

**Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought**

# **Woman and Society**

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**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH**

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## Preface

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings be on Muhammad, his holy family, and the righteous among his companions.

Human society is always in need of woman. For she constitutes half or more of its existence. Whoever considers carefully human history will conclude that woman played an important role even during the most backward historical periods, though this role was hidden in the shade or disappeared from sight.

Modern civilizations have formally underlined the role of the woman and her rights. However, since its coming, Islam has summoned woman to practice her role in life and to shoulder her responsibility in building human civilization. Allah, the Exalted, said:

"So their Lord did respond to them (saying) 'I will not suffer the work of any of you that works to be lost, be he male or female, the one of you being from the other,...'" Holy Qur'an (Aal-Imran, 3:195)

Indeed woman was neglected in pre-Islamic era of ignorance 'Jahiliyah', and yielded to the manners of dishonor and lowliness. However, in Islam, she has gained her personality and become an example for all believers. Islamic history witnessed eminent women, who played important roles. Among them were Khadija, the mother of believers, and Fatima, the chief of women of the world (a.s.).

Ignorance happened in some Islamic countries in the last centuries as it happened in other countries in the world. Hence, woman in such countries fell short of practicing her leading role in life. Thus, it is important for woman to understand the Islamic concepts concerning her. Accordingly, she will be able to play her role in developing society.

Without doubt, this role is different from that in material societies. For such societies have deprived woman of her dignity and her character. They have used her for a trade and information commodity. Moreover, capitalists and the ambitious ones have used her as a toy to play with. This method removes woman from her womanhood, her motherhood, her high position, and her gentle sentiments. So, she will gain nothing except crime, isolation, despair, violence, and the tragedies of the disorderly family.

Our dear readers, the study before you, acquaints you the role of woman in an Islamic society. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

***Al-Balagh Foundation***

## **The Definition of Society**

Society is a human organization which is composed of individuals, and joined with each other through ideological links and limited vital interest. This is the general definition of society. As for the links and relationships in Islamic society, they are grounded in Islam.

Thus, we can define Islamic society as follows: "It is a political group of people residing in a certain area of the earth. It believes in Islam. Its relations and its life regime are based on Islam." Therefore Islamic society is ideological. It has its own qualities that distinguish it from other societies. It is distinguished by its beliefs, its values, its ethics, its laws, its life regulations, its behavior, and its customs. The Holy Qur'an has summarized these qualities as follows:

"(This is) Allah's coloring and who is better than Allah in colouring; while Him (alone) do we worship." Holy Qur'an (Baqara 2:138)

## Why did Social Life Grow?

The growth of society and social life is among the basic matters which must be scientifically studied. For such a study will help us understand the reason why society and social life grew.

To understand the Islamic theory concerning the growth of society and social life, we must consider carefully the Qur'anic verses that talk about these matters. Meanwhile these Qur'anic verses urge man to build human society based on firm foundations and principles. Among them are:

Allah, the Exalted, said: "O people! Verily We have created you of a male and a female, and made you in nations and tribes, that you may recognise each other; Verily the most honored of you with Allah is the one of you who guards (himself) the most (against evil), ..." Holy Qur'an (Hujurat, 49: 113)

He said: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves, mates that you may dwell (inclined) unto them, and caused between you love and compassion: Verily in this are signs for a people who reflect." Holy Qur'an (Rum, 30:21)

He, the Glorified, said: "What! do they distribute the mercy of your Lord? (It is) We Who did distribute among them (even) their livelihood in the life of this world, and We did raise some of them above the others in rank, so that some of them may take the others in subjection; and the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they hoard." Holy Qur'an (Zukhruf, 43: 32) Studying and analyzing these verses show us the reasons why society grew. Among them are:

1. The basic factor for the growth of society is the general natural law of marriage. The instinctive structure of man and woman represents this law. Both, man and woman are the main factors for the growth of social life.

This instinctive relationship between man and woman is based on love and mercy. So, it leads to tranquillity. For this reason, the Holy Qur'an regards woman as the base of tranquillity. That happens through the psychological and social tranquillity of man and of social life in general. That is because the psychological and the physical relationship between man and woman terminates psychological tension. It also ends the instinctive and psychological energy and leads to the principle of balance between man and woman. For this principle depends on perfection through the general natural marriage law.

Consequently, man and woman must shoulder their responsibility to build a sound righteous society. For they are the source of tranquility, love, affection, and mercy in social life.

2. Acquaintance: The second reason which caused man to build a social life is acquaintance among human beings based on the instinct of social life. Regarding this view, the philosophers said: "Man is social by nature." Social and psychological experiments have shown that man feels tranquility and rest through his social life with others. For this reason Allah, the Most High, said: "So that you may know one another." This phrase shows that there is a human motive behind forming society or social life.

3. Exchanging interests: The third reason for building society, is the exchange of various material interests. Indeed Allah wanted individuals to

be perfect through their psychological, bodily, and intellectual abilities. He also wanted this perfection to be achieved through exchanging interests among individuals.

The individual has diverse needs and demands. He cannot secure them all by himself. So, he needs others, and others need him. These differing abilities lead to differing productions and services which the individual offers to others. Concerning the exchange of these productions, interests, and services, which are offered to satisfy needs, the Qur'an says: "...and We did raise some of them above the others in rank, so that some of them may take the others in subjection;"<sup>1</sup>

Social function has grown on this base. The principle of the functional social growth has also been explained according to this base. Namely, society grows as bodily organs do. Then it carries out its function as bodily organs do.

Thus, the Qur'an explains the material and human reasons for the growth of society. The role of woman becomes prominent clearly and basically through these elements. In other words, woman plays a functional, psychological, and material role in social life. For woman constitutes the greater part in society. The census has shown that the number of females is more than the number of males.

According to the theory of functional perfection, explained by the Holy Qur'an, shows that the role of the woman and the role of man are both studied within the frame of Islamic aims and values. So, woman is not a secondary element nor is she an additional being, though the human experience has shown the role of the man in building science and economy is greater than that of woman. While, the role of woman in building the psychological base of the family is greater than that of the man.

The Qur'an expresses this fact by saying: "and from it did He make his mate that he may dwell resting unto her." Hence it is the husband who feels at ease with the wife and is quiet through living with her. So, she is the center of attraction and the frame of tranquillity, affection and love.

The Qur'an talks about 'tranquillity' in numerous places. With that, we can understand tranquillity which the wife secures for her husband. We understand that through Allah's words, the Exalted: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves, mates that you may dwell (inclined) unto them, and caused between you love and compassion." "...then made He from it its mate," We may also understand 'tranquillity' in society when we understand the Qur'an's description of the relation between the husband and wife as the relation of 'tranquillity, affection, and mercy'.

Therefore, we must study the word tranquillity 'sakan' in numerous places in the Qur'an in order to understand its social and family meanings. He, the Exalted, said: "...and has made the night for rest," It means that people become tranquil at night.<sup>2</sup> He, the Most High, said: "...and pray for them; verily your prayer is assurance (of peace) for them;" It means that they become tranquil through your prayers and their hearts become quiet through them. Here tranquillity or calmness means sobriety, not losing motion.

"He it is who sends down tranquility into the hearts of the faithful." It means that He has found steadfastness and tranquillity.<sup>3</sup> The linguists have explained the meaning of `sakan' or calmness, by saying: "Sakana al-rih, meaning the wind has abated. Sakan al-nafs ba`da al-idtarab, meaning the soul has become tranquil after the disorder. Sakan also means all things with which the soul is intimate, such as the wife, fire( ), mercy, blessing, and daily-bread."

"Sakina means tranquillity, stability, sobriety, and dignity."<sup>5</sup>

With this, we understand the meaning of sakan or tranquillity which the wife provides for her husband and her family. In other words we understand that sakan means rest, stability, sociability, mercy, blessing, and dignity. With this we also understand why the Qur'an has used the word `sakan' with different meanings.

Scientific studies have indicated that man's psychological conditions have effects on his activities in life. It is well-known that the psychological conditions of the man and woman affect their social activities, such as agriculture, industry, trade, teaching, medicine, and the like.

Hence, material production decreases when the man leads a life full of family difficulties and psychological tension. Such a man will have no ability to carry out his social duties as good as possible. Meanwhile, he will have tense relations with his work mates. Therefore, the nature of the relations between the man and woman affects the level of production and development.

