



AL HIDAAYAH

الهداية

The Guidance for Humanity

Based on the Glorious Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



WOMEN'S
Rights in Islam
– PROTECTED OR SUBJUGATED?

BY DR ZAKIR NAIK

STUDY GUIDE



COURSE TOPICS

1. Introduction
2. Status of women in societies before the advent of Islam
3. Six important points with respect to women's rights in Islam
4. The women's rights in Islam
5. Spiritual rights
6. Economic rights
7. Social rights
8. Educational rights
9. Legal rights
10. Political rights
11. Conclusion

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To realise that women's rights in Islam are protected and not subjugated
2. To clarify the misconception that women are subjugated in Islam
3. To know about the different rights that women are entitled to in Islam
4. To understand that men and women in Islam are overall equal

QUESTION AND ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions

Match the Columns

True or False

COURSE DURATION

Video - 3 hours 15 min

Study Guide - 1 hour 20 min

Assessment - 10 min

Total Duration - 4 hours 45 min

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION



Introduction

1 INTRODUCTION

1 Women's rights, according to the Oxford Dictionary, are "rights that promote a position of legal and social equality of women with men." According to the Webster's Dictionary, women's rights are "rights claimed for women, equal to those of men with respect to suffrage (right to vote), property etc."

2 I am not too concerned about the so-called modern ideas, conclusions and categorical statements of scientists and unexperienced armchair experts on how life should be lived by women. I am more inclined to base my considerations and conclusions on truths which can be proven in experience. Experience and unbiased holistic factual analysis are the only sure test between the gold of truth and the glitter of theory.

Our thinking must be checked against reality, or our mental processes can lead us very much astray. Indeed, the best brains of the day at one time believed the world to be flat.



3 If you agree with the women's rights in Islam as portrayed by the western media you have no option but to believe that women's rights in Islam are subjugated.

Western talk of woman's liberation is actually a disguised form of exploitation of her body, deprivation of her honour and degradation of her soul.

The western society claiming to improve the status of women has actually degraded them to the status of concubines, mistresses and society butterflies, who are employed as mere tools of pleasure seekers and sex marketeers hidden behind the colourful screen of art and culture.





4 Islamic radical revolutionary support gave women their due status and rights in society in the “Days of Ignorance” 1400 years ago.

Islam’s objective was and continues to protect the thinking, living, seeing, hearing, feelings and striving for women’s upliftment and emancipation in society.



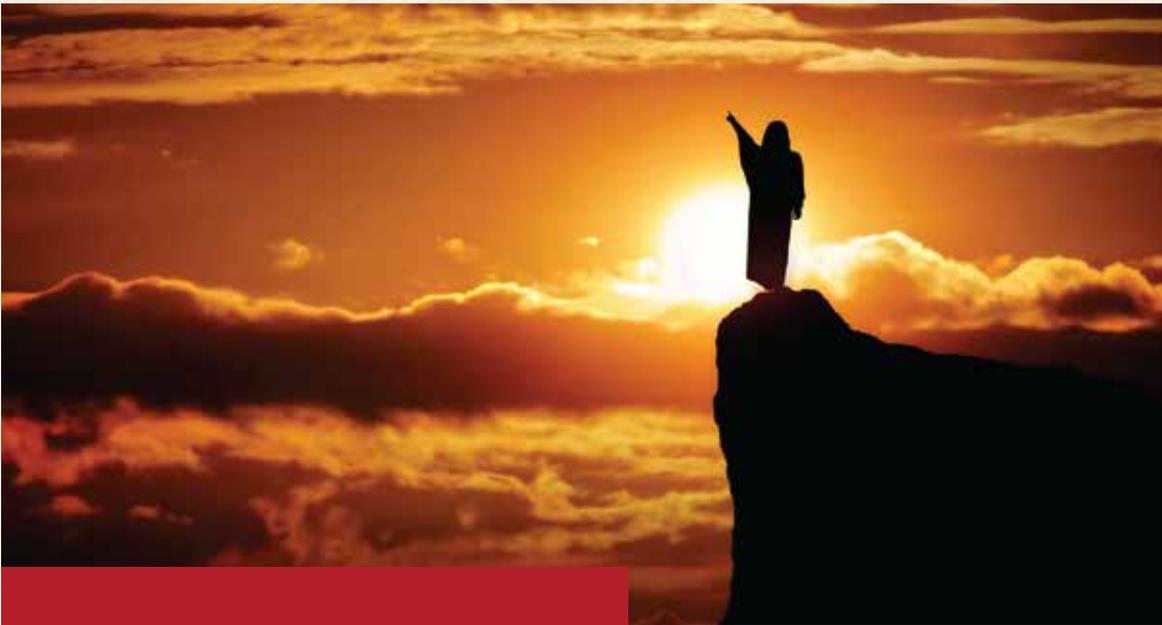
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STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOCIETIES BEFORE THE REVELATION OF THE QUR'AN

Before we analyse the status of women in Islam, let us first study the status of women in societies before the revelation of the Qur'an.

The following examples from history amply illustrate the fact that the status of women in earlier civilisations was very low, to the extent that they were denied basic human dignity.

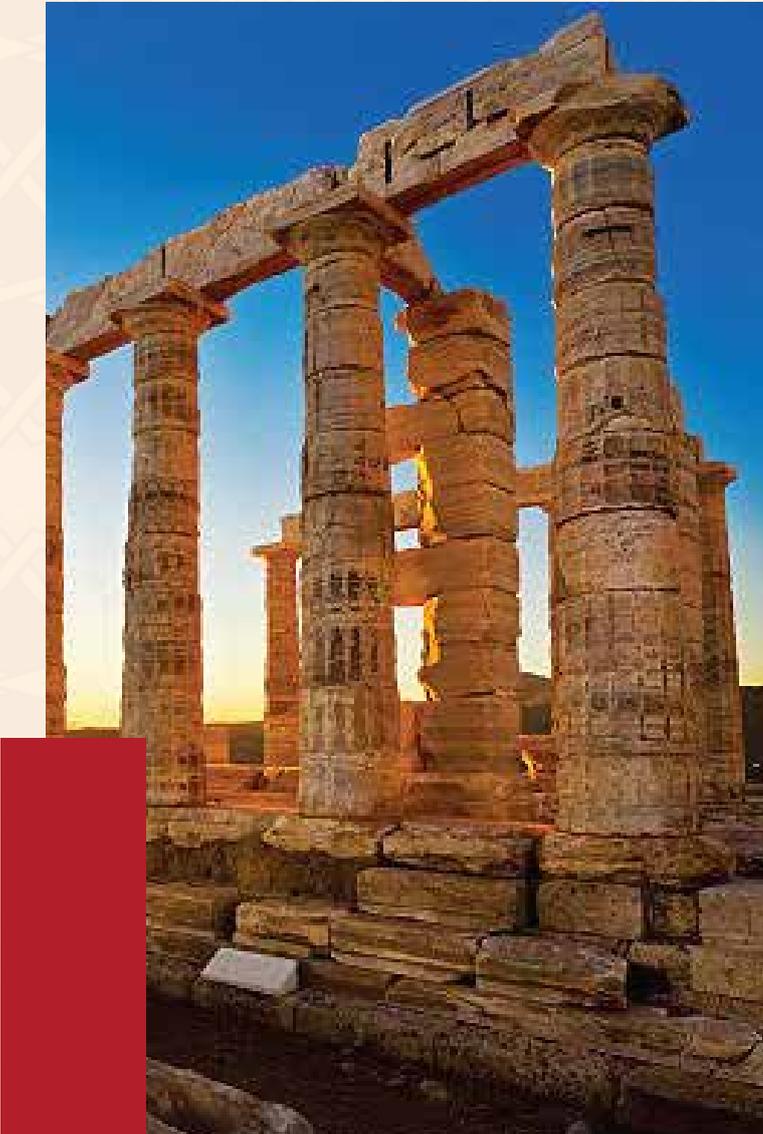




1 Babylonian civilisation

The women were degraded and were denied all rights under the Babylonian law. If a man murdered a woman, instead of him being punished, his wife was put to death.





2 Greek civilisation

Greek civilisation is considered the most glorious of all ancient civilisations.

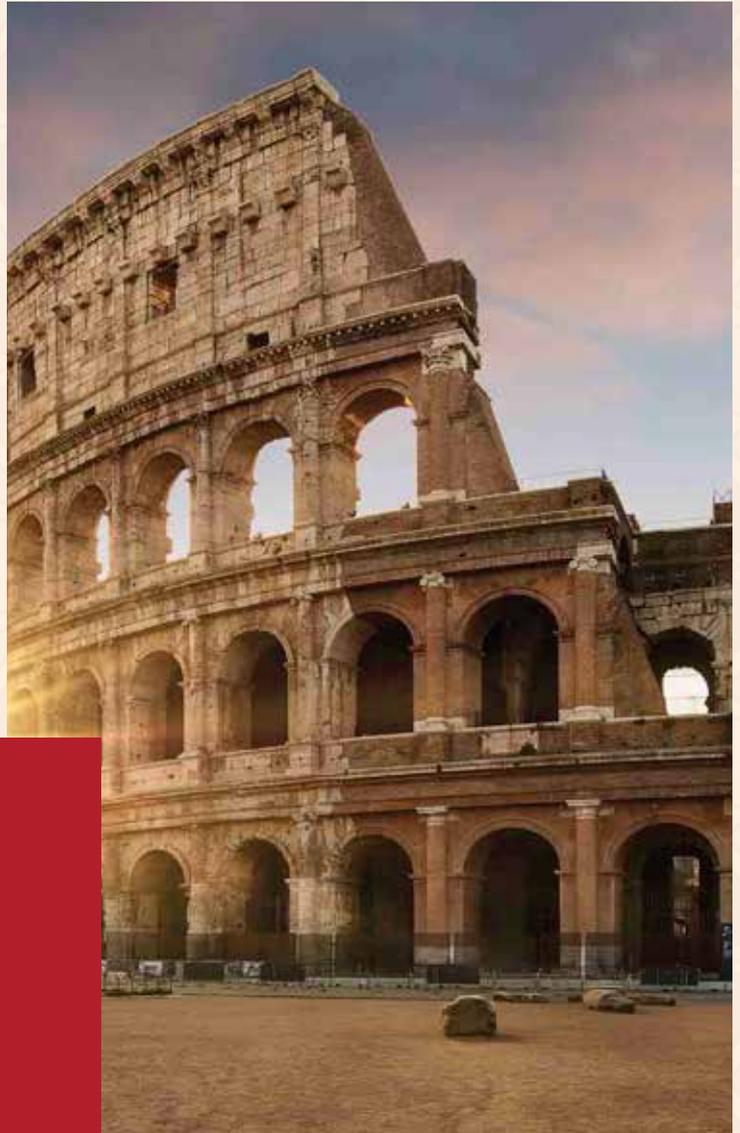
Under this very 'glorious' system, women were deprived of all rights and were looked down upon. In Greek mythology, an 'imaginary woman' called 'Pandora' is the root cause of misfortune of human beings.

The Greeks considered women to be subhuman and inferior to men. Though chastity of women was precious, and women were held in high esteem, the Greeks were later overwhelmed by ego and sexual perversions. Prostitution became a regular practice amongst all classes of Greek society.



