

REPRODUCTION OF PATRIARCHY THROUGH RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING: A  
STUDY ON SAMANYOLU TV; THE CASE OF “*BOŞANMAK İSTEMİYORUM*”

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## ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to understand how one of the strongest Islamist movements in Turkey, the Gülen Movement, approaches to the question of woman and disseminates it to the society through religious broadcasting. To realize this aim, the content of the movement’s television channel, STV’s program, *Boşanmak İstemiyorum* (I do not want to divorce) in which family, marriage and gender relations are the main discussion points is analyzed. Besides the assessment of the way in which gender relations are handled and family and gender norms are represented in the program, it also tries to provide discussions on the gender discourse of the movement and the related practices of the movement.

Key words: Islamism, Gülen Movement, religious media, religious broadcasting, gender

## ÖZ

### ATAERKİLLİĞİN DİNİ YAYINCILIK ARACILIĞIYLA YENİDEN ÜRETİMİ: SAMANYOLU TELEVİZYONU ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA; “BOŞANMAK İSTEMİYORUM” ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’deki en güçlü İslamcı hareketlerden biri olan, Gülen hareketinin, kadın sorusuna yaklaşımını ve bunu dini yayıncılık aracılığıyla topluma nasıl yaydığını anlamaktır. Bu açıdan, başlıca tartışma konuları aile, evlilik ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri olan, hareketin televizyon kanalı STV’ nin programı *Boşanmak İstemiyorum* incelenmektedir. Hareketin kadın sorusuna yaklaşımını anlamak için programda sunulan aile ve toplumsal cinsiyet normlarının ve konuyu ele alış biçimlerinin değerlendirilmesinin yanı sıra, hareketin toplumsal cinsiyet söylemi ve bununla ilgili pratikleri üzerine de bir tartışma sunmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslamcılık, Gülen hareketi, dini medya, dini yayıncılık, toplumsal cinsiyet

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study aims to understand the approach of one of the Turkey's strongest Islamist movements, the Gülen Movement, to the question of woman. To realize this aim, the content of the movement's television channel STV's program, *Boşanmak İstemiyorum* (I do not want to divorce) in which family, marriage and gender relations are mainly discussed, will be analyzed. Through this analysis, I aim to contribute to the studies on gender and the Gülen movement in particular and gender and Islamization in general. Besides, by focusing on the representations of gender relations on a television program which is produced and broadcasted by the movement's television channel, I aim to contribute to the studies on the use of media by religious movements and reproduction of gender discourse through religious broadcasting.

One of the most significant phenomena of the contemporary era is the resurgence of religious and fundamentalist movements in different parts of the world including liberal democratic states and the rest of the world, together with the endurance of religion as a social, cultural and a political force (cf. Eickelman, 2000; Fuller, 2003; Kepel, 1994; Mandaville, 2007). The Iranian Islamic revolution and the "Moral Majority" in the U.S are the main examples which took the attention of social

scientists because these were unprecedented and unanticipated developments by the major theorists. As argued by De Vries (2001: 16),

Theories of modernization, rationalization, differentiation, and disenchantment whose analytical tools – as articulated by Immanuel Kant, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Jurgen Habermas- imply anything but a simple secularization or increasing privatization of religion.

These theories assumed religion to be less important and influential in social and political life with the advancement of modernity and with the expansion of its intellectual and cultural products (Hoover and Kaneva, 2009). In contrast, in the 1960s and 1970s rising of religious movements and an increase in religiosity had been observed all around the world (cf. Calvert, 2008; Eickelman, 2004; Ismail, 2006; Meyer and Moors, 2006). Nevertheless, in the 1980s, as Casanova (1994: 211-234) argues the novelty was the “deprivatization of modern religion” which was explained by de Vries as follows (2001: 17): “religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them”. Casanova (1994: 3) argues that by the 1980s religions enlarged their spaces and entered into the public sphere around the world, and which was also the case for Turkey (cf. Ayata, 1996; Göle, 2000; Mardin, 1989; Saktanber 2002). Media played an important role in the development of these new religious movements and attainment of a new publicity (cf. Eickelman and Anderson, 2003; Hirschkind, 2001; Mandaville, 2007; Meyer and Moors, 2006). Furthermore, the contemporary revivalist movements are not all regressive movements but themselves products of modernity that developed as a response to the modernity. They are also selective in their opposition to and in their acknowledgment of the products of the modernity (Eickelman and Anderson, 2003; Mandaville, 2007). Media is one of these aspects of contemporary religious revivalism. As it is well known, the advent of the media, particularly the discovery of printing and publishing has

considerably contributed to the advance of modernity so that mass media technologies have always been associated with modernity (Hoover and Kaneva, 2009: 1). However, on discovering the persuasive power of the mass media religious authorities have appropriated its discursive patterns. One of the common characteristics of the different revivalist religious movements around the world is their employment of media technologies to spread and reinforce their ideology and consolidate their movements (Eickelman, 2000: 21). Hoover (2009: 3) claims that contemporary religious revivalism cannot be completely understood without discussing its relation to media. Furthermore, as many observers argue, it is important to note that the role of media in religious revivalism is not only instrumental but an internal part of the religious movements, which both shapes and shaped by these movements (Eickelman and Anderson, 2003: 5, Hoover, 2009:3). The use of media provided religious movements with tools to challenge traditional religious authorities as well as the secular ones and allowed plurality among themselves (cf. Eickelman, 2000; Hirschkind, 2001; Mandaville, 2007). This allowed emergence of new religious movements with new religious ideologies intermingled with many products and the ideologies of the modernity (Eickelman and Anderson, 2003: 5).

Though religious revivalism is felt in all spheres of social life and organizations, politics and the family are the main areas which aimed to be reformulated by these movements. The family is the main ground on which cultural struggles of different ideologies take place. In these religious ideologies, the woman, being perceived as the basis of the family, plays an important role in self-definition and reinforcement of these ideologies in social and cultural life (Gerami, 1996; Saktanber, 1994). Religious ideologies after revivalist movements appeared as determinative ideologies and main reference points in issues regarding women and gender throughout the world. For instance, in justification of sexual division of labor, women's association with the domestic sphere, in discussions of abortion, homosexuality, the norms of sexual conduct, teaching of sexuality and increasing divorce rates, religions became important sources of reference.

Similarly in Turkey, as Acar (1991: 281) argues, women played an important role as the battle ground between the religious and secular ideologies and will continue to play. Woman's image and position has been the main targets of these ideologies. Acar (1991: 282) points out that women gain importance in the ideology of Islam with their contributions as wives, mothers and home makers "as social agents responsible for creating and maintaining harmony in family life and socializing the young in line with Islamic principles."

The Gülen's Movement as a branch of Islamism in Turkey, after the 1980s, expanded and fortified with the help of new opportunity spaces created by Turgut Özal's policies and new economic and technological developments. The failures of the secular state; the rise of neo-liberal policies and neo-conservative values; the community character of the Gülen's movement and its ability to create a safe environment, for the citizens of Turkish state enabled this movement to build a strong and loyal Islamic movement. The media and education provided the movement with sites where the movement can spread its theology and also create and reproduce an alternative Islamic way of life in Turkey. To create an Islamic culture is the primary and most apparent aim of the movement. (cf. Arslan, 2009; Kömeçoğlu, 2000; Turam, 2007; Yavuz, 2003a)

Gülen's movement has long been an important discussion topic in Turkey, both in social sciences and in popular media. Nevertheless, the theological or political aspect of the movement has been the major areas analyzed in scientific researches; its cultural and social reflections have a limited place, and the question of women though discussed highly in popular media, underrepresented in the academic studies. Berna Turam's *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*,(2007); Patrick Hallzon's *Gülen movement :Gender and Practice* (2008) are the main studies which focus on women.

In this study, I aim to contribute to filling this gap, by analyzing the perspective of the Gülen's ideology of the women question. To realize this, I have chosen the site of media, as my focus of analysis. First, media is among the most powerful ideological instruments employed by the Gülen movement successfully, besides the institution of education. While there are many studies on the schools of Gülen, there is no detailed analysis on the way in which he uses the media. Second, media has been acknowledged as one of the most important institutions for feminist research based on its role in reproducing and reinforcing socially constructed gender roles. As studies on gender and media denote that women are predominantly represented in the media as wives, mothers, or as workers in traditional female jobs, as secretaries and nurses or as sexual objects and victims of violence in a wide range of television programs from news to soap operas (Zoonen, 2002). The roles of women as mothers and wives and the traditional sexual division of labor are represented as innocent and natural and by the emphasis of the importance of the family unity and happiness, the oppression of women based on this most basic division of labor is concealed and ignored (Binark, 2007; Saktanber, 1995). These representations of women through media play a significant role in reproduction of patriarchy. Additionally, though there are studies in Turkey, discussing the women's representation on television, and in Islamic printed media (Acar, 1991; Çorbacıoğlu, 2008), there is no study analyzing the Islamic television broadcasting. This study aims to contribute to fill this gap through analyzing how gender relations are represented on a television show *Boşanmak İstemiyorum* broadcasted by an Islamic Channel, STV.

In Chapter II, I will provide a brief analysis of the development of religious media in general and particularly religious broadcasting on television. After briefly examining the religious broadcasting, I will discuss the development, content and formats of the Christian and the Islamic broadcasting to provide a comparative outlook. Then, I will try to explore the development of Islamic television broadcasting in Turkey. Finally, I will focus on the representation of women in the religious television broadcasting.

For I am particularly concerned with Gülen's movement uses of media and the representation of women within it, Chapter III is dedicated to the discussion of Gülen's movement in detail. After providing an historical outlook on the movement, the main themes in the ideology of the movement, its perspectives on the women question, and the ideological instruments of the movement will be explored.

Finally, in Chapter IV, I will present a description and analysis of the main themes, and messages of the program of "*Boşanmak İstemiyorum*" broadcasted in STV, the TV channel of the movement. This is a court show, an example of a divorce court which is a program format adopted from the court shows developed in the West, particularly in the United States. In analyzing the approach of the movement towards women question, it is necessary to discover its conception of the institutions and processes of family, marriage and divorce. The program composed of reenactments of divorce court cases in which many issues regarding women- traditional sexual division of labor, women's identification with domestic sphere, women's roles as wives, mothers, home makers, violence against women, women's participation in education and workforce- are discussed in a detailed way. Based on the analysis of these discussions and related messages, through analyzing how the program' discourse define women in family and marriage, husband –wife relations ships, and the gender roles, I will try to explore the approach of the Gülen movement towards the women question.

In conclusion, I will summarize the discussions on religious broadcasting, and will point out the arguments on the Gülen's movement that has been articulated in this study. Then, I will specify the conclusions of this study based on discussions on Gülen's gender ideology, and the analysis of the discourse represented in the program *Boşanmak İstemiyorum*.

## CHAPTER 2

### RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING – MEDIUM OF TELEVISION

Linderman (1996: 83) in his work, titled *The Reception of Religious Television*, provides a broad definition of religious programming. He defines religious broadcasting by differentiating it from secular television on two levels. The production level (institutional level) and the product level (the content level). On the production level, the power relations determining the content of the broadcasting is important and religious broadcasting is defined as broadcasting governed by religious institutions or other religious groups. For the latter, he determines criteria for the media content, and defines broadcasting as religious if it is focused on institutional religion and /or religious language/symbols.

Stewart Hoover (1988) in his book, titled *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church* provides a more detailed definition for religious broadcasting by pointing out its characteristics. Firstly, he asserts that religious broadcasting is a religious activity both for the producers and the receivers. It is produced and received by religious people who share common religious values and morality as a religious duty. Secondly, the phenomenon of religious broadcasting closely connected to the wider phenomenon of religious revivalism of recent decades and it is linked to both conservative and mainstream religions. Thirdly, it is a form of broadcasting and has common elements with all other forms of broadcasting, and to a certain degree it is

framed in that context. Fourthly, the religious broadcasting has distinct political and institutional structures as well. Finally, it has influence over other religious institutions and the culture of a society.

In this chapter, I will try to elaborate the phenomena of religious broadcasting through the medium of television, with examples from the different parts of the Christian and Islamic worlds to provide a comparative analysis. Next, I will briefly present the development of Islamic channels in Turkey. Finally, I will discuss the representation of women on these religious media networks.

## **2. 1. Christian Broadcasting**

Literature on religious broadcasting mostly focuses on the development of religious media in United States where it had firstly gained power and took public attention. In the literature in question, religious television in the Unites States is referred as “televangelism” or “electronic church”. “Televangelism is defined as the broadcast of a theology of expressive Calvinism and teleministries refers to the institutional business operations and administrative structures run by televangelists.” (Tomaselli and Shepperson, 1993). Religious broadcasting firstly commenced with radio programming in 1900s. Religion has been major content from the very beginning of the radio broadcasting. In 1925, almost 10 percent of the 600 radio stations were governed by the religious organizations in USA (Linderman, 1996: 83).

The history of religious broadcasting in America is shaped by the transition from religious broadcasting’s domination by mainline liberal religious groups to the monopoly of fundamentalists. The state policies and the development of new

technologies in broadcasting have affected this process as well as the innovative and creative acts of the evangelists (Wuthnow, 1987).

First religious television programs were broadcasted in 1939 and 1940 by the NBC (National Broadcasting Company) network in USA. It consisted of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish programming (Mitchell, 2005). Initially, religious broadcasting was in control of mainline religious groups. Linderman (1996) argues that while the state encouraged religious broadcasting by assuming it as a duty of the television channels for the public interest, it limited the scope of this broadcasting by discouraging denominational and fundamentalist religious programming. In USA every network has responsibility of broadcasting in public interest. To fulfill this obligation networks started to provide sustaining time for religious broadcasting. The big media networks, based on the government policy preferred to provide mainline religious groups with free air time to obtain non-denominational and noncontroversial programming. Therefore denominational or more radical groups like evangelists were forced to purchase the air time. He goes on to argue that to afford to purchase of airtimes and the production costs these religious groups developed new techniques to raise funds, soliciting money from the followers which later become an important characteristic of the electronic church and provided them with a competitive edge against liberal groups (Linderman, 1996).

The development of cable networks and domestic satellite enabled evangelists with cheaper tools and opened space for evangelist broadcasting. Furthermore, in 1960, decided by the Federal Communications Commission that there is no public interest in distinguishing between sustaining time and commercial sponsored programs. The repercussion of this decision is that local stations could get public interest credit even when they do not provide free airtime for religious programs (Hadden, 2001: 16). When stations became more eager in selling airtimes to religious broadcasters,

evangelists who were able to raise funds enough to compete with secular commercial programmers gained power and monopoly over religious programming in USA.

One of important the differences of religious broadcasters from secular broadcasters lie in the way they cover the expenses of the production. As Hadden (2001: 16) cites “[w]hereas commercial broadcasting sells advertising to support programming, the electronic church sells itself and its projects.” Over time, to solicit support from the audience became the main characteristic of the religious broadcasting in the United States of America. They used donations both to continue broadcasting and for other projects. Mitchell (2005: 25) argues that as a result of these processes besides dominating the religious broadcasting within secular television, evangelists established their own television stations and media intuitions such as Christian Broadcasting Network, Trinity Broadcasting Network, PTL Network.

Mitchell (2005) also points out that in the beginnings of religious broadcasting, it included fire-and-brimstone sermons and religious services performed by a host of charismatic televangelist leaders. However, to compete with secular television, religious fare soon broadened its content and added popular genres of secular programming into its formats. Abelman (1987) provides the list of the genres included in the religious fare as : talk shows ("700 Club"), game shows ("Bible Bowl"), children's shows ("Davy and Goliath"), soap operas ("Another Life"), news-magazine shows ("Reel to Real"), sports programming ("Athletes in Action") and music/variety shows ("PTL Club") (Abelman, 1987:200). Moreover, televangelism’s popularity relies in the success of charismatic televangelists. Pat Robertson, George Whitefield, Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, Charles Fuller and Billy Graham are the most popular leaders of religious broadcasting (Mitchell, 2005: 13). As in line with the Hoover’s definition of religious broadcasting as a religious activity, all these televangelists frequently express that they fulfill their religious obligations through televangelism and they are glad to be able to spread the gospel around the world to reach millions of people even in one night , which was impossible within traditional ways.

Later on, more Christian networks with American or European origins have begun to be founded. Today's most popular religious channels are ByFaith TV, Revelation TV, UCB TV, God TV, Wonderful, DayStar, TBN, Inspiration Network International UK Christian News, UK Christian TV Guide, ChristianSat. Besides TV channels with origins of US, GOD TV appears as the most popular religious channel with a European origin. God TV sponsored by US televangelists, established in UK, by a couple called Rory and Wendy Alec in 1994. It was the first daily broadcasting Christian network in Europe. Since 2004 they are broadcasting from Israel 24 hours a day and became an international channel available all around the world. God channel is a Christian channel that presents main televangelist ministries such as Bill Graham, Pat Robertson and Benny Hinn. It includes praise and worship programs, news and current affairs programs; counseling programs; celebrity interviews, review of the art, children programs (Thomas, 2008: 118). The youth is also among the main targets of the channel, which can be derived from particularly the youth discussion programs and MTV style Gospel rock music featured on God TV. Again the main characteristic is the solicitation of funds from the audiences.

Though the leaders of televangelists while defending their activities apply to the argument that television is the most effective medium for the transmission of the gospel to millions, it is not the only goal they pursue. It is argued that one of the primary objectives of religious broadcasting is to provide a moral and value system alternative to the modern and "degenerated" one represented on secular television. The protection of family from these harmful effects of the secular modernity represented in the secular media is their strongest argument. For this aim, the religious broadcasting generated a "new social construction of reality" for its members. (Frankl, 1987:8)

## **2.2. Islamic Broadcasting**

Despite the fact that, mass media tools like press, telecommunications and electronic devices first perceived and disapproved as “foreign” and “modern” innovations” by Islamic populations and Islamic authorities, now it is observed that on discovering the discursive power of media, diverse Islamic groups from moderate to most radical ones employed this modern tool for their Islamic goals. (Hoover and Kaneva, 2009)

Bahonar (2009) draws attention to the opposition to modern mass communications in Muslim countries. Bahonar (2009: 244) argues that

The emergence of modern communication technologies following the formation of modern nation-states in the 20th century Middle East that was more or less rooted in colonialism was not only incapable of obtaining legitimacy but also rejected by the leadership of religious leaders.

She provides the example of Iran as insisting on the traditional forms of communications and resisting to foreign modern technologies (Bahonar, 2009).

The main approach is that modern media tools particularly television is the site of imperialism, where Western social, cultural economic values are aimed to be imposed on the Middle Eastern societies. Briefly, most of the critics based on the content more than its formats, which allowed to later employment of television by Islamists (Maguire, 2009). The adaption to these new technologies in Iran is most apparently observable in the period before the Islamic revolution in 1979. Its use is legitimated with argument based on its effectiveness in mobilizing populations and spreading the Islamic morality. As Hoover, emphasizes, similar to religious groups in USA, the Islamic groups behind the Iranian revolution, effectively employed media tools, to achieve their goals (Hoover and Kaneva, 2009: 3).

Among modern mass media tools television is highly adopted by Islamic groups since it is acknowledged as having the widest audiences when considered the low illiteracy rates in Middle East. Furthermore, use of internet is mostly developed by the Muslims in Diaspora but is very low in Muslim countries (Mandaville, 2007: 325). As a result the most significant form of media in the wider Muslim world is the television.

One of the major distinguishing factors of the religious television broadcasting in Islamic world is that it has developed mainly by the support of states whereas secular programming was outlawed or strictly controlled (Boyd, 1999). In majority of the Muslim countries religious broadcasting did not develop on Islamic groups' own initiations mainly due to the fact that the Islamist states did not allowed commercial independent broadcasting networks. Eickleman (1999: 9) points out that

Except Turkey and, until recently in Lebanon, where privately owned broadcast media have become increasingly circumscribed since the end of the civil war in 1995, television and radio are the province of official, usually state, institutions or, in the case of the Saudi-owned Middle East Broadcast Center, of the establishment's commercial interests that limit their range of editorial expression.

Since the WWII, the expansion of radio and television broadcasting has been under monopoly of states in the Middle East.

Religious broadcasting is the main theme in these state-owned television channels. Featuring of Muslim calls to prayer five times a day, Friday preaches and prayers, late-night prayers during the Ramadan, scenes of pilgrimage activities from Mecca were among the common themes of religious broadcasting in its former years of religious broadcasting in the Middle East.

In contrast, as discussed in the previous part, in the United States, religious broadcasting was shaped by the restrictive policies of the state and has enhanced mainly basing on their own efforts and technological advancements that provided them autonomy vis-à-vis the state control and allowed them to reach to their current strength. Europe, stands somewhere between the United States and Islamic broadcasting as having an established church privileged in the public service broadcasting system (Murdock, 1997: 99). In contrast, the religious broadcasting dominated the beginnings of broadcasting in the Middle East, where state supported religious broadcasting and applied censorship to the secular ones, until the advent and the expansion of the satellite channel networks. In many of the Middle Eastern countries, even the use of the satellite dishes, like Iran, Saudi Arabia are banned to prevent access to western and secular broadcasting.

In the 1990s the expansion of satellite broadcasting despite the bans on it, led to the establishment of local private satellite channels. MBC(Saudi-owned) is the first satellite channel of the Middle East, which started to broadcast from studios in London in 1991, followed by many other commercial private satellite televisions like the Orbit(1994), ART(1995),LBC(Beirut-based,1995), Future Televising, and Aljazere.

In contrast to the experiences in the west, where advance of the satellite broadcasting contributed to the development of religious programming, these commercial televisions were the ones who brought secular programming in to the Middle East, thus challenged the monopoly of religious broadcasting. Nevertheless, Sakr (2001) denotes that, despite the advent of satellite channels brought diversity of content and formats to the broadcasting in Muslim world, the power structures affecting the broadcasting remained almost same, under the control of state and elites. Religion remained to be the basis of legitimacy for all sorts of channels (Sakr, 2001). Nevertheless, the most drastic effect of satellite channels had been in formats of religious broadcasting. This process led to the emergence of new religious televisions

with new broadcasting policies to compete with these secular programming formats. These new emergent Islamic television formats are closely connected to the new neoliberal aspects of the contemporary Islamic movements. For instance many scholars associate the adaption of new formats to religious broadcasting in Egypt, by the emergence of neoliberal Islamic Movements (cf. Bayat 2008, Beinun 2005, Tartoussieh 2009). Relatively to the more conservative or fundamentalist Islamist movements, these are more open to novelties and flexible to adapt modern tools and formats for their own goals.

Though there remained channels like Iqraa and Al Majd, with classical religious broadcasting themes, some channels, as in the example of Egyptian channel Al Risella (The Message) launched in 2006, preferred to combine religious content with secular broadcasting formats to compete with both these classical religious channels and secular ones (Wise, 2006: 46). As in words of Wise, this channel provides “ethical entertainment” instead of classical broadcasting based on preaching. Wise (2006: 47) describes the channel, as consisting of comedy, late night talk shows, game shows, documentaries, soap operas, video clips and women’s programs starring veiled pop stars, and actresses “ all of which must meet an ethical standard that producers deem to be in accord with region’s religious and cultural values”

There are also examples of religious entertainment programs in more secular channels of Middle East. For instance in Dubai TV , a religious reality show, *Green light* , aired since 2005 and Islamic talk shows of *Parables from the Quran* and *the Stair Way to Paradise* aired on the Saudi owned ART satellite network (Wise, 2006: 49 and 112).

As understood from the variety of program formats existing alongside the classical preaching programs, it can be argued that there is a similarity between to the previously discussed Christian religious broadcasting. The Islamic one did not only

aim to disseminate abstract religious concepts or theology, but also to represent an Islamic social value system through these television programs. Briefly, their main focus is transforming what Hirschkind (2006: 212) describes as the ‘the sensory fabric of everyday life’.

Maguire had studied Huda TV which is established in 2005. It is a new English Islamic channel which started broadcasting with the slogan of “Light in Every Home”, referring light as the symbol of guidance and faith. It is an Islamic channel, which advocates “Islam as the ideal, universal way of life.” (Maguire, 2009: 12).

Al-Jazeera, is the most popular Islamic network, which is an international news channel, founded in 1996, by the journalists who quit from the London based BBC Arabic network, started to broadcasting from Qatar after the annulment of the censorship on broadcasting (Miladi, 2003: 149). It is not only the most independent television station, in the region, but also the most popular channel appealing to the widest audience in the region and around the world. It is not an Islamic channel like classical Islamic channels as the Huda or Iqraa. In the literature on Al-Jazeera, it is compared to the CNN, however based on its religious content, and its relations to Islamic leaders, it could be referred as a religious television channel in accordance with definitions of the religious broadcasting, provided in this chapter previously. As Cherribi (2006: 121) argues, rather than CNN, Al-Jazeera corresponds to the CBN, Christian Broadcasting Network based on its religious content. It provides space for many Islamic perspectives and broadcast religious programs, such as Ash-Shari‘ah Walhayat( Islamic Law and life) in which issues are discussed with reference to the Islamic law by a famous preacher.

The Al-Jazeera took attention firstly after the September 11 2001, with its broadcasting on the war in Afghanistan. Its significance lies in its exclusive access to

important Islamic groups like Taliban, Al-Qaeda and Islamic leaders like Bin Laden and ability to televise antagonistic voices. Besides these, the talk shows, broadcasted in the Aljazeera, takes attention by touching upon issues like women's freedom which are not debated in the other religious television channels of the Muslim world (Miladi, 2003). For instance, the program of Yusuf al-Qaradawi discusses issues like medical technology and sex, which are not regularly issues dealt with on other Islamic channels. All the issues are discussed with reference to Islam and Shari'ah. Similarly, Amr Khaled, who is referred as an Islamic "televangelist" became a popular religious figure.

In addition to these religious broadcasting institutions, there are also more radical Islamic groups that adopted television to promote their ideology and political aims. One important example is the Al-Manar TV of the Hezbollah, which is established in 1991 with the financial support of Iran, to draw attention to the Israeli occupation and to spread political and social message of Hezbollah to Lebanon and world (Firmo-Fontan, 2007: 177). This ideological instrument of Hezbollah, is significant since it is the second effective religious television in Arab world after the channel Al-Jazeera (Jorish, 2004). The channel composed of political shows, and news and educational entertainment. It aimed to educate its audiences on political issues in the Middle East, and on Western imperialist aims. Again formats such as series and game shows, with western origins are employed by this channel, to entertain people while educating. The Middle East politics is the main theme of the channel (Nasr, 2007).

### **2.3. Religious Broadcasting in Turkey**

Until 1990s the state in Turkey had monopoly over the country's broadcasting media provided through the state institution of TRT. The broadcasting of TRT is strictly designed in accordance with the official ideology of state secularism. For example,

Yavuz (2005:145) argues that to create a secular and national popular culture, governments in Turkey expanded their control over the general education and broadcasting. It is argued that television broadcasting is an important component of the Turkish national secularization and modernization project (cf. Azak, 2000; Öncü, 2000; Yavuz, 2005). As a result, different from the development of Islamic broadcasting in most of the Middle East countries, in Turkey, state, instead of oppressing secular broadcasting, restricted religious televising.

After the 1980 coup, a strong Islamic media emerged in Turkey. Furthermore, the advent of commercial broadcasting in Turkey resulted in a break in the authority of the elitist discourse of TRT and prepared the site for the emergence of new actors and new discourses in the public sphere. In this context, Islamic groups in opposition to the state employed the same tools, media and education, to counteract the secularizing project of the state. Eickelman claims that the employment of media by religious groups not only poses challenge to the state but also to the existing religious authorities by contributing to the dissemination of new alternative Islamic voices (Eickelman, 2000: 20). In line with his argument, as Yavuz (2005) argues, it can be argued for Turkey too that media provided the site for the new Islamic groups to challenge the authority of the state, the hegemony of the secular elites and the authority of traditional Islamic authorities and contributed to fragmentation and plurality among Islamic groups.

