

Women in the Nahjul-balagha: A Psychological Perspective

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The difference between men and women according to Imam Ali (AS) from the psychological perspective

One of the important principles which should be considered about women and therefore, one should refer to Imam Ali (AS), is the physical- psychological differences between men and women.

The intellectual and emotional differences between men and women

One of the undeniable differences between men and women relates to the intellect and feelings. Of course, it should be noted that by intellect, it means theoretical intellect, since in practical intellect women are not less than men and they are even sometimes better. In other words, theoretical, analytical, philosophical, hypothetical, and socio-political intellects are wider and stronger in men.

In general pure reason, mathematics, and pure theoretical intellects are more active in men than women, but practical intellect which relates to human perfection and progress is equal in men and women.

Though the world of intellect, feelings and vision of women are different, these matters don't play any role in evaluating human beings. Practical intellect which relates to human's perfection and progress is equal in men and women. Deduction, inductive reasoning, and solving mathematical equations are only skills, not human values.

And if men and women are different in this view and the quantity of such power is not equal in them, it does not mean at all that one is superior to the other especially because men and women are equal in perceiving life, divine knowledge, and the development of morals and determination, which are related to practical intellect. Perceiving some of the fine emotional realities are easier for women than men, and women are even more powerful in such perceptions.

Anyway, one of the differences between men and women is related to reasoning faculty and psychologists also have given attention to it.

M.S. Lamber says: "In a woman the reasoning faculty is imperfect since her powerful emotions amuses her deceitfully. Though women are clever and can perceive things fast, their minds have no connection and adherence in social matters."

And one of the differences which Imam Ali (AS) has noted in describing the extent of intellect between men and women is the matter of imperfect intellect which Imam Ali (AS) has talked about it in Sermon 80 [Nahj al- Balaghah].

As we told before, this imperfection doesn't mean imperfection of value at all. It only means that women are weaker than men in subjects related to theoretical and pure matters, and such an imperfection has no serious repercussion on the perfection and progress of women in superiority fields.

Besides, the difference in the extent of theoretical intellect, the other difference between men and women, exists in their feelings and emotions. It is natural that women are more emotional because of their motherhood and fellowship mission. This matter by itself is so valuable for women since instincts and emotions in a human being are the origin of any activity and motion. As psychologists have interpreted, the main engine for permanent activity in a human being is emotions and feelings and their type, intensity, and weakness has a special effect on individual and social life of a person.

One should search for the key of prosperity and misery of a person in the good or poor condition of his feelings. MacDugal says:

"Regulation and equilibrium of emotions and feelings is a basis for the perfection of personality and the personality of an individual originates generally from the intensity and weakness of his feelings."

Since emotions and feelings are more powerful in women, therefore, the intellectual cognition of women is influenced more by the emotions and feelings. But men are influenced less by their feelings and thus women are more powerful in emotional matters. As a result men and women need each other to fill these vacuums. Men need women because of their emotions and women need men for their intellect.

In other words, the intellectual imperfections of a woman are compensated by the intellectual perfection of a man and the emotional imperfection of a man is compensated by the emotional perfection of a woman.

As the human life and his perfection require both intellectual and emotional perfection man and woman together make a complete human unit.

Imam Ali (AS) in Nahj al- Balaghah says explicitly: "women are in shortage of wisdom and faith."

As it had been explained before, this isn't a value or quality imperfection. It is only because of the powerful emotions of women and their effects on perceptions and this matter leads to the imperfection of intellect in women.

The difference in the scope of obligations and responsibilities between a wife and a husband
One of the differences which exists between men and women as Imam Ali (AS) has pointed out is the difference in the field of obligations and responsibilities.

As we explained in the previous chapter though the pure intelligence and universal intellect is more powerful in men, the bigness of a man's skull, the heaviness of his brain, and the power of his theoretical intellect cannot mean that they are nearer to the Divine realities and thus can perceive the realities of existence better.

Even one can say that men see life and perceive realities based on their theoretical intellect and senses, but women have more immediate and intuitive knowledge while men perceive the realities by empirical and acquired knowledge. A man stares at the realities in the mirror of her nature.

Since the intellect has been referred to as the practice of religion and practical virtue in most of the traditions and the remarks of infallible Imams (AS) and what makes a human superior in the Divine portal is his virtue and that virtue is developed by the pious deeds, the weakness and limitation of the theoretical intellect in women won't do any damage to their faithfulness and devotion, but women are able to communicate with Allah faster and better because of their delicate and direct soul which they have in life.