3 Roman civilisation

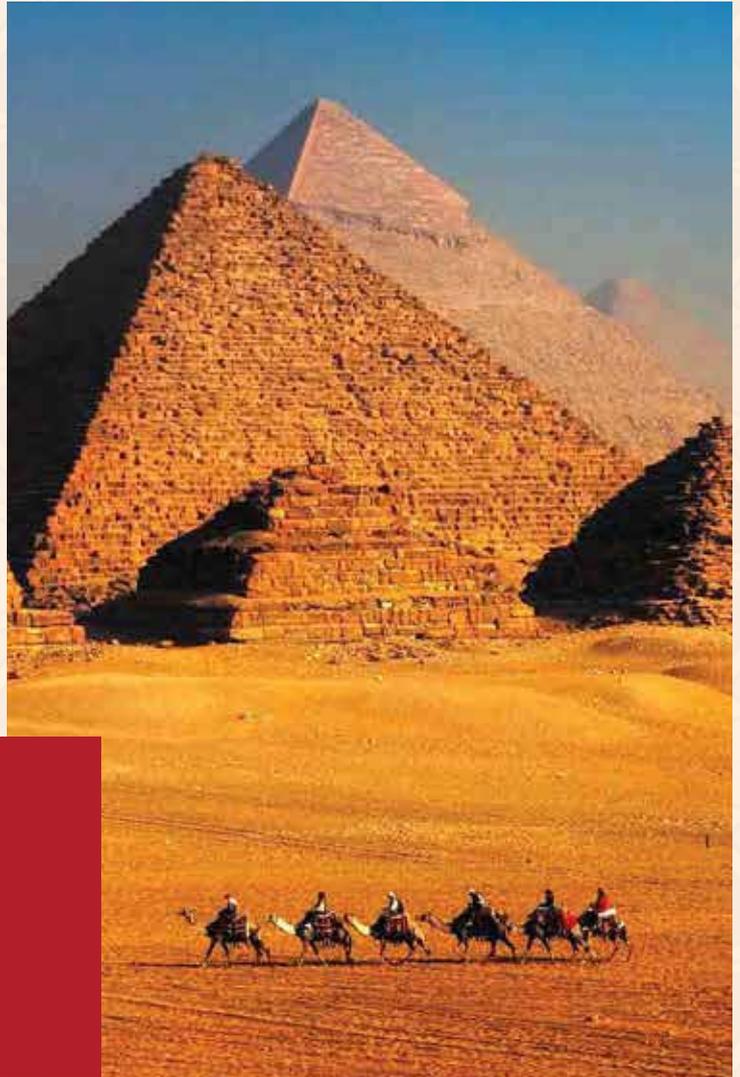
When Roman civilisation was at the zenith of its 'glory', a man even had the right to take the life of his wife. Prostitution and nudity were common amongst the Romans.





4 Egyptian civilisation

The Egyptians considered women evil and as a sign of a devil.



5 Pre-Qur'anic Arabia

Before Islam spread in Arabia, the Arabs looked down upon women and very often when a female child was born, she was buried alive.



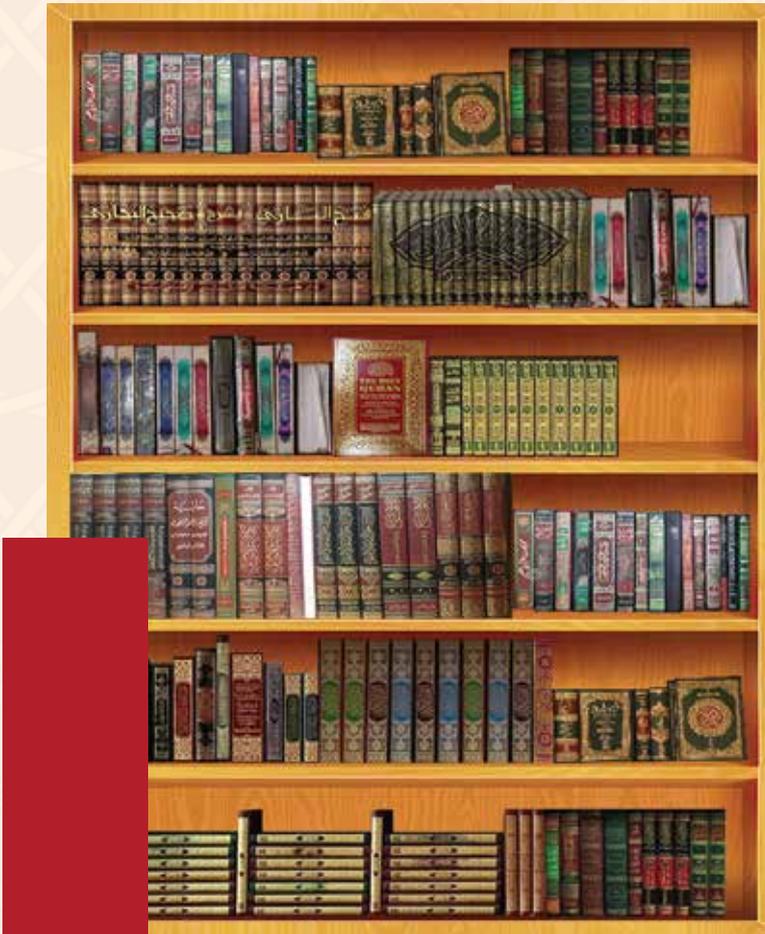
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SIX IMPORTANT POINTS

WITH RESPECT TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM

- 1** Muslims constitute more than 25% of the world population. Different Muslim societies have different cultures. Some may be close to Islam, whereas some may be away from Islam.
- 2** The status of women in Islam should be judged according to authentic sources and not by observing what individual Muslims do or what the Muslim society does.





3 The authentic sources of Islam are:

- A. The Qur'an, which is the word of God
- B. Authentic Hadiths or Sunnah (tradition) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

4 The Qur'an will never contradict itself nor will the authentic Hadiths contradict themselves, nor will these two authentic sources contradict each other.

5 Sometimes the scholars differ on certain issues. This difference on many occasions can be removed by analysing the Qur'an as a whole and not by deriving the meaning from one single verse. In cases of ambiguity many a time the clarification is given in some other part of the Qur'an. To support one idea, they quote a source and ignore the other sources.



6 For a dedicated Muslim, male or female, the ultimate goal is to seek the pleasure of Allah and to fulfil our duties on earth as His trustees and not to satisfy our own ego or gain fame.

Islam believes in equality between man and woman. Equality does not mean identicality. Islam presents the role of man and woman as complimentary not contradictory, as partnership and not conflicting so as to strive for supremacy. Man and woman are biologically different, physically different, and psychologically different.

When the western world speaks about men and women being equal, they themselves realise that practically they are not always equal. No wonder in sports and Olympics when they have a competition for 100 m race, long jump, high jump, swimming, boxing, etc., men and women compete separately and not together. But when they appear for an examination in school, college, or university they never appear separately but together. This practice clearly indicates that the western world too, like Islam, agrees that men and women are different in some aspects and same in others.



SPIRITUAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

LESSON 2



4



THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM

The women's rights in Islam can be divided into six major headings:

1. Spiritual Rights
2. Economic Rights
3. Social Rights
4. Educational Rights
5. Legal Rights
6. Political Rights





5

SPIRITUAL RIGHTS

1 In Islam, Paradise is for both Men and Women

The greatest misconception that the westerners have is that Paradise in Islam is only for the men and not for women. This can be easily disproved from the Qur'an.

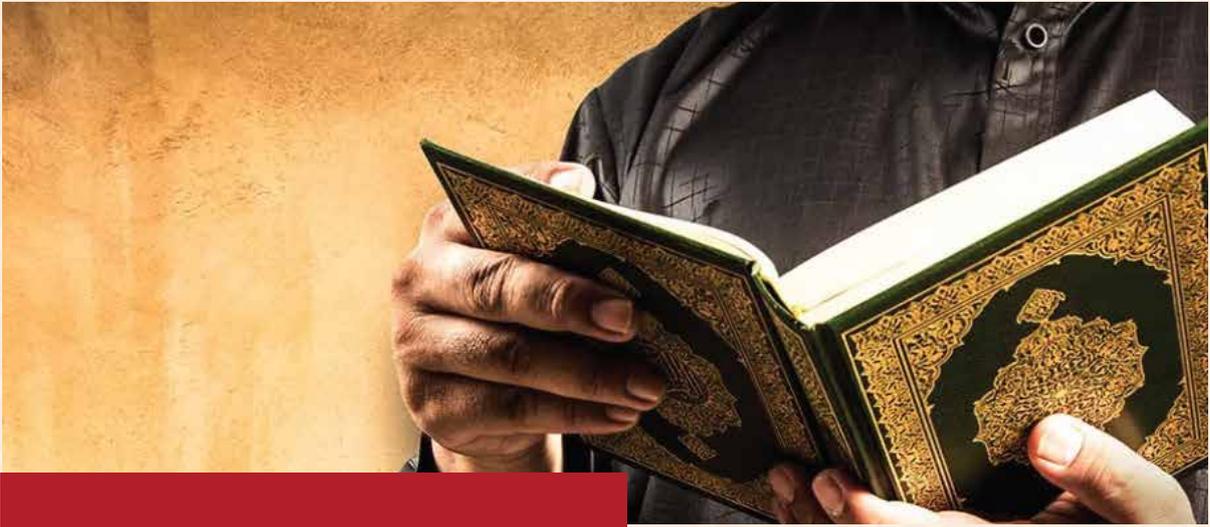
A. Both the righteous male and female will enter heaven

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا



“If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female and have faith, they will enter heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.”

Al Qur'an 4:124



B. Both the righteous male and female will have a good life in this world and the hereafter

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



“Whosoever performs good deeds whether male or female and is a believer, We shall surely make him live a good life and we will certainly reward them according to the best of what they did.”

Al Qur'an 16:97

Just because in Islam ‘Sex’ is not the criterion to enter Paradise, will you call such rights in Islam: Protected or Subjugated?



2 In Islam Men and Women both have Souls

Another misconception that the western media has about Islam is that the women have no soul in Islam. Before we discuss this from the Islamic perspective let us analyse what do the other religions have to say about women having a soul.

