

Chapter 1: Character of Woman

The issue of the woman's character has a leading role in recognising the woman in every creed and religion, and every thought course can, through the portrait it displays for the woman's character, give its opinion and lay bare its stance in respect of other affairs of the woman. In other words, all other subjects like: woman's rights, her social participation, moral perfections and veil and adornment are relevant and correlated to the theme of the woman's character.

So studying and investigating the woman's affairs in perspective of Islam, should also be conducted from this point. Further, it is explicit that indicating the Islam's view toward the woman should be, on the one hand, compatible to the incontrovertible religious sources, and on the other, it should be compliant and corresponding to the conclusions, necessities and effects of this theory. Otherwise, this issue would be incompetent to be a source of dependence and basis of inference.

Our view is that from an Islamic perspective, the woman is a human being, having all development talents, with being devoid of any defect or fault in the essence of her entity. And despite her owning all factors of perfection and development, like men, but she has an independent character and never be parasite on others. Because Allah has created man and divided the human being into two classes: man and woman, for the sake of his/her eternity. And classifying the creatures into male and female is in fact a general rule, in this material world.

Allah has sworn by this reality in His Holy Book:

“And Him Who hath created male and female.” (Qur’an, 3:3).

Hence, malehood and femininity are verily not characteristics peculiar to human beings, but rather they be a means of existence of all beings. And as they can never be considered as a defect or evil on the part of all things, the same is true too in regard of human genera. This religious inference can be applied in the case of women in many aspects and respects. devoid of any defect or fault in the essence of her entity. And despite her owning all factors of perfection and development, like men, but she has an independent character and never be parasite on others. Because Allah has created man and divided the human being into two classes: man and woman, for the sake of his/her eternity. And classifying the

creatures into male and female is in fact a general rule, in this material world.

The Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is verily the most important source for recognition of religion, as it being an intact and uncorrupted book, to which other books and sources should be measured and judged, and accepted only when proved to be compatible and incongruous to it. For getting acquainted with the Qur'anic view in respect of the character of the woman, I shall put forth six questions the answers of which given in this Divine Book would portray the real personality of the woman, as follows:

Creation of Man & Woman

Creation of the first man and woman has been described, in a story-like form, in many verses in the Qur'an. First Allah has apprised the angels that he was intending to place a viceroy and deputy in the earth:

“And when thy Lord said unto the angles: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth...”
(Qur'an, 2:30).

In other verses in surat al-Hijr, He said to the angels:

“And remember when thy lord said unto the angels: Verily I create man of the essence of black mud fashioned into shape. So when I complete him and breathe into him My spirit, fall ye down unto him prostrating “in obeisance”.” ***(Qur'an, 16:28, 29).***

Then He taught Adam all the names concluding a covenant with him:

“And He taught Adam the Names, all of them...” ***(Qur'an, 2:30).***

“And indeed had we covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; but we did not find in him any intention “to disobey us”.” ***(Qur'an, 20: 115).***

In another place, He said:

“Enjoined I not on you O children of Adam! that ye should worship not Satan?” ***(Qur'an, 36:60).***

After that Adam and his wife dwell in the heaven:

“And said we “O Adam! dwell thou and thy mate in the Garden...” ***(Qur'an, 2:34).***

Then begins the temptation of the Satan when tempting Adam and his wife Eve, or falsely swearing seducing them both to perpetrate that sin through trickery, cheating them to eat from the forbidden tree, causing them to deflect from the heavens.

In the holy Qur'an, it is said:

“And said We “O Adam! dwell thou and thy mate in the Garden and eat ye two therefrom freely as ye two wish but approach not ye two this tree lest ye two will be of the transgressors! But Satan made them slip and drove them out of what they were in; and “whereupon” said We: “Get ye down! the one of you as an enemy unto the other...” (Qur’an, 2:35- 36).

Threat, rebellion and disobedience could only be produced on the part of Adam:

“And Adam acted not “to the advises of” his Lord “deceived by Satan” and got astray.” (Qur’an, 20: 121).