Moreover, the woman plays a significant role in building society intellectually, materially, and morally, for she brings up and educates her children. The child will have a good character when he leads a life free from anxiety, tension, and family problems. Besides, he will have good relations with others, unlike the child who has a troubled character when he leads a life full of family problems. Such a child may have bad and aggressive behavior. So, corrupt education is the reason for all crimes that occur in society.

The mother contributes as the father does in other fields. She contributes in positive education. She has the ability to make her child love work and to be punctual and to urge him to study hard. Such a child will continue his education and develop his creative abilities. Then he will be a productive element through his experiences and his scientific and practical specialization. However, the child is dependent and lazy when his parents do not take care of him.

Such a child will be dependent on others, moreover, there will be many dependent elements that will decrease production and stagnate scientific, economic and social life. Thus, there is a close relationship between education and development, production, morals, and social life. So, the role of the woman is significant in social building in all fields.

## **The Elements of Building Society**

The relationship between the individuals in social life is like the relationship between the letters of a language. If the letters come together and are well organized, a linguistic structure will happen and convey human thinking and picture all human feelings and life.

Such separate individuals are unable to form a certain society unless they come together and form well-organized ties to regulate their behavior and activities. These ties and relationships are the elements of the building of society. They are as follows:

1. **Belief:** Belief is regarded as one of the strongest human ties that connect the members of society to each other. It turns them into a unit as firm as one body. The Holy Prophetic tradition says: "You see believers show mercy toward one another, like each other, and feel pity for one another. (They are) like the body. When a part of it (the body) complains, all the body responds to it through (showing) sleeplessness and fever."<sup>6</sup>

Hence, belief has practical, behavioral, emotional, and psychological reflections and effects on all human links. Their effects begin from building to reform. Moreover, they preserve social structure. So, we find the Holy Qur'an explaining this link, says: "And the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another; they enjoin good and forbid evil..." Holy Qur'an (Tawba, 9:71)

This blessed verse confirms that those who believe in Allah, the Glorified, and His message support each other. It also fixes a psychological and intellectual base, which is the strongest of all the bases of social building. In this concern, the holy verse regards the woman as a basic element in the circle of support. Thus, the woman shoulders the responsibility of social building, change, and reform. In this respect she is equal to the man.

2. **Laws and regulations:** Law is defined as: "A group of rules that regulate the behavior of individuals in society. General authorities force them to respect law."<sup>7</sup>

So, social law is a means to regulate the movement of society as natural law regulates the movement of the atom and the stars. Society cannot develop without law.

As for Islamic law, it is concluded from the Qur'an and the purified Sunnah. Hence, Islamic law regulates Islamic society according to Islamic precepts. Meanwhile it takes care of the biological and psychological nature of both man and woman. According to this scientific principle, Islamic law is divided into three parts. They are as follows:

A. Laws and precepts that concern the woman.

B. Laws and precepts that concern the man.

C. General laws and precepts that concern both the man and the woman. They represent the wider area of Islamic laws and precepts. This kind of regulation, which takes care of gender, urges both man and woman to move and be active in two areas of movement and activity. The first area concerns their gender. The other includes all society.

3. Islamic traditions and customs: Islamic society has traditions and customs. They are one of the distinguished elements of Islamic society. Hence, they should be preserved.

4. The need of services and exchangeable interests (production): This is clear through this holy verse: "...and We did raise some of them above the others in ranks, so that some of them may take the others in subjection...". This verse shows that need moves individuals to form society to exchange interests as other creatures do in their natural environment. Through that, the individual secures his need and participates in developing human life.

The needs of the individual and society always develop. The man and the woman differ in their administrative, psychological, physical, and intellectual abilities and inclinations. So, functional specialization sometimes occurs spontaneously; it sometimes results from the individual when he chooses his social function, namely the work which he fulfills in society, such as agriculture, medicine, trade, education; the Islamic state sometimes achieves it intentionally, for it is responsible for regulating the abilities of society to satisfy the needs of the individual and to solve the problems that result from all kinds of need.

Now we will briefly discuss woman's role in this respect.

## **Biological and Psychological Differences between Man and Woman**

Psychologists and doctors say that there are axiomatic scientific differences between man and woman. In other words they say that man and woman have different biological and psychological differences. Accordingly, the social function of the woman is different of that of the man. Hence, social life is righteous when man maintains his manhood and woman maintains her womanhood. Scientific studies have shown that the hormones of the ductless glands take part in forming the behavioral and psychological differences between the man and the woman. In the meantime, the nervous system participates in that too.

The Holy Qur'an has explained these differences between man and woman. It says: "And covet not that by which Allah has raised some of you above others; for men shall have of what they earn; and women shall have of what they earn; and ask Allah of His Grace; verily, Allah knows all things." Holy Qur'an (Nisa' 4:32)

Moreover, the purified Prophetic traditions (Sunnah) underline that both man and woman should preserve their gender. It prevents women from imitating men. Meanwhile, it prevents men from imitating women.

Psychological studies and experiments were applied on psychological deviation of both men and women. They have shown that some men try to imitate women, and some women try to imitate men. They have indicated that this state is a kind of deviation, and that this state may be controlled and treated through education, social measures, and reorganization of the character. The holy traditions have scorned and cursed such people.

The great traditionist and jurist, Hurr Amily, may Allah have mercy on him, has mentioned numerous traditions under the title: "It is not permitted for women to imitate men and vice versa."

It was reported on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) and Abu Hassan al-Rida (a.s.), who said: "I hate that men imitate women."<sup>8</sup> The meaning of hatred here is prohibition or not permitted as it has been mentioned in the tradition cited above. It was reported on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), on the authority of Allah's Apostle Muhammad (s.a.w.), who said:

"Allah's Apostle scorned the man who imitates women, and prevented the woman who imitates men in her clothes."<sup>9</sup> (It was reported) on the authority of Ibn Abbas, who said: "Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.) cursed the men who imitated women and the women who imitated men."<sup>10</sup>

These differences between man and woman force us to admit that there are functional differences in some of the vital fields and duties which the man and woman should perform. According to this discussion, we are able to limit the differences between the man and woman in social function.

## Woman and Material Civilization

To study the history of nations and societies throughout its ages, shows the sufferings of the woman and how has she exploited and persecuted.?

No ideology or belief has saved the woman from persecution and sufferings like Divine principles represented in its perfect and prettiest form i.e. the immortal Islamic message. Before talking about the value, rights and the notable position of the woman in Islam, it is necessary to mention some statistics about the persecution and sufferings of the woman in the material civilization headed by America and Europe that declare the rights of the woman.

The figures and statistics underline that the woman is persecuted and enslaved in these cultures. French News Agency: "1.3 billion human beings lead a life of abject poverty in the world. 70% of them are women. There are about 2.3 billion illiterate women in the world.

"One-third of the women in Norway, America, Holland and Newland are subject to sexual exploitation "Every eight seconds one woman is mistreated. Every six minutes one woman is violated."

The News Agency added: "Half a million women die during pregnancy and its symptoms. 40% of them are young girls. "The wages of 828 million women ranging from 30-40% less than those of men. 10% of bank considerations include them." In another report announced by American Federal Police says: "According to a study made by American Ministry of Justice, 310 thousand women are raped every year."

According to the report of French News Agency from Washington, there are about half a million sexual assaults against women every year."

According to the latest figures issued by F.B.A. the police announced only the existence of 140 thousand attempts of violation in America.

The Iranian Newspaper, Ittila'at, No.20401, quoted a report from Rome as follows: "The wave of violence has increased among the Italian families. The instances of murdering fathers by sons and of sons by fathers have increased more than they had been before."

The Italian Newspaper, Larpoblika, wrote lately from the annual report of the Euro Union for Statistics, in the first ten months of the year 1994, 192 incidents of family violence were recorded in Italy; 129 of them ended to murders. According to this report, this kind of violence led to 112 murders in 1993.

It is worth mentioning, 40.1% of these family murders occurred in the north of Italy; 43.8% occurred in the south of Italy; 16.1% occurred in the middle of Italy.

Most family murders in 1994 occurred in the Province of Lombardy, in the north of Italy. Jumhuri Islami Newspaper, No.4485, Autumn of 1994, mentioned the following report:

"Epidemiology Magazine, affiliated to the World Health Organization (WHO), No.11, Summer of 1993, published the latest world figures concerning AIDS in various areas of the world. "WHO has recorded that the number of AIDS cases was 718,894 in June, 1993. "(371086) cases were in America; 247,577 cases were in Africa; 92,482 cases were in Europe; 4,188 cases were in Australia; 3,561 cases were in Asia.