- A. In the 17th century, the Council of Wise Men met at Rome and unanimously gave the verdict that women had no souls.**
- B. The Orthodox Greek Church denied that women had a soul.**
- C. According to Saint Bernard, the women in Christianity are described as the organ of the devil.**
- D. In Hinduism, women are considered inferior to men and are born as women because of their misdeeds and sins in their previous birth.**



E. Qur'an makes it clear that both men and women have the same spiritual nature.

i. The spiritual nature of men and women is alike

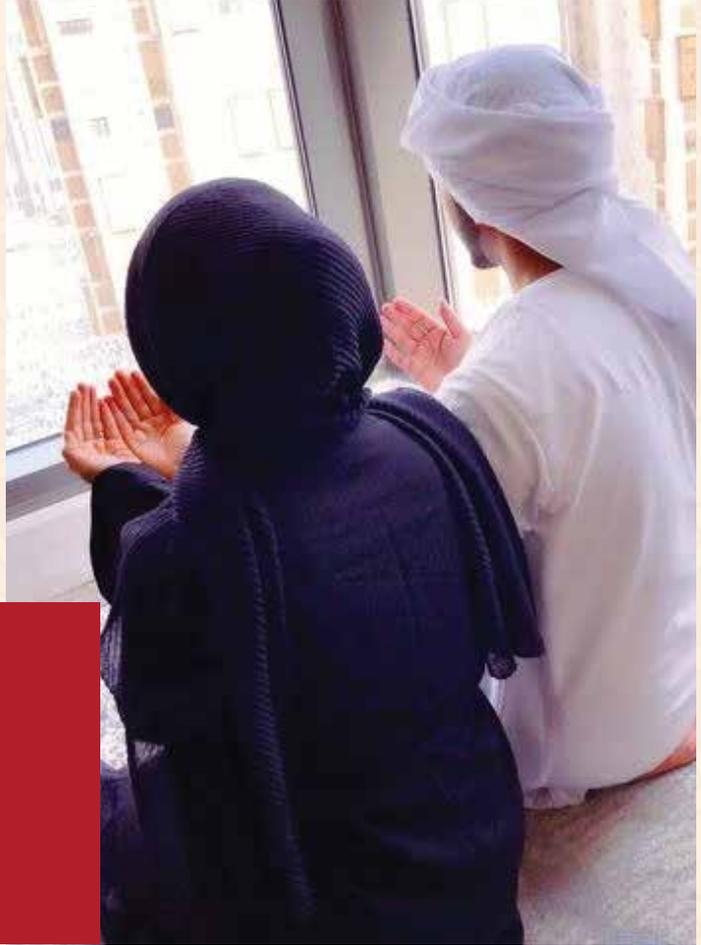
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا



“O Humankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate.”

Al Qur'an 4:1





ii. Allah made men and women as mates to each other, both having same spiritual nature

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ وَحَفَدَةً



“And Allah has made for you mates (and companions) of your own nature. And made for you out of them sons and daughters and grandchildren.”

Al Qur'an 16:72



iii. Allah made men and women into pairs of same spiritual nature

فَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا



“(He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves.”

Al Qur'an 42:11

iv. Allah created mates for men of like spiritual nature

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا



“It is He who created you from a single person and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love).”

Al Qur'an 7:189

Just because the spiritual nature of the man and woman is the same in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam: Protected or Subjugated?



3

Allah has honoured the children of Adam (pbuh), both Men and Women

A. When Allah created the human, He breathed into him his spirit.

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ



“When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My (created) spirit, fall you (angels) down in obedience unto him.”

Al Qur'an 15:29

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِهِ



“But He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of His (created) spirit.”

Al Qur'an 32:9

- B.** Human race has been created to be or serve as the trustee of Allah and therefore Allah has dignified the human race in both men and women.





وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ
مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا



“We have honoured the children of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation.”

Al Qur'an 17:70

Allah has honoured the children of Adam (pbuh) both men and women.



4 The Bible holds the Woman solely responsible for the downfall of humanity

A. Unlike other scriptures including the Bible, the Qur'an does not blame Eve for tempting Adam (pbuh) to eat the forbidden fruit or for the downfall of man.



وَيَا أَدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا
هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءَاتِهِمَا وَقَالَ
مَا نَهَيْكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّصِيحِينَ



فَدَلَّهِمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ
عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَّرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَن تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ
وَأَقُلَّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ
قَالَ أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ
قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ

يَبْنَىٰ ءَادَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوْءَتِكُمْ وَرِيثًا وَلِبَاسِ
التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَةِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

يَبْنَىٰ ءَادَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ
عَنَّهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَتَهُمَا إِنَّهُ يَرَكُم هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ





“O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden, and enjoy (its good things) as you wish: but approach not this tree, or you run into harm and transgression.”

Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, in order to reveal to them their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: “Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest you should become angels or such beings as live for ever.”

And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere adviser.



So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto them: “Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?”

They said: “Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.”

(Allah) said: “Get you down. With enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood,- for a time.”



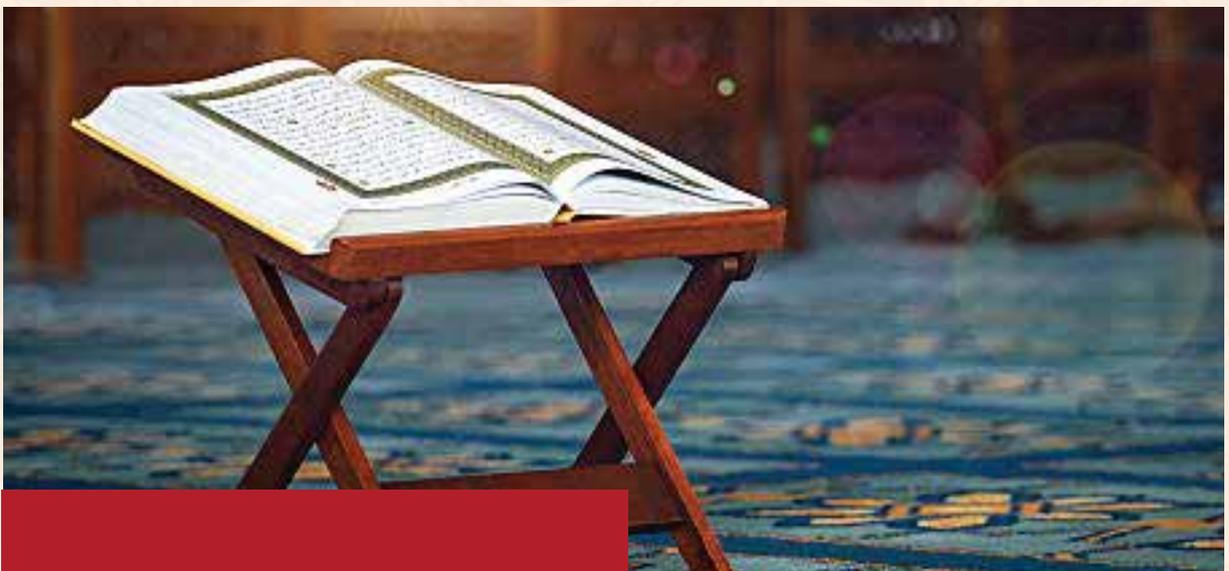
He said: “Therein shall You live, and therein shall you die; but from it shall you be taken out (at last).”

O you Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness,- that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may receive admonition!



O you Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as He got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them: We made the Evil Ones friends (only) to those without faith.

Al Qur'an 7:19-27



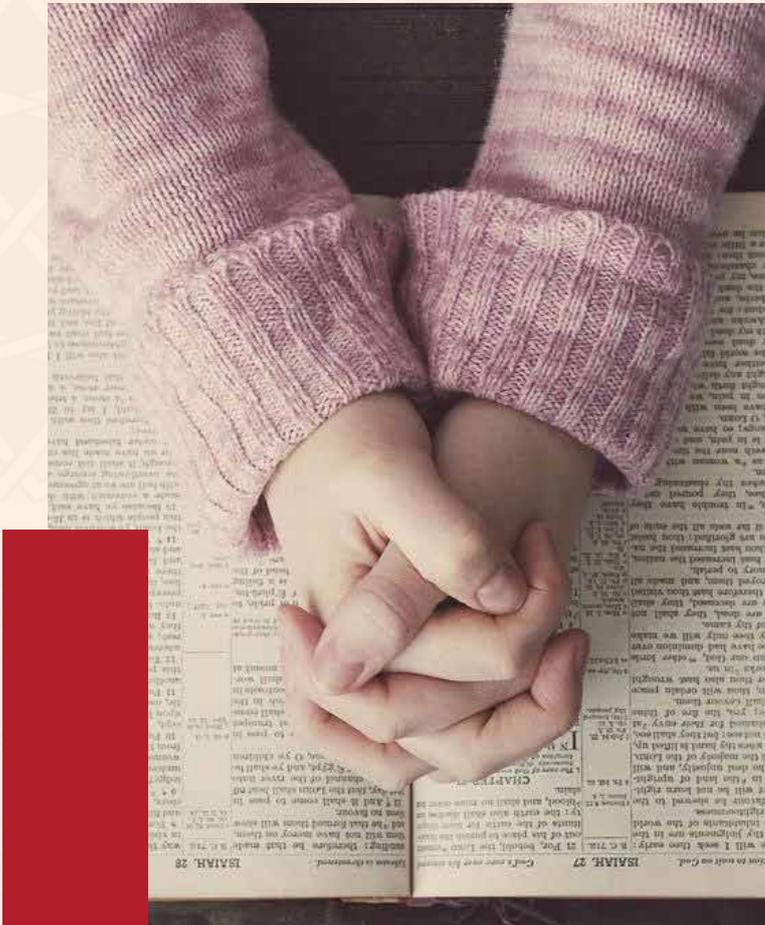


Adam (pbuh) and Eve are both addressed more than a dozen of times and Adam (pbuh) and Eve both are said to have disobeyed Allah and both repented and both were forgiven.

There is not a single passage in the Qur'an that only points to Eve. However, there is one verse in the Qur'an which specifically blames only Adam (pbuh).

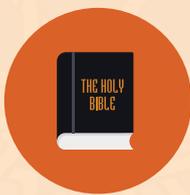


B. Christianity puts the complete blame on Eve for the fall of man and according to the doctrine of 'Original Sin' it holds Eve responsible for the sins of humanity. According to Bible in Genesis Chapter 3, Eve tempted Adam to have the forbidden fruit (apple).



5 The Bible considers Pregnancy and Labour pains as a Punishment for the Women

A. Pregnancy and labour pains a form of punishment for the women



“Unto the women He said, I will greatly multiply your conception. In sorrow you shall bring forth children and your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you.”

The Bible – Genesis 3:16

B. Unlike the Bible, which degrades pregnancy and considers the labour pains of the mother during childbirth as a punishment for eating the forbidden fruit, the Qur’an does not degrade pregnancies. In fact, childbirth is mentioned in Qur’an to uplift the women.



i. Respecting the mother that gave us birth

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ



“Reverance Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverance) the wombs (that bore you).”

Al Qur'an 4:1

ii. It is enjoined upon humans to be good to their parents

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلِيًّا
وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ



“And We have enjoined on human (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did their mother bear them, and in years' twain was their weaning.”

Al Qur'an 31:14



iii. It is enjoined upon humans to be kind to their parents

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا



“We have enjoined on human kindness to their parents: in pain did their mother bear them and in pain did she give them birth.”

Al Qur'an 46:15



iv. Death during pregnancy guarantees martyrdom for women



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

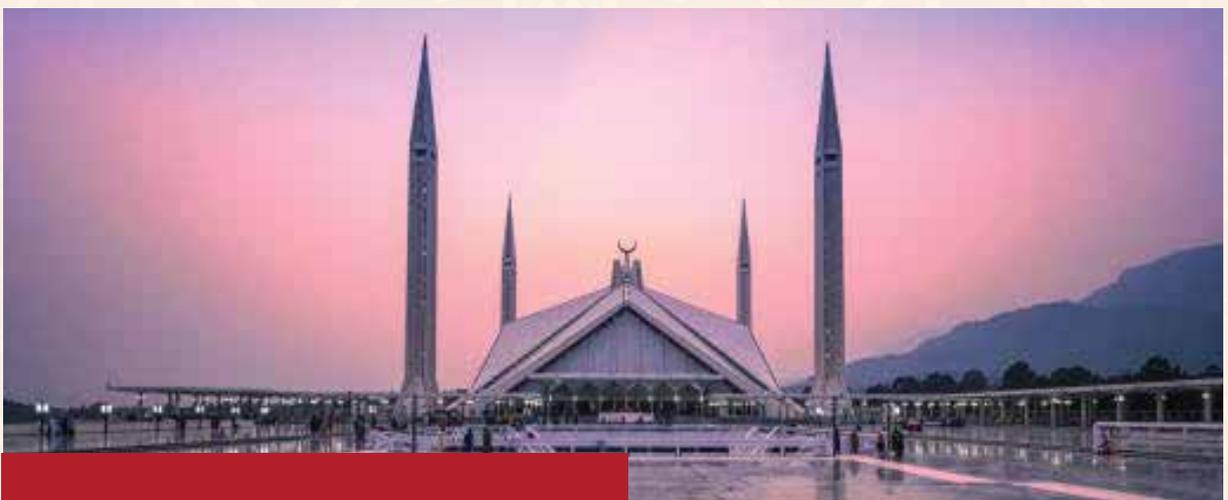
“When a pregnant woman dies in childbirth that is martyrdom.”

