in Islam which forbids woman from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in positions which fit her nature and in which society needs her most. Examples of these professions are nursing, teaching (especially for children), and medicine. Moreover, there is no restriction on benefiting from women's exceptional talent in any field.

WIFE THE LIFE PARTNER, PARADISE AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER

Islam defines marriage as a coming together of two souls, spirits, bodies and also as the union of two responsible members of their respective families, tribes or communities. Besides procreation and the fulfillment of bodily desires Islam ensures that marriage cements an emotional bond between the two partners and weaves a spiritual harmony based on love and mercy. The Qur'an (30:21) says: **"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect."** According to Islamic law, women cannot be forced to marry anyone without their consent. Islam enjoins kindness and compassion to men while dealing with their wives. The Quran (4:19) says: **"...on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them, it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good."** Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **"the best of you is the best to his family and I am the best among you to my family"**. Muslims have been enjoined to respect and honor their parents and especially their mothers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"Paradise lies at the feet of your mother"**, implying that the way to Paradise is through the service and obedience of your mother. If these

noble feelings of respect and reverence are ingrained in the minds of men then they will shudder at the mere thought of causing any pain to a woman in the form of violence, abduction, killing and rape.

POSITION OF A GIRL CHILD

The girl child is placed on a very lofty pedestal by Islam. The people who kill the girl child are threatened with dire punishment in the Hereafter. The Quran (81: 8-9) says, **“And when the girl-child that was buried alive is asked for what crime was she killed?”**

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said that **“whoever takes care of two girls until they reach adulthood - he and I will come together (meaning in Paradise) on the Day of Resurrection like this”- he joined his index finger and middle finger together.** Thus Muslims have always held the girl child in high esteem, the raising of whom will fetch them the highest virtue and reward.

DOWER NOT DOWRY

When a marriage is contracted in Islam the groom pays an amount called “mahr” (dower) in cash or kind to the bride. The mahr may be separated into two parts. One there is the “muajjal” (the prompt mahr) which the wife must receive at or immediately after the marriage ceremony. The other part of the “mahr”, called the muwajjal, is a deferred and promised amount. The deferred amount is supposed to provide the wife a means of support. Dowry and dowry deaths are thus nullified by this brilliant Islamic injunction called “mahr”.

WOMAN’S HONOR INVIOLEABLE

Islam accords the highest respect and sanctity to a woman. In fact some Arabs refer to women as “hurma” which means the inviolable ones. Her chastity and honor is accorded such a lofty position by Islam that any violation thereof is strictly punishable by law and considered a major sin. Islam has designed a system which regulates the natural human sexual urge through the institution of marriage and considers all sexual contact and intimacy outside marriage a crime irrespective of it being consensual or forced. Hence both rape and adultery are equally punishable and considered reprehensible and condemnable acts. Islam creates an atmosphere of piety and modesty by blocking all the modes and avenues that may lead a person to fall prey to his / her passions and violate the limits set by God which means leading a chaste life and seeking the fulfillment of natural bodily desires only within the confines of marriage. Some of the steps that Islam enforces to create a pious and healthy social climate in society include modesty in dress, following a policy of male-female segregation at public

events, public places and institutes. These include prohibition of alcohol, drugs, pornography and proscribing all mass media that promotes nudity and vulgarity.

HARSH PUNISHMENT IS THE LAST STEP

The basic principle of the punitive law of Islam is that a person is deemed innocent unless proved guilty. But once he has actually committed such a crime, it is not proper and advisable to make him a habitual offender by awarding light punishments. Islamic law of evidence is extremely strict and demanding for crimes like fornication and calumny. Once the criminal is convicted by the due process of law the punishments awarded for rape and adultery are extremely strict and stringent that set the fear of God in the hearts of people and the remarkable point is that the state is religiously obliged to conduct those punishments in public. The Quran (24:2) says regarding punishment for those guilty of fornication that: “.... Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.” But these punishments are always the last recourse for correction and reform.

CONCLUSION

The rising crime against women is a blot against this civilization and history will judge it very harshly if immediate remedial measures are not taken to curb its growth and intensification. Strict laws and fast track courts are not the only solution to this menace. A complete change of heart and mind is required in society which can only be brought about by a system that nurtures piety, virtue, fear of God, belief in the accountability of the Hereafter and where women are held in respect, honor, esteem and affection. Crimes against women can only be stopped by a society that makes marriage easy and fornication difficult, that gives “mahr” (dower) and not take dowry that seeks paradise at the feet of a mother and does not sell her in the market to satisfy the lust and hunger of lecherous men. Such a society can only be built and raised on the foundations of Islamic principles of the Quran and the noble teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Let the construction begin.



For more information email us at
dawah.jih@gmail.com