

[Home](#) > [The Rights of Women in Islam](#) > [Part Seven: The Differences Between Woman and Man](#) > The view of Will Durant:

Part Seven: The Differences Between Woman and Man

The differences between woman and man! What an absurd idea! In spite of our living in the second half of the twentieth century, there are still people here and there, who think as if they were in the Middle Ages, and maintain old and out-of-date ideas of differences between women and men, and think that men and women are not the same as each other. No doubt they wish to infer, like the men of middle ages, that woman is an inferior sex; that woman is not full human being; that woman is the link between animals and mankind. They think a woman does not have the ability or the esteem to live an independent and free life, and that she is obliged to live under the patronage and guardianship of man.

Anyhow, ideas like these are now obsolete and out-of-date. Now it is established that all those idle speculations were quite fictitious, and that, in the period of their domination over women, men had vigorously supported these arguments, while the true position was really just the reverse. Woman, as a matter of fact, is the superior sex and man is the inferior and imperfect sex.

But no in the twentieth century, due to the astonishing progress of science, the differences between men and women have become clearer and more well-defined. There is no idle speculation or fiction, in these hard facts. These are scientific and experimental realities. Nonetheless, these differences have in no way any bearing on the question as to whether woman or man is or is not the superior sex, the other sex being lower inferior or imperfect.

The law of creation brought these differences into being in order to make the relationship of a man and a woman within the family more firm, and the foundation of their unity more secure. The law of creation planned these differences so as to allocate with its own hands the rights and duties of women and men. The law of creation has laid down these differences in men and women with a purpose, just like the purpose that is found in the differentiation of the functions of the different organs within a single body.

If the law of creation has designed every organ, the eyes, the ears, the legs, the hands and the spine in a particular form, it is not because it has given a preference to two eyes, for example, and has unduly

discriminated in their favour, showing cruelty to one part as compared with another.

Is it a question of symmetry or one of imperfection and perfection?

One of the things which surprise me is that some people insist that the difference between men and women in their physical and psychological make-up should be depicted as women being imperfect and man being comparatively perfect. This would show that the law of creation had some ulterior motive in creating woman an imperfect being. The idea that a woman is an imperfect creature arose among the people of the west before it did among us easterners. Men of the west were quite unjust in their jeering at women and in calling her imperfect. Sometimes they claimed to be representing the church and remarked, 'A woman should be ashamed of being a woman'. Sometimes they said Woman is a being who has long hair and is short of understanding'. 'A woman is the last of all savage beasts that man has tamed.' 'A woman is the last link between animals and human beings,' and so on.

More surprising than this is that a section of the people to the west have recently done a complete volte-face, and now want to prove by one thousand and one different arguments that man is an imperfect, inferior and humble being, and that woman is perfect and superior sex.

If you, my dignified reader, had gone through the book *The Natural Superiority of women* written by Ashley Montague, which was serialized in *Zan-e ruz*, you would have seen how strenuously and with what shower of nonsensical talk the author wanted to prove that woman is more perfect than man. That book, in so far as it presents the results of the discoveries of medicine, psychology or social statistics is very valuable, but when the writer himself proceeds to draw "inferences" and wants to deduce conclusions in support of his theory, which is represented by the title of the book, he goes to the extremes of nonsense.

Why should they consider woman to be so inferior and worthless an object one day and then be obliged the next day to make amends for the past and do away with all deficiencies and defects from the face of woman and transfer them to the face of man? Why should it be necessary to interpret the differences between man and woman as an imperfection in one and perfection in the other, and be obliged, at one time, to take the side of one and, at another time, to support the other?

On the one hand, Mr. Montague insists on representing woman a species superior to man, yet, on other hand, he represents the distinctive attributes of man as being the result of historical and social factors and not the result of natural factors.

In fact, the differences between men and women are a matter of symmetry and not one of imperfection or perfection. It is the intention of the law of creation that these differences should be the source of a better relationship between women and men, who are without doubt created to live together. To live a single life is contrary to the law of creation. This point will become clearer during our subsequent

discussion in connection with our clarifications of the differences.

