



Defending the Woman's Rights

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Preface

Different schools' theories on the issue of 'woman' are not devoid of extremes, just as other human intellectual achievements are. Though some facts have been found, the overall attempt of scholars in this respect has gone to extremes. Thus, the subject of woman should be reconsidered deeply.

The subject of woman, as a body in the human society, can be studied as deeply as human being deserves to be appreciated. Any analysis of woman's life, regardless of her vocation and gender, would in fact be the analysis of the human life. The appreciating of woman and acknowledging her status and position is actually the knowing of the human being and acknowledging the human dignity.

It is doubtless that knowing oneself, one's society and position is essential for knowing other things. Hence, as the first step in getting information, human being should explore his own ego to acquire a relative knowledge of his infinite essence. Therefore, studying woman, as a part of the human society, is a step toward the knowing of humanity in general.

Among the extremist ideas about woman is a theory that tries to deny femininity of woman, separate her from her own original essence, and reject her undeniable inborn characteristics. The opponents of this theory deny a being, who is liked by the opposite sex, who can be a wife, and fulfill certain needs; or a being who can become a mother, give birth to another being, and help continue human race. They deny the existence of a being that can be the family axis, and soothe the stormy ocean of human society, like a calm beach. To them, the characteristics of wifeness, motherhood, the forming of a family and the educating of generations are incongruent with woman's personality.

These ideas are held by some western thinkers who try to free woman from pregnancy and motherhood. They recommend that babies be made by artificial wombs via artificial fertilization. They also support the tendency to the same gender in sexual relationships, so that the traditional family be removed.

Such theories are reactions to the limitations and oppressions imposed upon women due to the male enjoyments. However, this reactionary view cannot be true, because it is in fact accepting female deficiency. Nothing is more contemptuous for a woman than belittling her creation. This viewpoint also ignores Woman's natural necessities, such as delivery and its physical and mental effects, motherhood, wifeness, training of children in the family, and many other physical and psychological factors that exist in woman's life and necessitates certain conditions for her.

The necessities of woman's creation have been introduced by the heavenly religions, and especially Islam. Human knowledge and experience has also proved them. Thus, the ignoring of woman's specific characteristics is really denying the undeniable scientific findings.

It has scientifically been proved that motherhood is a necessity for women's body and mind. Psychologically, motherhood is the most enjoyable experience of a woman, which makes her life meaningful. Motherhood love

is the origin of other kinds of love. Therefore, depriving woman of this love means the denying of a part of her existence.

It has also been demonstrated that children who have not grown by their mothers lack self-esteem and are not efficient enough in the society. Moreover, their economic capability decreases. Another finding of scientific research is the constructive effects of family life on men, women and children, that is why the efforts of modernism for annihilating the traditional family structure have been in vein, facing terrible social consequences. So, postmodernism hastily turned to the traditional family, considering it as the solution for reorganizing the human societies.

In general, the theory that resembles woman to man deprives woman of her original character and true value; that is as an improver of human being.

The holy Quran states:

“I will not waste the work of a worker among you; whether male or female, the one of you being from the other ...”¹

*“Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying 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 Allah much and the women who remember, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.”*²

A believing man and a believing woman both seek the same way and the same final end. Great goals and wishes may have different paths, but the important point is the goal itself, which is achievable for both man and woman.

In Islam, woman is woman and man is man and they are individuals of the same essence; as emphasized by the holy 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 most righteous of you.”*³

In Islamic teachings, man and woman are one and this oneness is rooted in their essence. Creation has linked these two beings in a way that they are never divisible.

The holy Quran states:

“And one of his signs is that He created mates for you from your selves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for people who reflect.”⁴

In fact, this is a major Islamic teaching that: *“Everyone should seek his perfection from within himself.”*⁵ One should develop within his own self, gradually remove his deficiencies and idiocy, and finally reach the desired perfection and lasting prosperity.

It is totally insane for woman to lose or belittle her own self, so that she feels inferior in creation and tries to resemble man; wear and make up like him and imitate his behavior. This viewpoint is the outset of the denying of woman's personality and its result is as misleading as its beginning. Woman

should seek herself within her own self and beware that the existence of two human types -man and woman- is not acknowledging one and refuting the other.

Today, among the plethora of biased theories on woman, woman should return to her principles. She should ignore the aliens' contempt and discover her natural and cultural values with self-esteem. She should not lose her originality and not follow others blindly. Rather, woman should develop her own life via her cultural richness.

Our sincere scholars, who have studied the western culture deeply, have understood well that true salvation from tyrant systems lies in religious and cultural originality; that is the renewing of the precious Islamic and national values.

Knowledge is in monopoly of no one. One should benefit from others' knowledge, based on this lasting Islamic teaching, quoted from the Prophet Muhammad (a.s.):

*“Seek knowledge, even if it is far away in China, because seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim man and Muslim woman.”*⁶

This does not mean inferiority before the superficial greatness of the west. Some Asian nations have sought knowledge by benefiting from western science and technology, combining it with their own cultural values, and not becoming extremely fascinated by the west.

The most valuable perfection and true independence is, in fact, the knowing of oneself and one's own identity and nature, as well as knowing the flaws and declines of an alien culture. An alien culture leads nations to dependence, absurdity and unoriginality. The resulting dependence and captivity imprisons not only human body, but also his inner self and mind.

Surprisingly, some want to forget the attempts of determined thinkers and their warnings during the past centuries and make the youths forget them too. They intend to remove our self-reliance and thinking power, and make us culturally dependent, in order to pave the way for economic, military, and political assaults.

In this era of deviant viewpoints and false criteria, the youth should be awakened and informed by the authors, thinkers, and all cultural centers, so that our generation is immunized against any cultural assault. In the last few decades, anytime the Islamic principles and beliefs were attacked, the question of 'woman' was assaulted too. This issue is still being exploited at present.

Not very long ago, the Materialist and Marxist ideologies entered societies for some time, which resulted in the weakening of some beliefs and the drain of some brains. Now, that those ideologies have been proved worthless in explaining the philosophy of the world and human being, the capitalist ideology is trying to destroy the youth's beliefs, and would probably destroy other resources as well. Working against this cultural assault is at the first stage is the demanding duty of the knowledgeable. They should spare no effort to make the new deviant beliefs known throughout the society (in order to be resisted).

The introduction of western feminism is an instrument of this cultural assault, which attacks a half of the major body of the society, to destroy our religious and national unity.

The present book is written for the same excellent purpose. I hope this cursory evaluation of the different viewpoints on woman be useful for our younger generation, so that they become more familiar with the preferred view of Islam and the value it puts on woman. Of course, there is much research to be done on woman's rights to lighten the dark sides of it.

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Chapter One: Woman's Creation

Woman's soul and body is created from the same essence as man is. In fact, there is no difference between the reality of man and woman. The Holy Qur'an explicitly mentions this fact when saying:

(O People! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind), ⁷ and (He it is Who created you from a single being, and of the same (kind) did He made his mate that he might incline to her), ⁸ and (And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them). ⁹ So, woman's creation is from the same essence as man's creation, just as the Prophets (a.s.) are human beings and selected from among humans themselves.

The Qur'an says, (Certainly Allah conferred a great favor upon the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves).¹⁰ The sameness of man and woman is a theme easily acquired from the Qur'anic verses. There is only one other viewpoint in this regard that considers woman as an addition to man's creation. This is derived from some traditions of the Prophet's Household (a.s), but it is rejected by Imam Sadiq (a.s).

Zurara narrated, *“Once, Imam Sadiq (a.s) was asked about the creation of Eve and that some people believed that the Almighty Allah created her from Adam's lower left rib, and the Imam (a.s) said, 'The Almighty is beyond doing so. Those who hold this view think that Allah could not create a wife for Adam, but from his rib.*

*What do they mean? They let others make excuses in this regard. May Allah judge between us and them all!' Then the Imam (a.s) said, The Almighty Allah created Adam from soil and ordered the angels to prostrate before His creation. Then He made Adam sleep deeply, and created a new being for him ... The new being moved and Adam was awakened by her movement. He saw a pretty creation just like himself, except that she was a woman ... Then Adam said: 'O Allah! Who is this beautiful being to whom I am inclined?' Allah replied: 'This is My servant Eve' ... ”*¹¹

Allama Majlisi says, *“It is common among some historians and tradition narrators that Eve was created from Adam's rib, but some other traditions reject it.”*¹²

Then Allama Majlisi narrates an exegesis discussion from Abul Fotuh ar-Razi. Ar-Razi in the exegesis of the Qur'anic verse (O People! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind), ¹³ has said, *“By this mate, Eve is meant. There are two views on Eve's creation; the first is that Eve was formed from Adam's rib, and the second is that Adam's wife was created from the same essence. And this verse is like another one that says: (And Allah made wives for you from among yourselves)¹⁴ or (Certainly a messenger came to you from among yourselves).”*¹⁵

Then, Allama Majlisi says, *“The creation from the same essence means from the same father and it does not nullify the presence of a mother, as a requirement ...”*

There is another possibility about the word (min; ¹⁶ from) that it may be a causative preposition. In other words, it means that “*He created wives for you ...*”¹⁷ This second view is in accord with Imam Sadiq's view that woman has an independent creation just like man.

