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The Noble Life of The Prophet

(Peace be upon him)

Volume

1

By:

Dr. 'Ali Muhammad As-Sallaabee



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the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indeed, all praise is for Allah; we praise Him, repent to Him, and seek His forgiveness and help. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own selves and of our wicked deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, none can lead astray; and whomsoever Allah leads astray, none can guide. And I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, and He has no partner; and I bear witness that our Prophet Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (١٠٢)

"O you who believe! Fear Allah (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. (Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always), and die not except in the state of Islam (as Muslims) (with complete submission to Allah)." (Qur'an 3: 102)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ (١)

"O mankind be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever and All-Watcher over you." (Qur'an 4:1)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۖ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَكَذَّبَ فَازْهَبْ عَنِ عَرْشِهِ عَظِيمًا﴾ (٧)

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good

countries – Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Syria – have made valuable contributions, through discussions, correspondences, and meetings at seminars. Some provided me with rare manuscripts; others provided valuable advice on what themes I should stress; and yet others made various contributions, each in his unique way.

To be sure, I do not claim to have surpassed my predecessors. The stature of the Prophet ﷺ is great indeed; to comprehensively discuss just some aspects of his wonderful character and life requires a researcher with more time, stronger faith, a deeper understanding, and a greater intelligence than I possess. Nor do I claim infallibility, for Allah's protection from error is specific to the Messengers ﷺ and Prophets ﷺ. Whoever thinks that he has all knowledge, even of a particular subject of study, is ignorant of his own self. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾ (٨٥)

"And they ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) concerning the Rooh (the spirit); Say: "The Rooh (the spirit): it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little." (Qur'an 17: 85)

Knowledge is an ocean that has no shore. Ath-Tha'aalabee said, "Whenever anyone writes a book, he wishes on every day other than the day on which he completed it, to add to it, or to delete from it. That is the effect that one night has; then how about a number of years!" Conveying a similar sentiment, Al-'Imaad Al-Asbahaanee said, "I noticed that whenever someone finishes writing a book, he says on the day after he completed it, 'Had this been changed, it (the book) would have been better. Had this been added, that would have been a welcome (change). Had this been brought forward, it (the book) would have been better. Had this been left off, it would have been more beautiful.' This

(phenomenon) is one of the greatest of lessons (for mankind), for it proves that imperfection has a strong hold over human beings."

I hope from Allah ﷻ that I have done this work sincerely for His Countenance. I ask Him ﷻ to make this book beneficial to His slaves, to reward me for every letter that I wrote, to place this effort in my scale of good deeds, and to reward my brothers who untiringly helped me to finish this book.

"How perfect You are O Allah, and I praise You. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except you. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance."

One who is in dire need of his Lord's forgiveness and Good Pleasure.

'Alee Muhammad As-Sallaabee

2001 – 1422H

Some Important Historical Events Before The Advent Of Islam, Until, The Beginning Of Revelation

I

The Dominant Empires Of The World Prior To The Advent Of Islam

The Roman Empire

The eastern part of the Roman Empire was known as the Byzantine Empire, which ruled over, among other lands: Asia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Northern Africa; and its capital was Constantinople. It was a wicked Empire that subjected its citizens to oppression and wrongdoing. As is almost always the case when an occupying foreign force rules over the native inhabitants of a land, violent tactics were employed to bring the population under control. The empire showed no mercy to the populations they ruled. So desperate did the economic situation become for Syria's inhabitants that people would sell their children and use the proceeds of the sale to pay off their debts.

The Byzantines lived lives that were replete with contradictions. On the one hand, religion was deeply ingrained in people's minds and monasticism was widespread. In fact, it was not uncommon for a common man to enter into deeply arcane religious research. But on the other hand, the population had become engrossed in frivolous, and often outright evil, forms of entertainment. Stadiums that could accommodate 80,000 spectators were built. The main sporting events that took place in them consisted of gladiators fighting one another to the death, and at times gladiators were even pitted against predatory animals. While

such sport was the entertainment of the common man, and while unspeakably cruel punishment was his lot if he committed an offence, the rulers and higher classes lived lives of opulence and decadence.

