

Woman is wronged among us

Woman, in the Arab and Muslim societies, has been wronged in general, since the day when she was buried alive until today.

Muslims have not understood until now that woman has body and soul just like man; she has intellect, heart, feelings and instincts. Man cannot claim that he has honor and dignity, except that woman can claim this too. Allah says in the Qur'an:

O you men, surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. Qur'an, 49:13

So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other. Qur'an, 3:195

Of course, we do not deny that Allah the Almighty has given man a degree over woman for leadership and constancy, but it has nothing to do with preference at all. Allah the Glorified says:

They (women) have rights similar to those against them in a just manner, and the men are a degree above them, and Allah is Mighty, Wise. Qur'an, 2:228

The wisdom of Allah has determined that man and woman are equal in rights and duties, but a degree has been given to man over woman in leadership, because Allah has given man more power and strength and made him responsible for guarding and protecting woman. When a woman feels fear and fright, she hurries to seek protection of her man or husband. Therefore, Allah has imposed fight and jihad on man and exempted woman from that. In fact, Allah has imposed on man to fight and be martyred for the sake of woman. Allah the Almighty says:

How should you not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and the children... Qur'an, 4:75

This is what I have understood from the Holy Qur'an. It does not mean that Allah has preferred man to

woman; certainly not! There may be a man better than one thousand women, and there may be a woman better than one thousand men!

We must take the Messenger of Allah (S) as our exemplar. He treated woman in a way that the history of humankind has never known better than. Despite the fact that some of his wives hurt him, he never hurt any one of them at all. He always ordered Muslims to be good to women.

Nevertheless, some bad spirits of the pre-Islamic era have remained among Muslims until now. You may hear that some man has divorced his wife because she did not bear a male child. Until now, they raise from the Qur'an only this motto "**and beat them**", besides their sayings that "*woman is the seed of Satan*", "*she is sedition*", "*she is shame*", "*she is scandal*"...etc.

Woman among Muslims has remained underdeveloped and ignorant. She has no right to learn and study. Some people do not agree with her leaving her father's house, except to the house of her husband or to her grave.¹

Some men claim and repeat false traditions before learned men and women that the Messenger of Allah (S) has said, "*The best thing for woman is that she should neither see a man nor let a man see her.*"

What kind of mentality is that, which contradicts what has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, concerning the freedom of woman and her rights equal to man's? Otherwise, what is the meaning of this saying of Allah:

Say to the believing men that they should lower their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their adornment except what appears thereof. Qur'an, 24:30-31

This is very clear evidence on the freedom of woman in going out of her house as man does, and that she is ordered to lower her gaze and observe her modesty exactly as man is ordered to do.

Yes! The mentality of the pre-Islamic age has prevailed to some extent in the Arab and Muslim societies. Muslim men have exploited the degree that Allah has given them over woman to give themselves all the rights and deprive woman of all her rights, leaving her with nothing.

I would not go far if I say that the main reason behind our underdevelopment is our injustice against woman and closing the doors before her – no learning, no culture, no communication, no association, no going out and no right to choose her spouse. Until recently, woman is married without her choice. In fact, how can she choose while she does not know any man?²

Thus, a woman may find herself, in the night of wedding, before a man in age that of her father and she can do nothing except to submit unwillingly, and then it is said to her, "this is what Allah has determined for you; therefore, you have to be patient!" Then, she becomes like a productive milk cow that has

nothing to do, except to give birth, suckle, and bring them up because her husband likes to have many children!

Detest and hatred may rise and grow between the two spouses, because the husband is too old and may not understand the needs and feelings of the young wife, and most of the time, he leaves her alone, suffering the pains of the instinct and lust. And since the husband is jealous of her young wife, he tries his best not to let her see any man and not to let any man see her.

However, the sexual lust defeats everything and this woman falls in the first opportunity, as a reaction against suppression and deprivation. Consequently, unlawful relations come out. Forbidden fruit is sweet! Many a woman has a lover, and many a man has a lover or lovers and many children are born at the expense of others! Then doubts, troubles, problems, quarrel and lastly divorce comes about. The society is corrupted and high values are replaced by disorders, treasons, adultery, vices, and all sins. Unfortunately, this is what actually happens in our societies nowadays. Therefore, we must face these painful facts and not overlook them or bury our heads in sands like an ostrich.

Since the first day when I understood Islam and became certain that it is the best law at all, I called in meetings, conferences, and publications for the liberation of woman for making her learned and erudite. Surely, woman is the half (or more) of society, and when half of the society is paralyzed, the body of the nation shall not be able to carry out its functions and will die little by little.

