



The woman,

work, and divorce ..

DR - LAYLA HAMDAN





## Women, work, and divorce

Dear Leila, I had previously requested – kindly – to write about women's work and divorce, and the extent of the relationship between them. May Allah bless you.

### Summaries of Studies on this Matter

To address this question, let us take a look at the latest findings from studies on this issue. I have chosen an article published by "Eve" magazine, which sheds light on the reality that most divorce cases result from the fact that working mothers do everything while the husband does nothing! According to a divorce lawyer quoted by the magazine, women are tired of earning money, taking care of children, and paying household expenses. Hence, divorce becomes the outcome.

The magazine points out that the divorce rate in the United States reaches 40-50% of the total number of marriages according to recent data. This means that nearly four out of every ten marriages in the country do not last. Despite variations in divorce rates by age, ethnicity, and education level, this statistic paints a clear picture of the prevalence of divorce in America.

According to the divorce lawyer, most separations are due to "the working mothers doing everything" while the husband relaxes. He reveals that in most cases he deals with, working mothers bear the majority of household responsibilities and financial burdens, leading to imbalance in the family.

A previous study also found that couples are more likely to divorce when the wife is the breadwinner while the husband stays at home.

The magazine makes an important comment in its article, stating: "It is impossible to ignore the fact that this is exactly what feminists wanted in some way. They wanted women to become like men – to advance, to be breadwinners, to be businesswomen. Gloria Steinem once said: 'We have become the men we wanted to marry.' This is not the sole reason for these marriages ending in this way, but it is certainly a significant part of it. One could also argue that men have become weaker and more feminine over the years, leading them to be lazy at home and not taking the initiative to care for their families."

The American website "Business Insider" published a report discussing research showing that recently promoted women are more likely to divorce compared to their male colleagues. The website states that recent research, co-authored by a professor at Stockholm University in Sweden, Johanna Rickne, revealed that women who recently received promotions are more likely to divorce.

These are the summaries of studies and observations from reality that confirm previous findings in this context, and here I present the findings of a study by "William Sander," entitled "Women, Work, and Divorce," published in the American Economic Journal.

The researcher highlights the upward trend in the divorce rate in the United States and attributes it to the increasing earning capacity of women. To some extent, the increase in women's earning capacity is a result of the rising divorce rate, meaning that divorced women tend to invest more in practical experience and thus earn higher wages.

According to the researcher, the investment in women's work may reflect an increase in the desire to work and a decrease in the desire to get married. In his research paper, William provides evidence that adds support to the economic approach to divorce. He demonstrates that the divorce rate is significantly affected by women's earning capacity in the labor market, meaning that an increase in women's earning capacity enables them to leave the marriage market! They either remain divorced or remarry.

According to the researcher, it has been proven that the independent effect of male wages on the divorce rate is higher. In the farm (rural sector), the divorce rate was much lower than the divorces in the urban and non-agricultural areas. The researcher also noted that the number of divorced women living in urban areas is higher than men. This may reflect the attractiveness of urban areas to divorced women compared with divorced men. According to his research, the economic theory of divorce indicates that agricultural (rural) families should suffer less from "marital instability" than their non-agricultural counterparts. An important reason for this is that farmers' wives are comparatively more specialized at home.

Based on all the aforementioned and other factors I have not mentioned for fear of lengthening the discourse, we note that the correlation between women's work and divorce rates has become an accepted reality in the West.

### What about Muslim societies?



No individual denies the reality of the significant rise in divorce rates in the Arab world.

A report published by the British magazine, The Economist, has revealed that more than a third of marriages in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates end in divorce. The percentage rises to half (50%) in countries like Kuwait, significantly higher than its counterpart in the United States.

Divorce cases in Egypt have doubled since the year 1421 AH (2000 AD), ranking second with the highest divorce rates. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt, there has been a massive increase in divorce cases in the country during the year 1442 AH (2021 AD) compared to the previous year 1441 AH (2020 AD), reaching a rate of 14.7 percent. The new statistics indicate that divorce cases during the year 1442 AH (2021 AD) have increased to 254,777 cases, compared to the number of divorce cases recorded in 1441 AH (2020 AD), which amounted to 222,039 cases.

Figures from the Egyptian Family Court in the year 1437 AH (2016 AD) indicate that the divorce rate among working women has risen to 49%.

According to statistics, Saudi Arabia records 7 divorce cases every hour, averaging 162 cases per day. In Tunisia, 940 divorce cases are registered monthly, at a rate of four cases every 3 hours.