Chapter Two: Woman's Perfection

In the Qur'anic view, woman can reach perfection, just as man can. The Holy Qur'an explicitly states that she can go to ascension via awareness and good deeds. Anytime there is reference in the Qur'anic verses about human perfection, women are pointed out along men:

(Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying 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 Allah much and the women who remember; Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward. ¹⁸

In this verse, submission, belief, truthfulness, patience, humbleness, fasting, chastity, and remembrance of Allah are mentioned in the same way for man and woman. Both of them can equally reach these heavenly positions.

(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). ¹⁹ (And whoever does good deeds whether male or female and he (or she) is a believer; these shall enter the paradise and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly). ²⁰

In this verse, the unity of man and woman is justified, that an attempter should get reward as much as his/her attempt. Allah is beyond differentiating between the efforts of man and woman.

(And whoever does good deeds whether male or female while he (or she) is a believer; We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.) ²¹ This verse mentions the sameness of worldly rewards for good deeds of man and woman. In other words, good deeds of any servant receive equal rewards in this world and the Hereafter.

It should be pointed out that other Qur'anic verses about human perfection include both man and woman, though they are stated with masculine pronouns. Statements such as (O You who believe!) ²² means 'O People!' and refer to both men and women.

Chapter Three: Woman's Reason

The Holy Qur'an knows woman as a human, possessing all human qualities and all necessary capabilities of a human being. Nothing about deficiency in woman's mind has been mentioned in the Qur'an at all. Rather, as pointed out earlier, man and woman are equal to Qur'an in terms of reaching perfection, which is only possible through deep understanding. However, some traditions introduce woman as less intelligent than man. Some points worth mentioning in this regard.

a. Low intelligence and inadequate cognition is attributed to many people and social classes by Islam, either men or women, for instance:

Pride and arrogance is an indication of stupidity.

Imam Ali (a.s.) says, *"One's self conceit is the sign of his lack of reason."*²³

One, who accompanies the stupid, would lose his own reason.²⁴ Not listening to the wise kills reason.²⁵ Wastefulness wipes out reason.²⁶

Pride and self-deceit decreases reason.²⁷

One who loves something excessively would suffer from folly.²⁸

Lustfulness destroys brain.²⁹

A wise man keeps calm in anger; otherwise, he is foolish.³⁰

One who always does nonsense is unwise.³¹

Such guidelines are for awakening people, so that they know and overcome obstacles and try to perfect their wisdom.³²

Some other groups of people, on the other hand, are considered wise and even possessing complete cognition, either men or women.

A wise person seeks perfection and an unwise one seeks wealth.³³

A wise person judges his own opinion, not relying on what he likes.³⁴

A wise individual acts as to his cognition.³⁵

No wisdom is more valuable than opposing whims and desires.³⁶

A wise person is religious and faithful.³⁷

Humbleness before the truth and accepting it is the highest degree of wisdom.³⁸ Such statements do not concern innate human folly; rather they refer to cultural and social effects on human wisdom. One's background, education, and lifestyle may prepare the necessary conditions for his/her growth and materialization of innate capabilities. Any kind of shortcoming in these aspects, on the other hand, would harm human abilities, and even completely destroy a certain aptitude. The traditions about mindlessness have considered this doubtless issue.

Another issue is worth considering about human mind; wisdom is mentioned as accompanying faith in some traditions. The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) says, (Surely, goodness is obtained by wisdom. He has no faith, one who has no reason.)³⁹

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) says, (He, who is wise, is faithful.)⁴⁰

Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.) says, (O Hisham! The Almighty selected His prophets so that people accept His religion wisely. Therefore, those who understand the religion more wisely accept the prophets' invitation well. And whoever is more aware of Allah's religion, is wiser than others ...) ⁴¹

Keeping in mind these teachings as well as the Qur'anic verses referring to the faithful women, as equal to faithful men, it becomes clear that women

possess the kind of reason necessary for high-rank faithfulness. So anywhere that true faith, humbleness before Allah, chastity, and worship exist, reason and human wisdom inevitably exist.

Therefore, woman's mindlessness, referred to in some traditions, may mean the momentary state caused by human negligence. As these passing states are related to behavioral factors, they can be changed by a change in behavior, thus regaining the innate human nature. For instance, one who suffers from pride and despotism may lose reason. Then if these vices are wiped out by training and refinement of the soul, the barriers of thoughtfulness are removed, and thus the human mind regains its capacity and guides man.

According to what has preceded, woman's folly referred to in some traditions is related to the contemporary women who were less engaged in intellectual issues and they only thought of their female aspects. The mentioned traditions hence do not refer to woman's permanent nature.

Some descriptions of certain people or social classes are commonly seen in traditions that are related to changeable dispositions, just as common as these changeable states in traditions are sometimes interpreted as natural ones by mistake.

To make the point clearer, a tradition from Imam Ali (a.s) follows. Imam Ali (a.s) said, "*Women are not pious when in need and not patient with their lust. Cosmetics are necessary for them even if they are old. They are arrogant and proud even if they are disabled ... anyway, treat them kindly and speak with them well that they may improve their behaviors.*"⁴²

The last phrase of Imam Ali's statement indicates that the mentioned vices are not permanent innate ones; rather they are caused by women's milieu and education. Otherwise, the Imam would not say, "*Treat them kindly that they may improve their behaviors.*" In fact, these faults are due to inadequate education and improper culture of the society. They can be changed by kindly reactions. Therefore, by the term 'mindlessness' in traditions, it is meant the improper effect of society's culture on women.

b. Perhaps, the lack of reason implies the different brain weights of man and woman that is a reality about these two human kinds.⁴³ It is also proved by scientific researches that women's emotional intelligence is stronger. But this is not a weak point for woman; rather, it is an important necessity for her motherhood tasks. Woman's emotion plays a more central role in children's personality development and family's warm environment than man's strict mind-governed role. This quality diverts woman from complex intellectual issues to make the family warm and lovely.

c. If one or some traditions contain a certain controversial issue, it should be scrutinized to see if there are other contrasting traditions or verses. If the tradition's document is correct and no contrasting traditions are found, the principle of "*ta'adol wa tarjih*" (balance and preference) 1, a principle of Osul filed, should be followed. Perhaps, after expert studies it is found that there is in fact no contrast. However, there may be two traditions or a tradition and a Qur'anic verse that are labeled as 'general' and 'specific', 'absolute' and 'provisional' and so on. Also, two traditions may be about two separate subjects or about two states of the same subject. In these cases,

there remains no contrast. Finally, if a tradition is in total contrast with the meaning of a Qur'anic verse and they are by no means compatible, the tradition is ignored, due to its contrast to Allah's words. As a result, surface incompatibility cannot be regarded true contrast without careful investigation.

It should, of course, be kept in mind that this is a completely specialist job done by precise standards. Not everyone can nullify a tradition because of his/her own criteria.

In investigating about the tradition of 'woman's folly', it does not seem compatible with the Qur'anic verses. Nowhere in the Holy Qur'an there is a mention to such an issue; rather, woman and man are mentioned equally in case of good and bad conditions, as was pointed out in the section of 'woman's perfection'.

Moreover, the mentioned tradition is not in accord with another tradition of Imam Ali (a.s) in Nahjol Balagha:

*“Avoid consulting with women, except women whose reason has been tried.”*⁴⁵

Therefore, the traditions containing 'woman's folly' and traditions like the one just mentioned are *“Ithlaq wa Taqyeed”* (absolute and limitation acceptance) and the former are rejected. Therefore, Imam Ali's tradition does not include all women, but some exceptions. Today, however, those exceptions are more than those days, and perhaps they are the majority.

Another tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that refers to women's exceptional cognition. *“So many women who may have more religious understanding than men have.”* This is not equal cognition of men and women, but the occasional superiority of women. This tradition will be discussed in later chapters, too.

Chapter Four: Woman's Social Status

Islam has given equal positions to man and woman in most social activities. Woman has responsibilities in all group social activities, except Jihad (the holy war) and only Jihad; women have duties in defense, preceding and following the stages of Jihad.

The Holy Qur'an says: (And as for the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other; they enjoin good and forbid evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger. As for these, Allah will show Mercy to them; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise) ⁴⁶ As to these words of Allah, women have the great responsibility of guardianship as men do, so they enjoin to good and forbid from evil.

Woman's social status is as vast as the concept of good and evil in Islam. Therefore, women can engage in all social activities that men do, including the most important social field that is politics and government.

That is why women were active in political scenes in the early Islamic era and had leading roles in government. Prophet Mohammad (a.s.) took an oath of allegiance with women, according to the Qur'anic order, so that this half of the Islamic society becomes familiar with its socio-political responsibilities.

