

Chapter 4, An-Nisa (The Women) (part 1 of 3)

Description: Laws regarding inheritance and marriage concluding with a list of instructions for those who wish to enter Paradise.

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Published on 06 Mar 2017 - Last modified on 24 Jun 2018

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Introduction

This chapter is named for the many references throughout the chapter to women. It is 176 verses long and was revealed in Medina. When the Muslims migrated to Medina they were no longer a persecuted minority. Medina became an established Muslim community with Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and



blessings of God be upon him, as its leader. Laws were being introduced to the fledgling community with regard to women, marriage, commerce, finance, international relations, property and inheritance. There were also tensions between the Muslim community and some of the People of the Book and all these themes and subjects are covered.

Verses 1 " 10 Instructions

Fear God who created all of humankind from one soul (Adam). Fear God, in whose name you request favours and demand rights. Beware of severing ties with those to whom you are related. Give the orphans in your care their rights. Do not marry the orphan girls to take their property and possessions. God has allowed you to marry up to four women that are legally available to you. However if you feel you cannot treat all your wives justly then marry only one. When you marry make sure to give the bridal gift agreed upon, however if your wife consents to give up some of what is owed to her you may accept that with a clear conscience. Do not trust your property to those not equipped to look after it. If you are in charge of someone else's property, return it to them when they come of age. Be fair when you return the property because God will ask you to account for every little thing. For men and for women is an obligatory share of

what their parents and close relatives leave. Be kind and provide something to other relatives, orphans and the needy if they are present when the inheritance is distributed. The executors and guardians must be just. Those who take property unjustly will be burned in the Hellfire.

Verses 11- 14 Inheritance

God's instructions concerning the inheritance of your children are that the males share will be equal to that of two females. If there are two daughters their share is two thirds of the estate. If there is only one daughter her share is half. If there are children then the parents get one sixth of the estate each; if there are no children and the parents are the only heirs then one third goes to the mother. Debts take precedence over a bequest and bequests may not be given to those who inherit by law. A man inherit half of his wife's estate if they have no children but if they have a child he inherits a fourth. Wives will inherit a fourth of their husband's estate if they have no children but if they do they will inherit an eighth. If there are no parents or children a single sibling inherits a sixth of the estate but if there is more than one sibling they share a third. These are the rules set by God and those who obey Him and Prophet Muhammad will be admitted to gardens under which rivers flow, but those who disobey will abide in the Fire.

Verses 15 " 33 About women

If women are guilty of unlawful sexual intercourse there must be four witnesses against them. Their punishment is to be confined to their houses for life. This was until further directives were to be revealed. Punish men and women who are guilty of this offense but when they repent leave them alone. Accepted repentance is only for those who sin in ignorance or carelessness and then repent; repentance is accepted until the soul reaches the throat at the time of death. There is no repentance for those who persist in their sins and repent only when faced with certain death or for those who die as disbelievers. They will have a painful punishment.

For those who believe, a deceased man's relatives have no rights of marriage or otherwise over his widow. Treat your wives fairly and do not try to take back the bridal gift you gave them. Treat them kindly even if you dislike something about them. If you want to replace one wife with another do not take back anything you have given them even if it was a large amount. Do not marry women who have been married to your fathers.

These are the women prohibited to you in marriage; your mothers, daughters, and sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's and sister's daughters, the women who nursed you and your sisters through nursing plus your wives' mothers, and your step-daughters. Also prohibited to you are the wives of your sons and marrying two sisters simultaneously. All married women are prohibited to you (except slaves) but all other women are lawful for you to marry. If you do not have the means to marry free believing women, you are allowed to marry slaves who are believers. Give them their bridal gift and treat them justly and fairly. If the slave you marry commits adultery, her

punishment should be half that of a free unmarried woman. God makes it easy for you to see the difference between what is lawful and what is unlawful. He wants to lighten your burden and turn to you in mercy.

