

The 'Truth' about Channel 4's Sham *"The Truth About Muslim Marriage"* Documentary

On the 21st November, the UK's Channel 4 aired a documentary entitled, *"The Truth About Muslim Marriage"* in which it sought to undermine the Islamic Nikah contract by arguing that it does not protect the rights of Muslim women in marriage and that Muslims should be obliged to have a civil marriage recognized under British law in order to ensure that the marital rights of women were safeguarded by the British legal system.

Well, here are a few home-truths about the content of the documentary:

1. The programme cynically used a flaw within British secular law which fails to recognize marriage ceremonies conducted under non-Christian religious laws as valid, to try to blacken the Islamic Nikah contract and portray it as disadvantageous towards women.

2. The fact that Muslim women who have had a Nikah contract rather than civil marriage are unable to secure their marital rights in the UK is an indictment of the failures of the British secular system and not Islam. It is reflective of the failure of the British system to accommodate effectively for those of different religious beliefs. This is mirrored in other western secular systems which have imposed bans on other Islamic beliefs and practices such as the niqab or hijab. How ironic it is that the Shariah law, implemented under the Islamic system of the Khilafah that the secularists love to label as backward and oppressive towards women and minorities, allows non-Muslim citizens to conduct their marriage ceremonies according to their own religious beliefs without harassment, vilification or interference by the state, and recognizes them as valid marriages under the law.

3. Various lawyers and academics in the programme, including the UK's Law Commission recognized that the British Marriage Act, established in 1836 is not fit for purpose for 21st century multicultural Britain, where communities of various religious beliefs now comprise a significant proportion of the population. This is further proof of the inherent weakness of the secular and other man-made laws and systems which cannot cater for all times, places and people but are forced to change due to inadequacies and failures. This is not so for the Islamic laws which are fixed and unchanging for they are relevant for all times, places and people and hence do not require reform. This is a quality that is embodied ONLY by a System prescribed by the All-Knowing Creator of the Universe Who is aware of the past, present and future. ﴿قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾ **"Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Would you teach Allah your religion, while Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and Allah is Aware of all things?"** [49:16]

4. The huge scale of domestic violence and other marital problems and mistreatment that plagues the lives of married women in the general population in the UK as well as the epidemic of family breakdown and divorce, is evidence enough that British secular law has failed to create harmonious marriages within the society, rather it is presiding over a crisis in family life. This is due to various factors, including liberal sexual freedoms that have spurned a culture of extramarital relationships, as well as feminist ideas such as gender equality which has created confusion with regards to the roles and rights of men and women within married life and an environment of competition between the genders rather than cooperation and complementary roles and rights of the spouses.

5. The huge legal costs that women in the UK face when seeking a divorce, as well as the entrenched and well-recognised failures in the Divorce and Child Maintenance systems in Britain, and the fact that so many women are left without financial provision following divorce, highlight that the British secular system is not the champion and hero of women's marital rights that it is hailed to be.

6. The documentary chose to irresponsibly promote misrepresentations regarding Islamic marriages, rather than presenting the truth about the Islamic social and family laws which create tranquility and harmony within marriage, or the truth about the high status, good treatment and numerous rights that women enjoy within marriage as prescribed by the Islamic texts, including in inheritance, financial and legal rights centuries ahead of the secular systems of the West. **يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضَلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا** *“O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them - except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.”* [4:19]

7. The programme chose to take a familiar swipe at the Islamic law on polygamy, suggesting that it is a source of injustice for Muslim women, regardless of the fact that the man who takes on more than one wife is obliged by Islam to look after the physical, emotional, and financial needs of all his spouses and to treat them equally. The documentary however ignored the fact that men within liberal societies are free to have relationships with unlimited numbers of women simultaneously while taking absolutely no responsibility for their physical, emotional, or financial welfare, or for the children they father, other than a cheque through the post once a month – if that! And even after researchers on the program admitted that they came across Muslim women in their survey who stated that they entered into polygamous marriages voluntarily and happily, and were fearful that since British law prohibits polygamy, forcing civil marriages onto the community would criminalize their marriages, the program chose to brush aside the rights of these women for the sake of the feminist agenda of the production.

8. The documentary conveniently ignored the fact that to safeguard the well-established rights of women contained within the Islamic texts with regards to marriage, requires an Islamic system of governance that can implement the Islamic laws comprehensively upon a state and whose judicial system would facilitate women in securing their Islamic marital rights. This system is the Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood which is absent from the Muslim lands today but during its centuries of rule, there are countless examples recorded within the judicial registries of the time of women who independently brought and won cases related to the violation of their marital rights. It further emphasizes the point that Muslim women need the urgent establishment of this state in order to protect and deliver their God-given rights.

What a shame, that rather than presenting the REAL “Truth about Muslim Marriage”, Channel 4 once again chose to go down the secular media’s well-trodden path of peddling the outdated lie of how Islam is the enemy of women’s rights and opens them to abuse, injustice and mistreatment. It was the usual run-of-the-mill demonization of the Islamic beliefs and laws that Muslims in the West have become used to as the relentless background noise in the secular societies in which they live, to try and distance them from their Deen and create suspicion and hatred amongst the wider population towards Islam. However, it was a home goal for the die-hard secularists, for it once again exposed the cracks – NOT of Islam, but of the secular system they champion, including its willingness to entertain and tolerate this divisive, ignorant, Islamophobic garbage!

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

“They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it.” [61:8]

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