



## What Do We Want?

### To End the Guardianship of Men over Women, or End the Guardianship of the West over the Ummah?

(Translated)

The guardianship of men over women, or the rule of Qiwwamah (being in charge), is a subject that tired the United Nations and pushed both Britain and America to demand the abolition of what they considered oppression to women and violations of their rights. The human rights record in the Arabian Gulf and especially Saudi Arabia came under a violent international attack on the rights of Muslim women. Human Rights Watch has called for the dismantling of the system of male guardianship over women as a whole for being a major obstacle to the exercise of women's rights. As a result, campaigns were launched through online social media in Saudi Arabia demanding the abolition of the guardianship law altogether.

The question is: did Britain and America achieve stability, tranquility and peace for their women in the West in order for them to champion reform in our Muslim countries, and that the discussion on Shariah takes priority as an international issue; and the Muslim woman becomes the centre of a universal "sympathy" because her husband, father or brother is her guardian and responsible for her? The suffering of Muslim women extends to the tirade, rape, detention, torture and starvation in Burma, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine. Or are Britain and America ignoring the discussion about the suffering they have inflicted on us made with their doing?!

Attacking the Shariah rulings regarding the Muslim women is and has been customary by the West. We are aware that their objective is not the reform but the destruction of the family unit, society and the entire Muslim Ummah because of the significance of the role of Muslim women in intellectual ideological building of the Ummah and in contributing to the revival or decline of their Ummah.

The attack on the guardianship rule of men over women is in the context of gender equality, this utopian idea that sends its people in the West sky high but soon after they tumble and hit the ground, while they contradict their own laws, and they are unable to achieve equality even in wages, but in our Islamic countries, the laws come packaged to us and its expiry date depends on external dictates, but its failure is put down to the "Shariah", customs, traditions, imposed religious restrictions and the male dominated oppressive society, because the guarantee of women's rights in their opinion depends only on canceling the guardianship of men over them!! The voices are louder outside than inside crying: "The era of slavery has ended, the era of the harem has ended, the woman has become educated with qualifications, she has proved her worth, led conferences, led assemblies, led forums, and the time has come for her to take her role and take her place." And to make it sound pleasant they added: "to stand side by side with the man!"

Therefore, (King) Muhammad bin Salman in Saudi Arabia sought to achieve what his predecessors failed to do; what he saw as victories for women in the Kingdom, within the 2030 Vision, to satisfy his Western critics and trade with the Shariah rules and women alike, through amendments to the guardianship of men to the women in step towards its abolition, considering this an achievement as a major leap towards "modernity" and "progress" in dealing with women!

And it is a political cunning, to deliberately abuse the Shariah rules by the abuse of its implementation and using it to be a problem that hinders the interests of the people and their transactions, when the Shariah rules were legislated to be a solution for the people in their actions and to their relations and affairs!! So the man's guardianship of the women is included in the issuance of official documents and the management of daily interests from contracts and transactions or even work!

Male guardianship over women in Saudi Arabia became part of the legislative system that is not related to Islam, but they are secular laws in their origins and details, they are wrapped in fatwas on demand to suit the general form of society, which still believes in the validity of its creed and the validity of the rules emanating from it. This rule became a contradiction in terms of the idea it is based on and its practical application!

However, the demand for the full abolition of the male guardianship is still on the table, especially since the support is international and is being used by international and local organizations, like the last statement by a Saudi women's rights activist in the French news agency AFP: "We need more (to be done) this guardianship law must be abolished completely."

Is this what Muslim women really need? Is this what guarantees their full rights and make women revived and progressive, in obedience to the Creator (swt) committed to his command, to achieve the highest function in life, to be a servant of Allah (swt) alone!!

