

Lesson 1: Woman's Value

The Woman in the Eyes of the Societies

There are a lot of ideas and theories which are wide spread among the people and which rank the woman in a level less than that of the man. Also, the people incline to believe that such ideas are demonstrated by the divine doctrine; as a result, the Muslim person does not dare to face them, thus conceiving that to do so is an opposition to the doctrine. Yet, the truth is absolutely not so. Among these theories are the following.

1- Is the Woman a Secondary Creature?

It is widespread among some Muslims that Hawwaa [Eve] (God's peace bestowed upon her) was created from one of Adam's (God's peace bestowed upon him) ribs, and it is referred to some narratives to serve as testimonies for this theory. Such theory as regards the creation of Hawwaa may lead the human being to think that Hawwaa– and consequently all the women– is a secondary creature which was created from the rib of the man; moreover, some people relate that it is the short and left rib. This is absolutely an incorrect idea.

We do not need to discuss the signification of Hawwaa's being created from Adam's (God's peace bestowed upon him) rib. It is related to us that she was created from the same clay from which Adam (God's peace bestowed upon him) was created and definitely not from his rib.

It is related by Ibn Abi Al-Miqdad that his father related, "I asked Abu Ja'far [Imam Al-Baqir] (God's peace bestowed upon him), 'From what did God create Hawwaa?' He (God's peace bestowed upon him) in turn asked me, 'What do the people say?' I answered, 'They say that God created her from one of Adam's ribs.' He (God's peace bestowed upon him) said, "They are untrue. Could not He create her from anything else rather than his rib?" I asked him, 'O Son of God's prophet, I sacrifice my soul for your sake! From what did God create her?' He (God's peace bestowed upon him) answered, "My father told me in ascription to his fathers (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon them), 'God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, 'The Most High and Blessed God took

a grip of clay, mixed it by His Right – and both His Hands are Right, and created Adam from it. And from the leftover of the clay, The Most High God created Hawwaa. [1](#)

The term “leftover of clay” is not meant to make little of this clay, for God is All Wise which means that His Work is not resulted in leftovers. This term indicates two points.

First, it refers to the chronological order i.e. God created Adam (God’s peace bestowed upon him) at first from a part of the clay and then created Hawwaa (God’s peace bestowed upon her) from what remained from that clay after He had created Adam.

Second, it shows that she was created from the same clay which Adam was created from i.e. it deletes the idea which states that there is another clay for women different from that of men. In consistent with this is the saying of The Most High God in The Noble Qur’an:

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.” (The Qur’an, Ar-Rum, 30:21)

2- The First Fault and Sin

The adopters of other religions rather than Islam, and some Muslims as well, believe that the woman is responsible for the first fault which was done by the human being and that she was the reason of Adam’s (God’s peace bestowed upon him) committing of the fault too because she persuaded him of eating from the tree which The Most High God forbade them to eat from.

It is ascribed to Ibn Abbas that he said, “When Adam ate from the tree which he was forbidden to eat from, The Most Glorious and Reverent God asked him, ‘What made you disobey me?’ Adam answered The Most High God, ‘O God, Hawwaa persuaded me to.’ Then, God said, ‘I will punish her by that she does not conceive but painfully and does not labor but painfully and by that she bleeds twice a month.’ When Hawwaa heard that, she cried loudly. At that, God said to her, ‘The cry is destined on you and on your daughters’” [.2](#)

We consider such narratives as incorrect, for they contradict the literal meaning of The Noble Qur’an. The Most High God says,

“And O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat thereof as you both wish, but approach not this tree otherwise you both will be of the unjust. Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts; he said, “Your Lord did not forbid you from this tree save you should become angels or become of the immortals. And he [Satan] swore by Allah for them both, “Verily, I am one of the sincere well-wishers for you both.” (The Qur’an, Al-Aa’raf, 7: 19–23)

The Woman in the Eye of Islam

The woman is one of the two types of the human being species. Therefore, in order to get acquainted with Islam's view of the woman, we must examine her with respect to the kind which she belongs to i.e. the human being, and then we move to examine her with respect to her peculiarity as a woman.

The Woman's Honor as a Human Being

The Most High God says,

“And indeed We have honored the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with the lawful good things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.” (The Qur'an, Al-Israa' 17:70)

This honor is true for the woman as it is true for the man, and it is so equally true for both. The woman is not a creature that has the form of the human beings: She is a human being for true, and she is equal to the man concerning this point.

The Most High God says in His Noble Book,

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another.” (The Qur'an, Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

As the nations and the tribes are equal to each other because all of them are human beings, the male and the female are so.

