

# HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

*Dr Muhammad Hammad Lakhvi\**

Western thought has evolved and developed through centuries to reach its current situation. Liberties and freedom from each kind of restraint has been achieved in the name of democracy, eventually, after a long way struggle. Though, a lot of historical social, political, economic and religious factors have played their role through times in formation and development of Western thought, but role of three major aspects has been vital and basic. These prominent past features in the background of Western thought are Greek ideology, Roman political and social approach and massive revolt against the religious movement of Christianity. Political and social reforms by Solon in ancient Greece and afterward, thoughts imparted by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were the basic components of Greek ideology which stirred the Western minds giving them a dimension towards free thinking. Subsequently, Polybius and Cicero contributed towards political and social rights in Roman era. Public revulsion against authority of Christian Pope finalized the atmosphere for growth of modern Western mind set. The paper reflects different aspects of the fact.

Western political thought has evolved and developed through centuries to reach its current situation. Liberties and freedom from each kind of restraint has been achieved in the name of democracy, eventually, after a long way struggle. Though, a lot of historical social, political, economic and religious factors have played their role through times in formation and development of Western thought, but role of three major aspects has been vital and basic. These prominent past features in the background of Western thought are Greek ideology, Roman political and social approach and massive revolt against the religious movement of Christianity.

## **(1) Greek Philosophy**

Ancient Greece was divided into so many small independent city states. Two states, Sparta and Athens, had become prominent and well-known after going through some evolution process. In Sparta, a strict slavery system prevailed through long time and individual liberty did not exist. But human freedom blinked there in Athens intermittently. The system of government remained changing due to development of different political movements in Athens and hence, populace enjoyed freedom from undue restraints and could be able to play a vital role in the fields of

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- <sup>40</sup> . An-Nisa, 4:34
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- <sup>42</sup> . An-Nisa, 4:34
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Ahmed highlights this situation with these words "the husband assumes the role of ruler, superior, controller, oppressor and master, while the wife on the other hand, is reduced to a slave, a captive, a low, inferior and submissive creature."<sup>44</sup>

### Epilogue:

In short, this relationship is very precious, societal development depends on its solidarity; we should try to bring happiness to this life. Breakage of this blissful relation makes life of spouses and their offspring like a desert where every person suffers. This life, soothes our physical and psychological desires satisfactory, it is responsibility of the whole society to cater strength for this lovely and peace giving institution.

Parents must train their children, both male and female, for marital responsibilities. In our religion and society male is more responsible for the betterment of family, so he must treat nicely and softly. Forgiveness and patience is key to success and will make this life sound, peaceful and healthy.

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It is, however, the duty of a pious lady that in the event of clash with her husband, she should overcome her anger considering her husband to be the head of the family. Due to the husband's love his wife, the latter must also please him, be solicitous for his ease and comfort and have respect for and honour him. A husband who showers all his love and affection on his wife and spends his hard earned money to provide her comforts and amenities, taking her to be the centre of his devotions must be respected and honoured by his wife.<sup>41</sup>

The Holy Quran guides to solve the conflict between spouses in this manner.

Allah Almighty says in Quran

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا.<sup>42</sup>

And if you fear a breach between them twain (the men and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk.

Hedrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi gives the following comments on this verse:

And the women who are arrogant in their behavior should be first admonished. If they do not change their behaviour, do not share their bed. If they still disobey you beat them not causing any injury. If they obey you, do not commit aggression on them on one or another pretext. If the circumstances are such that there is risk of the situation being worsened, a judge who is competent to resolve the dispute may be appointed from either side who should investigate the matter and admonish those at fault, the husband or wife, or both. If the judges are sincere in their mission, they would by Allah's favour succeed in effecting a reconciliation between them. Allah is all knowing, all aware. Allah knows how mutual love can be restored between them and when he sees the good intention of the judge, He will guide them on the right lines. The judges must sincerely try to remove the doubts and suspicions existing in the mind of husband and wife and patch up the differences between them. The husband and wife should also cooperate with the judges and act upon the decision arrived at by them.<sup>43</sup>

Now a day's, most people do not care for kindness and behave strictly to their wives and treat them like slaves. Nascem

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) on the occasion of the Hajj-atul-Wida addressing a very large gathering, said: "Listen to me, O People! Treat your women nicely as they are under your control. You have no authority to maltreat them except when if they misbehave."<sup>33</sup>

If a man doesn't like his wife, Islam forbids him to hate and ignore his wife. Allah exalted directed Muslim in Quran

فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا<sup>34</sup>.