In this stage, Adam and his wife started to apologise to the Almighty Allah for their fault, confessing their wrongdoing, seeking God's forgiveness and mercy:

“Said they “O Our Lord! unjust have we been unto ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not and deal “not” with mercy unto us “then”, We will certainly be of the losers.” (Qur’an, 7:23).

Then Adam receives certain words and Allah relents toward him:

“And received Adam from his Lord “certain” words “of prayer” and God turned unto him “mercifully”, for verily He is the Oft turning “unto mercy”, the Most Merciful.” (Qur’an, 2:37).

Pondering and making a meditating pause on this story, the verses of which have already been quoted, we will be led to the fact that no difference or distinction is stated in the Qur'an in creation of the woman and man. Thus it is incorrect to attribute all characteristics of strength to the man and those of weakness and deficiency to the woman, since it is both talking about the human being and man or son of Adam as a symbol and specimen and representative of humankind.

Hence, in respect of vicegerency and succession, breathing of “God's” soul, prostration “in obeisance” of angels, teaching the names, evil whispering of Satan, rebellion and disobedience, covenant and contract, selection and choosing, receiving of words, and relentless and material of creation, they are both equal.

For completing discussion of this issue, two other subjects to which the verses on creation of man referred, should be studied and perused attentively.

Creation of Woman out of Man

When reading some of the Qur'anic verses, we may come to conclude that Allah has created the woman from the man, and this is considered a kind of deficiency on the part of the women.

These verses are the following:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single self and created from it, its mate, and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.” (Qur’an, 4: 1).

“He it is Who did create you from a single soul, and therefrom did make his mate...” (Qur’an, 7: 189).

“He created you from one being, then from that “being” He made his mate” (Qur’an, 39:6)

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves, mates...” (Qur’an, 30:21).

“And God hath given you wives of your own selves, and hath given you from your wives sons and grandchildren...” (Qur’an, 16:72).

“He made for you from among your “own” selves pairs...” (Qur’an, 42: 11).

In the first three verses, it is stated that men have been created from one self, and from that self their mates were created. In the next three verses this subject was made in the plural form and addressing all men that your wives were created from your own selves. Pondering over and meditating in all the verses as a whole, will verily indicate that what God intends to say is that the spouse of man being his mate and counterpart and from his self, neither being alien to him, nor a part of him or created from him “his body”. Since if this be true, it should be said that every wife was created from her own husband, hence the last three verses should be taken as evidences and proofs for manifesting and elucidating the meaning of the first verses.

In interpreting these verses, Al-‘Allamah At-Tabataba‘i says:

The apparent meaning of the verse: ***“and from it, He created its mate”*** being that God has created a spouse of the same species of the man, and all the human beings belong to two equal and alike individuals.

The word “Min” “from” in the verse is a genetic preposition “i.e. it shows the origin of something”. This verse, like other verses, discusses the issue of creation of the woman and man, like the verses: ***“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves, mates... .”*** and the verse: ***“And God hath given you wives of your own selves...”*** and others.

On this basis, whatever is stated in regard of these interpretations like that the denotation of this verse is to indicate the fact that the woman is derived from Adam and a part of him, according to some narrations “one of which claiming that God has created the wife of Adam from his rib”, being all baseless claims for which no evidence is ever established.¹

This statement was held by Wahbah Zuhayli, a sunni exegete, who quoted it from Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi.²

What can be concluded from all this discussion is the fact that the Qur'an, when making simile between the woman and man, it concentrates on the origin and root, and oneness of species of the two. Any claim other than this topic should be neglected. Besides, some traditions are there in support of this conclusion, to which we can refer here:

Al-Imam As-Sadiq was questioned once: Some people claim that Eve is created from Adam's rib "what do you say"? He (A) replied: "Verily God is absolutely pure and free from this." Is God unable to create a spouse for Adam, from other than his rib? So that to close the door leaving no room or excuse to be exploited by some evilminded to raise any doubt, to say that Adam has got married to himself?! May God judge between us and such people.³

In another hadith it is said:

God has created Eve from the surplus of the clay of Adam, and similar to him.⁴

Philosophy of Creation of Woman

In two Qur'anic verses a reference is made to a subject from which we can conclude a supposition that the woman was created for the man and she being a parasite to him.

