

The Role Of Islam In Recognizing The Rights Of Women

The liberating religion of Islam in that Dark Age granted women their suppressed rights. On the one hand, the explanatory and illustrative messages of Quran rose up and challenged the inaccurate culture of ignorance that deprived women of their right of inheritance, whereas they were considered as inferior and dependent on man, and when the female children were buried alive. On the other hand, the great Prophet of Islam promoted the veneration of the women practically by venerating and respecting his wife Khadijah and his daughter Fatimah Zahra (Peace be upon them).

Whenever Fatimah entered any place where the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) was present, he stood up out of respect for her and kissed her hands and by this behaviour he replaced the old dark culture of ignorant times by the new and elevated culture of Islam.

Does Islam Consider Women And Men As Equal?

From the perspective of Islam, God's consideration of the status of man and woman is equal as human beings. To shed light on this issue, we refer to the first verse of Chapter "The Woman" which is as follows:

Sura an-Nisa' – 4 The Woman

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

[4: 1] O mankind! Reverence your Guardian Lord who created you from a single soul and he created from that its mate. And from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women

– fear Allah, through whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.

According to this verse, the origin of human beings creation, including both man and woman, is regarded as "primordial ego" that is sacred soul and there is no distinction between them as a human beings.

Therefore, the status of the soul of man and woman in the presence of God is the same and equal and this justice in creation is emphasized in the Glorious Quran.

The important point that is worth describing is that the physical differences of men and women are just because they are supplementary and complementary to each other. Thus while each one has his/her own special integrity; in humanity and human integrity they are equal. Therefore, the physical differences are not the justifiable reason for superiority of one group over another.

The Equality Of All Human Beings In The Presence Of God

God in the Glorious Quran addresses all human beings, both man and woman, and says:

Sura al-Hujraat – 49 The Chambers

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

[49: 13] O mankind! 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 (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well- acquainted (with all things).

According to this verse, all of human beings, whether women or men, and black or white, are equal before the presence of God, and the only prominent factor for superiority and excellence is piety and virtue.

Answer To A Question

There is an important question, why has the Glorious Quran called man as "responsible"? Does it mean that men are superior?

In answering this question, let us examine the following verse:

Sura an-Nisa' – 4 The Woman

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِن رَّجَعْنَ غَيْرَ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَلَا تَبَغُّوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

[4:34] 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. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in the (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, (and last) do dharb (have separation); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance) for Allah is Most High, great (above you all)

For the real meaning of this verse, please pay attention to the following points.

Meaning of Protectors and Maintainers (Responsible)

The word “Responsible” applies to the person who is in a position of trust. For this reason in lexical meaning, the word “Responsible” is applicable to everyone who has effective responsibility. Since the responsibility of undertaking and providing the subsistence and supporting the family financially, according to Islam, is on man, the overlord in this honourable verse of Quran, has introduced men as the supporter of women. They are responsible for undertaking the subsistence of life and providing the expenses of family members.

Therefore, the above verse does not mean that men are superior or excelsior in comparison with women, but it is an expression of responsibility for men in front of the family as protectors and maintainers.

After explaining equality and parity status of women and men in the presence of God and viewpoint of Islam, it is worth answering several other questions in this field like the difference in inheritance between men and women, polygamy, temporary marriage and the right of divorce and so on.

The word, “**dharb**” has different meanings in Arabic and in this instance it means separation.

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