"For of you dislike her (for same reasons) it may happen you hate a thing wherein Allah has placed much good (for you)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has explained this point by saying

لا يفرک مؤمن مؤمنة إن کره منها خفا رضی منها آخر<sup>35</sup>

A Muslim should not hate his Muslim wife, if he dislikes some habits of his wife, if it is just possible that he may like some other traits in her.

The kind and benevolent treatment of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) towards his wives is a practical example for all the believers. He never even thought of giving physical punishment to his wives.<sup>36</sup>

In order to ensure discipline and stability in domestic life, men have been given more responsibility over women. The Holy Prophet (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) has taught that a mumin should be an embodiment of virtues and of excellent moral conduct and behavior and that the best of you in this respect are the kindest of you to their wives.<sup>37</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) has observed.

"The most perfect of the believers in faith is the best of them in moral excellence, and the best of you the kindest of you to their wives."<sup>38</sup>

One main aim and object of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) in calling for the meeting of the Ummahat-ul-Muminin (mothers of the believers) in Madinah, eight or nine years before his death was, besides other thing, to give a practical lesson that mutual love and harmony should exist between husband and wife.<sup>39</sup>

Allah the exalted has said in the Holy Quran.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ.<sup>40</sup>

Men are in charge of women because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property.

physical and mental health problems effect the divorced. Data collected by Gollagher, for instance, found that divorced and separated individuals have worst health status.<sup>27</sup>

After divorce, women especially in Pakistan setup are left in critical situation. Their readjustment in society is likely to be a serious problem affecting not only their individual personalities but also the one related to them and sometimes whole society. But proper socialization is only possible if families are integrated, on the other hand if family life is broken, this function is disturbed and family life may produce maladjusted personalities that may cause serious social problems.<sup>28</sup>

### **Remedies to reduce divorce rate:**

Marriage is very important decision in one's life, and should be taken, only when one is mature enough to handle all that is outcome of this bond. Compromise is key to the success in marital life, parent must train their children to compromise with others "The potent cure to most marital problems is for each spouse to be kind to the others. In this regards a women would do well to take the first step"<sup>29</sup> Privacy of matters also be maintained. "They are the wise husband and wife who strive to resolve their problems on their own unless, of course, the situation becomes so dire that outside help is needed."<sup>30</sup> Rushing to the courthouse for the most trifling of reasons, some times makes problems more complicated. "It is also important to understand that judges can not help to resolve problem it is such that they can only be resolved in private, without the intrusion of a judge. They are problems that cannot be resolve by force or by a court order, they can only be resolved when both husband and wife act based on their religious and moral consciences or, if things get really bad, when they choose wise and just arbitrators from within their families. When marital conflict is taken before a judge, very few couples are saved from divorce.<sup>31</sup> Proper and necessary training must be given to the persons before entering in the contract, both should know their liabilities and responsibilities of marital life and way to handle marital strife carefully. In joint family system, people should know the limitation of their authority and sensitivity of privacy.

Allah has decreed:

وَعَايِشُوا مَعَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ.<sup>32</sup>

And live with them in a proper manner

women, who are financially strong, are less willing to work on their marriages and can quickly opt for divorce."<sup>23</sup>

When women earn themselves, husband mostly do not care for their maintenance responsibility in this way conflict arises. Sometimes earning women do not pay due respect to their husbands.

In the last two decades there is a substantial raise in divorce in Pakistan, there are few reasons behind this whole dilemma such as lack of patience and tolerance towards each other, lack of spousal respect, forced marriages, child marriages, emotional instability, verbal or physical abuse, cultural clash, third party intrusion and change in attitude towards divorce.

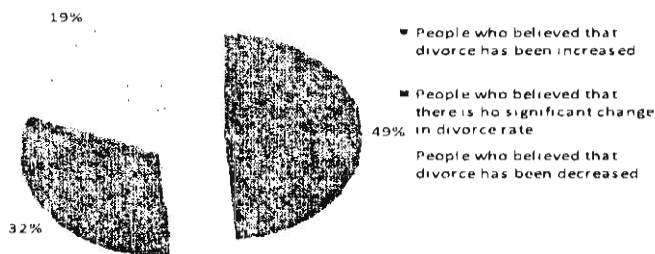
### **Impacts of divorce**

Islam provides laudable family laws which protects this centre of peace and tranquility and imposes checks to break this shelter of civilization. Our peace giving religion does not appreciate divorce because breakage of marital contract brings ruins to children as well as spouses. After divorce a child has to choose either his mother or father, in this situation he is deprived of sound love, care and affection. These broken families can not bring up children as a healthy and balanced person because of single parent hood.