Sunan Ibn Majah – Vol 4 Hadith 2803

Martyrdom is the highest degree of death that any person can achieve.

Pregnancy in the Qur’an has uplifted the women and not degraded her.

Just because pregnancy has uplifted the women in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam: Protected or Subjugated?





6 The Only Criterion for Judgment in the sight of Allah is 'Taqwa'

The only criterion for judging a person in the sight of Allah is 'Taqwa' that is God-consciousness or righteousness.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ



“O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other (Not that you may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (one who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and well-acquainted (with all things).”

Al Qur'an 49:13

Sex, race, colour or wealth does not make a person superior to the other. Righteousness is the only criterion for judgement.



7 In Islam Gender is Not the Criterion for Allah to Reward or Punish a Person

- A. The reward and punishment of Allah is in no way connected with the gender.

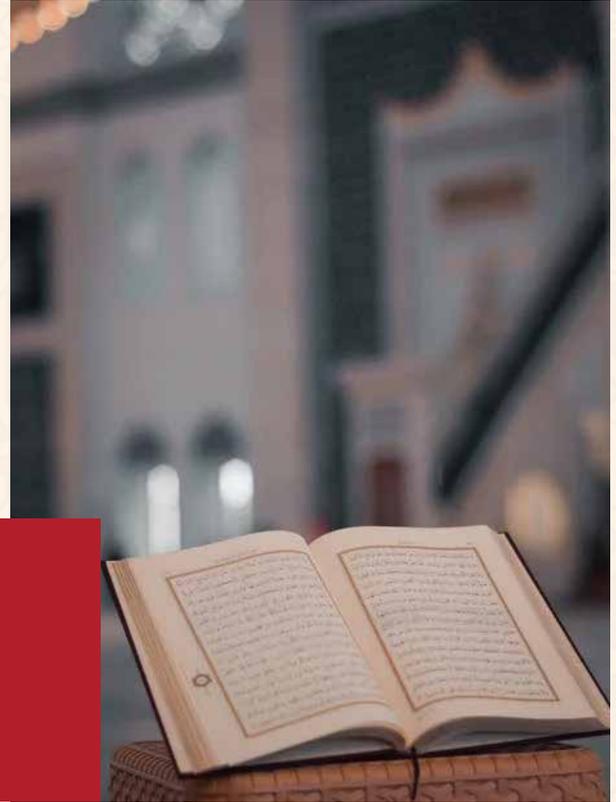
أَنْي لَّا أَضِيعُ عَمَلٍ عَمِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْتِي بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ



“Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you be it male or female. You are members, one of another.”

Al Qur'an 3:195





إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِينَ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ
وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ
وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ
وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ
اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“For Muslim men and women, - for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah’s praise - for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.”

Al Qur’an 33:35





B. The reward and punishment of Allah is in no way connected with the gender.

وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا



“If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.”

Al Qur'an 4:124

C. The spiritual and moral duties for men and women are essentially the same. Both must believe, pray, fast, give Zakaah, perform Hajj etc. In fact, there are certain concessions given to the women. The pregnant women and the menstruating women need not fast and can later compensate for the same. During the menstrual period or post-natal period, she does not have to pray altogether and does not have to compensate for it later.

Just because the spiritual and moral duties of men and women are equal in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam: Protected or Subjugated?

6

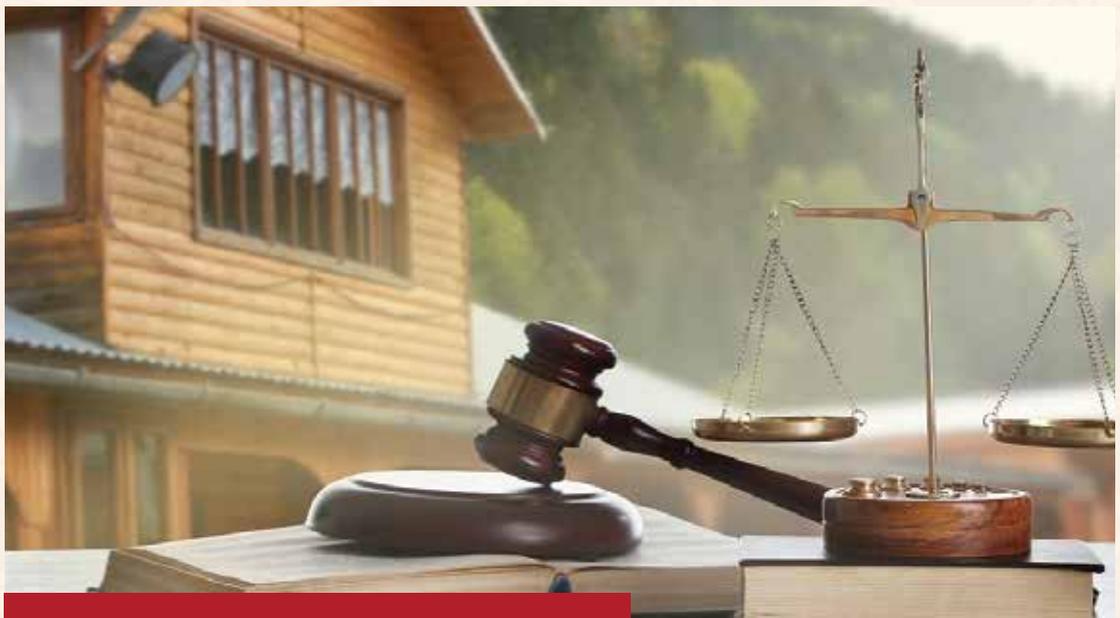


ECONOMIC RIGHTS

1 In Islam, Women can Own or Dispose Property of their Own Free Will

A. More than 1300 years before the west gave economic rights to the women, Islam recognised the rights of an adult woman. Any adult woman has the right to own or to dispose any property in any way she feels fit, whether she is single or married.

B. In 1870s in England, it was the first time that the rights of married women were recognised in the West where she could dispose and own property without the control, approval, or consent of her husband under the “Married Women Property Act.” This Act was later amended in 1882 and 1887.





2

In Islam Women can also Work or take up a Profession if she wishes to as long as it does not Violate the Islamic Shariah

- A.** A woman is considered as a Homemaker in Islam and not a housewife because she is not married to a house.
- B.** She can also work and is entitled to get equal pay if she does the same job as that of a male. There is no text in the Qur'an or the Sunnah which makes it unlawful for the women to work or to do any lawful job or profession. But naturally within the modesty level and within the purview of the Shariah.
- C.** She cannot take up jobs which are based on exhibiting her beauty and body like modelling, dancing, film-acting etc.
- D.** Many jobs which are forbidden for the women are also forbidden for the men for e.g., serving liquors, working in gambling dens, dealing in corruption and dishonest businesses, working in conventional banks which are based on Riba, etc.
- E.** A true Islamic society should have some women as professionals e.g., women physicians (doctors), women nurses, women teachers, etc.



F. The woman has got no financial obligation in Islam. It is the duty of the man in the family to look after the financial aspects of the family. Therefore, under normal conditions a woman need not work and is not required to earn the living of the family but however in certain genuine cases due to financial crisis in the family where both ends do not meet, she has the option to work with the permission of her husband if married. Even in such conditions no one can force her to work and if she takes up a job it is out of her absolute free-will.

G. As mentioned earlier, the job should be within the limits of Islamic Shariah. She can work in industries and small-scale factories which are exclusively designed for the ladies or have separate gents and ladies section.



She can also involve in business and where required to do the transaction with gents, she can do so through a Mahram like husband, son, etc. The best example I can quote is of the wife of the Prophet (pbuh), Khadijah (ra), who was a very successful businesswoman and did the transactions through Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Women can work in their own houses by taking up tailoring, embroidery, pottery, basket weaving, etc.



2 A Woman has No Financial Obligation in Islam

A woman has no financial obligation. Islamic law gives more financial security to the women than to men.

A. A Muslim woman has the option of not working to earn her living. The responsibility for maintaining her falls on the shoulder of the father or brother if she is not married and husband or son if she is married. It is also the duty of the relatives and the state to look after her. She is entitled for full support if she opts not to work.

B. During marriage, she is entitled to a marital gift (Mahr) from the husband which is entirely hers and she does not have to give back to the husband or father and she can do anything with it.

وَأَاتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً



“Give the women (on marriage) the dower as a free gift.”

Al Qur'an 4:4

This marital gift (Mahr) symbolises love, affection, and commitment.



The woman does not have to give any dowry to the man and the man does not have any right to ask or demand dowry from the woman.



The dower given by the man to the woman during marriage is known as Mahr which is the compulsory requirement. But nowadays just a namesake Mahr is given as customary of Rs 786. But at the same time they spend millions on the reception, decoration, etc. In Islam, there is no upper limit or lower limit for Mahr. If a person can spend millions on the reception, surely the Mahr should be much more.

C. Many Muslims have nowadays adopted the Hindu culture and give a small token amount of Mahr and in turn expect the women to get fridge, TV, furniture, car, etc. The more educated and richer the man, the higher dowry he expects e.g. If he is graduate – Rs 200,000; engineer – Rs 500,000; doctor – Rs 1,000,000. In Islam it is just the opposite, where the man gives the dower to the women according to his economic condition. Demanding dowry directly or indirectly is prohibited in Islam.



D. If the woman earns any income from investment or work during her marital life it is entirely hers and she is not entitled to spend a single penny on the household. She can spend it the way she likes.

E. Regardless of the wealth of women or income, the responsibility of maintaining her, lies on the husband, even if he is poorer than her, including food, clothing, lodging, boarding, medication, etc. Everything she needs, she need not spend anything. She has complete financial security.

F. In case of divorce or widowhood there are certain financial guaranties for the women like complete and full support during the waiting period and will continue after that if she is pregnant till childbirth. If she has any children, she is entitled for child support.