"The number of cases per countries is as follows: 289320 cases were in the U.S.A.; 38,719 cases were in Tanzania; 36,481 cases were in Brazil; 31,185 cases were in Kenya; 34,611 cases were in Uganda; 26,955 cases in Britain; 24,226 cases in France; 21,008 cases in Zaire; 18,347 cases in Spain; 16,860 cases in Italy; 14,655 cases in Congo. Besides there are other cases in other countries.

"We see that the U.S.A. not only occupies the first position in Aids cases but also it is extremely differing from the counties that follow. Besides, if we take into consideration the percentage of the figures, we will find that those infected by AIDS in the U.S.A. constitute 40% of the infected in 150 countries in the world. Nevertheless, the population of the U.S.A. constitutes only 5% of the population."

The Iranian Newspaper, Ittila`at, No. 20482, May 21, 1995, conveying its correspondent in Madrid, reported: "In the year 1960, 82% of the children lived under the care of their fathers. Nowadays, 60% of them live without fathers. Divorce and the stubbornness of mothers forced fathers to abandon their houses. After mentioning the above-mentioned figures, David Blink Horn, an American writer, said in his book `America without Father': `To have good fathers needs exemplary (righteous) women. This is the reason why fathers abandon their houses'

"In a report from America, the reporter of the Spanish Newspaper, Al-Payis, said: `Being partial toward the woman in American society led to the damage of the fathers there. It has prevented children from the care of their fathers. So, it has become a difficult dream to secure fathers in America."

Concerning the conditions of the children in Britain, the Newspaper, Ittila`at, No. 20407, January 1995, reported the following account from IRNA News Agency, London:

"In a report, the United Nations strongly criticized the conditions of the children in Britain and the laws and regulations of taking care of the children in that country.

"According to this report, prepared by the Children's Rights Committee affiliated to the United Nations Organization, the laws ruling in Britain concerning the health, education and social insurance of children pay no attention to the interests of the children there.

"The specialists in the Children's Rights Committee think that the laws concerning the children in Britain only concentrate for punishing and imprisoning the deviated children and teenagers. "Among the criticisms in the report is that the number of poor children has increased, the average of divorce has increased, the authorities have decreased their relives to poor families, and the number of children and teenagers, who loiter and beg in streets, has increased.

"The writers of the report expressed their worry about the mistreatment, sexual and physical exploitation from which children suffer.

"According to what the sources of the United Nations mentioned, the reports of this organization on the conditions of the children in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark have criticisms similar to those in the report about Britain."

An Iranian Newspaper, Jumhuri Islami, No.4485, mentioned the following: "According to IRNA News Agency from Bonn, the report of Germany Statistics Office mentioned in the year 1993 that the number of mothers who brought up their children by themselves increased each year. The report added that there were 455 thousand mothers in the eastern states of Germany (21% of all mothers in these states) who brought up their children by themselves.

"Besides there were 915 thousand mothers out of 7 million mother (12% of mothers) in the western states of German brought up their children by themselves.

"Thus, there were one million 370 thousand mothers out of 9 million 260 thousand in Germany who brought up their children by themselves.

"According to this report, 46% of these mothers in the eastern states and 30% of them in the western states did not marry officially, and 43% of these women divorced their husbands. As the children in Germany are under the care of mothers, therefore, they should take the responsibility of bringing them up.

There are over 9.26 million mothers in Germany. They have children under 18 years old. 5.4 million of them work outside their houses full time or part time in addition to their responsibilities in their houses and the tasks of bringing up their children. It is worth mentioning, the average of divorce has doubled since 1968. It has increased from 65 thousand cases in 1968 to 135 thousand cases in present years. Every year 390 thousand contracts of marriage are recorded in Germany. However, 33% of them end with divorce. This ratio reaches 50% in the large cities such as Hamburg.

Ittila`at Newspaper, No.20503, reported the following from the United Nations-IRNA:

"The American's contribution to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in comparasion with its national income, is less than that of the industrial counties in the world."

The officials of UNICEF announced that and added: "Though America occupies the second position after Japan through paying 9.7 billion dollars as an aid to UNICEF, this sum of money is only 0.15% of its national income. Holland and the Scandinavian countries occupy the first position in this respect, for their aid is 0.8% of their national incomes.

"The officials of UNICEF expressed their concern with the low contributions from rich countries to the under developed countries. Then, they added: `This happens at the time when the importance of supporting the growth and health of children and of improving the conditions of the work of mothers exetremely increases.'

"According to this account, 13 million children die in the world every year of pneumonia, diarrhea, and measles. "Besides 200 million children in the world suffer from the lack of vitamin C which leads to blindness."

Ittila`at Newspaper, No.20370, 15 December 1994, in another report adds. In the report it has been mentioned: "Tehran-IRNA: There are a half million children who loiter in America. Orphanages will be built for them. However, the American society regards this as a shame against it.

"Susan Fildiz, the analyst of the Washington Times Newspaper, wrote: "Many fatherless children live under the care of foster families. They are subjected not only to hitting, abuse and mistreatment, but also, they are killed." "Fildiz said: "The quality of the treatment of society towards its children is an important sign for the real identity of that society."

"She added: "The number of the children who loiter in America increases day by day to the extent that the police sometimes find new-born babies in garbage cans. In such cases, financial aid is not enough for mothers. Rather, it is necessary to find special centers to meet the basic needs of these children."

## **The Woman in Islam**

Why is the attack against Islamic attitude towards Woman?

Studying this matter (woman's rights in Islam) is among the important civilizational and intellectual matters and affairs at the present time. The opponents of Islam, their followers, and those who have no knowledge of Islamic thought, precepts and concepts still continue their oppressive attack against Islamic thought and law, claim that the woman is oppressed in Islam.

Studying and analyzing the elements of this intellectual battle between Islam, materialism and secularism, we can conclude that the axle of the battle moves around a basic matter. The matter is that the secular thought tries to spread sexual dissoluteness and corruption.

According to this theory, the woman will become a tool for enjoyment and instinctive satisfaction which destroys the family, society, and the woman. While, Islam honors the woman and raises her from this low level. It also grants her rights and position to allow her to share with man in building life and expressing her humanity according to human bases which we will mention briefly in this study.

Before discussing this matter, it is important for us to mention the basic reasons of this battle (of the rights of the woman) and accusing Islam of depriving woman of her rights.

Muslim writers and thinkers, the propagators of Islam, the religious scholars, the foundations of the Islamic message and culture, and especially as it concerns the children of the Moslem communities in the non-Islamic countries and especially in America and Europe should explain this important matter through researches, studies, conferences, seminars in all various political, psychological, social, family, and civilizational fields.

We can summarize the reasons which lie beyond the attack against the Islamic thought as follows:

1. The confusion between the backward customs and social Islamic theory:

Muslim writers, thinkers, and propagators should clarify such confusion, for the opponents of Islam, those who are deceived by corrupt material thought, and those who confuse concepts have no ability to distinguish Islamic concepts from the social customs existed in backward Islamic societies. Such customs are contrary to the essence, principles and methods of Islam that regulate society, sexual relationships and the foundations of the relationship between man and woman.

So, the opponents of Islam attribute such backward customs to Islam to distort it, intentionally or out of ignorance. It is necessary for us to differentiate between the present society of Muslims and the Islamic society based on Islamic principles.

This social backwardness in the society of Muslims is part of the general backwardness in the fields of science, knowledge, development, industry, health, etc.

Some sociologists derive a distorted picture concerning the social position of the woman from the rural of Muslim countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Morocco and the desert areas of Peninsula. Thus, they diagnose the

problem of the woman through the backward rural or desert view that oppresses the woman. Then, they give a distorted picture about the Muslim society, for its members are Muslims. They forget that such concepts and practices have no relation with Islam. We firmly believe that such concepts and practices oppose Islamic values and teachings. Meanwhile, Islam has devoted part of its thought, laws, and values to change these conditions.

## 2. Ignorance of Islam:

Among the problems which Islamic thought faces in our present time is that the people, in Europe, America, and other non-Islamic countries, are ignorant of Islam and have no correct knowledge of the simplest principles of Islam. In other words, they have a distorted picture of Islam. They think that Islam is based on fable, terrorism, bloodshed, and tribalism. They do not know that such ideas have been created by the enemies of Islam, such as orientalist, Zionists, and church foundations.

Thus, Western man knows nothing about Islam except distorted pictures. If Western man understands the essence of Islam, surely he will embrace it through rationale.

