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## ***A Review of Islam and the Western Family Organisation in Modern Eras in the light of seerah (PBHM)***

***Tooba Khalid***

*Doctoral Candidate, Department of Islamic & Oriental Learning,  
University of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore*

***Faiza Gul***

*Doctoral Candidate, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Faisalabad*

***Dr. Muhammad Maaz Arif***

*Lecturer, Dept of Medical Education, University of Health Sciences, Lahore*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This review examines the intersections and divergences between Islamic family structures and Western family organisations in modern eras, highlighting the evolving dynamics influenced by globalization, socio-cultural shifts, and legal reforms. Islamic family systems, rooted in religious doctrine and traditional practices, emphasize roles, responsibilities, and familial hierarchies grounded in Sharia law. In contrast, Western family structures often reflect more liberal and individualistic values, with increased emphasis on gender equality, diverse family forms, and legal autonomy. The review explores how these differing frameworks address issues such as marriage, divorce, child-rearing, and gender roles, and how each system responds to modern challenges such as migration, secularization, and evolving social norms. Through comparative analysis, the review aims to provide insights into how these family systems are adapting and negotiating their identities within a rapidly changing global context, offering a nuanced understanding of the complexities at the intersection of religion, culture, and modernity.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, Socio-Cultural, Sharia Law, Gender Roles, Marriage and Divorce, Legal Reforms, Secularization*

### **Introduction**

The most basic and important part of the society is the family. The relationship between a man and a woman comes into existence through marriage. Where the development and growth of society depends on the family, the reason for the



decline and chaos of the society is also on the family, because it is It is the family that is the unit of society and that is why societies exist. As much as the family unit is strong and stable, so the society and the state will be strong and stable. The family system of Islam is a natural code of life. Which provides guidance in every matter and every aspect of life. Almost every person in the world has his own way of living, his own way and style. Man considers himself bound by some ideas, concepts, traditions and habits. We can define this restriction and these habits as religion. In Islam, the pure relationship of the family comes into being through a sacred bond like marriage. Islam orders the practice of marriage instead of innovation and the adoption of those practices which are natural and legitimate.

The family system of Islam

The components of an Islamic family include husband and wife, children, parents and other relatives. In matters related to this, the status of women, marriage and divorce, child rearing, parental rights, mercy and family harmony are described below.

#### **Position of woman in family**

Woman is the basic unit of family system without which the concept of family is not possible. Since ancient times, women have been the target of persecution. Although nature had created him with soul and consciousness like a man. But he was treated like lifeless clay idols. A woman could win and lose at gambling. Sati was not to be burnt with the dead body of the husband. Sometimes he was recognized as the root of all evils, sometimes as a sack of filth, and sometimes as the source of all human sufferings, and sometimes he was denied to be a human being. There was no concept of rights and there was no concept of taking any opinion before locking her in the bonds of matrimony. Before Islam, the conditions of women were even worse than this, in which women were forced to live a life of poverty and helplessness. If this is the case with the basic unit of the family, the word happiness becomes meaningless. The colour of the family fades. It was Islam that declared the rights of women.

الا ان لكم على نساكنكم حقا ولنساكنكم عليكم حقا.<sup>1</sup>

"Be aware that you have the same rights over women as you have over men."

Just as men's rights are mandatory for women, so women's rights are mandatory for men. Islam respects the opinions of women. She is recognized as the heir of her children, parents and her husband. Nowadays, as a result of women's freedom movement, there has been a campaign for women's rights and women are struggling for their rights in different societies.

### **Marriage and Divorce**

The key component of the family is actually the relationship between man and woman. Due to this relationship, the numerical strength of the family increases. And because of this, a stable family comes into existence. This relationship is also the satisfaction of the individual needs of the individual and is also considered as a means of collective welfare. As far as divorce is concerned, it is common in almost all societies, but divorce is not allowed in some societies. And conjugal relations are recognized as indissoluble. Hindu and Christian societies are clear examples of this. The secular society of the West has rejected this concept of Christianity. And in the context of this, divorce was allowed to the woman, therefore there is a lot of divorce in the Western society. Divorce is actually the separation of relationship which has many reasons, among which dislike, nature, crime and suffering from a fatal disease etc. are the top. All religions including Islam have recognized this and this is the reason why the society is avoiding chaos.