"The family additionally provides such other socially beneficial functions as the, rearing and socialization of children, along with such humanitarian activities as caring for its members when they are sick or disable. On the economic side, the family provides food, shelter, clothing and physical security for its members. Finally, on the social side, the family may serve to promote order and stability within society as a whole."<sup>24</sup> In case of divorce, all above said blessings are dispursed, consequently, whole society suffers, social evils such as murder and other crimes prevail in society indirectly. It also causes many psychological problems to effectees of divorce. That is why, the shaitan, the worst enemy of a Muslim, confers awards to his such agents who are successful in breaking family life, he manages to stir up discord between a man and his wife.<sup>25</sup>

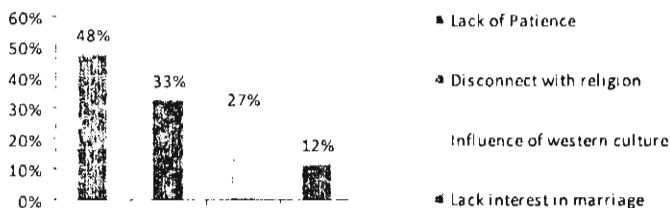
Divorced families have higher rates of clinical depression. Family disruption and low socio-economic status in early childhood increase the long-term risk for major depression.<sup>26</sup>

It is widely known that widows are at high risk of medical illness, a number of studies show that, generally, even more



Amongst various factors causing an increase in divorce rate, lack of patience top the list as cited by 48% followed by disconnect with religion (33%) influence of western culture (27%), women giving priority to their career (12%) and men's lack of interest in their marriage.<sup>21</sup>

#### Factors causing divorce



Bernama, in his study identified seven factors as the main causes of divorce among couples living in Asian countries; those are failure by husbands and wives in discharging their responsibilities, low grounding in religion, interference by third parties, differences in culture, sexual problems, money and careers.<sup>22</sup>

There are some other causes that contribute in the occurrence of divorce, these are poor communication, financial problems, lack of commitment to the marriage, dramatic change in priorities, infertility, failed expectations or unmet needs, addictions and lack of conflict resolving skills.

"The most important factor which is contributing in high rate of divorce in Pakistan is financial independence of women, lack of compromise from both sides and intolerant attitude. Women are acquiring higher education and contributing their due share in every sector of society and they are not a burden any more. Working



In September 2007, 1213 cases were registered in family courts, 795 cases were of dissolution of marriage among them<sup>10</sup> According to the statistics retrieved from the court of senior civil judge Lahore, from January to April 2008, 3523 cases were registered only in four months, about 80 to 85 cases are being registered daily<sup>11</sup> According to the same court of Faisalabad, 1466 cases were, registered in this period.<sup>12</sup>

Shazia Rasheed advocate told that divorce percentage has raised 50% to 60% a survey report about family cases shows that every fourth couple gets rid of their marital union.<sup>13</sup> A large number of "fatawas" are about marital discord, 85% percent questions are about family matters particularly divorce and triple divorce.<sup>14</sup> Marital discords are abundant, causing lot of discontentment to a blissful married life. Faiz Hassan sial did a research in 1998, about martial disagreements, result was very shocking, 90% couples were not satisfied with their marital life, they were agree to leave their spouses if they had a choice to do so, and had a better settlement.<sup>15</sup>

### **Causes of increasing divorce rate**

Family life needs care, patience and peaceful behavior, but if the couple is not able to show the proper handling of family problems, then family life suffers and even meets with breakage.

Dr. Jamal al Touwayribi (children psychiatrist in King Fahad Hospital) "said the causes of divorce is lack of understanding in couples, parents do not train their children to solve problems"<sup>16</sup> According to Dr. Ebtisam Halwani's study, causes of increase in divorce are torture and ill treatment of male partner.<sup>17</sup> Prof. Abdullah Al Fauzan said 55% divorce occurred on account of second marriage and 38% caused by mal relations of husband to other women.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes, reason of divorce is very minor and trifling, for instance a Sudian divorced his wife and Egyptian killed just because of purchasing tomato.<sup>19</sup> A sudian advocate said television is also causing disaster to family life; both persons are influenced by programme take divorce as a sultion of these discontentment.<sup>20</sup>

A recent Gilani poll conducted by gallup Pakistan shows that while nearly half of all Pakistanis (48%) believe that the rate of divorce has increased, a significant (32%) believe that there has been no notable change in divorce rate in the late ten years, whereas 19% claim it has decreased.

