

Islam and Marriage : A Human Right Perspective

Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain*

Abstract

The institution of marriage has been promulgated in a concrete and concise way with the revelation of every religious doctrine. The Muslims can boast of the introduction of human rights in the society. Marriage was declared as a civil right aimed at entering equality of men and women in the society. With the ardent of Islam, polyandry was prohibited and polygamy was brought to a limited state in accordance with the divine message. This saw the beginnings of the development of the modern day nuclear family in Arabia and subsequently in later Islamic civilizations. The number of wives was limited to four and that too if and only if men could do equal justice to them. Islam had the injunction on categorically set rules of married life indication specific conjugal rights. Islam, being the complete code of life, was the first to demarcate the share of females to inherit property of their fathers and husbands. This paper will explain the rights of marriage given within Islam. It will use the examples from the teachings of prophet Mohammad (SAW) and his implementation of the divine laws of the Holy Quran to show how the revolutionary changes were brought about in Arabian society and subsequently, in the following Islamic nations. Furthermore it will discuss the universality of these marital rights and illustrate that even the Holy Quran had been revealed 1400 years ago, its divine laws are applicable even in this era of modernity.

Introduction

Marriage is an established institution in human society. However, there is no written record as to when this fundamental institution was at first instituted. Nevertheless, the institution of marriage is found in the oldest societies in human history. It is a binding relationship, socially and legally, between a man and a woman. As an institution marriage has been concretized by the revelations of all religions.

Marriage ensures human rights, that is, rights of men and women, encompassing cultures, embodying social values and norms, common worldwide. In early system of marriage, contracts did not consider aspects of human rights, but streamlined social discipline. Therefore, with no restriction on the practice of polygamy and polyandry, it was for wealthy and influential men to possess as many wives and concubines. Thus, women's status in that society was not much above of slaves. As a simple possession of her husband, a woman was bound, without questions, to his rules and regulations.

It was with the advent of Islam when marriage, as an institution, was reborn with equality, justice and clear regard for human rights. Marriage meant weddings with a disciplined shape and form. It became part of and contributed to enlightened changes in human society. It also revolutionized existing cultures establishing human rights.

This paper will discuss briefly the historical perspective and the institution of marriage, culture, human rights, and focus on some relevant queries on marriage in pre-Islamic era in Arabia; the revelation of the Quran and the changes in the rights of marriage in Islam as enshrined in the Holy Book and the Hadith; and the role of Islam in establishing rights of men, women and children. In conclusion, the paper will highlight some instances of divine laws, still being applied even in this modern day world.

*Director, Institute of Hazrat Mohammad, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Marriage, Culture and Human Rights

The concepts of marriage, culture, and human rights, are related closely to one another to a great extent. In the primitive societies, these concepts were absent, and dominantly present was the concept of 'Might is Right'. In present day societies, the three concepts have developed a co-relation, despite marriage ceremonies based on different cultures, societies. For it is now clear, marriage reflects culture; culture manifests in wedding ceremonies of societies; and depicts the rights of citizens in those societies, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

Marriage

Marriage is a social bond. It is an interpersonal relationship enjoying governmental, social, or religious recognition. It is often created as a contract or through civil arrangements. The nature of marriage or wedlock is defined narrowly as being only between a man and a woman. This has, however, changed in definition and form over the centuries. It is not today as it was centuries ago. Now, marriage is removed from the families, to the couples. It has also made women more equal. Earnest R Grouws defined marriage as a public confession and legal registration of an adventure to follow. Mahatma Gandhi termed marriage as a fence that protects religion. Edward Westermarck said of marriage as, "More or less durable connection between the male and female lasting beyond mere propagation till after the birth of offspring."

Culture

Various definitions of culture reflect differing theories of understanding human activity, or, of criteria of evaluating human activity. However, simplistically, culture can be defined as overall behavior, ways of life, arts, beliefs and institutions of a nation inherited through generations. Culture can also be defined as the way of life, which includes codes of manner, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior, and systems of belief of a social group, or of a society. E B Taylor in his book of 'Primitive Culture' said, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, moral law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Maclver said, "Culture is what we are." According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO- 2002), "Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

Human Rights

All human beings are born free with equal dignity and rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 (III) of 10 December 1984 –

Article (2): Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article (18): Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right

includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article (27-1): Everyone has right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Marriage takes place in most cultures, though specific customs may vary widely. Marriage is difficult to define cross-culturally, because different cultures define differently family, love, parenthood, gender roles, etc. Therefore, cross-culturally, one's motivation to get married and expectations of it vary widely. In some cultures, marriages are conducted very much like business transactions; whereas, in others, they are for deeply sentimental reasons.