Turkey's first alternative Islamic channel, TGRT is established in 1993 by the owner of the Turkey's strongest Islamic newspaper *Turkey*. TGRT was followed by STV, Channel 7, and Mesaj TV. All these institutions represent the plurality of the Islamic social and political groups in Turkey. While TGRT is associated with Naksibendi order in Turkey, STV is sponsored by Nur movement, Channel 7 is known with its connections to the Welfare Party, and Mesaj TV is financially supported by the Kadiri order (Öncü, 2000: 307). By the 1994, 19 television channels and 45 radio stations of

the 525 commercial radio and television channels in Turkey belonged to the Islamic groups (Yavuz, 2005: 144).

The Islamic channels differ from commercial channels in Turkey in their general objectives, broadcasting and financial policies, as well as contents and formats of the programming and their discursive preferences. Similarly to the Islamic broadcasting in the Middle East, in Turkey, the main aim of the Islamic television channels is to promote Islamic morality by framing every aspect of the social life and securing Muslim community from the effects of the “imperialist” popular culture. Muslim media channels provide an alternative source to create a Muslim value system by establishing connections between the social incidents and Islamic principles. Islamic groups have always been active in creating such an Islamic social morality but what is novel is that Islamic education no more takes place in traditional religious institutions of mosques or lodges (Tekkes) by traditional religious authorities but through the media by newly emerging Muslim intelligentsia (Yavuz, 2005: 147). Öncü (2000: 307) clarifies objectives of Islamic channels in Turkey as,

They define themselves as ‘civil initiatives’ against the ‘moral degeneracy’ of infotainment channels, on the one hand, and the official ‘secularism’ of state broadcasting agency on the other. Their self designated mission is to ‘preserve the standards of the Muslim community’, by broadcasting programs which command *ma’roof* (good: generally that which meets community standards) and educating viewers about its violations, the *münkar* (bad: generally, that which violates community standards).

Religious broadcasters in Turkey claim themselves as carrying out an important sacred religious mission for the good of the society and Islam, similar to the other examples of religious broadcasting around the world. Furthermore, they are financed by religious organizations so that not exclusively based on advertising to cover the expenses of the broadcasting. This enables them to broadcast in accordance with their

ideologies and objectives and provides autonomy from the market demands. Though in the production process of some Islamic channels as TGRT, soliciting funds from the audiences was an applied way to finance broadcasting, it is not as common as in Christian broadcasting. For instance in STV, which is a channel financially, depended on the donations, extracted via the Gülen's community's financial organizations rather than on commercial advertising, soliciting money on TV has never been observed. (Erkal, 2008: 309)

The program formats of the Islamic channels similarly to the developments of religious broadcasting around the world started with classical programs based on preaching and reading of holy texts. However, these programs failed to appeal to the audiences provided with many alternatives in a multi-channel broadcasting period. Furthermore, they were subjected to criticisms from Muslim intellectuals questioning the represented incompatibility of Islam with enjoyment (Öncü, 2000: 308). As a result of these concerns, the Islamic channels started to employ the popular formats of the commercial broadcasting mostly formulating them in accordance with their ideological aims and moral standards. While TGRT has soon adopted itself to the mainstream programming with sit-coms or entertainment programs with female singers and female hosts, STV and Mesaj TV remained much more conservative. Though providing similar program formats with commercial channels and TRT, Islamic channels distinctiveness mainly lies in the different discursive language it provides to the audience. This discursive language of Islamic channels is based on keywords and expressions, coming from Ottoman Turkish, which find meaning in both religious and secular imaginary, which extensively differs from the state's purified language as well as from the language of other commercial channels (Öncü, 2006: 309). There are frequent references to the God, in every type of program, from cartoons to the documentaries, even in the imported western broadcasts, which aim to imply the presence of God in every sphere of life. Nevertheless, the main two Islamic channels later get closer to the mainstream channels with regard to the format and the content of their broadcasting. TGRT though emerged with claim of being an

alternative channel, which prioritizes Islamic social and moral values of Turkish society, from the very beginning exposed to critics from Islamic groups because of its wide range of broadcasts which are usually in contradiction with Islamic conservative perception. Gradually it became more similar to the commercial channels, and harshly criticized by Islamic groups. One of the most dramatic events was TGRT's transfer of Seda Sayan, a popular female singer, which draw criticism of Islamic groups based on her modern dressing style in the TV shows she hosted previously in different channels.

Similar to TGRT, although Channel 7 initially broadcasted mainly Islamic broadcasts, later adopted popular genres available in the commercial television channels. The similarities of the entertainment programs with women singers and hosts broadcasted in Channel 7 during the day and at the prime time with the ones aired on mainstream channels take attention. As a result, Channel 7 is also subjected to critics by the religious conservative groups for not respecting to the Islamic principles and morality. (Erkal, 2008)

Relatively to these strongest Islamic broadcasting institutions in Turkey, STV has maintained its conservative stance in broadcasting. STV is established in 1992, as an instrumental organization of the Gülen Community. Documentaries, news and discussion programs, programs in which the activities of the community presented, cartoons, and the television dramas with Islamic content (e.g. *Sırlar Dünyası*, *Beşinci Boyut*, *Büyük Buluşma*) are the main programs broadcasted in STV. STV has taken attention with the censorships it applied to western films and transformation of the original translations of documentaries and cartoons according to Islamic references. (Erkal, 2008). STV though maintain its conservative perspective, later adopted more popular television genres like Turkish serials, like *Yeşeren Düşler* and *Tek Türkiye* which gained popularity and expanded its audiences.

## **2.4. Women and Religious Broadcasting**

In this section, I will try to draw a general picture of representation of family and gender roles on religious televisions in accordance with the ideologies of these religious groups.

Firstly, as discussed in previous sections, all the religious broadcasting organizations aim to spread the religious principles and to propose and represent an alternative way of life on television screens which in accordance with the religious morality. Karen Armstrong (2002) denotes that all Abrahamic religions includes patriarchal principles and practices. Religions put importance on family and its function as a social unit which keeps society together, and provides the site of reproduction of religious morality. Besides, both religions contribute to reproduction of patriarchy, by providing legitimating its basic tenets, denoting the differences between sexes as an outcome of Divine rule, and as natural. They reinforce traditional gender roles which associates women with private sphere and man with the public sphere (Armstrong, 2002). Even though the women's participation in public sphere is tolerated or supported in some cases, the priority is still the "family" for women. They are allowed to participate in public sphere as long as they do not neglect their domestic roles, and do not distort family unity. Though there are differences among, the representation of women in the medium of religious television, it is mainly shaped with this general patriarchal ideology of revivalists.

As I was making research on the religious broadcasting networks in the western societies, although almost all popular televangelists had been all male, I observed that an increasing number of female participants appear on the programs as hosts and preachers since 1990s. In addition recently established broadcasting networks or the popular preachers follow a trend, according to which married couples engage together

in such activities. For instance, GOD TV, Europe's most widespread religious channel was founded by a couple Alec and Rory Wendy, and Alec Wendy is as active as her husband Rory Wendy in the TV programs and the business of the network. The religious broadcasting organizations are mainly family businesses in which wives play important roles in the professional team. Other members of the family also contribute to the broadcastings. Nevertheless, Frankl (1998) points out that women's main role are limited to their roles as wives. While, young members of the family reach to the young people, wives function as role models for the female audiences. Furthermore, it is observed that, the issues regarding women, gender and family are central in the discussions of these televangelists. In accordance with the debates of religious movements on feminist movements, I observed that the abortion, changing role of women in the family, the disintegration of unity the family, and topics like homosexuality appears among the most debated issues in Christian broadcasting.

Family is the main theme of religious broadcastings and protecting family is depicted as their most important aim after spreading the gospel. This theme of "family" highly used in broadcasting functions to shape the culture in accordance with Christian values. Pat Robertson who is a popular successful televangelist centers his programs on the family. Frankl (1998) argues that Robertson's channel, called the Family Channel promotes an ideal of Christian family which is a strong one and fights against the degenerated values that have been produced by modernity. According to Frankl this coincides with the ideology of Christian right which perceives and presents that "family is the basic unit of society essential for contemporary society's survival and strengthening of the Christian family can help the United States recover its greatness (Frankl, 1998: 176-177).

Therefore it is observed that in Christian broadcasting, most of the issues closely related to the status of women in society are discussed under the topics related to family life from a pro-family perspective. All the practices like abortion, pornography,

homosexuality, are acknowledged as attacks towards family, and their main aim is to fight against these so called attacks. Though, it can be argued that this “pro-family perspective” can summarize the ideological representations of women and gender roles in Christian broadcasting, there is not enough detailed descriptions and analysis of these representations. Interestingly, despite there are vast majority of studies on Christian broadcasting, there is only one recent study carried out in 2009, by Kathryn Irene Sheffield on religious broadcasting from a gender perspective, which provides a detailed analysis of classical and modern preaching programs aired in TBN , the largest religious broadcasting network around the world (Sheffield, 2009).

Sheffield (2009) claims that the religious television broadcasting has resulted in the increase in public appearance of evangelist women and even provided them with a relatively higher authority positions in the piety. Nevertheless what she firstly draws attention to is that the participation of women in religious broadcasting and attainment of seemingly authority roles has materialized through the loss of sexuality of these women. Instead of the images of women as sexual and temptresses in evangelist ideology, with the rise of televangelism, an “asexual woman” image presented as the images of good women who are responsible mothers and wives, which reproduced and reinforced the submissive roles of women to men in social life as well as in the religious institutions.

In her study, Sheffield, tries to explain and discuss how this submissive and asexual gender identities are constructed through the discourse of the televangelism. She mainly focuses on women’s roles as speakers, whether as preachers, interviewers or the interviewees. Sheffield argues that the female preacher, with her status as a preacher though proves a progress in the position of women in the piety authority, still preserved the female submissiveness and her low status in the level of religious authority, by distinguishing herself with her preaching style. The first point that takes attention in the female preaching is the employment of an emotional style in contrast

to the serious authoritarian style of the male preachers. While preaching, the female preacher interrupts her speech by expressing her emotions which disturbs her appearance as an authoritative figure. This corresponds with the approval of women to show their emotions in public, and associates women with “fragility” which distances them from being authorities (Sheffield, 2009: 25). The stories of salvation and confession of sinfulness which takes an important place in Evangelism, composes almost all of the speeches of the female speakers differently to man. Furthermore, based on her detailed analysis of television programs, Sheffield points out common patterns of confessions which differ based on gender. She (2009: 82-83) summarizes her observations as;

Men's confessions centered most often on sins such as gambling or drinking, and their new blessed state usually was described in terms of increased autonomy and agency... Women's sins, on the other hand, centered on their failure to be good daughters, wives or mothers, and their new saved state was described in terms of their increased ability to fulfill those roles properly.... Since this transformation often involved a decrease in their autonomy and agency, women's testimonies were functionally the opposite of men's: their salvation was constructed as a return to their "proper" subordinate and domestic roles, whereas men's salvation was constructed as an increase in autonomy and social efficacy.

In addition to these, more recently, talk show formats are characterized with the married couples hosting the show. Here the main difference arises in the topic men and women answer or in their approach to the topic. Sheffield highlights that women discuss issues related to the domestic life, or they speak as “mothers and wives” whatever the topic is.

In contrast to the limited studies on Christian broadcasting with a gender focus, most of the research done on Islamic television programming is centered issues regarding women and gender. The veiled women’s appearance on televisions, gender and family are among the main topics discussed in these studies. Lila Abu-Lughod (1998, 2004, 2007) has long been studied media and television in Egypt provides general

perspective of Islamic oriented movements on women, family and feminism and how they are reproduced by the media tools of these movements while denoting the overlaps between modernist and Islamist discourse. She emphasizes that while Islamists condemn feminism as Western and harshly opposes the sexual independence and most of the public freedoms it promoted throughout the world, their own vision of women and marriage borrows many characteristics from modern and western practices. While challenging women's work, and designate home as the proper place for the women, they support education of women and the ideals of bourgeoisie marriage. While women's work represented as distorting to family unity and women's nature, the education of women is encouraged on the grounds that they become better mothers and bringing up good pious citizens of the nation (Abu-Lughod, 1998). For instance, she draws attention to the increased appearance of popular women on TV leaving their jobs and adopting the hijab- new modest, Islamist dress as a result of their religious awakening. Through representation of these women on media, it is emphasized that when women work they are unable to fulfill their duties to their husband and children which distorts family unity. They are presented as becoming good mothers and wives after quitting their jobs and returning to their homes and having a happy family after then (Abu-Lughod, 1998: 255). Furthermore, on marriage the ideals of bourgeois marriage, which are conjugal love and the nuclear family, are adopted (Abu-Lughod, 1998).

While forced marriages and arranged marriages are denounced, the love match marriages are idealized. Abu-Lughod claims that though the "love" and the domestification of women are explained in Qur'anic and Islamic principles they are indeed modern practices adopted from West and not peculiar to Muslim communities. She further claims that these new Islamic movements and their orientation are not "traditional" but developed as outputs of modernity in twentieth century.

In addition to the case of Egypt, another study carried out by Firmo-Fanton (2004) focuses on Al-Manar TV which is affiliated with Hezbollah resistance movement in Lebanon. Al-Manar defines itself as a channel safe for the Muslim family, which spreads a morality in accordance with Islamic standards, and provides an alternative to the degenerated representations of other secular channels in Lebanon, where women are presented as sexual objects (Firmo-Fanton, 2004: 177). Al-Manar claims to offer television shows in all of which women are deobjectified. Hezbollah's ideology is based on the idea of complementarity between men and woman and women are valued as the bearers of the next generations. Women are also supported to continue their education and participate in labor force, and contribute to the resistance movement against Israel. Many women are employed by the Al-Manar TV, who wear hijab when they are on screen which covers all parts of their bodies other than their faces and the hands. Firmo-Fanton (2004) argues that though party promotes chador, on the screen to reach a wider group of audiences including more liberal and secular population of the Lebanon hijab is preferred for the women appearing on the programs of its channel. Despite of these working women in the institutions of the party, family unity has priority over women's empowerment, women participate in the movement and institutions as long as they did not ignore their families and it did not distort the family unity. Their most important role in the movement is being good Muslim mothers who are able to raise pious Muslim generations (Firmo-Fanton, 2004: 175).

Though these studies show that there are many working women in the media sector in previously, it does not represent the wider picture of Islamic broadcasting. The women's appearance on the television screen is still a highly debated issue in Muslim world and totally rejected in many examples. The first appearance of women on television has faced with strong protests from conservative groups in Muslim countries and resulted in debates and bans. Sakr (2007: 89) argues that "having been brought up not to mold with men or show their faces outside close family, women faced particular challenges, and dilemmas in the television industry".

For instance, Huda TV is an example of the Islamic channels which avoids women's appearance on the screens as a policy. Maguire (2009: 113) argues that

As Islam places great emphasis on modesty in general and female modesty in particular, the medium of television, by demanding an attentive gaze, presents a unique dilemma. As an intensely visual medium, some scholars feel that television should never feature women as it invites the uncontrolled and uncontrollable gaze of male viewers.

Though in recent years women's appearance and participation in Islamic television industry has risen, this does not necessarily leads to a change in broadcasting policies. Furthermore, the issues related to women are started to be discussed in religious broadcasting programs around the Muslim world. Whereas there are programs based sole on arguments of a male preacher, there are also programs based on discussions among male and female participants (Sakr, 2005). Sakr (2005: 145) argues that on analyzing the Al-Jazeera' debate programs, that Al-Jazeera has expanded the space for critical and contestatory discursive interaction over issues related to women's empowerment". Nevertheless, though new public spaces for discussions on issues related to women are opened, in Islamic broadcasting channel, both in Al-Jazeera and more conservative Islamist channels, Islam plays the most important reference point in these discussions. The issues are discussed in an Islamic framework.

In Turkey, women question has been an important battleground between the Islamic revivalist movements and secular state elites. As mentioned in the previous section television has been acknowledged as a significant component of the Turkish national secularization and modernization project (cf. Azak, 2000; Öncü, 2000; Yavuz 2005). While the women's appearance on television has been debatable and women who appeared on the screen are mostly "veiled" wider Muslim world, in Turkey, from the begging of the television broadcasting women participated in the industry, and "any form veiling" had been excluded. The women on TRT screen had the role of

representing the modern educated women of the Republic. Kural (1995: 98) argues that the media which is an important tool of the modernization project and under control of state elites, has responded to the covered women which threatens the image of the modern woman in phases. In first phase, the response was almost totally ignoring the existence of them. For instance, no turbaned women had been seen in any of the state channels for a long time except the times in which the turbaned women was the subject of the news. Nevertheless, later with the increase in commercial television channels, when religious leaders and theologians started to appear on television programs, veiled women gained publicity on television screens as well. Participation of veiled women on the programs of the commercial televisions as guests or experts has been common for years. Besides, I observed that recently the turbaned women, started to appear on commercial channels programs also as hosts such as Ayşe Böhürler on Kanal 1's program *3 Yüz*, and, Nihal Bengisu Karaca on Haber Turk's program *İkide Bir*. Nevertheless, the general image of the women in these channels is still in accordance with the image of modern secular women of the republic. Religious broadcasting channels, in such an environment, both for commercial concerns and legitimacy concerns has not to adopted a clear consistent policy regarding the turbaned women on the screen (Uslu, 2000). Zeynep Uslu (2000) argues that the religious television channels allocate less amount of space to magazine and depict women as sex objects on their news programs and in general than other commercial televisions in Turkey. Furthermore, some of these channels such as STV even refrain from employing female singers for entertainment shows, or when they are employed, women are dressed in more conservative codes than other television channels. Though Channel 7 and TGRT became much more closer to the other commercial channels with its content and the formats of women's programs, other Islamic Channels follow a different policy. For instance Uslu (2002) quotes Meryem Akbal, the supervisor of STV's Women and Children Programs Unit. Akbal argues that that the principal goal of the woman's programs is not the commercial ones, to represent the Turkish women's values. They define Turkish women, as viewers who are open to education and sensitive to Turkish customs and moral values and prepare their content according those women (Uslu, 2000: 84).

STV though adopted secular formats like soap operas presents a conservative stance towards women's programs. There is no woman's daily program similar to the woman's daily talk shows in rival commercial channels. The program of the *Yesil Elma* (Green Apple) a cooking program hosted by a male cook could be accepted as the only counterpart of these programs. Though, not designed as an entertainment program, it has a wide range of guests, from all sectors, such as Nazlı Ilıcak , who is a former deputy of Fazilet Party and Defne Joy Foster, who is a modern female black popular television star, with a Turkish mother and an American father. In addition to this, the program broadcasted on daytime other short television films, mainly targeting the women is the: *Aile Mahkemesi*, (Family Court) which is the successor of the program of the subject of analysis of this study "*Boşanmak İstemiyorum*".

## CHAPTER 3

### GÜLEN MOVEMENT AND THE QUESTION OF WOMEN

#### 3.1. Historical Background of the Gülen Movement

After the divisions in Nur Movement of Said Nursi, Fethullah Gülen's movement appeared as the strongest and most influential branch of Neo- Nur movements (Turam, 2007: 19). It is argued that the development of the movement from a small closed religious community into a loose global Islamist movement can be analyzed in three periods each of which was characterized by structural changes (cf. Bulaç, 2007; Lorasdağı, 2007; Yavuz, 2003a).

In the first period, movement emerges as a local religious community in Izmir. Gülen started his career as a government preacher in 1950s and the embryo of his movement is formed while he was officially preaching in Izmir. He was at the same time voluntarily preaching in several public places from coffeehouses to mosques commonly based on Said Nursi's ideas (Ebaugh, 2010: 27). His movement came to be known in late 1960s as *Izmir community*. Later dissemination of the ideology of Gülen had primarily begun in the summer camps and shelters for students which are called as the "light houses" (Ebaugh, 2010: 27). However, in 1971 during the military rule, Gülen was prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment. His case was dropped

when an amnesty was issued in the period of Bülent Ecevit's prime ministry (Bulaç, 2007). Mean while in the middle of the 1970s he strengthened his movement with organizing series of conferences around Turkey on several issues such as "Golden Generation, Darwinism, Social Justice." In 1979 he became more popular nationwide, after he had started to write in the periodical of Sızıntı.

After these developments, in the second period, between 1983- 1997, movement grew and became influential at national level. The development of Gülen movement as strong branch of Islamism in Turkey is argued to be connected to the social, political and economic processes have taken place after 1980s (cf. Lorasdağı, 2007; Turam, 2007; Yavuz, 2003a).

The Özal period, starting with Özal's prime ministry in 1983 and ending with his death as president in 1993, was a time when the pressures on Islamist movements were quiet alleviated. In 1980s the ban on Gülen's public preaching was lifted. He started to give public sermons nationwide and gained much more popularity. Furthermore, after 1983, the privatization of the education system in Turkey provided Gülen movement with opportunities to disseminate its world view through education system. The movement has founded more than three hundred schools and seven universities in Turkey and other countries (Özdalga, 2003).

Mustafa Şen (2010: 61) argues that "[f]or the last three decades, Turkey has witnessed the strong advancement of three major sociopolitical and socioeconomic processes: the first is the gradual but continuous rise of Islamist movements; the second is the rapid enlargement of the religious field; and last but not the least is the uninterrupted march of neo-liberalism, which as diffused every sphere of social life". Consequently a new large bourgeoisie which is closely connected to the Islamist movements has emerged (Şen, 2010: 71). Gülen movement has thrived in such a context.

Aras and Caha (2000: 39) argues that in the 1990s, policies oriented towards greater liberalization and a shift to export-oriented industrialization have led to the emergence

of new, dynamic, export-oriented, small and medium-sized businesses, many based in traditionally conservative Anatolian cities. It is argued that Gülen's emphasis on education and market economy, besides religion made movement appealing to this newly emerging Turkish bourgeoisie (cf. Aras and Caha, 2000: 39; Yavuz, 2003a: 189).

Ebaugh (2010: 44) asserts that these newly emerged Anatolian bourgeoisie, appealed by the discourse of Gülen, contributed to the development of the movement through investing in education, media and business activities of Gülen. Hakan Yavuz (2003a) explains the development of the movement with similar arguments. For Yavuz, (2003a:179) “[a]s a result of the opening and closing up of political and economic opportunity spaces in Turkey in twentieth century, the focus of the Gülen movement has evolved from building a religious community to creating a global, faith inspired educational system.”. As the movement became stronger, it consolidated itself by engaging in activities mainly in education, media and market economy. Through these institutions, the movement reached to a higher status groups in this second period (Yavuz, 2003a: 189).

On the other hand, Özdalga emphasizes another point. She (2005) explains the advancement of the movement, with her argument that Turkey is a society marked by a relatively low level of social integration at the national level. Due to this the deep economic inequalities and the weak governments that have been unable to solve social, economic and regional problems, citizens lack confidence in the state authorities. She cites that “In Turkey, the individual is still in many cases more “we” with his or her family than with the state.” (2005: 433). A significant response to the lack of strong integration with the state may be offered by different kinds of intermediary networks. It is in this specific conjuncture that religious movements like Gülen's gain importance (Özdalga, 2005).

Furthermore, education and media provided Gülen with new methods to disseminate his views, rather than direct preaching. Yavuz describes this period as “a period of

shifting from *irşad*, open and assertive teaching of Islam, to *temsil*, the persuasion of others regarding the good nature of Islam through good deeds and a moral lifestyle.” (Yavuz, 2003b: 41). Turam argues that the Gülen’s major *dava* (goal, issue) is to revitalize faith (Turam 2007: 19). All the foundations of the movement; the media, accompanies the schools and the lighthouses became instrumental for this *dava* of the Gülen’s movement.

Yavuz (2003b: 36) argues that as movement grew further; it became decentralized, based on loose networks. As its supporters become more varied, it evolved into a more moderate and open movement. In 1990, Gülen movement acquired strong control over media which led to increase in movement’s involvement in public sphere. Yavuz argues that as the movement became more apparent in the public sphere, it became more moderate to legitimate its being.

In the late 1990s Gülen movement transcended national borders and become a global religious movement. Together with the economic growth of the movement, the expansion of media and educational activities globally and the increase of Turkish immigrants around the world, transformed the movement from a small community into a global movement.

Its third period however begins with 1997 soft coup by the military. This military intervention was against a risk of fundamentalist Islamic takeover of the state. After this coup many restrictions put on Islamist groups and activities. Welfare party was banned, religious schools were restricted, a dress code outlawing the wearing of headscarves in institutions of higher education was implemented and some of the mayors were imprisoned. In such a period full of pressure over Islamists by the state, Gülen carried on his statist approach. Turam (2007) argues that, though the resurgence of Islamism has often been identified with a crisis rising upon the failure of state to meet rising expectations and Islamist groups appears as a response to this social

discontent, Gülen movement deviates from this generalization. She (2007: 19) asserts that “[w]hile the resentment of other Islamic groups and parties was peaking because of the state’s repression in the late 1990s, the followers of the Gülen movement were articulating wide ranging royal loyalties to their country, the nation, and its Republic , and even the military”. Gülen did not criticize the coup and restrictions put on other Islamic groups. He presented his movement as a soft and moderate movement vis-à-vis other Islamic groups in Turkey. He preferred to put distance between his movement and other political Islamic groups oppressed by the state to gain legitimacy from state. Furthermore, he fortified his position by establishing good relations with important political leaders. He achieved to gain support from many secular leaders. In addition, he made contacts with other religious leaders, and made his movement known globally. For instance, his meeting with Pope II John Paul took intensive attention worldwide.

However, in 1999, an attack on Gülen movement was initiated by some media organizations. Gülen movement was accused of being reactionary and a threat to the secular state (Ebaugh, 2010: 32). Based on the speeches of Gülen in the videocassettes exposed by these media organizations, it is claimed that he had been concealing his real aims and intentions in order to achieve his long-term goals. The defenders of the movement argued that the videotapes are not real and made up to hinder the development of the movement (Weller, 2006). At the end of a sequences of courts and appeals, in 2006, case of the Gülen which was filed by the state prosecutor in 2000, in 2006 is dismissed by the High Criminal Court (Ebaugh, 2010: 32). During this process, in 1999 Gülen moved to the United States, and has been living there since then. Yavuz (2003a) argues that after this video scandal the loose structure of the movement become even looser due to the legal restrictions. The activities started to be carried out less apparently. Moreover, the movement began to present a more consistent approach to democracy, and liberties.

It is argued that the structure of the Gülen movement is mostly defined as a sum of certain networks (cf. Ebaugh, 2010; Özdalga 2003; Turam, 2007; Yavuz, 2003a) Özdalga (2005: 435). states that “The Gülen community is a social network that is different from traditional *tarikats* (Sufi lodges)”. The legacy of Said Nursi, founder of the Nur movement, on Gülen movement’s structure is felt strongly as on its theology. It is said that Said Nursi’s famous quote, “our time is not a time for *tarikats* ” has played a determining role in how the Gülen Community is established. Additionally Özdalga (2005) defines Gülen movement as a sum of networks concentrated around four main type of activities: economic enterprises; educational institutions; publications and broadcasting; and religious gatherings. None of these sub-organizations is characteristically based on family and/or tribal relationships but on the voluntary and active participation of relatively independent individuals (Özdalga, 2005). Ebaugh, (2010: 25) explains the structure of the movements with reference to the “*cemaat*” which is a group consists of the motivational reading circles of practicing faithful citizens, which emerged in a context where secular government puts pressure on any organization that could threat secular and democratic principles of the new republic. Agai (2005) defines “*cemaat*” as composed of people sharing a common discourse and goals, rather than formal membership regulations.

Nevertheless, it is argued that even though movement has a loose structure, with millions of supporters, the organizational structure of the movement is highly hierarchical (Yavuz, 2003a; Yılmaz, 2008). Gülen is the sole leader of the movement and the hierarchical order extends from the top to the bottom through an increasing number of *abiler* (elder brothers) (Yılmaz, 2008).

The *ışık evler* (light houses), where young students stay and study together, form the basis of the movement. As Gülay (2007: 41) cites “the *ışık evler* established local sites of interaction, fundraising, and communal relations for the community’s growing followers”. The students read and learn Nursi’s and Gülen’s works live in accordance with Islamic principles and share an Islamic morality and develop a religious

brotherhood or sisterhood. Yavuz argues that the loyalty developed in the lighthouses furthers when students graduates and participates in work force. They build beneficial networks which makes the movement even more appealing for young, determined and successful individuals (Yavuz, 2003a).