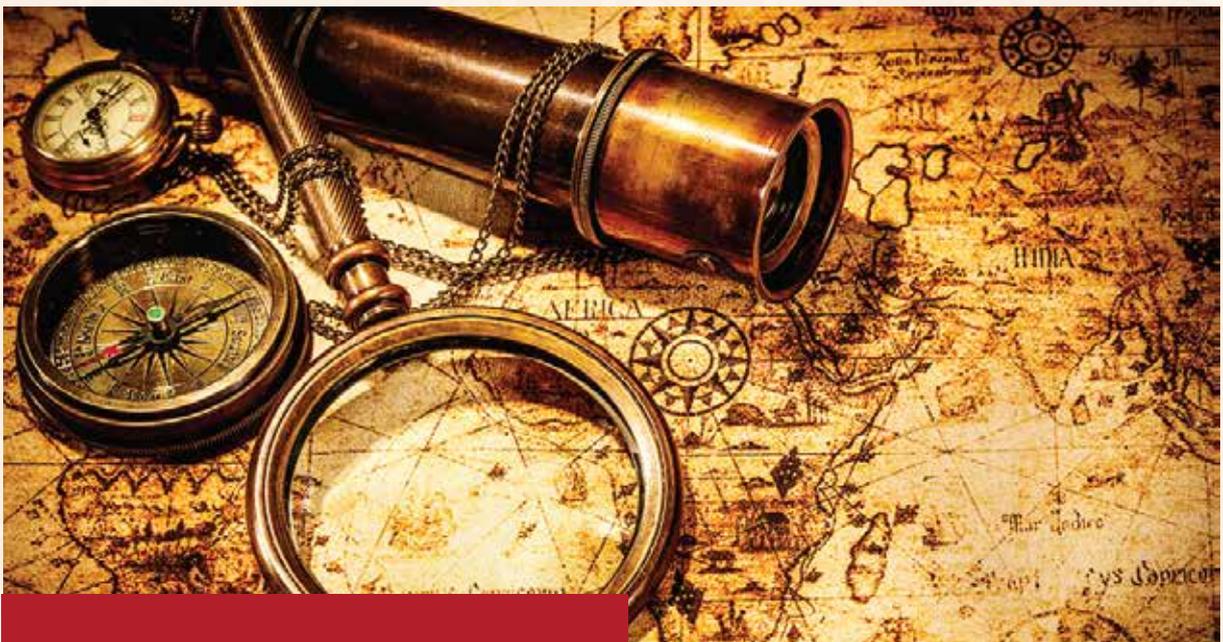
G. Women also inherit property.





The women on most occasions inherit half of that of the men because she does not have any financial responsibility which lies completely on the men and the women need not spend a single penny on herself or the family and can invest the complete amount and thus overall is benefitting more than the men.

H. Islam gave the women economic rights 1,400 years ago that exceeds the rights given by the modern European laws.



Just because the women in Islam were given Economic rights 1,300 years before the western world, will you call such rights in Islam: Protected or Subjugated?



SOCIAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

LESSON 3





7

SOCIAL RIGHTS

Socially, Islam gives women four different status:

1. As a daughter
2. As a wife
3. As a mother
4. As a sister





1 RIGHTS OF A DAUGHTER IN ISLAM

A. Islam prohibits female infanticide

Islam prohibits female infanticide or killing of female children. It is considered as a murder, a heinous crime.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ



“When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned – for what crime she was killed.”

Al Qur'an 81:8-9

Islam not only prohibits female infanticide, but also forbids all types of infanticide irrespective of whether the child is male or female.



قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ إِمْلَقَ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ



“Kill not your children on a plea of want: We provide sustenance for you and for them – come not near to shameful deeds, whether open or secret. Take not life which Allah has made sacred.”

Al Qur'an 6:151

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ
نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطَاً كَبِيرًا



“Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin.”

Al Qur'an 17:31

In pre-Qur'anic Arabia the killing of female infants was very common and very often, the moment a female was born, she was buried alive. Alhamdulillah, after the spread of Islam in Arabia, this evil practice has been discontinued, but unfortunately it is still prevalent in India.



B. More than a million foetus are aborted in India every year

According to a BBC documentary film shown in the programme 'Assignment' titled "Let Her Die", the statistics of female infanticide was given by Emily Buchanan. It had to be a Britisher who came all the way from Britain to give us the statistics and make a documentary film in a country which has the maximum rate of female infanticide in the world.



Everyday more than 3000 fetuses are being aborted in India on being identified that they are female. If you multiply this figure with the numbers of days in a year i.e. 365 you get a total of more than one million female fetuses are aborted every year. It is practised maximum in the states of Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. There are big billboards and advertisements saying "Invest Rs 500 and save Rs 500,000" signifying that you do tests like Amniocentesis or Ultra-sonography which costs about Rs 500 and on identifying that the baby that the mother is carrying is a girl you can always abort her and thus save Rs 500,000 which is usually spent in upbringing a girl and giving dowry in her marriage.

According to the Tamil Nadu Government Hospital report, out of every 10 female children born, 4 are put to death.



C. Female infanticide is the reason why female population is lesser than male population in India

Female infanticide is present in our country since centuries, no wonder the female population of India is less than the male population.

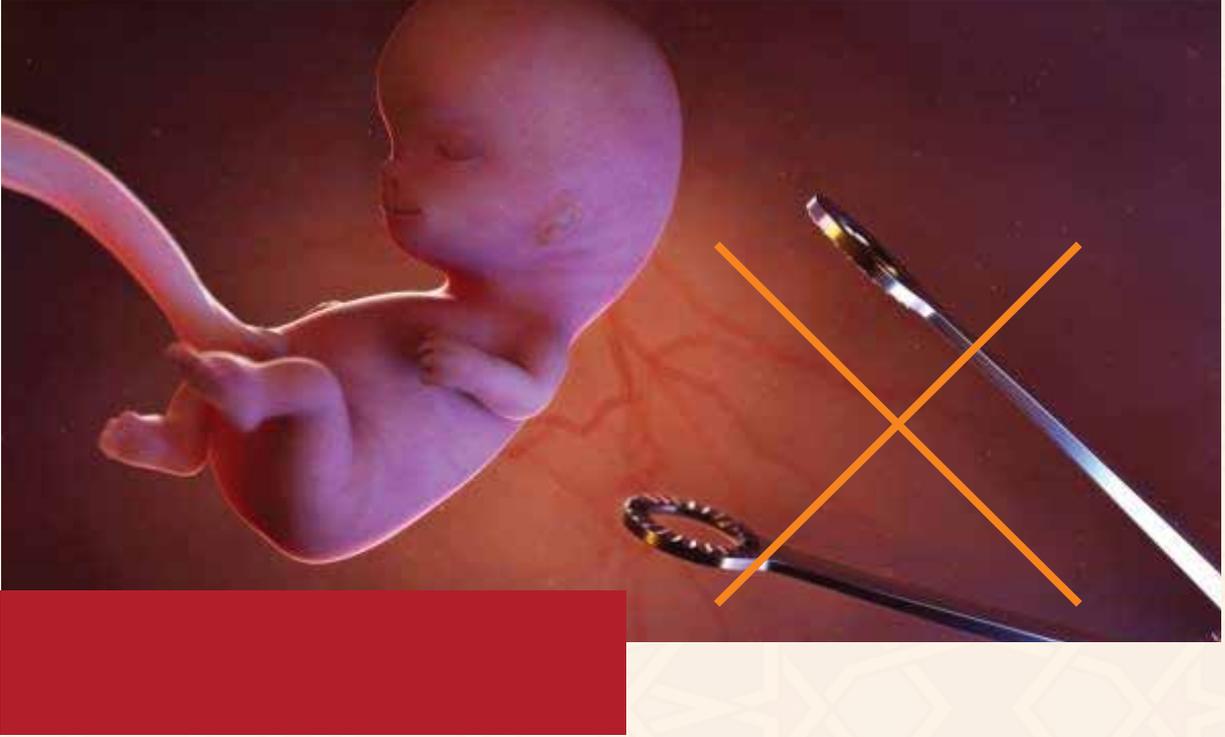
According to the 1901 census for every 1000 male, there were 972 females.

According to the 1981 census for every 1000 males in India, there were 934 females.

According to the 1991 census for every 1000 males, there are 927 females in India.

According to the 2021 census for every 1000 males, there are 948 females in India.

Previously there was only female infanticide present in our country, but nowadays after the advancement of science and medicines, another crime of aborting female foetuses has been added. No wonder, in the early census of 1901 the rate of female in the urban areas of Bihar and Goa showed 1054 and 1091 females respectively for every 1000 males and according to 1991 census it has drastically fallen off to 911 & 967 respectively. Thus the advancement of medicine has increased the rate of this evil practice.



D. Islam even rebukes expressing regret on the birth of a female

Islam not only prohibits female infanticide but also rebukes the thought of becoming sad on the news of birth of a female.

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

“When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief!”



With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on?.”

Al Qur'an 16:58-59



E. The girl in Islam is entitled for support and good upbringing and good treatment

i. The reward for upbringing daughters in Islam



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

“Whosoever supports two daughters until they mature, he and I will come on the day of judgement as this (and he pointed out with the two fingers held together).”

Musnad Ahmad – Vol 4 Hadith 2104

ii. Kind treatment to daughters leads to Jannah



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

“There is no man whose two daughters reach the age of puberty and he treats them kindly for the time they are together, but they will gain him admittance to Paradise.”

Sunan Ibn Maajah – Vol 5 Hadith 3670



F. In Islam there should be no partiality in upbringing of sons and daughters

Muhammad (pbuh) always spoke about justice and kindness towards the children whether it be a daughter or a son.

The Prophet (pbuh) not only preached about equal justice to the son and daughter but also practised it himself.

G. In Islam male and female both should get educated

In Islam whether male or female both should be educated. The first word revealed of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was 'Iqra' meaning 'to read', 'to recite' or 'proclaim'. In short, the first guidance given by Allah (swt) to the whole of mankind was the stress on education.



An ideal Islamic society requires that some women should take up profession like doctors, nurses, teachers, etc. The woman plays an important role in bringing up her children and only if she is educated can she impart right education to her children. Who can be a better teacher than the mother?



2

RIGHTS OF A WIFE IN ISLAM

A. Marriage in Islam and other religions

Let's analyse the status of a wife in different religions and what they have to say about marriage.

i. According to Buddhism, 'Nirvana'; i.e. salvation can only be obtained if you abstain from sex and had a life of celibacy.



ii. In Christianity according to the Bible:



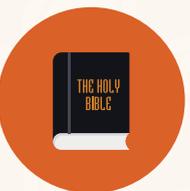
“It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

The Bible – I Corinthians 7:1



“I say therefore to the unmarried and widow it is good for them if they abide even as I (unmarried). But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”

The Bible – I Corinthians 7:8-9



“He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”

The Bible – I Corinthians 7:32-33



“He that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.”

The Bible – I Corinthians 7:38

In short, Christianity discourages marriage.



iii. Islam does not consider ‘women as an instrument of the devil’ but rather the Qur’an calls her ‘Mohsina’ – a fortress against Satan, because a good woman by marrying a man helps him keep a straight path in life.





a. Marriage prevents immodesty



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

“Oh! You young men whoever is able to marry should marry for this will help him lower his gaze and guard his modesty.”

Sahih Al Bukhari – Vol 7 Hadith 5066

iv. Marriage completes half of religion



The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“Whenever Allah bestows anyone with a righteous wife, has indeed given him an assist with half of his religion; so let him maintain Taqwa of Allah as regards the other half.”

Mustadarak Al Hakim – Hadith 2681





Once during question-and-answer session somebody asked me does this imply that if I marry twice, I will complete my full religion?

