

**Yasir Qadhi. (2023). *Our Family, Our Legacy*. Tertib Publishing. 92 pp.  
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The rights for a wife to divorce their husband, for a woman to decide over abortion, and for same sex couple marriage has become the indicators expressing society's endorsement of choice and freedom in several Western countries, especially the 5 Nordic countries plus the Netherlands. It is very telling that societies that endorse such principles of choice and freedom came from atheistic societies. This has also become the trend in the US (Ronald Inglehart, 2020).

Dr. Yasir Qadhi, a prominent cleric based in the US, has some things to share to Muslims all over on the importance of family in his book, "*Our Family, Our Legacy*". This book is a product of his series of YouTube lectures and others, in which he divided the book into three distinct parts.

The first part explains the importance of spouse relationship while the second talks about children's relation to their parents, not only about how children are important entities in developing a happy Muslim family, but also discussing how to deal with the current ties of the ideology of choice and freedom which has become rampant in the West and now becoming a prevalent issue in many Muslim societies. Finally, the third part is a Q&A session in which he engages with real questions and responds to many bedeviling questions.

Although this book is not an academic one per se, it deserves an academic review not only due to the immensity of such problem in families that Yasir Qadhi explains, but also the sound approach he offers in this book, which readers may benefit from in finding solutions to the prevailing issue.

On the subject of spouses, he begins with a metaphor of spouses being garments to one another to reflect the intimacy between the two. Yasir Qadhi cites Verse 187 of Surah Al-Baqarah, "They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them". In doing so, he mentions four important primary functions of a garment—protecting that which is embarrassing, protecting the wearer from

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extreme weather, making them feel complete, and finally beautifies them. One of the important take away points is that a husband and wife must be good at protecting the faults and the hidden aspects of the other spouse, meaning that they do not expose. The spouse does not shame, and the spouse does not reveal secrets that are going to embarrass his or her spouse.

In the next heading (Heading 2), Yasir Qadhi explains that spouses are signs of Allah's Existence and miracles, in which he bases such discussion on Surah Ar-Rum, Verse 21, which says, "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them". Yasir Qadhi invites his readers to ponder on the question of what are some of the ways that we can maximise the obtaining of *mawaddah* and *rahmah* – the love that Allah SWT has gifted for a successful marriage? As a way to respond to such questions, he advises Muslims to remember that marriage is a continuous work in progress which the husband and wife must always work on.

The next heading is quite controversial, dealing with the question of whether gender role is a human construct. Firstly, Yasir Qadhi specifies the problem of the idea that there should not be any difference between men and women – that the roles of the genders are the same. He explicates that this is biologically, physically, physiologically, emotionally, historically, and Quranically incorrect, refuting the wild thought of a genderless society.

In our religion, we say unequivocally and unabashedly that men and women are spiritually equal in front of Allah SWT, and that is real equality. Being born a certain gender does not make someone at a disadvantage in the eyes of Allah SWT and in earning the pleasures of Allah SWT. Yasir Qadhi highlights that the problem is when we take a role and make it better than the other.

Moving to the end of the discussion on spouses, Yasir Qadhi points towards the discussion of rights and responsibilities of husband and wife, in which the Islamic sources (Quran and Hadiths) state that men have *darajah* over women. This hierarchy does not imply superiority or nobility. Men are *qawwam* over women which primarily means that men are the protectors and maintainers of women. On the rights of the wife, he highlighted the psychology of women, which in essence, what a wife wants is the love, affection and attention of her husband. He then ends this part with optimism, referring to Verse 35 of the chapter in Surah An-Nisa'. Allah SWT guarantees if the husband and wife want to make the marriage work, they will bring about reconciliation and make the marriage work for them.

On the subject of raising children, Yasir Qadhi mentioned that if there is a rule to it, then there must be no rules at all. He later mentioned six points that parents can apply:

1. Actively participating as a parent,
2. Leading by example,
3. Cut them some slack,
4. Spend quality time together,
5. Connect with family, friends and the community, and
6. Make du'a constantly.

There were a couple of personal anecdotes which are certainly beneficial but nevertheless beyond the scope of the review. Below are a couple of points that may be useful for the next edition of this book, in which the reviewer has three bullet points to make.

First off, one has to be clear that when discussion about marriage takes place in Islam, it entails marital sex. Premarital and extramarital are not legitimate in Islam, and this point should be made clear by many authors when discussing about the issue of sex and marriage in Islam.

Those who follow the principles of choice and freedom would argue that sex is natural, not family, following the Rousseauian line of thinking. Dr. Yasir Qadhi himself clarified his stance on this and encourages readers to read the book by John Gray, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (1993). Although he makes it clear that the Quran teaches us that both male and female came from the earth, the book does not discuss the context of sex inside marriage only. Hence, a disclaimer must be made for such a book to be mentioned.

Secondly, external factors to family relations, both between husband and wife and between parents and children such as the extended family, including grandmothers and grandfathers as well as uncles and aunts are equally important pieces of the recipe for a never-ending happy family. In fact, in some cultures, they are more important than the internal dynamics itself. Although Yasir Qadhi mentions the importance of the idea that "It takes a village to raise a child", it is different from the idea of the external factors mentioned here.

Thirdly, pertaining to raising children, the ideas on the rights and freedom of choice of the children in the current times are really out of place. Children have the right to disown their parents. In fact, there are arguments where the child

could say that “Not only did I not choose you to be my parent, but never in my life had I ever wanted a parent. So, who are you to tell me to obey your rules?”. It would be good if Yasir Qadhi also responded to such a strange philosophy in a world where children are exposed to such knowledge, including this one.

The claims of universal human rights, believing that men are by nature essentially equal, are only parts of the story in the West. The Aristotelian scheme of thinking such as the one advanced by Alasdair MacIntyre would be a good example in explaining that there are in fact alternative universal principles in the West. Although this point may be highly philosophical, it would be good for the subsequent edition of this book to consider such an argument. Hence, one may still benefit from the Western ideas if one is really conscious and selective of it.

Overall, this is a very engaging book which touch deeper into the DNA of family problems. Not only that, but it also responds to the questions on women’s rights and the important role of parents as role models to their children.

The fact that this book is semi-academic in nature makes it more accessible. The approach makes it imperative to be translated in many languages, especially since this exposure would be strongly beneficial towards the many families of today who are already thrown into the strong ocean tides of the Western civilization.

## References

- Inglehart, R. F. (2020). *Religion's sudden decline: What's causing it, and what comes next?*. Oxford University Press.
- Gray, J., & Gray, J. (1993). *Men are from Mars, women are from Venus*. Harper Audio.