Education is the second important platform through which supporters of the movement communicates each other. The movement has founded more than three hundred schools and seven universities in Turkey and other countries (Turam, 2007). Besides, his media and financial organizations, Fethullah Gülen is trying to establish close relations with the political and cultural elite through organizations such as Journalists and Writers Foundation (Bulaç 2007; Turam, 2007).

### **3.2. The Ideological Orientation of the Gülen Movement**

#### **3.2.1. Gülen Movement vis-à-vis Political Islam or Cultural Islam**

The discussions on Gülen movement mainly revolve around the question that whether Gülen movement is an example of political or cultural Islam, and mostly in this dichotomy. According to this understanding Göle (1998) defines, political Islam as revolutionary Islam which aims at capturing the power to achieve change through top-to-bottom process. It defends the exercise of Sharia and complete transformation of the society, with strict anti-western orientation and confrontation with the system (Göle, 1998). On the other hand, Göle (1998) stresses that cultural Islam seeks Islamization through bottom-to top process, therefore targets the individual and the daily lives of the individuals to enclosure and transform the inner worlds rather than striving for seizing political power. Here, the development of a strong community plays a central role. Based on bottom to top approach of Gülen, his Islamization project focusing on the individual and daily lives and his avoidance of engaging in

conventional political activities and institutions in the literature his movement mostly argued to be an example of the cultural Islam.

Moreover, this distinction is judgmental in itself. As Saktanber (2002: xvi) argues this distinction categorizes “everything harmful and threatening to the existing social order” under the political Islam, while cultural Islam considered to be including what is “harmless and tolerable, more importantly unlikely to change in Muslim “quotidian”. In line with this, most of the critics on Gülen and his movement rely on the arguments of Gülen’s movement as political Islam referring to his concealed long term political aims to capture the state and political power as a serious threat the democracy and secularism in Turkey. On the other hand, the ones who appraise his activities and his community deny such political aims of the community and refer movement as an example of cultural Islam.

To discuss whether Gülen movement is political or not firstly it is important to denote the Gülen’s approach to this debate. Gülen himself strictly rejects the label of “political Islam” for his movement. Since the very beginning, Gülen encouraged the followers of his community to avoid political activity. Since he is against the “instrumentalization” of religion in politics, he condemns the discourses, rhetoric, practices and policies of “political Islam” in Turkey (Yılmaz, 2008). For Gülen, the politicization of Islam, understanding and representation of Islam as a political system, is a great insult to the spirit of Islam. Therefore, he repeatedly argues that he carefully avoided instrumentalization of religion in politics.

Nevertheless, while Gülen denounces the political Islam, he does not argue that religion must be limited to the private relationship between God and man. The ethical and social practice of Islam should be reactivated in Muslim societies. Gülen

advocates that religion plays an important role in construction of rules that regulate our social lives. He states that

Actually regardless of whether or not we accept it, religion is the most fundamental element to be established without our having a say in it... we are bound with certain rules. Religion is just like these rules. Whether we accept it or not, religion is the principal element that cannot be replaced by anything else because it occupies a very important place in regulating our moral needs, which are more important and meaningful than our material needs, and also our material lives, along with our individual, family and social lives. (Sevindi, 2008:37).

In addition, though Gülen avoids direct participation in conventional political institutions and activities, and discourage his followers to do so he indirectly involves in political sphere of Turkey by expressing his opinions on important national and international political issues of Turkey. For instance, very recently, in 2010, on two most debated issues, the video scandal of Deniz Baykal and the Israil's military attack on civil groups, he declared his opinions and even got responses from deputies in the parliament of Turkey.

However, İhsan Yılmaz (2005) criticizes the labeling of Gülen's Islam as political. One of the main arguments behind the critical approach to the political Islam of Gülen is the emphasis on Gülen's opposition to the possibility of change from top to down. Gülen believes that since the good morality is the basis of the Islam, desirable change can be achieved only through reaching to every individual in a society. For Yılmaz, (2005) Gülen's movement aims to contribute to social reproduction of a Golden Generation through control over educational, financial and media resources rather than political means. Religion is the important tool in creating such generation due to its societal role on ethical educational and intellectual levels. Similarly, Özdalga argues that the distinction between political ambition and religious activism is crucial for a correct understanding of Gülen's mission, she asserts that Gülen movement is an

example of active pietism (Özdalga, 2000). Lorasdağı (2007) also categorizes Gülen movement as the representative of cultural Islam.

However, Ayşe Saktanber (2002) argues that these conceptual tools of Political Islam and cultural Islam fail to explain the Islamic activism. Saktanber (2002: XV) argues that “the over all effort which motivates Islamic activism in Turkey is to channel what can be described as the cultural into the core of politics, a process that can be called politicization of culture.” By the politicization of culture Saktanber refers to the “negotiating between social practices which were thought to be political; and cultural. Through these practices, the cultural has been rediscovered, remanipulated and re-rendered in order to make the expression of what counts as the political much more effective.” (2002: XVI).

Mandaville (2007: 6) asserts that the conventional definitions of politics limit politics to certain group of activities and institutions, particularly to “the processes through which actors pursue governmental power in the context of the modern nation-state.” Mandaville provides a wider definition of political by referring “all actors and activities involved in the establishment, maintenance, or contestation of particular visions of public morality (“the good”) and of social order” as political. In response to the definition Roy’s (2004) Islamism which is limited to the Islamist projects struggling for the Islamization of social order through state power, Mandaville (2007: 345) emphasizes other processes of the Islamization of social order which targeting the individual and the collectivity of individuals rather than the state. Similarly, Salwa Ismail (1997: 1) argues that “projects of the Muslim self... take shape in context and in relation to material conditions, and are, further, enmeshed in power relations. They are never apolitical even when framed or explained in strictly moral or pietistic terms.” From starting the individual levels, this form of re-islamization transforms social relations, such as gender relations and family norms, which is definitely political.

In this framework, I argue that Gülen movement which targeting the individual and attempting to create an Islamic morality through bringing religion into the production of the public opinion on issues such as how we should live and how we should think about, how to live, through its communal, media and educational activities, is definitely political and can be denoted as one of the examples of the politicization of culture, argued by Saktanber (2000) in Turkey.

### **3.2.2. The Eclecticism of the Gülen's Ideology**

Gülen's ideology is defined as consisting of conservative, Islamic, nationalist, liberal and modern characteristics (Aras and Caha, 2000; Yavuz, 2003b). Aras and Caha (2000: 30) argues that “[i]n comparison to so-called "fundamentalist" Islamic groups, Gülen's movement's views on Islam are surprisingly liberal and tolerant of non-Islamic lifestyles.” They explain this characteristic of Gülen's movement to the “the long-term, specific experience of Anatolian people and the unique historical dynamics of Turkish socio-cultural life” (30).

As many observers of the movement indicate, in the ideology of the Gülen Movement, traces of Orthodox Sunni Islam, the Naqshibandi Sufi tradition, the Nur Movement, and some important Western theories can be noticed (cf. Özdalga, 2003; Yavuz, 2003b; Yılmaz, 2008). For instance, Yavuz (2003) and Kömeçoğlu (2000) mentions that among the Western authors Gülen makes references in his writings and speeches are Kant, Descartes, Sir James Jean, Shakespeare, Hugo, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Pushkin.

Briefly, Gülen's ideology can be perceived as a synthesis of conservative theories with modern elements. Lorasdağı, draws attention the argument that many contemporary Islamist movements, benefited from the Western modernity and created “their own visions of modernity” (2007:154). In line with this, Berna Arslan (2009: 11) refers to the Gülen community as an example of “conservative modernity” which is composed

of “moral values of Turkish Islam, a patriarchal gender politics, Imperial nostalgia of Ottomanness, nationalism and the promotion of the global free-market economy”

Similarly, Lorasdağı (2007: 154) argues that Gülen movement has produced its own vision of modernity, as a combination of Turkish Islam with values of democracy, in connection with the West, and challenging the modernity which has been proposed by the secular elite.

Moreover, Kuru (2005) argues that Gülen proposes his Islamism as a middle way option for individuals oppressed between traditional suppression and excessive modernity. Here it is important to clarify that Gülen does not offer a middle way between Islam and modernity. On the contrary, Islam itself is the middle way for Gülen. Özdalga (2005) also argues that Gülen defends that Islam itself is the middle way between materialism and spiritualism, between rationalism and mysticism, between worldliness and excessive asceticism, between this world and the next.

Based on the emphasis of Gülen on the links between Islam, reason, science, modernity, tolerance, and discourses of democracy and human rights, his movement is considered as a progressive Islamist movement by many scholars (cf. Aras and Caha, 2000; Bilici, 2001; Yavuz, 2008). For instance, Yılmaz (2008: 62) argues that

The Gülen movement is generally accepted to be moderate and can be considered ‘modern’ in the sense that it espouses a worldview centered around the self-reflexive and politically participant individual’s ability to realize personal goals while adhering to a collective identity, and seeks to shape local networks and institutions in relation to global discourses of democracy, human rights, and the market economy.

Gülen continuously argues that Islam is compatible with democracy and secularism. Furthermore, he defends that democracy, in spite of its shortcomings, is now the best political system, and societies should try to modernize and consolidate democratic

institutions in order to build a better society where individual rights and freedoms are respected and protected, where equal opportunity could be achieved (Yılmaz, 2005).

However, it is not possible, for Yavuz (2003b: 29), to consider Gülen's notion of politics and activities as liberal since he prioritizes the community and the state over the individual. While he stresses the importance of individual development, he defends this for the development of the society as a whole rather than for individual gains it brings about. Furthermore, according to Yavuz, (2003b: 30) Gülen's movement even though has reconciled itself with democracy and secularism; it hasn't become yet fully democratic or secular.

Gülen's main interest has been the status of Islam in the contemporary world. He concerns for the Islamic world's lagging behind the developments of the modern world. According to Gülen one of the biggest challenges Muslim world facing is the lack of scientific mentality (Sevindi, 2008). He draws attention to the necessity of a synthesis of the global scientific developments with the theological advances in Muslim societies. Neither of two will be enough for a good society alone. Since for Gülen, religion means the constitution of the morality and the identity, he advocates that the modern democratic society needs public morality which can only be effective with religion. (Yavuz, 2003b).

One of the influences on Gülen's movement was the *Nur* (Light) Movement which was organized around Said Nursi (1877-1961) and his writings, the *Risale-i Nur* (Letters of Light). It came to be known in Turkey after 1950s. Nursi's ideas appealed to the young and the educated in the secular education system of Turkey then, since he was strongly defending that religion does not contradict with science. His writings, *Risale-i Nurs*, stress the connections between Islam and, reason, science and modernity. Besides, in *Risale-i Nurs*, Nursi also draws attention the necessity of the

dialogue between East and the West (Aras and Caha, 2000). Gülen emphasizes the need of both religious and scientific knowledge. Though opposing to the contradiction between science and religion, he puts priority to religion over science. While he claims that religion and science are not necessarily contradictory, he accepts the situations where they are proved to be in contradiction. When a “scientific truth” appears to be in conflict with absolute religious truths, Gülen proposes to deny the former in favor of the latter. He argues that a scientific truth which is in contradiction with religious truths will be disproved by science itself at the end (Bakar, 2005).

The impacts of legacy of Islam experienced in Ottoman and early Turkish Republic can be seen in Gülen’s way of understanding Islam. Many scholar calls his theology as “Turkish Islam”. It is not just because Gülen’s Islamism has a nationalist side, but because Turkish Islam represents a different understanding of Islam. There are not different Islams for Gülen, There is only one true Islam, nevertheless, there are different practices and understandings of Islam based on different cultures. Gülen claims that the Anatolian people have different interpretations and experiences of Islam than those of others. He speaks of an "Anatolian Islam" which is based on tolerance without harsh restrictions or fanaticism (Aras and Caha, 2000). Gülen criticizes both Arab world and Iran for practicing a rigid form of Islam that is neither compatible with the true spirit of Islam nor with the conditions of contemporary world (Aras and Caha, 2000). Naqshbandi’s influence appears in the Sufism of Gülen’s theology. Nevertheless, while Naqshbandi’s disciple is based on a certain program of spiritual development, under strict control of the *shaykh*, Gülen’s program is more open and stresses good conduct or service to humanity (*hizmet*) more than spiritual exercises and devotions. Yılmaz (2005: 397) argues that “Gülen’s discourse is not only rhetoric; in praxis too he encourages all his followers to realize his ideals.” Gülen uses the term *hizmet* or service, as a way of worshiping, in which the individuals work in a very disciplined way to build a peaceful society. For him, continuously serving one's society is the most significant way of praising God and achieving a place in paradise. Weber claims in his book, *The Protestant Ethics of Capitalism*, religious values can encourage people to work hard and accumulate wealth. For Weber, the

foundations of the modern socioeconomic order were facilitated by the synthesis of two contradictory impulses — economic acquisition and religious piety. This aspect of Gülen’s movement, with its emphasis on disciplined work and efforts motivated by national-religious values is compared to Protestant movement of the sixteenth century (Aras and Caha, 2000: 40). Furthermore, when the situation in Turkey is analyzed, the existence of a strict secular model of government is argued to be leading citizens to worship “safely” by working hard to achieve economic development (Kurtz, 2005).

For Gülen, the contemporary enmity between the West and Muslim world is among the most important problems Muslims needs to solve. One of the most attractive themes in Gülen’s ideology especially in the global arena is his emphasis of “tolerance and dialogue” which are the two keys, he offers to achieve peace in the world. Michel argues that Gülen’s emphasis over tolerance and dialogue also has its grounds in the Sufist philosophy which defends that “all creatures should be loved as God’s physical reflection and objects of the Creator’s own love”. In Sufist ideology, there are no enemies or "others" (Michel, 2005: 348).

### **3.3. The Question of Women in Gülen Movement**

The public visibility of women in Gülen Movement’s organizations and institutions—particularly in media and education; women’s participation in the movement itself; and pro-women attitudes of Gülen have led to acknowledgment of Gülen’s Islamism as progressive with regards to the women question. However, there are very limited studies on the issue of gender aspect of the movement, while there are vast amounts of studies on the discussions of democracy, religion, science, politics, secularization, dialog etc. The studies on the issue of gender mostly concludes on the progressiveness of the movement with regarding the issues related to women relatively to other Islamic movements (Curtis, 2008; Hallzoon 2008). There are even debates on whether Gülen’s gender discourse could be labeled as Muslim feminist discourse in comparison to Islamic feminist accounts although Gülen definitely denies to label himself as a

feminist, since he harshly criticize feminism (Hallzoon, 2008; Sait Yavuz, 2008). Most comprehensive and analytical study with regards to the gender in Gülen's discourse has been carried out by Berna Turam, in her book *"Between Islam and the State"* (2007) in which she uses patriarchy as an analytical tool to reveal the Gülen's engagement with the state.

Although there are accounts promoting Gülen's gender discourse as "progressive" for women, as Turam concludes, it is far from empowering women. Turam's (2007) approach is based on Walby's conceptualization of patriarchy, according to which "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" and reveals the patriarchal structures which unable to empower women in the Gülen's movement.

Accounts which perceive the Gülen's gender politics as progressive, directly associates gender equality with women's participation in public sphere. However, the gender inequality is connected to the existing power relations in the society at different levels, such as family, social groups and movements, religious association, state etc. Therefore gender equality cannot be achieved unless women's access to the relations, structures of power is attained. As discussed in the previous section though Gülen's Islamism is perceived as "modern" in many fields, it is the carrier of the traditional and conservative values regarding gender relations. There is no challenge against the existing patriarchal power relations in the society, but the reproduction of it through their gender discourse justified on religious texts. Turam (2007) in her work draws attention to connections between the existing gender inequality in the discourse and practices of the Gülen's Movement to the historical cultural legacy of patriarchy of the Secular Republic.

Firstly, the pro-women attitudes of the Gülen movement and the project towards gender equality are products of male elite in the movement. Women in the movement do not participate in power positions and in the production of the movement's discourse even with regard the issues related to women themselves. Turam (2007: 122) observes that, "[i]t was exclusively male intellectuals , particularly the circle around Fethullah Gülen and his best friends, who were the founders and developers of the Fetullahist school of thought".

Turam (2007) goes on to argue that the movement takes the issue of women as fundamental for their civilizing project based on the movement's enthusiasm in public visibility of women in movement's organizations and institutions. However, it can be argued that, when it comes to the deeper analysis of gender inequality or the critics of restrictive practices of the movement towards women, Gülen and the movement in general, remains silent, provides vague explanations, or clearly articulates these matters as trivial. For instance, many Gülen conferences, the Abant meetings and the vast majority of the books of the Gülen neglect the issues of gender and women. Accordingly, his response to the discussion of the veiling, which will be discussed later in this chapter, as explaining the issue as of secondary importance according to Islam reveals the movement's approach to the issues regarding women.

In addition, while discussing issues regarding women, it is observed that Gülen refers to family and marriage instead of referring issue as a matter of individual rights. He stresses how Islam values woman as members of the family, as wives, mothers, housewives and daughters. For example in his interviews with Nevval Sevindi, on questions about women's rights in Islam Gülen quotes:

In the Qur'an, both women and men are mentioned. It is written that women are not obligated to do housework or feed their babies, but that men are obliged to hire someone to do these tasks. The money paid to women is the tradition of the day and is a reassurance for women. It prevents this money from being taken

away in the event of divorce. According to Qur'an, even gold given cannot be taken back. Heaven is under the feet of mothers. Men are obliged to make their wives happy (Sevindi, 2008: 67).

Moreover, in his interview, published in the Muslim World in July 2005, in response to the question on "his thoughts of the place of women in society", Gülen analyzes the place of women in the marriage and family.

The Qur'an invites people to form a family life and points out many wisdoms and benefits of marriage. In order to strengthen the ties of marriage, the Qur'an places more responsibility upon the husband's shoulders... Thus, the Qur'an, as in many cases in this matter, in addition to reminding spouses about their duties towards one another, emphasizes the main principles of human morality, and invites individuals to be respectful to God and virtuous towards each other... And Islam addresses women and men equally and raises women, with its remarkable breath, to a blessed position. It has taken women from being objects for men to the level that paradise lay under their feet.

It can be argued that as long as the question of women remains peripheral, discussed with reference to the woman's role in the family, the discussion of whether Gülen's discourse could be called as Muslim feminist discourse or not seems irrelevant.

Sait Yavuz argues that Gülen's progressive ideas on the issues regarding women such as women's work and education mostly rely on his offer for change in Islam by using the method of *ijtihad*. Based on the universality principle of Islam, *ijtihad* is the activity of reinterpreting *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* in accordance with developments in contemporary times (Sait Yavuz, 2008: 850). This perspective of the Gülen is the base on which the discussion of similarities between the Islamic feminist discourses and Gülen's gender discourse rely. However I argue that the differences between these two are more fundamental when compared to the similarities.

As Margot Badran (2002) defines, Islamic feminism aims to create an awareness of gender inequality, rejection of such situation and taking action to achieve gender equality. However, there is no awareness and serious account of gender inequality in Gülen's discourse. Gülen claims that the women's position in Islam and in Turkey is not that problematic. Firstly, as response to the blames put on Islam for the lower status of women in Muslim societies, he argues that the patriarchal culture and traditions which are external to Islam are responsible for women's secondary status in the society. He makes references to the pre Islamic periods, to support his arguments on Islam's progressive aspects for women. He states in one of his interviews:

Because the lands into which Islam spread are in the Arabian Peninsula; women are routinely oppressed in the Middle East and Arab countries. Feudal and patriarchal traditions are being kept alive by being practiced under the banner of Islam. However, the Prophet Muhammad fought against these fourteen centuries ago and tried to destroy this patriarchal structure that buried their daughters alive. Some Arabs don't read about our Prophet, who said, "Those who threaten their daughters well will go to heaven" (Sevindi, 2008: 66).

As to prove his claims that women's status is better in Islam and in Turkey, Gülen makes comparisons with different cultures and religions. "In many Catholic countries and in countries like India, women are also treated badly. Widowed women are burned with their husbands, In China; they detect female embryos with ultrasound and then destroy them by having abortions." (Sevindi, 2008: 66) Furthermore, he believes that because of the old traditions in Turkey which makes women strong competitive and active alongside man, Turkish Islam, does not have problems regarding the issue of women as Arabic and Iranian Islams. Based on these arguments, it can be argued that Gülen do not acknowledge the gender inequality as a central problem in his ideology which should be discussed or overcome.

Secondly, the dominance of the male elite in the production of the Gülen's gender discourse is among the main areas where it differs from the Islamic feminist accounts.

The main argument of Islamic feminists such as Fatima Mernissi and Asma Barlas, is that injustices and gender inequality in Islam is the result of patriarchal and misogynist interpretations of Islamic texts, patriarchal culture and male-dominated Islamic jurisprudence. As Miriam Cooke (2000: 95) argues “Islamic feminists are objecting to the fact that the Quran has been interpreted and history has been recorded and passed down almost exclusively by men.” Basically, they put the blame on their male counterparts in their Muslim communities and challenge this male dominated Islamic jurisprudence.

Thirdly, Bargan (2002) argues that Islamic feminist accounts have also applied to western feminist, nationalist, humanitarian/human rights and democratic discourses to reach their ends. For instance, Najmabadi (1998) takes attention to the secular feminist articles in the journal of Zannan in Iran and stresses the dialogue created between Islamic and secular feminisms around their common goal of improving the women’s status in the society. In contrast, Gülen’s discourse is in harsh opposition with feminist discourses. While Gülen approaches positively to many of the theories with western origin, when it comes to feminist theories, he harshly criticizes. He condemns feminist movement as being an extreme, which is far from protecting women (Hällzon, 2008: 294). Gülen argues that feminism disgraces women by distorting their femininity and forcing them to become masculine (Turam, 2007). In Gülen’s words “...Most champions of women’s rights and freedom only excite women with physical pleasure and then stab her spirit.” (Sait Yavuz, 2008:853). For Gülen, with the so called freedom woman achieved with feminism, even worsened the situation. Women became as objects of pleasure, means of entertainment, and materials for advertisement which reduced ‘freedom’ to sexual liberty” (Sait Yavuz, 2008: 853)

Fourthly, Moghadam (2002: 1144) cites that “in her writings Najmabadi discusses how Islamic feminists have come to insist that gender discrimination has a social rather than a natural (or divine) basis and how this could open the door to new

possibilities for gender equality.” In contrast the gender ideology of Gülen is based on strong biological determinism, and inequalities between genders are justified as outcome of different “natures” of the sexes.

As a result of these vital differences, the discourse of Gülen regarding to the woman question, cannot be compared to the Islamist feminist discourses.

### **3.3.1. Women’s Position in the Private Sphere**

The main cornerstones of the gender discourse of the Gülen are the gender complementarity and spatial gender segregation.

Firstly, as Yavuz argues Gülen’s gender discourse as in all other Islamic ideologies is based on the argument of “gender complementarity”. Based on this basic assumption, he regards gender question as not a question of equality but a question of justice. He explains how the sexual division of labor is defined in Quran while emphasizing that this division of labor does not bring about hierarchy between sexes (Yavuz, 2008). Gülen clarifies his approach in his interviews with Sevindi by saying “In essence, what applies between men and women is not a question of superiority but a division of labor.” (Sevindi, 2008: 92). He argues that women and men are not the same physically and psychologically, they have inborn different qualities therefore they have different predetermined gender roles. According to Gülen, women and men are not equals but they complement each other. Thus, it can be safely argued that his gender discourse is based on biological determinism as opposed to social construction of genders. Secondly, his assumption of complementarity between men and women implies heterosexual relationships as the norm. This is clearly derived from his following words: "In my opinion, women and men should be the two sides of truth, like the two faces of a coin. Man without woman, or woman without man, cannot be;

they were created together.” (Ertugrul Ozkok, Hoca Effendi Anlatiyor, Hurriyet, 1/23-30-954)

Furthermore, as Turam indicates his analysis of the division of labor acknowledges the superiority of men over men (Turam, 2001: 283). He describes men as physically stronger and apt to bearing hardship while describes women as compassionate, delicate and self-sacrificing. For women have these qualities, they are responsible for the motherhood which makes them important as the nurturers educators and trainers of the new generation (Yavuz, 2008: 854). With his emphasis on women’s role as mothers in the family, he implicitly attributes to the men the role of provider of the family (Hällzon, 2008). Housework, nurturing and the child raising are the main duties of the women beyond dispute and confines women to the private sphere (Turam, 2007).

In this respect Turam (2001) contends that sacredness of the motherhood is the principal base of the sexual division of labor in the gender discourse of the movement. She argues that the inequality produced by this traditional sexual division of labor is neglected and disguised with the emphasis on the holiness of the motherhood. However, the sacred status of motherhood does not bring about power or liberty to women. Furthermore, it is not considered as heavy or serious “job” as men’s work in the public sphere. This division of labor is taken as a fact, and the result of Truth of Creation thus cannot be questioned. (Turam, 2001: 284)

In addition, Gülen community is a sex-segregated community in which from the smallest group to the largest organization, strict sex segregation is the rule. Yavuz (2003a) argues that the light houses of the Gülen community may be considered to be an instrument of social control and as an endeavor to create a sex segregated community with very few cross gender interactions. Behind this practice, the ideas of

the priority of the “service” over individual interests and the strict control of physical desires lie. Any cross-gender intimate relationship extra-marital is discouraged in the Gülen’s movement. The religious education and the social control in these lighthouses enable students to avoid cross- gender intimacy and other practices of western socialization. The lighthouses and dormitories of Gülen community provide young students with shelters against such behaviors as drug and alcohol use, premarital sex, and violence. This is why many conservative families prefer their sons and daughters to stay in Gülen dormitories. (Yavuz, 2003a)

Private sphere is among the main targets, which Gülen desires to influence, since it is the sphere where Muslim community and identity is primarily constituted. Furthermore, in the nationalist approach of Gülen, family gains importance as the basis of the nation. While emphasizing the significance of the family and private sphere, he frequently draws attention to the threats posed to family by the western tendencies. In Gülen’s words, “Islam is about morality and identity, and these must be instilled in the formative period of childhood. Thus, the family, the private domain, is where Islam must be put in to practice.” (Yavuz, 2003b: 32). Furthermore, the most of this responsibility falls on the shoulders of women. “Home was a women’s sphere where she would undertake the most sacred contribution, to the community, namely the reproduction of new generations.” (Turam, 2001: 280).

Kandiyoti (1987) argues that the emphasis of the sacredness and the importance of women as reproducers of new generations in religious or nationalist discourses may appear as providing women with higher status and respect at first stance. However, in fact this restricts women into the images defined by men. And since these images are internalized, the oppression does not diminish; only the possibility of struggle against this oppression weakens.

Similarly to the functional approach to family of Gülen, Turam (2001: 281) explains the perception of marriage in Gülen's ideology as "functionalist and strategic". Marriage is part of the service, in the interest of the community, for the sustenance of secure homes for the reproduction of new generations. She quotes Gülen "marriage must be based on reason and ration". She argues that Gülen approaches critically to the romantic marriages and, draws attention to the frustration and divorce those kind of marriages results in. Furthermore she adds that marriage is seen as a duty and inevitable for the women, while there is no necessity for men. As in important male figures including Gülen himself, there are men who avoid marriage and devote themselves to service to the community and to God.

Moreover early marriage for women is encouraged by the community particularly for women who do not attend to the universities. This practice of early marriage functions as an effective tool to exclude women from power structures and provide the conformity of them with this traditional sexual division of labor and sex segregation (Turam, 2001: 284). Moreover, divorce is discouraged by the community even if not opposed strictly. Though, Gülen continuously stresses the importance of the marriage and the family, he is not completely against divorce. He draws attention to the necessity of the harmony in the marriage and family for the wellbeing of the next generations and perceives divorce as the last resort, when disagreements between spouses disturb the harmony of the family to an unbearable amount (Gülen, Muslim World 2005).

On the issue of violence, he clearly expresses that he is opposed to violence against women. Nevertheless, it is not clear how he defines violence against women. He mostly expresses his opinions on the issue of violence against women, when he is directly asked about the "physical" violence against women, but also he mentions some forms of psychological violence such as belittling. In response to these enquiries, he disapproves violence against women, by emphasizing the "gentle nature" of the

women. In his discussions, he makes references to the Prophet, and to his attitudes towards women. Gülen expresses that

In the Arabia of those days, women were of even less value than a handkerchief. When he married Aisha , he lived and stayed with her the most. He would consult her about everything. It is even said that he spoiled Aisha, whom he loved very much; he valued her greatly. One day he said he was very upset with his father, who had slapped her twice. He never used force against any woman, and never used harsh words. Aisha was not affected by even slander. Upon this subject, the relevant Qur'anic verse describes Aisha's innocence. (Sevindi, 2008: 67).