The Holy Qur'an states: (O Prophet! When believing women come to you, giving you a pledge that they will not associate aught with Allah and will not steal and will not commit fornication and will not kill their children and will not bring calumny with what they have forged of themselves and will not disobey you in what is good, accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them from Allah, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful) ⁴⁷

This verse is about paying of allegiance with the newly-established Islamic government in the Prophet's age, which happened on the Day of the Conquest of Mecca. After the men's allegiance with the Prophet (a.s.), women came to him and asked to pay allegiance too. Then the mentioned Qur'anic verse was revealed and it mentioned the qualifications for being the prophet's allegiant, emphasizing women's engagement in the political activities.

It is narrated that the Prophet (a.s.), on that day, took the women's allegiance verbally. Women could also do so by putting their hands inside a bowl of water in which the Prophet (a.s.) had put his own hand. This way, the allegiance between individuals and the government was established. It is also narrated that the Prophet (a.s.) took women's oath, shaking hands with their hands covered. ⁴⁸

It is narrated that on the day of al-Ghadir women paid allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.) by putting their hands in the same bowl of water as his hand was.

Moreover, women participated in the great socio-political movement of Hijra and their immigration to Medina was accepted along with men's. This is especially important at a time when women were deprived of most of their individual rights and could not engage in social issues.

The Holy Qur'an states: (O you who believe! When believing women come to you migrating, then examine them. Allah knows best their faith.

Then if you find them to be believing women, do not send them back to the unbelievers.)⁴⁹

As it is mentioned in exegesis books, the examination of emigrant (Muhajir) women was to ensure that their departure has not been due to family disputes. This was done by asking those women to swear that their emigration had not been because of disliking their husbands, tiredness of their city or other worldly problems.⁵⁰

Women can participate in other social movements and have a leading role in them. The Ashura movement is the best sample of this kind of participation. In recent times, women's role in Iran's tobacco movement led the monarch government to accept the verdict of the great Ayatollah Shirazi. Contemporary women's heroic role in the Islamic revolution of Iran is also clear.

Women can also take part in social positions. In fact, the only social positions in which women cannot participate are Imamate and prophethood. Of course, reaching the position of infallibility and guardianship (wilayah), which are the essence of prophethood and imamate, is possible for them; the great Lady Fatima az-Zahra (a.s.) had possessed this position. Women, however, have not been given the demanding prophethood or Imamate positions in the society because they are too difficult and very heavy tasks.

For the Islamic authority (marji'iyah), some do not consider masculinity as a prerequisite, provided a woman or some women have other qualifications.

In the future, after Imam Mandi's reappearance and international revolution, women shall have key social roles and some of them shall be disciples of the Imam (a.s). Imam Baqir (a.s) stated: (By Allah, that three hundred and thirteen men will come to him (Imam Mandi (a.s)) along with fifty women ...) ⁵¹ This shows the women's future social role, especially because the first group of Imam Mandi's disciples has deep understanding and faith. They are exceptional characters with especial intellectual and spiritual power.

Abu Basir narrated, *“Once, I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s): 'May I be sacrificed for you! Shall be there other believers besides Imam Mandi's disciples on that time?' The Imam answered: 'There shall be other believers too, but those who shall work with him after his revolution shall be elites, Islamic authorities, the knowledgeable, agents, and judges.’”*⁵²

Preparation for the twelfth Imam's era necessitates, at least for the waiting women, studying Islamic jurisprudence and knowing social management issues, to be able to participate in that great international revolution.

There are also various viewpoints concerning women's judgment. Some Islamic jurisprudents do not permit woman's being a judge, some others believe that this issue should be solved by consensus, and still other jurisprudents, both in the past and today, allow woman's being a judge. Among the late jurisprudents, the late Ayatollah Muqaddas Ardabili rejected the total abandonment of woman's judgment.⁵³ The argument of the opponents is not much grounded.

Proving the consensus is also not easy. One of the arguments of the opponents is a tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated by Abu Khadija who said, *“Once, Imam Sadiq (a.s) sent me to the Shia with this message: ‘Never go to corrupted judges in case of financial disputes! Identify a man among yourself who knows halal (lawful) and haram (unlawful) so that I appoint him as your judge. Never refer to an oppressor judge.’”*⁵⁴

It is doubtless that (man) does not mean a male person; rather it means a person who has an insight in Islamic rules and traditions to differentiate between the lawful and the unlawful. The criterion here is not femininity or masculinity at all.

As it was mentioned in the preface, most of the statements containing masculine references or pronouns are in fact general addresses to all human beings. Such statements address men, because men's roles were clearer and they were more at hand then. So, gender is not specified in these traditions and rules; they only reflect the conversational practices of the past.

It is also inferred from Imam Sadiq's tradition that he is denouncing the oppressive judges. Two points deserve being underlined in the mentioned tradition; that the judge should be a righteous and Muslim person, and that the judge should be conscious of the judgment issues. The emphasis of the tradition is after all on the judge's practical and scientific qualifications and the avoidance of tyrant courts, and not on the gender of the judge.

In sum, anyone who has the necessary qualifications of knowledge, piety, preciseness, and the power of decision-making away from passions and desires can be a judge. Therefore, woman's judgment does not add an especial condition to the general judgment issue.

Another tradition is used as an argument against woman's judgment. Sheikh al-Hurr al-Aamili has written a chapter in his *Wasa'il Al-Shi'a* with only this tradition that the Prophet (a.s.) in his will had told Imam Ali (a.s): *“The Friday Prayer is not required from women ... and they are not to be entrusted with judgment.”*⁵⁵

The former part of this tradition is not followed and the Friday Prayer is considered true for both man and woman. It seems unjust to accept one part of the tradition and reject the other part, so the argument by this tradition is completely wrong.

The matter of woman's judgment, in sum, requires more scholarly scrutinizing. Of course, some contemporary jurists have researched about this and approved woman's judgment.

It should be pointed out that judgment is one of the difficult jobs. The courts with criminals, wrongdoers, claimants, and complainants on the one hand, and the conscience's concern about knowing the very fact, fair verdict, and the hereafter account on the other hand, are truly distressing. Therefore, judgment is a demanding work. Many strict Islamic teachings have been mentioned in this regard that prevent most of the learned from entering the judgment profession. One of these traditions comes here as an instance:

Imam Sadiq says, *“Judges are four groups (kinds); three groups go to the Hell and only one to the Paradise. One, who judges unjustly and knows that his judgment is unjust, goes to the Fire, one, who judges unjustly but does not know that his judgment is unjust, goes to the Fire, and one, who*

*judges justly but does not know that his judgment is just, goes to the Fire. One, who judges justly and with knowledge, goes to the Paradise.”*⁵⁶

In some traditions, judgment is considered the job of the prophets (a.s.) and the Imams (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.) considers judgment as difficult as the ruling over the society.

One day, some children brought their writings to Imam Ali (a.s.) to choose the best one. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: *“Surely, it is a kind of judgment; oppression in this judgment is like oppression in the rule.”*⁵⁷

Considering the difficulties of the judgment profession, is the removing of this burden from a certain group or class a service and consideration or it is a disservice and ignoring of their personality? It seems that detesting the burdensome judgment responsibility for woman, if it is proved at all, indicates a great service to woman, just as eliminating other hard jobs such as Jihad. Another consideration is that woman's delicate sensations might spoil just judgment.

However, this is only the author's view and the arguments against woman's judgment are not much grounded. Two aspects of woman's social activities are briefly mentioned here for their importance:

a. Cultural and scientific activities: One of the most supported issues in Islam is the scientific and educational growth throughout the society; without the slightest differences among people or classes. The Qur'anic verses are quite clear in this regard. The traditions necessitate cognitive growth too, to an extent that the religion is defined as reason.

Imam Ali (a.s.) says, *“Reason is one's inner religious laws, and the religious laws is his outer reason.”*⁵⁸

Prophet Muhammad's statement, which is narrated and accepted by the different Muslim sects, is very famous in this regard. The Prophet (a.s.) says, *“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim man and Muslim woman.”*⁵⁹

In some versions of this tradition, the phrase 'Muslim woman' is not narrated. Scholars say that 'Muslim man' is a general noun including both man and woman. This view is undoubtedly true.

For many kinds of education such as learning Islamic fundamentals, woman does not even need her husband's permission, just as other obligatory deeds for which the dissent of the husband is not important.

That is why after the dominance of Islam and the eradication of the obstacles of learning, everyone, especially women, started acquiring knowledge. Not long afterwards, some learned religious scholars among women were well-educated and they reached high scientific ranks. A story about one of Muslim learned women deserves to be mentioned here.

Burayrah was one of the women of the early Islamic era. One day, her husband came to the Prophet (a.s.), complaining that she had left home and gone away. Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) called Burayrah and asked her to go back to her husband's house. Burayrah said, *“Are you ordering me?”* The Prophet (a.s.) answered, *“No! There is no obligation, but I am the mediator.”*⁶⁰

The conversation between the Prophet (a.s.) and that woman shows that she had reached a religious cognition to differentiate the criteria of the

Islamic rules. She analyzed the speech of the Messenger of Allah (a.s.) and asked if he gave an order as the Islamic jurispudent or only an advice to her. The Messenger of Allah (a.s.) in return confirmed her view and said, “*I am the mediator.*” The conversation in this tradition is widely used by the jurisprudents and scholars of Usool when discussing whether an order without necessary evidence is an obligation or not.