Common Points of Weakness

This honor which is indicated in the noble verses does not mean that there are no points of weakness in the character of the human being with its both types. There are many points of weakness which the Qur'anic verses refer to not in order to dispraise and underestimate the human being but in order to draw his/her attention to the gaps which he/she must be aware of in order to fill them in and in order not to be an easy prey. The aim of The Noble Qur'an is the guidance:

“This is the Book, whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are the pious ones.” (The Noble Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:2)

Therefore, every verse which reflects upon a certain point of weakness is in fact a kind of guidance towards perfection and not a sword held, we seek refuge by God, in order to weaken the human being, the man or the woman. The human being is weak; The Most High God says,

“...and man was created weak.” (The Qur'an, An-Nisa', 4:28)

Also, the human being is hasty; The Most High God says,

“and man is ever hasty.” (The Qur’an, Al-Isra’, 17:11)

Moreover, the human being gets irritable at the evil and niggard at the good; The Most High God says,

“Verily, man was created very impatient, irritable when evil touches him, and niggardly when good touches him.” (The Qur’an, Al-Ma’arij, 70:19–21)

All these verses do not aim at underestimating the human being but at holding his/her hand and preserving him/her from falling in such things. This applies to the woman and to any verse talking about her or referring to some traps in which the human being often falls.

No Difference within the Human Species

The woman’s being a human being makes her of the greater honor with respect to the other creatures, as is stated in The Noble Qur’an. But the still raised question is related to within the human species itself: Is the woman of a lower level of the human being species while the man is of the highest level?

The Noble Qur’an answers this in saying:

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that who is the most pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (The Qur’an, Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

The Most High God did not determine the standard of honor in that the human being be a man or a woman. The only standard is that of piety in which there is no difference between the man and the woman. The most pious person, whether a man or a woman, is the most honorable with The Most High God.

It is related in the narrative ascribed to Imam Abu Abdullah Ja’far As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The righteous woman is better than a thousand unrighteous men”³.

The question still raised is about the saying of The Most High God:

“... but men have a degree over them.” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:228)

What is the connotation of this noble verse? And what is meant by the degree which men have over women?

This Qur’anic verse is involved among the following verses:

“And if they decide upon divorce, then Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower. And divorced women shall wait [as regards their marriage] for three menstrual periods, and it is not lawful for them to

conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period, if they wish for reconciliation. And they have rights similar over them to what is reasonable, but men have a degree over them. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:227–228)

This noble verse talks about the marital relationship and about the duties and rights of both the man and the woman in this relationship. It does not refer to the spiritual status or to a difference between the woman type and the man type. On the contrary, it indicates a practical issue which is related to the rights and duties of the husband and the wife; and it is doubtless that there are differences from the religious aspect in a lot of the practical details between the man and the woman. One of these details is the divorce to which this noble verse points out.

In later on lessons, we are going, by the will and help of The Most High God, to talk about the difference which is related to the practical aspect and about the background of these differences.

Women in the Noble Qur’an (A Balanced Look)

The Noble Qur’an is distinguished by its balanced look towards the woman. It neither, as some societies did, present her as a goddess and nor, as other societies did, disparage her to the extent of burying her alive. On the contrary, it presents her, as it presents the man, as a human being who passes in this life through tests and afflictions during which this human being may be guided to the correct path or may be misled.

The Noble Qur’an, therefore, refers to some women who failed the test of this world. The Most High God sets forth a parable about atheist women; The Most High God says,

“Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve, the wife of Nûh [Noah] and the wife of Lout [Lot]. They were under two of our righteous slaves, but they both betrayed them so they benefited them not, against Allah, and it was said: ‘Enter the Fire along with those who enter!’”

(The Qur’an, At-Tahrim, 66:10)

On the other hand, The Noble Qur’an sets forth another example which is related to a woman who had money and power; yet when she got acquainted with The Truth, she believed in The Most High God and gave up to His Will. The Most High God says in Al-Naml [The Ants] Chapter,

“She said: ‘O chiefs! Advise me in this case of mine. I decide no case till you are present with me.’ They said: ‘We have great strength and great ability for war, but it is for you to command; so think over what you will command.’ She said: ‘Verily! Kings, when they enter a town, despoil it and make the most honorable amongst its people low. And thus they do. But verily! I am going to send him a present, and see with what the messengers return.’ So when they came to Soulayman [Solomon], he said: ‘Will you help me in wealth? What Allah has given me is better than that

which He has given you!

Nay, you rejoice in your gift!’ Go back to them. We verily shall come to them with hosts that they cannot resist, and we shall drive them out from there in disgrace, and they will be abased.’ He said: ‘O chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me surrendering themselves in obedience?’ An afreet from the jinns said: ‘I will bring it to you before you rise from your place. And verily, I am indeed strong and trustworthy for such work.’ One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said: ‘I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!’ then when he Soulayman saw it placed before him, he said: ‘This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for his own self; and whoever is ungrateful, certainly! My Lord is The Most Rich, The Most Bountiful.’

He said: ‘Disguise her throne for her that we may see whether she will be guided, or she will be one of those not guided.’ So when she came, it was said (to her): ‘Is your throne like this?’ She said: ‘It is as though it were the very same.’ And [Soulayman said]: ‘Knowledge was bestowed on us before her, and we were submitted to Allah.’ And that which she used to worship besides Allah has prevented her, for she was of a disbelieving people.’ It was said to her: ‘Enter the edifice’ [(a glass surface with water underneath it) or a palace]. But when she saw it, she thought it was a pool, and she uncovered her legs. He said: ‘Verily, it is an edifice paved smooth with slab of glass.’ She said: ‘My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit in Islam, together with Soulayman, to Allah, The Lord Of All The Worlds’” (The Qur’an, An-Naml, 27:32–44)

Focus on the Shining Model

It is noticed that The Noble Qur’an often refers to the shining model of the woman. It also highly sheds light on the righteous woman in a lot of its noble verses and focuses on a lot of shining points from her history throughout the human process. In addition, it presents many women as models not only for the women but also for all the humanity, thus including both men and women.