The Persian Empire

The Persian Empire was greater and stronger than the Byzantine Empire. False religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Mithraism, dominated the lands of Persia. The kings of Persia – the crown would pass from father to son – were extremely corrupt; they acted with impunity because they believed themselves to have been descended from their gods. Anything that was produced in Persia became the property of the kings, who would spend what came to them with almost unimaginable extravagance.




Many farmers left their lands and sought refuge in places of worship, fleeing either from exorbitant taxes or forced entry into the army. For the people of Persia were used as mere pawns in the wars that would intermittently be waged between the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire; and of course, the citizens had nothing to benefit from such wars; it was only the kings who stood to gain profit.


India

Before the advent of Islam, at around the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian calendar, India was immersed in ignorance. Obscene acts, which were considered holy by India's inhabitants, were perpetrated in houses of worship. Women were considered to be of no value. That many women would burn themselves to death upon the death of their husbands clearly indicated their standing in society. And if a woman did live on after her husband's death, it was forbidden for her to remarry. India was isolated from the world, which of course led to widespread ignorance. Its inhabitants forced upon themselves absurdly strict dietary rules. And those who were considered outcasts in society were forced to live outside the boundaries of the city.

Supported by political and religious law, the caste system made a clear distinction between the various classes of society. At the top of the hierarchy were the Brahmans – priests and scholars; then the Kshatriyas – warriors and rulers; the Vaisyas – merchants, traders, and farmers; and lastly the Sudras – artisans, laborers, servants, and slaves. The law gave the Brahmans the right to act with impunity; as for the Sudras, they didn't have the right to own property, to sit alongside Brahmans, or to read religious books. There was another caste whose members were ranked beneath the Sudras; they were called the 'untouchables,' and they were forced to do hard, menial, and highly unpleasant labor.

A Synopsis Of The Dominant Religions Of The World Prior To The Advent Of Islam

Before the advent of Islam, human beings were living through one of the worst periods of human history. The line of Prophets from the descendants of Ishaq  had come to an end with the ascension of Jesus  to the heavens. In the centuries that followed, belief in the trinity gained more and more acceptance among Christians, until, around the beginning of the sixth century, only a handful of people still believed in the Islamically Monotheistic teachings of Jesus .

The entire world was engulfed in darkness. Describing the period prior to his Prophethood, the Messenger of Allah  said, "Verily, Allah looked at the inhabitants of the world and despised them, both the Arabs and foreigners among them, except for some remnants from the People of the Book (i.e., those among them who still believed in pure Islamic Monotheism)." Polytheism and idol worship had become widespread. Some people apostatized from their religion; others didn't follow any religion at all, other than ritualistic acts of worship they performed to idols; and others believed in a distorted form of a divinely revealed religion. In short, almost all of the inhabitants of earth were living in a state of darkness and ignorance.

(i.e., as Muslims, as people who are inherently inclined towards *Tawheed* and away from polytheism). Devils indeed came to them; have taken them away from their religion, and have made forbidden upon them that which I have made lawful for them; and have ordered them to associate as partner to Me that with which I have not sent down any authority.' And indeed, Allah looked at the inhabitants of earth and despised them, both the Arabs and foreigners among them, except for some remnants from the People of the Book (i.e., those who still believed in Islamic Monotheism)."[1]

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*, "The Book of Paradise," chapter, "The Qualities by which the People of Paradise and the People of the Hellfire are Distinguished in this World" *Hadeeth* Number: 2865.

2

The Early Arabs And Their Civilizations

The Early Arabs

Based on the different descendants of today's Arabs, historians have classified early Arabs into three categories:

1) The *Al-Baa'idah* Arabs

They are from the tribes of 'Aad, Thamood, Al-'Amaaliqah, Tasm, Jadees, Umaim, Jurhum, Hadramoot, and those that are closely linked with them. Prior to the advent of Islam, the *Al-Baa'idah* Arabs were wiped off of the face of the earth, leaving no descendants behind. But while they did roam the earth, they had kings whose dominions extended to Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions) and Egypt.

2) The *Al-'Aaribah* Arabs

These are the Arabs who are descended from the line of Ya'rob ibn Yashjub ibn Qahtaan; they are called the *Al-Qahtaaniiyyah* Arabs, and they are also known as the Southern Arabs. The kings of Yemen were *Al-'Aaribah* Arabs, as were the people from the kingdoms of Ma'een, Saba, and Himyar.