To understand this problem more clearly, let us return to the speech addressed by German President, Roman Hotsogh, on the occasion of honoring Mrs. Ana Mary Shmil, a German orientalist, who received a peace prize from the German Book Association in 10/1/1995. Some people opposed giving a peace prize to Mrs. Shmil, for she supports the Islamic thought, treats it justly, and summons people to understand Islam and to change the distorted picture which the European ministers made about Islam and Muslims.

In response to those who opposed giving a peace prize to Mrs. Shmil, the German president said: "There is a phenomenon that seems clear in our relations and dealings with Islam in our present time. We do not accuse falsely of the German public opinion when we say that many of us think that Islam is the religion of inhumane penal law, non-tolerance, oppression against woman, and aggressive roots. However, this is narrow-mindedness which we must change. In turn, we must remember the wave of enlightenment that maintained great parts of the western inheritance six or seven centuries ago, and that it found itself before a style of western thought. Without doubt, it was radical and non-tolerant."<sup>11</sup>

In another part of his speech, the German president indicated that the Europeans showed enmity toward Islam, for they had no knowledge of it. Thus, in his speech, he asked them: "Isn't it possible that we do not understand Islam because it depends on deep popular faith, while we are in a secular society?"

"Have we the right to classify the pious Muslims with the radical terrorists because we have no sound feeling towards the mockery at the religious feelings of others or because we are unable to express this sound feeling?"<sup>12</sup>

Then, the German president admitted that he had no knowledge of Islam until he read the books of Mrs. Shmil. In this regard, he said: "I did not know the numerous Islamic trends in the history of Islam except through the

books of Ana Mary Shmil. Perhaps, other than I witnessed the same experience. Indeed we are in need of understanding each other."13

Then, the German president summoned (people) to understand Islam to adopt another attitude towards it. Thus, he said: "I confess that there is no other option before us except that we must increase our knowledge of the Islamic world. That is if we want to achieve human rights and freedom."14

Then he added: "Indeed, the real reason for longing for understanding Islam and its rich civilization arises from our belonging to a civilization differing from it. Mrs. Shmil has moved this longing in my soul. I hope that others than me do the same."15 "Mrs. Shmil has paved the way for us to meet Islam."16

The battle of granting a peace prize to the orientalist Shmil in Germany in 1995, the agreement of the learned political public opinion in Germany, which is among the most important countries in modern history, and the victory of the front of Shmil, which means the victory of the trend that summons (people) to understand true Islam and to adopt an attitude towards it, among this advanced class of thinkers and politicians, among the foremost being is the German president, whose important speech we have read, all these denote that Muslim writers, thinkers, artists, and scholars think men should shoulder their responsibility towards Islam.

Besides, religious foundations and clergy men should shoulder their responsibility towards it. They should spread the true Islam that moves intellect, heart, and conscience. They should follow the method of the Qur'an when they summon people to believe in Allah, the Glorified: "And call you unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation and dispute with them in the manner which is the best;..." Holy Qur'an (Nahil 16:125)

That civilizational battle, which took place in Germany and ended for those who summoned people to understand Islam, shows us that Islam is great and that man is ready to understand it, regardless of his faith. This battle is clearly shown in the Qur'an: "Go you unto Pharaoh, verily he has transgressed (the bounds). Then speak you both unto him a gentle word, happily he may get admonished or fear (Our punishment)." Holy Qur'an (Taha 20: 43-44)

From this we understand that the Qur'an summons the propagators of Islam to hold true faith and communicate it to those who have intense enmity towards Islam. Meanwhile, it summons them to leave despair and to open a door to hold intellectual talks. That is because the conditions of talks differ from time to time. In other words, the talks may be rejected today but are accepted tomorrow. What is rejected through one way is accepted through another way.

### 3. Lust and Sexual Deviation:

Perhaps, among the most prominent motives of those who demand the freedom of woman or sexual desolation is the motive of lust or sexual deviation. The Holy Qur'an talks about these motives and their danger and denotes their destructive effects. Allah, the Most High, says:

"But followed after them a succession who neglected prayers and they followed lust, so they shall soon meet perdition,." Holy Qur'an (Maryam, 19:59)

He said: "(It has been) made to seem attractively fair unto men, the love of the lust for women and sons and the hoarded treasures of gold and silver..." Holy Qur'an (Aali-Imran 3: 13)

He said: "...but desire those who follow their own lusts that you should deviate a great deviation." Holy Qur'an (Nisa'4: 27)

In these verses, the Holy Qur'an explains the danger of lust and that it represents `ghay', which means (the ignorance that arises from a corrupt belief) and `mayl', which means (turning away from righteousness and moderation), which has been mentioned in another verse:

"Those who hinder (others) from the path of Allah and seek to make it crooked; and they in the hereafter, they are the disbelievers." Holy Qur'an (Hud 11:19) There is a practical proof in the reports and figures which we have mentioned about sexual deviation. The Qur'an has explained it to people and warned them against it.

#### 4. Inherited Malice and Fear of Islam:

Among the motives of the campaign against Islam and distorting its attitude towards woman is the inherited malice against Islam and distorting its principles and high values. This malice began from the day when the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) made public his mission. Then it increased during the Crusades and after them. Through blind imitation, Europe has inherited spite and hatred towards Islam.

It has spared no effort to distort the plain principles of Islam and to mislead public opinion, because Islam is a civilizational mission that will destroy their interests, end their oppression and domination over the world in general and the Muslim world in private. The fears of Europe of Islam have increased since the beginning of Islamic awareness and the appearance of Islam as a plan which the Islamic movements have adopted, and which a live experience has embodied through establishing Islamic states, such as the Islamic Republic in Iran.

The super powers have gathered their hirelings everywhere to resist Islamic awareness and to destroy the Islamic plan and its propagators and the holders of its banner.

## **Woman During the Lifetimes of the Prophets (a.s.)**

Woman had a prominent and important role during the course of divine summons and the movements of the prophets and messengers (a.s.). Woman took part in the intellectual and political struggle, and suffered from torture, murder, emigration, persecution, oppression, and mental and political terrorism.

She made public her view freely and joined the divine mission inspite of her loss of authority and property. For instance, Mary, the mother of Jesus (a.s.) who was praised by the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s.a.w.) too. In many verses, the Qur'an has lauded this lady and offered her as an example to men and women to follow her behavior and the righteousness of her thinking and character.

Whoever studies the history of woman finds that the divine message addresses both the man and the woman. In other words, the divine message does not make any distinction between them because of their gender.

When we study some historical examples of the life of women in the course of the divine message, we will understand the important and active position which woman occupied during the lives of the prophets and their messages. Thus, the value of woman, her intellectual and political participation, and her lawful and humane rights appear in Islamic society. We can understand this important and active participation of woman when we read the story of the struggle of the father of the prophets, Abraham (a.s.), against his people in Bablon, in the land of Iraq, and his struggle against Nimrud.

That struggle ended for Abraham (a.s.) when he was saved from the fire through a divine miracle that exceeded all the imaginations of material intellect. So, he emigrated to Syria. Sarah, his wife, was the first to believe him and to accompany him during his flight to Syria. Then they emigrated to Egypt.

Then they returned to Syria to live there. Abraham (a.s.) started the most important period in the history of man. Meanwhile, his wife, Sarah, supported him and stood beside him throughout his struggle, sufferings, and emigration.

The Qur'an talks about the story of this emigration and the family life. It also talks about the role of Hajar (Hagar), the second wife of Abraham (a.s.), and her participation in creating the brightest period in history at Holy Mecca in Saudi Arabia. That was when Abraham (a.s.) brought her from Egypt.

The story of Hajar is one of the most famous of all the stories in history. Thus, she became very famous in history when she took care of her son, Prophet Ismael (a.s.), in a valley unproductive of fruit near the Sacred House. Then Ismael (a.s.) became the grandfather of the greatest Prophet in the history of mankind, Muhammad (s.a.w.). The Qur'an has recorded these events when it says:

"O Our Lord! Verily I have housed a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivable, nigh unto Your Holy House..." Holy Qur'an (Abraham, 14:37)

Moreover, the Qur'an talks about the mother of Moses (a.s.) when Allah inspired her to save Moses (a.s.) from Pharaoh. The Qur'an notes that Allah

honored her when he returned Moses to her to raise for the wife of Pharaoh. Later, Moses saved his people from oppression and destroyed the greatest tyrant in the history of mankind.