Do not consume one another's wealth under false pretences and do not kill each other. Avoid the great sins and the minor misdeeds will be wiped out. Do not covet what God has given to others but instead ask God for some of His bounty. Men and women will be rewarded according to their deeds. Follow the inheritance laws correctly.

Verses 34 " 42 Serve God

Men are in charge of women and righteous women are obedient to their husband. If a wife is disobedient she must be admonished, left to sleep alone and as a final resort you are permitted to strike her without leaving marks or causing injury. If they obey you have no right to punish them. If there is fear that a marriage might break down then get help with arbitration from both families. If the couple wish to remain together then God will find a way for that to happen.

Serve God; do not associate anything with Him. Be good to your parents and relatives, the needy, and the neighbours both near and far, your companions, travellers in need and slaves. God does not love those who are arrogant, boastful, and stingy or who encourage others to be stingy. God also does not like those who spend their money to show off, or those who do not believe in the Last Day and those who choose Satan as their companion. Believing in God and the Last Day, and spending in charity would not have harmed them. God does not harm anyone. Good deeds are increased. Witnesses will come and those who disbelieved and disobeyed will wish they had not because nothing is hidden from God.

Chapter 4, An Nisa (The Women) (part 2 of 3)

Description: Part two begins and finishes with some rules about prayer, and includes a discussion about those whom God cursed, the importance of obeying Prophet Muhammad and some verses about emigration.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2017 IslamReligion.com)

Published on 13 Mar 2017 - Last modified on 14 Jan 2018

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Verses 43 " 57 Prayer and those cursed

Oh you who believe do not pray while you are intoxicated; wait until you know what you are saying (this injunction was later followed with the complete prohibition of alcohol). Likewise, do not pray when you are in a state of impurity until you have taken a complete bath. If you cannot find water to perform ablution before



prayer then find clean earth and wipe your faces and hands with it. Those who were given some of the Scripture used it for misguidance and they want you to do the same. God knows your enemies well. Some Jews take the words out of context. God cursed them.

The People of the Book (Jews and Christians) should believe in this Quran, it confirms their books. God does not forgive those who associate others with Him; it is a huge sin. Inventing lies about God is a sin. Those who were given part of the Scripture now believe in idols. God cursed them for that and they will never find a helper. They are not more rightly guided than the believers; God has rejected them. If they were given a share of the kingdom they would not share it. The Jews envy Prophet Muhammad, many the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and his followers for what God has given them but they should remember that they are also from the family of Abraham whom God favoured with the Book, wisdom and a great kingdom (i.e. there is no reason to feel jealous since both the Israelites and Ishmaelites are the offsprings of Abraham). Hell is enough to burn those who turned away. Those who disbelieve in the verses will be herded into the Fire; those who believe will be led into gardens under which rivers flow. They will find there purified spouses and cool refreshing shade.

Verses 58 " 70 Obey God and His messenger

God's excellent instructions include returning the things entrusted to you and judging fairly, if you are called upon to do so. Obey God, His messenger and those in authority. If there is a dispute refer it to God and His messenger because that is better and will give the best result. Some people claim to believe yet still want to turn to unjust tyrants for judgment. They are hypocrites that turn away. They will return trying to bring about reconciliation but God knows what is really in their hearts. However you must speak to them, instruct them and try to penetrate their hearts.

Messengers were meant to be obeyed. When they wronged themselves, they should have come to you (Prophet Muhammad) and they would have found God's forgiveness. But no, they will not truly believe until they make you the judge over their disputes. They

should have done what they were instructed to do and they would have got a great reward. Whoever obeys God and His messenger will be with the ones on whom God has bestowed His favour. That is a bounty from God.