The number of divorce cases in Algeria rises to 64,000 annually, at a rate of one case every 12 minutes, while in Jordan, the number of divorce cases reaches 14,000 annually.

Statistics in Morocco indicate that courts issue more than 100,000 divorce judgments annually, exceeding 30% of the annual marriage cases.

Reports highlight the declining influence of preachers, scholars, and family members on divorce decisions. The participation of females in the labor market has granted financial independence to millions of women, encouraging them to separate without hesitation.

Through widespread reports, it is evident that divorce rates rise in urban communities and decline in rural ones, depending on the reality of women and their social roles entrusted to them in different social environments, aside from cultural system differences. The more families maintain their customs and traditions, the less likely divorce becomes. Social actors, elders, and influencers intervene to settle disputes and provide solutions to problems. As women become financially independent and prioritize their work, their willingness to sacrifice and endure marital relationships decreases, leading to quick disengagement. This is exacerbated by the functional imbalance caused by holding a job outside the home, resulting man losing his role as the head and provider of the family, while the mother's role remains vacant and weakened. Many men and women cannot tolerate this imbalance, as it contradicts their nature, leading directly to divorce.

However, this does not mean that a woman's work alone causes divorce, but it is a significant factor among the causes of divorce. All reports, whether Western or Arab, agree that divorce rates are higher in urban life where women work, and lower in rural and agricultural areas where women fulfill their household duties, allowing men to fulfill their role as family heads without challenging men on it, neither materially nor morally.

As women take on jobs outside their homes and neglect their duties within the family, the man feels a disruption in his functional role and becomes unable to commit to this role. This gradually undermines the relationship between him and his wife, gradually threatening the dwelling, affection, and mercy, due to the dominance of materialism, selfish, and greedy choices. This imbalance is reflected within the household itself. The biggest losers in all of this are children, who grow up under the care of grandmothers, formal schools, neighbors, maids, or even the streets without supervision! They grow up in disturbance and carry with them the mistakes of their upbringing to their new families, leading to neglect whose impact extends to future generations, posing a danger!

### **The imbalance of roles is a harbinger of collapse**

Sensible individuals do not dispute that the working of women is one of the main causes of divorce in society. No matter how much women who work argue, it is difficult for a woman to balance between working outside the home and working inside it. A woman's work outside her home must inevitably affect the efficiency and quality of her work inside her home, especially in raising her children. With the nation undergoing campaigns of globalization and marginalization, the role of education (upbringing) is in desperate need of heightened protection and care. As mothers venture into the labor market, children are left with an uncertain future, lured by deviant calls and destructive ideas, all rationalized and procrastinated. We lose generations day by day!

The mother returns home exhausted, needing rest, lacking patience, tools, and sufficient knowledge to comprehend the child, who requires an educational and psychological plan, monitoring, understanding of his psychological, intellectual, religious, and moral needs, and wise handling in his exceptional cases and crises. Thus, the working mother may vent her anger on him/her, shirk responsibility, or surrender him/her to others, or hand him/her over to the internet and electronic devices, retiring for rest, needing to catch her breath for the next workday.

Her family bears her resentment from mistreatment by her boss or employers and from her daily problems. Moreover, she carries the problems of her work to the family. Each woman who denies the fact that her work affects her marital life is lying to herself before lying to others. We have witnessed how hard-working women struggle to fulfill all their duties, and inevitably, shortcomings occur.

Furthermore, daily outings make children seek new shelters, and how many consultations have reached me from repentant women, most of whom complain about working mothers or mothers who were not there at the right time to listen to them or protect them from surrounding dangers. Thus, the girl turns to a corrupt friend, a corrupt neighbor, or a strange man, leading to disgraceful stories.

There will always be a segment of women who defend the idea of their work, and I say there is one case we excuse, the case of widows, women without providers, and those whose living conditions force them to work, as their circumstances are compelling. There is no need to remind them of the restrictions of this work, which should be adhered to completely, including the full commitment to the Islamic dress code, avoidance of free mixing, and submission in speech, among other constraints that preserve and protect women from being tempted or being themselves a temptation.

Not all jobs are suitable for women, but only limited options that suit their nature and human characteristics. This falls within the framework of the Shariah regulations accompanying the allowance of women to work.

Away from discussing these details, staying within the context of answering the question, the conclusions we draw according to our convictions are conclusions based on reality and experience. The West's attempt to remove women from their homes, involve them in the labor market, and stimulate the capitalist wheel has come at a high price for our children and our generations, who have been left without proper education (upbringing) to meet the nation's needs for a wise, honest, and strong generation!