As a result, though Gülen states he is against violence against women, he does not provide a detailed analysis of the reasons and the effects of the violence against women doesn't not refer problem as a social issue and propose social solutions. Instead see it as an individual problem, and advices women to divorce or to resort to violence as self defense as he declared in 2008 during his interview with Ahmet Kurucan (25 October 2008, Zaman).

### **3.3.2. The Public Sphere**

Though Gülen in most of his speeches, and interviews argues for women's participation in work force, his approach is far from promoting gender equality. Turam (2001: 289) observes that the women who are visible in the public occasions of the movement are either the outsiders, or a limited number of elite women of the movement and the wives and the daughters of the male followers are excluded from these visible public spaces as well as the power positions in the movement. In sharp contrast to public image of the community, in their daily lives women are severely confined to the private sphere.

Nevertheless, there are women of the community who participates in public activities of the movement. The young and single women of the movement, mostly the university and graduate students participate in these services of the community in the public sphere. However, Turam's (2001: 274) account reveals that, they usually engage in labor intensive activities rather than decision making processes and their services are either voluntary or for very low wages.

While Gülen emphasizes that the role of the women in the movement as equally important as men's', there is a clear gender distribution of roles. While men are engaging activities in the fields of education and business, women attend church services and festivities, they entertain guests, and they organize parties and cultural events. Maria Curtis (2005) argues that a great deal of the women's participation in the movement until now has often included preparing and serving food though there are women in higher education institutions and business organizations. Therefore, it can be argued that the participation of women in the movement's public sphere activities is also not liberating or empowering for women, firstly because it lacks economic power due to the voluntary work, or low wages, secondly because they are excluded from decision making processes (Turam: 2001 : 274).

#### ***a. Work and Education***

Gülen is mostly considered to have progressive impact with his advocacy of education of women. Yavuz claims that "This community was not in favor of their daughters' education. Now, with the encouragement of Gülen, there are many girls in the community allowed to continue high schools and even to universities" (Yavuz, 2003b: 30). However, though Gülen's discourse promotes the necessity of the education of the women, this is not for the individual good of the women or for a goal of attaining gender equality, but for the good of the community and the nation. As in all Islamic discourses and conservative ideologies defending women's participation in education, "the need of educated mothers to reproduce next generations" is the main reason behind.

Besides, it is seen that there is gender inequality regarding education in practice as well. The Gülen schools were sex segregated until the Law enacted in 2000, which forbids sex segregated schools. Before 2000, majority of the Gülen schools were boy schools. Even in mixed schools of Gülen movement, now, it is still observed that number of the girls is much less than number of the boys (Özdalga, 2003: 86).

When it comes to the issue of women's participation in work force, Gülen does not argue for total exclusion of women from public sphere. However, his gender discourse, again based on his biological determinism, justifies the unequal sexual division of labor in the paid employment. He claims that Islam does not ban women's work as long as the working conditions are suitable for women. The so-called "suitable" jobs for women are the ones associated with lower status and wages in the market. Furthermore, in practice in the organizations of Gülen movement, it cannot be argued that there is gender equality. As Yavuz (2003b: 29) expresses there are no women working in high positions in his vast networks or media empire.

Furthermore, Turam (2001: 279) argues that when there appears contradiction between the service and the career objectives of the women, the latter is perceived as secondary importance vis-à-vis the former. For men, no such contradictions arises since the men's work is acknowledged as necessary, and "serious business" while women's work outside of home is not considered as fundamental.

### ***b. Veiling***

On the issue of veiling, Gülen does not make decisive statements. The debate over veiling, during 1980s, upon the demand of Islamic women to attend universities with headscarves has resulted in a clash between the secular state and Islamic movements.

As many observers argue that Gülen preferred to stay away from such a clash between the state in correspondence with his overall statist and moderate approach (cf. Bilici, 2001; Turam, 2007; Yavuz, 2003a). He justified his stance by arguing that the veiling is compulsory for women in Islam; however it is an issue of secondary importance in Islam. He adds that there is no clear rules in Islam describing the way women should veil. In response to the questions regarding the headscarf issues in Turkey universities, Gülen emphasizes the necessity of education, and advises his supporters to prioritize education over veiling (Sevindi, 2008).

Visibility of unveiled women in the public areas of the movement provides it with a civilized image. This is in line with the interest of the movement and do not engender problems as long as the wives and daughters of the movement's men are veiled in the domestic sphere (Turam, 2001: 286).

All these arguments and observations indicates that while Gülen and his followers defends veiling strongly in their private lives, to avoid possible clashes with the state, presents a flexible stand on the issue of veiling. Although this compromising attitude on the issue of veiling seems as progressive, the main motive behind this attitude is to avoid any severe contradiction with the state rather than providing women with liberty to veil or not. Indeed, these male initiated discourse which can be derived from the Gülen's own statements perceiving the issue as a trivial matter, apparently does not take into account the discrimination against the veiled women in the public sphere, as an issue of human rights and women's perceptions and feelings on the issue of veiling seriously.

### 3. 4. Ideological Instruments of the Gülen Movement

Gülen movement has three basic fields of ideological instruments which occupies the sources of power of the movement. These are educational institutions, business and financial organizations and the media. These institutions are foundations of a project aiming to create a Golden generation educated with modern principles of science and technology and inspired by Islamic morality (Bilici, 2008).

Rather than searching place in the political system of Turkey, Gülen preferred to seek power through maintaining control in these three fields. The Educational institutions of Gülen movement consist of high schools, summer camps, colleges and universities. The movement has founded more than three hundred schools and seven universities in turkey and other countries.

Gülen criticizes both the modern and traditional institutions of education. For him each fails to integrate scientific knowledge and spiritual values, both of which are necessary for the creation of Golden Generation. For Gülen lack of religious education results in atheism, but the lack of scientific education results in fanaticism (Yavuz, 2003a). According to Gülen

In both cases, that of the traditional schools -*madradas* and *takyas*- and that of the state schools and military academies, the root problem is the same, the lack of *integration*— integration of the new and the old, of modernity and tradition, of scientific and religious knowledge, of technical skills and character formation (Bilici, 2008: 356).

For Gülen, the result of this lack of integration is a society in crisis. Gülen in his schools, though not providing a religious education, proposes a different type of education than other state and private education institutions. They offer a first-rate education that brings together the latest technological advances with character formation and high ideals. It is argued that Gülen schools, is accepted as the most

important proof of the validity of Gülen's struggle to reconcile modernity with spiritual values (Michel, 2003). In addition, Yavuz (2003b: 39) argues that though Gülen schools considered to be successful as the students achieve high results in university exams, they do not promote a structurally different education. Memorization and conservative values are emphasized more than critical thinking and they fail to promote free will and individualism.

Second source of power comes from business and financial organizations associated with Gülen movement. Gülen constantly emphasizes the importance of the free market economy, with democracy so that his movement appeals to newly emerging business community. Through these groups he provides financial support for his activities in different fields such as education and media. İŞHAD (İş Hayatı Dayanışma Derneği), Işık Sigorta, Asya Finans are the main financial institutions which support Gülen movement. For instance, Asya Finans is a non-interest-bearing bank which is set up to finance Gülen schools in Central Asia and to promote economic development in the Turkish-speaking Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Besides, İŞHAD is a strong association consisting of more than two thousand businessmen and merchants who financially supports Gülen's educational activities.

Thirdly media is among the most important source of power of the Gülen movement. Gülen fortified his movement through establishing new broadcasting companies, publishing presses and cultural foundations. Gülen's media is accepted as strong as other effective media groups in Turkey. His use of media for his movement has also taken attention globally. As Aras and Caha illustrates, An American expert on Islam, Dale F. Eickelman, calls Gülen "Turkey's answer to media-savvy American evangelist Billy Graham....In televised chat shows, interviews and occasional sermons, Gülen speaks about Islam and science, democracy, modernity, religious and ideological tolerance, the importance of education, and current events." (Aras and Caha 2000: 36).

The Gülen community owns the daily newspaper Zaman, the television channel Samanyolu, and the radio station Burc FM. It has many periodicals such as Aksiyon (a

weekly magazine), Ekoloji (an environment- related magazine), Yeni Ümit (a theological Journal) , The Fountain (a religious periodical in English ) and Sizinti. Besides, the community widely uses video and audiotapes besides written documents. Gülen's media network differs from other purely commercial media in its mission and vision of the formation of public opinion in accordance with the movement's ideology. While it has commercial concerns, it also concerns the movement's ideals.

As mentioned several time in this study, to maintain the power of its movement Gülen, tries to be careful to avoid confrontation with Turkish state. The increasing use of media made the movement much more apparent in the public sphere and let it to communicate its theology within the normative domain of the public sphere in Turkey. Yavuz (2003a) argues that as a result, Gülen movement is compelled to moderate its voice to legitimate itself. More over the media is the most important tool for the movement to legitimate itself in the eyes of the Turkish state. Hence, the foundation uses the mass media in such a way that they can manage their own image as a way of resistance against possible negative depictions. Furthermore, Yavuz argues that (2003a: 36) "Proliferating activities organized by the foundation and reported by the mass media have to a certain extent succeeded in establishing an affinity between Fethullah Gülen and tolerance and peace at the level of popular culture."

## CHAPTER 4

### “BOŞANMAK İSTEMİYORUM”: GENDER AND FAMILY ON GÜLEN’S TV, STV

In this chapter, I will analyze the TV series of “*Boşanmak İstemiyorum*” (I do not want to divorce) to elaborate further and in detail the gender discourse of the Gülen movement and to provide an insight how media reproduces the patriarchal gender order of the community and contributes to the women’s conformation to this gender order.

*Boşanmak İstemiyorum* is a TV series displaying reenactments divorce cases based on real stories as claimed by the producers of the program. It is a format adopted from the American TV show “divorce court” which is a courtroom show broadcasted between 195. In this period the show was reenactments of the real divorce cases. Then the program format had changed and Now it is court show televising real court cases.

*Boşanmak İstemiyorum* is based on reenactments of real divorce cases as derived from the declaration in the beginning of the every episode, “The show is based on real court cases, but to protect the institution of family and its members, the real names of the participants are not referred.” The show takes place in a court setting and displays divorce trials exploring various reasons behind why the spouses apply to court for a

divorce. The marriages of the participant spouses are held under the spotlight. The program has been airing Monday through Friday on Channel STV since 2007, June. It is still airing, nevertheless in the last season, its name is altered as “*Aile Mahkemesi*” (Family Court) and its content is broadened to include cases other than divorce. When this research was carried out, the program was in the form of “Boşanmak İstemiyorum” and only the divorce cases were displayed in the program.

The series of Boşanmak İstemiyorum is chosen as the subject of this analysis firstly because it is a program mainly targets women, since it is aired during the day time, secondly because it provides the audience with comprehensive discussions on the issues related to women. Furthermore, it is the only program in the STV, the main TV channel of the community, in which women plays considerable role. In this study, 12 divorce cases lasted in 36 episodes broadcasted between 11th November 2008 and 10th January 2009 are analyzed.

After giving a brief description of the show, I will firstly provide information about the main actors in the show. Next, I will examine the representations of the family and marriage patterns in the program, followed by the analysis of the approach of the program towards traditional roles of women, particularly mothering and towards women’s participation in public sphere. Finally, I will look at two important sources of disputes displayed in the show, which represented as factors leading to divorce; namely infidelity and violence.

The cases displayed in the show, are said to be based on real stories, however the format of the trials in the program is different from the format of real divorce trials of Turkish Legal System. Firstly, there are no lawyers, instead parties defend themselves. Furthermore, there is a jury, composed of 5 jurors, which is unfamiliar to Turkish judicial system. Though, this jury does not have an authority over decision making,

the jurors participate in trials by expressing their opinion on the case, by asking questions, or making comments on ongoing debates during the trial.

The show takes place in a setting designed as a court room. The judge wearing a black robe seated on a raised desk. On the wall behind the judge, picture of Ataturk is hanging. All other participants are placed across the judge. On two sides of the judge, there are desks of the plaintiff and the defendant. In the middle, there is the desk for the witnesses. Behind these desks, there are seats for the visitors. On the right side, next to the visitors, there is jury's desk. Men and women, both in the jury and in visitors' desk sits next to each other, there is no sex segregation in the seating. It can be argued that the court is depicted as a family environment in the show, almost all participants are members of the family and therefore no need of sex segregation is articulated in the show.

One case is discussed in three different trials, in three episodes broadcasted on three different days. On the first trial, the petitioner explains his/her reasons for divorce. On the second trial the defender responds to the claims of the petitioner and on the last trial the judge listens to the witnesses. After listening to the witnesses, judge takes the opinion of the "expert" and the jury. Before making his decision, he asks the decision of the parties for the last time. Finally based on all the information and opinions he issues a decree on the case.

During the program, while parties or the witnesses tell their stories, flashbacks and re-enactments are frequently used to give the viewer a more effective perspective of the incidents. Furthermore, during the trial (which is not carried out in a formal format) besides parties and judge, the relatives or the friends of the parties in the court room and the jury continuously intervenes in the discussions; upon which the program depends on. The Judge's attitude towards them is also informal and rather reminds the

audience the attitude of a father. For instance, he refers the defendants as son or daughter. Sometimes, he gives advices, sometimes praise the participants and sometimes he loses his temper shouting at the participants or orders them out of the courtroom. Furthermore, during the trial he frequently talks to the TV audience and establishes relationship with the audience.

Both women and men may be the one who initiates the divorce. While in the 5 of 12 cases the petitioner is the wife, (C1, C3, C5, C7, C8) in the remaining 7 the petitioner is the husband. However, 2 of the cases in which the husband is the petitioner, the wife also opens court case during the trial and becomes the petitioner.(C2, C10) Though numbers of female and male petitioners are almost equal, in all of the cases women are presented as the victims of the marriage. Though the women are also claimed to have faults, they are displayed as the main parties who suffer from the problems in the marriage, the victims.

In 5 of the 12 cases a divorce decree is issued; 6 of the cases are rejected and in 1 of the cases the judge decides on separation for six months which ended up in resolution of the marriage. In 3 of the cases petitioned by the husband resulted in divorce while in 2 of the cases petitioned by the wife.

Main causes of divorce and disputes in the cases analyzed are violence; alcohol or drug addiction accompanied by gambling, disagreements between wives and their mother-in-laws; infidelity and cultural and intellectual incompatibility. Wives are in all cases the parties who are well intended and victims while men are usually also good in essence but deceived by their relatives or close friends. While husbands blame their wives as failing to be proper mothers and wives, the complaints of the bad treatment of wives by their husbands is depicted as outcomes of other deviations, such as alcohol and gambling. Very similarly as discussed in chapter two, in Christian

broadcasting too alcohol addiction and gambling appears as the main reasons of the men's wider social and economic failures, while women's failures are defined only in terms of their roles as mothers as wives.

Besides these, social issues like migration, urbanization, modernization are mentioned in the discussions of the trials. While migration is handled as a factor which has disturbing effects on the family unity, the approach of the program to urbanization and modernization is more ambiguous. While these are referred in discussions related to the western culture, particularly to the degeneration in it, they are represented as corruptive forces. However, in the discussions on house hold types, nuclear family is defended strongly as the necessity of the modernized world. Similarly to the findings of Abu-Lughod on Islamic channels in Egypt discussed in chapter 2, the nuclear bourgeois family which has been brought about by modernization and the urbanization, is represented as ideal type of family to achieve a harmonious family life.

#### **4.1. Main Actors in the Show**

Firstly I will provide brief information about the main authority figures and their roles in the show, who are the jury, the expert and the judge with a particular focus on the judge and continue with the other participants in the show.

##### ***a. The Jury***

The jury, though does not take much attention in the program, plays role in most debated issues during the trials. The jury is composed of three male and two female middle aged jurors. Whether upon their initiative or judge's request, they make comments. The jury has a lower authority than the judge and the expert. Nevertheless,

though not clearly stated in the program, it is understood that, the jurors has a higher status in the eye of the judge than the other participants in the trial and judge respects that third view point. Their difference is apparent through their formal language and formal dressing which is in clear contrast with other participants in the trial. Nevertheless, there is no information about the social or professional backgrounds of the jurors.

### ***b. The Expert***

The expert plays a relatively more important role in the show than the jurors. In the end of each trial before judge makes his decision, the expert expresses his or her opinion both on the case and on other issues discussed during the trial. The expert is significant in the sense that it represents the “science” and the “scientific approach” in the program. Through the expert the importance given to scientific knowledge is emphasized. The judge often refers to the explanations and advices of the expert as “It’s what ‘The Science’ says” and thus he supposed to provide a scientific base for his judgments.

In 10 of 12 episodes analyzed in this study, the expert is a young veiled woman who is specialized in family consulting and child psychology. She takes the attention as being the only educated and working woman participated in the show. Her appearance differs from the other female participants and women in the jury with her modern Islamic dress code- her headscarf and long-skirted modern two piece suits. Her covering is important first because it is in conflict with real Turkish courts where headscarf ban is in rule. However, in the STV’s ideal example of a Turkish court case, we see that a working women is free to work with her veiling. Secondly, a difference is observed between the veiling of the educated and non educated – traditional women participated in the show. All the other veiled women appeared in the show, who are the uneducated, non working, wives, or the relatives of the parties, were in more traditional forms of veiling, mainly the traditional head scarf, baş örtüsü in which the hair is not covered completely. Göle, (1991: 121) in her analysis of veiling in her

study the *Modern Mahrem*, draws attention to the use of veiling as an indicator by educated urban Islamist women to distinct themselves from their traditional mothers and grandmothers. In accordance, here the style of veiling functions to emphasize the difference between the modern and traditional Islamic women.

Thirdly, her Islamic dress code, veiling when combined with the fact that she is an expert, functions to prove one of the most important claims of the Gülen ideology; the compatibility of the Islam and the Science and provides an example of an ideal member of the community.

The expert expresses his/her opinions about the future of the marriage. Sometimes, the judge asks for further explanations for some issues discussed during the case to learn the scientific approach to those issues. What takes attention is that, while expert explains and defines some psychological problems related to the case from a scientific perspective, by using scientific terms she also makes further conservative commands by emphasizing the morality of Turkish culture. For example, in one of the cases, wife's meeting with her ex-fiancée is the main cause of the divorce. (C12) Judge asks the opinion of the expert "Whether one may meet his or her ex fiancée with friendly motivations? Expert replies;

If the society, that this question is asked, is the one we live in, the answer is no. People might have misinterpretations since our social values depend upon stronger fundamentals. The results will be questioned and the motive will be overlooked, I think, to pursue alternative solutions may be more reasonable and acceptable.

### *c. The Judge*

Judge is the most important figure in the program and most of the show depends on his speeches. Besides being the judge of the trial, he plays roles as a preacher and a father.

The judge is also the most significant figure for this study since he appears as the main authority in the show. For this, it is assumed that the perspective of the judge represents the ideology of the program so of the Gülen movement. When analyzed, it is observed that judge's position have clear connections with the Gülen's approach to the same issues.

Firstly, as in Gülen's discourse "state, religion and science" are main themes in judge's discourse. The power and the importance of the Turkish State are frequently emphasized by the Judge. He presents himself as the representative of the Turkish State by frequently stressing that he decides "on behalf of Turkish State or with the authority of Turkish state. When parties, dare to threaten others, or to solve their problems through force and violence, Judge reminds participants the fact that we are living in a state governed by the rule of law, and makes emphasis on how important is to live in such a state, and how strong the Turkish State is.

His authority mainly depends on this legal status in the show as the representative of the state, as an expert in legal issues and as the sole decision maker in the trial. Nevertheless he is not only the legal authority in the program. From his speeches similar to a preacher, it is implied that he is also an authority on morals and religious issues. On moral issues, he appears as the authority since it is implied that he has a higher social status than the participants in the trial. He judges the parties with reference to traditions and customs, and religion as well as to laws. He describes himself as coming from a rural Turkish family, "an Anatolian son". He has the so called "respectful morality" of the Anatolian society. In addition to this background, he is educated and a successful working man. He clearly represents the ideal individual of the Gülen movement who has succeeded to combine modern

achievements with his religious conservative Turkish morality and modest Anatolian background.

During the trials judge makes speeches on the issues relevant to the case. Though he emphasizes that he makes his decisions based on legal codes, it is observed that religion is another main reference point in his speeches. Firstly, he uses a religious language. Words like sin, divine justice, benefaction, destiny, *helal* (canonically lawful), *haram* (forbidden by religion) and conscience are the most common words in his verbal repertoire. Secondly, in his discourse, religion plays a significant role as a social control mechanism. For example, in one of the trials he makes a speech on which craft and emphasizes that it's a crime and it's among the worst sins according to "our religion." Similarly, the use of alcohol is a common issue discussed in the show, and Judge denounces alcohol as *haram* at any level, and clearly states that he has never even tried it once. Furthermore another common figure in the trials is "slandering" which is not only labeled as a guilt, but also worst of the sins by the Judge.

Besides, mentioning his religious perspective on significant issues, his decisions on the cases are also directly related to religion. For instance in one of the cases, when it is said that the wife has attempted to commit suicide, then the judge mentioned the importance of this in the sense that it might affect the decision of the child custody. The wife expressed how regretful she was of committing such a sin and begged judge to keep her son. Judge replied "it is very important for me that you regret and accept this as a sin". Then he did not ask for further investigation of her psychological well being and in the end of the case which ended up in divorce, he granted the custody to the wife.

Furthermore in the general approach of the program besides the legal justice “Divine Justice” plays an important role in the resolution of the cases. The “truth” is discovered in the end of the every trial. In judge’s words this situation is expressed by saying “this is God’s justice; God will always show the truth.” And he advises the participants and the audience to trust God’s justice.

Moreover, besides religion, judge also makes references to the so called scientific knowledge. He, himself provides statistical information, or some other information which he defines as “scientific” or asks the expert for further scientific information on the issue. For instance, while he is discussing the problem of women’s education, he fortifies his arguments with statistics, claiming that “36% of women are not educated in this country.” Nevertheless, he does not provide the sources of the statistics or the knowledge he uses.

Additionally, sometimes judge makes emphasis over the contradiction of science with traditions. In such situations, he gives priority to the science and indicates negative sides of the traditions. For instance, in one of the cases (C4) in which the wife has married at an early age, judge criticizes the tradition which forces individuals to marry when they are not ready and argues how this is in contrast with scientific approach. In the case, the wife claims that she was too young and was not ready to get married so that she didn’t want to marry but her parents forced her. Father explains why he had forced his daughter to marry as “everyone had been considering them as engaged, if they had not been married, people would have started to talk about them behind their back. Judge responses as “from the perspective of the traditions, you may be right but Science says to us that firstly people should complete the development of their personalities. If father is not ready to be a father, if mother is not ready to be a mother, how could they make a happy home? This critical approach of Judge to the traditions is observed in most of the trials. For instance, in almost all cases, in discussion of different issues there is one common argument. It is displayed as how people behave

according to “what others will think?” Judge, criticizes this point of view, and claims for several times that “It is you that matters”.

Lastly, besides a judge, he acts like a father and plays a paternalist role in the show. He calls the participants as son, daughter, and makes speeches starting with “I’m speaking as your father”. Furthermore, he makes a separation between himself as an individual and as the representative of the Turkish state. In some of the episodes in the end of the trial, he puts his stuff gown off and speaks on behalf of himself, not as the Judge of Turkish state but as a figure of father. His appearance in the show as the father and the authority at the same time reinforces the authority figure of the father in the domestic sphere.

#### *d. Other Participants*

Other than these authority figures in the show, there are the parties, plaintiffs and defenders, their witnesses, mostly the members of their families, and the spectators; the relatives and acquaintances of the parties.

There is very limited information provided in the show, on the jobs, ownerships or education status of the parties. From the complaints of the parties from economic problems, and from their life styles it is understood that they are mostly traditional and low income families. However, in three of the cases (C2, C9, C10) we see the upward mobility of family, of two of which is directly related to the migration (C2, C9).

The identification of women with the domestic sphere and the men with the public sphere is clearly represented. In all of the cases, women – wives or the female relatives of the participants are housewives with two exceptions. In one of the cases (C10), the wife once had to work, as a domestic servant, to maintain her family, when her

husband was an alcoholic, but she is not working now since it is not a necessity now. In the other case, the wife is working as an unpaid farm laborer of the family farm (C9). On the contrary, all men are working. They are either wage laborers or shopkeepers. In one of the cases husband is a migrant worker in Germany (C9).

In the lives of the families religion and traditions are considerably important. Men and elderly family members frequently criticize modern practices. Nevertheless, young women in the show often criticize and challenge traditional practices. They question the rights and responsibilities traditionally ascribed for them as a wife and a bride or as a mother. Though critics of traditions are common, no critic posed towards religion and religious bases of these traditions.

Men are mostly dressed formal, a suit without a tie while women's dresses are more casual. There are not many veiled women in the show, but all the women appear in the show has conservative forms of dressings conforming codes of modesty. Long sleeve shirts and long skirts are common. Only, in two of the cases the wives and the elderly women in the family are covered, with a traditional Anatolian headscarf which does not cover their hair completely. Veiling is not an issue discussed in the show. As opposed to the Islamic Broadcasting in the Middle East, veiled women are not the representatives of women image particularly in the show and in the general of the channel, Samanyolu TV. Since Gülen avoids contradicting with the secular state, he remains less active in the veiling issue, and headscarf debate. In accordance, though the expert is turbaned, veiling is not much apparent in the show.

## **4.2. Family and Marriage Patterns**

To analyze the approach of the show towards women, it is important to look at the representation of family and marriage since in Islamist discourses, and in the Gülen's discourse women is discussed with reference to her role in the family and marriage. Moreover, the discussion of the organization of the private sphere is important for the analysis of gender since inequality between genders in the private sphere are connected to the broader social and political relations and play role in justifying and reproducing them (Bora and Üstün, 2005 :13).

Besides, it is important to note that in contrast to discussions over women's visibility on television screens in Islamic broadcasting in Middle East, here it is observed that, there occurs no problem in appearance of women on television, without veiling, even if in one of the most conservative Islamic channels, STV in Turkey

### **4.2.1. The Perception of “ Family” of the Program**

As explained in the previous chapter, in Fethullah Gülen's ideology the institution of family has a significant place. It is accepted as the foundation of Turkish society in which values of Turkish culture preserved and new generations are reproduced. Women are valued as the centers of the family and seen as sacred as mothers who bring up the next generations. Accordingly, the program reinforces this sacredness of the family and its function in the sustenance of the community and nation as well as women's role in it. The main aim of the program is claimed to protect the family institution as it is stated in the online advertisements of the program. The producers of the show argue that the values and ideals that the modernized world imposes upon us severely demolishes the idea of a family institution and the prospect of humanity is being threatened by men and women who are driven into disparity with concerns on

the increasing divorce rates. For them, excessive individualization results in the loss of basic human virtues such as compassion, devotion, acceptance and integrity. This is clearly expressed in the article presented on the web site of the channel, before the program started to broadcast “Desperate times call for desperate measures and Samanyolu Television believes in the need of a solution to the community, this is where the brand new show, I Do Not Want to Divorce comes into play.” (<http://bosanmakistemiyorum.blogspot.com/>)

Besides, this same attitude is observed in the judge’s discourse. For instance, in one of the cases, (C12) he makes a speech extraneous to the case in response to the critics to the format differences of the cases in the program from real Turkish court cases. He explains that it’s a show program with a particular aim. It aims to encourage spouses to rethink their decisions before getting divorced. While stressing the importance of the family, he frequently mentions high divorce rates and corruption of the family in the West. In one of his speeches, he says that:

We see who advices to divorce. I provide you with the statistics of the Europe. However, USA has realized. European Union has still not realized the amount of danger. Russia has realized. Europe is failing. Thank God, we are still not that bad. But the amount of danger is too wide. Danger of divorce...