Plato's theory:

This matter is not one that has only recently been put out for discussion. It is at least two thousand four hundred years old, because it was discussed in the same form in Plato's *Republic*.

Plato claims, in unambiguous terms, that women and men possess similar capabilities, and that women can carry out all the obligations and responsibilities which men are charged with, and benefit from all the rights that men enjoy.

The origin of all the new ideas which have come up for consideration concerning woman and, what is more, certain other ideas which people in the twentieth century have deemed to be excessive and consider unacceptable are also found in the thoughts of Plato. That these ideas belong to a man who is called the father of philosophy may look strange to the reader. Plato in Book V of his *Republic*, argued in favour of the State's control over women and children in connection with the improvement and the well-being of different generations, of its depriving some women, and men of their right to reproduce, and of its allocation of the right to reproduce exclusively to those who have especially excellent and distinctively superior qualities.

He further more urged in favour of the arrangement whereby the education and training of children was carried on outside the environment of the family, and of permitting reproduction only in certain years of the lives of men and women, the age at which they would be most full of vitality and vigor.

Plato is of the opinion that women should also be given military training in exactly the same way as men and that they should also take part in athletic competitions exactly as men do.

However, there are two noteworthy points in what Plato said. Firstly, he admits that women in Physical as well as spiritual and mental powers are weaker than men, that is, he admits of a difference between women and as regards quantity, but he does not believe in their being different as regards the quality of their talents. Plato believes that men and women are alike in their talents, though, of course, woman is weaker than man in all respects; but, he asserts, it does not necessarily follow that men and women have a special ability to do one task rather than another.

Plato thanks God for his being born a man and not woman especially because he considers woman to be weaker than man. He says; " I thank God that I was born a Greek and not other than Greek, that I came to this world as a free person and not a slave, and that I was born a man and not a woman."

The other thing is that whatever Plato said in respect of the well-being of children, their training, the similarity of the make-up of men and women, and the state's control on women and children, all of it concerns the ruling class, that is, philosopher- rulers, whom he considers specifically worthy to be rulers. As we know, Plato is, in politics, against democracy and favors an aristocracy. All that Plato said

concerned the aristocratic class, and as far as people out that class are concerned his views were different.

Aristotle against Plato:

After Plato, the other figure of the ancient world whose thoughts and opinions we are acquainted with is Plato's pupil Aristotle. In his *Politics*, he expressed his ideas concerning the differences between women and men, and vehemently opposed his teacher, Plato. Aristotle believes that the difference between women and men is not only in the quantity of their abilities, but also in the quality. He says the nature of the abilities of woman and man is different, and that the functions which the law of creation imposes upon each one of them and the rights which have been designated to them are different in many respects. According to Aristotle excellence in the morals of men and women are also different in many respects. A certain behavior may be regarded as a virtue for a man, and yet may not be commendable for a woman, and in exactly the same way a certain behavior or comportment may be praise-worthy and excellent for woman, but not considered worthy of a man.

The views of Aristotle ousted the views of Plato in the ancient world, and the thinkers coming after them gave preference to the views of Aristotle over those of Plato.

The opinion of the modern world:

All that has been stated above concerns the ancient world. Now we have to see what the modern world says. The modern world does not rely on mere guesses and conjectures. Instead, relies on observation and experiment, on statistics and figures, on the study of the thing itself. In the light of profound medical psychological and social studies, more and multifarious differences between women and men have been discovered. These could not have been discovered by any means in the ancient world.

Those in the ancient world who used to judge men and women did it simply on the grounds that one has a large frame and the other a smaller one; one is more coarse and the other more delicate; one is taller and the other shorter; one has a stronger voice and the other is soft-speaking; one is more hairy and the other has a more smooth body. The greatest extent they went to was to take into account the difference in the time of puberty, or to look at the differences in intellect and sentiments. Man was considered a symbol of intellect and woman a symbol of kind and affectionate feelings.

However, other kinds of differences have recently been discovered besides these, and it has been discovered that the worlds of women and men are different to each other in many respects.

We shall mention all the differences between women and men which we were able to gather from the writings of the great scientists, and then we shall deal with the question as to how many of these differences are based in nature, and how many are the result of historical, cultural or social factors. A number of these differences can be listed by anybody after a little experience and attention, and some of

them are so clear and self-evident as to be impossible to deny.