3) The *'Adnaaniyyah* Arabs

They are called the *'Adnaaniyyah* because they are descended from

Naufal, Al-Muttalib, and Haashim. It was from the household of Al-Muttalib that Allah ﷻ chose our beloved Prophet, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib ibn Haashim. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Indeed, Allah chose Kinaanah from the children of Ismaa'eel; He chose Quraish from Kinaanah; He chose the children of Haashim from Quraish; and He chose me from the children of Haashim."^[1]

The Civilizations Of The Early Arabs

1) The civilization of Saba (Sheeba) in Yemen

It was in Yemen that the people of this civilization lived and prospered, benefiting greatly from the copious rainfall that Allah ﷻ blessed them with. Using great engineering skill, they built dams, the most famous of them being the Ma'rib dam. They used the water that was held up to irrigate their fields; they had gardens in which grew all kinds of trees, vegetation, and luscious fruits. But they were ungrateful to Allah ﷻ, Who then punished them with a great flood. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ آيَةٌ جَنَّتَانِ عَنْ يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُمْ بَلَدَهُ طَيِّبَةً وَرَبُّ غَفُورٌ ۝ فَاعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتِ أُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَأَثَلٍ وَشَيْءٍ مِّن سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ ۝ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَهُمْ فِي جُحَرٍ ۖ إِلَّا الْكَافِرَ ۝﴾ (٧)

"Indeed there was for Saba' (Sheba) a sign in their dwelling-place, - two gardens on the right hand and on the left (and it was said to them) "Eat of the provision of your Lord, and be grateful to Him, a fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord. But they turned away (from the obedience of Allah), so We sent against them Sail Al-'Arim (flood released from the dam), and We converted their two gardens into gardens producing bitter bad fruit, and

^[1] Saheeh Muslim, "The Book of Virtues"; chapter, "The Superiority of the Prophet's Lineage." Hadeeth number: 2276.

tamarisks, and some few lote trees. Like this We requited them because they were ungrateful disbelievers. And never do We requite in such a way except those who are ungrateful, (disbelievers)." (Qur'an 34: 15-17)

It is indicated in the Qur'an that, in past times, there were a series of inhabited cities or villages that extended from Yemen to the lands of Al-Hijaz (Makkah, Al-Madeenah, Taa'if, etc.), and then continued further northwards to the lands of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions). Consequently, trading caravans that traveled from Yemen to the lands of Ash-Sham always had plentiful supplies of shade, water, and food along the way. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرًى ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ سِيرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيَ وَأَيَّامًا آمِنِينَ ۝ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَزَقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَقٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ۝﴾ (١٩)

"And We placed between them and the towns which We had blessed, towns easy to be seen, and We made the stages (of journey) between them easy (saying): "Travel in them safely both by night and day." But they said: "Our Lord! Make the stages between our journey longer," and they wronged themselves, so We made them as tales (in the land), and We dispersed them all, totally. Verily, in this are indeed signs for every steadfast grateful (person)." (Qur'an 34: 18, 19)

2) The civilization of 'Ad

The people of 'Ad lived in the northern part of Hadramoont. They lived in lofty buildings, were skilled in various trades, and were blessed with springs, fields, and gardens. And it was to them that Allah ﷻ sent Prophet Hood عليه السلام. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلَا نَنْعُونَ ۝﴾ (١٢٤) *إِنِّي لَكَ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ*

3

Politics, Religion, Economics, And The Overall Condition Of Arabs Prior To Islam

Religion

Overall, the world status of Arabs prior to Islam was nothing to boast about; at best, they deserved a mention only in the footnotes section of a historical study of the era. The political and legal structure of Arab societies was in chaos; the belief system was absurd. At the best of times, they were no better than underlings of either the Persian or Roman Empire.

Arabs glorified and blindly followed the religion of their fathers and grandfathers, no matter how misguided and superstitious their beliefs were. And so they faithfully worshipped idols. Every tribe had its own idol: Hudhail ibn Mudrikah worshipped Suwaa'; the tribe of Kalb worshipped Wadd; Mudhaj worshipped Yahghooth; Khayawaan worshipped Ya'ooq; and Himyar worshipped Nasr. Both the Khuzaa'ah and Quraish tribes worshipped Isaaf and Naailah. The idol Manaaf was situated on the seashore, and was glorified by all Arabs in general, and by the Aus and Khazraj tribes in particular. The idol Al-Laaf was in Thaqeef, and Al-'Uzzaa was situated above Dhaaf 'Ariq; these latter two idols were considered by the Quraish to be the greatest of idols.