Men and women are equal in perceiving life, divine knowledge, and the development of morals and determination which are related to practical intellect. Perceiving some of the fine emotional realities are easier for women than men, and women are even more powerful in such perceptions.

In general, one should say that it is a difficult task for a man to reach the practical virtue and moral perfection due to his Powerful instincts, sensual inclinations and also the possession of rigid, irresistible, and inflexible morale which leads to egotism, selfishness, haughtiness, etc.

Therefore, men have to suffer more hardships and mortifications.
women are inclined to virtue and divine faith more than men due to their weaknesses and limitations in their instincts and sensual inclinations and also because of their fine and flexible morals.

Though their level of thinking, intellectual faculty and speculative philosophy is less than that of men, women have great emotional aptitude and direct connection with life instead and are able to pass the ways of virtue, practice, commitment, theosophy, and obedience easier. women can pass the way of the divine proximity better by the way of theosophy and intuition.

Surely psychologists also have discussed about the matters related to the women's internal insight and their abilities to communicate better with the creatures and the Creator, but it isn't

possible now to talk about their theories in detail. There is an agreement between psychologists and theoreticians on this matter that women are more powerful in faithfulness and devotion due to their internal insight.

M.S. Jina Lambrouz, the well-known psychologist, says: "Insight is the internal visual faculty of a woman and this hidden vision can see the result of an event before its happening and inspired her. A woman's insight is a compass which saves her from misleading."

"Suzan Vieh", a specialist in pharmaceutical plants, points out this and says: "All over the world men are trying to reach the internal insight and communication by the way of internal thinking while a menopausal woman reaches this level normally.

To show that women were pioneers in Islam and their qualities, it is enough to say that many women accepted the religion before their husbands, and perceived its realities by the inferences and believed in it firmly while not only many men refused to accept and had doubt about it but also they tried to extinguish its light.

This matter shows that women were intelligent, genius, and pioneer in piety and religiousness. Malik ibn Anas in Al-Muwatta has also said that some women had accepted Islam while their husbands had been infidels. Some of them are as follows: The daughter of Walid ibn Mughayrah who was the wife of Safwan ibn 'Ummayah and became a Muslim before her husband, and Ummi Hakim who was the daughter of Harith ibn Hashim and the wife of Akramah ibn Abi Jahl and accepted Islam before her husband.

Imam Ali (AS) knew the imperfection of women's faith during their menstruation period due to the abandonment of the ritual prayer and fasting. This doesn't mean that the belief structure of a woman is imperfect. But because of special physical-Psychological situation of women in the period of menstruation, some of the obligations and responsibilities are not asked from them. Thus, the range and quality of the obligations of the women and men are different.

Surely, this abandonment of the ritual prayer and fast may harm their beliefs and to compensate for such imperfection and deficit, Islam recommends communicating with Allah by invocation, supplication and recitation the Qur'an. And during the special time of ritual prayer it is suggested that women Perform their ablutions, pray sitting on their prayer mats, and fast after the glorious month of Ramadan to compensate for those days which they Cannot fast.

As such, this decrease of Pressure in obligations and her deliverance is because of her special condition and a woman can prevent from its bad effects on her faith by praying and communicating with Allah. It doesn't mean that generally women are imperfectness in their faith, and Imam Ali (AS) has also confirmed this imperfectness due to the abandonment of

ritual Prayer and fast during that period. How is it Possible that women enjoy the goodly life based on the interpretation of the Qur' an and can Possess all the spiritual Perfection that men can enjoy but are imperfect in the structure of beliefs and personality?!

The difference between men and women in excitements and tensions

One of the other mental differences that exist between man and woman relates to excitements, and psychologists believe that women will be excited faster than men. Thus, their reactions towards events and happenings are different.

Professor Rick says:

" Men and women are generally different in form and manner, besides the feelings and the extent of excitements aren't alike and will never show the same reactions towards the events and happenings."

Jina Lambrouz says: "What make a woman to take a decision are her cordial emotions and not her intellectual preliminaries.

Anyway, the speed of getting excited in a woman compared to a man is a mental difference between them which has effects on the women's reactions and decisions.

Thus, Imam Ali (AS) has highlighted this mental difference and has recommended: "Don't stimulate the women's feelings and emotions even if they offend your honors and reputations."

The stimulation of women's feelings and emotions may make them perform actions against the intellect and law and show unreasonable reactions because the speed of excitements makes her intellectual and sensual faculties weak and this weakness has a great effect on the women's actions and decisions. Thus, Imam Ali (AS) has recommended not to make women .so much excited that can lead to unreasonable behaviors