

## The Painful Fate of Women throughout History

قال رسول الله(صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ): كانت مريم سيدة نساء زمانها، أما ابنتي فاطمة فهي سيدة نساء العالمين من الاولين الاخرين

The Holy Prophet (S) said: “Maryam was the Lady of the women of her time, but my daughter Fatimah is the lady of the whole worlds’ women, from the first to the last.”

Throughout history women have had a very painful story. Their physical weakness in contrast to the opposite sex- man being the reason why the bullies and despots throughout history endeavoured to trample their human identity. What crimes they committed to this end! Especially in Arabia during “The Age of Ignorance”<sup>1</sup>, (even though at that time the whole world had sunk into ignorance), the identity of woman was more than anywhere else trodden upon; to such an extent that a woman was exchanged like a piece of merchandise. A share in the inheritance of men was not granted to them.

They saw the birth of a girl as a disgrace. And, as we know, buried newborn baby-girls alive. They even ignored the laws of nature saying that the children of our daughters are not our children. our children are only those of our sons. This Poem has remained from that age for us as a reminder of this very belief of theirs:

بنونا بنو أبنائنا و بناتنا \*\*\* بنوهن أبناء الرجال الأبعد

*The offspring of our sons are our progeny –and on the other hand the offspring of our daughters are the off springs of alien men.*

But when Islam came into the ring to revive human and godly values, it began fighting this ignorant belief, and it rose to restore the lost identity of woman.

It did this by preaching cultural counsel and education; by creating laws for women’s benefit and allowing

them participation in various activities and, finally, with severe action against those who were not willing to surrender to these realities.

In another tradition, we read that:

Assma bint Omays, the wife of Jafar bin Abi Talib returned with her husband from Habasha<sup>2</sup> and came to see the Prophet's wives. One of the first Questions she asked was: "Have any of the verses of the Quran been revealed in regard to women?" They (the wives of the Holy Prophet) claimed to have no Knowledge of this!

Assma came to see the Holy Prophet (S) and said: "O Prophet of God! Is the female sex caught with loss and detriment? (maybe she had the right to say this because for many years she had stayed away from the country of the revelation, and thought that the remains of the principles that ruled the society in the Age of Ignorance, still remained.)

The Prophet asked: "why?"

She said: "Because in Islam and the Quran no virtue has been announced in relation to them as there has been for men."

Even though it was the fifth year of the hijra and eighteen years after the rise of Islam, while in relation to the restoration of the identity of woman much points had been revealed in the Holy Quran and habit, for more emphasis on this matter, verse 35 of the chapter Azhab (the Allies) was also revealed. It is a verse that is in reality the one that states all values, all of the values that are alike in women and men, and of which (women) posseses the most superior footing.

These values are summed up in ten parts;

It commands:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ

وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

وَالْفَانِتِينَ وَالْفَانِتَاتِ

وَالصَادِقِينَ وَالصَادِقَاتِ

وَالصَابِرِينَ وَالصَابِرَاتِ

والخاشعين والخاشعات

والمتصدقين والمتصدقات

والصائمين الصائمات

والحافظين فروجهم والحافظات

والذاكرين الله كثيراً والذاكرات

أعد الله لهم مغفرة وأجراً عظيماً

**“Surely the men who submit and the women who submit”**

**“And the believing men and the believing women”**

**“And the obeying men and the obeying women”**

**“And the truthful men and the truthful women”**

**“And the patient men and the patient women”**

**“And the humble men and the humble women”**

**“And the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women”**

**“And the fasting men and the fasting women”**

**“And the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard”**

**“And the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember”**

**“Allah has prepared for them Forgiveness and a great reward.”<sup>3</sup>**

And thus Islam spoke its words on this subject, showing that men and women walk side by side in the course of life towards God and human values; in the event that enjoy the same conditions along this course.

Some are surprised at how Islam has given the right to women to demand a salary for suckling her own children:

فإن أرضعن لكم فاتوهن أجورهن

**“Then if they suckle for you give them their recompense”<sup>4</sup>**

Which woman would demand a reward or salary for suckling her child, especially when she lives jointly with a man?!

But it shouldn't be forgotten that this command is so that Islam can say, not only is woman a human being and possessing all human rights, not only does she have the right to decide about her own property, and man has no right to repress this right of hers without her consent, but also if she wishes, she may demand her recompense for suckling (her child). What a deep impression did this order make in that environment?!

In short, women of the world have a great obligation to Islam, because it saved them from the grip of the tyranny of history's oppressors on condition that Islamic instructions are carried out properly and in detail.

1. The period before Islam. (N.T.)
  2. Ethiopia. (N.T.)
  3. Al-Ahzab 33:35
  4. Al-Talaq 65:6
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