While the significance of the program as to prevent possible divorces is emphasized in the program, divorce is not totally rejected. It is apparent both in Judge’s speeches and in his decisions. He claims that divorce is acceptable as the last option, when there are no other solutions to maintain the marriage. And he justifies his point of view with reference to Islam. He stresses that Islam as opposed to other religions permits divorce when necessary. He acts accordingly, by decreeing divorce in 5 of the 12 cases analyzed in this study. Furthermore, while he mentions problems of children with divorced parents, he doesn’t reject divorce even for marriages with children. All 5 cases in which divorce decree issued are marriages with children.

#### **4.2.2. Marriage patterns and Household Types**

In all of the cases, it is discussed that the formation of the marriage plays significant role in the future of the marriage. From the first days of the marriage, formation of the marriage creates problems for the spouses. Arranged marriages, marriages based on the individuals' choices and marriages without the consent of the families are marriage arrangements exemplified and discussed in the show.

In C1 and C11 arranged marriages are displayed. In both examples of the arranged marriages, marriages took place without the consent of the women. They are forced to get married, at an early age. Most of the parents of the parties argue for arranged marriages, and their claims are based on their own experiences of long term marriages. Nevertheless all of the young couples criticize this pattern. The importance of the individual choice and love are their basic claims.

Furthermore, the expert also discusses the problems faced within arranged marriages and labels these marriages as unhealthy (C11). Judge as well clearly states that he is against marriages realized without the consent of the parties based on scientific claims of the expert. However, although the arranged marriage is harshly criticized during discussions by all the "authorities" in the show, the examples of two arranged marriages result in a happy ending. It is implied that even in forced marriages, love and harmony could be achieved through some sacrifice, particularly the sacrifice of women, even when they get married forcefully.

Beside arranged marriages, even in love match marriages couples could get forced to marry earlier than the time individuals desire, in order to prevent possible rumors in the neighborhood. In 2 of the 12 cases, in C2 and C4, the male members of the women's families decides when the young women should get marry. The honor of the

family, and possibility of the neighborhood rumors determines the time of the marriage. This connection between female sexual purity and family honor is among the main tools of controlling women's sexuality. Kandiyoti (1987: 326) argues that "women are vested with immense negative power because any misbehavior on their part can bring shame and dishonor to the male members of a whole community, lineage, or family." Though judge mentions that the parties should decide when they will get married, he does not challenge the association of the sexuality of women with the "honor of the family which enables men and the community to restrict women's activities. Instead it is reproduced in the show, with several examples. Furthermore, it is observed that, as consequence of this perception, there is a very limited space for the extra marital female-male acquaintance for women in the discourse produced by the show, in accordance with the gender discourse of the movement as discussed in the previous chapter.

Moreover, marriages which take place without the consent of the families are also a common pattern in the show. In these examples, women had to elope to marry since their parents did not permit to marry men that they loved. In four of the cases, women's sufferings from these kind of marriages are emphasized (C5, C7, C10, C12). Firstly, women are dishonored as "bad woman" , and thus exposed to bad treatment by the members of their family in-laws, particularly by their mother-in-laws. For instance, In case 5, The mother-in-law, rejects the "eloped women" as her bride. Their main cause is that such a rebellious woman will not be obedient to her husband as well.

The judge harshly criticizes these arguments and belittling of women. He advices families to support their children's marriages by drawing attention to the sufferings of women in those kinds of marriages.

Independent of the type of the formation of the marriage, in all cases, “love” is accepted as one of the fundamental bases of the marriage both by the Judge and the young spouses. As discussed in the previous chapter, Turam (2007: 124) argued that, Gülen perceives reason rather than love as the basis of marriage in his functional approach to the family and marriage. However, in the show “Love”, (the conjugal love) appears as an important theme. Abu-Lughod (1998: 217) argues that Islamists “in particular although claim to represent a “return” to the culturally authentic, rejecting emancipation of women as a Western corruption, their positions are no more traditional than those of the progressives”. She concludes that though they are less tolerant of women’s work, but strongly agrees on the education and conjugal love as ideals and love is represented as the only proper basis for the marriage on Islamic broadcastings. Similarly, in *Boşanmak İstemiyorum* even in arranged and forced marriages, love appears as the basis of the marriage. For instance, in the case 1, the woman was forced to marry someone she doesn’t know. She tells her experiences, as “I didn’t want to marry him but thank God, he was a kind man and I loved him”. It is implied that even marriage does not start with love, love develops between the spouses when they fulfill their tasks as wives and husbands properly. Love is emphasized and dramatized through the scenes in which the camera focuses on the glances of spouses to each other accompanied with the entrance of the program’s music. The soundtrack of the program is a sad song with romantic lyrics describing a break up and sang together by a male and female singer, which became very popular in many video-sharing websites and social networking websites.

Besides, the formation of the marriage, type of the household is among the most discussed issues in the show. Nuclear family is promoted strongly in the show, with providing scientific bases for their arguments, while extended family is condemned through dramatizing the tragedies of women in the extended families. The extended families and interference of parents or in-laws are implied as one of the most common problems resulting in conflicts between couples. In 8 of the 12 cases, household type is the extended family. One is patriarchal extended family, while others are transient

extended families, with the husband wife, their unmarried children and widowed mothers and sisters of the husband. The major problem here arises from the conflicts between the wife and her female relatives-in-law. Women are the main actors who generate the problems and suffer from these problems. This is a practice which contributes to the internalization and reproduction of the patriarchy by women in Turkey's classical patriarchy as Kandiyoti (1988:279) has argued.

The cyclical nature of women's power in the household and their anticipation of inheriting the authority of senior women encourage a thorough internalization of this form of patriarchy by the women themselves. In classic patriarchy, subordination to men is offset by the control older women attain over younger women.

In these examples of the extended families women are oppressed both by their mother in laws and by their husbands. However it is implied as that the mother in laws, sister in laws or the other brides in the family poses most challenge to the new young bride. Furthermore, again in all of the examples, the new brides are presented as victims and mother in laws as vicious, bad intended women. While judge criticizes such mother-in-laws, they justify themselves by arguing that they had also experienced such treatment at the beginning of their marriages and obeyed without questioning. New brides are exposed to humiliation, belittling, restraints and violence from other women in the extended family. They have no or limited power on decision making on the issues related to families, homemaking and childrearing. For instance, in case 11, the mother-in-law opposes to the pregnancy of her bride and takes her to the doctor to figure out whether she is pregnant or not, to force her to have abortion in case she is pregnant. Similarly, In case 10 it is seen that, the mother in law decides whether the daughter should go to school or not.

All these mistreatment and intervention of the families in to the marriage is criticized by the Judge. He aims to present an intermediary role between the parents and the

couple. In reconciling the disputes he focuses on the attitude rather than the contents of discussion. He emphasizes that the young should be polite towards their parents, and in return the parents should be compassionate. For him parents should not intervene in the marriages, but children should respect them. However, parents' advices should be taken into consideration by the young couples since their parents are more experienced.

Moreover, men are almost all the time on the side of their mothers and they are deceived by them. In all these examples, the responsibility of the bad treatment of the men towards their wives is of their mothers and sisters. In other words men are innocent in the essence, and manipulated by other women, and that's the reason why they mistreat their wives. In the end, the husbands find out the real aims of their mothers, or sisters, regrets for their mistreatment towards their wives. For example, in case 10 in the end of the case, it is discovered that the mother of the husband has bribed someone to bear false witness as the lover of the wife. Similarly in case 11, the sister of the husband lies in the trial and brings a false witness as the lover of her brother's wife. She presents a fake photo as the evident. When husbands find out the truth in these cases, he calls of his divorce.

### **4.3. Women's Roles in Private and Public Spheres**

#### **4.3.1. Women's Roles in Private Sphere**

Though the claim of equality of men and women" takes place in the judge's discourse, the presentation of family life and marriage evidently reinforces traditional sexual division of labor in which women's primary responsibilities are mothering, familial and domestic tasks while men's are economic and extra-domestic tasks. It is observed that mothering is presented as the primary, most significant and sacred role of women.

Secondly it is depicted as her primary identity, which is supposed to provide women with power.

During the show, the judge frequently praises mothers and mothering with references to religion, namely, Islam. In one of the cases he describes women as “sacred” and adds that when they become mothers, they are even twice sacred. He draws attention to how women are valued in Islam as mothers by frequently reminding the famous quote of the Prophet Mohammed, “The heaven lies under the feet of the mothers”. It is represented as that the primary responsibility of the children is on mothers, and women are “naturally” more devoted to their children than men. There are examples in which men threat their wives by their children, or force their pregnant wives to have abortion and even apply to physical violence to cease the pregnancy. Furthermore, in all of the cases resulted in divorce, the right of custody is given to mothers without any explanations or discussions of reasons. The accusation of “insufficient mothering” is among the major causes behind men demanding for divorce; and is used as a common means to degrade women.

Women identify themselves primarily as mothers and believe in the power of having bred a child. One can simply observe this during the quarrels between wives and their mother-in-laws; for instance in case 10, the mother in law challenges her bride basing her argument upon maternal rights by stating the following, “Does one lose maternal rights to her son as soon as he gets married? I breastfed him and nurtured him for years” to this the bride responds, “I gave him a son, I’m his son’s mother”, mentioning that she is just as important as her mother in law now for she has given birth to a son of her own. Here it is easily to observe what Kandiyoti has referred as the reproduction of patriarchy by women, their internalization of patriarchy through their life cycles.

In addition, mothering is also emphasized through the representation of the idea that men always prioritize their mothers over their wives, in discussions between the two. This is most apparent in cases in which men are easily deceived and manipulated by their mothers against their wives.

#### **4.3.2. Women's participation in public sphere**

Though there is no open statement as “women should not work” it's implicitly discouraged. The priority of women's tasks as a mother, as a housewife, and as a wife are emphasized in the discourse of both the participants and the authority figures of judge and the expert.

There is a strict division between the private and the public spheres and, the emphasis on women's confinement to the private sphere. Women's activities outside home, which are even limited to visiting family members or neighbors, are questioned, and discouraged. Among the common reasons behind men who demands divorce, the accusation of ignorance of domestic tasks and mothering have a great significance. For instance, men complaint when the cook is not ready when they came home. The judge, though more politely than the husbands, questions the wife, and encourages caring more about his family in order to achieve a harmonious family life. In some of the cases, in the end of the trial, the future of the family is written, like “they lived happily ever after”. In one of the cases it is written that the wife is visiting neighbors less often and they have a happy family now.

The program defends participation of women in education. However, what they mean by the “education” is not clear. In one of the cases it equals to the lowest level of education, which is limited to mere literacy. In another case, the young wife opposes to marry, and desires to continue her high school education. One of the disputes between the couple arises from the fact that woman continues her education after she

gets married without informing her husband. Her husband does not allow her to go to school. He depreciates her will for education “what will happen, after that age, having education, will she become a professor? Why will need a married women education?” (C9). In this particular case the judge responded quite angrily to his argument and sharply criticized this point of view and stated “Unless you solve this problem, you can solve nothing. To solve this, firstly the minds should be transformed. Surely, she will be educated and feel herself as a human.” During the judge’s speech on the necessity of education, the camera focuses on the portrait of Ataturk on the wall behind the judge.

In the discussions on the education of women, the argument of necessity of educated mothers prevails. However, in one of the cases, the young wife expresses the need of education by criticizing the dependency of women on men. In this case, the wife is illiterate and all the family members and village people oppose her will to learn how to read and write. Their main argument is that a woman in the village does not need to read or write. However, the wife responds that “They don’t educate their daughters, and compel them to be accompanied by a man all the time. All women should be literate, so self-sufficient.”

#### **4.4. Reasons of Divorce**

The addiction problems of the men, the disputes between the wives and their mother in laws, violence are among the main reasons of disputes between the couples. Nevertheless, not all of them lead to divorce. In the show, 5 of the 12 cases has resulted in divorce (C2, C7, C8, C9, C10).

In two of the cases (C2, C9), the infidelity of men, which is proved during the trials , are the causes of divorce. In one of them, (C7) beside other reasons of disputes- the addiction problem of the husband to alcohol and gambling-and the physical violence against woman is the main reason leading to divorce. The man attempts to murder women, by hanging her, and their son witnesses the scene. Though the man realizes that he is deceived by his sister and her husband, and expresses how he is regretful in the end of the show, the woman insists on getting divorced. Violence perpetuated by the mother in laws also represented as a cause of divorce. In case 10 (C10), the wife is exposed to violence from her mother in law persistently. The mother in law, through physical and psychological violence oppresses her bride which results in deep psychological and physical damages on women. This is the main reason for the Judge to decree a divorce in that case. Finally, in one of the cases, the husband is found guilty of a crime against humanity, after it is discovered that he had planned to sell his baby (C8). Beside the bad treatment of the wife by the husband, and extreme physical violence, the crime of the husband appears as the main reason bringing about the divorce. To capture the messages of the program regarding the polygamy and violence against women, these causes of divorce will be analyzed in next two sections.

#### **4.4.1. Polygamy and Women's Appearance**

When it comes to polygamy the program has a clear stance. From the Judge's speeches and decisions it is understood that polygamy and infidelity is not tolerable in any circumstances and is a sufficient cause for divorce. In two cases, judge harshly criticizes the infidelity of men, and directly decrees a divorce on the discovery of their infidelity. This is in line with Gülen's and program's general approach to marriage and family. Infidelity as a threat to family unity and bourgeois marriage depends on love between the spouses, hence rejected harshly.

Nevertheless, from the traditional point of view which is mostly articulated by the elderly relatives in the show, we observe that, infidelity is acceptable for men, whereas women are degraded or punished severely if they are found unfaithful to their husbands. We observe a double standard operating here also in Judge's approach to the issue. While judge criticizes approval of men's infidelity, he remains silent to the severe punishment or degradation of the infidel women.

In two cases in which, (C2, C9) men cheats on their wives, families have a history of migration. Migration is depicted as a factor distorting the family unit. Husbands' claims as the causes of divorce are intellectual incompatibility as well as cultural and lifestyle differences with his wife. It is usually argued that women lag behind their husbands when men migrate and work and while men are able to adapt to the urbanized life styles women fail to adapt. However, the main discussion revolves around the women's appearances.

In first of these cases, (C2) family migrates to a city from a village, where the husband works and achieves higher financial status. In the example, it is demonstrated as men cheats on his wife with several women, who are dressed in modern codes, including working women and popular fashion models. In contrast to these women, his wife is victimized and honored at the same time as the traditional modest woman. The husband claims that while he has adopted to the urban life, his wife lags behind. Nevertheless, the discussion carried out over this case is mainly based on the comparison of appearances of two different types of women, as depicted in the show, the traditional rural woman and the modern urbanized woman. While the wife defends herself, "what he means by adaptation to the city, is wearing miniskirts, and make ups". Judge, while remains silent about the dress codes of the modern urban woman, clearly acclaims the traditional women and her dress code, and do not let the humiliation of her style, in the name of all other village people.

In the second case, the husband migrates to Germany by himself, gets married to a German woman and has a child from her, while still married to his wife in the village in Turkey. Similarly in this case, the judge honors the modest traditional and altruistic woman who has been laboring in the family farmer, taking care of their son, dealing with the house chores, and waiting for her husband to return for 6 years.

The husband contrasts the woman in Germany and his wife and claims that after living in Germany he had found out how a woman should be. His Turkish wife is wearing *yemeni* (traditional cheesecloth head covering), and *shalvars*. Her hair is untidy and her hands are dirty and damaged. The husband criticizes his wife's hair, her dress and her hands.

The judge loses his temper at that point. He starts to explain why she is different from the woman in Germany. "This girl does not spend a certain amount of time everyday in beauty parlors." He continues with glorifying the traditional Anatolian rural women who are working as farm laborer and makes emphasis on the sacrificing women of Turkey in contrast to women in Germany. In addition, in this case, after the couple gets divorced, the conversation between the mother of the husband and the German bride is displayed. The mother who has been defending the German wife from the beginning of the trial, demands to live with them in Germany, and regrets having a German wife when her request is refused. Then she suddenly realizes the value of her ex-bride who was as obedient and altruistic woman. Here, in these cases the subordination of women is reinforced through the honoring of the obedient and altruistic women.

#### **4.4.2. Violence against women**

Violence against women composes largest portion of the program. When I analyze the examples of the violence against women in the program I used a broad definition of

violence; such as "any act involving the use of force or coercion with intent to perpetuate/promote hierarchical gender relations" (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 1990). The term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

This definition includes other forms of violence against women, which are psychological, sexual and economic violence besides physical violence. While the physical and psychological violence appear as most important themes in the show, there are limited examples of sexual and economic violence, which are overlooked in the discussions in the trials.

As psychological violence; name-calling, belittling, yelling, criticizing, threatening, restraining activities based on claims of "chastity" are common. Furthermore, physical violence is a very recurrent theme in the program. In all of the 12 cases, and all 36 episodes it takes considerable place, both in the narratives of the parties and in the flashbacks displayed. The extent of violence ranges from the simplest manifestations of physical violence to attempts of murder. Furthermore, in the examples, violence is perpetrated not only by the husbands, or male members of the family, but also by the female members of their husbands' family and by the neighbors.

While in judge's discourse every form of physical violence is condemned, and violence against women criticized harshly, in practice, as shown in the show, it is possible to overlook, excuse and tolerate to even most drastic forms of physical violence against women. The physical violence in most of the cases is accompanied by the alcohol or drug addiction and it among the main excuses of the violence against women. It is observed that, while, infidelity brings about a divorce without further consideration, physical violence, even associated with serious health threats to women, do not necessarily result in termination of the marriage. For instance in one of the

cases the alcoholic husband kicks his pregnant wife in the stomach in order to terminate her pregnancy. The woman gets injured and the baby dies. In that case, despite the severity of the violence perpetuated by the husband, the judge decrees separation for 6 months on this case and in the end the woman forgives her husband and they reunite (C1). The main excuse for violence is the husband's alcohol addiction, and upon realizing how sinful it is, he gives up drinking alcohol and becomes a proper husband and is forgiven by his wife.

Violence is not represented as the deviant behavior, but denoted as the outcome of other deviant behaviors such as addiction and gambling. Furthermore, the manipulation of men by other women also appears as the reasons of bad treatment of men to their wives.

Physical violence is showed as a widespread phenomenon, and besides being an individual problem, it is argued as a social problem by the Judge in the show. However, it is at the same time implied as inevitable and part of everyone's life and proposed with excuses which contributes to the normalization of and the toleration to it. Furthermore, while judge condemns violence, and frequently urges the audience and the participants in the court not to apply to violence, he does not give any advice to the women who are exposed to the violence. There are no mentions on where or how battered women apply to, no mentions of legal procedures, or shelters for women. Rather Judge attempts to find excuses and compromise between the spouses. Furthermore, it is not treated as a crime. In sum, the message revealed in the program is that while ideally violence should be avoided, it could be tolerated in practice.

To conclude, the discourse in the program despite the stresses on the women's education, violence against women, and human rights it is far from empowering women. the reproduction traditional gender roles. Women are solely depicted as

wives, mothers and house keeper, while men are represented as the sole breadwinners of the family. The heterosexual bourgeois marriage based on love and nuclear family is represented as the ideal. The claims of honor and chastity in controlling women's body and actions are reproduced. While the education of women constitutes the considerable part of the judge's discourse, women's work is not an issue discussed in the show. Moreover, while infidelity of man, polygamy is strictly rejected, as a factor threatening the ideal bourgeois marriage, the violence against woman, though criticized repeatedly in the show, does not appear as an important practice which oppresses women.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to understand the how one of the strongest Islamist movements in Turkey, the Gülen Movement, approaches to the question of woman and disseminate it to the society through their television channel, STV. To realize this aim, I firstly provided a discussion on the approach to the women's issue in the discourse of Gülen and the related practices of the movement, and then analyzed in details the content of a TV program which is produced and broadcasted by the television channel of the movement. STV's "*Boşanmak İstemiyorum*" (I do not want to divorce) is a court show which is based on reenactments of the real divorce cases. In order to analyze the movements approach to the women question, I have chose this program since it provides large amount of discussions on the issues related to family and women. Through, the analyses of this program, I tried to indicate how the patriarchal discourse of the movement is reproduced through representations of marriages, divorces, and family and gender relations.

To situate my analysis in the broader discussion of religious broadcasting and reproduction of patriarchy, in Chapter II, I tried to discuss the use of media by the religious revivalist movements around the world and in Turkey, both Christian and Islamic to provide a comparative analysis. Religious broadcasting is defined as a

broadcasting of religiously oriented content by the religious institutions or religious groups. Although I have restricted my investigation to two major monotheist religions, Christianity and Islam, religious televising in general almost started with the advent of television broadcasting, later strengthened and become widespread around the world while continuing to be strengthened. There are examples of religious television channels affiliated with different religions and religious groups, ranging, from the most fundamental ones to the moderate groups. The basic common aim of the religious broadcasting, as articulated by its producers, is to spread the religious principles and theory and to protect family and society from distorting effects of what they usually called “degenerated modernity” by representing a reality in accordance with religious morals and conducts. Although there are many differences among different religion’s broadcasting policies and also among different groups of the same religion, they all present a conservative outlook and perpetuate a restrictive culture, which depends on traditional gender roles, through which patriarchal principles and practices are reproduced. The emphasis on the importance of the family institution, the unity of the family as well as the traditional gender roles for women such as the domestic roles of women as wives and mothers are the main common points in all religious broadcasting.

In Chapter III, I tried to draw a general picture of the Gülen movement, by discussing its historical development, political character, ideological arguments and its ideological instruments. Gülen movement which is a branch of Nur Movement of Said-i Nursi, particularly after 1980s, appeared as a distinct and strongest Islamist movement in Turkey. From the 1980s onwards, neo-liberal and neo-conservative developments which are widespread both nationally and globally provided a suitable base for the Islamist movements, in Turkey as well, to enlarge and consolidate their movements. By successfully mobilizing the newly emerged conservative bourgeoisie, and employing the most effective discursive tools – education and media, Gülen movement produced a strong Islamist movement, which gained popularity at the global level. Gülen gained sympathy around the world, ranging from Christian to

secular authorities and academicians, due to his emphasis on peace and dialogue among civilizations, and it was acknowledged as the progressive and moderate face of Islam. Nevertheless, in Turkey, though there are the ones who agree with this image of Gülen, the movement also receives harsh critics from the ones who hold secular perspectives. These debates mainly revolve around the dichotomy between political and cultural Islam. Gülen's Islam is referred as an example of Cultural Islam in many studies and by Gülen himself. Although Gülen movement with its distancing itself from political actions, with its focus on the individual and community rather than the state, and with its aim of transforming society through a bottom up process, seems to fit in the definitions of cultural Islam, in this study following, Saktanber (2002) it is argued that this dichotomy fails to explain this phenomenon. The Islamization project of the Gülen's movement, which attempted to create and spread an alternative Islamic morality through bringing religion into the production of public opinion on issues such as how we should live, is argued to be an example of what Saktanber (2002) calls "politicization of Islam". After discussion on the political character of the movement, I tried to point out main ideological elements in the discourse of Gülen and continued with the discussion of Gülen's discourse on the issue of woman. In this regard we can also observe two opposite approach which sees Gülen's approach as progressive with regard to the women issue and the other as conservative. In this study it is argued that Gülen's discourse relies on and reinforces the basic patriarchal principles and practices which lead to the reproduction of conservative gender and family values. By discussing gender issue as a question of justice, rather than equality, which is based on the argument of differences between sexes , Gülen defends the idea of "complementarity" between sexes according to the principles of Islamic distribution of labor between sexes and reproduces traditional gender roles.

In Chapter IV, to understand the approach of Gülen's towards the women question and how this discourse is reproduced through television broadcasting I analyzed the program *Boşanmak İstemiyorum*. Based on the assessment of the way in which gender relations are handled in the program, and representation of family and gender norms, it

can be argued that, the program reproduces patriarchy, through reinforcing traditional gender roles and prioritizing family unity, no matter how the program wanted to represent itself as a broad minded one. During the analysis I figured out the connectivity between the Gülen's discourse on gender and its representation on the media and I also observed many similarities with the other religious broadcasting institutions' representation of women on television around the world despite the differences in the cultural contexts that these programs were reproduced. All proposes a conservative gender discourse.

The limited sources on the Gülen movement and religious broadcasting with a gender focus consisted one of the main limitations of this study. Another difficulty was the vast amount of study on Gülen, carried out by both the sympathizers of the movement or the opponents of the movement. Though this may seem as an opportunity, to reach a generative discussion on the subject, the arguments in these studies are mainly based on personal experiences, rather than scholarly analyses. Furthermore, this study is limited to the analysis of the discourse and discourse production of Gülen regarding the women question. However, how these are practiced in the organization of the movement and daily lives of the movement's followers is as important as the discourse itself. Further studies which analyze the practice of gender relations in the movement can indicate the continuities between the discourse and practice.

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## APPENDIX

### COURT CASES

#### **COURT CASE 1 (C1)**

**November 14-17-18**

**Plaintiff:** Man

**Defendant:** Woman

They have been married for 15 years. They have a boy and a girl who is newborn. Her brother threatens the man not to divorce.

#### **Reason of Divorce**

1. Having married his wife as a child and later coming to the city from the village.
2. Her wife could not adapt to the environment, could not improve herself which lead having an awkward manner.
3. His wife is extremely jealous and she hired a private detective to follow him around.
4. Being extremely jealous, she went Man's office and blackmailed him, belabored his employees and she didn not show the children to Man and his family.

When the judge asks some questions about the problems, Man says: "*I don't want to divorce.*" But Man sends a secret note to the judge that includes facts about the threats.

**Woman:** *“I don’t want to divorce. I gave him my youth. I was poorly off. Now I can’t end my marriage for an insignificant women. Our children need attention, I can’t divorce.”*

**Man:** *“Her brother heard of our relationship. He threatened me. I had to marry because of this. She was jealous even before we came to Istanbul. But after we came to Istanbul, I started a good business and she blowed her stock. She humiliated me and she started to stop by my office often.”*

**Flashback:**

As the Man is examining the files with his assistant, Woman arrives. She starts to hit the assistant and she insults him. Man straightens out his wife and says: *‘You disgraced me.’*

**Woman:** *“Right. I’m not in accordance with your class. I’m ugly and without make-up!”*

Woman accepts to do rehearsals and she says to defend herself: *“No one becomes closer to my husband like her.”*

**Woman’s Father:** *“My daughter isn’t sick. He has deceived my daughter for a long time.”*

**Judge:** *“There must be a reason behind her distrust and jealousy.”*

**Man’s Mother:** *“If he deceives her, that’s a good thing. Please look my boy and that Woman! She looks like a buffoon.”*

The Judge gets nervous. He understands that the insults impose all of the villagers and he inflicts imprisonment and he says: *“Apologize to Woman and the villagers.”*

**Man:** *“She can’t accommodate to my new environment.”*

**Woman:** *“He wants me to wear skimpy clothes and to put on make-up.”*

**Man:** *“No, I asked her to go to a diction course. But she didn’t.”*

**Woman:** *“I didn’t refuse it. But I didn’t want to lose my roots.”*

**Man:** *“Please tell me: Having dirty hair or smelling bad is your roots? She eats the meat with her hands and she doesn’t know to use her left hand for holding the knife. She isn’t well groomed and she dresses ungratefully.”*

He didn’t come home for six months. He says, *‘There weren’t the safety of lives.’* In the meantime Woman starts laughing and then crying. She stands up and goes to her husband.

**Judge** takes a break: *“Please sit down. Wash her face.”*

In the meantime **Woman’s Father** hits Man: *“You made my daughter sad. When you started to make money, you started to deceive her...”* Her father feels like he is about to faint.

**Judge:** *“Your husband has another claim’ he says, “They enchanted me.” Is it true? By expression of Allah, we must avoid seven things. First of them is polytheism. Second one is enchantment. Enchantment is bad for our faith and crime for our laws. Do you use this outdated way?”*

**Woman:** Resists the claim. *“I take refuge with Allah, I don’t use ways like this. I burned herbs for my husband’s asthma. We gave you nothing except love but you escaped from them.”*

Woman doesn’t visit Man’s mother and she doesn’t show her babies to her.