The Qur'an has mentioned this woman as a basic axle in creating these events. Then the Qur'an talks about Pharaoh's wife, Asiya, and the mother of Jesus (a.s.). The Qur'an has shown them as an example to generations to follow them. In this connection the Qur'an says:

"And Allah sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh, when said she: `O My Lord! Build for me a house with You in the Garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and his doing, and deliver me from the unjust people.' And Mary the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity; and breathed We into it (her body) of Our Spirit, and she testified the truth of the words of her Lord, and His Scriptures, and she was of the obedient ones." Holy Qur'an (Tahrim 66:11-12)

Let us read these two verses and consider carefully their wonderful intellectual meaning that talks about the character of woman with honor and respect which no material civilization grants her. The Qur'an has offered the righteous woman as a practical example to men and women to follow her. This has been mentioned in the verse: "And Allah sets forth an example to those who believe." The phrase ""And Allah sets forth an example." and the phrase "to those who believe" explain clearly for us a unique concept in the world of thought and civilization concerning the righteous woman.

The Qur'an has offered them as an ideal example to both men and women to follow them in thought and socio-political attitude. It has shown two examples to the high character of the believing woman and her position in Islamic thought. It has shown Pharaoh's wife, the Queen of Egypt, the Lady of crown, palace, power, policy, and the great state at that time.

However, she challenged the authorities. The Qur'an has also shown Mary, daughter of Imran, who challenged the haughtiness and plot of the children of Israel. As the woman played an important role during the lives of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them), she played the same role during the life of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his mission. This unique ideological role was played by Khadija bint Khwaylid (a.s.). It is worth mentioning, Khadija (a.s.) belonged to tribe of Quraish.

She was the Lady of the society and had a remarkable position at Holy Mecca. She had wealth, trade, and position. She was the first woman to believe in Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.) message. Accordingly she believed in his prophethood and spent her money to support him. For him, she suffered all persecutions throughout the ten years of her holy life, be his side. She endured all the sufferings of the siege that lasted for three years. Thus, she has become among the greatest women in the history of Islam. For this reason, Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.) called the year when she died the Year of Sadness.

Muslims magnify this Lady very much. They follow her behavior and noble attitudes.

In a conversation with his wife `A'isha concerning Khadija's character, the Prophet said: "Allah has not recompensed me with better than her. She was the mother of the family and a house-wife. She believed me when the

people accused me of lying. She supported me with her money when the people deprived me (of that). She bore me a son when I was deprived (of that) from other than her." 17

Again he talked about her, saying: "Indeed, I love those who love her." 18

Then the Prophet (s.a.w.) talked about his daughter Fatima, the chaste: "Fatima is part of me. Whoever hurts her hurts me." 19 One day he was asked: "Which of your family is the most lovable to you?" "Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad," he said. 20 From these texts we understand the position and character of the woman during the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.). This attitude of the Prophet represents the best evaluation and respect to the position of the woman in Islam.

Through this brief Qur'anic and historical explanation, we understand that the woman looked after the great prophets and supported them. This was embodied during the lifetimes of Abraham, Moses, Ismael, Jesus (a.s.), and Muhammad (s.a.w.), who were the greatest of all the prophets and messengers and the leaders of thought, righteousness, and divine civilization in the earth.

The Qur'an has recorded the role of the woman during the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his mission. It has also mentioned that the women took part in emigrating with the Prophet and struggling before him. In this connection, the Qur'an has mentioned both men and women when it talks about emigration, pledge of allegiance, mission, good reward, the relationship between men and women, etc. There are hundreds of verses in the Qur'an about these matters. The following are some of them:

"And the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another; they enjoin good and forbid evil." Holy Qur'an (Towba 9:71)

"And my Lord! Forgive You me and my parents and him who enters my abode believing (in You) and the believer men and the believer women, and increase not unto the unjust ones in aught save perdition!" Holy Qur'an (Noah 71:28)

"The day you shall see the faithful men and faithful women, with their light running before them,..." Holy Qur'an (Hadid 57:12)

In these verses, the Qur'an raises the woman to the highest position and treats her as it treats the man. In the concept of the Islamic message, the man and the woman support each other to communicate the thought. They both reform society and remove corruption and crime. They both convey the message of good and peace and righteousness throughout the earth.

In the second verse, Prophet Noah (a.s.) asked his Lord to forgive both believing men and women. Through the meaning of this prayer, the principles of honoring, love, and respect for the woman spread. That is because the supplication for a certain person has all these meanings.

The Qur'an pictures that believing men and women will be in a halo of light on the day when they meet their Lord to receive their reward according to their deeds.

Thus, we understand that the Qur'an has granted the righteous woman love and support. Besides it has summoned (people) to ask their Lord to forgive the believing woman and bless her. Moreover, it has surrounded the believing woman with a halo of light. Such a woman is she who follows

Asiya Pharaoh's wife), Mary (the mother of Jesus), Khadija (the wife of Prophet Muhammad [s.a.w.]), and Fatima (the daughter of Muhammad [s.a.w.]).

Apart from this, we understand the high character of woman and respect towards her when we know that the first martyr in Islam was Sumayya, the mother of the great companion `Ammar b. Yasir. She was killed by Abu Sufyan, the leader of the polytheists. Thus, Sumayya sacrificed her life for the principles of the Islamic message. That was when the confrontation took place between the terrorists and tyrants, and Muhammad (s.a.w.) and the deprived and slaves who followed the message of Islam to give them their rights and to save them from ignorance and exploitation.

A number of the deprived women hurried to believe in the Prophet (s.a.w.) at the beginning of his mission. They endured pain, torture, and persecution. So, they emigrated to Habasha and Medina. They supported Allah and His Apostle (s.a.w.) strongly. The character of the righteous women clearly appear when we look at the view that surrounds the martyrs whom the Qur'an has mentioned:

"And the earth shall get radiant with the light of its Lord, and the Book (of deeds) shall be set, and the prophets shall be brought up and the witnesses, and (it shall) be judged between them, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly." Holy Qur'an (Zumar 39:69)

The Muslim woman has not discovered her true position in Islam yet and the Muslim man has not known the true position of the woman in Islam yet. So the relationship between them has become disordered and it will not become ordered until they both follow the principles of the Qur'an and recognise the rights of each other.

If the woman who follows the material civilization knows her position and respect in Islam, she will embrace it.

## Preparing the Women to fulfill their Tasks

The process of preparing and educating has an important effect on building and forming man's character. It directs his abilities and merits in a constructive manner. Thus, he is able to carry out his tasks in society. When man is neglected and deprived of education, direction, and organized preparation, he will grow up spontaneously.

In other words, circumstances, environment, and events will direct him. All these things kill his character, waste his abilities, and hinder his social growth. Then he will have a weak and unstable character, so he will be unable to deal successfully with society, events, problems, and chances. The conditions of woman should be studied through the picture represented in Islam. This picture is in the Qur'an and the purified Sunnah. It depends on numerous bases. They are as follow:

1. The unity of mankind depending on His words, the Exalted: "O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two many men and women. And keep your duty to Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship. Surely Allah is ever a Watcher over you." Holy Qur'an (Nisa 4:1)

We can understand this verse not only through its great meaning, but also through the Revelation that opened the Sura of al-Nisa' that talks about the affairs of woman with this verse and depends on it. The sura of al-Nisa' is among the greatest Suras. It has 176 verses excluding the bismillah, namely, in the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This surah is regarded as the foundation, legislation, and values that organize the relationship between man and woman, and limit their position and their role in society.

2. The relationship between man and woman depending on love, affection, mercy, calmness, and tranquility. All these qualities are presented in these words of His, the Exalted: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves, mates that you may dwell (inclined) unto them, and caused between you love and compassion: Verily in this are signs for a people who reflect." Holy Qur'an (Rum 30:21)

3. Man and woman are equal in rights and duties: "and for the women shall be similar rights (over men) in fairness,." Holy Qur'an (Baqara 2:228)

In this verse, Allahs means that man and woman have rights and duties over each other. Each of them has rights and duties. They both should carry out their duties through paying the rights of each other with kindness and good association. With this unique religious, and moral principle, Islam has balanced the relationship between man and woman. Accordingly, it has established an outstanding principle for the rights of woman.

4. The social relationship between man and woman is based on friendship as declared by the Holy Qur'an. Allah, the Exalted: "And the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another." The Qur'an gives this wonderful picture of the relationship between man and woman. This relationship is based on friendship. The highest degrees of love and respect are presented in this relationship. It has been established in the language that the word `wali' means supporter, lover, and friend.

Among the clear social phenomena in our world, which suffer from tyrants, are persecution, depression, force, and domination. Thus, this phenomena have negative effects on social dealings, education in school and home, the relations of work, and all kinds of social organization.