Anyway, this one and other traditions indicate that once pagan women, who were worlds apart from culture and knowledge, got very enlightened after the advent of Islam.

Such women are numerous throughout Islamic history up to the present day. It is highly expected from Muslim intellectual women to review the history and record the accounts of enlightened women to be presented to the new generations. Some books have been surely written on the life of great Muslim women; however, not enough eloquent works, especially by scholar women, have been produced. b. Economic activities: Women have the right to participate in economic and commercial fields, exactly as men do. In Europe, women were given the right of commercial activities only after centuries, not for their own sake, but for the capitalism purposes. “... *The industrial revolution industrialized woman too...Women were cheaper workers, thus the employers preferred them to tough high-wage men ... The first law for freedom of our mothers was the 1882 law. According to this law, British women got extraordinary privileges. They could keep their wages for themselves. Factory owners in the House of Commons ratified this law to absorb women to their factories ...*”⁶¹

Centuries before Europe's giving privilege to women, Islam had granted rights to Muslim women, not for materialistic but for humane purposes. Islam permits women to work outside home and possess their own salary. Women can make a will and inherit from others. They can make any economic attempt, invest, and establish farms and factories. These issues are derived from the Islamic teachings and explicitly defined in our Islamic law (Fiqh).

Chapter Five: Woman; the Family Axis

The importance of family is known to everybody. It has a central role in educating generations, as well as comforting family members and especially man. It is also the basic cell for the society at large. Even some authors who have had a machine view about family, talking about biologic fathers and mothers and machine-made children ⁶², are worried about family annihilation, as the annihilation of the central core of human civilization:

“Family annihilation is in fact a part of the general crisis in industrial society in which all the organizations of the second wave are beginning to extinct. It is frequently being heard that family will be annihilated in the future, or that “family” is the most important issue today ... In recent years, there have been so much divorce in families that today one out of seven American children live with a single parent. This number is even higher in urban areas and it reaches one out of four children ... ” ⁶³ *“Most scholars ... have considered family as the most important factor in educating children, their health or illness, dignity or deviation, compatibility or incompatibility ... A child acquires the first lessons of life in family ... devotion, affection, rules and traditions, cultural and religious rituals, and duties ... Family shapes the child's personality ... Individual or social health is not possible without considering the family's role ... Family can be the physical, emotional, intellectual ... planner of the child or its destroyer.”* ⁶⁴

Doctor Irvin Greenburg, psychology professor at the Medicine College of Albert Einstein believes: *“People will marry in pursuit of a stable structure.”* According to this view, family is like a root that accompanies its members, wherever they goes. It is as an anchor, which saves people's lives from the storms of change. In short, the more different the surroundings become, the more important the role of family becomes ⁶⁵.

“... anyway, what appears from within all these changes and diminishes their importance is a minute thing. There is a secret voice embedded in human activities that is not been discussed much. It has always been a balancing factor in society; that is the family round... This round is so ancient and it works so automatically and systematically that is taken for granted and people have not asked about it...These natural and predictable family happenings grant human beings, from various tribes and societies, a sense of belonging in the course of changing affairs. The family's round in human life is considered as the base of the mental health.” ⁶⁶

In the preface of *“Toward a New Civilization”*, we read:

“Toffler, on the other hand, believes that one of the outcomes of the Third Wave is the influence and importance of family and respect for it. In the Second Wave (Industrial Civilization), the powerful 'family' institute faced a gradual decay and lost all its qualities of the First Wave. So the patients were sent to hospitals instead of being cared for at home; children were sent to kindergartens and schools; old people were sent to nursing houses; and the couples spent most of their time in parties, restaurants, and clubs. What remained of family was only emotional ties, which could be easily broken.

However, the Third Wave would revive it again, granting it its previous power and authority. In this way, many people would do their jobs at home

*using computers, fax machines, multifunction telephones, and other Third Wave communication media... Many parents would teach their children at home by modern communication means. Medical jobs, even surgical operations, can be done at home by robotic computers connected to medical centers. As family members spend most of their time at home, emotional ties will strengthen. Thus, family importance and influence will become even more than that of the Second Wave.”*⁶⁷

*“To me, for reasons previously mentioned, none of them but family would be the main canon of tomorrow's civilization. I think 'home' has a wonderful importance in the Third Wave civilization. The start of production-for-consumption method, development of Electronic cottage, creation of new constructs in economy, and automatic nonmass-production industries all contribute to the renewal of family as future society's central unit. The economic, sanitary, training and social duties of such a unit would increase and not decrease.”*⁶⁸ Woman has two basic roles in family, along many other apparent and invisible roles. These two main roles are:

1. Woman renews man's character, capability, and efficiency at home. The calmness the woman grants to man cannot be made in any other way. Will Durant says, *“As woman changes the fancy man to the man devoted to family and children, she serves the continuation of generation ...”*⁶⁹

The Holy Qur'an reveals this role of women:

*(And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion. Most surely, there are signs in this for people who reflect.)*⁷⁰

(Rest) is a deep calmness that men get beside women and family. It helps the ship of life reach the prosperity shore. It also eliminates man's concerns and tensions.

Another point to be mentioned is that family familiarizes man with duties and regulations, bringing a gradual sense of commitment and small-scale management. This is an important instruction that cannot be taught in any school so tangibly and emotionally. As a result, man can fulfill his duties as well as the society's expectations from him efficiently only in the family and beside woman. And this is woman's role of wifeness.

2. The other essential role of woman's is motherhood. This, too, is a fundamental constructive role. Motherhood is a long-term duty. From the time the embryo is formed in woman's womb, she begins raising the child up to school time. Afterwards, though the child is independent, s/he is affected by the mother in some way throughout the life.

Of course, mother's evident role is very important in the period of breastfeeding and childhood. During this long period, all aspects of the child's personality are shaped by the mother. In fact, the child receives major assets from the mother and his future is formed accordingly. Educational situations, too, affect the child in the same way as the mother wishes.

That is why Islam has many recommendations to mothers in pregnancy, delivery, breastfeeding, and other periods. Physical guidelines such as proper nutrition and mental relaxing ones should be followed. All these

aspects are effective in motherhood and well-educating of children. This is the most beautiful skill of woman; a skill exclusively in her own hands.

*“A healthy woman breastfeeding her child should be considered the beauty peak of Creation.”*⁷¹

As a result, in benevolent education and support of woman's rights, this great aspect of woman's life should be considered, not sacrificing it for other transitory social roles.

*“Genius is equally possible in motherhood as in politics, literature, and war. Sameness in genius cannot be judged by power or skill ... rather it should be assessed by the ability for playing natural roles of man and woman ...”*⁷²

The motherhood role is emphasized and discussed much in Islam to strengthen the relation of children with family and reinforce the family system (More about motherhood is to come in the last chapter). Also sincere scholars, who wish to reorganize the human society and civilization, underline motherhood role, warning women about the propaganda on equality of man and woman that might distract women from their natural duties; because the children who do not experience the presence of their mothers or families that are dismantled after divorce suffer much.

*“... Young girls should be educated rightly to be good mothers and raise good children, not to become physicians, lawyers, or professors ...”*⁷³

Women should also learn that motherhood is their most important role in life that helps their material, spiritual, and even physical development.

*“... It seems that the female beings -at least about mammals- do not reach perfection but after one or some pregnancies. Women without children are angrier and they lose their mental balance sooner. Women are generally unaware of the importance of reproduction process for their own development. So it is not logical to divert their attention from this role and direct them to the same lifestyles, viewpoints and goals as men's.”*⁷⁴

The mottos of freedom and equality should not undermine this great mission of motherhood. All logical scholars are concerned about family issues and woman's role in family, so that the family does not dismantle and woman plays her role inside it. They are worried that woman accepts manly responsibilities and forgets her own mission; a mission greater than manly works and imitating the male gender. *“... Those who speak about woman's freedom should know that a complete woman is more vital than an incomplete man ... If the nature seems unable to maintain the family and the child, it is because women have for some time forgotten the nature. But the defeat of nature does not last forever.”*⁷⁵

Chapter Six: Violence against Woman

In Islamic teachings, all kinds of violence against all people have been banned. Gentleness, however, has been emphasized in social relations. The Holy Prophet (a.s.) said: *“Nothing is more beloved to Allah and his Messenger than faith and gentleness with people. And nothing is more hateful to Allah and His Messenger than polytheism and violence against people.”*⁷⁶

The subject of violence is sometimes misused and misinterpreted. To understand the concept of violence truly, it should be born in mind that the Islamic reprisal of the criminals, Jihad with the unfaithful, and using war instruments against violators of human rights are vital issues recommended to Muslims throughout the Qur'an. Reprisal is sometimes a vital tool, because violators and oppressors do any oppression, kill and torture cruelly for their interests, and use the highest levels of violence.

Before such people, non-violence has an inhumane meaning. It is in fact like gentleness to a rapacious leopard. The behavior of the holy Qur'an toward these violent individuals is for the interest of humanity:

(Whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you, and be careful of your duty to Allah and know that Allah is with those who guard against evil.)⁷⁷ The only way for facing these human-like savages is violence and not logic. Some simple-minded proponents of western liberal-democratic school think that the oppressors can be confronted with logic and ethics, without any violence. All the past and present realities and instances nullify this false imagination. This is also rejected in the overall history of the prophets.

The Prophet of Islam, who is (Mercy for the worlds) and whose motto is *“I have been sent (as prophet) for completing the nobilities of character”* went to 83 wars. He battled even with inner opponents and had a decisive behavior with Muslims who did not accept some Islamic rules. This statement of the Prophet (a.s.) manifests the true way for Muslims:

*“Goodness, all the goodness is maintained by (the force of) the sword. People are directed to goodness only by the sword. And the swords are keys to the Paradise and the Hell.”*⁷⁸

The same tradition⁷⁹ is also narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.), the fifth infallible Imam. Prophet Muhammad (a.s.), the great leader of humanity and the best teacher of ethics and divine principles, thinks that all the goodness is materialized by the power of the swords. He considers the instruments of power as the only way for gaining peaceful and humane goals. The Prophet (a.s.) knows that the cruel and voracious people do not leave murder, crime, oppression, and disloyalty and do not accept righteousness except by the force of the sword. In the present era, we see clear instances of these criminals who oppress the third world nations. They oppress the nations concerning oil price. They suppress national movements. Food and drug companies use their power to force and dominate nations. They spread viruses so that their products be sold, making the vital foods and drugs the most violent instruments for reaching their goal.

The weapon producers start wars among innocent people to sell their products, beside many other inhumane methods. After this much violence

that is unprecedented in history, they now speak of non-violence. They suggest logical and humane behavior toward oppression to make the youth away from the principles of Jihad, martyrdom, and sacrifice. They want to abolish revolutionary bases and pave the way for inhumane rulers.

As was mentioned, according to the Prophet (a.s.), violence is the worst thing and it is equal to polytheism. Of course, this prohibited violence is the one against Allah's servants; these Allah's servants means trustworthy, faithful, and responsible people, not the oppressive criminals. So, one should be aware of propagandas and be careful of usage and aim of apparently beautiful words.

Surely, Islam has condemned violence and aggression. Even the annoying of any living being is forbidden in Islam. Imam Sadiq (a.s) said: *“By Allah, the pious are prosperous. Do you know them? Those who do not annoy a very small ant that is hardly seen.”*⁸⁰

Furthermore, any kind of trivial annoyance that makes others unhappy is considered a devilish doing in Islam. The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) said, *“One, who annoys a faithful, annoys me and one, who annoys me, annoys the Almighty Allah. One, who annoys Allah, is cursed in the Torah, the Bible, the Zabur (the Psalms), and the Qur'an.”*⁸¹

Imam Sadiq (a.s) stated, *“The Almighty says: Let him, who harms My faithful servant, expect a war from Me.”*⁸² Insulting and disrespecting others is also forbidden in Islam. The Prophet (a.s.) said, *“The meanest of people is he who insults people.”*⁸³ Scaring and distressing others is considered away from true belief, as the Holy Prophet (a.s.) stated, *“One, who distresses a faithful and then he gives him all the world, shall not ransom himself by that nor shall he be rewarded for it.”*⁸⁴

Finally, any kind of unpleasant and unkind behavior is not acceptable. The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) said, *“Whoever pushes a faithful to demean him by it, slaps him on the face, or does something to him that he hates, the angels curse him until he shall satisfy him (the faithful) against himself, repent, and ask Allah to forgive him.”*⁸⁵

It was mentioned that a faithful means a faithful man and a faithful woman, who are both included in all these rulings. These rulings have been given more importance in family relationships.

What was stated is the general Islamic teaching. The Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet's household (a.s), however, emphasize the avoiding of violence more deeply about woman (This issue will be discussed in details in the last chapter).

The Holy Qur'an states: and treat them kindly ...) ⁸⁶

Even in talking about the divorcing of woman, the Holy Qur'an stresses kindtreatment: (And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed term, then either retain them in kindness or release them in kindness, and do not retain them for injury, so that you exceed the limits, and whoever does this, he indeed is unjust to his own soul; and do not take Allah's communications for a mockery ...) ⁸⁷

Divorce and separation often go with harms, hatred, and unwanted reactions. The Qur'an prevents these issues, saying that if a man wants to divorce his wife, he should not annoy or harm her or behave violently

toward her, observing the principle of 'kindness'. Therefore, even in quarrels, the principle of 'kindness' should be observed in dealing with women.

In another Qur'anic verse about the breastfeeding period, the principle of 'kindness' and the providing of mothers' needs are emphasized: (... and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father of the child according to usage ...) ⁸⁸

The criteria for providing the mother's needs should be “*kindness*”; not the necessary amount, but more than that. Considering the Qur'an's emphasis on the “*kindness*” criteria in treating women, the concept of 'kindness' should be studied carefully to see if it is the same as the legal criteria or something more than justice and law.

The concept of “*kindness*”, which defines the social verdict of 'enjoining good' (al-Amr bil Ma'ruf) in the Islamic teachings, has a deeper meaning than the mere lawfulness and justice. It includes the legal and just rights, plus ethical and humane ones. Such a humane behavior deserves human high values. So treating woman legally or justly is treating her in a way determined by the law, but treating woman with “*kindness*” means treating her beyond her (only) legal rights; treating her also as ethics and Islamic values determine. In other words, it means observing the obligatory deeds and the recommended deeds as well.

In the book Majma' al-Bahrayn, we read: “*kindness' is a general term for anything that is Allah's obedience, His pleasure, doing good to people, and any action that is considered good by the Sharia (laws) or logic ...*” ⁸⁹

Aminul Islam Tabarsi says, “*Behaving with 'kindness' is the behaving according to Allah's commands, observing woman's rights, satisfying her needs, and having good temper and good behavior with her. It is also said that 'kindness' means not to beat woman, not to speak badly with her, but to speak with good humor ...*” ⁹⁰

Attention should be paid that in addition to observing the right and justice, kind and humorous behavior and following ethical criteria are considered as 'kind treatment'. It should also be borne in mind that the “*kindness*” mentioned in the Qur'anic verses refers to a general rule, rather than an exception or specified situation. In other words, it cannot be said that women should be dealt with kindly in some specific situations and not in others. Such a meaning is in full contrast with the verses containing the principle of 'kindness'. Therefore, this principle is the general Islamic rule in dealing with woman. The peak of forgiveness toward women is stated in this Qur'anic verse:

(... Then if you hate them (wives) it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has pledged abundant good in it ...) ⁹¹

Aminul Islam Tabarsi says, “... *There is abundant good in keeping wives who are not much beloved... and this verse encourages the husbands, who do not like their wives, to have patience and not to divorce them. This patience is encouraged as far as there is no harm to one's life, religion, or property ...*” ⁹²

This is recommended to men who have ethical, behavioral, or other problems with their wives and who rush to divorce them, not behaving patiently or ignoring some of their desires.

The Holy Qur'an has also warned seriously against the annoying of women: (And those who speak evil things of the believing men and the believing women without their having earned it, they are guilty indeed of a false accusation and a manifest sin.)⁹³ This verse follows another one that mentions the annoying of Allah and His Messenger (a.s.), thus the immorality of the annoying of believing women becomes more manifest. These were examples of verses that explicitly prohibited any violence against women. The same concept has been mentioned in traditions too. Imam Baqir (a.s) has quoted from the Prophet (a.s.): “Does one of you beat his wife and then he still wants to embrace her?!”⁹⁴

Considering these discussions, it may be asked that why the Holy Qur'an has mentioned the beating of women in this holy verse: (And as to those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping places, and beat them. Then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them.)⁹⁵

Islam has obliged woman to obey her husband in marital issues as a right of the husband. The importance of such needs and fulfilling them is certain. If conjugal needs are not responded to, the disobedient wife may face violence from the husband, since man is naturally more powerful. The Holy Qur'an in this case has limited such violent behavior, setting specific stages for the husband to enforce his wife to obey him and fulfill his desires. (Slightly) Beating a wife is only allowed in case of her disobedience of matrimonial concerns. The amount and quality of this beating is determined in traditions and Qur'anic exegesis. It is defined as a gentle beating that leaves no scar.⁹⁶ To avoid any kind of extreme violence in this regard, Imam Sadiq (a.s) has defined this beating as: “It is the beating with a toothbrush.”⁹⁷

This beating in fact declares an ethical opposition, not physical punishment. It should also be kept in mind that the beating itself follows two ethical and educational stages, as specified in the same Qur'anic verse: (... admonish them ... leave them alone in the sleeping places.)

To avoid going to extremes in leaving a disobedient wife alone, such as long-time leaving, sleeping in another room, or leaving the house, it is being determined as its least amount. Imam Baqir (a.s) said, “The verse means sleeping with his back toward the woman.”⁹⁸

Even in leaving women in their sleeping places, any kind of mistreatment is forbidden. So if women abandon the most necessary and primary relations with their husbands, they first face an ethical, then an educational reaction, and later a punitive one, in the same way as determined by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and not more than that. Some jurisprudents believe that woman's obedience to her husband is only obligatory in case of the ordinary matrimonial relationship. Even if some other kinds of pleasures are lawful in Islam, women are not forced to obey their husbands in them. As her obedience is not compulsory in all desires of the husband, disobedience of them is not regarded as 'desertion'.⁹⁹ 'Obedience' and 'desertion', which are

set principles in matrimonial issues, should not accompany violence and harm. They are in fact assessed with 'la dharar' (no harm) principle, i.e. obedience of woman to man's request should not cause any harm to woman in any way. Imam Sadiq (a.s) was asked about Allah's saying in the verse (Neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child), ¹⁰⁰ and he answered: 'Some breastfeeding women deserted their husbands' desires ... so Allah prohibited man to harm his wife and woman to harm her husband.' ¹⁰¹

Even if this specific tradition had not been narrated about 'not to harm woman', the general 'La dharar' (no harm) rule involves any kind of harm. According to this rule, any kind of harm in social, family, and individual relations is banned.

Chapter Seven: Differential Psychology

Woman psychology is very complex and vast, especially with regard to the different states of mind of man and woman. Assessment of identical and different aspects of woman and man is very crucial because though man and woman are both human beings, they have fundamental differences. Examining the woman's mind for finding her diverse aspects needs patient work of expert psychologists.

Some research has been done and books written in this regard. Muslim scholars should continue this line of research in accord with the Islamic teachings to prevent jurists and sociologists from going astray in defining the woman's position. The first issue is the knowing of the undoubted differences and variations shown in the outer appearance of the two genders and proved in scientific studies:

*“Biologists believe that man and woman have fundamental differences, which are more caused by nature than by environment. They believe that any cell in woman's body differs from its like cell in man's body. Before being borne and affected by the society, the cells develop into different beings; man and woman. Doctor Mahmud Behzad says that if social conditions make man and woman different, they only make the natural differences deeper.”*¹⁰²

*“In spite of all the claims made by extremist supporters of equal rights of man and woman, man and woman have different biological and ideological functions and diverse states of mind. As a result, present psychologists have defined two distinct states of mind; female and male, just as biologists have divided the body into female and male.”*¹⁰³

Even the societies that have followed the equality principle of female and male in all areas of life could not ignore the natural distinctions between male and female that are so concrete in daily life.

*“In countries like the United States of America where women can promote to higher social positions, usually boys and girls engage in all educational issues. Most teachers, though, accept the differences between schoolboys and schoolgirls, without having an exact definition of it. The teachers, who teach in both girls and boys' classes, or the investigators, who visit both classes, often speak of the conflict of the two categories and the necessity to conform them again. However, in rural coeducational classes, the distinction between the two genders is very evident... Physical and mental differences between most men and women and their different social roles have led to the idea of 'male and female samples', which is really an abstract, but useful notion. Moreover, everybody finds out to belong to one of these groups. This plays a crucial role in the social, family, educational, and vocational roles, as well as the behavior of individuals ...”*¹⁰⁴ The gender is not only evident in physical manifestations, but also in all areas of woman or man's life. It brings about some distinctions, the most obvious type of which is the physical distinctions. According to Truman, *“Every body cell carries the signal of its gender ...”*¹⁰⁵, *“... All body cells, as well as body organs and the nervous system have the specific sign of body gender.”*¹⁰⁶

Undoubtedly, there are relations and mutual effects between the human physical and mental aspects. Countenance, height, weight, skull and bone sizes, muscle, brain, and other organs are not only physiologically different in the two genders, but have mutual mental effects. In fact, physical differences manifest or at least introduce differences in personality.

It is totally accepted in psychology that the body status affects the mental position. Thus in psychology, people are divided into various types according to their physical form. Boney, muscular, tall, or short types, for example, are defined to have different mentalities. These personality types affect crime committing, education capability, artistic talent, and other inclinations. Introvert and extrovert individuals are also defined using these physical attributes.

*“... Our outside appearance shows our physiologic habits and even our regular viewpoint ... Even deeper issues can be predicted from one's face; not only the virtues or the vices but also smartness or stupidity; one's secret feelings and habits; one's tendency to get certain physical or mental diseases ... Researchers can give a complete description of one's inner and outer attributes by only looking at his/her face ... One should not change her/his natural body organs because any small change in body size creates deep changes in physiologic and mental activities. Very sensitive, hardworking, or tolerant people do not have heavy bodies, neither do the genius ... The face and gestures ... reveal body characteristics and mental power ... Mental characteristics are certainly in relation with physiologic activities ... ”*¹⁰⁷

Some differences between the genders are briefly mentioned here:

Boy and girl's Growth

Experts say, *“... Girls grow up faster than boys that their skeleton, teeth, and genital glands mature faster than boys'. The girls' average of one or two-year lead over the boys continues throughout childhood and maturity ... ”*¹⁰⁸

Physical Power and Strength

The human or animal male gender is certainly stronger than the female one; therefore, it is more ready and efficient for hard works. *“... Boys are superior to girls in regard to life capacity and muscular power in all ages... (Except between 11 and 14 years old in which girls are slightly superior). Finally, the boys' physical activity is more than the girls' throughout life.”*¹⁰⁹ *“In childhood, girls have larger buttocks than boys have. This difference becomes more evident during puberty. The boys' bones become larger and thicker, their muscular tissues become more and their shoulders wider. Because of the same differences, boys become stronger than girls and continue to be so. Another reason for men's strength is that their heart and lungs are larger than women's. Therefore, their blood pressure is higher, they are more able in carrying oxygen to the blood, and their heart's beating is slower than women's when at rest. Moreover, men are chemically more tolerant of tiredness after sport exercises, in comparison to women ... ”*¹¹⁰

Genital Glands

The genital glands in man and woman have different roles in the reproduction process and work at different times. The genetic effects and hereditary attributes are also very wonderful. This important masterpiece of creation does not end here; it has great effects on the body and mind of woman and man, making them two entirely different beings. The genital functions affect not only the mental and sensational aspects, but also intelligent, taste, and artistic talents. Finally, the genital aspect forms the personality of man and woman with two different sets of characteristics.

It is better here to see what biology experts say in this regard:

“The reason why women have more fluctuating mood than men have is that their hormonal changes are more than those of man. Women's estrogen increases from about zero to its higher amount and then again reaches zero one time every thirty days...Most women tolerate such a frightening change with an admirable patience. If men's genital hormone was taken from them twice a month and then again given to them, the world would become much worse than what it is today; it is now being managed by men whose genital hormone is unchanged.”¹¹

“... The genital glands not only help the continuation of generation, but also affect our physiologic, mental, and spiritual activities. No great philosopher, scientist, or even criminal has ever been eunuch. Men's testicles and women's ovary have various functions; they make male or female cells...They also leak substances into the blood that manifest male or female attributes in our tissues, organs, and senses. They highlight all our bodily actions as well.

The substance leaked by the testicles causes bravery, violence, and excitement, and these are the features that distinguish a war-like cow from the one working in a farm. The ovary affects woman in the same way, but not throughout her lifetime; its size decreases after menopause and then stops working. Because of this short period of ovary activity women look much broken down than men in old age. The testicles, however, remain active throughout life.

The difference between man and woman is not only in their genital organs and woman's womb and delivery; rather it is caused by a more important factor that is the chemicals leaked by genital glands into the blood.

The proponents of feminism, who think that the two genders can be educated in the same way and they occupy the same social responsibilities and positions, are unaware of these natural differences. Woman is in fact very different from man in many ways ...

Throughout man's life, the testicle cells are producing the primary core from which all new cells of the fetus are developed. Woman however makes not only a half of the primary core of the fetus, but also all the protoplasm that surrounds this core. Woman's role is therefore more important than the man's in creating the fetus... Moreover, man's role is short-time in the reproduction process, while woman's role lasts about nine months. During this time, the fetus is fed with substances from the mother's blood that is filtered inside the placenta.

In addition to getting the necessary material from the mother to grow new tissues, the fetus leaks some tissue materials back...Throughout pregnancy, the mother is affected and sometimes poisoned by the fetus. In short, because of its different tissues, the fetus in the womb influences its mother much. Finally, it changes the mother's physiologic and mental state during delivery ...”¹¹²

“... The body cells leak out materials into the blood that certainly influence the human mental and spiritual activities. Among all the inner glands leaking out materials, the testicles are the most influential on one's mental power and state. Great artists, poets, saints, and conquerors have generally had extreme sexual tendency. Removing the genital glands even after puberty causes some mental changes.