- a. The Prophet considered marriage for a Muslim as half of his religion because it shields him from promiscuity, fornication, homosexuality etc., which add to half the evil in society.**
- b. Secondly, only after you marry do you have an opportunity to become a husband or wife, a father or a mother and thus perform your duties as a husband or wife and father or mother.**

Whether you marry once or twice you are yet fulfilling only half of your Deen.



v. According to Islam, marriage is a blessing and bounty on both man and woman.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً



“And among His Signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts).”

Al Qur'an 30:21

vi. The Qur'an refers to marriage as a 'Misaq' that is a sacred covenant or agreement between husband and wife.

وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا



“And they have taken from you a solemn covenant.”

Al Qur'an 4:21



vii. Islamic law requires the consent of both the parties before marriage.

a. A woman cannot be forced to marry by anyone including her father. Parents can help and advise the daughter for marriage but cannot implore or force.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَجِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا



“O You who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will.”

Al Qur'an 4:19





b. There have been cases where Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had given the choice of continuing or invalidating the marriages as the consent of the daughter was not taken.

Ibn Abbas (ra) reported:



“A girl came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), and she reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) gave her the choice between accepting the marriage or invalidating it.”

Musnad Ahmad – Hadith 2469

In another version, the girl said:



“Actually I accept this marriage, but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right (to force a husband on them).”

Sunan Ibn Maajah – Hadith 1873



Narrated Khansa bint Khidam Al Ansariya that her father gave her in marriage when she was a matron, and she disliked that marriage. So she went to Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and he declared that marriage invalid.

Sahih Al Bukhari – Vol 7 Hadith 5138



viii. When a woman in Islam is married to a man it is not that she is married to a master, or that she should be treated like a slave, but she is married to her equal and should be treated like a partner with love and dignity.



The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“The most perfect believers are those that are best in character and behaviour and those that are best to their family i.e., wife.”

Musnad Ahmad – Hadith 7396



The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character among them. And the best of you are those who are best to your women.”

Sunan At Tirmidhi – Hadith 1162





ix. In Islam the rights of husband and wife are equal in all aspects except in the aspect of leadership in the family.

a. Men have a degree of higher responsibility

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ



“And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable, but men have a degree (of advantage) over them.”

Al Qur'an 2:228

Here a degree higher does not mean in superiority but refers to responsibility.

b. Men are given more strength than the women

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ
اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ



“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given one more (strength) than the other because they support them from their means.”

Al Qur'an 4:34



c. The Arabic word used is 'Qawwam' which is many a time mistaken for superiority but is actually derived from 'Iqamah' meaning 'to stand up for' in the same fashion as Iqamah is given before prayers that is 'standing up for prayers.'

d. According to the commentary of Al Tabari the word 'Qawwam' means degree higher in responsibility and service and not superiority. Thus, it is the duty of the man to see that he provides security and maintenance to the woman, and this should be carried out with mutual consent.

Therefore, men are not one degree higher in superiority or dictatorship but one degree higher in standing up for responsibility. This responsibility should be carried out by mutual consent of both husband and wife.





x. Husband and wife are like garments to each other.

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ



“The wives are your garments, and you are their garments.”

Al Qur'an 2:187

A garment is both for show and for concealment. The husband and wife are meant to cover each other's defects and faults and beautify each other's life. In other words, they have a relationship of hand and glove.

xi. Even if there is lack of affection or liking between husband and wife this is not a justification to be unjust and uncompassionate.

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُنَّ شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا



“Live with them (wives) on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.”

Al Qur'an 4:19



B. Divorce in Islam and other religions

- i. According to the Hindu law the husband is considered to be the Lord and Master of his wife and the wife is his slave and servant. No matter how cruel, unjust, and inhuman the husband may be for the wife, he is her saviour, and her place is his feet. There is nothing like divorce in Hinduism. The wife has to happily bear all the torture and brutality of the husband.

Suppose by mistake my sister gets married to a cruel man who daily tortures my sister for no fault of hers; wouldn't I want to save my sister from her sufferings? Even after explaining to my brother-in-law, he does not improve, the only solution is divorce. How can anyone with scruples be a silent spectator to the brutality that is inflicted on his sister or daughter?





ii. In Christianity divorce is forbidden except if the wife commits fornication.



“That whosoever shall put away his wife (i.e. give divorce), saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery and whosoever shall marry her (i.e. divorcee) committeth adultery.”

The Bible – Matthew 5:32

iii. One of the greatest misconceptions that people have is regarding divorce in Islam. There is a system of divorce in Islam which is to be applied only in extreme cases where the problem between the husband and wife is too grave to be solved and the continuation of married life would be unproductive. Among the permissible things in Islam, the most hated in the sight of Allah is divorce.

The method of divorce is clearly spelt out in the Qur'an in Surah Al Baqarah, Chapter 2: verses 227 to 242.

iv. There is a great misconception and myth about divorce in Islam, not only among the non-Muslims but also amongst the Muslims that it is the exclusive right of the man to give divorce.



There are various ways to dissolve a marriage in Islam:

- a. It could be the unilateral will of the husband**
- b. It could be by mutual consent of both husband and wife**
- c. Khula is when a wife requests the husband to give divorce even if the husband is fulfilling all his duties and responsibilities because she does not want to continue the marriage.**

An incident of Khula had taken place during the time of Prophet (pbuh) where he commanded the husband to give divorce.

- d. It could be the unilateral will of the wife (if the marriage contract specifies)**
- e. Faskh Aqdun Nikaah – By the judgement of a just Muslim judge (Qadhi) after a reasonable complain by the wife against the husband like ill treatment, lack of support etc. or any legitimate reason.**





3 RIGHTS OF A MOTHER IN ISLAM

A. The obedience and respect and love to parents is next to the worship of Allah. It is mentioned in several places in the Qur'an that you must be kind to parents.

i. Be good to parents

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا



“Be good to your parents.”

Al Qur'an 6:151





ii. Allah has enjoined upon humans to be kind to their parents especially the mother

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلِيًّا
وَهُنَّ وَفِصْلُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ



“We have enjoined on the human being kindness to their parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning.”

Al Qur'an 31:14

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ
أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا



“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months.”

Al Qur'an 46:15

In the last two quotations the mother is specially mentioned after the parents.



iii. Respect the mother that gave you birth

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ



“Reverance Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverance) the wombs (that bore you).”

Al Qur'an 4:1

iv. When your parents reach old-age do not say a word of contempt nor repel them



وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ
الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ
لَهُمَا آفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرَهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا
قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ
الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ
أَرْحَمُهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا



“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour.”

“And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: “My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.”

Al Qur'an 17:23-24

B. According to several Hadiths serving one's mother leads to Paradise.



Mu'awiyah bin Jahimah came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: “O Messenger of Allah! I want to go out and fight (in Jihaad) and I have come to ask your advice.” He said: “Do you have mother?” He said: “Yes.” He said: “Then stay with her, for Paradise is beneath her feet.”

Sunan An Nasa'i – Hadith 3104

It does not mean literally for e.g., if a mother walks on the road and steps on filth and dirt, it becomes Paradise; it means if you respect your mother, obey her, love her, take good care of her, you will In Sha Allah enter Paradise.



C. The mother in Islam gets three times more love and kind treatment than the father.



Narrated Abu Hurairah (ra):

A man came to Allah's Messenger (pbuh) and said, "O Allah's Messenger (pbuh)! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Your mother." The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man further said, "Who is next?" The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is next?" The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Your father."

Sahih Al Bukhari – Vol 8 Hadith 5971



That means 75% of love and companionship goes to the mother and 25% to the father; that too the better 3/4th goes to the mother and the remaining 1/4th to the father. The gold medal goes to the mother, the silver medal goes to the mother, the bronze medal goes to the mother and the father gets the consolation prize.



4

RIGHTS OF A SISTER IN ISLAM

**A. Men and women are
'Auliya' of one another**

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ



“The believing men and believing women are protectors one of another.”

Al Qur'an 9:71

Here the Arabic word used is 'Auliya' which does not mean friend but supporters or helpers or protectors that means all believing men and women are brothers and sisters unless otherwise.

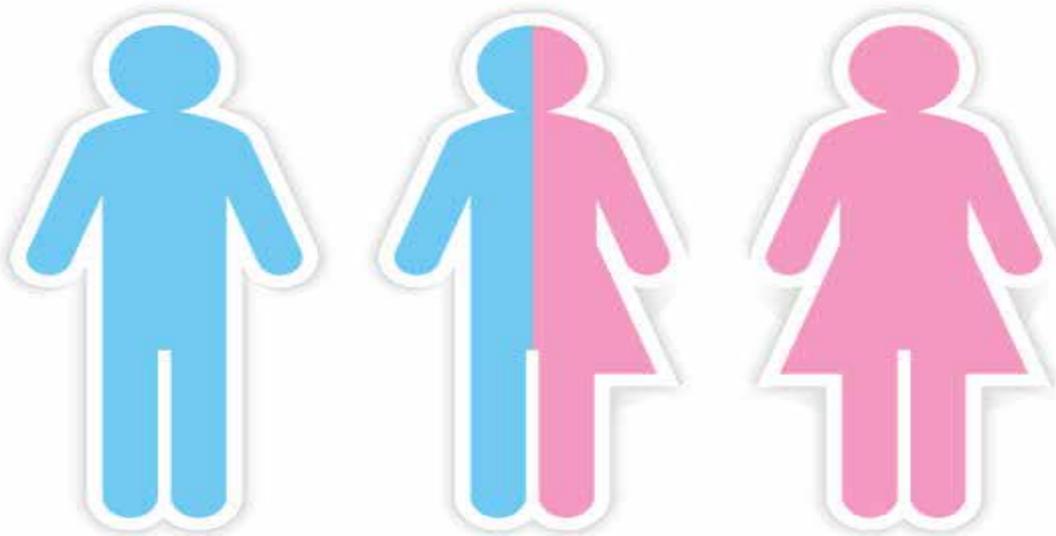


B. Women are 'Shaqaa'iq' of men



The Prophet said:
"Women are 'Shaqaa'iq' of men."
Musnad Ahmad – Hadith 25663

'Shaqaa'iq' has two meanings, sisters or halves. Therefore, women are sisters of men or women are halves of men; that is society is made of two halves, one half women and the other half men.





EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM



8



EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

1. The first guidance given to the humankind in the Qur'an was 'Iqra', to read, recite, to proclaim.

أَقْرَأْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ
أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ



Read! (or Recite! or Proclaim!) In the name of your Lord and Cherisher who created.

Created the human out of a congealed clot of blood (a leech like substance).

Read and your Lord is Most Bountiful.

He who taught (the use of) the Pen;

Taught man that which he knew not.”

Al Qur'an 96:1-5

The first instruction in the Qur'an was not to pray or fast or to give Zakaah but was to read. This instruction was to both male and female. Islam gives a great deal of importance to education.



2. Seeking knowledge is obligatory in Islam.



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (whether male or female).”

Sunan Ibn Maajah – Vol 1 Hadith 224

3. The Prophet (pbuh) made it a point of duty to every father and mother to make sure that their daughters were not ignorant of the teachings of Islam.

4. After marriage a woman has her right to religious education from her husband that he either teaches her or allow her to go elsewhere to acquire it. If this matter is taken before a judge, he must compel the husband to fulfil her demands in the same way that he would in worldly matters.





5. The women at the time of the Prophet (pbuh) had become so keen to acquire more knowledge that they came to the Prophet (pbuh) with the following proposal:



“You are always surrounded by men so appoint a day for us. The Prophet (pbuh) promised to do so and went to them and taught them.”