Marriage in pre-Islamic Arabian society

There were some types of marriages still prevailing, where polygamy (having several wives at one time) and polyandry (having several husbands at one time) are professed and practiced. The other types included polygyny, endogamy, common law marriage and monogamy (the union of one wife to one husband). In some jurisdictions, civil marriage has been expanded to include same-sex marriage. However, monogamy is quite common and found almost everywhere around the world.

In pre-Islamic societies, there existed some eight kinds of marriages. Islam made an exception of one and declared the rest illegal. The affluent Arabs, especially the Quraysh and Hashimite families, followed the customs of their forefathers that virtually changed from the spirit of the Hazrat Ibrahim (Peace be upon Him). They themselves became misguided and their practices became distorted. This adversely affected their cultures and societal norms, thus pushing the people into darkness, and to overall human rights violations.

Marriage in Islam

Celibacy is not recommended for Muslim men or women. The most common form of marriage unites one man and one woman as husband and wife. The age for marriage is whenever individuals feel themselves ready, financially and emotionally, for taking the vows. Here, it must be noted that in Islam, marriage is not a religious concept as it is in many religions, but a civil contract between a man and a woman. Islam also recommends marriage highly as, among other things, it helps in the pursuit of spiritual perfection.

There are several passages and verses in The Holy Qur'an regarding marriage and family encouraging Muslims to be married, if possible. The Creator of the Universe –Allah- has stated in the Holy Quran:

“Marry those among you who are single, and the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female; if they are in poverty, Allah will give them, means out of His grace: for Allah is Ample-giving and He Knows all things.” (c24:v32)

“O Mankind; fear your Guardian Lord, Who created you from a single person, created out of it, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women: fear Allah through whom ye demand your mutual (rights) and be heedful of the wombs (that bore); for Allah ever watches over you.”(c4:v1)

“If you fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able deal justly (with them), then only one, or that which your right hand possess. That will be more suitable, prevent you from

doing injustice.” (c4:v3)

Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him) said, “A person who possesses the means to marry (i.e. he is able to work etc. to support a wife and children) and does not marry, then he is not from amongst us (i.e. the believers).”

Prophet (Peace be upon Him) has even said that “when a Muslim gets married, he has fulfilled half of the religious devotion and duties, and then he should take care of the other half by being God-minded and aware of his obligations.”

As a Muslim, one should live in accordance with Islamic Jurisprudence, and in the way shown by the greatest of creations, Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him), who made the biggest impact on mankind and its existence in the universe.

Human Rights and Marriage

Marriage is a human right, accepted in all civil societies. Before Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), Arab women had few rights. Infant girls could be killed and buried in the sand by parents, if they wanted a male child instead. A woman could not inherit land or property of her parents. Only sons could inherit. Women (and in most cases men, too) did not have a say in their marriages, which were arranged by their parents. Women were usually treated like property of men. But these conditions changed with Islam.

Marriage became a vital part of a Muslim's life. In fact marriage became so important in the religion of Islam that it was declared to be one half of one's faith.

Most of us are contented with focus on major principles relating to different issues of a society. However, the Quran presents a complete code of life. The Quran establishes marriage with moral safeguard and legal means to have relationship with the opposite sex, and to grow a family. It is both a solemn and a sacred relationship, far above mere physical aspect. It is not only a contract between two persons committing themselves to each other, but importantly, a contract in which the Almighty Allah is made the first and prime witness. It is made with all intention of making it permanent, and for eternal success.

Rights of Women as Mother

Islam improved the status of women. Women were to be respected. The Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) influenced the lives of Muslim women in the past and still influence their lives today.

Mothers are accorded a special place of honor in Hadith too: “A man came to the Prophet Muhammad and asked him, “O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?” The Prophet said, “Your mother”. The man then said, “Who is next?”. The Prophet said, “Your mother”. The man further asked, “Then who is next?” Only then did the Prophet say, “Your father.”

Rights of Women as A Wife

Marriage in Islam is based on mutual peace, love, and compassion, and not just satisfaction of man's needs. Quran stated, “And among His Signs is that He created for you, mates from among yourselves, that you may live well in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (c30:v21) He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto

Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)". (c42:v11)

According to Prophet's teaching, a women's consent is prerequisite for the validity of marital contract. Female has the right to accept or reject marriage proposals. In modern age, marriage without female consent is also regarded unlawful.