Reciprocal differences:

Physique: Man, normally, is of a larger frame and woman has a smaller body; man is taller and woman is shorter; man is more coarse and woman is more delicate; man has a stronger voice and is harsh in his tone, while woman is more soft speaking and more melodious in her voice; the development of a woman's body takes place sooner than the development of man's body to the extent that it is universally said that the fetus of a girl develops sooner than that of a boy. The muscular development and strength of a man's body is greater than that of a woman. A woman's power of resistance to many diseases is greater than a man's. Woman reaches the age of puberty earlier than man, and also becomes unproductive sooner as regards the reproduction powers. A girl starts speaking earlier than a boy. The normal brain of a man is larger than the normal brain of a woman, but with attention to the proportional size of their bodies, the brain of a woman is larger than that of a man. The lungs of a man have the capacity to inhale more air than the lungs of a woman. A woman's heartbeat is quicker than a man's.

Psychology: Man has a greater preference for physical exercise, hunting, tasks involving movement, than a woman. The sentiments of man are challenging and war-like, while the sentiments of woman are peaceable and convivial. Man is more aggressive and quarrelsome, and woman is more quiet and more calm. A woman refrains from taking drastic action, both with regard to others and with regard to herself, and this is the reason for the smaller number of suicides in women than in man. In a mood for suicide, man will take a hastier course in comparison with woman. Men will use a gun, hang themselves, shoot themselves, or jump from the top of a lofty building, while women tend to use sleeping pills, poison, and so forth, in such a crisis.

The feelings of woman are aroused quicker than a man's. Her sentiments are excited sooner than those of man; that is, a woman, in matters with which she is involved or of which she is afraid reacts sooner and with more acuteness just as she feels, while a man is more cool headed. A woman is naturally more disposed than a man towards decoration, ornaments, beautification, adornment and dress. The feelings of woman are more transient than those of man.

Woman is more cautious, more religious, more talkative, more timid and more formal than man. The feelings of a woman are motherly and these feelings are clearly visible in her childhood. Woman is more concerned with the family, and her attention is subconsciously directed more than man towards the importance of a home. In activities based on reasoning, and in abstruse intellectual problems, woman cannot equal man but in literature, painting and all matters that are related to aesthetics, she is not behind man.

Man has more ability to keep a secret than woman and he keeps unpleasant private matters to himself better than a woman. This is the reason why men are victims to some psychological illnesses more than women. These illnesses develop as a result of his keeping his confidences to himself. Woman is more

soft-hearted, and instantly resorts to weeping, and occasionally to fainting.

Feeling towards each other:

Man is the slave of his own passions and woman holds herself fast in the love of man. A man loves a woman, because he has admired her or chosen her while a woman loves a man because she has perceived his worth or has previously made an avowal of her sincerity. Man wants to take possession of the person of the woman and to wield power over her, and woman wants to conquer the heart of man and prevail upon him through his heart. Man wants to master woman through her head, and woman wants to influence man through his heart. Man has a desire to embrace woman and woman has a desire to be embraced. Woman desires to see bravery and courage in man and man wants to see elegance and charm in woman. Woman considers the support of a man the most valuable thing for her. Woman is able to control her sexual drive more than man. The sexual drive of man is aggressive and that of woman passive and inciting.

The differences between woman and man 2

In issue no.90 of *Zan-e ruz*, the view of an eminent American Professor of psychology Prof. Reek (?), was published. For many years, he had been making investigations and conducting research into the conditions of woman and man and he had arrived at certain concrete conclusions; he listed a lot of differences between woman and man in a voluminous book.

This professor says that the world of man is totally different from the world of woman. If a woman cannot think like a man or act like a man, this is because the worlds of both are different. He observed that in the Old Testament it is mentioned that 'Man and woman have come into being from one flesh'. Yes, no doubt both have come into being from one flesh, but they have dissimilar bodies, and, taken as a whole, are different from each other.