Sahih Al Bukhaari – Vol 1 Hadith 101

He also sent representatives with messages to enlighten the Muslim women.

The women, who only a few years before the revelation of the Qur’an, were looked down upon as mere chattels unfit for education became among the most learned figures of their time and started offering guidance to others in educational matters.

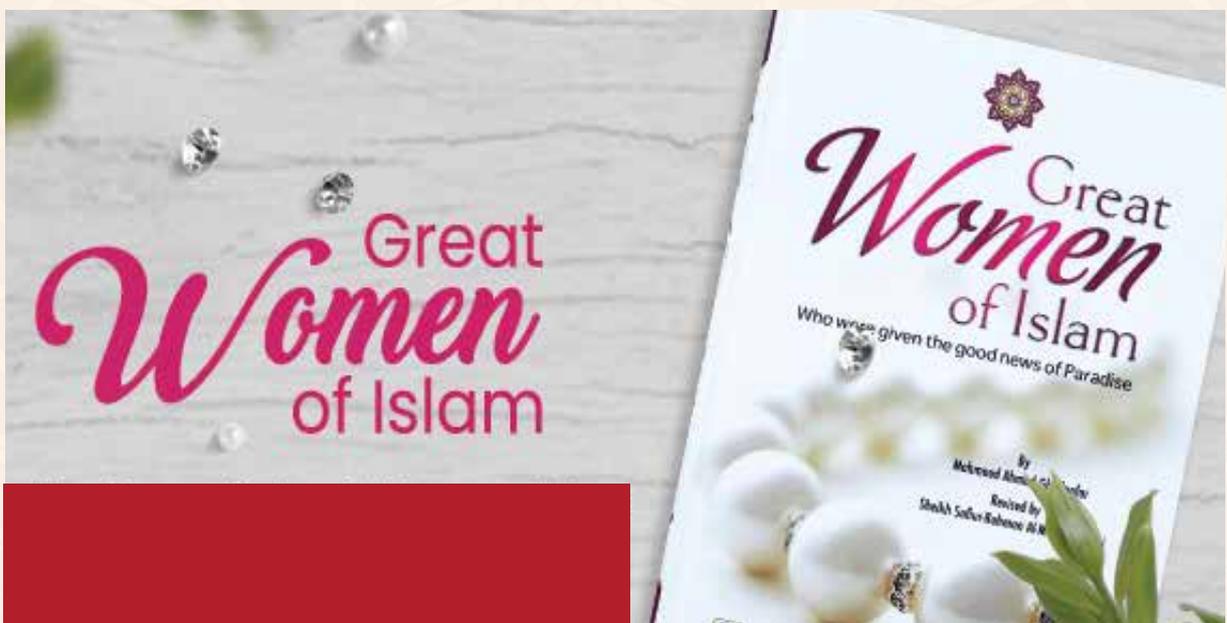




6. Several examples of great Muslim women scholars can be given:

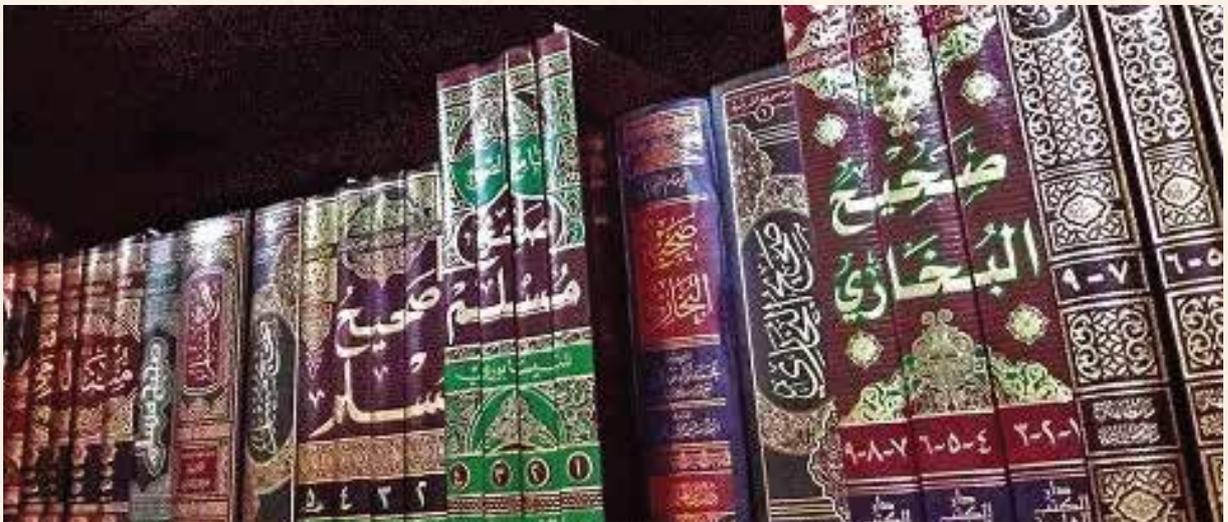
A. 'Aishah bint Abu Bakr (ra)

- i. The first and foremost example is that of 'Aishah (ra) the wife of the Prophet (pbuh), who lived long after her husband's death and provided great guidance to the first Muslim community, even to the renowned Sahaabah and the Khulafaa Ar Rashidoon (may Allah be pleased with them). Her pupil, 'Urwah ibn Zubayr testifies: "I did not see a greater scholar than 'Aishah (ra) in the learning of the Qur'an, obligatory duties, lawful and unlawful matters, poetry and literature, Arab history and genealogy."





- ii. She had profound knowledge of medicine. Whenever the foreign delegations came to the Prophet (pbuh) and discussed various remedies for illness, she used to remember them. She was so well versed in mathematics that important Sahaabah (ra) used to consult her on the problems concerning 'Mirath' (inheritance) and the calculation of the shares.
- iii. 'Aaishah (ra) even guided Sahaabah (ra) who sought her advice on different matters. They included 'Umar bin Al Khattab, Khalid bin Waleed and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them). She was among the great Huffaz (memoriser) of Ahadith. In all, 2210 Ahadith are narrated on her authority alone.



- iv. Abu Musa Al Ash'ari (ra), himself a famous jurist and learned scholar says, "Whenever we, companions of the Prophet (pbuh), encountered any difficulty in the matter of any Hadith we referred it to 'Aaishah and found that she had definite knowledge about it."
- v. Great scholars learnt from her and there were a large number of others. In short she was a scholar of the scholars.



B. Safiyyah bint Huayy (ra)

Safiyyah (ra), the wife of the Prophet, was also very learned in Fiqh. Imam an Nawawi says, “She was the most intellectual among learned women.”

C. Umm Salamah (ra) – wife of the Prophet (pbuh)

She was also a great scholar. Ibn Hajar has given the names of at least 32 scholars who learnt Ahadith from her.

D. Fatimah bint Qays (ra)

Fatimah bint Qays (ra) was also a scholarly lady in the early days of prophethood. Her learning was so deep that she discussed a juristic point with ‘Umar (ra) and ‘Aaishah (ra) for a long time and they also could not change or challenge her views. Imam An Nawawi says, “She was one of those who migrated in the early days and possessed great intellect and excellence.”

E. Umm Sulaim – mother of Anas (ra)

Umm Sulaim (ra), the mother of the famous Sahaabi Anas (ra), was herself a highly respected Sahaabiyah. Ibn Hajar praises her, saying, “Her laudable qualities are too many to mention, and she was very famous.” Imam An Nawawi calls her: “An excellent scholar among the Sahaabiyah.”



F. Sayyida Nafisa – granddaughter of Hasan (ra)

She was a great scholar. A large number of pupils came to her from different places to learn from her. Imam Shafi'i founder of the Shafi'i school of Islamic law, was one of her illustrious pupils.

G. Umm Ad Darda – wife of Abu Ad Darda (ra)

Umm Ad Darda (ra), the wife of the famous Sahaabi Abu Ad Darda (ra) was so learned in the science of Hadith that Imam Al Bukhari, referred to her as an authority in his Sahih Al Bukhari.





H. Aisha bint Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas

She was the daughter of a great Sahaabi, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (ra). She was very learned in Islamic sciences, to such an extent that Imam Malik, the famous jurist and scholar of Hadith was her pupil.

I. Umrah bint Abdur Rahman

One of the illustrious pupils of 'Aaishah was Umrah bint Abdur Rahman who was described by Ahmad ibn Hambal in the following words, "An eminent theologian and a great scholar. She was the most learned of all pupils in the Ahadith of 'Aaishah (ra)."

7. The list of learned women of the early days of prophethood shows that women were not kept illiterate and ignorant, but rather were fully encouraged to participate in the process of learning and scholarship. They also knew their rights and responsibilities very well. There were instances to show that some women even challenged great scholars of their times if they said something which was against the rights granted to women by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

At a time when women were illtreated, buried alive after they were born at that time Islam had women scholars in the field of medicine, science and religion. Because Islam tells that every woman should be educated, will you call such women's rights in Islam: Protected or Subjugated?



LEGAL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM & CONCLUSION



9



LEGAL RIGHTS

Men and women are treated equally in Islamic law.

1. The Shariah protects the life and safety of both men and women.



A. If any man murders a woman, the ‘Hadd’ punishment or Qisas will be applied to him and he will be killed. Likewise, a woman murderer will also be put to death. This law of equality is mentioned in the Qur’an in Surah Al Baqarah – chapter 2, verses 178 & 179.

i. Once a Jew killed a girl by crushing her head in the time of the Prophet (pbuh). The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) ordered him to be killed in the same way.

ii. The second Khalifah of Islam, ‘Umar (ra) put to death several persons who were accomplices to the murder of a woman.



2. In the matter of Qisas there is no difference between a man and a woman. In the matter of injuries to a woman's eyes, ears or any other kinds of wounds the Qisas operates in the same way as in case of man. If a man kills a woman, he is to be killed. Similarly, if a woman forgives the murderer by accepting 'Diyah' nobody is entitled to reject her decision. If the guardians of the murdered person differ in accepting Diyah and forgiving him, the other relatives are prevented from taking his life. It is immaterial if the person forgiving happens to be a man or a woman.

3. In Islam the punishment for committing a theft is the same; that is cutting off the hands for both man and woman.

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ



“As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hand a punishment by way of example from Allah for their crime.”

Al Qur'an 5:38

4. In Islam the punishment for fornication whether it be man or woman is the same.



“The woman and man guilty of fornication flog each of them with hundred strikes.”

Al Qur'an 24:2



5. In Islamic law a woman is accepted as a witness. This right was given to the woman 1400 years ago at a time when most of the societies rejected the witness of a woman. Even till as late as 1980's Jewish Rabbi were thinking and considering whether to allow women as witnesses.

6. Islam protects the chastity of women.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ



And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witness (to support the allegation), – flog them with eighty strikes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors.”

Al Qur'an 24:4





A. Islam takes utmost care as regards the chastity and modesty of a woman. For a minor crime, two witnesses are sufficient, but if anyone accuses a woman as regard her chastity, he should produce at least four witnesses to support the allegation. In most of the societies, we find men abusing women in public and calling them with obscene names such as prostitutes.



B. In an Islamic law, if the person accuses a woman and cannot produce four witnesses or after he produces the 4 witnesses, if any of them falters, all of them including the person who has produced the false charge will receive 80 lashes each.