Herewith I cite these verses, after which I will elaborate and explain their meanings:

● ***"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, when he covereth her, she beareth a light burden and carrieth it, when it groweth more heavy they both pray to their Lord; "If Thou givest a good child, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones." (Qur'an, 7: 189).***

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

Out of these verses it can be understood that the philosophy of creation of the woman being peace and repose for men. In fact, the original cause for life being men, and the women were created for giving them rest and repose.

In response to this we should say that this tranquillity and repose can never be onesided, but it is mutual between the woman and man, since the love and compassion mentioned in the second verse, is stated as mutual and reciprocal between the two. Further the verse considered this affinity as one of God's signs, and in the first verse if dwelling in rest stated onesided, but it should be interpreted in view of the second verse.

In exposing the second verse, al-Allamah At-Tabataba'i said:

The meaning of the verse ***"He created for you from yourselves mates."*** is that He "God" created from your species the like of you so as to make you benefit and get advantage. Because every woman and every man is provided with genitals alike and similar that complement each other, and when coming into each other they give production. That is, by action of both of them "sexual organs" the work of production and procreation of offspring is achieved and fulfilled.

Based on this, each one of them "man and woman" has a deficiency and in need and want to the other spouse, and from intermingling them together a complete full production will come out. Due to this need and lacking, each one of them feels inclined to and moves toward the other, and when copulation is done every one feels calm and at peace. Because every imperfect is so eager and anxious to what complements him/her, and every wanting is inclined to what meets his/her need and perfects him/her. This is exactly the sexual appetite "lust" that is established and deposited inside both the spouses.⁵

In short, what the Qur'anic verses intend to demonstrate being not the philosophy of creation of the woman, but they in fact tell of the kind of spiritual and life connection between woman and man, and attachment to each other.

How Qur'an Introduces Talents of Men & Women

The second question whose answer should be found in the holy Qur'an being: How were the aptitudes and abilities of the woman and man divided in the Qur'an? And are all of them stated to belong to the men alone? Or no distinction is mentioned in it?

Further many verses are there in the Qur'an demonstrating the genetic and legislative talents and powers of human beings, using everywhere words of man and mankind with general expressions, with no exception on behalf of women or preference of men over women.

In regard of aptitude, the Qur'an referred to the following points:

Divine Spirit

Man has "inside" a Divine Spirit, and this merit is not distinguished alone to the men.

"So when I complete him and breathe into him My Spirit, fall ye down unto him prostrating "in obeisance". (Qur'an, 15:29).

Fashioning and Modification in Creation

"Surely We created man of the best stature." (Qur'an, 95:4).

"O thou man! What hath beguiled thee from thy Lord, the Most Gracious One. "He" Who created thee, and fashioned thee and "gave thee a body" justly proportioned." (Qur'an, 82:6, 7).

Tools of Administration

"He it is Who caused for you the hearing and the sight and hearts; "very" little it is what ye give thanks "unto Him". " (Qur'an, 31:23).

The Divine Creation

"Then set thou thy face uprightly for "the right" religion, in natural devotion to the truth "following" the nature caused by God in which He hath made the people..." (Qur'an, 30:30).

Moral Conscience

"By the soul as it is perfected. And inspired unto it "against" its vices and "about" its piety!" (Qur'an, 91:7, 8).

Bearing the Trust

"Verily we offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof..." (Qur'an, 33:72).

Further, He considered all natural potentials to belong altogether to man, referring to them with plural form and with expressions like: "He made subservient unto you, created for you, and made for you":

"And made subservient unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth." (Qur'an, 45:13).

"He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth..." (Qur'an, 2:29).

"Who made the earth a bed "resting place" for you and the sky a structure and causeth water to descend from heaven..." (Qur'an, 2:22).