The absence of freedom, scorning the character of others, persecuting them, and depressing their will are familiar phenomena in our present society. Nobody protests against them but in some limits which are inappropriate for these phenomena.

Woman suffers from the pressure of this phenomena more than man. Our society has inherited backward habits, customs, and concepts. Through them it treats woman. Thus, it scorns the character, abilities, and merits of woman. Moreover, in many environments, man regards woman as a creature below the love of humanity of man.

The concepts of isolating woman from advanced social life have come into existence because of backwardness and the absence of Islamic awareness and understanding from the circles of Muslims, and general social, political, and intellectual situation. We find strange that some material writers have ascribed these concepts to Islam.

Because of the conditions of ignorance and backwardness, Muslims have submitted to material intellectual invasion through its two eastern and western schools. Thus, has begun a war waged against Islamic thought and to focus on the conditions of woman in the Islamic world. So, non-Islamic information and cultural foundations, secular parties, and the propagators of materialism and dissoluteness have spared no effort to drag woman from those circumstances and conditions in which she lives in backward society to the circle of dissoluteness, to corrupt woman, and to trade with her affairs politically and culturally.

That is because they have become sure of corrupting woman through sexual dissoluteness, and the motto of (woman's rights) and (woman's freedom), being the best way to corrupt the generation of males and females. That is because woman is the source of temptation and sexual excitement. Besides spreading sexual dissoluteness, which they have called (sexual rights), is among the most dangerous ways to destroy the family, to make children homeless, and to destroy human relationship between man and woman.

Thus, the plan of preparing and educating woman faces three directions. They are as follow:

1. The direction that resulted from the conditions of civilizational backwardness and awareness. It is the direction that depends on the base of scorning woman's character, depressing her will, and making absent her human and social role beside man. This direction has been inherited through habits and customs that have resulted from those who have no knowledge of Islam, the conditions of domination, the haughtiness of man, and intellectual backwardness.

2. Material direction: Western material civilization summons (people) to adopt this direction. It is the direction that summons people to believe in sexual dissoluteness that aims at destroying family relationships and empowering persecution and oppression of woman in another way and

under the motto of "woman's rights" and "sexual freedom", etc., that makes woman the victim of sexual enjoyment and violation and diseases.

3. Islamic direction: It is the direction that believes in the unity of mankind and organizes the relationship between man and woman according to respect and cooperation that aim at building society and organizing sexual relationship between man and woman not according to dissolute woman's body and to enjoy it and to destroy the foundations of family ties, as it occurs nowadays in Europe, America, Russia, China, Japan, and other countries in the world, that have followed the trend of material civilization. Rather on the foundation of respecting woman's humanity and granting her her rights, for she is a human being with qualities and rights and character.

## Building through Family Relationships

It has become clear that society stands on three basic pillars. They are as follows:

1. The reaction between the two cases of womanhood and manhood, for they have biological and psychological qualities, and that the happiness of society, its psychological tranquility, its social and material growth, the development of its production, and the righteousness of its behavior depends, to a large extent, on the righteous reaction between the two psychological states- the state of womanhood and manhood.

2. The link of common culture and thought.

3. Exchanging interests among the various members of society- males and females.

According to the first and third pillars, the social function of all the members of society, males and females, have come into existence according to their physical and mental abilities and their psychological inclinations. According to these pillars, woman moves to take part in building family and society. The widest fields of this participation is family.

Psychological studies have confirmed the Qur'an when it denoted that family was the base of society and was among its most important foundations and the foundation on which social life is built. Thus, the Qur'an has explained that and put the rules of relationship between man and woman and between the rights and duties of both man and woman to make them able to work and to build a happy social life.

Allah, the Exalted, said: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves, mates that you may dwell (inclined) unto them, and caused between you love and compassion: Verily in this are signs for a people who reflect." Holy Qur'an (Rum 30:21) "He it is Who created you from a single self and from it did He make his mate that he may dwell resting unto her." Holy Qur'an (Araf 9:189)

"Men have authority over women on account of the qualities with which Allah has caused the one of them to excel the other and for what they spend of their property; therefore, the righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen that which Allah has guarded." Holy Qur'an (Nisa 4:34)

"and for the women shall be similar rights (over men) in fairness,." Holy Qur'an (Baqara 2:228) "but deal kindly with them (women)." Holy Qur'an (Nisa 4:19)

"Let him with abundance spend of his abundance." Holy Qur'an (Talaq 65:7)

"and help you (one another) in righteousness and piety, and help you not (one another) in sin and aggression." Holy Qur'an (Ma'ida 5:2)

The Qur'an has talked about the human and lawful foundations and ties. The Prophetic traditions (sunna) has also talked about that. We will mention some traditions which have been reported on the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.): "All of you are responsables. And all of you are responsible for your subjects. The emir who (rules) over people is responsible for his subjects. The man is responsible for the people of his house. The woman is responsible for the house of her husband and his children. The slave is

responsible for the money of his master. Indeed you are all responsible for your subjects."(21)

It has been reported on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), who said: "It is the manner of the Prophets to love women."(22) It has been also reported on his authority (a.s.): "I do not think that a man gets better in faith without loving women better."(23)

It is useful here to refer to that the building which woman practices in society is sometimes a direct act and is sometimes through her psychological and moral relationship with her husband and her children. The wife should secure the atmosphere of rest and good association for her husband. She should also secure for him love, affection, and psychological tranquility.

For such psychological atmosphere has great effects on the character of husband and his relations with others and his ability to produce and give. That is because the psychological conditions of man affect all his activities and his relations with others. When family life is full of problems, worries, and tension, it affects the husband's character, work, production, and relations with others.

Psychological atmospheres in the family not only affect the husband but also the children. It is difficult for the child who grows up in the atmosphere of hatred and tension and problems and bad treatment to be a righteous character in his behavior and his relation with others and in directing his physical and mental abilities. Sometimes, because of the conditions of bad education, the child becomes an irregularly aggressive human being or he becomes lazy and non-productive or becomes a loiterer and is ready to create problems and commit crimes.

However, sound education forms a sound character. So, such education affects the economical, social, and scientific future of the child. Thus the role of woman is very effective in building society through educating and preparing good members for society, and through securing a sound atmosphere for her husband.

In the foregoing texts, the Holy Qur'an and the purified Prophetic traditions have limits for family administrative, organizational, educational, psychological, and lawful rules and foundations. Through these woman takes part in building society. Accordingly, building the family stands on

1. Love, affection, mercy, and respect between husband and wife.
2. Woman has rights and duties.
3. Man is the leader and supervisor and manager of his house.
4. Man and woman cooperate with each other to run the affairs of life.
5. Man and woman should be moderate in spending, and that they should maintain the economy of their family.
6. They should feel responsibility, namely the husband should feel his responsibility towards his wife and the members of his family. Meanwhile, the wife should feel her responsibility towards her husband, her children, and her family. For she is responsible for looking after her house and her children. Moreover, she is responsible for bringing up her children in a good manner and treating them with love and kindness.

## Woman and Family Economy

Among the basic problems of human society are: the problem of money, individual and collective income, and the balance between income and spending. This includes the economy of family and its financial balance between expenses and consumption. So, wasting food, drink, ornament, clothes, house, luxuries, and services are among the most dangerous problems that face man.

Extravagance destroys the economy of family, nation, and state. Most times this extravagance does not match the income of family. To organize the economic balance of society, Islam summons people to be moderate in spending. It forbids extravagance and miserliness. She takes great responsibility in organizing family spending and identifying its nature.

Islamic Law has legislated general rules for organizing spending. It has also limited the basic system for family spending and balance. We will mention some verses from the Qur'an that describes the servants of the Most Merciful (Allah) and regards them as ideal examples to others in spending. In this connection, Allah, the Most High, says: "And those who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but are stationed between the two (extremes)." Holy Qur'an (Furqan 25:67)

"and eat and drink you and commit you not excesses." Holy Qur'an (A'raf 7:31)

"And give to the near of kin his due and to the needy and the wayfarer, and squander not (your earnings) wastefully. Verily the squanderers are brethren of the satan; and Satan to his Lord is ever an ingrate." Holy Qur'an (Isra' 17: 26-27)

"And cause you not to shackle your hand unto your neck, nor stretch it forth to the maximum (limits of) stretching forth, lest you should (therefore) sit down blamed, destitute." Holy Qur'an (Isra' 17:29)

"Lodge them, wherever you lodge according to your means, and you harm them not to straiten (life for) them, and if they be pregnant, spend you on them until they lay down their burden; and if they suckle (to your issues) for you, you give them their recompense; and deal you unto one another in fairness; and if you find between you difficulties, then shall suckle some other woman for him. Let him with abundance spend of his abundance and he on whom is straitened his subsistence, let him spend of what Allah has given him; (for) Allah lays not on any soul a burden save to the extent to which He has given it; Allah will soon bring about ease after difficulty." Holy Qur'an (Talaq 65:6-7)

In this manner the general bases of family budget spending and expenses are limited within the frames of moral moderation, education, and guidance—they are the social and the family frame.