Divorce is an undesirable thing in the eyes of Allah. It can be adopted only in times of extreme compulsion. But nowadays it is being made a toy. The unruly society of the West has quickly adopted it and now its thinkers are increasing divorce. As a result of which the woman has become insecure. And the foundation of the family system is solved. Marriage and divorce laws have been changing since early societies, but they have remained an essential part of human society. Just as it is human nature to form relationships, it is also necessary to be forced to break relationships at times. It would not be right to say that connection and disconnection are an essential part of human life.

### **Training of children**

After the relationship between man and woman in the family, the most important thing is the education of children and the care of the elderly, so they were given special care. Every family was considered respectable for raising children. However, in some societies, girls were disliked, even some Arab tribes buried girls alive. But Islam has interpreted the training of children and girls as worship and kindness. Hazrat Ayesha Siddiqā says about training girls.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من ابتلى بشيء من البنات فصبر عليهن كن  
له حجابا من النار<sup>2</sup>

"The Prophet said, "Whoever is tempted by the raising of daughters, and he perseveres with it, those daughters will become a shield between him and the Fire."

In Islam, the one who brings up daughters is entitled to reward. With social evolution, the nature of children's training has also been changing. Generally,

children's training includes agricultural education, professional skills, military training and religious education. But socially, with the widening of the methods, the education of the children will also change. In Islam, each society declared its specific moral principles necessary for education. But thanks to the modern industrial society, life has become more extensive and complicated. Therefore, training children has also become a difficult problem. Children are being considered a burden due to lack of economic support. This is the reason why breeding of children is not liked nowadays. And the abundance of children is being divided into scarcity through artificial measures.

Elderly functioning and their care are an integral part of the family. Elderly parents are considered to be the organizational base of the family. Parents spend the best part of their lives in the service of their children, so they are considered deserving of having their young children support them in their old age.

In the early societies, parents were the main part of the family and the service of parents was considered necessary for the children. But in modern times, due to the weakening of the family system, the independence of each individual and becoming economically independent, the style of their care has changed. It is the misfortune of this age that old parents are providing the necessities of life with trembling hands and wobbly legs. And sons are sitting apart, bewildered by the healthiness of youth. This dangerous trend of Western society is establishing permanent centres where their welfare will be taken care of. However, Islam has presented a comprehensive but practical plan for the education of children and the care of the elderly.

#### **Family harmony**

The characteristics of a good family include that it fulfils all its duties and its structural elements are complete. Family harmony means that the relationship between man and woman is strong and stable. The head of the family should be such that every member of the family is bound by his decisions, irrespective of the sector they belong to. The foundation of social stability depends on family harmony. A society in which the family system is disturbed and children and elders are not an integral part of the family, that society is seen to be devoid of sexual immorality, compassion and mercy, victim of criminal negligence and devoid of human compassion. According to the scholars of the society, family harmony causes the emotional security of the individual. Family disorder is the cause of modern social chaos. Generally, in family harmony it is assumed that there should be a relationship of trust and confidence only between husband and wife.

In fact, this relationship is also important between parents and children. Being aware of each other's feelings and emotions, sharing sufferings and failures

together and sharing each other's happiness, the family gets the status of an organized existence. In which the main role is a woman. A woman is a bridge in the family. It binds all relationships together.

Family is essential for social harmony. A family is the foundation of children's individuality and individual prosperity. Where children and adults get opportunities to learn about their role in the society. Especially the process of caring for the deprived and needy sections of the society, children learn things like compassion and respect for elders in the family itself. Parental relationship status is an important social issue for children. This is why social cohesion refers to the shared values of a society. The presence or absence of social harmony has profound effects on the development of the country or society. Therefore, for the development and improvement of the society, it is necessary to strengthen mutual relations. The level of trust in people is determined by social cohesion. This creates a feeling in the members of the society that the problems faced by the country and the society are their problems, for the solution of which they should play a full role.<sup>3</sup>

**Strong relationships within the home:**

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ  
أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ<sup>4</sup>

"O people! We have created you from a single male and female, and created your families and nations so that you may recognize each other. Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing."