In regard of educating the human beings, the plural pronoun with terms of man are used:

"God", The Beneficent, Taught He the Qur'an. He created man, He taught him expression." (Qur'an, 55:14).

"He" Who taught "to write" with the pen. "He" taught man what he knew not." (Qur'an, 96:45).

In regard of delegating the apostles and legislating a religion, and sending down a scripture also there is no distinguishment of differentiation:

"He it is Who raised among the ummies "illiterates" an Apostle from among themselves, reciting unto them His signs, and purifying them, and teaching them the Book "Qur'an" and wisdom..."

(Qur'an, 62:2).

What is the Aim of Creation of Woman & Man?

Is there any difference in the objective of creation of woman and man? Has the Qur'an stated any distinction between women and men in this respect? The answers for these questions are definitely in negative, as the Qur'an mentions the goal of creation to be servitude and devotion, no difference is there in this regard between the woman and man. Also no separation is seen between the two in regard of the end of invitation "da'wah" of the messengers, which is life and living.

"I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me." (Qur'an, 51:56).

"O ye who believe! respond ye to His Apostle "Muhammad" when He calleth you to that which giveth you life..." (Qur'an, 8:24).

How Do Woman & Man Enjoy the Values?

A number of values are stated in the holy Qur'an that can be a moral measurement criterion for man, and in which no distinction or preference is seen. These values are the following:

Faith and Good Deed

"Whosoever did good, whether male or female, and he be a believer, then We will certainly make him live a life good and pure..." (Qur'an, 16:97).

Knowledge

"Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks." (Qur'an, 58:11).

Piety "taqwa"

"O ye people! Verily we have created you of a male and a female, and made you in nations and tribes, that ye may recognise each other; Verily the most honoured of you with God is the one of you who guardeth "himself" the most "against evil"." (Qur'an, 49:13).

Competing in Faith

"And the foremost in the race, the foremost in the race. Those are they who will be brought night." (Qur'an, 56:10, 11).

Jihad "struggle"

"... And Allah hath distinguished those who strive above those who sit "holding back" by a great recompense." (Qur'an, 4:95).

Migration

"So their Lord did respond to them "saying" "I will not suffer the work of any of you that worketh to be lost, be he male or female, the one of you being from the other. They, therefore, who did migrate and were turned out of their homes and suffered in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly blot out their sins from them, and I will most certainly admit them into gardens beneath which flow streams; A reward from God! and God! Verily with Him "only" is the Excellent Reward." (Qur'an, 3: 195).

In continuing discussion of values it is proper to relate a tale from history of first stage of Islam.

Muqatil says: When Asma¹, the daughter of Ummays returned with her husband Ja'far from Abyssinia, she went near the wives of the Messenger of Allah "may God's peace and benediction be upon him and his Progeny" and said: Is there any verse revealed in the Qur'an regarding the women? The answer came to her in negative.

Thereat she betook herself toward the Prophet (S) saying: The women are sustaining a loss and detriment, all the time. The Prophet questioned: Why? She replied: Since Allah has never referred to them in good terms, as He did in regard of men.

After that the following verse was revealed:

"Verily the Muslim men and the Muslim women, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obedient men and the obedient women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember God much and the women who remember God "much", Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a great recompense." (Qur'an, 33:35).

How can Felicity be Obtained by Man & Woman?

The Qur'an has introduced only one way toward felicity of man, and invited and asked all children of Adam, men and women, to follow and adopt that way.

"Enjoined I not on you O children of Adam! that ye should worship not Satan? for he is your open

enemy. And ye should worship "only" Me, "and" this is the "only" Right way?" (Qur'an, 36:60, 61).

Throughout the five daily "obligatory" prayers, every follower of Islam implores God five times, day and night, to guide him toward the straight path, which is way of guidance.

Enemy of Woman & Man on Course to Perfection

Do the woman and man have enemies on the path to happiness? Is their enemy a common one? Is his enmity to each of them of the same degree? These are requests to which answers should be given within the last question. Some of feeble and ignorant thoughts indicate that in view of religion, the Satan contracts enmity with the man while proposing friendship with women, and Adam was entrapped for the first time by Satan, through his wife.