Another injustice of our society against woman is that we have thought of the lust of man only and found effective solutions for it, in order to “close the door of excuses”. Therefore, we have built public places for men to satisfy their desires whenever they like, and with no denier or objector! Rather, it seems that the matter is too natural to the extent that sometimes a brother may meet his brother, or some man may meet his nephew or another relative there in that place, and he may feel proud and victorious, because that place is a proof of manhood where no one can enter it except one who is manly!

If such a man, who feels proud before his fellows that he has gone to such place and been acquainted with different women, comes back home and sees his sister look at passersby in the street from the window, shall turn the house upside down and beat that poor sister until she bleeds!³

Why did jurisprudents think of the satisfaction of man’s lust and they did not think of the satisfaction of woman’s lust if they were just?

I do not call for the liberation of woman, as the case is in the corruptive West – where people do not believe in values and good morals and they believe in freedoms only. I call for the liberation of woman within the limits that Allah and His messenger have determined such as hijab, abstinence, modesty and chastity and beyond that she is free to do, as her brother does in her father’s house and as her husband does when she is married. If we actually do that, we shall save ourselves and our society from corruption, vices and underdevelopment.

There is no doubt that jurists must have thought of that, but they regarded it unlikely to find public places for women to satisfy their lusts, because this is a thing impermissible. They might deduce differently that from the fact that Islam permits man to marry one, two, three or four women at the same time, but prohibits so for women in order to preserve lineages and children because woman is the one who bears and gives birth and not man.

However, fact is that this instinct is always vital in woman. Therefore, sufficient solutions must be found to preserve woman's dignity, honor, and entity exactly like that of a man.

Has Islam ignored this fact? Has Islam permitted for man what it has not permitted for woman?

The Prophet (S) talked much about the subject of sex and gave sufficient solutions to keep the Muslim society safe from corruption and sin. He said, "*O folk of the youth, whoever can afford to get married let him get married, because it is better in lowering the (unlawful) gaze and better in being chaste. Whoever is not able to let him fast, for it shall be a protection for him.*"⁴

It is a sufficient solution for the youth, who can afford to get married. Through marriage, the youth, males or females, can satisfy their sexual lust whenever it is required and save their selves from erring. The problem is only with those who cannot afford to get married. At the time of the Prophet (S) also when marriage was so easy and simple and did not cost much, there were young men who could not get married. Then how is it not going to be more of an issue nowadays when marriage has become too difficult and costly for many reasons?

From among these reasons is that young men and young women keep on learning until the age of twenty-five, and after that, they look for a suitable job that may assure their living. Then, they must prepare a house with its furniture in compliance with the requirements of the modern ages that have become necessary. One may be, at least thirty years old to be able to get married.

A young man and a young woman, who can biologically get married in the tenth or twelfth year of age, cannot actually afford to get married, except in the age of thirty. Then, what do they do during all these long years? If we say that they have been so abstinent and chaste and have not thought of sex at all, we may be liars to ourselves, for they are human beings and not angels; especially in this age where mixing is something very natural everywhere. A male student mixes with a female one in the university. In fact, since primary school until high education, there is mixing between males and females which often occur away from parents and observers. A girl may live with her boy classmate for nine months, but she does not live with her family except for three months. So what happens there?

The answer is well known by the students themselves and by their teachers, and by everyone who works inside or outside his house.

1. There is no doubt that a jurisprudent or a preacher is the son of his milieu and society. He carries out his mission within the reality he lives in; therefore, he does not tire himself to show the ruling of Allah, face new changes, and keep to justice. He may not observe whether people in that society are excessive or wasteful. For example, is woman wronged, or she is given her full rights?

Let us not rely on some weak traditions that do not fit our milieu and social backgrounds. A jurisprudent may not talk about the essence of hijab (Islamic veil), learning of woman, mixing (of males and females), the influence of the TV...etc, but he does not wake up, except when he is shocked by changes, sudden events and the cultural invasion of the west against us, and then he behaves as a surprised one; either he clings to his heritage and fanaticism, or gives a fatwa in a hurry and after sometime, hesitating between nomadism and modernity, open and closed society!

2. The books of history and biographies mention that women came to the meeting of the Prophet (S.) and asked him to find them good husbands. Once, some women came to the Prophet (S) and said to him, "We cannot be alone (to talk) with you in your meeting of men..." He assigned to them an appointment in the house of someone, and then he went to them at the appointed time and place.

The Prophet (S) permitted women to do some works. He said to the wife of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, who was forced to work to spend on her husband and children, "...you shall have reward for your spending on them, so spend on them!" There are too many examples concerning the affairs of woman, showing her freedom and rights.

3. Some Sunni jurisprudents gave a fatwa that one, who looks at a foreign (non-mahram) woman, is to be whipped (one hundred whips), relying on the saying of the Prophet (S), "The two eyes may commit adultery", mentioned by Ahmed ibn Hanbal in his Sunan and by at-Tabari in his al-Kabeer from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.

4. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 6 p. 117.

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