Islam ensured Inheritance

Islam revolutionized old opinions, concept of justice, and imbalance prevalent before its advent in all spheres of society. Thus, 1400 years ago, Islam introduced radical change not only in the Arabian society, but also in all Islamic nations. The Almighty Allah intended Muslims to develop a society where all members lived in peace and harmony. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon Him) emphasized parents should be just and fair to all the children, particularly in matters of gifts and kindness, and that one should not get more while other or others gets less, or nothing. Equality and nondiscrimination was not only desirable, but they also met the demands of justice and equity pleasing to the Almighty Allah. On this, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) also taught kindness, care and respect of women in general, to build a congenial environment in the family life.

It is Islam that ensured equity in the distribution of movable and immovable assets and properties among children of parents and ancestors. "Men shall have a share of what parents and relatives leave behind, and women shall have a share of what parents and kinsfolk leave behind, whether it be little or much - a share is ordained (by Allah)". (c4:v70)

"From what is left by parents and those nearest related, there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large – a determinate share."(c4:v7)

"But at the time of division, other relatives, or orphans, or poor who are present, give them, out of the property, and speak to them words of kindness and justice". (c4:v8)

"Almighty Allah (thus) directs you regarding your children's (inheritance); to male, a portion equal to that of two females; if only daughters, two or more, their share is two –thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is of a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if children is deceased; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters), the mother has sixth, (the distribution in all cases is) after the payment of legacies and debts". (c4:v11)

Islam Allows Polygyny or Polygamy in a Limited Scale

Islam also recommends polygyny, among other things, but in a limited scale. Despite monogamy - the union of one wife to one husband - is widespread almost everywhere, polygyny or polygamy at the same time, however, has been acceptable in many societies. According to Chamber's Dictionary, Polygyny is the condition of customs of allowing more than one wife at the same time. There are many reasons that support polygyny, but Islam limits the practice to four wives, permissible only when one can be equally fair to all wives. Thus, Muslim men are allowed to practice polygyny, and can have more than one wife at a time, up to a total of four. On the other hand, Muslim women are not allowed to practice polyandry. It has to be added that polygamy in Islam is a matter of mutual consent. No one can force a woman to marry a married man. Besides, the wife has the right to stipulate that her husband must not marry any other woman as a second wife.

Unrestricted polygamy existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. Polygamy was a custom prevalent in the society of pagan Arabs, and Jews. During that time, men used to marry as many as nearly

hundred women on temporary or contractual basis. On the basis of this custom, in those ancient societies, the wealthy and influential men, kings and people of high-profile, possessed many wives and concubines, declaring themselves mostly as God's representatives on the earth.

Before Prophet Musa (Peace be upon Him), the Israeli people were habituated to polygamous marriages. The ancient Hebrew used to endorse many wives whenever wished or desired. In ancient Hindu society, men could have more than one wife, and women could have many husbands. In later times, such tradition was followed largely by high caste (Brahmins) of the Hindus community, marrying wives whenever they pleased.

The revelation of the Holy Quran and Islam brought a revolutionary change in marriage. They provided for a disciplined lifestyle and a decent shape to polygamy, as well as polygyny. The Holy Quran says, "If you fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with orphan, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able deal justly (with them), then only one, or that which your right hands possess. That will be more suitable, prevent you from doing injustice." (c4:v3)

In another verse Allah says: "Ye never able to do good to justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire; but turn it away (from a woman) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If ye come to a friendly understanding, practice self-restricted, Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (c4:v129) The Holy Quran did not create any fundamental right of polygamy. The relevant Quranic verse is only permissive. Under the circumstances of the then Muslim society, polygamy was permitted. Whether in any society, polygamy will continue or not, depends on the social needs and values.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), as narrated in a Hadith, has said "If a man has two wives and he is impartial to one, he will appear on the Day of Resurrection with one side hanging down. Islam considers Imbalance and injustice among wives as an offense".

The resorting to the practice of polygamy by Muslims, including the Holy Prophet actually occurred during the time in history when Islam was weak and struggling to rise and establish itself. At the time when battles were fought for survival, particularly after the Battle of Uhud, when many Muslims were killed, leaving their wives and women behind, the above mentioned Quranic verse was revealed. The number of women became more than men, and that trend was likely to continue with the battles to come. These widows had to be rehabilitated and Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him) asked Muslim men to take care of them through marriages, and consequently taking charge too of the orphans.

The case of Prophet Muhammad's (Peace be upon Him) marriages can be treated as an exceptional one, as they were contracted to set an example for other Muslim men to follow for the overall wellbeing of the then existing society.

