

meaning of the verse. This is another reason for this waiting period: the husband may regret separating from her, so he is given this period of time to think about the matter and make his mind up.

This indicates that Allah (ﷻ) loves harmony and reconciliation between spouses, and He dislikes separation, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The most disliked of permissible things to Allah is divorce.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

This applies specifically when the woman has been divorced and the waiting period ('iddah) has not yet ended. But if the waiting period has ended, then she is completely divorced and the husband does not have the greater right to take her back; rather if they agree to get back together, they must do a new marriage contract, fulfilling all the necessary conditions.

«And women have rights similar to the rights over them, according to what is equitable» that is, women have rights over and duties towards their husbands, just as their husbands have rights over and duties towards them, both obligatory and recommended.

The reference point with regard to rights and duties between the spouses is what is equitable, and that is to be based on local custom in that particular place and at that particular time, as applicable to men and women of similar social standing. That varies from one time, place, situation, people or custom to another.

This indicates that provision of maintenance, clothing, kind treatment and accommodation, and frequency of intercourse, should be in accordance with what is equitable. This is what the regular marriage contract is based on. But if there are some additional stipulations, then they should be adhered to, unless it is a condition that permits something that is forbidden or forbids something that is permitted.

«but men have a degree [of responsibility] over them» that is, men are of higher standing and take the leading role, and have some extra rights over their wives, as Allah (ﷻ) says: