



## Gender Equation for Social Stability in The Light of Qur'ān and *Sīrah*

Salma Razzaq (PhD)<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In the globalized world of today, we see growing interaction between peoples from different regions and religions, leading to exchange of contemporary thoughts impacting their social lives. The paper is focused on examining contemporary thought on gender equality, which is at the centre of feminism that has evolved in the West, moving away from the religion, elevating economic empowerment and emancipation from social norms and religious values. The slogan of 'gender equality' is perceived as an unrestrained liberation movement posing a serious challenge to our social order in the Muslim world, including Pakistan. Thus, the study aims at instigation of intelligentsia and masses for serious appraisal of the situation to identify the drivers for 'gender equality' that help it to permeate into Pakistani society and offer alternate in the form of 'gender equation' in the light of Qur'ān and *Sīrah* to checkmate the negative impact of this contemporary thought on our social system. The research has adopted analytical approach to examine the Islamic view on gender relationships to establish a gender equation through the Qur'ān and traditions of the Prophet ﷺ for social stability in our society.

**Keywords:** *gender equality, social stability, human rights*

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Air University Islamabad, Pakistan. ([wajisuperb@gmail.com](mailto:wajisuperb@gmail.com))



## Introduction

The rise and fall of nations depend upon their thoughts and pursuit of knowledge. Since its inception, Islamic knowledge has been preserved in Arabic and Persian, and our disinterest in learning these two languages, combined with our obsession with English as a medium of learning, has allowed Orientalists to project the image of a stagnant Muslim thought. Furthermore, Muslim thought has not made extensive use of hereditary knowledge; as a result, most of the writings of Muslim philosophers have been obliterated, and Muslim societies are vulnerable to contemporary feminist thought, which undermines the social system's foundation. Each nation has a distinct culture and cultural identity; however, some similarities cannot be ruled out with other civilizations.<sup>2</sup> Western societies, besides development in all fields of life, have gone through social reformation, triggered by feminism based on human rights in the context of women, which has finally translated into the idea of gender equality.

Muslim societies around the globe are exposed to the influence of western thought called feminism. Feminism originated in fifteenth-century Europe, where women were stripped of all rights, while Islam had given an unprecedented range of rights to Muslim women long ago. There have been evolutionary shifts in the feminist movement beyond western gender politics to gender equality, now venturing into the idea of women's superiority over men. If we study human history, we find that religions and the human intellect have been instrumental in the development of different traditions relating to women. Since human society has always been male dominated, the intellect used to shape the rules can also be described as prejudices against women. On the other hand, as far as religion is

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<sup>2</sup> Baloch Qadir Bakhsh, "The Islamic Civilization" The Dialogue (2004) accessed on March 01, 2021 [https://qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/1\\_1/04--Islamic%20Civilisatino.pdf](https://qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/1_1/04--Islamic%20Civilisatino.pdf)



concerned, men and women are in the same position, wherever there is a divergence or conflict between them. Since religions have been relegated and intellectuals have dictated to humanity, we have seen a great deal of imbalance when it comes to women's rights, hence supporting the thoughts on gender equality.

The paper looks at the Islamic view on gender relationships to establish a gender equation through the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet ﷺ for social stability in our society.

### **Contemporary Thought on Gender Equality**

The origins of contemporary female thought may be traced back to the West, where religion has been driven to the margins and freedom has taken centre stage. This viewpoint has grown through time as a result of women's denial of human rights. Modern Western culture is built on a variety of good and painful transformations that have happened since Europe's inception. However, the turn of the century and its numerous innovations, notably industrialization, gave many women opportunity to work outside the home. According to Coolidge, "not a few" of these women were able to tap into their innate intellect and began to question and reject the traditional position of women in Western civilization.<sup>3</sup> With the passage of time, a gradual shift occurred, and "the new woman" evolved between the two world wars. This contemporary woman set a high value on economic and financial freedom. This type of liberty conferred additional rights, such as the freedom to marry or stay single, the right to work, and the right to sexual expression, to mention a few. Intellectual freedom was most essential to "the new woman"; women want self-realization, the capacity to use their intellectual gifts and talents to discover their actual selves and identities. Needless to say, this new woman posed a threat to male-dominated society and provided plenty fodder for authors of the day. As a result of the burgeoning feminist movement, female characters in

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<sup>3</sup> Coolidge, Mary Roberts. *Why Women Are So*. New York: Holt, 1912.



modernist literature are frequently depicted. In western philosophy, the "new woman" is defined as one who emphasizes the shared identity and interests of all human beings. While she appreciates the diversity inherent in real equality, she also recognizes that this diversity does not have to be based on gender, but rather on what everyone has to offer society. While the "new woman" was far from ideal, and some of her aims and behavioral patterns were less than commendable, according to June West, the bulk of this was just "a product of women's failure to adapt to freedom of choice."<sup>4</sup>

These crimes fuelled a surge in anger and antagonism, spawning a new notion in the shape of the Enlightenment, which was founded on reasons other than scripture, and the formation of modern civilization. It was founded on anti-religious views such as Modernism and Secularism, which were followed by the liberal ideals of Atheism, Humanism, and Liberalism, which were supported by the immediate slogan of humanity's freedom and equality. As a result, an intellectual fight was conducted against sexism in many areas of life, including social, economic, religious, and cultural oppression. Such trends and ideas appear to prepare young women for sexual encounters and to acquire such talents that they believe they are recovering control over their previously lost bodies, thus regaining control. Thus, the feminist movement's aims have progressed beyond the logical conclusion that there are no abiding principles, thanks to the liberal benefits. The involvement of women in this process leads to the idea of female enslavement, which brings the concept of slavery to the forefront.<sup>5</sup> The reflection of these thought can be established through the slogan of "MERA JISM MERI MARZI" that dominated the Women March in 2021.

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<sup>4</sup> West, June B. *New Woman*. Twentieth Century Literature , 1955.

<sup>5</sup> Zillah R. Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (New York and London: Longman, Inc., 1981), p. 102.



## Gender Equation; not Equality

Islam and its democratic system are kind and gentle to women. They are also good-natured, wise, and considerate. It is in favor of both men and women. Islam, in relation to both men and women, likewise adopts a realistic approach in line with real and basic needs, aptitudes, and nature in relation to all beings. Nobody should expect more than the resources that are given to them. To understand the Islamic point of view on women, it can be examined from three angles.

First: her role as a human being in the path of spiritual and meaningful perfection; *Qur'ān*, in this regard, says, "O Prophet, tell your wives: "If you seek the world and its embellishments, then come and I will make some provision for you and release you in an honorable way." But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the Abode of the Hereafter, then surely Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good. " If any of the Prophet's wives does something blatantly wrong, her punishment will be doubled. That is easy for Allah. But whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger and does good deeds, Allah will double their reward. We have prepared for her a generous provision. Wives of the Prophet, you are not like other women. If you fear Allah, do not be too complaisant in your speech lest those with diseased hearts should covet you; but speak in a straightforward manner".<sup>6</sup>

Second: From the point of view of Islam, the door to academic, economic, social, and political activities is fully open for women. It has no relevance to Islam when someone is trying to deprive a woman of academic opportunities, keeping her away from economic activity or excluding her in relation to political and social engagements. *Qur'ān* says, "And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is the Mighty,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid 33: pp. 28-33



Wise”.<sup>7</sup> Women can perform these activities if they are needed and to the extent that their physical capacity permits. *Shari‘ah* has not forbidden to participate in various social activities, and she can handle all political, economic and social affairs. However, since a woman is more fragile than man in terms of physical structure, she has certain inbuilt limitations for engaging in outdoor activities.<sup>8</sup>

Third: Looking at a woman as a member of the family and society is the most important thing. In Islam, men are not allowed to treat women with oppression and impose on them but have announced equality of status in that context. *Qur’ān* says, "O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah—in Whose Name you appeal to one another—and 'honour' family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you".<sup>9</sup> There are limited rights for men within the family, which is really a matter of great wisdom. Holy Prophet ﷺ has termed women as “ruler” of the house. The Prophet said, “Women is the guardian of her husband’s home and his children, and she will be answerable for it”.<sup>10</sup> That kind of rights within the family for the woman carry an element of accountability and a great deal of thoughtfulness is veiled within that. Prophet ﷺ is narrated to have said that a “woman, who becomes a widow, who is wealthy and belongs to higher strata of society but darkens her skin in service and upbringing of her children, she will be close to me in paradise as close as the two fingers (middle and index”.<sup>11</sup>

This hadith points towards the spirit of sacrifice and the psychological makeup of the woman, which is best suited for the rearing of children, while the

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 2 : 228

<sup>8</sup> Shahbaz, Abu Saad Ehsan Ul Haq, Islam, *Women and Europe* (Urdu), Daar Ul Undlas, 2017

<sup>9</sup> Qur’ān4:1

<sup>10</sup> Sahih Al Bukhari, *Chapter Wills*, Hadith No 2554, 2751, 5200

<sup>11</sup> Masnad Ahmad *Chapter Attributes of Quraish Women*, Hadith No 6861



man is bound to fail in this regard as well. This rejects the idea that the proponents of freedom of women are eager to drag her out of the home into the job market, thereby depriving the children of motherly affection and the home of its anchor in the form of a woman. Nevertheless, the basic social unit of a family or home, and the prospects of proper grooming of the next generation are shattered without the supervision of a woman. Islam is not opposed to women rights as demanded by women in the West. Islamic concept of life finds overwhelming confluence on gender equality with the contemporary Western thought in the context of human rights, however, it is in conflict with the unchecked liberties that have surfaced in the garb of human rights. The same is explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

### **Status of Women in Islam**

The Islamic thought on the status and rights of women can be seen with utmost clarity, as a large part of the seventh century Divine Book "The Qur'an" makes women's rights a part of its debate. Surah *Baqara*, Surah *Al-Nisā*, Surah *Nūr*, Surah *Talāq* and Surah *Al-Aḥzāb*, for the most part, bear witness to the fact that Islam, unlike any other law in the world, gives women equal rights as men. Reading the Qur'an cannot hide the fact that if feminism has to do with women's rights, the Qur'an itself is a feminist book. Thus, the fault lies with the Muslims, who overlooked the Islamic injunctions. In Surah *Al-Nisā* verse 1, Allah says that men and women were created with one soul. An even greater example of equality can be exemplified: "O People! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from this very soul He mated and made many of them, both men and women, in the world," whereas in Surah *Al-Baqara*, both were called equal, saying: "They are clothing for you, and you are clothing for them". Thus, men and women are equal as souls in the light of Quran.



Islam defines a proper way and code of conduct for a follower in every field of life, irrespective of gender, be it in the business world, household, married life, or any other field. Before the advent of Islam, the lives of women had no value, and Islam gave them the proper right to lead a respectable life. The teachings of the Prophet ﷺ gave equal rights and importance to both women and men. The elevation in the status of a woman means that she has an equal right to get education and knowledge from anywhere, as the Prophet ﷺ has said: "The pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male and female.

### **Emancipation**

Male and female are neither totally identical nor totally different as products of one single being. Therefore, their roles and responsibilities are governed by their capacity and ability. While the capacity belongs to physical and mental make-up, the abilities are inbuilt qualities and strengths which are manifested through the capacity to act. There is no denying that the woman is physically weak, and thus the powerful party is more likely to dominate. In addition, she is emotionally different from the man who often weakens her position. For example, love for children is evidence of the same fact, because the mother is more sensitive in this regard. Considering this, the Qur'an establishes the rights and duties of both men and women and assigns the responsibility of sponsorship to the man as a "man." In Surah *Al-Nisā*, verse 34, Allah says, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means." Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard".<sup>12</sup>

It may be noted here that Islam makes it lawful and morally obligatory for a woman to be given her *Shari'ah* rights. When we look at the *Shari'ah* package

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<sup>12</sup> Qur'ān 2:34





called marriage, the woman also has responsibilities that she will be loyal to her husband. She will protect his children, his home, and his possessions, take care of her husband's physical needs, obey him in a well-known manner. But it is nowhere in this package that she will be additionally responsible for leaving earnings for herself and her children, if in wedlock. It is rather the responsibility of the man to spend on her maintenance.

The *Qur'ān* does not leave the rights of a woman merely to the whims of society and the will of men but states every right explicitly in the form of clear orders. The woman's particular share in the inheritance, the right to own property, and the right to separate from her husband, the consent of the girl in marriage, the financial compensation by her husband, owning or running a business, and management of her wealth are all specified in Islam. The right to receive compensation for breastfeeding a child in the event of separation, and the sustenance during the period, are such clear things that these can only be deliberately ignored through prejudice.

In the event of unacceptable circumstances, the *Qur'ān* not only permits divorce or *khul'a*<sup>13</sup>, but in the case of divorce, there is a long debate about ensuring women's rights. The punishment of eighty whips to the accuser about adultery, who fails to prove the allegation by producing four witnesses, also shows how serious the *Qur'ān* is for the honor and dignity of women. The law of the *li'ān*<sup>14</sup>, if the man accused his wife of wrongdoing, allowed the man and woman to be willingly separated, is revealing the same fact. In such a case the *Qur'ān* completely rejects the honor killings. Here, one can establish the importance of this gender in the eyes of the author (the Creator) of the *Qur'ān*, compared to those who wrote the American Constitution in the late eighteenth century and support the idea of gender equality.

<sup>13</sup> The right of wife to initiate divorce proceedings is known as *Khul'a*, in Islam.

<sup>14</sup> Separation of husband and wife, for false accusation.



But we cannot ignore the distressing fact that, despite the explicit orders of the *Qur'ān*, the condition of women in Muslim societies is still far from desired and, despite the passage of fourteen centuries, the *Qur'ān's* commands are still being neglected. *Surah Al-Baqara* and *Surah Al-Nisā*, testify to the love of the Creator of the *Qur'ān*, that keeps pouring in for such a weak creature. The importance of women's rights and family life has been emphasized by Allah Almighty in the *Qur'ān* and how vital is the institution of the home and the role of women and the fundamental rights for the peace and tranquility of this world in the eyes of the Creator? The reader of the *Qur'ān* can discern this fact with slight consideration and concentration. It is understandable that the West is unaware of the rules in this book or ignores it because of any prejudice, but on the other hand, Muslim societies, too, are far removed from the understanding and practical application of the unmatched principles. Even in Muslim societies, these *Qur'ānic* orders are largely ignored, and the image of the Creator's love does not appear there. The hatred and humiliation of women is no less common in Muslim societies, even in the religious groups. Despite performing all household duties, women are blamed for being underutilized. They say, "What are women doing all day in the house"? This is a sheer neglect of the role of women, as enunciated in *Qur'ān*.<sup>15</sup>

### **Empowerment**

To lead a woman to her true destiny, Islam is seen as restricting men, who used to force women to serve at the edge of their physical or financial power, often subjected to humiliation and contempt. It terms women equal to men in most aspects of life as mentioned in *Qur'ān*, " Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women,

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<sup>15</sup> Babur Qudsia, 'Domestic Violence' PhD thesis University of Karachi, 2012.



the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward".<sup>16</sup> It is learned that in Islam all these spiritual and meaningful places and higher human ranks are equally divided between men and women. In this sense, women are equal to men as a human being. Whoever works for Allah, "even if it is a man, the woman is (We will give him/her a pure life)".<sup>17</sup>

### **Motherhood; a Privilege**

It is worth noting that Islam has given women priority over men in some places. For example, if a man and a woman are the parents of a child, and the child belongs to both, it is more important to serve the mother. The rights of the mother are greater for the offspring, and the obligations of the offspring related to the mother are more serious. The Holy Prophet ﷺ responded to the question of a companion, "With whom may I do better and respect?" He said, "with your mother." He repeatedly uttered the same sentence when asked for the third time. When the inquirer asked the same question for the fourth time, Prophet ﷺ said "with your father".<sup>18</sup> In the family, the mother has more rights over the children and the duties of the children are greater with respect to the mother for her social role in bearing and rearing a child. It is the divine principle that the one who bears the most hardships have the greatest right. Because a mother endures a lot of hard work, its value is immense.

### **Social Freedom**

In relation to social activities, Islam has set certain boundaries which are related to the free mixing of men and women and do not restrict women's

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<sup>16</sup> Qur'ān 33:35

<sup>17</sup> Ibid 4:124

<sup>18</sup> Sahih Al Bukhari, *Book of Good Manners*, Hadith No 5971



participation in social activities. In this regard, Islam is very cautious and has not instructed us to erect a barrier between men and women everywhere, on the road, inside the institution, office, or market. Hijāb is one of the fixed boundaries that have been placed between Muslim men and women is to be respected. Men should respect her, and women should obey him. As *Qur'ān* says, "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze, guard their private parts." That is pure for them. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what they do".<sup>19</sup> The Islamic rules of conduct in male-female relationships and socialization enable women to perform social tasks like men, subject to physical energy, interests, and opportunities.

### Participation in Decision Making

Prophet ﷺ himself consulted women and gave importance to their ideas, which shows Islam gives them the appropriate right to take and implement decisions. Islam provides inspiration to women to be equal human beings and has brought a revolution in values for women by spelling out details on status, rights, and social dealings in a matrimonial context. *Qur'ān* says, "To whomever, male or female, does good deeds and has faith, We shall give a good life and reward them according to the best of their actions".<sup>20</sup> It has given them complete right to be in a marriage, to take *Khul'a*, if they have issues with their partners. Narrated *Uqbā bin Al-Hārith*: "That he had married Um *Yahyā bint Abū Lahab*. He spoke. A black slave-lady came and said, 'I suckled you both.' I then mentioned that to the Prophet ﷺ who turned his face aside. *Uqbā* further said, I went to the other side and told the Prophet ﷺ about it. He said, 'How can you (keep her as your wife) when the lady has said that she suckled both of you (i.e., you and your wife?) So, the Prophet ﷺ ordered him to divorce her'.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in the pre-Islamic era, women were seen as a piece of lust by man but with the passage of time and with the values in

<sup>19</sup> Qur'ān 24:30

<sup>20</sup> Qur'ān 16: 97

<sup>21</sup> Sahih Al Bukhari, *Chapter on Witnesses*, Hadith No 2659



Islam, they have been given more respect. Their consent is of extreme importance in every aspect of life which they are involved in. Anything which is done against their will is considered as a punishable crime. Narrated in *Hadīth*, “If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part ...'(4.128) It concerns the woman whose husband does not want to keep her with him any longer, but wants to divorce her and marry some other lady, so she says to him: 'Keep me and do not divorce me, and then marry another woman, and you may neither spend on me, nor sleep with me.' This is indicated by the Statement of Allah: 'There is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between them both, and (such) settlement is better (4.128)’<sup>22</sup>

### **Respect and Protection**

Every initiative taken to defend women focuses mainly on the protection of women's chastity. The chastity of women truly establishes their respect and dignity in the eyes of others. Besides the chastity of women, the purification of men is also essential, not exclusive to women. *Qur'ān* says, "O people! Consume the lawful and pure things of the earth and do not follow Satan's footsteps. For sure, he is your open enemy." He only commands you to do evil and commit acts of indecency and to ascribe to Allah the things concerning which you have no knowledge (that He really is their source)<sup>23</sup> In a society, where women are deprived of *Hijāb*, they are subjected to nudity, thereby compromising the security and safety of women, men, and youth. Thus, to keep society and the environment safe and healthy and to create an amiable and respectful atmosphere, Islam has ordained *hijāb*, which does not hinder them from performing their activities with full confidence and peace of mind. *Qur'ān* says, "O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way it is more likely that they will be

<sup>22</sup> Sahih al Bukhari *Chapter Wedlock (Nikah)*, Hadith No 5206

<sup>23</sup> Ibid 2: 168 & 169



recognized 'as virtuous' and not be harassed. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful".<sup>24</sup>

### Complementary Role in Family

The family, according to *Qur'ān* is a pairing of a man and a woman for peace and tranquillity. Both partners must play their respective roles towards attainment of the objective of wedlock bondage. The role of women in the family was neglected before the advent of Islam. To ensure family peace and harmony, Islam has commanded that woman be treated with care. The Prophet said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt (trouble) his neighbour. And I advise you to take care of the women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so I urge you to take care of the women".<sup>25</sup> Their roles as wives, mothers, sisters, and teachers have all been specified and are given extreme importance. Allah says in *Surah Luqmān*: "And we have enjoined man in respect of his parents - his mother bears him with fainting upon fainting, and his weaning takes two years – saying, "Be grateful to Me and to both your parents, to Me is the eternal coming".<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Prophet ﷺ has also highlighted that "Paradise lies under the feet of mother"<sup>27</sup>, as such, woman's status in family as a mother has been made an important aspect of Islam. *Qur'ān* says, "We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents; in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth".<sup>28</sup> As a daughter, the woman was oppressed in previous times. But the teachings of Islam and Prophet ﷺ taught that daughters are blessing sent from Allah. They were not given their due rights in the property