Other than these main idols, Arabs worshipped a countless number of lesser idols – idols that individuals could take along on journeys

and that were small enough to be carried around or placed in homes. In his *Saheeh Bukhaaree* related that Abu Rajaa Al-Utaaridee said, "We used to worship a stone. If we found a better stone, we would shoot the first one away and take the second one (as an idol). And if we could find no stone, we would gather a mound of earth; then we would bring a sheep and milk it over (the mound). And then we would walk around it (as an act of worship)."^[1]

Such polytheistic practices prevented Arabs from knowing Allah ﷻ, glorifying Him, and having faith in Him ﷻ. They claimed that the idols were only intermediaries between them and Allah ﷻ, but that was of course an unacceptable excuse, if they even meant it is an excuse. Their idols and the practice of idol worship controlled their hearts, deeds, and all aspects of their lives, thus leaving little room in their hearts for the glorification of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَى يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴾ (36)

"It is only those who listen (to the Message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), will respond (benefit from it), but as for the dead (disbelievers), Allah will raise them up, then to Him they will be returned (for their recompense)." (Qur'an 6: 36)

Only remnants of the religion of Ibraaheem ﷺ – which had reigned supreme in the early days of Makkah – remained, and even those remnants were subject to distortion. True, Arabs performed pilgrimage to Makkah; but they came to worship idols, and the pilgrimage season was a time not of piety, but of mutual boasting over worldly glories. As for the purely Monotheistic beliefs of Ibraaheem ﷺ, Arabs added superstition and falsehood to them, thus making it very hard to see in the new beliefs the original teachings of Islamic Monotheism. And as such, Arabs had cut off all religious ties to Ibraaheem ﷺ; in fact, they were closest in their beliefs and practices not to the People of the Book, but to the polytheistic Brahmans and Buddhists of India.

^[1] *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, "The Book of Battles"; chapter, "The Delegates of Banu Haneefah, and the Hadeeth of Thumaamah ibn Uthaal." *Hadeeth* number: 4376.

Despite widespread ignorance and polytheism, there were some individuals, albeit very few in number, who refused to worship idols, and instead worshipped Allah ﷻ alone. They are now known as the *Hunafaa*, which is the plural of the word *Haneef*, a person who is a pure Islamic Monotheist. They are called *Hunafaa* because they were following the religion of Ibraaheem ﷺ, whom Allah ﷻ referred to in the Qur'an as being *Haneef*. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ (١٧)

"Ibraaheem (Abraham) was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Hanifaa (Islamic Monotheism – to worship none but Allah Alone) and he was not of the Al-Mushrikun."
(Qur'an 3: 67)

One such *Haneef* was Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail – may Allah have mercy on him – who refused to worship idols and to eat Islamically unlawful food, such as blood, an animal that is slaughtered by other than Allah's Name, or an animal that is not slaughtered but dies of natural causes.

Another example of a *Haneef* – a pure Monotheist who followed the religion of Ibraaheem ﷺ and Ismaa'eel ؑ – was Qiss ibn Saa'idah Al-Iyaadee. Qiss worshipped Allah alone, without associating any partner with Him in worship; and he was known for his intelligence, wisdom, insight, and noble character. He believed in resurrection after death, and would, prior to the advent of Islam, give glad tidings about the coming of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In *Dalaail An-Nubuwwah*, Abu Nu'aim related that Ibn 'Abbaas ؓ said, "Verily, Qiss ibn Saa'idah would preach to his people in the marketplace ('Ukaadh); he said in one of his sermons, 'The truth shall become known from this direction,' and he pointed with his hands towards Makkah. They (i.e., the people gathered around him) said, 'And what is this truth (or who is the bearer of this truth)?' He said, 'A man from

the children of Luai ibn Ghaalib will invite you to the Word of Sincerity (the phrase of *Tawheed*), to the eternal life, and to bliss and happiness that never ends. So when he invites you, answer him (by accepting his message). Were I to know that I will live until the time he is sent, I (would consequently know that I) will be the first who will hasten to him (in order to become a follower)."