Moreover, the feelings of these two beings can never be alike, and their reactions to events and circumstances will never be the same. Man and woman take different actions according to and consistent with, their true sexual dispositions, and just like two planets they revolve in their two different orbits. They can have understanding between each other and be completely at one but they can never be one. This is the reason why man and woman can live together, love each other and not get tired and bored with their particular and distinctive qualities and behaviors.

Prof. Reek made a comparative study of the mentalities of men and women and pointed out a number of differences. Among others, he said that it is boring for a man to be always in the company of the woman he loves, whereas nothing is more pleasant for a woman than to live by the side of a man she loves. Man, in his heart, wishes to remain always in the same state day after day, while a woman always wants to have a new being and to rise every morning from bed with a new look. The best words that a man can say to a woman are: "My dear. I love you" and the most beautiful words that a woman can say

to the man she loves are: “I am proud of you”. If a man has had relations with several lovers during his life, that man is considered attractive in the eyes of other women.

On the other hand, a woman who has had relations with more than one man is disliked by men. When they are old men have a feeling of unhappiness because they miss their main support in life, that is, their work, but old women on the contrary feel satisfied because they have the best thing in front of their eyes, namely a home and some grand-children. In the eyes, of men, a successful life means to be regarded as a respectable personality in public, while in the eyes of a woman success means to win the heart of one man, and to hold and sustain it for the whole, of her life. A man always likes to convert his spouse to his opinions and nationality, while for a woman after marriage to change her beliefs and nationality to that of the man she loves is as easy as changing her family name.

The masterpiece of creation:

Apart from the controversy as to whether the dissimilarities between men and women necessarily cause differences in their rights and duties concerning household matters, this phenomenon is basically one of the most amazing masterpieces of creation, and is a lesson in the Unity of God and in knowledge of Him, a sign and an indication of the wise and efficient order of the universe and clear evidence for proof of the fact that the process of creation is not based upon mere chance— nature does not go through its processes blindly, as if in the dark. It is an enlightening proof of the reality that the phenomena of the universe cannot be explained without invoking the fundamental principle of a final cause.

So as to arrive at its own goal and to preserve its nature the gigantic apparatus of creation has brought into being the great device of reproduction. From its own workshop, females of the same species and males of the same species are continuously brought into existence. Since, in order to maintain and prolong the existence of the subsequent generations, the cooperation of the two sexes, especially in the human species, is required, and so as to persuade these two sexes to help each other in this work, the foundation of their union and unity was laid. It has been arranged in such a way that self-assertion and the seeking of ones own interest, which is natural in every living being is transformed into service, cooperation, forbearance and self-denial.

The two sexes are made with the desire to live together; and to make the plan completely practical, remarkable physical and mental differences are established between them, so that their bodies and souls can be better united. These differences are the source of mutual attraction, and are designed so that the male and female should feel love for each other. If woman had had the body, spirit, manners and behavior of a man, it would have been impossible for her to attract man towards herself, and make him eager to become united with her. Likewise, if man had all the physical and mental attributes of a woman, it would have been impossible for woman to regard him as the hero of her life, and consider that her highest art is to hunt and conquer his heart. Man is born to conquer the world, and woman to conquer man.

The law of creation has constituted and built man and woman according to such a pattern that they are attached to and seek each other, but not in the way in which they are attracted to other things. The interest that a human being has in other things arises from his self-interest, in other words, a human being wants things for himself. He sees them as a means; he wants to sacrifice them for himself and for his comforts. But the attachment of a husband and a wife is in such a way that each of them wishes the well-being and comfort of the other, and is happy in forbearance and self-denial for the sake of the other.

A union stronger than passion:

It is strange that some people cannot distinguish between 'passion' and 'affection'. Such people think that the only factor which can unite a couple is desire and passion, the motive of taking advantage, of benefiting, the same sort of interest that a person has in food, drink, clothes and cars. They do not know that besides selfishness and the desire to exploit, there are other interests which are innate and natural. These interests do not have their roots in self-interest. The source of such attachments is exactly the reverse of what they think. These relations have their source in self-denial, forbearance and a preference of discomfort for oneself so as to ensure the comfort of the other. These are the relationships which reveal the humanity of human beings. Indeed, some of these sentiments are observed, as far as the couple and their offspring are concerned, even in animals.

These persons imagine that a man has always looked and still looks towards a woman in the same way as a young westerner looks at a street-walker, as if it is only passion which could unite the two of them. As a matter of fact, the union which constitutes the basis of the unity of the husband and the wife is greater than passion. It is the same thing which the holy Qur'an mentions with the name of "mawaddah" (love) and "rahmat" (mercy).

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

And of His signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses that you might repose in them, and He has set between you love and mercy. Surely in that are signs for a people who consider. (Qur'an, 30:21)

How fallacious it is to explain the history of the relations of man and woman thinking only of the idea of profiting and exploiting, and, as it was previously mentioned, basing this on the struggle for survival. We have already referred to how much nonsense has been written about this.

When I read some of their writings and their elucidations of the history of the relations of man and woman, I find that the only principle these people employ is that of contrast. They suppose that men and women are two different classes of society which have always been in conflict and at war with each other. Truly, it is all amazing for me, and I deplore their lack of reason and judgment. If they can account for the history of the relations of fathers and their children in terms of profit and exploitation, they can

also interpret the history of wives and husbands in the light of that point of view. It is true that man is stronger than woman, but the law of creation has so constituted man instinctively that he could not perpetrate on his wife the atrocities which he has inflicted on his slaves, serfs, inferiors and even his neighbors, just as he could not practice that sort of cruelty with his own sons and daughters.

I do not deny the cruelties of men towards women, but refuse to accept the interpretation that is put forth concerning those cruelties, throughout history, men have inflicted a great many cruelties on women, but the motivation for these cruelties was the same as that which caused them to be cruel to their children, in spite of their great concern for them, their careers and their welfare. These were, of course, the very things which caused them to be cruel to themselves as well, and the root cause was ignorance, fanaticism and traditionalism, but not the will to exploit. If I get time, I will give a detailed exposition regarding the history of the relations of men and women at an opportune occasion.

Reciprocal differences in the feelings of men and women towards each other:

Man and woman do not differ from each other only in their outlook towards matters of family life, the very way in which, they are attached to each other is different. To be more clear the nature of the attachment of man to woman is not the same as the nature of the attachment of woman to man. Despite of the fact that attraction is mutual, still, unlike inanimate bodies, the smaller body attracts the bigger body towards itself. Creation has designed man as a symbol of searching, loving and demanding, and woman as a symbol of love and attraction. The sentiments of man are characterized by asking, and the sentiments of woman are towards demureness; the sentiments of man are to seek, while the sentiments of woman are to be sought.

Quite recently the photograph of a young Russian girl who had committed suicide appeared in one of our daily newspapers. The girl had written on the paper which she had left behind: 'Up to this time no man has kissed me, and life is unbearable for me'.

This was the cause of a great defeat for a girl, that she had not been loved by a man or kissed by him; but which young man would he be disappointed from life if a girl had not kissed him, or if he had not kissed a girl?

In his detailed and comprehensive discussion, Will Durant says that if the criterion of the preference for, or worth of, a girl were learning and intellectual achievements, and not natural charm and subliminal cleverness, girls with lesser academic achievements would not have been very successful in finding husbands. The true position, however, is that sixty per cent of university women are without husbands. He says that Sonia Kovalevsky, a distinguished scientist, complained that no one would marry her. "Why can no one love me? I could give more than most women, and yet the most insignificant women are loved and I am not" (*The Pleasures of Philosophy*, p. 136)

Please note that the nature of the feelings of disappointment of this lady is different from what the disappointment of a man would be. She says: "Why does nobody want me?".

In the affair of finding a wife, a man feels defeat when he is unable to get the woman he loves, or if he gets her and is unable to keep her under control.

All these matters have a philosophy behind them: a stronger and deeper bond of attraction and unity. And why this attraction? Is it so that men and women can get more pleasure out of life? No, not just that; rather it is the foundation of human society and the structure of the maintaining and training of the coming generation which is laid on that base.

