Ever wondered what in the world that meant? Especially when you walk into a world class buffet and take in the spread of food. Hot and cold cereals and porridges, freshly baked rolls and breads of countless varieties stacked neatly in wicker baskets, pastries, crepes, crumpets, pancakes and waffles artistically piled up with every accompaniment you could imagine: cream, cinnamon sugar, honey, syrups, jams, pastes and spreads. The ice layer at the end of the room invites you to freshly squeezed juices and “smoothies” whizzed in front of you in flavours and varieties you may never have heard of (cucumber and mint, pear and banana, pineapple and black grape ...).

As though cleverly designed, unsuspectingly the aroma of freshly ground coffee of the finest Arabica and Robusta blend pulls and lugs you to the tea and coffee station where international varieties introduce themselves to you for the first time.

Not to speak of the egg chef who can prepare eggs in any way: poached, scrambled, boiled and can prepare the most delectable varieties of omelette that your supermom may never come up with after weeks of planning. The grills station offers the best of steaks while you wait and the salad and deli-bar has the freshest and the finest.

Ah, then there’s the curry counter tempting you with the most authentic curries from India to Indiana and the hot vegetables are simply out of this world. The highlight of it all is the fruit table with the best of berries to the sweetest of melons, the finest sortès of stone fruits to the most amazing of desert fruits. From the most exotic to the very basic, mangosteen, litchi, starfruit, apples and pears in a dozen variants all arranged in the most eye- catching display with mindboggling fruit art. Watermelons in the shape of a flowerbed, cantaloupe in the shape of a rose, bananas, naartjies and kiwis in the shape of a palm tree all arranged around a fountain of
How do they do it? There is no way that one person would prepare all this food singlehandedly from scratch everyday and give it this world class presentation? Who does it? And how do they all spoil the broth? If this is spoiling the broth, then I want more!

In the 1800’s a French chef invented the kitchen brigade system. This system is still used in many restaurants and kitchens around the world. It streamlines kitchen duties, avoids duplication of efforts and keeps everybody out of everybody’s way. Everybody is given a position and a duty. Someone is assigned to seafood whilst another mans the grill-corner. Some prepare soups and sauces whilst others prepare the vegetarian fare. There is a pastry cook, a roast cook, a fry cook, a pantry supervisor and a dishwasher. The list extends to thirty different positions in order to ensure that every patron enjoys his meal hot, with the best of presentation, and in the shortest of time.

The simple secret behind this fascinating system is distribution of work. Duties were assigned to selected capable individuals. They in turn stuck to their duties. This, accordingly produced tremendous results.

Too many cooks would definitely spoil the broth when duties are free for all. Imagine the fish cook behaving like the pastry cook. The malva pudding might taste like fish paste from the Maldives. There would be pandemonium in the kitchen with everyone eventually pulling each other by the hair, not to talk of dissatisfied patrons. Nobody but nobody wins in the end. The cooks are scrapping it out, the customers are disgruntled and the establishment loses money.

Likewise social structures vary from thousands of people in an army to hundreds of people in a company to a team of two people in a marriage: husband and wife. Every social structure has duties and responsibilities. An army has various tasks to be carried out and a company has multiple duties to be fulfilled. This requires people to occupy different positions. In the same way every home has multiple duties and responsibilities. These are normal and natural in every marriage and are not alien to any society. Rentals and utilities need to be paid and daily supplies need to be purchased. For this, an income needs to be generated and errands need to be run. In the home, food needs to be prepared, the home has to be kept tidy and when they do come, the handful that they are, the children need to be attended to, nurtured, disciplined and most importantly, loved. These are the basic, primary duties of any home consisting of a man and his wife.
What system do we then follow when assigning duties in a marriage? Should a woman receive equal opportunities as a man and 'everybody does everything'? Does she dress like him, work like him and behave like him? Is she equal to him?

The teachings of the Glorious Quraan clearly indicate that a man and woman are both equal to one another in their personal capacities in the court of Allah Ta’ala. A man is not better than a woman just because he is a man, and a woman is not better than a man merely because she is a woman. “The better person in the sight of Allah Ta’ala is the one who has better taqwa (Allah consciousness).” (Surah Hujuraat, v13)

Commonsensical banking practise would reveal that a bank balance only increases after funds are transferred or deposited. Bank balances don’t go higher just because of gender, be it a camel-age-man or a rocket-age-woman.

“To a man’s credit is the reward of his deeds and to a woman’s credit is the reward of hers.” (Surah Nisaa, v32)

It is at this point in Islam that gender equality stops. Period!

