Great Books of Islamic Civilization

The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization

Distinguished Jurist's Primer

VOLUME II

Biдāyat al-Mujtahiд wa Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣiд

Ibn Rushd

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XVIII

THE BOOK OF NIKĀḤ (MARRIAGE)

The principles of this book are covered in five chapters:

Chapter 1: Preliminaries of marriage;

Chapter 2: Requirements for the validity of marriage;

Chapter 3: Requirements for an option (khiyār) in marriage;

Chapter 4: Marital rights; and

Chapter 5: Marriages prohibited by law.

18.1. Chapter 1: Preliminaries of Marriage

In this chapter there are four issues: the *hukm* of marriage; the *hukm* of the proposal (*khitba*) for marriage; proposal to a woman proposed to already; and glancing at the woman to be proposed to (*makhtūba*).

18.1.1. Issue 1: The hukm of marriage

A group of jurists maintained that the hukm of marriage conveys recommendation. These are the majority (jumhūr). The Zāhirites said that it is obligatory. The later Mālikites held that for some it is obligatory, for others recommended, and for the rest it is permitted. This depends on the extent to which an individual fears falling into evil.

The reason for their disagreement lies in whether the form (sigha) of the command—in the verse: "[M]arry of the women who seem good to you", and in the tradition, "Marry, for through you I wish to outnumber the nations", and in other traditions like it—implies obligation, recommendation, or permissibility. Those who say it is obligatory for some, recommended for others, and permitted for the rest, have recourse to maslaha (secured interest), which is a kind of analogy called mursal. It is a principle for which there is no determined source of reliance; it has been rejected by a number of jurists. The preferred opinion in Mālik's school is based on it.

Qur'an 4:3

² The word mursal, from irsal, means "to let go". This term is used with reference to qiyas, which is analogy within a narrow framework tied down to a particular text. Maslaha is undertaken with reference to the meaning of the texts considered collectively, free from the hold of a particular text.