The role of woman is prominent in managing the affairs of the house and family economy. That is when she is careful with the budget of her family and moderate in spending on luxuries.

The wife is able to save part of the income of the family and to free her husband from debts. That is when she is moderate in spending on herself and her family.

Extravagance does not only affect the family but also affects the general economic situation of society and state. For the ability to buy in the market becomes high because of high spending and consumption. So, the value of money becomes low and the prices of commodities and services increase. Accordingly, the deprivation of the poor (of buying) increases, the family faces debts and social problems, currency faces inflation. As a result of the disorderly economic situation of society , moral, security, and political problems come into existence.

To educate woman to be moderate in spending special lectures on family economy in schools take part in building economic awareness and save it especially from the problem of over expending and the deprivation of poor classes. With this woman participates in building society through directing and organizing family economy, and through being moderate in spending according to the method of the Qur'an and its wise summons. Therefore, woman should carry out her responsibility towards her husband and her house according to the previous Prophetic tradition.

## Work and Islamic Law

Islamic law summons people to work. It urges them to work using many practical attitudes, concepts, and texts. Among them are the following words of Allah, the Exalted:

"He it is Who made for you the earth subservient, traverse you then its board sides, and eat you of His provision; and unto Him (alone) is the return." Holy Qur'an (Mulk 67:15)

"And when the prayer is ended then disperse you in the earth and seek you of the grace of Allah." Holy Qur'an (Jumu'a 62:10)

"And seek, by means of what Allah has given you, the abode in the hereafter, and forget not your share in this world." Holy Qur'an (Qasas 28:77)

Islamic Law not only summons people to work and production but also it denotes that they are different in abilities and merits. It also denotes that people should be perfect through exchanging interests with each other. In this respect Allah, the Most High, said: "...and We did raise some of them above the others in rank, so that some of them may take the others in subjection." Holy Qur'an (Zukhruf 43:32)

The Qur'an urges people to work, production, and exchanging interests. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) regarded work and production as jihad and worship. In this connection he (s.a.w.) said: "He who works for his own family is like the mujahid in the way of Allah."<sup>24</sup>

"Worship is seven parts; the best of them is seeking the lawful."<sup>25</sup>

Jurists devoted great efforts to their studies and analyses of work and production. They concluded that precepts of Islamic law and its attitude towards service and productive work is valid. They divided work legally into five parts. They are as follows: 1. Obligatory work: Islamic law has regarded as obligatory the work aiming at meeting need, satisfying the soul, and maintaining the family. Moreover, it has made it obligatory on the debtor to work to pay his debt.

2. Islamic law has regarded the work aiming at generously spending one's family as most desirable. 3. Islamic law has regarded as unlawful the work in forbidden things, such as making wine, narcotics, prostitution, and dancing etc... It has also forbidden work that leads to unlawful deeds, even if it is lawful in itself. 4. Islamic law has regarded some work as abominable for itself or for other than it. 5. Excluding the above-mentioned points, Islamic law has confirmed that work is lawful. With this work, collecting money and increasing wealth is lawful as long as it follows the precepts of Islamic law.

To study and analyze the concepts of the verses and the traditions, we will not find in them anything what prevents woman from working. Rather, they permit woman to work as they permit man, though some texts address and urge man to work.

## The Work of a Wife

Islamic law has limited precepts concerning the work of a wife as follows:

1. The wife has the right to stipulate in her marriage contract that her husband should not prevent her from working.

2. The husband must agree to let his wife work through mutual understanding. That is when she wants to work without a previous stipulation. Sometimes the husband disagrees to let his wife work. This does not mean that Islamic law prevents her from working. However, that depends on the relationship between the husband and his wife.

3. If a woman had worked before the marriage contract, a work contract is valid, even though work opposes her husband's right.

4. When the wife works without permission from her husband, the correctness of permission depends on the approval of the husband in what contradicts the rights of husband. The contract is valid in what does not contradict his right. 5. The precept which woman makes to hire herself to service includes all work contracts she makes.

When we study the precepts of Islamic law, we will not find any text that prevents woman from working in the first title. Rather, those who prevent woman from working outdoors produce evidence of that. Some people say that when woman works in mixed foundations, she will be corrupted, and will commit unlawful acts. This means that woman's work is unlawful because of the mixed work that leads her to commit unlawful acts.

It is necessary to mention here that all work that leads to unlawful things is forbidden for both man and woman. Therefore, it is obligatory to prevent mixed work and to employ the person needed for the regardless of whether the person is a man or woman.

From interpreting this holy verse: "and We did raise some of them above the others in rank, so that some of them may take the others in subjection", it is clear that abilities, merits, and readiness for work differ from one person to another, regardless of the person being a man or woman, and that exchanging interests and satisfying service and material needs can be achieved by all the members of society. Every individual, regardless of his gender, offers his effort and ability to satisfy the needs of society. Meanwhile the individual satisfies his needs through the process of the service and material exchange in society.

Therefore, the farmer offers agricultural products, the engineer and the technician make the instruments, the doctor offers medical treatments, the teacher teaches, the merchant secures commodities in the market, the soldier defends his country, the night watchman struggles against thieves, etc.

When we study and analyze all Islamic concepts and precepts, we will find that Islam does not prevent woman from working or from getting knowledge. The woman has the right to practice any work she wants, such as agriculture, industry, medicine, engineering, administration, political jobs( ), driving cars and planes, teaching and education, etc.

Man and woman have the right to practice all lawful work. Both man and woman are equal before the precepts of Islamic law. The difference between man and woman lies in some duties that concern both of them or in some

powers which have been built on scientific bases that take into consideration the psychological and biological structure of both man and woman to organize and manage social life.

Accordingly, work is permitted in Islamic law. Rather it is sometimes obligatory. No work is forbidden in Islam except those which Islamic law has forbidden, or that leads to unlawful deeds. Some people regard it forbidden for woman to work. Such people must produce evidence in support of their claim. For there is no religious proof for that.

The religious scholars have analyzed religious obligatories and divided them into collective and individual. Through studying the collective duty, we can conclude that Islam has made it incumbent on both man and woman to secure social services such as medicine, engineering, teaching, agriculture, trade, transport, security, etc. Sometimes collective duty becomes individual duty, regardless of whether the individual is a man or woman.

From this we understand that the division and carrying out of functional work in society stand on two bases: individual and collective. In both cases, Islam does not make any difference between man and woman. Rather, Islam makes it incumbent on woman to learn jobs that concern women such as medicine and teaching.

## Woman and Political Work

Woman's rights are among the basic matters that face intellectual and civilizational discussion in the 20th century. Among these rights are woman's participation in political life and work.

We find it strange that those who support woman's rights accuse Islam and Islamic beliefs of depriving woman of participating in political life and work. They support their claims with the political and social situations which they witness in Muslim countries. They do not differentiate between Islam, as regime, law and principles, and those of Muslims who do not represent Islam through their social and political actions. What they see in the society of Muslims is different from Islam. The picture of woman in that society of Muslims, the way of treating her, and her value in society opposes Islam, have resulted from views and concepts that have arisen from social practices, habits, and customs that do not represent Islam, especially as it concerns the attitude towards woman in political, social, cultural, and scientific fields, and her relationship with man.

In Islamic thought, policy means taking care of the affairs of the community in all of its vital fields, and leading its movement in the way of Islam. So, policy is a general social responsibility. All Muslims are responsible for it. In the terms of a religious scholar, that responsibility is an individual obligation. In it the command and address is directed to all Muslims, regardless of whether they are men or women, but some exceptions exist.

In this connection, Allah, the Exalted, says:

"...that: `Establish you the religion and be you not divided therein'." Holy Qur'an (Shura 42:13)

"Allah has promised unto those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth before them." Holy Qur'an (Nur 24:55)

"Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority from among you." Holy Qur'an (Nisa'4:59)

In all these verse, the address is directed to all Muslims, men and women. So, establishing religion with its thought and with all its religious, social and political regulations, is the responsibility of all Muslims. The address of obedience to the Muslim ruler, which has been mentioned in the verse that talks about obedience, is directed to all Muslims, and the promise of succession is directed to all those who believe (in Allah) and do good deeds.