**Man:** *“Why doesn’t she show our babies to my mother? What did my mother ever do to her? Problems are between us. I asked her but I can’t talk with her.”*

**Woman:** *“His mother invites his girlfriends. Man defected me when I was a child and then visited his mother. A message came to her phone and I read it. A woman whose name is Birsen, wrote: “Mother, I really liked your meals. I want to be your bride.” Have you ever met a woman like her?”*

**Flashback:** Man catches the detective.

**Woman:** *“I don’t even have any money for buying milk for my babies. How can I hire a detective?”*

**Judge:** *“You are not as pure as the driven snow. You defected her when she was a child. When did you go on holiday with you wife?”*

Man panics. Woman shows the photographs of her husband and his lovers on magazine.

**Second Sitting of The Court:** Woman counter suits.

In Incidental Plea Of Defense,

1. They have been married for 15 years,
2. For this period, she is a good wife and mother.
3. When her husband earns Money, he starts to deceive her and leaves the home.

**Woman:** *“My husband leaves the home sometimes. Then he comes to see the children. He hits me and he isn’t interested in problems about the children. He did all of this so that he can divorce me.”*

**Man:** *“There’s a reason I am with other women.”*

**Woman:** *“First of all, I’m the mother of children. You said hurtful things to me.”*

**Man:** *“Please look at her. How can I walk with her?”*

**Woman:** *“What is the problem about me? I can’t wear skimpy clothes. Is a man says to her wife, whose mother of his children that she is a bad woman.”*

**Judge:** *“When did he tell you the terrible word?”*

**Woman:** *“He said it when I was pregnant, then he added “I don’t want this baby” and he started to kick my stomach.”*

**Flashback:**

**Man:** *“You want this baby because you are afraid to be alone and you want my Money. Do you know what they say to a woman who goes about with her husband for his Money?”*

He starts to hit her.

**Woman's Father:** *"When I found her, she was lying on the floor. She was losing blood and couldn't breathe. My grand child, Cem called me. He could barely talk because of fear."*

After 6 months, Man comes with his mother to take his child. Woman says: *'She is a little baby and needs breast milk.'* Man hits her. He can't take the children because she locks the door.

**Woman's Father:** *"It's my fault. She wanted to divorce but I opposed to divorcement. I said to her: "You can't return back to our home."*

**Judge:** *"You went with a wedding gown, you can only return with grave clothes. The house of the husband is a hell. You are shutting the door as well. What will she, or women alike do? Firstly, women must have opportunities for education. They must have a job and trust.. Our aim before decree of divorce, couples must think results of this. How can you live with 2 children?"*

**Woman:** *"We can't live. There is no electric and no phone. My father is a coolie, my brother is a driver. We don't take any money from him. I only think of my children."*

#### **Decision Sitting of The Court:**

**Judge** makes a speech independently from the court case: *"My dear colleagues, who are still actively working with law, I would like you to look at realistic examples. Why did the defendant and plaintiff separate in the first place? I cannot find a reason for it in the past 40 years. Our first aim is to protect the family. If we have a chance to change a divorce decision, we will be very happy. We see some people who agree with divorce. I would like to give you the statistic of the European Union. United States of America realized the danger of divorce, Russia realized as well, but European Union did not. We are far from them but the danger is big, the danger of divorcing is bigger. We have a mind to go on a pilgrimage like an ant. One way or another. If we can't find a way, we will die fighting this battle. Because these are good things. I want my viewers to watch this sitting of the court carefully. A Judge makes a decision and consciences have a decision, too. Not only viewers, but also attendance of the parties must understand the decisions of consciences."*

**Judge:** *“Look at me my daughter. Everything will be alright. But Supreme Allah has a working scale. Only Allah doesn’t forget who is doing what. Don’t forget Allah’s Justice.”*

**Their Son (Cem):** *“I want them to divorce. My Father hit my mother and she cried. He sometimes hit her without a reason. But he said: ‘ Men occasionally must hit women.’ He doesn’t have any friends and he is alone.”*

**Expert Psychologist Rümeyza Ölmez: (turbaned)**

“In this case is case that is encountered quite often in our society. I would like to view the case in the sense of a woman and I feel that she is the victim as I sure that you do as well The difficulty lies in the problems of adapting to the big city, having arrived from a rural town. The husband plays a big role here and has many responsibilities. The woman needs help as she is a housewife with two children and can only overcome these difficulties with the help of her man. Even though her husband did not physically abuse her, he physiologically abused her in great respect. The husband failed to act as a father and failed as a husband. Since the child is an adolescent, a male child needs father’s attention more than his mother. The father figure is a screen door for an opening to the outer world for the child. If father figure is weak, the doors to the world will be weak as well.”

**Jury:** No consensus. 3 against and 3 for the divorce.

Judge asks the parties.

**Man:** *“I don’t want to divorce.”*

**Woman:** *“I want to divorce.”*

**Decision:** Parties to be divorced and Guardianship of the child to be taken by the mother.

## **COURT CASE 2 (C2)**

**November 19-20-21**

**Plaintiff:** Woman

**Defendant:** Man

**Woman:** No job. Once, did some housekeeping without telling the husband.

**Man:** Had a job. Fired from a factory. Now runs a grocery store.

Married for almost 10 years now. Both divorced. This is their second marriage. Have one child.

### **Reason for Divorce:**

1. My spouse is addicted to drugs.
2. Exercises violence to our child and me.
3. Exercises unexpected and unstable behavior.
4. He sold my house and property with fraud without my approval.
5. I think he is cheating on me.

At the start of the case:

**Woman:** *“Please, get us divorced Mr. Judge, I beg you. I’ll be your slave.”*

**Judge:** *“Never beg anyone. Whoever he is you are talking to, never say you can be his slave. We all beg only to Allah. We all try to be slaves of Allah only.”*

Man tells the court that he used drugs to forget the fact that his family gave away his sister and him to child services. He adds he has no harm to anyone.

**Judge** speaks about drug addiction: *“Drug addiction is the most important problems of this era. Unfortunately, it is so easy for people to access to drugs. Every sheep is hung from its own leg. But if it’s broken then all the community gets harmed. You not only hurt yourself but also your family, your friends, your neighbor, and your nation. It slowly destroys everything in your life. It destroys piece, love, friendship, loyalty, your property and finally your marriage.”*

Man claims he doesn't recall beating his sister or his wife. Judge gets angry.

**Judge:** *"Of course you don't recall. You lose your mind your will. You lose everything. I don't believe any man can hurt his sister, his wife, or his child with a healthy mind. In order to be able to do such thing, someone needs to use stuff and kill his brain cells. There are a lot of women running away from physical violence in the family. This has to stop."*

**Man:** *"Like they go and never come back. They always come back."*

**Judge:** *"Of course they do. This country has a reality. They tell the brides that they go in a wedding dress and they can only come back in grave clothes. When the husbands beat and kick them away they are alone in the middle of the street. It's not like they come back because they want to. That's why I keep telling in each and every episode. Society has to educate women so that women are able to stand on their own feet. Then see if they come back. If she could take care of her child, does she come back ha?"*

Judge now emphasis on the importance of the parents: *"We cannot keep our lives in order unless we keep our family in order. Otherwise we grow unhealthy children."*

Man was fired from the factory. He claims the reason of his wife to leave the house is this. Woman disagrees and tells the violence is the true reason. She takes her one-month baby and leaves. Man complains that wife never helped him mentally.

Woman claims husband cheated on her.

Man sells wife's house without her approval.

### **Defense**

**Man:** *"There are some mistakes I did. But one reason of those mistakes is my wife. I grew up in childcare services. I haven't seen a family before. There were guests in our house all the time. I was leaving because I couldn't go to sleep in front of her friends and her relatives. I wouldn't start using those evil drugs if I could stay at home at the first place. I was going out as well when my wife is not at home because I wanted to stay with her. I couldn't enjoy a life with my wife and my baby. She was in neighbors' all the time. I was preparing my own dinner when home."*

**Judge:** *“Honey, can you the reason of all these? Drug addicts search for an excuse to start and they find one. Maybe your hubby tells the truth ha? Is that possible? Maybe unwillingly you pushed him into this with those behaviors of you?”*

**Judge:** *“The man is fired already. And his wife leaves the house as if she wants to punish him. Is that right? Wrong my daughter wrong. This is called ignorance. This man needs someone to talk to. This man needs help.”*

Woman insists she didn't run away because he is fired but because he beaten her.

She stays at her husband's friend's house.

**Husband's friend:** *“Everyone in the neighborhood was gossiping about her. He had a right to beat her. Who knows what would happen to her if it weren't for us. Anything can happen to a married woman when she leaves home. She was going to live on the streets.”*

Man complains about the fact that wife wasn't following his orders.

**Flashback:** Man and the friend come home intoxicated. Woman tells she cannot allow this in her house.

**Man:** *“I want to drink and she doesn't allow me, does this make any sence? Who rules the roots in this house, her or me? I say the last word in that house. Women have no right to speak. How embarrassing is that. I couldn't make a woman follow my orders.”*

Man's friend prepares a trap to the man with a real estate woman in order to buy their house. He makes the man fired. He makes him a drug addict.

Man' sister tells how much her brother loves his wife and how much he was upset when wife left home.

**Judge:** *“Someone will love his wife this much and will hurt her this much at the same time... It seems unbelievable.”*

9-year old child comes to the court to speak. Kid gets upset and left home to stay at the man's friend' house. Tells he heard his father's friend and the real estate woman talking.

**Judge:** *“They don’t tell there comes a good thing after every bad event for nothing. His mother and sister got sad but it should have happened like this in order for the truth to come out in light. My Allah never lets anything hidden.”*

Judge asks the last words of both parties.

**Woman:** *“I got confused. I leave the decision to you Sir.”*

**Man:** *“I don’t want to divorce.”*

**Specialist: (turbaned)** *“The reason behind the sudden move of the Kid’s to leave the house is that he hoped his parents might get closer again for him. Rather than the wife let’s look at the husband. He had experienced a negative childhood. Since he grew up without any parent love, he made a family without any fatherhood love. Because the wife didn’t know what she should have done in such a situation, the case got worse and more serious. I think the decision should be made after the defendant gets the necessary treatment.”*

**Jury:** The case is overruled.

**Decision:** The case is overruled. Since the plaintiff left the decision to the judge in her last word because with that she gave up from her case. The costs to be sponsored by Turkish Family Association, it is decided for parties to have treatment and rehabilitation by a family expert in a health organization.

**Woman:** No longer goes to neighbors’ every day. She spends more time with her husband and children. She had one more baby two years after the court.

**Man:** He had physiologic treatment for a while and got much better. He went back to his job he lost earlier.

### **COURT CASE 3**

**November 24-25-26**

**Flashback:**

The bride comes to her husband's home. Her mother-in-law and her husband's sister won't let the bride in, they push her and they don't let her see her children. The bride falls down and the bride's husband's sister brings her a glass of water but she puts poison inside the glass. The child hears the bride's husband's sister saying 'I will kill you' to the bride.

**Plaintiff:** Man (Sefa)

**Defendant:** Woman (Meryem)

Their child is 6 years old.

**Judge:** *"You are here in the court because of your irresponsibility of your wife's/husband's in the marriage, and because he doesn't listen to your and your mom's words."*

**Woman:** *"I got married at a very young age your honor. I had a child when I was a child myself."*

**Judge:** *"Mother states that her daughter was married very early. No one has asked Meryem whether she was ready for this marriage or even if she wanted to marry in the first place. One has to ask."*

**Flashback:**

Man beats wife because she keeps going to her mom's home.

**Man:** *"I wouldn't hit her if she didn't make me angry so much."*

**Judge:** *“Why didn’t you go to your mom’s home less if your husband didn’t want you to go to her home so much? Why didn’t you remind your daughter that she has her own home and that she has to take care of it?”*

**Mother of the Woman:** *“I wanted to protect my child.”*

**Judge:** *“Your daughter has got to protect her own home and family as well and you have to support your daughter.”*

**Man:** *“I will beat her again if needed. I will beat her again if she does that again.”*

**Judge:** *“Is husband the most important aspect of this trial your mother or your husband? The whole aim is to spread the love and respect.”*

**Flashback:** Woman’s mother-in-law forces her to do some work. Her husband comes right in when she yells to her mother-in-law “I am not your slave!” Her husband says: “Why are you yelling at my mother?” and starts beating her.

**Judge:** *“Albert Einstein says: ‘It is harder to crack a prejudice than an atom.’ One thinks with a prejudice that all mothers-in-law are evil but we look from the point of view from the mother-in law and they think that all brides are evil. Both thoughts are wrong. Cracking these prejudices is very important. If a bride behaves towards her mother-in-law as her mother then her mother-in-law will behave to the bride as her daughter.”*

**Man:** *“My wife would always put make up on and put nice clothes and I wouldn’t want her to do these things. They would make me uncomfortable and she would do the same things to her little child as well.”*

**Flashback:** When she puts make up on with her child, her husband starts to beat her in front of her child.

**Man’s Mother:** *“With a mother like that, I am sure that she puts make up etc. You are teaching her the wrong stuff from the beginning.”*

**Woman's Mother:** *"It's not bad when a woman does it for her husband."*

**Woman:** *"Despite all of these things, I was still willing to live in that house. If only they let me live my own life there. They even decided upon my room and I couldn't even decide upon my bed sheets! I get so annoyed when there are two people who keep giving me orders."*

**Judge:** *"Is this true to interfere with the life of a young married couple?"*

**Judge:** *"Urbanization has brought a new type of family life; it's what we call a 'small family'. Instead of three generations, there is the mother, the father and children. The experts are recommending this type of family life. They say that this is the best type of family."*

**Letter of defense:** The woman states that she is being ignored and she has been behaved badly because she hasn't given birth to a son.

**Judge:** *"Do you think it is a 'fault' to give birth to a girl?"*

**Man's Mother:** *"It is not a crime but it is not something to be proud of."*

**Judge:** *"How ignorant! It wasn't in her own hands to give birth to a girl or a boy. I am not saying this; it is the doctors and the biologists who state this. As our elders say, let the child be healthy."*

**Man:** *"It would have been better for me and my family if I had had a son. My father was an only child and my brother has passed away. I am the only one who survived. It wouldn't be so bad if my generation would continue."*

**Judge:** *"It wouldn't be too bad but have you also found Meryem guilty like your mother because of this?"*

**Man:** *"Yes, she insisted on not giving birth again after she had a girl."*

**Judge:** *“Everybody should know this; each baby that she gives birth to is given to her from Allah and it is not her fault to give birth to a girl or a boy because she doesn’t decide on this. It all depends on the male.”*

**Man’s Mother:** *“Come on! She is the one responsible for this like her mother.”*

Woman states that she cannot give any births and she cannot take care of the baby because she has hernia.

**Woman’s Mother:** *“When they understood that she cannot give birth to a baby boy, they started to search for a new bride.”*

**Man’s Mother:** *“I can’t stand to see my son single when he divorces. I will surely find a young and healthy bride for my son.”*

**Decision:** Judge asks to both parts for their decisions.

**Man:** *“We have always blamed Meryem. I don’t want to divorce.”*

**Woman:** *“My husband has never been on my side, he has always believed in them. I want to divorce.”*

**Expert: (male)** *“A big family- small family: A big family is a type of family in which at least 3 generations live together. The relations are complicated. There is no “individualism” and the rules are set according to the traditions. The person who joins this family obeys these rules. In a small family however, the problems between the wife and husband are solved between the two because their parents do not live with them. The communication is much more healthy.”*

**His opinion on this marriage:** *“If this family becomes an independent family and if the sides become “good” mother and father and good parents, this marriage can be saved.”*

**Jury:** The case is overruled.

**Decision:** The case is overruled.

**Judge:** “You are a father now, you have got to take care of your house, your children and your nephews/nieces but you have got to keep the distance as well.”

#### **COURT CASE 4 (C4)**

**December 2-3-4**

**Plaintiff:** Man (Cengiz)

**Defendant:** Woman (Şule)

Married for 15 years.

#### **Reason of Divorce**

1. His wife never follows his orders.
2. She appreciates her parents more than her own family.
3. In the end, she left their house.
4. She only cares about the money.

Defendant doesn't accept the claims.

Defendant's mother is dead.

**Flashback:** Every time the woman cleans the house, her mother in law gets the house dirty again. Husband thinks that she didn't clean the house although he wanted her to do. So he claims that she didn't follow his orders.

**Mother in law:** *“A woman says ok to anything in the house she came to. It's not slavery. A woman always follows her husband's orders.”*

**Judge:** *“This is called slavery.”*

**Woman:** *“I have a kid I can't apart my child from his father. I know how it feels like not having parents while growing.”*

**Woman:** *“I didn't leave the house. They forced me to leave.”*

**Mother in law:** *“She is like her mother, her mother also left her husband and let him die because of his suffer.”*

Their father says that her mother is dead but the parents of the father claims that she isn't dead but she ran away.

**Mother in law:** *“We don't want a woman who leaves her house. Our family tradition cannot accept such thing.”*

**Flashback:** Woman wants to live with her husband alone in their house. The man doesn't listen to her. The mother in law doesn't want them to have their own house. Man tells his wife that he cannot leave his mother alone and adds that if she doesn't want to live like that the door is open. They send the woman away and the woman leaves.

**Woman:** *“They forced me to leave.”*

The couple had lived on their own house for 10 years until the father of the man was died. After that they moved to his mother's house.

**Man:** *“I have moved because of Şule's relatives, because her sister or brother stopped by very often.”*

The woman claims that she sent her child to a boarding school since her mother in law's house is so small.

**Woman:** *“They tortured me. Everyone follows my mother in law's orders. No two families can get along in one house.”*

**Mother in law:** *“This grouchy daughter in law envies that my son takes care of us. We lived together with my mother in law and never said a single word law until she died.”*

**Flashback:** Man hitches the woman out of the door. The woman stays at her old grandfather's that day.

**Man:** *“A woman should wait in the front of the house till the morning.”*

**Mother in law:** *“A girl who runs away once is called runaway bride. She has no value. We can't accept her back to our house again.”*

**Judge:** *“So you say it’s not a fault to tug your wife out of the door but it is that she didn’t wait there till the morning? And, you this attitude doesn’t suit to you as a mother.”*

**Woman:** *“I won’t divorce for the sake of my child. Plus, I love my husband.”*

**Woman’s elder brother:** *“A man’s man takes care of his wife. He doesn’t follow his mother. This man is his mother’s baby. Nothing good can come from him.”*

**Flashback:** Man wants to sell her wife’s house and buy a car. Wife doesn’t accept. They rent the house.

**Man:** *“When there is her husband how the hell she can give it to her brother. My wife doesn’t trust me at all.”*

**Man:** *“My wife always appreciated her family more than me. They always came first. I like her cakes very much. She never cooked for me. But She cooked for her family all the time. A man expects his wife to serve him.”*

**Woman:** *“After we moved to my mother in law’s My husband changed a lot. In every problem there was her finger in it. My husband didn’t know anything and believed in what they say. I never had a chance to speak.”*

**Flashback:** Mother in law pushes the wife because she went to sleep before she did. She says a bride should always go to sleep after her mother in law does.

**Judge:** *“This is ridiculous.”*

**Woman:** *“Everything was forbidden to me. My mother in law was jealous of me.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Forbidden is one thing. Tradition is something else.”*

**Judge:** *“This girl felt herself like a slave rather than the bride of the house.”*

**Mother in law:** *“She is not a good mother. If she were, she would give one more grandchild. I no longer allow her in. I’m gonna take someone whose family is certain.”*

**Flashback:** They are getting in the car. Mother in law pulls the wife out of the car and she sits in the front. She says she gave this man birth so she will sit in the front. Man

asks the wife why she looks at him in such a stupid way. He says his mother cannot be comfortable at the back. He adds that she can sit wherever she wants to.

**Judge:** *“There is a huge difference between pulling her out of the car and gently asking her to sit at the back. The man hurts his wife not to hurt his mother.”*

**Woman:** *“They kept telling me that my family is uncertain in front of the children.”*

**Mother in law:** *“I am sad for my grandchild. They will tell him his mother is like this and like that when he grows up.”*

**Judge:** *“What is grouse and bad is that you keep telling this. It’s a sin. You should be afraid of Allah. This girl has right to rebel.”*

**Woman:** *“I tolerated all these for the sake of my son. Otherwise even if I do love my husband I wouldn’t stand.”*

**Judge:** *“Do you still love your husband despite all these?”*

**Woman:** *“Yes I do. Please don’t divorce us.”*

**Man:** *“It’s me who doesn’t want you. What can the Judge do about this. Understand this. We will not be like we used to be. Because I no longer want to see you.”*

**Judge gets angry:** *“Don’t say such hurting words to your wife. Otherwise you will regret.”*

**Mother in law:** *“I didn’t want to live alone because she didn’t treat him as a husband. She didn’t cook for him. She didn’t wash his clothes. That’s why we send the boy to the boarding school. They were fighting all the time. She was yelling at him all the time. It’s my fault. I took this bride even I know what her mother is like.”*

Grandfather of the wife (surprise witness) comes in. It turns out the mother of the wife isn’t dead. She is at the mental hospital. The father kept this as a secret because he didn’t want his children to know that their mother is insane.

After this news the Judge wants the mother in law to apologize. But she doesn’t. She says she doesn’t want a bride with an insane mother. Meanwhile the husband finds out that his mother sold his wife’s house by fraud.

**Judge** asks the last words of the parties.

**Man:** *“I don’t want to divorce. I cannot leave my wife in such a situation.”*

**Judge:** *“This is called fidelity.”*

**Woman:** *“I want to divorce. It’s too late. I have no trust to anyone.”*

**Jury:** The case is overruled.

**Decision:**

1. Rejection of the case.
2. The sister and mother in law to be prohibited to come 100m close to this family.
3. The parties to move to another house.
4. The house of the woman to be prohibited to be sold to third parties.

## **COURT CASE 5**

### **December 5**

Since it is the holiday week the **Judge** makes a speech: *“For the past 2 years, our dear spectators have invited us to their homes, they have included us in their secluded lives.. I want to share the holiday joy with them. I want to start the trial with these emotions of bliss.”*

**Plaintiff:** Woman (Ayşe)

**Defendant:** Man (Turgut)

Married for 14 years and have two kids.

Married without the approval of the families

Woman is unemployed.

Man works. He sells the laces her wife makes.

### **Reason of Divorce**

1. Apathetic to home and his children
2. He depreciates me because I ran off with him
3. He threatened me with my life
4. He has drinking problems

**Flashback:** Man tries to hang the women with the rope. Woman tells the story and begs the judge to divorce her.

**Judge:** *“Divorce is a lot more difficult then getting married. I need you to bring me your evidence; I can’t make a decision unless I feel comfortable with my conscience.”*

**Man:** *“A woman’s place is near his husband. Only her corpse leaves it. We can’t divorce.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Woman who escapes from his father’s house deserves everything.”*

**Judge:** *“I don’t understand why only she is accused of being a runaway? Why doesn’t her husband count as a runaway as well?”*

**Mother in law:** *“That’s faith, that’s their fortune.”*

**Judge:** *“We can’t object to that. We’re discussing something different now. Your son mocks with his fate, and uses it against her.”*

**Woman:** *“One gets blinded by love, hope that no one suffers that. Marrying without the family approval was such a horrible thing to do. When we were about to run off he was saying he’d make me live like a princess. Then he started drinking, he comes home drunk every day. He never provides for the home. He only gives bread to the children.”*

**Man:** *“A real man deserves a drink.”*

**Judge:** *“Look at his understanding about manhood! You spend your children’s money to drinks and that’s called manhood ha?”*

**Man:** *“When I drink I hurt nobody.”*

**Judge:** *“That drinking problem got you here and you still say it doesn’t hurt anyone?”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“It’s my daughters fault. If my husband came home drunk I wouldn’t take him inside. She should have grabbed a cudgel. I didn’t carry my husband to bed when he was drunk like his mother. I didn’t take him in.”*

**Judge** criticizes this harshly and mentions he’s against it.

**Judge:** *“Speaking about alcohol: what happens with only one beer? That is how it always starts and it gets worse everyday.”*

**Man’s Sister:** *“It’s the woman who made me run away from the house. She should have taken care of herself.”*

**Man trying to hang the woman:** Man has debts. He tells her to sell the house and beats her because of this. She hides in the basement. When she says they can’t sell because they’ll be left on the street he tries to hang her.

The house is the women’s family’s house. Turgut’s sister and her husband set her up to buy the house. His brother-in-law got him addicted to gambling and her sister tells

him to behave badly to his wife. On the other hand she tells the wife to take care of herself.

The mafia that Turgut is in debt comes to court and tells this.

**Woman:** (She still doesn't calm down) *"He should have been wiser. He should not have been tricked, no one could have tricked me, I want a divorce."*

**Man:** *"Ayşe please forgive me, I'm really sorry. Thankfully I couldn't kill you, if I did I would have been dead too. I don't want to divorce."*

**Expert Psychologist:** Criticising about Turgut's alcohol treatment: *"one has to want to be cured. But one has to get support from his/her environment. It is the only way to cure such things."*

**Jury:** No consensus. 2 male decide in favor of the divorce. 2 female decide against the divorce and add the conclusion: *"If Turgut learns from his previous mistakes and is given another chance this marriage can be saved."* Third male decides against the divorce and says: *"If Turgut gets treatment he can be fine."*

**Decision:** Divorce.

## **COURT CASE 6 (C6)**

**December 17-18-19**

**Plaintiff:** Woman

**Defendant:** Man

**Reason for Divorce:**

1. The man is violent
2. He does not want child/children.

Hasan has already had two children when he got married so he doesn't want more children. He kicked his pregnant wife out of the house because she didn't listen to his word.

**Judge:** *"What kind of belief, what kind of humanity is this."*

**Mother in law:** *"My son already has a child."*

**Man,** kicked his pregnant wife's belly so that there can be a miscarriage and he also admits that. "I made a mistake your honor."

**Mother of the woman:** *"If a husband doesn't want kids, then he clearly is not in for the marriage either. It means that he doesn't love his wife."*

**Judge:** "I love this saying. You did all these things and then you come to me and say that you made a mistake. It's not right. She ran out of home to give birth to her child and now her husband wants the child back"

**Man:** *"I don't want my child to be raised by other people. I will do my job as a father."*

**Woman:** "He came back to kidnap my child". The **woman** starts to cry.

**Judge:** *"I understand you as a mother"*

**Hasan:** “This child is also mine and if I want this child, I will get him/her.”

**Judge:** “Maşallah, maşallah!”

**Mother in law:** “*What will be written in the ID of the child? Last name Erbil, Name of the father Hasan, name of the mother not that important.*”

**Judge:** “*The mother is very important. Allah has put heaven under their feet. If a person wants to go to heaven, he/she has to get the “permission” and prayers from her mother.*”

**Hasan:** “But a father is more important for a child. The father is the one who provides his child’s needs.”

**Judge:** “The mother gives birth to the child and raises the child. The child is with the mother inside the house and the father is out. Can the child be raised without a mother?”

**Ender (Hasan's friend):** “*He told me whether he should give the child away for adoption. He has already two daughters. He changed his mind because this child is a boy.*”

Hasan denies this statement.

**Second witness, Hasan's mother:** “*Her husband didn’t want this child at first but after he had learnt that she was pregnant, he got used to the idea. His wife ran out of home and my son was very sad. He went to pick her up but she wouldn’t come. He came to me then and begged for me to get his wife.*”

But the woman could not go because they treated her very badly at phone. Then she talked with the mother’s grandmother but Sevda would not even pick up the phone. That’s why she didn’t go.

**Judge:** “*If there is a situation that is a bit to be ashamed of and embarassing, then one cannot go. No matter what, I would have gone there to see my grandchild if I were you.*”

**Mother in law:** *“You are too angry your honor. What kind of a father does that? My son would not and Hasan asked me to lend him a lot of money. My Hasan was going to surprise by changing the furniture your honor.”*

**Judge:** *“Inshallah I will give the right decision.”*

**Third witness, Ender Baykal:** (Hasan’s friend): *“They used to get along pretty well. I don’t want them to get divorced. He didn’t want the baby at first but then he was very happy when he learned that she was pregnant. My friend has been too devastated your honor.”*

**Flashback:**

**Hasan and Ender** are talking. **Hasan** is crying “What have I done to her? She doesn’t love me. If she loved me she would be here right now.” He is not happy.