Qiss did end up being a contemporary of the Prophet ﷺ, but he died before the Prophet ﷺ received revelation for the first time.

Some Arabs became Christians; others became Jews; but neither Christianity nor Judaism had a substantial number of followers in the Arabian Peninsula. For that matter, even planet worship and Magianism caught on to a very limited degree among Arabs. Despite the presence of minority religious groups in the Arabian Peninsula, the vast majority of Arabs were – until the advent of Islam – die-hard idol worshippers.

The Political Situation Of The Arabian Peninsula

The inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula were of two kinds: the nomadic desert dweller (Bedouin) and the city dweller. Tribal laws and customs prevailed all over Arabia, even among the more civilized kingdoms of that region, such as the kingdom of Yemen in the south, the kingdom of Al-Heerah in the northeast, and the kingdom of Al-Ghasaasinah in the northwest.

A tribe was a group of people who were linked to one another through blood relation. It was the laws and customs of each tribe that dictated the relation between the individual and the group as well as the rights that were due to and obligatory upon – depending on the case – each member of the tribe. For example, the chief of a tribe had many rights over his people, but they too had rights over him. There were a number of factors that made a tribe member suitable for the position of chief – his status, generosity, character, bravery, and so on. The chief of a given tribe had the right to be honoured and obeyed by his people; if there was a dispute, his judgment was final. He had monetary rights as

Arab Society

Like most primitive cultures, customs and traditions passed down through the generations dictated the social norms of Arabs, the social status of individual tribesman, the relations between fellow tribesmen, and the relations between one tribe and another. The following are some of the basic realities of Arab society prior to the advent of Islam:

1) There was no limit to the degree to which the nobility felt proud about their ancestry and ranking in society

Arabs were obsessed with the idea of preserving their pure blood, and so they would not intermarry with other races. Islam brought an end to that, making it clear to Arabs that the only factors that make one person superior to the next are piety and good deeds.

2) Arabs were also obsessed with eloquent speech and purity of language

Perhaps the reason why poetry had a strong hold on the hearts and minds of Arabs is that it was the most beautiful way of expressing and recording for posterity – when a poem was especially good – facts about their noble lineages. It is not surprising, therefore, that Arab societies produced so many wonderful poets and public speakers. A single line of poetry had the potential of raising or lowering the status of a tribe. So just as a modern day country becomes thrilled when its favourite sporting team performs at a world-class level, an Arab tribe would become overjoyed if one of its members became a skilled poet.

3) Women were treated like merchandise

At least among most tribes, women were on an equal par with merchandise, in a very literal sense, for they were passed down through inheritance. If a man died, his wife was passed down to his eldest son – provided, of course, that she was not his actual mother. He then had the right to marry her, or even to prevent her

from remarrying. This practice continued until Islam expressly forbade a man from marrying the wife of his father. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَجِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (٢٢)

“And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed; indeed it was shameful and most hateful, and an evil way.” (Qur’an 4: 22)

Despite their deviant sexual practices, Arabs did forbid at least some forms of incestuous marriage, such as marriage with one’s mother, daughter, grandmother, sister, and aunt.

Women were oppressed in other ways as well; for example, women – as well as children – were not allowed to inherit wealth, for the entire estate of the deceased went only to those who could fight and help protect the tribe. It was not a written law that women couldn’t inherit wealth, but it was a practice recognized through established custom, and custom often had more force than legislated law. In this regard, the situation of women changed with the advent of Islam, with the death of Aus ibn Thaabit ؓ. Aus ؓ left behind two unsightly daughters and one very young son. His two nephews came and seized his entire estate, which they would have had the right to do (according to pre-Islamic customs) had they done so during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. Aus’s wife pleaded with them, suggesting that they marry Aus’s two daughters, who could have then benefited at least in some way from their father’s wealth. But the two nephews refused, primarily because of the unsightliness of the two daughters. Aus’s wife then went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, “O Messenger of Allah, Aus has died, and has left behind a young son and two daughters. His two nephews, Suwaid and ‘Arfatah, came and seized his entire estate. I said to them, ‘Marry his two daughters,’ but they refused.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ commanded the two nephews, saying, “Do not move (or spend or use) anything at all from the