A working woman may argue and accuse us of exaggerating, emphasizing that her husband helps her as she is not divorced. We say: social studies are not based on individual cases isolated from their context and reality. The presence of non-divorced working women does not negate the fact that a woman's work was one of the main reasons and factors for divorce, not only in the Islamic world but globally. Thus, we are faced with an exposition of a truth that should not be evaded. We are facing a factor that is destroying families, societies, and generations. With this truth we can see all the angles of the issue, therefore the world is not measured on one individual case or an exception. It is not measured by certificates of self-reconstruction! The continuation of a married woman while working does not mean that her family has been secured and her children have passed danger, but rather it is the most vulnerable families to disintegration, weakness, and educational(upbringing) fragility.

The family is founded upon a stalwart husband who provides for and safeguards its religious and worldly interests, and upon a wife who, with diligence and responsibility, tends to its needs, preserves its interior, and organizes it with a dignified system. Wherein the husband and children find their abode, stability, and comfort. Wherein she collaborates with her husband in the upbringing process of her children with knowledge and wisdom.

The process of nurturing new generations should not rely on happenstance upbringing! Rather, it should be under the conscious responsibility of enlightened parents, aware of each of their roles in this critical process for the nation.

There is no competition between men and women in this regard; they complement each other and do not contend with one another! Nor do they vie for roles assigned to each of them. As the Almighty has said, (And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Indeed, Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing).

### **Denigration of the woman's role within her household**

In truth, the integration of women into the workforce was not merely a matter of self-realization or parity with men, nor a mirroring of Western women's realities, but rather accompanied by the demonization and deliberate belittlement of the woman's role within her household. Within this lies injustice, contempt, ignorance, and if not overt aggression, certainly warrants strong counterarguments.

For the woman within the home is a light, a teacher, an embrace, and a giver. Her work cannot be described with disdain, scorn, or contempt except by one who is ignorant, defeated, and an enemy to oneself and the nation. Therefore, every housewife, when faced with disdain from those who work outside the home, should respond with grace, clarifying to them that they have deviated from their natural, Islamic, and moral duty. Their departure to pursue material gain and compete with men is indeed a capitulation to Western notions of "equality," which have never and will never be achieved between male and female (and indeed, male is not like female). The noblest role for a woman is to be a wife and mother, and leaving for work while neglecting and belittling the value of this role as a wife and mother, with all its required knowledge, work, responsibilities, care, and preservation, indicates corruption of nature, taste, and religion.

Furthermore, the woman's departure deprives her of a realm of beauty, elevation, learning, and ambition within her home, relegating her to a mirage in the desert, where she spends her life, health, and nerves working outside the home, only to find that many others have preceded her in righteous deeds and virtue towards husband, child, and nation! Some have memorized the Quran, and others have produced scholars and warriors for their nation! Some have kept their husbands from sliding into despair or regression, and the role of the wife and mother in her home is only understood by the discerning and wise!



The life of a woman, for her religion and her nation, dictates to be responsible for her family. Squandering this responsibility is not merely a shortcoming to be met with reproach, but a crime against the family, the nation, and aiding the enemies in their destruction and weakening – for she is a fundamental building block of the nation - necessitating trial if truth be sought!

This nation is not fit for surrender and subjugation but for leadership and sovereignty.

How can we prevail with mothers outside the home chasing after money and children whose none care for! How can we prevail with mothers executing Western agendas within us, willingly or unwillingly, with their consciousness in the depths and their concerns in worldly matters, ceaselessly clinging to them?

Married women, mothers, and housewives are most obligated to fortify their defenses and carry out their duties. However, this does not mean sitting at home watching television and engaging in gossip and slander! Rather, it means equipping oneself and preparing for one's mission. We have seen wise mothers who, upon marriage, devoted themselves entirely to their homes, teaching their children and nurturing them, and the results were magnificent! On the other hand, we have seen mothers who prioritized their certificates and wages over their children, producing a generation that is cowardly and easily defeated by every pitiful Western call. Not every woman within the home is successful, only those who realize the importance and value of this decision, and the purpose behind it, rise to fulfill the responsibility with fear of God and seeking His pleasure.

This issue has far-reaching implications, and belittling the role of the mother and wife within her home is a grave crime against the nation as a whole. Let those who treat it lightly and mock it beware!

### **The work that we need!**

What we need is platforms for the science of upbringing, for documenting experiences, for conscious mothers to convey their ideas and enrich the discourse among their sisters, making the upbringing of children our foremost priority as a Muslim nation, destined for victory and triumph.

