

Equality of Man and Woman

The religion of Islam gave women an honorable status and true dignity. Before the advent of Islam, women had no rights of any kind, or an independent identity in any form. The great importance of the Muslim woman's role – whether as wife, sister, or daughter, and the rights that are due to her and the rights that are due from her – have been explained in the Glorious Qur'an, and further details of this have been explained in the purified Sunnah.

With the advent of Islam came the verse from the Qur'an condemning those who practiced female infanticide: "And when one among of them receives the glad tidings of a daughter, his face turns black for the day, and he remains seething. Hiding from the people because of the evil of the tidings; "Will he keep her with disgrace, or bury her beneath the earth?"; pay heed! Very evil is the judgment they impose!" [Surah an-Nahl : 58/59]

The Holy Qur'an makes no distinction between man and woman as regards to the fundamental human rights. Here we may specifically state that woman, like man, is the possessor of free personality, and enjoys equality with man, in respect of:

Her spiritual and moral status:

The Qur'an says: "...Unto men the benefit of what they earn (of virtue) and unto women the benefit of what they earn (of virtue)" [Surah al-Nisa : 32]

i.e. in matters of spiritual grace both, man and woman, enjoy equal status and are independent of one another. A woman's responsibility in faith is exactly the same as that of a man. Women are to pray, fast, give charity, perform the pilgrimage and perform other forms of Ibadah. A woman is rewarded for this just like a man. A woman must believe in the Oneness of Almighty Allah, the Books of Almighty Allah, the Angels of Almighty Allah, the Prophets of Almighty, the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Judgment and Heaven and Hell, and Predestination.

Her economic rights:

The Qur'an says: "Unto the men (of a family) belongs a share of that which parents and near kindred leave, and unto the women a share of that which the parents and near kindred leave, whether it be little or much – a legal share." [Surah al-Nisa : 7]

Her legal rights:

The Qur'an says: "...And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, according to what is equitable..." [Surah al-Baqarah : 228]

Islam ensured a dignified life to the fair sex, which was hitherto treated in an unfair manner. Woman became the mistress of the household. Man was not allowed to beat or manhandle them nor deprive them of their share in the property. The Holy Qur'an declared: "A mother should not be made to suffer because of her child, nor he to whom the child is born (be made to suffer) because of his child (because both are equal before the law)..." [Surah al-Baqarah : 233]

Her right for gaining the Knowledge:

Islam has made it a duty on every Muslim male and female to gain knowledge, which is considered to be a superior act of worship in Islam. In Islam, therefore both men and women are credited with the capacity for learning, understanding and teaching. Knowledge is not only limited to the religious knowledge but includes all forms of knowledge. Acquiring knowledge will enable Muslim women and men to get a better perception and understanding of the world around them and make them more conscious of Almighty Allah SubHanuhu wa Ta'ala.

Conclusion:

The status of Muslim women as defined in Islam is very important because women make up half of society and they are responsible for nurturing, guidance and reformation of the subsequent generations of men and women. It is the female who imbues principles and faith into the souls of the nation. Indeed, the Muslim woman is the initial teacher in building a righteous society. Islam brought a new lease of life to women. Islam elevated the status of women to great heights so high that she stood shoulder to shoulder with man. In the Islamic family, the role of men and women is complementary rather than competitive. Their duties are described as equal in importance but not identical in substance.

Now, the issue of feminism in Islam is meaningless. The coming of Islam has brightened the life and future of women, in which Islam has lifted up their level. Islam upholds women to the highest and most respected position.

We hope our effort will be appreciated and our sisters in faith will surely remember us in their prayers for peace and prosperity, health and happiness and Allah's SubHanuhu wa Ta'ala Mercy and Favour. May Almighty Allah SubHanuhu wa Ta'ala, through the Waseela of Sayyiduna Rasoolullah SallAllaho Alaihi wa Sallam accept this humble effort; and may He SubHanuhu wa Ta'ala give us the Toufeeq and Hidayah to restore the true rights to our Muslim women as dictated by Islam. Aameen!!

N.B.: We do not intend to restrict the readership of this note to sisters only; brothers also can benefit from this note. May Almighty Allah's blessings be always with us and our families. Aameen!!