

Contents

Pronunciation and transliteration chart.....	10
About the word <i>Lord</i>	14
Arabic honorific terms used in this book.....	14
Publisher’s Note to the Third Edition	15
Dedication.....	16
Acknowledgements.....	17
Introduction	18
CHAPTER ONE	
Going by the Book: Qur’anic Interpretations.....	21
<i>Qawwâmoon</i>	21
Obedience.....	24
Darajah.....	26
Has Allah given more to men than to women?.....	28
Women: concerned only with frivolities?.....	29
Menstruation.....	30
Summary.....	33
CHAPTER TWO	
Partners for Life or Three Strikes and You’re Out?	
Marriage and Divorce.....	35
Choosing a partner	37
No forced marriages in Islam	38
But what about romance?.....	38
Early marriage.....	40

6 *Contents*

Prevention is better than cure	42
Compatibility	43
Divorce	45
<i>Ṭalâq</i>	46
<i>Khul'</i>	48
Summary	49

CHAPTER THREE

Domestic Slaves and Baby Factories?

The Role of Muslim Women	51
Unpaid domestic servants?	52
Women's work in Madinah	53
The Prophet (ﷺ) helped out around the house	53
Ramadan: a domestic treadmill?	54
Babies, babies, babies!	56
Desperately seeking sons	57
Daughters are to be cherished	59
Nothing wrong with large families	60
Birth control	60
Summary	62

CHAPTER FOUR

(Abuses of) Polygyny	63
Terminology	64
Polygyny is part of the Islamic set-up	65
Polygyny as proof of Islamic universality	66
Western hypocrisy	68
Fairness (<i>'adl</i>) in plural marriages	68
Common sense and maturity	70
The great welfare polygyny scam	71
Convert wives rejected	72

Polygyny as a threat.....	73
Can a wife stipulate in the marriage contract that the husband may not take another wife?.....	74
The green-eyed monster.....	74
The positive side of polygyny	75
Summary.....	75

CHAPTER FIVE

Domestic Violence	77
What happens to battered wives?.....	78
Does wife-beating have Qur’anic sanction?.....	79
A last resort in specific circumstances	80
Hadiths on corporal punishment.....	81
Historical context.....	82
Wife-beating in the guise of ‘correction’	82
Causes of <i>nushooz</i>	83
Who can abused wives turn to?.....	83
A poor track record.....	84
Women’s refuges.....	85
What if the husband is guilty of <i>nushooz</i> ?.....	87
Roots of violence	88
Breaking the cycle.....	89
Summary.....	91

CHAPTER SIX

Abuse of Non-Muslim Women	93
Taking advantage of non-Muslims is not ‘OK’	94
All fornication is forbidden.....	95
Marriage to women of the People of the Book.....	96
Dowries: Don’t price yourself out of the market!.....	97
What about the children?.....	97
“Impure women are for impure men...”	98

8 *Contents*

Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones	99
What are we doing about it?	99
Time to review our attitudes.....	100
Treachery	101
Summary.....	101

CHAPTER SEVEN

Purdah to the Max: Home as Prison?.....	103
Hijab.....	104
A woman's place is...?	104
How did we get into this mess?.....	106
Deep-rooted bias and moral conservatism	107
Qur'anic priorities.....	108
Purdah = prison?.....	109
Conditions for going out.....	111
Wherever possible: single-sex institutions.....	112
Women and work.....	113
Going out for <i>tabarruj</i> is forbidden.....	115
Free mixing is not permitted.....	115
Mosque attendance	116
Jihad	116
<i>Da'wah</i>	117
Summary.....	118

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Unkindest Cut: Female Circumcision.....	119
Female genital mutilation — Definitions.....	120
Not unique to Muslim cultures	122
A girl's ordeal.....	122
Medical and psychological consequences	123
The Islamic perspective:	
Female circumcision in the hadiths.....	125

Are all women temptresses? 128
Islamic ideals versus social reality 129
Maintaining chastity in society: the Islamic solution 129
Speaking out 130
Eradication: the way forward? 131
Muslim immigrants in the West: “children at risk?” 132
Summary 133

CHAPTER NINE

Beyond Home Economics:

Education for Girls and Women 135
 Depressing statistics 138
 Women’s education at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) 139
 ‘Ā’ishah: archetypical intellectual woman 142
 Ḥafṣah: custodian of the Qur’an 142
 Female scholars in history 143
 The decline 144
 Selective education? 145
 What do women need to know? 146
 Can women travel to seek knowledge? 148
 How to educate our daughters 148
 Summary 150
Notes 153
Bibliography 163
Appendix One: Questions to ask a prospective husband ... 167
Appendix Two: Islamic Organizations
 dealing with education 172
Glossary of Islamic terms 174