After removing the ovary, women become broken down, losing some of their intellectual or creative power. The men, who remove testicles by operation, somehow lose their original personality ... Great artists have mostly been great lovers. It is as if the activity of the genital glands is necessary for getting artistically inspired. When one cannot reach his/her desired love, the soul is stimulated and excited. If Beatrix had married Dante, he might not be able to compose his masterpiece 'Divine Comedy' ...”¹¹³

“... if we suppose that the body glands affect the human behavior, then it is clear that the two genders not only are mentally distinct, but also have 'distinct tendencies', affected by important individual changes... However, regardless of psycho-physiologic manifestations of the gender, this distinctiveness has a special effect on the personality development ...”¹¹⁴

The Emotional Aspect

It is quite clear that man and woman have many emotional differences. Women are more sentimental and quickly affected by romantic and exciting scenes. *“Because of their sincere feelings, girls are more quickly affected by training programs and more easily reformed. According to Morris Debs, girls should be educated differently from boys, because of their future role of motherhood in the family.”¹¹⁵*

Motherhood plays an important role in developing woman's emotions. That is why psychologists consider this aspect as the origin of many mental and emotional states in women and an inseparable part of woman's life.

“... Douche has highly emphasized women's motherhood instinct as the developer of their mental growth. In short, he considered the before- and after-puberty periods as a prelude to motherhood. This way, acceptance becomes part of her essential physiologic and anatomic essence. She waits to get fruitful; her life becomes meaningful only by becoming a mother.”¹¹⁶

“Men mostly tend to help in heroic situations, while women more like to pity others.”¹¹⁷

“Men and women react against losses and calamities differently. Women get depressed mostly after a cut in their relationship. Men, however, get depressed because of losing an ideal or a great goal. This difference shows that women are much dependent on their personal relationships and have little individual independence. This is still a proved viewpoint used by some psychiatrists in facing women depression.”¹¹⁸

Men and women also look at daily life, emotional issues, and other people differently; one with a male view and the other with a female view. The human being in evaluating issues is both a viewer and an actor; giving to anything from her/his own personal attributes, though the issues are certain enough. If this is true, then people's gender characteristics are the most determining factors in their viewpoint. This is a great quality of the system of creation in which woman's emotion helps in making generations and forming families.

Resistance against Diseases

One of the differences between man and woman is their different physical power and resistance against diseases. The amount of this resistance affects the quality as well as the quantity of each person's life.

“Men live about seven years less than women. The question is that: is this because of physiologic or environmental causes? Researches show that females are more resistant against infections than males are. Maybe this is because of the female genes on their especial chromosome that increases their resistance. “Another point is that males not only have more heart attacks, but also have heart attacks earlier in life. Moreover, women are somehow immune against these attacks because of their 'estrogen'.”¹¹⁹

Mental Aspect

Some traditions were mentioned in this regard in previous chapters. Here the difference between the mental power of man and of woman is discussed. The first important point is the different brain weights of man and woman. In all human races, the size of woman's skull and spinal column are less than those of man. Women are also shorter than men are in all races. Woman's brain weighs comparatively 100 to 200 grams less than that of man. This is a fact that two seemingly similar genders are this much different; a fact that implies a real wisdom, because in addition to many similar responsibilities and missions, the two genders have special distinct responsibilities in the system of creation. These especial responsibilities necessitate some differences in the bodily and anatomic systems; an undeniable fact.

Experts have said that a human being thinks, understands, and acquires wisdom wholeheartedly. Though the immediate thinking tool is the brain, it is never free from the effects of the body's various organs. The hormones, genital glands, tissues, organs, brain size, height, pregnancy, and a dozen more of physiologic and mental activities are related to the physical state and the affect the human understanding; some known to us and many others still unknown. *“... In brief, a human being thinks, makes love, is hurt, admires, and worships with his/her brain as well as all other organs ... ”¹²⁰*

Therefore, the mental aspect should certainly be different in man and woman; especially because of the effect of the genital glands on the brain.

As a result, it can be said that if a mother behaves in a rigid concrete manner, her children may have emotional shortages and be raised as an ill-treated generation. And maybe this different state of the brain in women helps develop emotional aspects of the children; the human-making role of motherhood. Exactly due to the same reason, the male and female genders have slightly different trends and interests. *“... More women are engaged in*

*musical jobs, but male musicians have created deeper more durable music.”*¹²¹ This is also true about science, philosophy, and inventions. Except a few instances, men have founded great schools of philosophy and invented important inventions.

Undoubtedly, the mental growth necessary for a perfect prosperous life exists in women, so men and women are equal in issues that need mental growth and its resulting true understanding. Man and woman are also equal when thinking about the wonderful signs of the creation that leads to the finding of the source of creation. The Holy Qur'an equally mentions believing woman and believing man, worshipping woman and worshipping man, humble woman and humble man ...etc .. Man and woman are hence equal in belief and religious progress, as was mentioned earlier. Two points are worth mentioning here:

a. Islam has necessitated mental growth for economic and financial decisions. This is stated in verdicts about genital and social puberty. Mental and social puberty is of course above the genital puberty. The Holy Qur'an emphasizes economic issues. Hence, it requires mental growth for it. Man and woman are not different in this regard. Both genders can possess their own capital and participate in economic activities after their mental growth.

These issues should be discussed more deeply. The mentioned criteria show that some Islamic verdicts reflect women's normal position in the past. If in a society women differ from (the women of) the past, getting higher mental and cultural positions, those criteria may also change. Since Islam belongs to all ages and all societies, these changes of criteria are discussed and their conditions determined. b. Another related point is about deputyship in the Hajj ritual. If some people do not have the necessary financial or physical conditions for this ritual, they can appoint another person as their deputy. The question now is if a woman can be the deputy of a man, especially in his first obligatory Hajj (sarura).

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about a woman who was the deputy of a man and he said, *“If that woman has performed the Hajj before and she is faithful and understanding (in religion), (she can be the deputy of a man). There maybe a woman is more knowledgeable than a man.”*¹²²

The closing phrase of Imam Sadiq's statement determines woman's probable high position in fiqh and that so many women may acquire higher positions than men in this field by their attempt, as we see many instances of such women today.

The mentioned statement generally implies woman's jurisprudence in fiqh as well, because if women can be more knowledgeable than men in the Hajj issues, which are very complicated, they can be more knowledgeable in other areas of fiqh too. Such women can be jurists, provided they have other necessary characteristics.

It is also said that if there were no men for the lawful slaughtering of animals (due to Islam), but some women knew how to do it, the wisest of them should be selected for it.

Once, Imam Sadiq (a.s) was asked: *“Can a woman slaughter an animal when there are no men?”* He replied, *“The wisest of the women should do it.”*¹²³

The then conditions and women's social position caused some viewpoints reflecting the realities of the time, not women's intelligence and capabilities. Women are also mentioned as great jurists and hadith narrators of the utopia after the Imam Mandi's reappearance: Imam Baqir (a.s) said, *“In Imam Mandi's era, all people are taught knowledge and wisdom to the extent that women judge according to Allah's Book and the Prophet's sunna inside their homes.”*¹²⁴

Because the necessary qualification for judgment is jurisprudence and true knowledge of the divine verdicts, this tradition shows women's scholarly position in the future.

At the end of this chapter, some findings out of researches about the differential psychology of the two genders are mentioned:

The Cognitive Capabilities

“In the area of cognition, reviewing hundreds of researches show only a few differences between males and females. First, girls get higher scores in the verbal section of IQ tests. Their intellectual growth begins with language learning, while boys' intellectual growth takes place in practical skills ... Second, men are better in mathematics tests. Girls have equal performance with boys in verbal mathematics questions, but boys are better than girls in dealing with numbers and forms.

*Third, boys are relatively better than girls are in spatial-visual tests ... such as recognizing a form from various angles, reading maps, or finding a simple form inside a complex form. A wonderful ability of girls and women is that they can keep totally irrelevant details in their minds for a short time, but boys and men can remember things that are related to themselves or related to each other. That is why women can be better secretaries. Girls can memorize lessons with or without understanding them, but boys first try to make a logical relationship among the issues and then memorize them ...”*¹²⁵

Social Behavior

*“Regarding the social behavior, researches show some gender differences ... A 32-year research (from 1933 to 1965) in the United States showed that men are always more violent than women. Women, however, are more verbally violent. In other words, women use obscene language when they are angry, while angry men show angry behavior and involve in beating and kicking ...”*¹²⁶

The words of Corrine Hut, a woman psychologist, are worth mentioning here: *“Corrine Hut has impartially and logically found out that a woman is physically, physiologically, and psychologically different from a man and these differences bring about different social roles for them.”*¹²⁷

Chapter Eight: Greatest Pleasures

Islam has attended to all human needs, not separating man and woman's material and spiritual life. Islam accepts the attractions and beauties of human life in both material and spiritual aspects. It looks positively at the issue of 'enjoyment' and denies the lack of enjoyments in some Sufi and Eastern schools. It therefore considers marriage and its enjoyments reasonable inside Islamic framework. Islam also considers marriage and its normal pleasures as effective in the human spiritual growth.

This Islamic view is not only about some parts of the worldly life; rather all the pleasures and joys of life are viewed as positive, constructive, and valuable in Islam.

According to this view, woman is considered as one of the most valuable and attractive parts of the human life. Phylogeny (fondness of one's wife) is thus considered congruent with the Islamic belief and human spiritual growth, provided that it is moderate and away from extreme fondness in women, which is denied by the common sense and the religion.