7. In the western society a woman adopts her husband's name after she marries. In Islam a woman after she marries, has an option of either adopting her husband's name or continuing with her maiden name and you can find several examples in Muslim countries where the woman continues with her maiden name.

**1st
name**





10

POLITICAL RIGHTS

X



1. Both men and women are allowed and should participate in the public affairs that is in the interest of the society.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ



“The believing men and women are protectors of one another.”

Al Qur'an 9:71

They are protectors and supporters to each other, not only in social affairs but also in public affairs.



2. Women participated in choosing the head of the state.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعَنَّكَ



“O Prophet! When believing women come to take the oath of fealty to thee.”

Al Qur'an 60:12

The Arabic word is ‘Baa’iah’ which is not equivalent to modern election but is much more than that.

The Prophet (pbuh) was not only the Messenger of Allah but also the head of state and the women confirmed their allegiance to him which is equivalent to choosing him as the head of state.

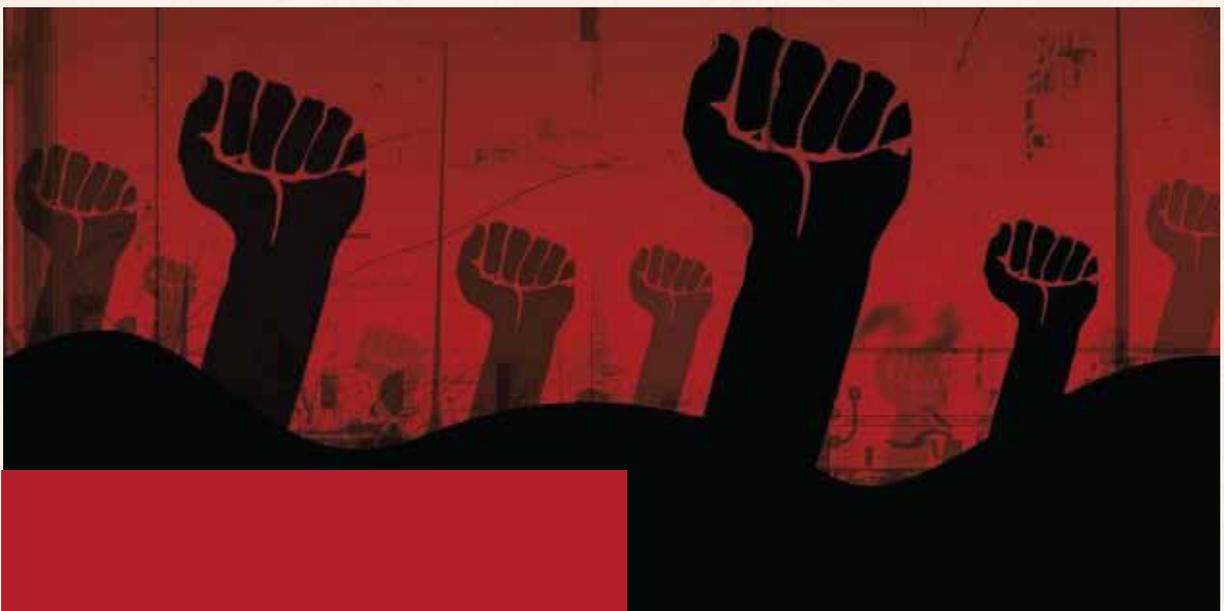




3. Women participated in law-making.

Once Umar (ra) was discussing about the regulation of Mahr in the mosque. They were considering putting restriction on the Mahr as some people discouraged young Muslim men from getting married. A lady from the backseat of the mosque objected with giving Qur'anic reference and said no one has the right to introduce this when Allah has not put restrictions on the Mahr; then who are you to put restrictions to it. Umar (ra) humbly replied that the woman is right and Umar is wrong.*

In political terms, the woman's objection will be called objection to the breaking of the law of the constitution as Qur'an is the constitution for the Muslims.



***NB: Ibn Kathir mentions that this narration is good and strong.**



4. Muslim women took part in battlefields. There is a whole chapter in Sahih Al Bukhari regarding participation of women in battlefield.

A. Many Muslim women helped in the battlefield by providing water and giving first aid to the soldiers.

B. If the need arises women may participate in the battlefield.

i. During the battle of Uhud few people protected the Prophet (pbuh) from the enemies and one of them was a woman named Nusaibah bint Ka'ab (ra). While defending the Prophet (pbuh) she received several injuries as a result of this and was praised by the Prophet (pbuh) for her heroic deeds.

ii. Women should maintain their modesty even in the battlefield.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ



“Men are the protectors of the women.”

Al Qur'an 4:34

Under normal circumstances, the women should not go to the battlefield. It is the duty of the man. Only when required, under necessity are women allowed to go to the battlefield; if not they shouldn't. Otherwise, you'll have the same position as that in the USA.



In USA the women were allowed to join the battlefield since 1901 but they were not allowed to take active part – they only played the part of a nurse. Later on, after the ‘Feminist Movement’ had started in 1973, the ‘Feminist movement’ demanded – “Why aren’t women allowed to take active part in the battlefield?” So, the American government allowed it. After 1976 women were allowed to take active part in the battlefield.

According to a report of the Defense Department of America, which was released on the 23rd of April 1993, it said that – “90 people were sexually assaulted in a convention, out of which 83 were women and 117 officers were charged with disciplinary action.”





X **In one single instance, 83 women were sexually assaulted!
And what was the crime of those 117 officers?**

They made the women run while they snatched their clothes. They were made to parade nude without even covering the genital parts! They were made to have sex in public!

Is this what you call ‘Women’s rights’?

If this is what ‘Women’s rights’ is, then they better keep their rights to themselves. We do not want our sisters, our daughters, and our mothers to be sexually assaulted.

Later after this incident was reported, there was an uproar in the parliament and then the American President, Bill Clinton himself had to issue a public apology and he said that “Necessary action will be taken.”

We are well aware that when politicians say, “Necessary action will be taken”, it indicates that most likely the action will not be taken.

Thus, Islam allows women to take part in the battlefield only when required. But there too they should maintain their Islamic Hijab and the Islamic ethics and modesty.



11

CONCLUSION

X

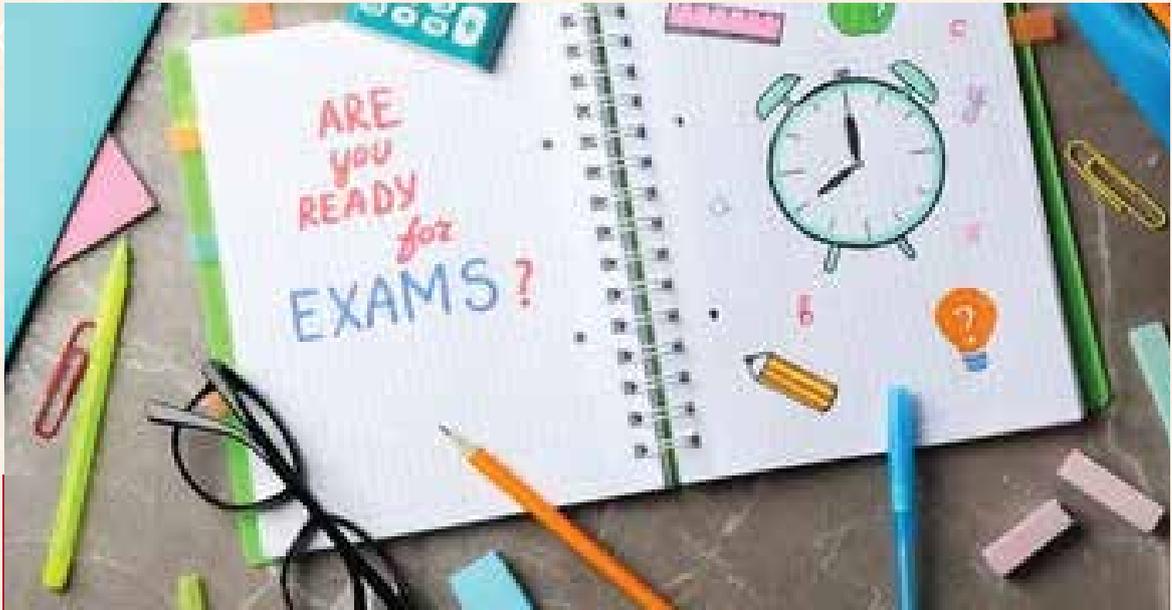
1. Men and women in Islam are overall equal but not identical

As I mentioned earlier that equality does not mean identically. The woman in Islam are overall equal but not identical in each and every aspect.

In an examination, two students 'A' and 'B' both obtain the first rank by scoring 80% out of 100. The question paper contained 10 questions each carrying 10 marks.

In question no. 1 student 'A' obtained 9/10 and student 'B' obtained 7/10. Student 'A' is higher than student 'B' in question no. 1.





In question no. 2, student 'A' scores 7/10 and student 'B' scores 9/10.

Therefore, in question no. 2, student 'B' is higher than student 'A'.
In question no. 3 to 10, both 'A' and 'B' obtained 8/10 i.e, both are equal.

When you add up the grand total of all the ten questions, both obtained 80/100. Therefore, both the students 'A' and 'B' are overall equal. In some questions 'A' is higher than 'B' and in some 'B' is higher than 'A'. While in others both are equal.

In the same way, men and women overall are equal. In many aspects they're identical but not in all.



2. The roles of men and women in Islam are distributed based upon their abilities

Men and women are biologically, physically, and psychologically different. Depending upon the psychological nature, physical nature and the biological nature, their roles can differ. As regards, the majority of the things both can do. Certain things can only be done by a woman but not by a man. Certain other things can only be done by a man but not by a woman. Depending upon their abilities the roles of men and women are distributed. But overall, they're equal.

For example, if a robber enters my house, I'll not tell my wife, women and men are equal, so you go and fight. I'll not tell my daughter, go and fight.





Men and women are equal in Islam, but Allah (swt) says in the Quran;

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّموُنَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ
اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ



“The men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means.”

Al Qur'an 4:34

The men are the protectors of the women because Allah has given them more physical strength.

So here, in physical strength, man is one degree higher than the woman.

When it comes to motherhood:



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

“A man came to Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and said, “O Allah’s Messenger (pbuh)! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?” The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Your mother.” The man said. “Who is next?” The Prophet said, “Your mother.” The man further said, “Who is next?” The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Your mother.” The man asked for the fourth time, “Who is next?” The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Your father.”

Sahih Al Bukhari – Vol 8 Hadith 5971



That means 75% of the love and companionship goes to the mother and 25% goes to the father. That means the mother gets the gold medal; she gets the silver medal as well as the bronze medal, whereas the father must be satisfied with a consolation prize.

Here the women have one degree higher than the men.



Thus, Islam believes in equality, not identicality. Men and women are overall equal in Islam.



3. Western societies led the Muslims to deviate from Qur'an and Sunnah with respect to Women's rights

Many of the Muslim societies did not give the women their rights and they deviated away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the western society is largely responsible for this. It is because of the western societies, many Muslim societies have become overprotective and overcautious with regards to the women and have gone to one extreme and deviated away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. On the other extreme, some of the Muslim societies in the name of advancement blindly followed the Western culture and are led astray.

If one analyses the women's rights in Islam according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, one will have to agree that they are protected and not subjugated.

