Islam and Fertility Regulations

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Abstract—Islam has a general principle of increase in population. But the Muslims are equally obliged to take care of health, education and the provisions etc. for their offspring and wives in the best possible way. The Muslims would have to regulate and manage the number of children, if any situation affects their duties regarding their wives or children. Islam accomplishes permissibility of temporary blockage in human fertility if someone faces any problem regarding health of mother or children. During the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW), coitus interruptus was the only way for temporary spacing between the children. In technologically developed environment, the same can be resort through some advanced methodology or instrument of temporary blockade. Solid grounds are available in Islam that the fertility rate should be managed if any of the aspect of human quality is being affected.

Keywords—Islam, Fertility Regulations, Muslims, Qur'an.

ISLAM AND FERTILITY REGULATIONS

Allah Almighty (SWT) has created the human being commensurate with the nature, the same nature the great Deen Islam has been accomplished upon. As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

فَأَقْفَمُ وَجِهَتُكَ لَذِينَ حَتَّىَ فَقَرَتُ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَقَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَى هَٰٓآذِنَّ الْكُفُّرِ وَلَكَنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَا يَعْمِنَ

And indeed We sent messengers before you and made for them wives and offspring. [2]

Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) also married and had children. All these prophets are to be followed and they are the people whom Muslims should look to emulate. Allah says:

أَوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فِيه́ٓمُ الْفَتْرَةَ

They are those whom Allah has guided. So follow their guidance. [3]

There are some references in Qur'an which mention the fact that the basic purpose of the marriage is increase in the offspring. The Holy Qur'an declares that children are a gift and a blessing from Allah. Allah mentions some of the bounties that He has bestowed upon mankind in the following verse:

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْقَرْنِينَ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَزْوَاجِ بَنِينَ وَحَدُّةً وَزَرَاقَمْ مِنَ الطِّيَابَاتِ

And Allah has made for you wives of your own kind, and has made for you, from your wives, sons and grandsons, and has bestowed on you good provision. [4]

The holy Qur'an also mentions:

المال والبلد ورثة الحياة الدنيا

Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. [5]

Islam has forbidden celibacy (living without marriage), monasticism (life of monks & nuns) and castration (removal of the male glands) for the reason that is contrary to the human nature as well as Islam. The Holy Prophet (SAW) made this clear when he told those companions who were considering acetic forms of life and determined to be unmarried, to pray whole night and to have fast every day:

وَللهِ إِلَى نَحْشَأَكُمْ لَهُ وَإِلَى أَصِبْعَتِكُمْ لِلَّهِ أَصِبَّعُ عَظِيمٍ وَأَصِبَّعُ أَصِيلٍ وَأَرَادْتُ أَنْ أَغْلِبْ وَأَنْأَذَّرُ النُّسَاءَ فَمِنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سَلَتِي عَلَى مَنْي

By Allah! I am the most fearing of you from Allah and most pious of you but I fast and I break my fast; I pray and I sleep; and I marry women. Whosoever turns away from my way of life is not from me. [6]

The Holy Prophet (SAW) not only encouraged marriage but he encouraged marrying those women who are child-bearing. He stated:

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Marry the loving, child-bearing women for I shall have the largest numbers among the Nations. [7]

According to Abu Sa'id:

إِنْآ إِبَأَ سَفَبِيْنَ رَجَّلٌ مَسْتَفَيْنَ فَهَوْا عَلَى حُزْنٍ أَنْ آَطْعَمُ مُنْذَ ذِلَّةِ أَنْ لاَ يَعَيْبُكَ عَلَى نَعْلَتِكَ أَنْ تَعْمَلُهُمُ الْمَعْرُوفَ

Abu Sufyan (my husband) is a miser and does not spend enough on me and his children. He replied: Take whatever suffices you and your child within proper bounds. [11]

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said to his companion Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas (RAA):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَنْ نَقْلِفَ نَقْطَةً تَبْيِغَ بِهَا وَجَهَّ اللَّهَ إِلاَّ أَجْرَتْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى مَا تَجَلَّكَ فِي مَأْمَرُكَ

We rode out with the Prophet (pbuh) to raid Banu al-Mustaliq and captured some female prisoners . . . we desired women and abstinence became hard. [But] we wanted to practise 'azl; and asked the Prophet (pbuh) about it. He said, 'You do not have to hesitate, for Allah has predestined what is to be created until the judgement day.' [15]
temporary spacing based upon his own specific circumstances. During the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his companions Azl was the only way for temporary spacing between the children. In technologically developed environment, the same can be resort through some advanced methodology or instrument of temporary blockade. Though this management or planning could not be hundred percent result-oriented as the Holy Prophet (SAW) mentioned in the fore-cited Ahadith:

ما من نسمة كانة إلى يوم القيامة إلا وهي كانة

That soul must be created which is predestined to be created until the day of resurrection. [16]

Islam is a complete code of life and religion of pristine nature that covers all possible issues of human life. Islam accomplishes permissibility of controlling the increase in number of children if someone has any problem other than the financial constraint. Because Islam believes that the only true provider for all mankind is Allah. If Muslims follow what Allah has prescribed for them, Allah will provide for them. Allah has warned about killing one's children out of fear of poverty for either parents or the child. Allah says:

وَإِيَامُكُمْ نَزْرَةً وَإِيَامِنْ

Kill not your children because of poverty - We provide sustenance for you and for them. [17]

Allah also says:

وَإِيَامُكُمْ نَزْرَةً وَإِيَامِنْ

And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin. [18]

The fertility management by temporary means is not that of killing the children anyway. We have mentioned the above verses just to keep in mind that the financial issue should not be the ground for regulating the fertility. There could be so many other reasons to address the issue. Health of mother or children and unavailability of appropriate medical facilities could be regarded as proper legal ground to manage the fertility. The base could also be obtained from social, political or unhealthy moral circumstances. Though the quality of life (or living standard) has not been given much importance by Islam but the quality of human being is very important in the eyes of Islam. Solid grounds are available on the basis of above-mentioned Hadith that the fertility rate could be managed if any of the aspect of human quality is being affected. Islam furnishes topmost significance to the harmony, peace and smooth running of the society. Any action or policy which may contribute to the welfare of the society should be highly and widely appreciated. It is pleasing that Ministry of family planning has changed its name to ministry of population affairs few years ago if the targets have also been changed under the umbrella of Islam to provide the society with quality and welfare in real sense.

REFERENCES

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[2] (Ar-Raad 38)
[3] (Al-Anaam 90)
[4] (An-Nahl 72)
[5] (al-Kahf 46)
[6] (Al-Bukhari 4675)
[7] (Abu Dawood 1754)
[8] (Sahih Ibn Hibban 4103)
[9] (Al-Bukhaari, 2416; Muslim, 1829)
[10] (At-Talaq 7)
[12] (Al-Bukhari 2592 & Muslim 1628)
[13] (Al-Bukhari 4808)
[14] (Muslim 2610)
[15] (Al-Bukhari 3823)
[16] (Al-Bukhari 3823)
[17] (Al-Anaam 151)
[18] (Al-Isra 31)