The holy Qur'an regards this idea to be incorrect. Besides, the creation verses indicate that Satan has whispered and prompted to Adam and Eve to err and they both went astray. But then they both confessed before their Lord that they have wronged themselves.

In other verses the Qur'an considers the Satan as the enemy of man, not the enemy of men.

"... Verily Satan unto man is an open enemy!" (Qur'an, 12:5).

The Almighty Allah has also made a covenant with all children of Adam charging them to keep themselves far from Satan, as stated in surat Yaseen:

"Enjoined I not on you O children of Adam! that ye should worship not Satan?" (Qur'an, 36:60).

To sum up the discussion, it can be said that the holy Qur'an never maintains any difference between personality of woman and that of the man, but rather it looks at them both equally as a pure human entity, preparing for both of them the ground of development and progress. The only difference lies in the fact that the Qur'an considers the woman and man as complementary to each other in human life.

"... they are an apparel for you and ye are apparel for them;..." (Qur'an, 2:187).

In his exposition of this verse, al-Allamah At-Tabataba'i writes:

By apparel "libas" the commonly known meaning is indicated, that is whatever man covers his body with. These two sentences are metaphorically used, as each woman and each man can curb the other from following evil ways and being a joint property, and every one of them is raiment for the other, covering his/her defects and screening his/her private parts.⁶

The Prophetic Sunnah

Through and between the traditions, an eloquent statement is quoted that manifests the views of our religion leaders "Imams" the character of the woman, to some of which I refer herewith:

Mates of Men "shaqaayiq"

It is reported from the Messenger of Allah "peace and benediction be upon him and his Progeny" that he said: "The women are verily the mates "shaqaayiq" of the men."⁷

The same hadith is quoted with other versions like: "They are verily equals of men." and "The women are mates of men." ⁸

In regard of the meaning of the word Shaqaayiq, lexicographers write:

The woman are verily mates "shaqaayiq" of the men, meaning that they are like and equal to them in morals and behaviour and nature, in a way that it can be said the women have not been separated from the men. ⁹ The root of the term shaqeeq gives the meaning of full brother "from the same father and mother".

Paradise is under the Feet of Women

In a hadith reported from the Prophet (S), he said: "Paradise is verily under the foot of the woman."¹⁰ This hadith is recorded in books of hadith with other versions, like: "Paradise is under the feet of mothers," ¹¹ and: "Construction of paradise is under feet of mothers."¹² and others.

Honouring Women

In regard of honouring the women, the Prophet (S) said: "The best of you are those who be too kind to their wives." ¹³

He also said: "None honouring the women but the magnanimous, and none insulting them but the mean depraved one."¹⁴

The noteworthy point here is that our religious leaders have, in their last testaments and in most critical situations, recommended to respect rights and dignity of women.

In the last year of his age and in his Farewell Pilgrimage "hijjat alwadaa'", which was attended by a huge multitude of people, the Messenger of Allah (S) addressed people saying:

"O mankind, your wives have right over you and you have right over them... so fear you the wrath of God, in respect of the women, and recommend to them all the good."¹⁵

al-Imam Ali "peace be upon him", after being stroked on the nineteenth night of Month of Ramazan, has summoned his children giving them and all people throughout history, precious recommendations, among which the following maxim was also cited:

"I recommend you to observe your duty to" Allah in regard of the women and the captives whom your right hands possess. As the last thing recommended by your Prophet was that he said: "I commit to your charge the two feebles: the women and what your right hands possess."¹⁶

That which can be concluded out of this statement is that the custom of enslaving "others" is never approved by religion at all, and it has exerted so many efforts for abolishing and eradicating it from the human society.

Further, some laws and regulations have been revealed and enacted all for changing and removing this abominable practice with time passage. In regard of women the same method was followed and adopted to the effect that our religion never intending to discriminate between males and females, and the aim of some of the laws and rules was to creating gradual accompaniment with the society and eradicating that habit forever.

