

HONOUR OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Most people believe that women in Islam are oppressed. That they have no freedom of thought or ability to decide for themselves to do as they wish. This opinion is completely false.

The condition of women in Islam is being derogated by many of us because we do not know the truth about the status Islam gives women.

In India, we find at present women being treated with utmost shamelessness by some people who still think that they are not worthy of being equal to men.

Before the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), women were treated like cattle and inherited or sold at will. We still find this to be the case today in certain parts of the world where truth has not yet arrived.

- ✓ After the advent of Islam, the respect given to women was so high that they were considered equal to men in all walks of life. Only their duties differed.
- ✓ Both men and women were punished for any wrong done by them equally.
- ✓ Women participated, of their own free will, in major events of Islam, which shaped the direction of Islam. The respect they are given surpasses all other religions.
- ✓ Allah declares in the Quran that not only Muslim men but also women would be given equal reward if they behave with righteousness and Taqwah, piety and justice, etc. (Sura Ahza'b (33) verse: 35):
- ✓ The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) were given special status in Islam as mothers of the Ummah.
- ✓ Women had the right to inheritance, and even the father had no right to marry off his daughter without her consent.
- ✓ Surah Nisa and many other Surahs were revealed just for the sake of justice for women.

If we go through the history of Islam, we can find numerous hadeeth scholars who are women. The names of Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Maymana, Umm Salama, and Aa'ishah (may peace be upon all of them) are familiar to every student of Hadith, as being among its earliest and most distinguished transmitters. Ayesha (ra) was also knowledgeable in arts, medicine, and mathematics. She was consulted for the ratio of inheritance after the demise of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Down the centuries, many women Sahabiyat were considered as custodians of knowledge, and the Muslims benefited from their Bayan. They were held in high esteem by the judges and jurists of their time.

The list is too long to mention here of those women scholars of that time, who were allowed to share the dais with their brothers in giving lectures and propagating Islam as best as they could.

No one even found it demeaning to listen to a woman. Women and men were considered with equal respect according to their knowledge and character. However, to prevent any ill thoughts from entering their minds, Allah has ordered both to lower their gaze and has set certain

restrictions of Hijab for women as well as men. This is because we Muslims, men and women, are taught to be disciplined and are of a higher standard.

Even today, many teachers, professors, and doctors, are at their best in their profession and work for the benefit of society. In the Muslim countries, none of them are demeaned or looked down upon. This is because Islam teaches men and women to respect each other.

And Love Jihad: forcing women or men to change their religion for marriage or otherwise, is forbidden in Islam. Allah says: "There is no compulsion in religion." Al-Quran- 2:256

This is because faith should come from the heart.

When India got its independence, Gandhiji's famous words were: Only if a woman can walk the streets adorned in jewels alone at night, without being harmed, can I agree that India has truly attained independence. This condition we find nowhere except in the Arab world.

- ✓ No country that follows the Shariah Law will you find such shameless behavior because rape and sexual harassment attract the strictest punishment there. Whether a Muslim or non-Muslim, we find that women are respected and given their due position in society.
- ✓ While rape and flesh trade are rampant all over the world, we find that the Muslim land has the lowest percentage of such shameless acts.
- ✓ Therefore, even today, when we find anyone criticizing us, our duty is only to respond with kind words, the truth about the status given to women in Islam.

In fact, the best way is to ignore such baseless criticism. If things go beyond the limit, we can seek justice in the court of law, and go ahead with our head held high, without giving much prominence to such vulgar and shameful propagations, and try to explain, wherever necessary, the importance of morality and respect that ought to be shown among the citizens of India.

If we want our country to progress further, let us join hands with like-minded people and develop a nation that is proud of its women and honor them as they deserve.¹

Wa Salaam

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¹ Please refer to FUNDAMENTALS OF Hadith By Dr. BILAL PHILIPS, and my book ETERNAL GUIDANCE TO PEACE, for further details.