In the Sura of al-Mumtahana, v.12, Allah, the Exalted, says: "O (Our) Prophet (Muhammad!) when come unto you believer women pledging that they will associate not aught with Allah, and they will steal not, and they will commit not adultery and kill not their children, and they will utter not slander, nor utter any falsehood which they had forged themselves between their hands and their feet and will not disobey you in what is fair, then accept you their pledge, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah; verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." This verse is a practical practice and Qur'anic proof, which the Prophet (s.a.w.)

carried out during his political and propagative life, for accepting the pledge of allegiance of woman to Muslim ruler. In fact, her pledge of

allegiance to him is obligatory. In this verse, the pledge of allegiance is the pledge of obedience to the Muslim ruler to conform to legal precepts and laws and to acknowledge his authority. This pledge of allegiance represents the most prominent meanings of the political rights in human society.

Perhaps, the clearest proof for the political role of woman and her rights in Islam is that which has been mentioned in the verses that enjoin (people) to do good and prevent (them) from doing evil, and the verses of authority that includes both men and woman. The jurist and great Muslim thinker, and martyr, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (may his grave be sanctified) has produced this verse as evidence that every believing man and woman is qualified for political authority. Both men and woman are equal in that. This is mentioned in the text of his words:

"The community practices its role in succession within the legislative frame of the following two Qur'anic verse: "...and (conduct) their affairs with counsel among themselves," "...and the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another; they enjoin good and forbid evil."

The first text gives the community the power to practice its affairs through a consultative committee, unless there is a special text opposing this text.<sup>26</sup> The second text talks about authority, and about that believers rule each other. By authority 'wilaya', He (Allah) means ruling His affairs. For the context enjoining (people) to do good and preventing (them) from doing evil' branches from it (authority). The text is obvious in that authority includes equally both believing men and women. Putting into effect the principle of consultation and the view of majority during differences results from that."<sup>27</sup>

Muslim women entered the field of policy at the lifetime of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.), as the verse of pledge of allegiance has mentioned. Muslim women entered the political field and took part in political life. Muslim women also entered and showed their opinions on the matter of the Imamate, policy, and caliphate after the death of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.). The best example of that was the attitude of Fatima The Chaste (a.s.), daughter of the most honorable Apostle, Muhammad (s.a.w.), and wife of Imam Ali b.

Abi Talib (a.s.). That was when she entered the field of policy after the death of her father (s.a.w.). She stood by Ali during her political movements and attitudes. So a group of the emigrants and the Ansar joined her. Accordingly, a political ideological party was formed. The party opposed and refused the pledge of allegiance (to Abu Bakr) that took place under the shelter (saqifa), and then it summoned the people to Pledge allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.). Moreover Fatima (a.s.) communicated with the Ansar in their houses and summoned them to pledge allegiance to Ali (a.s.) and to oppose Saqifa.

This has been mentioned in some historical books:

"Ali, may Allah honor him, went out at night carrying Fatima, daughter of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.), on a riding animal, (and made her pass) through the assemblies of the Ansar to ask them to support (Ali). However, the Ansar said: 'O Daughter of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.), our pledge of allegiance

to this man( )husband and your cousin had come to us before Abu Bakr, we would not have turned away from him."28

The books of history have also mentioned opposing attitudes took place between Fatima, the Chaste (a.s.) and the caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar b. Khattab.

When we consider carefully the two verses (the verse ???????of consultation and the verse of authority of believers), which martyr al-Sadr has explained, we will find that they are the wide intellectual foundation of political rights, in fact they are the wide intellectual foundation of all the members of the community, men and women.

In this respect, there is another verse. The verse urges both men and woman to oppose tyrannical rulers, to establish the Islamic state, to guide political public opinion, etc. The verse contains these words of Him, the Exalted: "And that there should be among you a group who call (mankind) unto virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong; and these are they who shall be successful."

In this verse the Qur'an makes it obligatory that there should be a group from Muslims to enjoin (people) to do good and to forbid doing evil. This group includes both men and women. The clear proof for that is these words of Him, the Exalted: "And the believer men and the believer women, they are guardians to one another; they enjoin good and forbid evil."

It is clear, in Islamic thought, that the political field is so wide that it includes enjoining good and forbidding evil and includes the summons to establish the Islamic regime, facing oppressive rulers and regimes. It also includes participating in managing authority, planning the policy of the community, political education, consultation, pledge of allegiance -such as electing the ruler and the representatives of the community, and taking part in consultative assemblies that practice enjoining good, and forbidding political means, etc.

From studying political and social situations and conditions, according to which we should act, we can conclude that this group which the Qur'an ordered to be founded: "And that there should be among you a group...", cannot practice its role as the Qur'an wants except when it is an organized group to practice its role according to developed means and methods which should suit the conditions of the historical period of its Muslims. This means that woman can take part in political groups and activities, various reformative and intellectual foundations and associations.

From these Qur'anic bases, we understand that political life is open to woman, as it is open man, on both levels- individual and collective obligations- or to permit participation in all fields of political life.

A practical example of women's political life in Islam is their true participation in political life In the Islamic Republic of Iran. The constitution here has given woman the right to elect and participate in the parliament (the Consultative Assembly) and political organizations, activities, and jobs, just as woman took part in the Islamic revolution against the Shah's regime. She participated in strikes, demonstrations, distributing leaflets, and delivering speeches. She shared with man all his political

struggle. Accordingly, she has obtained all her political rights under the Islamic regime.

## Epilogue

Only Islam has given woman rights and dignity. In this connection the Qur'an says:

"And indeed We have honored the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and on the sea and We provided them with sustenance of good things, and We have exalted them over most of those whom We have created, by (high) degree of exaltation." Holy Qur'an (Bani Israel 17:70)

"and for the women shall be similar rights (over men) in fairness,." Holy Qur'an (Baqara 2: 228) The Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

"It is the manner of the prophets to love women."

Therefore, woman should demand her rights as the Qur'an gives her. The Qur'an wants her to be mother, daughter, and wife. It wants her to be a person who has the right of support and love in society. It wants her to practice her biological, psychological, and intellectual abilities in the place of good, purification, and righteousness. For woman has tasted the bitterness of life in the chastic world of material civilization. And praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

## Endnotes

1. In Majjma` Bayyan, Tubrisi explained this verse, saying: "They exploit each other. So, they make use of the work of each other. With that the straightness of the world is organized."
2. Turaihi, Tafsir Gharib Qur'an Karim. Tabataba'i, Tafsir al-Mizan.
3. Ibid.
4. Mu`jam Wasit.
5. Ibid.
6. Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab al-Adab, Chapter 27.
7. Dr. Anwar Sultan, Mabadi' Qanuniya Amma, p.16.
8. Hur Amili, Wasa'il Shi`a, Kitab Salat, Abwab Ahkam Libas, Chapter 13.
9. Ibid.
10. Bukhari, Sahih, vol.7, p.55.
11. Dr. Nadim Ata al-Yas, Sayaqhar al-Ma' Summa al-Hajar, p.42.
12. Ibid, p. 46.
13. Ibid, p.50.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid, p.51.
17. Is`af Raghbin. Shibanji, Nur Absar, p.96.
18. Muslim, Sahih, (Dar Ihya Turath Arabi) vol.15, p.201.
19. Tirmidhi, Sunan. Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol.4, p.5. Nisa'i, Khasa'is, p.25.
20. Tabari, Thakh'ir Uqba, p.36.
21. Bukhari, Sahih, vol.3, p.196.
22. Kulaini, Furu` mina al-Kafi (3rd Edition), vol.5, p.320.
23. Ibid.
24. Kulaini, Kafi, Kitab Ma`isha, vol.5, p.67.
25. Harrani, Tuhaf Uqul an Aal Rasul, Mawa`idh Nabi (s.a.w.).
26. An example of that is the text which has been reported on the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.) concerning the Imamate of the Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) in the farewell Pilgrimage, and the like. Also see Ahmed, Musnad, vol.1, p.118. Ibn Maja, Sunan, vol.1, p.43. Hakim, Mustadrak, vol.3, p.109.
27. Martyr, Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Islam Yaqud Hayat, p.171.
28. Ibn Qutayba Daynwari, Imama wa Siyasa, vol.1, p.19.

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