The Concealed Belief

All Muslims, shi'ah and sunni, boast of their history due to having virtuous and chaste women, enumerating for them distinguished characteristics from which many men are deprived.

Among these great notable ladies we can refer to: Khadijah, Fatimah (A), Umm Salamah, Zaynab, Hamidah "wife of al-Imam as-Sadiq (A), Sawsan "mother of al-Imam al-Hasan al-Askari (A), Hakeemah "daughter of al-Imam al-Jawad (A) and Umm Ahmad "wife of al-Imam al-Kadhim (A), and others.

Fathoming and examining the biography of women will show them to be among perfection seekers, and each having a scholastic and spiritual position in relation to the religious leaders. Rather some of them were known to have the position of succeeding an Infallible Imam and being a spiritual trustee, depository and executor of him.¹⁷

The question arises here being: Does the woman have any difference in essence and nature with the man, and is her human cause and background like that of the man or that the difference being not in essence and nature, but they differ in the dimension of human perfections affected by outer circumstances.

If the first case be correct, the presence of women of virtue and maturity and superior to many men, would be somehow impossible in essence and unaccepted. Then how can be there many individuals in whose essence a radical change happened, while no special and unusual provisions being under consideration for them.

And when accepting the second case, that is to consider the women's defect being a transient and ephemeral phenomenon imposed on them by the social circumstances, again this question will still be raised: Are the imposed provisions admitted by religion and religious leaders? Or that they were concerned for removing that defect, intending to take away those inconvenient conditions?

If the first supposition be admitted, then existence of virtuous and prominent women will be incongruous and reversed to purpose and objective of religion. As a result of all this, it is proper to say that no difference is there whatsoever between women and men, in respect of essence of humanity and leaven of development and maturity: And those partial differences were only caused and created by inhuman conditions, with which religion is not content, the evidence for which can be the presence of outstanding women in history of Islam and Muslims, with emphatic recommendations to maturity and perfection.

In short, we can say that according to the description and portrait of the character of woman given by the Qur'an, "Prophetic" Sunnah and inner belief of Muslims, there is no difference whatsoever in the nature and composition of these two species. Besides, the ability to attain maturity and perfection seeking is the same for both of them "men and women", as they both can reach the sublime ideal and human positions, and each one of them is never a parasite upon the other.

al-Allamah At-Tabataba'i has an elegant comment in this regard, in which he says:

Evidences and experience necessitate that the man and woman, being two individuals of one and the same essential species, which is the human being. As all the marks and signs witnessed in category of men are witnessed also in the category of women, without a bit difference, and emergence of traces of any species undoubtedly obligates realisation of its subject. No one can deny the fact that the category differs greatly and slightly in some of the common traces, but this can never cause the annulment of existence of species in every individual. Thus it becomes clear that the specific extrapolations and maturities available for one species can be found in the other species, of which the moral maturities attained by faith, worships and seeking God's pleasure. So the best and most comprehensive words expressing this meaning can be the following Qur'anic verse:

"... I will not suffer the work of any of you that worketh to be lost, be he male or female, the one of you being from the other." (Qur'an, 3: 195). 18

For completing this view, I should give answers to a pair of important questions, since otherwise all my discussion will lead to no conclusion and will be incomplete.

The first question is: If we admit that female and male enjoy one and the same essence and nature, with realising their being not one entity, i.e. neither a woman is a man nor a man is a woman. Then where lies the field of difference between these two beings?

The second question is: Some of religious expressions like deficiency of woman's intellect, and lack of faith, contradict such view and weaken it. But if we intend to defend this view "that the woman differs

from the man with 'aql and deen", we should give evidences that it can give reply to such faults. Hence, in conclusion of this chapter, I will make a condensed investigation about these two questions.