Among these Qur’anic models are the following.

1-The Wife of the Pharaoh

The Most High God says in His Noble Book,

“And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe, the wife of Fir’aun [Pharaoh], when she said: ‘My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir’aun and his work, and save me from the wrong doing people.’” (The Qur’an, At-Tahrim, 66: 11)

To be noticed, the wife of the Pharaoh was not presented by The Noble Qur’an as a model for the women only but for all those who believe. The world with all its luxuries was available for this shining model; however, she turned away from it towards The Most High God:

“My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise...” (The Qur’an, Al-Tahrim, 66: 11)

2- Maryam Bint Omran

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This great woman is referred to in many Qur’anic verses. Her story recurs in more than one chapter in The Noble Qur’an, thus accompanying her in several stages of her noble and blessed life. Among these verses are:

“So her Lord accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Zachariah [Zachary]. Every time he entered the sanctuary to visit her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: ‘O Maryam (Mary)! From where have you got this?’ She said, ‘This is from Allah.’ Verily, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit.”
(The Qur’an, Aali-Imran, 3:37)

“And when the angels said: ‘O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the mankind and the jinns. O Maryam! Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord, prostrate, and bow down along with those who bow down etc.” (The Qur’an, Aali-Imran, 3:42-43)

There are a lot of ideas and theories which represent the woman as being of a level lower than that of man.

The theory about Eve’s (God’s peace bestowed upon her) creation from Adam’s (God’s peace bestowed upon him) rib is not consistent with the narratives which relate that she was created from the same clay which Adam was created from.

The Most High God made the woman equal to the man in humanity and imposed on each one of them special duties which are adequate to him/her.

The Most High God does not, in the Qur’anic address, distinguish between the woman and the man; He made them of the same level of honor.

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Comprehension Questions

1- Is the woman a secondary creature?

2- What is the Qur'anic look towards the woman?

3- How would you answer the one who demonstrates that the woman i.e. Hawwaa is the one who committed the first sin?

4-Who are the women whom The Most High God set forth a parable about them in The Noble Qur'an?

5- Does the Saying of The Most High God: "but men have a degree over them" mean that the man is preferred to the woman?

For Reading: Fatima Bint Asad

Fatima Bint Asad is the wife of the Sheikh of Al-Bat'hah [the level land], Abu Taleb. She is the mother of The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him) and Taleb and Aqeel and Ja'far. And she is the one who brought up God's prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) after his grandfather Abdul Moutaleb had died, putting him ahead of her four children in her tenderness, motherhood, and noble sympathetic affection.

How graceful the talk of The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) is when he describes her in his saying, "She was, among all God's creatures, the kindest one to me. She was my mother next to my mother who gave birth to me. Abu Taleb used to do his work, and the table used to be prepared for him, and he used to gather us to his food. This woman used to keep a part of the food, so that I would eat from it."

What also indicates this is what the historiographers and the biographers related as regards what he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) did when she died. The chronicles relate that he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) "shrouded her with his noble shirt. He lay in her tomb. And then he exclaimed seventy times, 'God is Great' when he prayed on her: an act he did with none but with her." After that, God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "The angels filled the horizon. A door of Heaven was opened for her. The beds of Heaven were prepared for her. And an aroma from Heaven was sent to her: She is in an ease and spirituality and a Heaven of blessing; and her tomb is a yard from Heaven."

One of the companions of the concluding Prophet was astonished of that, so he asked him about the reason. God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) answered, "Nobody, after Abi Taleb, was kinder to me than she was."

The history recorded several points for this model woman, among which are the following:

- She was the first woman next to Khadija)May God be pleased with her) who adopted Islam.

-She was the first woman to immigrate to Al-Madina on foot and bare footed.

-She was the first woman to pledge allegiance to God's prophet) God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) in the day of Allegiance Pledge.

Ibn Abbas related that the following noble verse descended in reference to her:

“O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give you the pledge, that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood [i.e. by making illegal children belonging to their husbands], and that they will not disobey you in any good deed, then accept their pledge, and ask Allah to forgive them, Verily, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (The Qur'an, Al-Mumtahanah, 60:12)

She is the mother of The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali Al-Murtadha (God's peace bestowed upon him). She gave birth to him inside Noble Kaaba, which is an excellence God granted to nobody but her: God, in an act of honoring her, split for her the wall of Al-Kaaba, thus giving her the permission to give birth to her blessed baby there.

- [1.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Twenty Two, p.116
- [2.](#) Al-Moustadrak [Making Up For the Means], Al-Hakim Al-Nisabari, Part Two, p.381
- [3.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Fourteen, p.123
- [4.](#) Bint: the daughter of

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