The more society emphasizes the importance of family, the more people will struggle to create and maintain their families. If society is dysfunctional and sexual immorality is rampant. So, no one will take on his shoulders any responsibility that family life demands.

**Concept of joint family**

The sociability of man gave rise to human collectively. Countless social systems came into existence in the collective life of man<sup>5</sup>. And numerous nations settled. Man has been considered civilized. This sense of it has made human life meaningful, that is the reason why togetherness is the voice of human personality. Humans are basically social<sup>6</sup>. The main reason for this is the present and ancient human societies. Human society is not static and static, but human society keeps on changing and the process of development continues. The remarkable thing is that there is no change in the nature created by Allah Ta'ala. Allah created people on this nature. This is the formation of social organization. The first unit of which

is the family. Man is forced into social formation due to his upbringing, his desires, his environment and other factors.

As after the creation of Adam, realizing their need and for the completion of humanity, Allah created Eve. In the same way, he placed a state of love and peace in men and women for each other<sup>7</sup>. This is the demand for peace that forced them to build a house together. That is why families and clans came into being. Society is also a natural need and desire of man. Humans are physically weak, they can neither withstand natural factors alone nor have the ability to defend against other attacks. Since man is deprived of natural weapons, he needs the help of others. This compulsion is its nature and the cornerstone of its collectively. Man is not created as an individual but for collective life. All the institutions that man has created for his collective life are somehow related to the institution of the family. In the long collective life of man, innumerable social systems came into existence and innumerable nations were settled. Says Allah Ta'ala.

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ بَعْدِ نُوحٍ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادٍ خَيْرًا بَصِيرًا<sup>8</sup>

"And how many settlements did We destroy after Noah, and your Lord is sufficient to know the sins of His servants."

Egyptian, Greek, Indian, Roman and Iranian are the top among the nations that have achieved a high position in the history of human civilization and the journey of civilization. But the patterns of early society still exist in different corners of the world. After establishing the system, their names are significant in history. Until the advent of Islam, the human community has learned a lot from both religious and cultural perspectives. At the time when Islam came with the message of guidance, many societies were organized and had great capital of their history.<sup>9</sup>

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ<sup>10</sup>

"Mischief appeared in drought and drought because of the evils earned by the hands of the people so that Allah would make them taste some of their deeds so that they would turn back."

At the time when Islam started preaching from the land of Arabia, there were both urban and Bedouin societies in Arabia, but they were not standardized. After the Arabs, the societies that Islam faced were the Roman and Iranian societies.

### **The family system of the West**

In Western society, marriage is considered a legal contract rather than a formal contract in which parents have the right to raise and own children. In addition, parents monitor the development and survival of children in society. In some

cases, parents allocate a portion of their income to the family. <sup>11</sup> George Peter Murdoch has described the social structure of the family system something like this.

A family is a social group characterized by common residence, Economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes. At least two of them maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more own or adopted children of sexually cohabitating adults.<sup>12</sup>

Karl Marx described the institution of the family as a source of exploitation. He used the terms imperial society, slave society and capitalist society for social organization. He is of the opinion that a child is taught how to obey, not how to survive. The real goal is the attitude of freedom. The concept of family in the <sup>13</sup> West has changed over time. Therefore, there are various forms of family system which are socially and legally recognized.

The following are the forms of family system in the West.

#### **Central/Primary Family**

A family consisting of only parents and children is called a nuclear family or basic/central family. It is also considered a conjugal or conjugal family. In this family system, a man and a woman do not have to be married. There must be only marital relationship between them. Those whose children are their own or adopted are called nuclear family. In America, the concept of conjugal family is common, which usually includes husband and wife and minor children. The historical background of the nuclear family is evident from the fifth century AD. Nuclear family values have been challenged by family structures such as stepfamilies, single parents and domestic partnerships. A stepfamily is also called a blended or extended family, in which one of the parents is not related to the children by descent or genetics. In such a family, children may live with their biological mother or father.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Single families**