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 33: 59

<sup>25</sup> Sahih Al Bukhari Chapter *Wedlock (Nikah)*, Hadith No 5185 & 5186

<sup>26</sup> Qur'ān 31:14

<sup>27</sup> Nasai, Chapter on *Jihad*, Hadith No 3106

<sup>28</sup> Qur'ān 46:15



inherited from their parents. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “The man who raises two little girls, rightfully, he and I, will stand like this on the Day of Judgment (he joined two fingers together and pointed towards them)”.<sup>29</sup> This shows how important it is to raise a daughter in a family life. Moreover, she has also been granted a special share in the inheritance of her parents' property. As a result, Islam has solved the challenges that women face in family life, and if these guidelines are followed in modern times, women will always see them as a blessing for themselves.

### **Social Justice**

Justice is one of the fundamental teachings of Islam, while the rights of men and women are specified in *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth*. They have been given equal rights and responsibilities as stated in *Qur'ān* “The believers, men, and women, are protectors of one another; they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy”.<sup>30</sup> Apart from this, there are more than 30 verses in the Holy *Qur'ān* which state the importance of equal rights among both genders in different domains in Islam.

Equity among all beings is stated in the *Qur'ān* and its need in this modern era is extremely necessary for the justice system in the world. It says, “Do not desire what is denied, as we have given preference to some over the others”.<sup>31</sup> In a similar context, the modern Muslim women's urge for equal rights must keep note of the threat of loss of modesty, forgone by their western forerunners, who claim freedom in terms of societal status and individualized rights. These points form the focus of Islam with respect to women, as Islam directs men to be just to women and to humanity. Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “Best among you are those, who are good to their

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<sup>29</sup> Al-Silsila-tu-Sahiha, Chapter *Justice between Wives and Children*, Hadith No 1989.

<sup>30</sup> *Qur'ān* 9:71

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid* 4:32



women”.<sup>32</sup> During his last sermon on Hajj, the Prophet ﷺ said, "O people, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only with God's trust and permission. If they abide by your rights, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve of, as well as never to be unchaste”.<sup>33</sup>

### Conclusion

Islam has given women a status that is much higher than the demands of so-called gender equality demand, which are leading to the degradation of women in the West. However, the attraction of slogans like "women's emancipation" and "empowerment" is finding its way into the minds of Muslim women, who are oblivious of the rights granted by Islam as discussed earlier. It is established from the above discussions that Islam has confluence of thought with feminism on women's rights, however, opposes the demand of unchecked freedom that undermines the institution of family, which is very important for the humanity. Muslims today are dependent to use the media of the West to gain access to their intellectual heritage, as the great scholarly works of Muslim scholars, are controlled by the West for publication. With the deprivation of their academic heritage, Muslims are also undergoing an intellectual and academic decline. Their approach towards Islamic norms and injunctions has shifted towards social behavior with western thought at the heart. It is the Western-controlled knowledge repositories and media outlets that provide information about everything, including scientific thinking, modern facilities and inventions, and knowledge of political and social

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<sup>32</sup> Tirmizi: 1162

<sup>33</sup> Sahih Muslim Hadith No 2950, *Last Sermon of Prophet* □





developments, thereby extending the influence of western culture and alienating Muslims from Islamic values. The root cause of all these reasons is a disconnect with Islamic teachings, thought patterns, and culture because they did not fully comprehend Islam's basic ideology. While Muslim societies as a whole lack in the application of Islamic principles of life at both the individual and collective levels, governments are not playing a role in promoting Islamic cultural values, and the intelligentsia is also divided, a state of intellectual chaos is anticipated based on the interpretation of specific different commandments concerning justice and equality for women in society. Therefore, the following recommendations are proffered:

- We need to build a social order at an individual / family / society level in accordance with Shari'a in the contemporary environment, thus integrating Islam into our lives on a deeper level.
- Motherhood is a full-time profession, and hence must be given priority in the grooming of Muslim women to perform domestic affairs and child rearing in accordance with Islamic teachings and our values.
- Women's rights organizations should prioritize legislation, compatible with the contemporary environment based on Islamic principles, urging public and private sectors to adopt measures for the wellbeing of women.
- Women's rights activists should pave the way for women's progressive involvement in socioeconomic growth while emphasizing the safety, security, and dignity of women in accordance with Islamic values for greater success.
- Character development should be one of the most important goals of education system, and teachers should serve as role models in according to Islamic values and teachings.



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