Verses 71 " 87 Take care

Be careful, believers. When you go to battle go in small groups or all together. There are people among you who will lag behind to avoid battle but if you are successful they will pretend regret. Those who are killed or victorious in God's cause will get a great reward. Fight in God's cause. Rescue those who cry out for God's help. Those who believe fight for God and those who disbelieve become the allies of Satan. Have you seen those who fear men as they fear God? The life of this world is brief and the Hereafter is eternal. Death will find you no matter where you are. When good comes they acknowledge God but when they suffer evil or loss they blame Prophet Muhammad. What is the matter with them? All things are from God. If you obey Prophet Muhammad you obey God. God has not sent you to be their keeper; they obey you when in your presence but when your back is turned they plot against you. God knows, so trust Him and that is sufficient.

Why don't they think about the Quran? It answers their questions just as Prophet Muhammad could have answered them. If it was not for God's bounty and mercy everyone would serve Satan. So Prophet Muhammad, fight in God's cause because you are only responsible for yourself. Urge the believers to fight because God might allow you all to overcome the disbelievers. Whoever speaks for a good cause will share in the reward and whoever speaks for a bad cause will share its burden. Respond to greetings with its equivalent or with something better. God keeps account of everything; there is no God but Him. You will surely be called to account on the Day of Resurrection.

Verses 88 "100 About fighting and emigration

What is wrong with you? Why are you divided about what to do about the hypocrites? You cannot guide those God has left to stray. They want you to reject faith and be like them so do not take friends from among them until they have immigrated to Medina for the sake of God. If they turn on you aggressively then kill them. A believer must not kill another believer except by mistake. And if someone makes this mistake they must free a slave and offer compensation. The compensation can be waived as a charitable act. If the victim was at war with you, but a believer, then the compensation is to free a slave. If the victim was part of a group with whom you have a treaty then a slave must be freed and compensation paid and if you are unable to do this then fast for two consecutive months. The punishment for killing a believer intentionally is Hell. Be careful! Do not kill someone who offers you a greeting of peace; do not call him a non-believer.

Those believers who stay behind (except those who are unable to fight) are not equal to those who strive in God's cause. Those who strive are offered a higher rank though there is a good position for all. When the angels take the souls of those who have wronged themselves there are some that say they were oppressed. The angels will ask if the earth was not big enough for them to find refuge in. There only refuge is Hell, except

for those who were prevented by circumstances beyond their control. God might pardon them. He is All-forgiving. If someone who emigrates for God's sake dies, he is assured of a great reward.

Verses 101 " 104 The prayer

When you travel you are permitted to shorten the prayer. When in battle, pray in ranks one at a time, one group guarding the other. You can lay aside your arms during heavy rain or illness but be careful. After prayer remember God, standing, sitting or lying on your sides. When you are secure you must re-establish the regular prayers. Do not weaken, if you are suffering so too is the enemy but you can expect help from God but they cannot.

Chapter 4, An-Nisa (The Women) (part 3 of 3)

Description: A discussion about belief, the People of the Scripture and their desires and wrongdoing, the hypocrites and closing paragraph about inheritance.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2017 IslamReligion.com)

Published on 20 Mar 2017 - Last modified on 24 Jun 2018

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Verses 105- 126 Wrongdoers only harm themselves

The Quran was revealed to you Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, so that you may judge between people according to God's will. God is forgiving and merciful but do not argue for those who deceive themselves. God does not love the treacherous or sinful. They can conceal their true selves from the people but not from God. Those who argue for them in this life will find that no one will argue for them on the Day of Resurrection. Anyone who disobeys God can ask for forgiveness and they will find that God is merciful. Those who sin only harm themselves, but those who sin and try to blame others add the sin of slander to their burdens.



When a group of people tried to lead Prophet Muhammad astray God saved him.

They did nothing but lead themselves astray. They are unable to harm the Prophet. God revealed the Book and wisdom to Prophet Muhammad; it taught him things he did not previously know. They talk in secret but nothing good comes from their secret talks unless it is about charity, kindness or reconciliation. If any oppose Prophet Muhammad after they have understood and chosen to follow the guidance, then they will be driven into Hell. God will not forgive anyone who associates anything with Him but He will forgive any lesser sin.