In origin the Shariah is to be fully applied within an Islamic system that will implement it well, and protect it, so that the balance can be achieved naturally in the individual, society and state, and discipline and commitment are motivated by the fear of Allah before it is motivated by the power of the Sultan (authority)! Hence, the rule of guardianship is consistent with the social system and with the rules of society and with the people's customs, ideas and convictions. It therefore achieves virtue and justice, and it is truly a privilege for Muslim women, not as portrayed by the West in this dark dramatic scene, in the form of the jailer father and the controlling husband and the oppressed daughter, or as implemented by the rulers in a reckless performance, without controls or accountability, or laws to protect it.

The male guardianship over women in Islam is an obligation from Allah (swt) and the responsibility of men, as in all institutions, centers and councils there are people who are responsible for others, such as the director, the president and the official, the function of guardianship is an executive one adopted by the man within the institution of the family, dealing with management, spending, and taking good care of the family, and being fully responsible. The evidence for this is in the Qur'an: **الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى** **«Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth»** [An-Nisa' : 34].

The preference (choice) here is not the measure of piety, that is, it is not because they are better to Allah (swt) and closer and more pious, but the choice for the male guardianship is due to physical, mental and material strength, which is recognized by common sense and correct opinions. This preference is divine wisdom rendering man responsible and to prepare him for his Shariah duties. A Woman on the other hand have to prepare for her responsibilities and duties in agreement to her nature!! The issue is therefore not just masculinity and authority, but rather it is an honour followed by an obligation (takleef), because this guardianship corresponds to the nature of men as well as the nature of women, with the characteristics that Allah (swt) appropriately deposited to both genders. Therefore man is responsible for his family and responsible for their protection and spending on them

and management of their affairs, while the woman carries out other great and huge responsibilities! The guardianship does not wipeout the personality of women, rather the guardianship is a support, care and protection, and it has limits and controls!

The removal of the law of guardianship within an Islamic system is a breach of a coherent chain which is the first brick of societies and is the foundation of the family; dispensing of the guardianship brings hardship for the woman and does not make her happy. She is forced to assume responsibilities greater than her capacity and ability. Her nature (fitra) and life will be disturbed. In contrast, the abolition of guardianship weakens and humiliates men. Women leave men who are not responsible and not in charge! The Western society is a good example when they violated the instinct and claimed rationality and enlightenment and made men and women similar, regardless of the characteristics of each one. It was one of the reasons that exhausted women physically, morally and materially because they lost an innate need.

Dr. Auguste Furrell said under the title *Women's Sovereignty*: "Women can only know happiness if they feel respect from their husbands, and by treating him with some glorification and honour, a woman should see him as her best example either in physical strength, courage, sacrifice and self-denial, or in mental excellence ... or else he will soon fall under her rule and control ... and this (sovereignty of women) will not lead to the happiness at home; because it is a violation of the natural situation that requires man to lead the woman with his mind and intelligence and will, and in return she leads him with her heart and emotions".

It is better for the woman in the Gulf to demand the abolition of the guardianship of the spiteful West, who want women to be lost completely as their lost women in the West, and stripped of their identity and creed, and to cancel America's guardianship on the land of the Two Holy Mosques and depletion of resources and energies, and to demand the end of the guardianship of the American intelligence, that travels up and down the country without accountability or question!! Will women turn a blind eye to this vicious Western guardianship that destroyed the land and offspring, lowering the ceiling of their demands to the issue of male guardianship over women?! Will women live better lives if they are at contradiction to nature and the Deen or will they lose the way and live in hardship?

From here, we invite you, our sisters in the Gulf region, as an integral part of this great Ummah, to work towards the resumption of Islamic way of life by establishing a rightly guided and just state that achieves good and justice and guarantees everyone their rights, and to stand side by side to remove the Western guardianship from our Muslim land. To achieve the sovereignty of our Shariah and Ummah; and the West will leave us dejected and humiliated.

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ﴾

**"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoy what is right and forbid what is wrong" [Al-i-Imran: 110].**

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by**

**Nisreen Budhafri**