A single-parent family is a family in which there is no other spouse (husband, wife). Generally, this family is formed by the death of a spouse, divorce, artificial or unintended pregnancy. In which the individual supports the only children. Historically, the single heir family came into existence mainly because of the death of the spouse. While the second major reason is the increasing divorce rate. Most of the parents prioritized child rearing after divorce instead of remarriage. The third major reason is the artificial process. Due to which the number of single heir family is increasing. Notably, family censuses show a worldwide increase in the number of children living in single-parent families. The single-parent family has become the norm in the United States. And it is a trend in many other Western countries. According to the 2017 report of the United States Census Bureau, out

of twelve million single-parent families, four million are single-parent families where 80 percent have children under the age of 18 who are only supported by their mothers. are rearing.<sup>15</sup>

### **Domestic partnership**

A family system is a domestic partnership established on the basis of mutual relations between two persons. In which they both live a common domestic life but are not married. The term domestic partnership is not commonly used due to some legal complications. But in some states, such as Australia, New Zealand and USA, the terms civil partnership, civil union and registered partnership are used instead of domestic partnership. These include limited rights and duties of the partners. In a few states, long-term domestic partners live together but are not entitled to legal protections under common law marriage laws. Because of limited rights, some partners enter into a domestic partnership verbally or in writing without having sex. And because of this relationship, they also get some other rights including the right to property.<sup>16</sup>

A term similar to the domestic partnership system is what we call phakia. Used in the West. phakia is love and sex between two people. However, these relationships can be short-term or long-term. In the United States, this trend is spreading rapidly among young people. And live together because of the comfort of the house. Especially low-income people avoid marriage because they cannot afford the wedding expenses and other responsibilities. Or there is fear that they will face financial difficulties in case of divorce.<sup>17</sup>

### **Blended/Blended Family**

A blended/blended family consists of mixed parents and children. That is, one or both of the parents remarry and both have children whom they raise together. A blended/blended family is also called a stepfamily. There are two types of blended/blended families. One is traditional and the other is unconventional. A traditional family consists of the middle class. Where father earns and mother takes care of the house. In a non-traditional family, the mother earns and the father takes care of the home. And the practice in America is non-traditional. While some children have to work tirelessly to make their place in the family. According to the 2004 US Census report, 42 percent of youth have step-relatives, while 30 percent of youth have a half-brother or sister. Due to the increasing rate of divorce, mixed family system in the form of second marriages is becoming widespread.<sup>18</sup>

### **Extended family**

Extended family includes parents, children, spouse's siblings and their children who live together as opposed to individual family. Sometimes close relatives also live in the extended family. For example, an elderly person who lives with them



because of their age, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and paternal grandmothers, etc. In some cultures, the term extended family is used for this. The traditional family is prominent in South Asia, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Latin American countries and India. While in the American state of Mexico, three generations live together in an extended family.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Matriarchal family**

A family consisting of a mother and her biological children is called a mother-headed family. This type of family is found where women have all the resources available to support their children. But their husbands mostly stay outside the house and sometimes go home. The husband has a secondary position in the house. It is not necessary for the husband of the mother of the children to be their father. In general terms, the children are the centre of this family. The woman is the organizer of the daily routine of life. Mother Sir Barhi family is present in various cities and states of the West.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Family of choice**

The term chosen family is also used for the family of choice. This family is formed by the choice of gay men and gay women. In which both the spouses fulfil their respective responsibilities i.e. one is the husband and the other is the wife. L. for this family in western countries. Yes B. The term T group is used. That is, same-sex men, same-sex women, bisexuals and heterosexuals are part of this family. If any member of this family leaves the family, he has to be ashamed in front of the family members. There are 12 conditions for joining a family of choice that binds them into a strong family system.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Monogamy**

Monogamy refers to a family in which a person has only one legal spouse in his life. Or have only one spouse at a time. Monogamy is embedded in family values in Western European societies. And it is legally enforced in the developed countries of the world. In Japan in 1880, in China in 1953, in India in 1955 and in Nepal in 1963, having two spouses was banned. Socially, the monogamous<sup>22</sup> family came into being for a number of reasons including availability of resources, geographical distribution, diseases spread through prostitution, over-protective behaviour of spouses and psychological factors about relationships.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Polygamous family**

A polygynous family refers to a marriage where more than one spouse is married at the same time. Both husband and wife have a relationship with two people at the same time. Polygyny for a man who has more than one wife at a time while at times the term Mary poly is used for a woman married to two men. The practice of having more than one wife at the same time is common in the Middle East, Africa and Islam, but having more than one husband at the same time is allowed

in Western society, not in Islam. While in Nepal, China and India, a woman can marry two brothers at the same time.

