

# Rights & Responsibilities of Husbands & Wives

**Description:** Rights of husbands and wives on each other will be discussed based on the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

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Objective:

- To learn the rights of husbands.
- To learn the rights of wives.
- To learn the basics of sexual conduct between the husband and wife.

Arabic Terms:

- *Mahr* - dowry, bridal gift, given from a man to his wife.
- *Ramadan* - The ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It is the month in which the obligatory fasting has been prescribed.

Islam clearly lays down rights and responsibilities of a husband over his wife and that of a wife over her husband. The idea that spouses have rights over one another is quite unique to Islam. What also makes it more amazing is how clearly they are laid out, so conflict can be minimized. Marriage counselors call it “expectations,” but do not have a clear idea of what those expectations should be. That is why they are left for a husband and wife to decide. Many times, they cannot decide or agree, thus ending the marriage.



What follows are some of the most important rights and responsibilities of husbands and wives. Few points must be kept in mind before reading them:

1. Allah is the source of these rights and responsibilities.
2. Just like a husband has rights over his wife, the wife has rights over her husband. They should both strive to fulfill each other’s rights to the best of their ability and forgive each other as much as possible if they fall short.

3. Both husband and wife must be moderate with respect to these rights and responsibilities. They should not remind the other of their rights in times of anger and quarrel to add more fuel. In other words, do **not** use your rights as instruments of abuse.

4. Many new Muslims read websites that specialize in Islamic legal rulings and books on Islamic jurisprudence as guides to better living. These resources usually provide the letter of the law, not necessarily the “spirit” of the law. The “spirit” of the law is to live in peace and harmony without disobeying Allah. Always remember that love, gentleness, and mercy are *essential* components of a happy, Islamic marriage.

## Rights of the Wife Over the Husband

Islam grants a wife rights over her Muslim husband. Some of them are financial, others are not.

### 1. **Mahr**

The woman has the financial right to receive *mahr*, or bridal gift, from her husband.

### 2. **Good Treatment**

The Quran puts great emphasis on treating the wife well. “**...And live with them in kindness...**” (Quran 4:19). In addition to the Quran, the Prophet of Allah has also stressed, ‘The most excellent of you is he who is best to his wife.’ (Tirmidhi)

A Muslim husband must remember the advise of his beloved Prophet, “Fear Allah in regard to women. You were given them as a **trust** from Allah and by the word of Allah they have become lawful for you.” (Muslim) A wife is a trust, neither a slave, nor a dog and must be treated as such.

### 3. **Financial Maintenance**

A wife has the right to financial maintenance, including food, clothing, and housing according to what the husband can afford. It is the husband’s responsibility to work and support his wife.

### 4. **Protection**

A husband must protect his wife including physical and emotional well being.

## Rights of the Husband Over the Wife

### 1. **Obedience**

In Islam, a wife is required to obey her husband in matters that do not involve disobeying Allah. This concept is totally alien to many Westerners, so please understand it well. In the West, they call this ‘control’ and sometimes ‘emotional abuse’. It is neither. Few important points must be kept in mind.

One, a wife must obey her husband in obedience to Allah. The Prophet said, ‘**If a woman**

**offers her five daily prayers, fasts the month of Ramadan, guards her chastity and obeys her husband, it will be said to her on the Day of Judgment, “Enter through any gate of Paradise you wish.”**” (Ibn Hibban)

Two, wife obeying her husband is not like a slave obeying the master! She is a free woman, not a slave. What this means is that her husband can not abuse his authority over his wife and act as a tyrant. He must remember that he is the servant of Allah and will be questioned about how he treats his wife.

Third, a husband must conduct the affairs of his family with mutual consultation with his wife, but in the end, he is the decision-maker and he will be responsible in front of Allah for his decision. A wife should not object to his decision-making authority and recognize that just like every company has a CEO, the “family” is like a company and the husband is its CEO. Remember, the husband has to balance his authority with good treatment that is the wife’s right over him.

## **2. Protecting the Honor & Dignity of the Husband**

She must protect his wealth and children, among other things, in his house. The Prophet Muhammad said, **“The wife is the guardian over the house of her husband and his children.”** (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim) She is required to raise his children upon Islamic values.

## **3. Not Leaving the House Without the Husband’s Permission**

The Prophet said, “If the wife of any of you should seek permission to go to the mosque, do not prevent her.” (Muslim) This does not mean she has to take his permission every time before she leaves the house, asking, “Can I leave?” What this means is that she should not go some place he does not approve of. It will minimize conflict and keep happiness in the family. An exception is the mosque. She can go to the mosque without her husband’s permission and approval.

## **4. Not Allowing Anyone to Enter His House Without His Permission**

The Prophet said, **“And your right over them is that they do not allow anyone whom you dislike to sit on your cushion.”**<sup>[1]</sup> Once again, what this means is not to let anyone in the house who the husband disapproves of to minimize conflict and maintain harmony.

## **5. Concealing Bedroom Secrets**

Neither spouse should talk about their sex lives with friends and family members. It is considered inappropriate, indecent, and shameful. Both should respect each other’s privacy in this regard.

Sexual intercourse is a right they both have on each other. Each spouse has a right to intercourse. Vaginal intercourse is prohibited during a woman’s menstrual cycle and post-natal bleeding. Anal intercourse is severely prohibited at all times.

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Endnotes:

[\[1\] Saheeh Muslim](#)

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