However, if a Muslim man was not capable to be equally just and fair to four wives, he was not to marry more than the number he could be just and fair with.

Women verses Men

Islam regarded men and women as being of the same essence created from a single soul. The teachings of the Holy Quran were revolutionary. According to Quranic law, the relationship was set on the principle of the division of labor with men usually carrying out tasks outside home, while women taking charge of tasks within home.

The Holy Quran states “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women,” (c4:v34). The Holy Quran urges Muslim husbands to be kind to their wives even if they do not like them. “O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the marital gift you have given them, except when they have been guilty of open betrayal of marital vows and trust; on the contrary, live with them in a state or condition of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them— it may be that you dislike a thing and through it Allah brings about it a great deal of good. (c4:v19)

Earlier, it was mentioned before the advent of Islam, the Arabs who did not believe in the Creator or Allah - buried live infant girls; and women danced naked in the vicinity of the Kaa'ba (sacred place of Muslims) during cultural programs, as annual fairs. They treated women as mere chattels and objects of amusement and pleasure with no rights or position. This era was called the Age of Jahiliya (darkness).

As Ibn-e-Umar narrates that Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him) said, “All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian of the people, and the man is a guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards.” [Al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 62, Number-128] The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), reportedly said women are the twin halves of men.

Islamic teachings are universal in nature. They respond to the needs of diverse times, cultures, and circumstances.

Equity in Some Other Extents

Equity is used here to mean justice and overall equality of the totality of rights and responsibilities of both genders. It does allow for the possibility of variations in specific items within the overall balance and equality. In regard to the above mentioned issue, the Holy Quran says: “And (women) shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men (husbands) have a degree over them.” (c1:v228) The Quran calls man and woman as the dress of each other. The Holy Quran says, “They (wives) are your garments and you are their garments.” (c1: v187)

The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) has laid down the basis on which marital relationship is established. He (Peace be upon Him) has enjoined his followers to treat their wives well. He says: "I enjoin you to be good to your women."

We cannot fulfill the prophet's instructions unless we establish a relationship with our wives on the basis of mutual care and kindness.

To emphasize taking good care of women, Islam has outlined certain rights and duties for both man and woman to be honored. Both can claim equal rights against each other, except for those minor differences which are necessitated by the nature of their roles, and the way they are created. Allah says in the Qur'an: "In accordance with justice the rights of the wives (with regard to their husbands) are equal to the (husband's) rights with regard to them." (c2:v228).

The Prophet Mohammad (Peace be Upon Him) has specified the rights of a woman against her husband when he was asked by one of his men companion: "Messenger of Allah, what rights does a man's wife hold over him?" He answered: “That you feed her when you find food to eat, and dress her when you dress yourself, and that you do not strike her on her face

and do not abuse her verbally, and that you do not boycott her except within`the0home.” (Related by Abu Dawood and Ibn Hibban).

However, women still did not have equal rights with men. For example, arranged marriages are still found in many countries today, including countries like Bangladesh, India, and in the Middle East .Many women still had no say in their marriage arrangements. This was a custom some parents did not change. It is essential both spouses should keep each other's honor, and protect and gratify each other with love. If unfortunately, any action damages mutual trust, or any serious difference arise in conjugal life, only then divorce, the last option ending a distasteful marriage, is applicable. However, both parties should try to settle the disputes within themselves. If they ultimately fail to solve the problems, and if both parties agree, divorce can be applied. But divorce has been defined by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) as the most hateful of all lawful things in the sight of Allah.

Religion Often Influences Marriage and Practices

Islam reformed the old marriage laws in far-reaching manner, while retaining their essential features. In this regard, as in other areas of social legislations, the prime aim of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) was to improve 'woman's position'.

The regulations on marriage, which, in principle, are the most important have been laid down in the Quran in Sura Nisa (from the period shortly after the battle of Uhud):" If ye fear that ye cannot act justly to the orphans, marry the women whom ye think good, by twos, threes or fours; but if ye fear inability to be just, then marry one only, or whom you possess; this will be easier that ye be not unjust".(c3:v3)“Give the women their dowry freely; but if they voluntarily remit you a part of it, enjoy it and may it prosper you.”(c3:v4) “arry not the woman whom your fathers have married (except what is already past); for this is shameful and abominable and an evil way. Forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your aunts paternal and maternal, the daughters of your brother and sister, your foster-mothers and foster-sisters, the mothers of your wives and the stepdaughters who are in your care, born of your wives, with whom ye have had intercourse — but if ye have not had intercourse with them, it is not a sin for you— and the wives of the sons, who are your offspring, also that ye marry two sisters at the "same rime except what is already past; Allah is gracious and merciful”.(c3:v23)“Further married women except that you possess. This is ordained by Allah for you. But he has permitted you to procure outside of these cases with your money in decency and not in fornication. To those of them that ye have enjoined give their reward as their due, but it is no sin to make an agreement between you beyond the legal due. Allah is all-knowing and wise.”(c3:v24)