Field of Difference between Woman & Man

So many statements are said in regard of differences between woman and the man, with some of them believing these differences to be little in number and of no value and some believing many differences are there between these two species. It is not easy to prove these claims. What can be cited briefly and defended is the following:

1. Verily a difference is there between woman and man, and no one can claim that there be full equality in all walks of life between woman and the man.
2. Among the said differences, that which can be admitted and agreed upon, there being some issues appertained to survival of species of mankind. That is the differences that are relevant to quality of reproduction of offspring of man. Naturally these differences have some marginal consequences, whose limits, extent, steadiness and decline being controvertible.
3. Beside all that is said, other differences could never be established through definite religious or scientific evidences.
4. In regard of the differences circulated among people nowadays, how can we be sure of not returning them to social conditions? And their not being a transient phenomenon? For example, a woman in a locked society may be confined at home never comprehending so many of social affairs, with her social conscience being not shaped. But if this same woman be brought up and grown in convenient and favourable conditions, no one will dare to accuse her of deficiency of intellect.

Based on abovementioned points, we can consider, in case of contravention of differences between woman and man, only that extent which is definitely established, and known to be unproduced by social factors but having roots in the nature and composition of woman and man. Otherwise, the identity of every woman and man, and their independent personality and presence may make us to believe in oneness of all walks of life for both of them.

Essence Deficiency of Women

The second question is thus: Some of the religious expressions raise doubt in regard of common identity of the woman and man, like the phrase saying that the women having defective intellect and shortage in faith... etc.

Studying every and each one of these samples is quite out of scope of this research and discussion, but I can give some criteria and rules through which we can judge and issue decision in regard of them "specimen".

A) Some of these traditions have not been properly interpreted, but by mediation and taking good care a clear meaning can be given to them. If it is stated in a hadith that the women having deficiency in reason, this will not be an informing of a creative and inherent thing in women, but rather taking into consideration acquired and experimental reason, in which social, educational and political conditions have full interference. This should never be taken to indicate inherent inability of women, but would be like saying that the villagers have a lower culture. And this, if supposed to be true, never means inherent ignorance of the villagers, but rather they can, through bringing about the necessary grounds, be equal and even higher than the townsmen, and men of knowledge and culture.

It is natural that if a woman is detained inside the house, and refused the qualifications of honour and knowledge, she would never be able to have, like any other individual attending the events, full knowledge of the incidents and proceedings and possess social understanding. No difference here is found in this regard between woman and man as the same thing would be true in regard of men when they are kept inside the house. Hence the following is said in a hadith:

"Whoever forsaking merchandise, he will verily lose twothirds of his mind."¹⁹

In this manner, the meaning of the hadith of shortage of faith "of women" will be clear. Because what is intended of faith being not a heartfelt and doctrinal state, but rather assignment and precept being meant to which be referred with the term Deen in most of the narrations. That is the assignment "takleef" of women being less than that one imposed upon men, especially in time of menstruation, whereat God has exempted them of some of the ritual duties and impositions.

The hadith of deficiency of faith has been stated in most of the reliable sources and references with the term deficiency of religion, and only in one version was referred to with the expression shortage of faith "iman".²⁰ Therefore it never implies any slander or deficiency for women. And if what is meant by deficiency the inward defect, then why have the fuqaha said: "It is recommendable for every woman to sit on prayer rug at times of prayers citing some words in remembering Allah."²¹

Through abstruseness and pondering over contents of traditions, with comparing and measuring them with other narrations, some of difficulties and objections would be warded off and evaded. But of course this mediation and abstruseness should be accompanied with equity, abstinence from prearbitration and evacuating the mind of the current culture.

B) Some of these traditions can never be ascribed to the religious leaders "Imams", but rather have been fabricated under the influence of irreligious cultures and multifarious stimulants.

As an example for this, the following traditions are quoted from the Prophet (S): "Burial of daughters "alive" is verily a dignity,"²² and "The grave of the bridegroom is goodness."²³ That is despite their being contrary to the Qur'anic verses vilifying the preIslamic "jahili" habits and customs,²⁴ with the traditionists confirming their being composed.