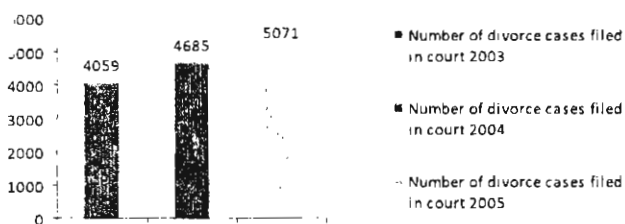
## Increase in divorce:

In present era, marriage life is abundant with number of problems, neither it is easy to establish nor to continue it; so many causes are here to demolish this peace giving center. East or West, marriage institution is suffering severely, divorce rate is on alarming scale.

In United States, it is estimated that 40% of all marriages ended in divorce as of 2008. One study estimated that legal reforms accounted for about 20% of the increase in divorce rate in Europe between 1960 and 2002.<sup>4</sup> In Australia, nearly every third marriage ends in divorce. Marriages are avoided as far as possible and divorces are easier and galore. Not being able to cope with the wide spread sexual anarchy; many countries in the west, including Britain have legalized homosexuality.<sup>5</sup> Muslim world is also rushing towards the breakage of family life, although having a unerring and elated family laws which provide gaiety and security to married life.

In Saudi Arabia, according to the ministry of planning, 70,000 marriages and 13,000 divorces were recorded last year. In Riyadh, there were 3,000 divorces out of 8,500 marriages that took place in 2002. Makkah had the largest number of divorces (396,093), followed by Riyadh (327,427), the Eastern province (228,093) and Asir (130,812). If the trend continues there will be eight million single women in the Kingdom by the end of the decade according to Dr. Ebtisam Halawani's study.<sup>6</sup> According to another report, 33 women face divorce daily, so the percentage has raised to 20%.<sup>7</sup> In Saudi Arabia, about 70 thousand couples start their marital life annually, a number of 13 thousand divorces recorded in this period.<sup>8</sup> In my own homeland Pakistan, scenario is the same. In a survey conducted at family court of Lahore, it was revealed that every year the percentage of divorce is increasing. In 2003 cases of divorce filed in family court were 4059. In 2004 the rate increase with 4685 and in 2005 the rate of divorce according to lawyers at family court was 5071.<sup>9</sup>

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|---|------|
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## Surge of Divorce in Muslim World

Dr. Hafiza Shahida Parveen\*

Family life is a very essential institution for human civilization. Marriage life is accepted norm in all societies and religions. Islam prefers family life and disapproves its breakage. Divorce creates a painful situation for spouses and children families as well as for society. When this institution is disturbed, negative effects are felt by each family member. Ratio of divorce is increasing at high scale, break ups are multiplying. Sometimes divorce occurs on minor and trifle reason. This panic situation is prevailing every where in the world. In Muslim countries, scenario is also very serious and it is the responsibility of whole Muslim ummah to make the situation better. Spouses are not well aware of their marital duties; they are not properly trained for this vital and sensitive responsibility. This panic situation must be addressed carefully and urgently, so that this vital institution peace and tranquility could be saved from havoc.

The most lovely and beautiful shelter on the earth is "home sweet home". This doesn't provide only a physical protection and comfort but also caters for psychological and spiritual umbrella, which luxuriates human life. Every person needs this centre of love, peace and tranquility, without which he is not able to cope with the hardship of life. Marriage life is outcome of a legal and religious bond; which brings liabilities to each partner. Now a day's people damn care for their responsibilities, that is why ratio of divorce is increasing day by day, in the world also as well as in Islamic society.

### Meaning of Divorce:

The word divorce traces its origin back to Latin, means the splitting of a unit, the permanent physical separation of the spouses. While the Arabic word "Talaq" means to set loose, set free or to leave.

According to Arabic dictionary, divorce means to breach the bond, visible or invisible.<sup>1</sup>

In Islam, divorce (or the dissolution of marriage) is the termination of a marital union, breach of Nikah (marital contact)<sup>2</sup> in different societies it means the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties.<sup>3</sup>

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May Allah give us the vision to follow the true path of opted by Muhammad (SAW) and to explain it to the others to the true sense.

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Having a detailed view of these letters one concludes that we are facing the same behavior. In other words there are three type of tasts.

Many non-Muslims countries seek sympathy for Muslims they not only give free atmosphere for preaching but provide legal shelter also like Habsha. We should have dialogue with them so tenderly that we may not lose their co-operation. Some countries react hostile behavior even do not listen the name of the Muslims.