Conclusion

Marriage, as an institution binding a man and a woman together for raising family under a social discipline and for societal harmony, is professed by all religions and has been practiced by their followers ardently through millenniums. There had, however, been times when the institution was weakened and eroded by inroad of revived paganistic rituals and cultures, only to be again thwarted by impositions of religious interventions. This has been a cyclic phenomenon in human history till the last sway of pagan revival was demolished by the birth of Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him), and the establishment of Islam. The dictates of the Almighty Allah through the Holy Quran and the firm clear authority of His last Messenger consolidated marriage as a strong and solid institution with all the trappings of legal, moral, social, cultural bindings. Islam gave marriage specific and clear rules and

regulations ensuring equality in partnership, establishing equal human rights, and judicious sharing of mutual owned wealth and property, between husband and wife. In fact, once contracted to a marriage, both husband and wife were bestowed with new changed legal status with new rights and obligations.

To the followers of Islam, Muslim men and women, marriage became a vitally important part of their lives as much as a half of their faith. Despite Muslims being converted from different and varied backgrounds, their marriages may reflect aspects of their previously practiced cultures, but never those conflicting with the rules and laws as laid down by Islam. Within the confines of marriage, Muslim men and women are to procreate, raise children as true followers, and assure their healthy life and settled future.

Our world today is again beset with the disease of ancient pagan way of life where marriage is no longer considered necessary, or even significant for a relationship; where marriage of same genders are seen as acceptable. Against such a wayward approach, Islam and Muslims have been able to stand as an unwavering bulwark protecting the sanctity of marriage. Thus, many of those with a stint of eventual frustrating pagan way of life are turning to Islam to find solace and comfort in this increasingly troublesome complex world. Indeed, for only Islam and the Islamic way of life still offers hope and peace to all who wish to know and follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the preaching of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him).

References

1. "Family Values", written by A.Z.M. Shamsul Alam, chapter: Polygamy in Islam, page no 187-193.
2. "Favorite Prophet (SM)", part-one, written by Shishir Das, Publisher Alhaj KM Mahmudur Rahman, chapter-2, page no 3-5.
3. "Introductory Sociology" (Course No-6201), written and edited by Md Abdus Salam, Mohammad Quamruzzaman, Dipa Rani and Sofiar Rahman (Liton), chapter-Social Institution: "Family and Marriage", page no -190.
4. "Introductory Sociology" (Course No-6201), written and edited by Md Abdus Salam, Mohammad Quamruzzaman Dipa Rani and Sofiar Rahman (Liton), chapter-Culture, page no-92.
5. "Muslim Family Law and Court" (Bengali Book), written by Qamrul Islam, chapter: Pre-Islam Polygamy, page no-12-13.
6. "The Encyclopedia of Islam (1995)", Edited by C E Bosworth, Volume -7, Chapter-Nikah, page no -27.
7. Articles: "Marriage Is a Basis for Blessing Complete Concealment of Women", by Shaikh Musa Ibrahim Menak, in Arshad's page (www.google.com) on Islam.
8. Islami Bishawkosh, chapter- Nikah, page no-102.
9. References of 'Al-Bukhari and Muslim Sharif', taken from the book (Bengali) 'Quran and Hadith Sanchayan (Collection), written by Prof Maulana Atiqur Rahman Bhuiyan, Bhuiyan Publishers (Prokashani), chapter: Duty to Parents, page no-93.
10. References of Hadiths (Al-Bukhari and Al-Mishkat Sharif) taken from the book "Muslims' Marriage" written in Bengali, by Abdullah Mamun Arif, Quran - Hadith Research Centre (an

Institution of Furfura Sharif Research Centre), Chapter- Wedding, page no - 7.

11. The Holy Quran (With Arabic Text), Translation of verses (v) is heavily based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali. [Note: 'c' means chapter (Sura Number and 'v' means verse of the Book]
12. Workshop for the media personnel on “Human Rights Reporting” organized by Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC), in association with International Federation of Journalism (IFJ), held on July 28-29, 2007, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.”

- Kofi Annan