There are some people who call on female deities; that is nothing but following the cursed Satan. For these people there is no escape from Hell. Those who believe and do good deeds will find their eternal reward in gardens under which rivers flow. It is a truthful promise. The final abode will not be according to your desires nor will it be according to the desires of the People of the Book. The believers who are righteous will be rewarded. There is no one better than the person who submits to God and follows the religion of Abraham. God was a friend to Abraham. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to God.

Verses 127 " 140 Fear God

When they ask you (Prophet Muhammad) about women, tell them that God's rulings concerning their rights are in the Book (Quran). If a woman fears cruelty or alienation from her husband they should seek a peaceful compromise. Be fair in your dealings; God watches you. You can never be completely fair between wives but you should try to be. Do not ignore one wife so that the other feels as if she is neither married nor divorced. If you do divorce God will provide for both parties.

Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to God and the believers are instructed to fear God. The People of the Scripture were also instructed to fear God. If God wanted to He could destroy all of humankind and replace them with others. The rewards in this world and the next are God's to distribute as He sees fit. Believers; stand firmly for justice and be true witnesses even if it is against yourselves or your relatives. Do not follow your personal desires.

Oh you who believe, confirm your faith in God, His Messenger, His Book and all the previously revealed books. If you do not believe in God, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers and the Last Day then you have gone completely off course. And if you believe and then disbelieve over and over God will not forgive you or guide you back to the straight path. Tell the hypocrites that there is a painful punishment awaiting them. Do they ally themselves with the disbelievers to seek power? All the power is with God. If you hear people denying or ridiculing God's revelations then you must leave their company until the conversation changes. Hell is where the hypocrites and disbelievers will be gathered; you do not want to be amongst them.

Verses 141 " 162 Repent to avoid a painful punishment

The hypocrites change sides, always trying to appear to be looking after the believers. They even try to deceive God but He will be the Judge. At prayer time they are either lazy

or showing off. They spend very little time remembering God. Do not take them as your friends and allies. They will be in the lowest part of the Hellfire. However, if they repent, they will be believers and will be granted the mighty reward due to the believers. God does not punish the grateful.

Do not publicly speak evil words unless you are truly wronged. Do not taunt people for what they did in the past. God is able to extract retribution but He is also the Pardoner. You cannot take some of the guidance but reject other parts. It will result in a humiliating punishment. A reward is due to those who believe in God and His messengers and do not make a distinction between any of the messengers.

The People of the Scripture (Jews) ask you (Prophet Muhammad) to bring a book from heaven for them. They were even harder on Musa. They wanted to see God and were struck by a thunderbolt for their wickedness. Even after they worshipped the calf God forgave them. God took a covenant from them but they broke their commitments. God sealed their hearts. They slander Maryam, the mother of Jesus, and brag about killing Jesus. They most certainly did not kill him, God raised him up. Because of their continual wrongdoing certain things were made unlawful for them. Those among them who reject faith will have a painful punishment. Those who believe and do righteous works will have a great reward.

Verses 163 " 176 Jesus was a Messenger

Revelation was sent to Muhammad and all the prophets, David received the Psalms, and Musa spoke directly to God. Some messengers you know about, others you do not, but they all brought good news and a warning. You may choose to believe or not, but those who hinder others from belief have certainly strayed far away. Believe in the truth for your own benefit. People of the Scripture, tell the truth about God. Jesus was a messenger; abandon the Trinitarian doctrine because God is Only One. He does not need a son. Jesus and the angels never scorn worshipping God. Those who disdain His worship or are arrogant will have an agonising torment with no one other than God to protect them. Convincing truth in the form of the Quran has come to you; hold fast to God and He will show you the way.

They ask you for a ruling on the inheritance of a person with neither descendants nor ascendants. In such cases, a sister inherits half her brother's estate; a brother inherits all his sisters' estate. If there are two sisters or more, they inherit two-thirds of the estate. And if there are both brothers and sisters, the male inherits twice the share of the female. This is made clear so that you do not make mistakes. Remember that God knows everything.

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