**Judge:** *“I don’t want it either but there is clearly a problem here. Why would Sevda make up something like this?”*

**Ender:** *“Sevda had been seeing dreams. My wife told me. She saw Hasan take the baby from her in her dreams.”*

**Judge:** *“Why didn’t you tell this before? I would have gone to the doctor to get it checked.”*

**Man:** *“Sevda always used to do these things. She would tell her dreams like they were real. She can’t know these things.”*

**Judge:** “Why wasn’t I told this important mistake in the beginning of the case? This is an illness”

**First witness, the Grandmother:** admits being a witness to Sevda’s nightmares.

**Fourth witness Hayri Yaman:** *“I know Ms. Sevda”*

**Hasan:** *“Where does this man know my wife from?”*

**Hayri:** *“I saw his wife once from the window. I have been married for 20 years. Unfortunately I have never had children. Despite all the medical treatments, Allah has not given us this chance then we decided to adopt. There is a certain procedure for this. I have decided to adopt illegally. Ender Baykal has told me he could help, he told me that he knew somebody who had a daughter who was pregnant and that they did not want the baby. He said I could adopt that baby. I gave half of the money. It was a deal for 50,000 TL. I could not get the baby 15 days before the birth. He put me off with excuses. He sold me the baby. I do my work fully and I have recorded the first images.*

**Mr. Ender:** *“I did not do this on my own. I did it with Hasan.”*

**Judge:** *“I cannot understand how a father can sell his baby and give the baby away for adoption.”*

*The law will impose the penalty on Ender. Do you have anything to say to this Hasan?”*

**Hasan:** *“I am very regretful. I love my wife and I don’t want to get divorced. I obeyed the devil and it was my weakness to earn money. Please forgive me your honor. Please don’t put me in jail.”*

**Judge:** *“This is a court. I can neither forgive nor punish people here.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Please have mercy on us your honor.”*

**Hayri:** *“I will give the money to the family to make things better a little bit then I can also feel better.*

**Expert’s point of view:**

**Rumeyza Ölmez: Psychologist (wears a headscarf):**

*“Firstly the age difference in this marriage is 20. This may not be a problem in the beginning of the marriage but it might cause trouble in the next 15 years. I don’t think that this marriage is going to go on well.”*

**Jury:**

The case is accepted by common consent.

**Decision:**

Both sides get divorced by acceptance of the case since there is not a benefit neither in sides nor from the public.

The custody of the child will be given to the child's mother.

Monthly child support of 400 YTL and a redress of 15,000 YTL from the defendant to the plaintiff.

The husband will and his friends will be taken to office of the director of public prosecutions because of human trade.

## COURT CASE 7 (C7)

**December 11-12-13**

**Plaintiff:** Woman (Fatoş)

**Defendant:** Man (Şevket)

3 years married, no children. Man has a profession, woman has none.

### **Reason of Divorce:**

1. My husband has an alcohol problem,
2. He leaves home very often,
3. He beats me. I fell out of balcony once because of him and I almost died. I lost my baby.

Woman knows nothing about the man she is going to marry. She is marrying him by force of her stepmother. Because of her little age, she has no intention of getting married with someone; instead she wants to go to school and study. However, she was forced to marry her stepmother's nephew.

**Woman:** *"I was forced to get married. But I loved Şevket, what if I did not? I didn't want to get married at the beginning, but in time I fell in love. Now, women think twice before they get married. But there are a lot of women out there like me who are all unhappy and desperate. They all say 'he loved you too'. A man who loves cannot do these things in life? The man I once loved is not here anymore, he is inhumane."*

Woman claims that her husband is naive; it was his friend who made him addicted to alcohol and gambling.

**Man:** *"She says I'm naïve. I'm not naïve; I am the man of the house. She has no respect to my opinions. Am I not the only one who brings money to the house? My word is the rule."*

**Woman:** *"We are two people living in that house. I also have a contribution to the house as much as you do. I speak for the sake of him. Do I not have a right to say a*

*word? Am I always supposed to say that he knows what is best, he always says right no matter what?"*

**Man:** *"If you leave it to her, I should give all of my money to her hands. I don't give an account of my money. She even interferes with the friends I have."*

**Judge:** *"You are married now. You have a common life and family. It doesn't matter who brings the money to the house. All the decisions about the money should be taken together by the couple. You have no right to act selfish about that."*

Woman claims that she lost her baby because of her husband.

**Flashback:** Şevket wants Fatoş to have an abortion. Fatoş refuses. Şevket beats her and kicks her stomach to make her to abort.

**Man:** *"Ok. I am guilty, but so is she. She decided to have a baby without my consent. Baby means extra expenditure and I am the one who provides that. What would happen if we had a child? She is the one who sues for divorce. Who would take care of the child? It's fortunate that she lost the baby."*

**Judge:** *(got nervous) "What do you mean who would take care of the child? She has her own family. Of course we prefer that no one gets divorced, but if there is no good left in that marriage you get divorced."*

Woman claims that she almost died because of her husband's beating.

**Flashback:** Şevket comes home drunk, attacks Fatoş with a chair and causes her to fall out of balcony while she is running away.

**Man** explains his act of violence as: *"I couldn't put up with her nagging about her marriage by force all the time. I tried to talk this out of it, but it always ended up with a fight."*

Woman goes to school and does not tell her husband. When her husband finds out, they fight; he doesn't let her go to school. In the court, he also jokes about her eagerness to study.

**Man:** *"As if she is going to become a professor after this age."*

**Judge:** *(got nervous) “What a manner. If you don’t solve this, you wont solve a thing. And to solve this, you need to solve the mentality which says ‘as if she is going to become a professor’ first. This mentality needs to change. Of course she is going to study, she is going to feel that she is human (the camera focuses on the picture of Atatürk). I am serious; I don’t care whoever gets offended. She is going to study. A human being who stops reading is no longer living; s/he just thinks that s/he is living.”*

**Man:** *“A wife does nothing without his husband’s consent. I had no thrust on her. What can a married woman gain with studying?”*

**Stepmother:** *“Men, women are different. This is the fact of our society. You accept that or you leave.”*

**Judge:** *“Whenever we talked about your alcohol and gambling problems, you always accused your wife. Alcohol addicts have always an excuse about that. What’s yours?”*

**Man:** *“Dear Judge, if your wife always nags about her marriage by force, she calls you ignorant and naïve, what would you do?”*

**Judge:** *“You are asking the wrong guy, I never drank in my life, never gambled as well.”*

**Man:** *“I was drinking to have peace. My brother Serhat was making me forget all my troubles whenever we got out.”*

**Judge:** *(again talks about alcohol) “You can never find the peace of a happy family with someone else except your family. It is even impossible with alcohol. You get drunk, you forget. When you are sober, the same problems are waiting for you as always.”*

After declarations of witnesses, it is noticed that Şevket’s friend Serhat was a contractor and loan shark as well. He was willing to buy the land where Şevket’s store is located on, that’s why he is intentionally tried to make him get used to drink alcohol and gamble. Şevket was going to be in a great debt and finally have to sell the land.

Judge asks the last words of the parties.

**Woman:** *“Şevket disregarded me, beat me and insulted me just because he trusted that man. Even though the man who has been torturing me had been trapped in to a play, I don’t want to be married. I want divorce.”*

**Man:** *“My heart aches. I can’t make her forget the terrible things I’ve done, but I apologize to be forgiven. I love her.”*

**Expert Psychologist Rumeyza Ölmez (turbaned)** Mentioning the marriages which are not dependant on the common allowance of the parts, which are held by force: *“Of course we will give advice to our children on these decisions. However, the choice of continuing should be left to them. Otherwise, they address all the problems they face in their marriages to the people who took the decisions instead of them. Then, the solutions become difficult.”*

*“In this case, the main cause of problem is that Şevket’s ignorance of how to behave to his wife in a family, and he was destroying his wife’s trust right at the beginning by being dependant on outer effects. After all these problems if he notices that he needs to trust his wife first, this marriage can be saved. Nevertheless, because he showed psychological and physical violence to his wife, Şevket has a lot to learn. And if Fatoş wants to keep going, she should forget the past and make a fresh and new beginning.”*

**Judge:** *“There is an incompatibility between parties and this is partly caused by defendant. He caused this incompatibility because of his loyalty and friendship to his aunt and lack of questioning caused by over trust behavior. That’s why the final decision is changed to separation instead of divorce. The court decides separation of the parts during 6 months.”*

**Judge takes off his coat and speaks after decision:** *“In this case, the thing I emphasized the most is that you’re willing to study. Listen and think about what the psychologist talked about. But never give up your eagerness to study.”*

**Happy Ending:** Fatoş forgives her husband because of intense care and love.

**COURT CASE 8 (C8)**

**December 17-18-19**

**Plaintiff:** Woman (Sevda)

**Defendant:** Man (Hasan)

**Reason of Divorce:**

3. Man implements violence,
4. Man doesn't want to have kids.

Hasan already had 2 kids from his previous marriage. That's why he doesn't want to have kids. He threw her pregnant wife out of the house because she didn't listen to him.

**Judge:** *"With which consciousness, what kind of humanity is this?"*

**Mother in law:** *"My son already has two kids."*

Man accepts that he kicked her wife in the stomach so she has a miscarriage: *"I made a mistake Mr. Judge."*

**Women's Mother:** *"If a husband doesn't want to have kids its means that he doesn't want to get along. It means he doesn't loves his wife."*

**Judge:** *"I liked this word. Do all these and in front of the judge say you're sorry. Not good. Woman runs off so she can have her baby and now man wants the kid back!"*

**Man:** *"I don't want my kid to be raised by strangers. I will do my father duty."*

**Woman:** *"He came back to steal the kid and starts to cry."*

**Judge:** *"As a mother I understand you."*

**Man:** *"It's my kid, I'll take it back if I want to."*

**Judge:** *"How nice! How clever!"*

**Mother in law:** *"What would write on his ID? Surname Erbil, fathers name Hasan. Mothers name is not that important."*

**Judge:** *“Mother is so important. Allah put heaven at the feet of them, if one wants to get in one needs the mother’s prayers.”*

**Man:** *“But for a kid a father is more important. A father provides for all his kids needs.”*

**Judge:** *“Mother gives birth, and raises. Mother is in the house with the kid and the father is outside. How can a child grow without his mother?”*

**Man’s Friend (Ender):** *“He said he thinks about giving him as an adopt child. She has two daughters, he gave up on him because he’s a boy.”*

Hasan denies.

**Mother in law:** *“He didn’t want before but after he learnt she’s pregnant he accepted. His wife just left, my son was so sad. He went to take her back but she didn’t come. He begged me to get her back.”*

But she couldn’t go, because they were mean when she called them. She talked to her grandmother; Sevda didn’t even come to phone. That’s why she couldn’t go.

**Judge:** *“You can’t go if there is a situation to be reluctant of. No matter how they treat, I would’ve gone and see my grandson.”*

**Mother in law:** *“You are so angry Mr. Judge. Which father does such a thing? Not my son. Hasan also wanted a loaded amount of money from me. He thought of changing the furniture and surprise her.”*

**Judge:** *“I hope I’ll give a right decision.”*

**Man’s Friend (Ender):** *“They got along pretty well. I don’t want them to divorce. He didn’t want the baby at first but once he learnt that she is pregnant he was so happy. My friend is divested.”*

**Flashback:** Hasan talks to Ender. He cries to him: “what did i do to her, she doesn’t love me. If she did she would have come back.”

**Judge:** *“I don’t want it too but there is a problem. Why would Sevda make up this kind of story?”*

**Man's Friend (Ender):** *"Sevda was having dreams. My wife told me. She saw Hasan taking her baby in her dreams."*

**Judge:** *"Why didn't you tell me that before? You could have gone to a doctor and check this out."*

**Man:** *"Sevda used to do such things. She tells the stories that she saw in her dreams as real. She can't know that."*

**Judge:** *"Why didn't they tell me before a mistake that important? There is such a disease."*

**Witness (Hayri):** *"I know Sevda!"*

**Man:** *"How does this man know my wife?"*

**Hayri:** *"I saw her wife once. Form the window. I've been married for 20 years. Sadly we didn't have kid despite medical interventions. Then we decided to adopt a kid. There are lots of paperwork for that. I wanted to adopt a kid illegally. Ender said that he could help with that. He has a friend who has a pregnant daughter and they didn't want the baby. He told me that I could adopt the baby. I gave half the money. He settled down for 50 thousand liras. 15 days before the laboring I couldn't get my baby. He delayed me with grandmothers. He sold me the baby. I take my business seriously so i took the pictures of the deal when i was giving the first half of the money."*

**Ender:** *"I didn't do this on my own. We did it with Hasan."*

**Judge:** *"I still can't understand how a father could sell his kid. The law will give the answer of Ender. Do you have anything to say Hasan?"*

**Man:** *"I'm so sorry. I love my wife, I don't want a divorce. Making money was my worse weakness. Please forgive me Mr. Judge, don't send me to prison."*

**Judge:** *"this is a law court: I cant forgive or punish anyone."*

**Mother in law:** *"Please mercy us Mr. Judge."*

**Hayri:** *"to ease my conscience I'll give the money to family."*

**Expert Psychologist RumeYZa ÖImez (turbaned):** *“First of all, the age difference is 20. Even if that’s not a problem at the beginning, it will be after 15 years I don’t think that this marriage can continue.”*

**Jury:** The case is accepted with consensus.

**Decision:** Divorce. Parental rights to be given to the mother.

## **COURT CASE 9 (C9)**

**December 22**

**Plaintiff:** Man (Ibrahim)

**Defendant:** Woman (Gülcan) (headscarfed)

Gülcan's mother also wears a traditional headscarf and her hair cannot be seen. Gülcan's mother-in-law also wears a headscarf but the front part of the hair can be seen. They have two children but one of them had passed away. Ibrahim married someone else in Germany.

**Man:** *"My wife doesn't suit me. I repel people when I am with her. Look at her hair and her outfit"*

**Judge:** *"What is wrong with her hair? Everyone pays to buy those wigs to use them as hair and she has henna on her hands just like every Anatolian girl, what's wrong with that? Aren't you the one who have just said that you were in love and that you two loved each other? Why don't you like the girl that you loved just now?"*

**Man:** *"Your honor, I have been to Germany, and I have learned a lot there. I am not the person that I used to be when I got married. I know now how a woman should be."*

**Flashback:** The woman is heating the stove and her hands are dirty. Ibrahim is disgusted.

**Mother in law:** *"I have been to many places in Germany, I have seen many women, this is not how a woman should be."*

**Judge:** *"How should a woman be?"*

**Man:** *"She needs to look after herself, look at her! She is covered with mud."*

**Judge:** *"Girl, your hands and your face are covered in mud, I know already but explain to your husband so that he can understand too."*

**Woman:** *"I spend my entire day working with the anchor in the field and carrying woods."*

**Judge:** *“Look, she doesn't spend her day in the beauty saloons with manicure or pedicure. She was trying to earn money in a home without her husband. What are you comparing exactly? Yes, Ibrahim, you went to Germany from a village and you had a cultural shock there, we understand. But how can you erase those 28 years in just 2 years Ibrahim? How can't you like your own mother and your own wife who spends her day in the fields working with the anchor and those hands with henna?”*

**Woman:** *“So if I wear different clothes, will you love me more?”*

**Man:** *“No, you need to have manners too.”*

**Judge:** *“So do you want her to be like the women in Germany?”*

**Man:** *“Love is not enough, a man has to desire his wife when he looks at her.”*

**Judge:** *“Jury, this woman took good care of her house and her family.”*

**Flashback:** When Gülcan is hugging her teacher and crying, the family of her husband and the headman of the village come right in. The father of the girl tries to defend her. Gülcan's mother-in-law starts beating her. There are other villagers and all of them wear headscarves. The teacher denies that.

**Woman:** *“My teacher, Ahmet, is very important to me as a teacher.”*

**Headman of the village:** *“It doesn't happen like that. In a village, if a girl and boy are not related, they cannot come close or even be in the same room.”*

**Man:** *“They always saw you two while they were going to and coming from the school.”*

**Woman:** *“I was learning how to read and write.”*

**Mother in law:** *“What does she need the "reading and writing" for when she has lots of work to do?”*

**Judge:** *“Why did you want to learn how to read and write?”*

**Woman:** *“I don't have a phone at home, I cannot keep in touch with my husband so I thought I would write him a letter.”*

**Judge:** *“36% of the women in this country do not read. Please make them read! This mentality has to change.”*

**Woman’s Father:** *“No one has ever sent her to school and even if I had wanted to send her, I would but I can’t. How can she be in a class full of boys? How can I send her to school when no other girl in the village goes to school?”*

**Man:** *“Let’s say that the girls started to go to school, what will be the use of this in the village?”*

**Judge:** *“Ibrahim, weren’t you the one who said that your wife had to be like the women in the city with manners and knowledge?”*

**Man:** *“Yes but the women in cities go shopping! She cannot change after all these years. It won’t be as if she will go to school and be a doctor!”*

**Judge:** *“Going to school and studying is another thing. There is nothing more important than knowing how to read and write!”*

**Landlord of the village:** *“I will get myself a third one to save the honor of your daughter. It will be a financial and a mental support for you” to Gülcan’s father.”* The father agrees.

**Judge:** *“I am sorry for your loss. I have the report here about the death and it seems like the cause of death was an accident. I have another report here stating that Mrs. Gülcan was mentally healthy.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Living alone in a house without a husband? That’s unbelievable!”*

**Headman of the village:** *“A woman who lives on her own is always in danger.”*

**Judge:** *“And you are calling yourself the headman of the village.”*

**Woman:** *“The house was far away from the field and I was too tired.”*

**Man:** *“Were you scared of doing housework if you were going to stay with my mom?”*

**Expert Psychologist:** *“It’s hard to live far away from home for 5 years without any love or respect. Ibrahim chose the easier path, he basically said that he could start a new life by erasing his old life.”*

**Jury:** *"We cannot decide."*

**Decision:** Divorce

## **COURT CASE 10 (C10)**

**December 25-26-29**

**Plaintiff:** Man (Kadir)

**Defendant:** Woman (Sema)

Kadir has a lover. Sema's brother wants her to divorce her husband and to marry someone more decent; he does not want her to attend the court and mentions that the presence of a lawyer will be enough. (There is no lawyer around!) Sema secretly decides to attend the court case.

### **Reasons of Divorce:**

1. My wife is suicidal,
2. We have irreconcilable differences,
3. She completely ignores me.

**Man:** *"She ruined our life and our son. How dare you call yourself a mother!"*

**Judge** (gets angry): *"Easy now. She's still your wife, and the mother to your son."*

**Woman:** *"We've been through such harder times; we'll get over this as well. There are people out there who want to damage my marriage, Kadir is getting carried away. I do not want to divorce."*

**Man:** *"We loved each other deeply but her brother and her father never wanted me around and always treated me wrong. When our families did not approve of us seeing each other, I ended up kidnapping her."*

**Brother:** *"What do you mean 'seeing each other', your only purpose was to have a good time with her and take off when the time was right. No way!"*

**Man:** *"I never meant to have a good time with her, I completely devoted myself to her but her family did not think I was good enough. In the end I kidnapped her and took her to my mothers place but even my mother did not want me. She did not approve us and told me to get out."*

**Mother in law:** *“Why run away and get married? How can you do that without the approval of the family, the father, and the mother? You two were too young to be married at that age.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“My sensible daughter helped him out and saved him from becoming an alcoholic.”*

**Brother:** *“I told them. Don’t get me into trouble. Don’t humiliate us, don’t get married to him but she never listened. He’s an alcoholic..”*

**Woman:** *“Brother, is that what you really said? You never talked like that. A slap first, then a remark. A fist next, then a remark. This was the real reason I got married early, to get away from the violence and bullying.”*

**Brother:** *“For your own good.”*

**Judge (gets mad):** *“I do not understand. How do you mix assault and kindness? How do you convene a slap to the face with goodness? Please explain that to me?”*

**Mother in law:** *“You always call my son an alcoholic but the biggest problem occurred to a marriage at a young age. Of course violence is a part of it as well. You should have thought your daughter right from wrong!”*

**Judge:** *“Just because they did not ask for your opinion and got secretly married, is it as big of a crime to turn you into a murderer? Is that how you look at it? Can this be justified? Is all this true?”*

**Brother:** *“I have my reasons as well, we are children of Anatolia.”*

**Judge:** *“Who are you trying to teach? I came here from the heart of Anatolia. I grew up in a village.”*

**Judge:** *“Kadir, tell me about this alcohol problem of yours?”*

**Brother:** *“See he doesn’t deny it, all I wanted to do was to protect my sister.”*

**Woman:** *“To be thrown out on the street was so much better than being with them and being beaten every night.”*

**Judge:** *“Stop right there, you are being ridiculous.”*

**Woman:** *“I trusted Kadir, I thought I would for sure find serenity and peace with him.”*

**Brother:** *“If you can’t find peace at your fathers home, how do you plan to find it with a stranger? Is that what you suggest, anyone who can’t find serenity at their fathers house should run away?”*

**Man:** *“Sema’s family kept beating her, my family did not approve her. That’s why I kidnapped her.”*

**Judge:** *“Is there no middle way?”*

**Mother in law:** *“I won’t accept a runaway bride. Why would someone who won’t listen to her brother and father listen to her husband in the first place? If she ran away from her father place, then she will eventually run away from her husbands as well.”*

**Judge (mad):** *“She ran away with your son.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Why would she listen to what my son has to say if she never obeyed her parents?”*

**Woman:** *“Who are you to judge me!”*

**Judge:** *“Speak proper to your elders.”*

**Judge:** *“If she leaves her fathers home, she’ll eventually leave her husbands as well... why kind of mentality is that?”*

**Mother in law:** *“These kids think marriage is child’s play.”* Turns towards the jury and asks: *“What would you do if your child ran away from home?”*

**Judge:** *“I would be very upset, I would try to find an answer to why she ran away, and I would try to find the blame in myself. If I am the one to blame, then there isn’t much one can do. If someone else were to blame, then I would try to get rid of the fault. Why would someone run away without a reason?”*

**Woman:** *“If it were up to you we would split up in two days but look how far we have made it. We have a wonderful son”.*

**Man:** *“She calls him her son as if she ever mothered in the first place!”*

**Judge:** *“Don’t talk back to each other, I wish you would have done that before you came here.”*

**In the court hallway:** The brother beats on Sema and tries to force her to leave. The girl mentions that she does not want a divorce. She mentions that her brother will have to shoot her, for her to leave the courthouse.

**Man:** *“When I married Sema my finances went down, then we started to drift apart. When I started to make some more money I got back together with her and brought my family to my home.”*

**Woman:** *“Did you ever ask me?”*

**Judge:** *“He never talked to you?”*

**Woman:** *“No, he never asked my opinion. Even he did I wouldn’t have said no. When the family members arrived we started to drift apart. Kadir changed. He stopped noticing me. They disregarded me; even my son stopped paying attention after a while. I have no willpower left. If you ever asked Kadir to pick between his mother, and me he would pick his mother. I apologized to my mother, because my mother formed a family, and so will I.”*

**Man:** *“Sema, you keep saying that you don’t want a divorce but can’t hold yourself back from bad mouthing my family.”*

**Judge approves:** *“Everything has an extent, and so does love, and that is sacrifice. What does Sema says? She says, “Mom sorry but I will chose Kadir over you, If I had to”. I think she is right.”*

**Man:** *“Sema started trouble from day one. She even tried to kick my family out of the house.”*

**Flashback:** The curtains have been changed in the house. Sema gets upset: *“Who are you to change my curtains. They are changing the order around my house without even my approval, get out of my house, I do not want you around anymore.”* Kadir arrives and scolds Seda.

**Judge asks woman:** *“Did you really say all those things?”*

**Mother in law:** *“She has no shame, it wouldn’t surprise me if she denied the things she said!”*

**Judge:** *“If you had some manners, some shame, you would think twice before yelling out like that in front of a court of law.”*

In the meantime, the brother talks with a friend about finding some cash about a shop.

**Woman:** *“I am not being impolite your honor, they barged in the whole time, why do I have to handle all that? Do I have to live with them? I did not get married to them you know.”*

**Mother in law:** *“You married my one and only, my baby, my precious son. What right do you have in that house? My son went through all the trouble for that house.”*

**Judge:** *“Your son is married now. Kadir, why didn’t you consult your wife before doing so?”*

**Mother in law:** *“I’ve spent years living with my mother-in-law in the same room with her, never said a thing.”*

**Woman:** *“They ruined the order of my house.”*

**Mother in law:** *“These new generation brides are no good, they are never satisfied no matter what we do.”*

**Man:** *“I don’t understand why she is mad, why is she offended?”*

**Woman:** *“Life is great for her. She never gives a hand, all she does is relax all day but on the other hand I started to feel like a stranger in my own house, they never leave me alone.”*

**Mother in law:** *“She never did house work, that’s why. She doesn’t like to do the chores around the house you see?”*

**Judge:** *“Madam, can you please give it a break?”*

**Mother in law:** *“I’ve been a house wife for many years your honor, I am just trying to teach her what I know and what I’ve learned.”*

**Woman:** *“I’ve learned the hard way, organized a way to run the house before they arrived, why do I need to learn all over again? I do not her advice.”*

**Judge:** *“My dear child, please try to be a little more polite, she is your elder.”*

**Man:** *“When my family arrived, all she wanted to do was find a way to leave the house. She kept pressuring me to take her out.”*

**Woman:** *“I did not want to leave the house, I just wanted to spend some time alone with Kadir.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Aa! Shame on you, watch what you are saying!”*

**Man:** *“Does she expect me to cuddle when I am around my mother? She should have some respect.”*

**Judge:** *“Sema didn’t really say anything wrong.”*

**Woman:** *“ I never asked you to cuddle with me?”*

**Mother in law:** *“What are they talking about, in public, speaking rashly.”*

**Woman:** *“They always misunderstand what I am trying to say.”*

**Judge:** *“What she means is that when the mother in law was around, her husband could not show her enough attention.”*

**Woman:** *“I just wanted to leave to house so that my husband and I could have a proper conversation together.”*

**Mother in law:** *“What did you have to speak of when I am not around? Your only concern was to persuade my son to kick us out the house.”*

**Judge:** *“Did you do anything about this Kadir?”*

**Man:** *“Sema did not want them around the house in the first place, then she became enemies with my family..”*

**Mother in law:** *“What disrespect. She only does what she thinks is right.”*

**Woman:** *“If that was the case, you son would not have loved me.”*

**Flashback:** The mother-in-law goes through the bride's clothes and picks some out to give to the less fortunate. The bride yells, the husband gets mad. The mother-in-law says, *"you are a married woman now, do you intend to wear these?"*

**Judge:** *"Couldn't you just have talked in a more appropriate manner instead of yelling my dear?"*

**Woman:** *"She never understands me. My mother-in-law has no right to pick what I should and shouldn't wear."*

**Mother in law:** *"A married woman should watch what she wears, I would be ashamed of wearing those clothes even if it was around the house."*

**Woman:** *"If there was a problem with the way I dress, Kadir would have warned me about it before hand."*

**Woman's Mother:** *"Are you calling my daughter immoral?"*

**Mother in law:** *"You can tell that by the way she ran away from home."*

**Woman:** *"What kind of a husband, what kind of a man are you!"*

Judge gets upset.

**Man:** *"My mom is in her best interest, and look at the way she is acting."*

**Woman:** *"I do not want anyone to think for my place. I've lived all these years without any problems and I am grateful for that."*

**Judge:** *"Kadir my son, do you think that you could have balanced things out a little better?"*

**Woman:** *"He says yes to everything his mom says, but when it's up to me everything is a drag."*

**Mother in law:** *"See this is your real problem, you are just jealous because my son loves me a lot. I tolerated him for 9 months, do I ask for too much? You are just some stranger. I spent half my life raising up my children and now some stranger takes him away."*

**Woman:** *"Am I not your son's wife, your grandkids mother?"*

**Mother in law:** *“My son can go through ten girls like you, but there is only one mother and that’s me.”*

**Woman:** *“What kind of a mother tries to demolish her son’s marriage?”*

**Judge:** *“Look here, this is what everyone needs to realize about being a mother; Being a woman is a blessing... if a woman becomes a mother, she is even more blessed.”*

**Mother in law:** *“My son, Figen, my grandchild and I are a family. The bride came later, so what happens when the children get married? Does one lose parental rights to them?”*

**Woman:** *“I gave him a son, I am a mother as well.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Son, me or Sema?”*

Judge gets mad. During the court case, the brother pushes around Sema, and then both families have an argument.