When the following hadith was reported by Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Inauspiciousness lies in three things: means of transport, a wife and a house." 'A'ishah said: "The Prophet quoted this saying as a speech of the people of pre-Islamic era "jahiliyyah", and its narrator has not quoted the first part of the Prophet's speech."²⁵

There are so many alike samples in the texts of narrations and traditions.

Undoubtedly, it should be noted that it is not right to consider every hadith not agreeing with our taste and view to be fabricated and falsified but we should have full knowledge of criteria of assessment of chain of transmission "sanad", and apply them properly.

C) Some of the traditions and narrations are applicable to special provisions, in a way that they can never be generalised. In other words, the purport of the hadith is regarding the conditions and circumstances of that time, not intended to expose the sought situation, like what is reported between the lines of traditions on preventing the learning from writings of women.²⁶

Nowadays no religious expert is found holding the belief that it is not necessary for the woman to learn writing and reading. In the past too, some scholars and thinkers were of this belief. Further a large number of women related "in kinship" to religious scholars, were virtuous and intellectuals. The example for this can be seen in the wife and daughter of ash-Shahid al-Awwal,²⁷ and Aminah Beigum daughter of al-Majlisi the 1st,²⁸ and others.

Seemingly, taking into consideration these principles and rules for evaluating and comprehending so many of narrations concerning the woman would be so helpful and useful.

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1. Al-Mizaan Fi Tafseer Al-Qur'an, vol. IV, p. 136.
 2. At-Tafseer Al-Muneer, vol. 1, pp. 139-140.
 3. Wasa'il Ash-Shi'ah, vol. XX, p. 352, Baab 28, vol. IV, p. 258.
 4. Bihaar Al-Anwaar, vol. XI, p. 115; vol. 42.
 5. Al-Mizaan Fi Tafseer Al-Qur'an, vol. XVI, pp. 173-174
 6. ibid., vol. 11, p. 44.
 7. Musnad Ahmed, vol. VI, p. 256; Kanz Al-Ummal, vol. XVI, p. 482.
 8. Mawsu'at Atraaf Al-hadith An-Nabawi, vol. III, p. 55 & 266
 9. Lisaan Al-Arab, vol. VIII, p. 166.
 10. At-Tabaqaat Al-Kubra, vol. IV, p. 274.
 11. Kanz Al-Ummal, vol. XVI, p. 461.
 12. Mawsu'at Atraaf Al-hadith An-Nabawi, vol. IV, p. 513.
 13. Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. II, p. 636.
 14. Mukhtasar Tareekh Dimashq, vol. VII, p. 50.
 15. Tuhaf Al-Oqool, p. 30
 16. ibid., p. 140.
 17. Zan Wa Payam-awari, pp. 145-238.
 18. Al-Mizaan, vol. IV, p. 89.

19. Wasa'il Ash-Shi'ah, vol. XII, p. 8, hadith, no, 20.
20. Masaadir Nahj Al-Balagha Wa Asaaneeduha, vol. II, p. 86.
21. Tahreer Al-Wasslah, vol. I, p. 24, question 11.
22. Silsilat Al-Ahaadeeth Az-Za'ifah Wal-Mawzu'ah, p. p. 220-221.
23. Tahreer Al-Mar'ah Fi Asr Ar-Risaalah, vol. I, p. 13.
24. As in the verses 58& 59 of surat An-Nahl: " and when is announced unto (any) one of them a daughter, black becometh his face and he is filled with wrath. He hideth himself from the people, of the evil for the tidings given to him (he pondereth whether) he shall keep her with disgrace or bury her (alive) in the dust ? Behold, (how) evil it is what they decide,...".
25. Al-Ijaabah Li Irad Ma Istadrakathu 'Ala As-Sahaabah, p. p. 114-117.
26. Al-Islam Wa Mar'ah, pp. 28-29 and 51-52.
27. Bihaar Al-Anwaar, vol. 103, pp. 55 & 261; Kanz Al-Ummal. vol. XVI, p. 379.
28. Mu'jam Rijal Al-hadith, vol. XXIII, pp. 179 & 196.

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