For them there is a particular strategy such countries are democratic and secular types. Muslims should maintain relations with them keeping in view their constitution and legal system. So preaching methodology is not same. As Quran guides us:

﴿ اذْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بَاتِّبِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴾ (25)

“Invide (Mankind, O Muhammad to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with te Divine Revelation and the Quran) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better.”

Some countries are impartial they are liberal and allow to live with every religion and creed if their constitution and society do not receive any major change in it. Such countries are numerous. According to a cautious survey approximately twenty thousand people are embracing Islam annually in America.

Second important point is this that though today there is no regular system of corresponding with each other. But Muslims should prepare such a kind of literature that may be used for these three groups. Islam is a universal Din. Its invitation (Preaching) is for all mankind.

Third main and important point is this that we should opt friendly behavior instead of apologizing or defensive. Moreover we should not explain Islam such a way which is not according to the true spirit of Islam. Popular tradition is this when the people came to the Prophet (SAW) and gave different options to Him and offered to opt one of them and stop preaching the words He spoke at that occasion are an example for the persons.

He said, for God’s sake if they put sun on my one hand and Moon on the rest, I will not give up this preaching.

“and speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition of fear (Allah)”

So this manner may be seen timely and repeatedly. He wrote at the end of letter to Shah-e-Najjashi.

قد بلغت و نصحت فاقبلوا نصيحي والسلام على من اتبع الهدى. (20)

No doubt I conveyed, advised to those who accepts the right path. Wrote to Munzar bin Sava, the ruler of Bahrain:

اما بعد فاني اذكر لك الله عزوجل فانه من ينصح فانما ينصح و انه من يطع رسلي و يتبع امرهم فقد نصح لي. (21)

After that I would mention the Name of Allah, the greatest, the most worthy this is for one who accepts and obeys and follows, so I advised the priests of Najjran,

فاني ادعوكم الى عبادة الله من عبادة العباد و ادعوكم الى ولاية الله من ولاية العباد. (22)

I invite you to worship Allah instead of a man, and to be a slave of him than that of Allah.

Syed Mehboob Rizvi writes “These letters show sympathy and welfare towards the addressees.”(23)

In the contemporary history there is a letter like to his counterpart the greatest god, master of all lands writes to the cursed and foolish one, you say you trust in God, why your god not saved your land from my hands. I would not settle the dispute till you give up land, and opted.(24)

### Conclusion:

1. One response was to accept the invitation like Shah-e-Najjashi.
2. Second one the response of hard reaction and opted hostile kind of type like king of Persia.
3. Third one are those kind of people not accepting Islam but respected the bearers in lue of diplomatic manners, respected as good wishes and explained that they had some causes sent gifts to the Prophet (SAW) like rulers of Egypt and Rome.

(15) فاني انا رسول الله الى الناس كافة لانذر من كان حيا ويحق القول على الكافرين.

So, I am Prophet of Allah to the whole mankind, that he or it (Muhammad or Quran) may give warning to him who is living and that word may be justified against the disbelievers.

when the Mussailma Kazzab wrote to him (SAW) "I have been made share with Prophet-hood, half land is for me and half for the Qurash but the Qurashi are crossing the limits."

He (SAW) replied:

من محمد الى مسلمة الكذاب! بلغني كتابك الكذب والافتراء على الله وان الارض بورثها من يشاء من عباده و العاقبة للمتقين والسلام على من اتبع الهدى.

(16)

"From Muhammad (SAW) to Mussailma Kazzab". I received your letter that discloses you lie and blame upon Allah the land is for Allah (17).

سلم على من اتبع الهدى و علم ان ديني سيظهر الى منتهى الخف والحافر فاسلم تسلم ، واجعل لك ماتحت يدك.

(17)

"Salam to who accepts right ways, after that Allah gives his land to one whom he wishes to give it and the last victory is for the pious men."

He wrote to Huza bin Ali the ruler of Yamama in this way. Salam to one who accepts Hadiya behold my Din is to capture all the surrounding ones if you embrace Islam you would get peace accepting Islam your land would be with in you. Huza replied.

"Very pleasant is your invitation, the Arabs are terrified by my honour if you accept my demand, I, will accept you if you give me any post, I would be your follower. Prophet wrote in his reply if you ask even a foot of land from me, I would not give it over to you. Allah who is the master holds on knows every thing".(18)

### 5. Sympathetic and Polite Way:

Inter-Religion Dialogue needs that preacher should invite with well-wishing and goody minded. As in the mater of mosses almighty Allah directed him :

(19) ﴿ قَوْلًا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَنَا لَعَلَّ يُتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى ﴾