The view of a female psychologist

In issue no. 101 of *Zan-e ruz*, the opinion of a female psychologist, Cleo Dalsun was quoted. This lady says that in so far as she is a woman psychologist, she is keenly interested in the study of the mentality of me. In recent past, she says, she was commissioned to research into the psychological factors in women and men and she came to the following conclusions:

1. All women like to work under somebody else. In other words, they prefer to work as a subordinate under the supervision of some superior.
2. All women want to feel that their existence creates, and is a matter of need.

After that this lady mentions her own opinion. She says that she believes these two desires of women have their root in the fact that women are under the commands of their feelings, whereas men follow their reason. It has been observed very often she goes on, that women are not only equal to men as far as intelligence is concerned, but are sometimes better than them. The only weak point in women is the intensity of their feelings. Men always think in more practical ways, arrive at better conclusions, are better organizers and give better instructions. So the mental superiority of men over women, she reasons, is something which is planned by nature.

However much women may fight against this matter of fact, it will prove fruitless. Because they are more sensitive than men, women should accept the reality that they need the supervision of men their life. The most important aim in the life of woman is security, and when she succeeds in fulfilling her aim, she ceases to be active. A woman is afraid of facing the dangers involved in achieving her aim. Fear is the only feeling which they need help in order to dispel. Those tasks which require continued mental effort make women bored and tired.

A hasty movement:

The movement that was started in Europe to restore the suppressed rights of women took place haphazardly and in a great hurry because they were very late in starting it. Feelings did not let reason

speak and be taken as their guide, and that was how everything good and bad was washed away in one wave. This movement helped woman out of many misfortunes, gave her many rights, and opened closed doors for her, but, in exchange, it created a lot of other misfortunes and miseries for her and for human society in general.

No doubt, if these matters had not been taken up hurriedly, the restoration of women rights would have taken a far better course. In that case the wailings of wise people against the present unpleasant situation and the even more horrendous future would not have reached the skies. Anyhow, there is still hope that knowledge and reason may prevail, and the feminist movement, instead of being led, as before, by feelings, will listen to the advice of knowledge and reason. The fact that the distinguished thinkers of Europe have given expression to their views on this matter is by itself a sign of hope in this direction. It can be seen that concerning the relations of men and women, the people of the west are themselves fed up and bored with their own behavior, the very same behavior with which the imitators of the west have recently become intoxicated.

The view of Will Durant:

In part four of his book *The Pleasures of Philosophy*, Will Durant has made a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the problem of sex and the family. We shall make a short selection of certain parts of that book for our readers so that they may have an idea of the way of thinking of western scholars and abstain from passing hasty judgments.

Under the heading of “Love” Will Durant writes:

“It is at puberty that love sings its first clear song. Literally puberty means the age of hair — the sprouting of vegetation on the male, particularly hair on the chest, of which he is barbarically proud, and hair on the face and chin, which he removes with the patience of Sisypus. The quality and abundance of the hair seem to rise and fall (other things equal) with the cycle of reproductive power, and are at their best at the acme of vitality. This sudden foliage along with the deepening of the voice, is among the “secondary sexual characters” that come to the male at puberty; while to the blossoming girl nature brings the softened contours that will lure the eye, the widened pelvis that will facilitate maternity, and the filled out breast that is used to nurse the child.

‘What causes these secondary characteristics ? No one knows, but professor Starling has found favour for his theory that when puberty comes, the reproductive cells begin to produce not merely ova and sperms, but certain “hormones” which pass into the blood and cause a physical and psychical transformation. It is not only the body that is now endowed with new powers; the mind and character are affected in a thousand ways. ‘There are in life,’ said Romaine Rolland, ‘certain ages during which there takes place a silently working change in a man’ – or in a woman. This is the most important of them all. New feelings flood the body and the soul; curiosity drives the mind forward, and modesty holds it back.’ (pp. 107–108)

“‘All men,’ says de Muset ‘are liars, traitors, babblers, hypocrites, strutters; all women are vain, artificial, and perfidious; ...but there is in the world one thing holy and sublime and that is the union of these two imperfect beings.’” (*ibid.*, p. 110)