Beyond this, Islam acknowledges the differences that men and women enjoy. Diversity in temperament, differences in anatomy, disparity in emotions, purpose of creation and functionality are but a few of the distinguishing features. Men are naturally more rugged, hard and physical. Women are instinctively more gentle, soft and emotional. Why wouldn't these differences be catered for when the source of Islamic teachings is indeed our Creator, who knows the finest detail of the human blueprint?

“He created you, then perfected you, then brought you to due proportion. He composed you, in whichever form He willed.” (Surah Infitaar, v7-8)

It is Allah Ta’ala who’s the Creator and Nourisher of all things.
By accepting him as our Creator we would have to accept that his decision of roles and duties for both genders would be the most wise, most prudent and most accurate: indeed, it is a judgement that would be infallible, stand the test of time and span across every age. People are limited just as their views and sentiments are. They see, hear, smell and touch to a fixed point. Their thought only reaches to a limited plane. But Allah Ta’ala is unlimited and unrestricted. His theories don’t change. He doesn’t have a re-think. He doesn’t miss a point.

“My Lord doesn’t err nor does He forget.” (Surah Taaha, v52)

To accept His decision and abort our “brainchild” is a smarter move than challenging His Divine word. Asserting our ideas and abandoning Divine guidance is more like a child trying to motivate for a plastic rattle over a gold bar. Weird, isn’t it?

Hence, roles and positions were awarded to husbands and wives, men and women, keeping in mind their instinctive behaviour and inherent strengths. And mind you, tasks and duties were shared so that duties are streamlined and duplication is avoided. Everybody is happier that way and no one is overworked and stressed out. It shouldn’t be that a man is working and a woman is also working. The wife is cooking and the husband is also cooking. The father is babysitting and the mother is also babysitting. The woman runs errands and the man also runs errands. That would definitely be “too many cooks spoiling the broth.”

In that event, both would be returning home tired from work, frustrated with the traffic and irritated with the kids. Food still has to be prepared, the house needs to be cleaned and the children need to be helped with homework. Would that be a happy home or a hell of a home?

It’s a laughable situation, just like a bunch of chefs all running to peel potatoes and then racing to dice tomatoes and then jumping over one another to clean meat. How absurd!

These are the double standards of the world around us. It actively supports and encourages distribution of work at all levels of society but the home. Armies, governments, business corporations, schools and shops all have a system of work distribution, but the home. Cry, the beloved home. It’s as though the home has been excluded from this universal principle so that
Too many Cooks Spoil the Broth!
Last Updated Thursday, 27 June 2013 12:34

chaos reigns in every home!

Society is made up by the people that belong to it. The people are made up by the homes they belong to. A healthy home is a healthy society. A broken home is a broken society. A home with a correct system is a happy home. A happy home is a happy society. A sad home is a sad society.

To rub salt into the wound, women are oppressed under the banner of ‘women’s rights’. She has to work, return home and work again. You see, it’s one job for the men and two for the women. The height of it all is that she deems it her honour to chant these paradoxical slogans ... “oppression” in the name of “rights”! What a world?

The million dollar question is who plays what role? What is the career path of a woman? What is the duty of a man? The man was given the position of a leader and decision-maker. Yes indeed, he rules, but not as a master over his slave or an employer over his employee. He does not have a free rein to do as he pleases. He rules, but Allah Ta'ala overrules.

He is obligated to live with her with kindness and compassion. He is asked to make her part of household matters and affairs. His word would be final and his influence respected. Monetary obligations and expenses are to be borne by him alone. He would run all errands and all affairs external to the home.

“Men are the guardians and caretakers of women because of the virtue (of position) that Allah Ta'ala has afforded to some over the others and because of expenses that they bear.” (Surah Nisaa, v34)

The woman having been relieved of the burden of earning and leaving home was given the important task of the home-maker. It’s not just about cooking and cleaning and attending to the mundane chores about the home, but a significant part of that is effective management of the home and the upbringing of children. She is to correctly mould the impressionable minds of her children and provide solace and comfort to her vulnerable husband.
The primary field of a woman’s endeavour is … home sweet home.

Nabi (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) outlined this very clearly, and set the trend when his blessed daughter went to live with her husband, ‘Ali (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), by assigning all affairs outside the home to him. Faatimah (radhiyallahu ‘anha) was to be responsible for taking care of the home. (Musannaf Ibni Abi Shaybah #29677)

All of the above, as well as numerous other injunctions and incidents, clearly establish the basic division of labour between men and women in Islam.

Otherwise too many cooks will, spoil the broth. Nobody likes their broth spoilt. Do you?