Today, the Western society and the Western family are suffering from a painful situation. The Western system is troubled and troubled by sex. The family and home system of the West has become a source of anxiety and worry instead of comfort and peace. Today, the man of the West is wandering in search of peace in dancing clubs and dance halls. It is necessary for the man of the West to seek refuge in the mercy of Islam, in which worldly and hereafter satisfaction and peace are the only peace.<sup>24</sup>

A Review of Islam and the Western Family Organization in Modern Eras in the Light of Seerah. The comparison between Islamic family values and Western family organization in modern eras offers a rich exploration of differing cultural and religious paradigms. The Seerah, the biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), provides foundational guidance on family structures, roles, and responsibilities in Islam, which can be juxtaposed with Western models to understand the evolving dynamics and challenges in both contexts.

### **Islamic Family Values in the Light of Seerah**

In Islam, the family is considered the cornerstone of society, and the Seerah offers numerous examples of the Prophet's teachings and practices that emphasize strong family bonds, mutual respect, and clearly defined roles. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advocated for a balanced approach to family life, where spiritual, emotional, and material needs are addressed.

1. **Role of the Husband and Father:** The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the role of the husband as a provider and protector of the family. He was known for his kindness, fairness, and involvement in household affairs. The Seerah recounts his compassionate treatment of his wives and children, highlighting the importance of mercy and justice in family relationships.<sup>25</sup>

2. **Role of the Wife and Mother:** Women in Islamic teachings are accorded a respected status, and their role as mothers is particularly emphasized. The Seerah illustrates how the Prophet treated his wives with respect and dignity, encouraged their participation in social and religious matters, and valued their contributions. His marriage to Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), who was a successful businesswoman, exemplifies the supportive and complementary roles that spouses can play.<sup>26</sup>

3. **Child Rearing and Education:** The Seerah provides insights into the importance of educating and nurturing children. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized moral and spiritual upbringing, compassion, and the instillation of Islamic values. He was gentle with children and encouraged their involvement in community life, setting a precedent for positive parenting.<sup>27</sup>

### **Western Family Organization in Modern Eras**

In contrast, Western family organization has undergone significant changes, particularly in the modern era. The traditional nuclear family model has been challenged by increasing rates of divorce, single-parent households, and cohabitation. Factors such as individualism, secularism, and changing gender roles have influenced family dynamics.

1. **Individualism and Family Structure:** Western societies often emphasize individual rights and freedoms, which can sometimes lead to a focus on personal fulfillment over collective family responsibilities. This has contributed to diverse family forms, including single-parent families and childless couples.<sup>28</sup>

2. **Gender Roles and Equality:** The Western discourse on gender roles has shifted towards greater equality, with a strong emphasis on women's rights and economic independence. While this has empowered many women, it has also led to challenges in balancing work and family life, a concern that the Seerah addresses through the concept of mutual cooperation and support between spouses

3. **Secularism and Family Values:** The influence of secularism in the West has led to a more pluralistic approach to family values, often moving away from religious-based norms. This contrasts with the Islamic model, where family life is closely integrated with religious principles and practices.<sup>29</sup>

### **Convergence and Divergence**

While there are clear differences between Islamic and Western family organizations, there are also areas of convergence. Both contexts recognize the importance of love, respect, and support within the family. However, the basis for these values differs, with Islam rooting them in religious obligations and the Seerah, while Western models often derive them from humanistic and secular philosophies.

The Seerah offers a timeless framework for addressing modern challenges in family life, including issues of gender roles, parenting, and societal expectations. It emphasizes balance, compassion, and mutual respect, values that can provide valuable insights for families navigating the complexities of modern life, regardless of cultural or religious backgrounds.

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