We need to magnify women's concerns within their homes, in all fields and areas. Every task undertaken by a wife and mother is knowledge, art, and a barrier that requires preparation and education worthy of it. Let the concerns of women range from the art of caring for their husbands and treating them kindly, to the art of raising children, understanding their psychology, and producing leaders and soldiers who will be honored by history. To the art of problem-solving and finding solutions for a more successful and stable journey. To the art of managing the home

intelligently, and creating beauty, love, and dedication, a glorious creation. Let the priorities of wives and mothers be those.

Let homes become gardens and dwellings, rivers of giving and selflessness, let homes turn into schools of preparation and production for victorious generations! Let homes become fortresses and warehouses of goodness and blessings.

This is the kind of work that families, nations, and generations need today, not pursuits where life is wasted and then becomes a reason for entering the fire and depriving Muslim women of the lofty ranks of paradise. Not to mention the consequences of shortcomings against husband, child, family, and nation!

Every husband who encourages his wife to work should reconsider himself twice and consider the magnitude of the losses accompanying this decision. He should be responsible for his family, preserving its dignity and uprightness, without fearing poverty: (That is only Satan who frightens [you] of his supporters) and (And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways). There are one thousand solutions and methods, by the grace of God, besides sending your wife into a forest of temptations and dangers and diverting her from her fundamental role and crucial duty.

For those who argue for the necessity of female teachers, doctors, and nurses to prevent mixing and provide a safe environment for Muslim women, we have many righteous and unmarried women, and we have plenty of ways to safeguard families without exposing them to danger. What is the benefit of a female doctor treating Muslim women while her own family is neglected and her children are in peril?

Rather, it is a matter of priorities, a matter of necessity, tending to her family and direct responsibilities, and then she can think of others.

Ibn 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "All of you are shepherds and every one of you is responsible for his herd. A leader is a shepherd and is responsible for his herd. A man is the shepherd over his family and is responsible for his herd. A woman is the shepherd over the house of her husband and is responsible for her herd. A servant is the shepherd over the wealth of his master and is responsible for his herd. So, all of you are shepherds, and every one of you is responsible for his herd." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

You shall be inquired, O wife and O mother!

Among the most concealed arguments behind which the defeated ones to the disbelieving West hide are the salary and the assurance of the future. I say, by Allah, if a woman enters the project of marriage completely sincere and with the best assumptions about her Lord, with perfect excellence, nothing harmful would befall her, and she would attain a righteous husband, noble in character and benevolence, and she would bear offspring whom she nurtures, educates, and connects with. And if she did not attain all of that, she would still have the support of Allah the Exalted, and whoever attains the support of her Lord becomes independent of all people and will find nothing but goodness and victory.

But it is the evil assumption of Allah the Almighty and entering with intentions tainted! How can we expect a sincere gift based on a relationship that only flourishes with truthfulness, selflessness, and complete commitment!

Every woman advising her sister of the necessity to secure her future and not to trust her husband is a corrupt and mischief-maker trying to rob her of the most beautiful aspects of life: security, tranquility, and serenity, subjecting her to live in fear, anticipation, and degradation. There is no sensible man who would sacrifice a righteous woman who supports him, complements him, and preserves his home and offspring, but it is deception, envy, and injustice to oneself and others.

Entering into a project with a corrupt intention, defamation, and evil assumptions results in failure and deprivation of blessings (And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself)

Beware, O Muslim women, of the deceitful and defamatory ones, for their advice is deceit and deception, a demolition of souls, homes, and families, and a deprivation of the blessings of Allah the Exalted upon His servants and a severance of the path of elevation!

Let the beginning be the exaltation of reliance on Allah the Almighty and the fulfillment of the duty of the righteous wife in its entirety, seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Most High, and thereafter, let not the Muslim woman ever care or fear poverty or injustice... for it is either victory or martyrdom.

Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi aptly summarized: "History has witnessed that every nation has been affected when its men lost their manhood and zeal, and its women their femininity and

motherhood, with adornment prevailing among them, and contending men in everything, neglect of domestic life, and the promotion of barrenness, dimming their star and eclipsing their sun, so they became a mere relic."

In conclusion, the work that a woman should engage in is the work that brings her joy in her worldly life and the Hereafter. As for work that brings misery to her, her husband, and her children. I fear it may fall under what Allah the Almighty has warned against: ([They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work").

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and peace and blessings upon the noblest of messengers.

Translated by, Aya, Ameera and Yasmeen

Original article in Arabic

[المراة والعمل والطلاق](#)

THE BELIEVERS