**Flashback:** There is an argument about the child. Kadir gets mad and says he cannot take it anymore. He slaps his wife. He mentions that if she ever raises her voice toward her mother-in-law again, there is going to be a lot more than a slap to the face. Sema has signed up her son for classes without the knowing of Kadir.

**Judge:** *“Sema, did you really sign your child up for classes without letting Kadir know about it?”*

**Woman:** *“All of his friends were attending classes, I did want him to stay away from his friends.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Isn’t a pity? He just started school, what you are doing is just going too far. How can you ask a male kid to make the bed? This is ridiculous, she even makes him prepare the dinner table.”*

**Judge:** *“So, what if she does?”*

**Woman:** *“I just wanted my son to be handyman. What if one day he has to live on his own, change his job, change his city? What next, who will take care of him then?”*

**Mother in law:** *“You know what happens when you a treat a young man like that? He’ll become faint-hearted; he won’t go to school or work. How can you make him do women chores?”*

**Judge:** *“There might be some truth in what you say but most of what you have said make no sense.”*

**Mother in law:** *“When I first arrived to the house, my grandchild was as timid as a mouse. I do not know what she did with him.”*

**Judge:** *“You mentioned that the real reason behind this divorce is due to the family of the plaintiff, that you and your husband were at good terms until the family moved in with you and you had to stay away from your own son.”*

**Woman:** *“My mother-in-law kicked me out since she was unhappy with the fact that I ran away with Kadir.”*

**Mother in law:** *“I came here to pick up my grandchild, from the woman who ran away from her home.”*

**Woman:** *“It is your son who kidnapped my first, and then beat me afterwards.”*

**Mother in law:** *“What’s a slap anyway? It’s my sons right to do so.”*

**Judge:** *“Are you suggesting that to give a beating is a right?”*

**Mother in law:** *“Of course it is. He brings food on the table, doesn’t he have that right?”*

**Judge:** *“I will ask you loud and clear: did you beat your wife?”*

**Man:** *“Sema is living a good life thanks to me, so what, she has a problem with a slap?”*

**Woman:** *“Kadir, did I not take care of the house when you were fighting alcoholism?”*

**Mother in law:** *“And you call yourself a woman? A woman should know her place.”*

**Judge:** *“You mean a woman’s place is to get beaten up all the time, that is what you mean right?”*

**Judge:** *“Did they always treat you bad?”*

**Woman:** *“Always... After my mother-in-law moved in ...”*

**Man:** *“Everything is expected in a wedding, they will be fights, and there will be noise, why would I want to be with a person who can’t even handle the simplest tasks?”*

**Judge:** *“Why didn’t you end up speaking about your troubles with your husband or with the ones who were causing the trouble? Would that not have been a better idea? You look like a smart girl.”*

**Woman:** *“I wanted to talk about it before I left the house.”*

**Man:** *“Her solution was to kick my mother out.”*

**Judge:** *“What you call a solution is the problem itself, what if your mother was dependant and Kadir left the house?”*

**Man:** *“She never empathized.”*

**Judge:** *“Could you have tried a little at least?”*

**Woman:** *“I am being insulted in front of my son, I do not want to raise him in an environment such as this.”*

**Mother in law:** *“This woman sleeps around in the streets.”*

**Judge:** *“She spent a night at a relatives house, and if she did end up having to sleep on the street it would be due to you.”*

**Mother in law:** *“How would I know? And even if I did, how would the people on the street know?”*

**Judge:** *“People on the street are none of your concern”*

**Woman:** *“Do I live for the people on the street?”*

**Brother:** *“You obviously do not care but people have been asking questions and harassing us.”*

**Woman:** *“If I knew you would have taken care of us, I would have stayed at your place but all you do is beat me. I was looking for a shelter, I went to Nilgün’s place.”*

**Witness (Nilgün):** *“I am not Sema’s relative but I am her friend for life. Can a woman only protect her dignity if there is a man next to her? I have been living on my own for years and not a single person can bad mouth me.”*

**Mother in law:** *“They won’t say it to your face but I’ve heard the things people say behind your back.”*

**Judge:** *“Allah bless us and protect us from gossip!”*

**Mother in law:** *“Once you leave your husbands home, there is no turning back..”*

**Brother:** *“Same goes for when you leave your fathers home.”*

**Nilgün:** *“Is it acceptable to expect a woman to obey everything they ask for and when questioned blaming them with dishonesty your honor? Should they have to sleep on the streets? They talk about virtue and then they leave us out on the streets.”*

**Brother:** *“If it wasn’t for us (men) they would not be able to protect themselves. They need us!”*

**Judge:** *“You like to take advantage of the situation... You talk of women as if they are some wild monsters that are out on a hunt in the forest. The husband does not want them and kicks them out on the street, the brother does not want them and neither does the father. What would you do in a situation like this? What sick thoughts. This is wrong.”*

**Mother in law:** *“There is a set layout. You either show some respect or end up without a home.”*

**Judge:** *“Do not pay attention to the people around you, it is you that matters. It is not what they do; it is what you decide on. Take care of your home, trust each other.”*

**Flashback:** The mother-in-law ends up beating the bride the day she decides to stay at her friends place, forcing her to stay at home. The mother-in-law turns towards the grand child and mentions to him that his mother would not get beaten if she were not indecent and shameless. She then yells at the child and tells him to spit on his mothers face.

**Mother in law:** *“I showed her what it is like to run around town without the approval of her husband and mother-in-law.”*

**Judge:** *“Whatever the reason, violence is not the way to solve problems. It is not the solution to anything, matter of fact, it is inhumane.”*

**Man:** *“We were forced to beat her so that she could understand her mistakes. I told her not to leave the house and she did..”*

**Judge:** *“You need to change this mentality, immediately.”*

**Mother in law:** *“I got beaten at first as well, but then I did what my husband asked me to do. I learned not to get him upset.”*

**Woman:** *“You mean I have to do everything my husband asks me to do?”*

**Mother in law:** *“Your husband knows what’s best for you.”*

**Nilgün:** *“But that doesn’t necessarily mean that everything that comes out of his mouth is the truth.”*

**Judge:** *“No matter what happens, you cannot beat on somebody.”*

**Woman:** *“If he wanted to do well, he would just talk to me.”*

**Judge:** *“Yes.”*

**Mother in law:** *“I beat my children as well.”*

**Judge:** *“You cannot educate people with violence, if you do not change this mentality you are bound to create more severeness. Look at what happened, your anger caused her an attempt to take her life away.”*

**Suicide situation:**

**Woman:** *“Everything went bad and I could not take it anymore. They left me at the hospital door completely poor and dead broke.”*

**Man:** *“Should I have brought home a woman who attempted to take her life away?”*

**Woman** (starts to cry): *“Allah forbid, I made a big mistake, I was very ignorant. I was very sick of getting beaten all day especially in front of my son. I had no one to talk to,*

*no where to stay, I know I made a big mistake but please do not take my son away from me.”*

**Judge:** *“Allah will never give anyone more than one can handle, but you do realize a sane person will never try to take her life away. I hope Allah will never put anyone in a condition like that. You are regretting your past actions that shows a lot of potential.*

**Woman:** *“They haven’t shown me my son in days. They left me out on the street. I couldn’t say it at first but they threatened me, they said they would kidnap my son.”*

**Judge:** *“Take this into the records. As a precaution I would like the child to be with her mother until the case is dismissed.”*

**Mother in law** (starts screaming): *“He’s my grand child, no one can take him from me!”*

**Judge** (gets angry): *“No reason to be rude.”*

When the case was postponed, Sema also asked for a divorce as well.

**Betrayal claim:**

**Sister-in-law:** *“Sema doesn’t love my brother. I cannot stand the fact that my brother got betrayed. There is a reason why Sema does not want us around the house; she used to talk to someone secretly over the phone. She told someone that she loves him.”*

**Woman:** *“She’s lying!”*

**Man:** *“What kind of a sister are you, how can you have kept this a secret? You are in trouble now!”*

**Mother in law:** *“When we first moved in it looked like they were getting on well, but we found out that she was cheating on him all along. Before we arrived she had no problems meeting up with her lover but when we were around she couldn’t meet up as often.”*

**Woman:** *“I am a mother as well, how can one frame a mother like this?”*

**Burak (the man who harassed Sema):** *“We used to be lovers with Sema before she got married to Kadir, we are still lovers.”*

**Woman:** *“He followed me all around but I didn’t pay attention to him once. My honor has been stained and I would like to clean it.”*

**Judge:** *“Good idea my dear, you do have a child after all.”*

**Man:** *“You’ll be paying for this once we get out of here.”*

**Judge:** *“Do not harass, take legal action against him.”*

**Burak:** *“Sema and I had a fight and she got together with Kadir. Which reasonable person would settle down with an alcoholic? She only did it to resent me. I’ve been going to Sema’s place for years, I know everything for the couch to the seats.”*

**Judge:** *“I am going to ask you to take an oath. You threw a dynamite in a nest and you are still moving.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“Burak was obsessed with my daughter, my daughter went through so much due to him. He threw dirt at my daughter. It is very easy to throw dirt your honor. He almost ruined my daughters life, when her brother was back from the military, the whole neighborhood was filled up with gossip.”*

**Next-door neighbor:** *“At first they were not doing too great, especially due to Kadir’s alcoholism problem. When Kadir’s family moved in it was even worse. Sema always tried to do what her mother-in-law asked of her but she on the other hand just oppressed her.”*

**Woman’s Brother:** *“Burak used to be my friend but I realized he was a conman. Burak is not my sister’s lover; he is actually Figen’s lover. You can ask him if you want.”*

**Burak:** *“I lied.”*

**Judge:** *“You do know that lying is a crime right son?”*

**Burak:** *“Yes but the love I have had for Sema has made me blind”*

**Sister in law:** *“Shame on you!”*

**Judge:** *“So you used Figen as a step to get to Sema?”*

**Burak:** *“Yes. Mrs. Cevriye (mother-in-law) asked me to do it, she said I could have the farm for it.”* (Burak shows the title to the farm).

**Mother in law:** *“I did everything to keep Sema away from my son and grand child.”*  
Mother-in-law loses herself.

**Expert psychologist:** *“Who should take care of the mother? Sema is a good candidate at being a good mother but she has been damaged due to external factors. As long as she is by herself, she will be a good mother. Does the educational system include beating? No: violence is the very primary method used by human beings who feel incapable. Both parties need to be treated.”*

**Jury:** Divorce.

Judge asks the last words of the parties.

**Man:** *“After all that I have done, I am not sure if fortune will ever come my way your honor.”*

**Woman:** *“I do not trust Kadir. I feel very indecisive. I want to save my home but I’ll leave the final verdict to you.”*

**Decision:** Divorce. Parental rights to be given to the mother.

Kadir’s case has been dismissed since he could not prove his claim.

**Judge:** *“Wish you could have got along so that I could give the refusal decision and that we could all go back home in peace.”*

## **COURT CASE 11**

**January 12-13-14**

**Plaintiff:** Man (Metin)

**Defendant:** Woman (Gülşen)

Married for 5 years. Man thinks this marriage is a mistake from the beginning.

**Woman:** *“I don’t want a divorce. These claims are here for different reasons.”*

**Mother in law (to woman’s mother):** *“You sold your daughter. I won’t let you spend my son’s money.”*

**Man:** *“I came to Istanbul at the age of 12 on my own. My elder sister was living here and I stayed with her, then I left. I lived on my own for 15 years. My mother was sad about this. Then she saw Gülşen. Even if I said no, she insisted. I wasn’t thinking of getting married. Even if I thought so, not with girl my mother found for me.”*

**Woman:** *“Isn’t it a little late to say that? You realize that after five years?”*

**Man:** *It’s still a profit when you turn back from a loss before you make more loss.*

**Judge:** *“That’s right. But it would be much better if you thought about this at the beginning.”*

**Man:** *“They told me there is always fortune in a wedding.”*

**Woman:** *“I didn’t want it either. I went crazy when they first told me that someone I don’t know is coming to ask me from my parents.”*

**Judge:** *“Metin, tell me one thing. Should the parents lead their children to get married since they are more experienced?”*

**Man:** *“Absolutely not.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“It was my mother in law who liked me. We are getting along with my hubby very well for 35 years now.”*

**Judge:** *“So you say it should be like this. We have seen so and it should be so. Ha?”*

**A jury member:** *“Of course the opinion of parents is important. But the parties should have a word too.”*

**Judge:** *“It’s not the style of the marriage. In the end you are here.”*

**Gülşen & Metin:** *To us it’s wrong.*

**Judge:** *“So marriages live long because mothers get her children married?”*

**Man:** *“At the time parents were picking up. It was the tradition.”*

**Woman:** *“But many of my friends got married with their own will.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“Many of them got divorced though.”*

**Judge:** *“See, many of them got divorced.”*

**Woman:** *“At least they got married with the ones they love. So they didn’t regret. They were happy when getting married. I was crying when getting married. I kept praying to Allah until the wedding night if they may give up getting me married.”*

**Sister:** *“I also got married like that. I had to love my husband. Thank Allah I did. My husband came out a good person.”*

**Mother in law:** *“We were worried what if Metin gets married with a wrong girl.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“We were worried about the same thing. They say ‘If you leave your daughter with her own, she marries either a timpano guy or a clarion guy.’”*

**Judge:** *“We need to trust our kids. If we don’t our mistake brings them here.”*

**Woman:** *“I felt myself like a sheep to be sacrificed at the time of the wedding.”*

**Judge:** *“It’s too sad. It’s even worse that you tell this here. Didn’t you tell this to your hubby? Didn’t you know that your hubby was getting married like that?”*

**Woman:** *“Yes. Metin never told. My mother in law and sister in law were telling me though. They were telling me that Metin never wanted me and I should pray for them. They said they took me.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *They were getting along well. They got worse because of you.*

**Mother in law:** *“We realized at the very first night and regretted. They wanted a fortune from us. If you knew how much gold they wanted.”*

**Woman:** *“No they did not.”*

**Mother in law:** *“It’s the tradition. Of course we will obey.”*

**Man:** *“I couldn’t give what they wanted. I didn’t have that much money.”*

**Woman:** *“They fooled out of me. Yes they did give me the golds. But it turned out all of the gold was borrowed. They took them back.”*

**Judge:** *“It’s wrong from the beginning. It’s all wrong. This mistake should be fixed. People shouldn’t be crushed under the traditions. This is the right thing to do. Do you think the promises should be taken after the marriage?”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“A promise is a promise. If you won’t be able to keep it, you won’t give one. You start telling lies from the very first day. Liars!”*

**Mother in law:** *“So they would be happy because of the golds.”*

**Judge:** *(angry) “You should have discussed these at that time. You shouldn’t have made a promise. They shouldn’t have either. And this divorce wouldn’t have happened.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“When we make a promise we do it. We think everyone thinks that way.”*

**Judge:** *“You wouldn’t be hearing these words, if you didn’t give that promise.”*

**Woman:** *“I lost my trust to my husband from the beginning. I was embarrassed to everyone.”*

**Woman’s Father:** *“Word is a bond to us.”*

**Judge:** *“What happened is happened. They made a promise and they couldn’t do it. My daughter, tell me this. Did you make a big deal out of it?”*

**Man:** *“Didn’t you say that everyone has her arms full of gold and you want too.”*

**Man:** *“My mother got me married so that I no longer be alone and so that I have warm food in front of me every day. But my wife weren’t there when I come home. She was in her mothers’. I wasn’t comfortable there.”*

**Woman:** *“I want him come with me but he wouldn’t.”*

**Mother in law:** *“They say you will forget about your father’s house when you get married. That’s what we did. This is the faith of every girl.”*

**Judge:** *“Let’s not say you will forget. But you now have your own home. Should a girl totally break out from her parents because she is married?”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“She is going to look after her home and won’t forget her parents at the same time.”*

**Judge:** *“She was coming at night too?”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“It’s not like she’s going to somewhere bad.”*

**Mother in law:** *“Her mother should warn her not to come to them every single day and to make some warm food for her hubby.”*

**Woman:** *“I miss my mother so much. Since I don’t have any friends she is like a best friend to me.”*

**Judge:** *“It’s not like this kid is a live in. He has his own home.”*

**Man:** *“It’s gonna make everyone happy to end this marriage.”*

**Woman:** *“No, please don’t. I beg you Mr. Judge. Don’t let it happen.”*

**Man:** *“You didn’t want it either at the beginning.”*

**Woman:** *“Right. I didn’t. But I loved you later on.”*

Music starts. They look at each other.

**Mother in law:** *“Of course she doesn’t. Who wants to leave that money.”*

**Man:** *“I cannot catch up with enough money to my wife’s parents. Since my father in law has only the pension pay and they pay rent, he always wants money from me.”*

**Woman:** *“It’s borrowed money. He will pay it back.”*

**Mother in law:** *“They sold their daughter. My son is paying the payments every month. One should carry any load on his shoulder and still not sell his daughter.”*

**Judge:** *(angry) “Like it’s not you who took the girl at the first place. No one sell his daughter. It depends on how you approach it. He says that he borrowed the money and will pay back when he sells his property. Approach it from the good side once.”*

**Man:** *“This is not borrowing. They made me pay their rent every month. Maybe it’s a bit harsh to use the word selling but it’s true that they took a lot of money from me and never paid back.”*

**Woman:** *“I won’t go to my parents’. Not gonna take any money. I will do whatever my husband wants. Please just don’t divorce us.”*

**Judge:** *“Jury, you are hearing right? Be careful what the plaintiff is saying regarding the two claims.”*

**Woman:** *“My hubby even cheated on me. I stand that as well.”*

**Flashback:** Man receives a message from a woman. ‘Honey, are you at home?’ Wife starts crying ‘Who’s this woman? Man gets angry. ‘We didn’t get married with love. You don’t have a word on this stuff.’ He leaves home. Woman tries to stop him. He pushes her and leaves. Woman cries: ‘Why did you marry me?’

**Judge:** *“Metin, is this happened?”*

**Man:** *“Yes. But only in the first few days. My friends didn’t know that I got married.”*

**Judge:** *“What is the difference? In the first days or not. A married man is a married man. You should have answered the phone in front of your wife and tell that you are married.”*

**Man:** *“I didn’t go to that woman. I got angry to my wife and went to my friends.”*

**Mother in law:** *“This is a man. Of course he will do.”*

**Judge:** *“Who gives that right to a man?”*

**Mother in law:** *“My son has a job. He makes money. He can both take care of his wife and rascals at the same time. Tell that you did my son. Tell with proud.”*

**Judge:** *“It’s nothing to do with money.”*

**Mother in law:** *“It’s to nothing to do with money. It’s about the wife. It’s the wife who pushes a man apart from the house.”*

**Sister in law:** *“It’s always the wife’s fault.”*

**Judge:** *“The thing we call Flesh is... Yunus Emre served to Allah for 40 years in order to educate his flesh.”*

**Man:** *“I’m not that pity. My flesh didn’t beat me. It’s her fault if she believed to my mother and sister.”*

**Woman:** *I was sick of hearing my husband’s rascal stories from them. They were telling me so that I become aware of his value. It’s ridiculous.*

**Flashback:** The mother in law is making the bride rub her feet and telling her how much this some other girl was in love with her son. Brides answers that there were a lot of men who wanted her. She adds that there was this guy who cried because she got married. Mother in law rebukes her. She claims the bride still meets with him. She tells this to her son.

**Judge:** *“How did you respond to this Metin?”*

**Man:** *“I went crazy. I believed because my mother told so. Is there any lover greater than a mother?”*

**Woman:** *“I didn’t see anyone. Actually there wasn’t such a man. I made him up.”*

**Judge:** *“One of the three legs of a marriage is trust.”*

**Mother in law:** *“My son believes me first.”*

**Woman’s Father:** *“What if mother lies to separate you from your wife.”*

**Judge:** *“I have seen such examples million times in my work life.”*

**Man:** *“I believed my wife at last when she cried so much. But still little doubt remained there.”*

**Mother in law:** *“I investigated and found that guy.”*

**Flashback:** Woman feels some indigestion. Mother in law yells at her: *“Don’t say you are pregnant!”*

**Woman:** *“My mother in law took me to the doctor for abortion if I was pregnant. Then she threatened me with killing me if I get pregnant.”*

**Judge:** *“You even interfere in their decision to have a baby?”*

**Woman:** *“She even was interfering in what I wear. I bought a red coat. I couldn’t wear it because she didn’t allow me to.”*

**Mother in law:** *“She was a new bride. She was taking too much attention. Red should be worn when you are a child. If a person doesn’t know what to do you should interfere. It’s a mother in law’s job to interfere in. I’m the mother of her husband.”*

**Woman:** *“We were actually getting along with Metin quite well. But whenever my mother in law comes we start fighting.”*

**Man:** *“I don’t understand. You are complaining and you don’t want to get rid of this at the same time.”*

**Woman’s Mother:** *“My daughter loves her husband. There is no reason for them to divorce. The only reason we are here is her mother in law. Metin married my daughter because his mother told so. He now wants to divorce again because she tells so.”*

**Nuri Taşçı:** (The guy that the sister in law hired): *“I know Gülşen very well. She probably doesn’t know me. She comes to my tea café once a week. I saw her with another guy.”*

**Judge:** *“This is a big claim. It should be proved. If it’s a slander it’s a big crime. Do you have any proof?”*

**Nuri Taşçı:** *“I have some photos of them.”*

Judge has the criminologist check the photos if real.

**Oktay Şendik:** (the guy claimed to be the secret lover of the bride): *“I don’t know anyone. I saw her in a wedding 7 years ago. I never saw her after that. Nuri knows how to make money very well. I’m sure he took money to testify. I’m a married man.”*

The photos turn out to be fake. Nuri tells that the sister in law forced him to testify. Metin gets angry and yells to his mother and sister.

**Expert Psychologist Rumeysa Ölmez:** *“It’s not a very healthy thing to get married with the force of parents. Metin was not ready to get married. In addition Gülşen didn’t have the magnet to pull him home. Moreover, his sister and mother make it even more difficult for them to get along with each other. We already see how motivated the wife is. After he saw what his mother and sister did if the husband changes his way of communication this marriage could lead.”*

**Jury:** The case is overruled.

**Judge** asks the last words of the parties.

**Man:** *“I’m not sure.”*

**Woman:** *“I never gave up loving Metin. I don’t know how to lead this marriage when his parents don’t want it.”*

**Decision:** The case to be overruled. A court record to be prepared against; Nuri, sister in law, and mother in law.

**Judge:** *“Metin I have a request from you. I tell this to everyone. Worry about how you will lead your family not how you get married. Metin keep the balance with your wife and parents.”*

**COURT CASE 12 (C12)**

**January 15-16-19**

**Plaintiff:** Man (Serhat)

**Defendant:** Woman (Hediye)

**Woman's Mother:** Wears a colorful headscarf, tied from the chin with a large collar.

**Man:** *"I do business out of city and whenever I went Hediye was staying with my mom. One day, when she was staying with her own mom, she met with her ex- fiancé. One of our relatives saw it. They were almost holding each other's hands."*

**Flashback:** *"Hediye's ex- fiancé is holding her by the hand and they are talking. Hediye admits that these statements are true."*

**Man:** *"It's not possible for a married woman to talk with her ex- fiancé."*

**Woman's Mother:** *"I am not saying what she did was true. She is young and ignorant. She probably didn't have bad intentions in what she did."*

**Judge:** *"She might not have had bad intentions but she surely was upsetting. Hediye, why did you meet with your ex- fiancé?"*

**Woman:** *"We came across each other when I was staying with my mother, he just got out of jail, and he insisted and held me by the arm. I had to meet him in order not to cause any trouble."*

**Man:** *"She even should not say hi to her ex- fiancé even if she sees him in the street."*

**Woman's Mother:** *"My daughter loves her husband. If she hadn't loved her, she wouldn't have run away from home. She is not a person who would betray her husband."*

**Mother in law:** *"I don't find what Hediye did right. A married woman should not meet her ex-fiance. It wouldn't be wrong right now if Serhat killed Hediye."*

**Judge:** *"What you are saying is totally unreasonable in law."*

**Flashback:** After Hediye runs away from home, Serhat and his sister search for the bedroom to find the address and his sister finds birth control pills. She asks whether he knew about this and Serhat says no and adds that he is against the idea.

**Judge:** *“You might be right in getting angry; this is not a decision that one makes on her/his own. Why did you decide to do this on your own?”*

**Woman:** *“Serhat had been fired once so I was scared.”*

**Judge:** *“Why didn't you consult your husband?”*

**Woman:** *“I was scared and I couldn't tell him. He forbade me to talk to my mother.”*

**Judge:** *“Whatever happens, you should not have hidden it from your husband.”*

**Judge:** *“Sometimes I tell myself 'I wish they had talked about this before they come to the court.’”*

**Flashback:** Hediye's mother-in-law and her husband's sister tell Hediye off. Hediye asks for permission to see her family but they tell her that if she goes she can never come back again.

**Judge:** *“Is this all true?”*

**Mother in law:** *“Yes.”*

**Judge:** *“So you punished Hediye in your own way.”*

**Man:** *“Last week, Hediye's ex-fiance came to the court's door. Hediye and her brother got into his car.”*

Judge asks Hediye if this is true. She remains quiet and her brother explains: *“Yes it is true but we got into the car to talk about something else.”*

**Sister in law:** *“Judge, there is something that hasn't been spoken yet. The day after Hediye went to meet her ex-fiance, she disappeared for a week. My brother got permission from work and came home. She came home exactly after one week. We asked her where she had been but we couldn't get the answer.”*

**Judge:** *“Where had you been?”*

**Woman:** *“What can I say now?”*

**Judge:** *“If you remain quiet, what they say will be taken account as true.”*

**Woman:** *“No, Judge. I did not run away to go to my ex-fiancé. I will prove if you let me. I was too suppressed from Serhat's family's pressure. It was going to be like hell when Serhat would be there as well so I went to see my friend Gül and just be in peace for a while.”*

**Mother in law's cousin:** *“I saw Hediye and her ex-fiance talking in the street and Hediye was quite flirty.”*

**Woman's brother: (to her)** *“Why don't you say that you want to divorce? Weren't you going to get back with your ex-fiance?”*

**Woman:** *“I have to save my honor. The judge is going to divorce us anyway.”*

**Witness Gül:** *“Yes, judge. She came to my place that day.”*

**Judge:** *“Hediye, can't you admit that this is wrong? A married woman going away from home without informing anyone, I can't understand this and you staying at a woman's place don't change things either. Whether it be in a woman's or a man's place, you staying God-knows-where is even a reason for a divorce.”*

**Witness Turgut:** *“I have been the owner of a small market in the neighborhood for 10 years. I know everyone around here. That morning, I saw Hediye with a guy.”*

**Judge:** *“Who was that man? Was he your ex-fiance?”*

Hediye faints. Judge gives a small break and the trial starts again.

**Woman:** *“Yes, that guy was Murat.”*

**Judge:** *“Where did you go with your ex- fiancée?”*

**Woman:** *“I can't tell you where and why we met but there is one thing; I have never cheated on Serhat.”*

**Woman's Brother [shocked]:** *“We had a group of friends when we were young and we used to drink. They say drinking is bad for you and I understood it that day.”*

**Flashback:** Murat and Hediye's brother steal something and Hediye's brother kills someone.

**Woman's Brother:** *“Murat asked about Hediye. He was devastated when he learned that she got married. The he found me. It turns out that he threatened Hediye and kidnapped her but he didn't even touch her.”*

**Judge:** *“I want to talk about two things: First, she used the birth control pills without consulting her husband. That is a behavior that is very distrustful of Hediye. These decisions should be given together by the husband and wife. Second, meeting with her ex-fiancé when she is married. This is not acceptable in our society. We question the consequences rather than the reason behind it because our moral values are very strong.”*

**Expert Psychologist:** *“I recommend that from now on, both sides should not give up keeping in touch and trust each other rather than what other people say.”*

**Jury:** The case is overruled.

**Judge:** The jury also agrees with our expert.

**Decision:** The case is overruled.