“In, adults the ritual of courtship is acquisitive advance by the male and seductive retreat by the female. There are exceptions here and there... Usually the male takes the positive and aggressive role, because he is by nature the fighter and the beast of prey; the woman is to him a prize which he must conquer and possess. All courtship is combat, and all mating is mastery.” (*ibid.* p. 111)

“The superior modesty of woman obviously subserves the purposes of reproduction. Her coy retreat is an aid to sexual selection; it enables her to choose with greater discrimination the lover who shall be privileged to be the father of her children. The interest of the race and the group speak through her, as the interests of the individual find their strident voice in man . . . Woman is cleverer than man in love because, normally, her desire is less intense and does not obscure her judgment.” (*ibid.*, p. 117)

“Darwin considered the female of most species to be comparatively indifferent to, love; Lombroso, Kisch, Krafft-Ebing... will have us believe.... that (it) is not physical delight that woman seek, so much as an indiscriminate admiration and a lavish attention to her wants and in many cases the sheer pleasure of being desired contents her . . . ‘Love in woman’, says Lombroso ‘is in its fundamental nature no more than a secondary character of motherhood, and all the feelings of affection that bind woman to man arise not from sexual impulses, but from the instincts — acquired by adaptation — of subordination and self-surrender (*ibid.*, pp, 117–118)

In the chapter gathered together under the title “Men and Women”, Will Durant writes “The function of the woman is to serve the species, and the function of the man is to serve the woman and the child. They may have other functions also, but wisely subordinate to these; it is in these fundamental and half unconscious purposes that nature has placed our significance and our happiness.... The woman’s nature is to seek shelter rather than war; and in some species the female seems quite without the instinct of pugnacity. When she fights directly it is for her children.” (*ibid.* p. 119)

“She is more patient than man; and though he has more courage in the larger issues and crises of life, she abounds in diurnal and perennial fortitude for facing the smaller and endless irritations of existence..... But woman is pugnacious vicariously. She goes for a soldier and delights in a masterful man; some strange masochistic element in her thrills at the sight of strength, even when its victim is herself.” (*ibid.* pp 119–120)

“Occasionally this ancient joy in virility overrides her more recent economic sense, and she will marry a fool if he is brave. She submits gladly to a man who can command; if she seems less submissive in our days it is because men have less force of character than before....

“Woman’s interests are familiar, and normally her environment is the home; she is as deep as nature and as narrow as four walls. Instincts adapt her to the traditional and she loves the traditional as any

expert loves the sphere which reveals his excellence. She is less experimental in mind and morals (barring certain metropolitan exceptions); if she resorts to 'free love' it is not because she finds freedom in it, but because she despairs of achieving normal marriage with a responsible male. How gladly she would draw the man closer to her and absorb him into the home! Even if, in younger years, she thrilled to the shibboleths of political reform, and spread her affection thin over all humanity, she withdraws these tentatives when she finds an honest mate; rapidly she weans him and herself from this universal devotion and teaches him an intense and limited loyalty to the family. 'I would give the world for you,' the youth says in courtship's ecstasy; and when he marries he does.

"It is just as well. The woman knows, without needing to think of it, that the only sound reforms begin at home; she serves as agent for the race when she transforms the wandering idealist into her children's devotee. Nature cares little about laws and states, her passion is for the family and the child; if she can preserve these she is indifferent to governments and dynasties, and smiles at those who busy themselves with transforming constitutions. If nature seems now to fail in this task of protecting the family and the child it is because woman has for the while forgotten nature. But it will not be long defeated; she can at any time fall back upon a hundred reserve expedients; there are other races and other peoples, greater in number and extent than ourselves, through whom she can maintain her resolute and indiscriminate continuity" (*ibid.*, pp. 120, 124, 125)

This has been a short selection, of the statements of distinguished thinkers, about the differences between women and men, and their views in this connection.

I had intended to discuss, under the heading of 'The Secret of Differences', how far historical and social factors have been effective in bringing about these differences. Anyway, I dropped the idea of a comprehensive discussion of this matter, so as to abstain from enlarging the scope of the subject matter. I hope this matter will become completely clear in the course of future chapters.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/rights-women-islam-murtadha-mutahhari/part-seven-differences-between-woman-and-man#comment-0>