The woman (one's wife) is introduced as a very enjoyable creature in the Islamic teachings.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated from the Prophet (a.s.): *“The delight of my eyes has been made in prayer and my pleasure (has been made) in women.”*¹²⁸ Imam Sadiq (a.s) was asked: *“What is the most enjoyable thing?”* Everybody said something about this, but Imam Sadiq (a.s) replied, *“The most enjoyable thing is the sleeping with women.”*¹²⁹

Surprisingly, the enjoyment of association with women is considered the greatest pleasure of the Hereafter, too, in a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s). Imam Sadiq (a.s) said, *“People do never enjoy in this life and the afterlife a pleasure more pleasant than the pleasure of (association or sleeping with) woman ... The inhabitants of the Paradise do not find anything more enjoyable than marriage, which is found neither in foods nor in drinks.”*¹³⁰

As a result, there is no doubt about the acceptance of this kind of pleasure by Islam. In addition to so many spiritual realities, the material daily realities of life are not ignored in Islam. In fact, anything is defined in its own place and within the religious framework. Defining mere material goals, however, is not acceptable in the Islamic view.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) said, *“From the morals of the prophets is the love of women.”*¹³¹

Thus, the philosophy of enjoyment has two basic criteria; first, the human beings should avoid material enjoyments as their ultimate goal in life, so that they would not ignore the permanent spiritual joys. Second, they should act moderately; avoid both Sufi avoidance of joys and the mere goal of enjoyment. Both of these extremes are far from the high Islamic goals. Islam supports moderation in all fields of life, including enjoyment. It has been proved that moderation helps permanent benefit from pleasures, because going to extreme results in early old age and the deprivation of enjoyment.

Imam Ali (a.s) said, *“The one who does not act economically (moderately) shall die out of wastefulness (extravagance).”*¹³²

Imam Sajjad (a.s) stated, “... *Please me with moderation ...* “ 133
Moderation helps benefit from the present facilities, but extravagance wastes capitals and abilities.

By spreading close relationship between husband and wife, Islam tries to strengthen the family institution. This way, the family members do not attend only to legal regulations for solving their problems; rather, they follow their own deep emotions. The principle of kindness is the natural base of spouses' relationships that overshadows the law. Legal and social rules are not efficient enough in reinforcing the family. Only love and kindness help fortify family relations and dominate legal and ethical regulations.

The cooperation of ethical and religious systems is necessary for enforcing all the rules. All cases of breaking the law and escaping from it happen because the legal systems try to institutionalize the law rigidly, not with the help of emotional and religious systems. “... In no society human values can be maintained merely by the law; rather by strengthening human virtues and ethics. Increasing people's understanding also simplifies the job of law enforcers. It is by awakening the conscience of people that the law is followed without any force or obligation.” ¹³⁴

“... The institutionalization of law facilitates the continuation and maintenance of societies, not the number of legal books or the fear of punishment ...” ¹³⁵

Chapter Nine: Woman's Mission

The human being is a free creature, who can decide overtly, and choose something from among others. However, man or woman is entangled in nature's compulsory rules, limited by natural traditions, and cannot go beyond them.

For instance, the human being becomes hungry; his/her hunger is satisfied with some food. S/he needs the air and to breathe. S/he gets sick and needs drugs. Finally, after a period of growth, s/he gradually loses power and passes away. There are no options and solutions in such issues, but obedience and surrender.

The result of this compulsion principle in science is that the natural rules of any creature are not changeable. Any attempt for changing these compulsory conditions may violate that creature's quality of existence. Even if he/she/it is able to continue life after being altered, he/she/it may not remain as efficient as before.

The nature's unchangeable rules have also defined certain duties and missions for man and woman. They should find their mission inside the natural framework and follow it. It is therefore not logical that woman accomplishes the male's duties and vice versa; it is no progress or evolution, as some people might think!

*“Physiologic rules are as rigid as the rules of stars and not changeable because of human desires ...”*¹³⁶ As a result, anyone should attempt, think, and act inside his/her framework of existence to go beyond the material life to human perfection. Man and woman's special missions are discussed with regard to this inflexible criterion.

Though man and woman are from the same essence of creation, according to the natural laws each one has a especial mission. His mission is to be a good man and her mission is to be a good woman; that is what the nature has specified for them.

‘Women should try to develop their natural characteristics, in line with their own nature and without blind imitation. Their mission in promoting the human race is much greater than men's is. Women should not consider their mission as unimportant. The importance of the two genders is not their being equal ...’¹³⁷

The equality of rights and missions in the two genders blends two different sets of duties while both remain undone. This inefficient performance of duties brings about basic disorders in the society. If the proponents of woman's rights announce this sameness of duties, they prevent both genders from completing their fundamental roles.

In fact, the blind blending of man and woman's missions is the result of the male prejudice, which considers the male gender more valuable. It tries to provoke women to think, work, and have emotions and roles like men. This is really an insult to women, because maleness is considered a value.

Woman's prejudice should thus not liken women to men and ignore their original character, in order to value them! Being a woman is perfection and value in itself, just as being a man is valuable. Man and woman each have divine missions by doing that by which they can get prosperity and perfection in this world and the Hereafter. Anyone who seeks to be like the

opposite sex might suffer from inferiority complex and even cannot play his/her own role, because of being alien to his/her real character.

In this compulsory life, the physiologic and psychophysiologic rules have introduced certain ways for each of the two genders, congruous with their physical and psychological characteristics, to grow and reach their own goals. Therefore, the criteria for education, rule-making, and other social areas should be in accord with each gender.

*“Experts of education should consider man and woman's differences and their natural roles. This is a very important factor for creating our future civilization.”*¹³⁸

We can mention many instances of men's feminine roles and women's masculine jobs in some countries and evaluate their resulting problems for the human society, as mentioned even by proponents of feminism. Only one example is talked about here: One of the effects of this blending of roles is the destruction of families, which is totally incurable. Some imaginary fortune-tellings that talk about employed mothers and ordered children are really nasty and they cannot fill the empty place of the family, the relationships among its members and many other emotional ties. How can the employed mothers and the ordered children of medical institutes bring about that calmness created by a family of father, mother, and children? How can a human society be established by such stepfathers and stepchildren? Can we expect the humane love and kindness in such artificial relationships? The proponents of the artificial life consider humans as objects and the role of human families as multifunctional machines! Of course, these instances are very few and created from fatal materialist and capitalist views. Thoughts and views against the Divine rules and traditions would not last long and would be vanished by human pure temperament and the Divine religions. Even now, the modernism that thought of core families is being defied and replaced by postmodernism and its trend of extended families and their values.

The future tellers, too, talk about the human tendency to traditional families in future civilizations:

*“... I think none of them (multinational firms, information mangers, computer rooms, industrial research labs, etc.) is the future society's main axis. In fact, homes are the axes of future civilization. To me, home is very important in the third wave. The introduction of production for consumption, the development of electronic village, organizational constructions in economy, automatic industries, and non-mass production all imply the regained importance of the family as the basic unit of future society; a unit whose economic, medical, educational, and social duties shall increase in the future, rather than decrease ...”*¹³⁹

Chapter Ten: Consultation with Woman

Family is a small society. Managing this small society is so hard and delicate. The father and mother, as the basic axes of the family, cannot easily manage the family if they do not have the power of understanding and decision-making.

The family management has various aspects, like economic, cultural, medical, legal, ethical and educational aspects. These aspects exist in the husband and wife's relationship, the relationship among the children, and the children-parents' relations. The small- and large-scale managements are identical in some respects, so the managers of small societies, such as family, should follow the methods of large-scale successful managers in their own small society.

One of the factors in successful management is consultation. In other words, though the final decision is made by one person, s/he consults with others before making plans and decisions. This has a two-fold result.

First, the manager's consultation with other people in a system gives them self-confidence and self-esteem. The second result is that the system benefits from the experience, knowledge, and information of all the people. It is evident that 'Not everyone knows everything' and only by consultation the helpful information of all individuals is gained.

That is why consultation is considered a criterion for the growth of cognition and future knowledge and has been too much emphasized in Islam. The Holy Qur'an says:

(And consult with them in the affair ...) ¹⁴⁰ Getting advice from others is also stressed in traditions. Imam Ali (a.s.) said, *“It is an incumbent duty of a wise person to add the views of prudent men to his own view.”* ¹⁴¹

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned 'consultation' in three verses. One is addressed to the Holy Prophet (a.s.) to consult with the Muslim Umma on important issues, which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This is not the consulting about laws, of course, because the lawmaker is only Allah in Islam, but in the way of carrying out the laws. The history of Islam has many cases of the Prophet's consulting with his disciples, like when the Muslims dug the trench in the al-Khandaq Battle by the idea of Salman.

Another instance of Qur'anic verses about consultation is this verse:

(... and their affair is a matter of counsel among themselves) ¹⁴²

This verse is about the entire Muslim nation. Since the verse begins with: *“And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer,”* it addresses all the believers. This nation should base their activities on consultation. The third instance is about consultation in the family.

(... But if both (parents) desire weaning by mutual consent and counsel, there is no blame on them.) ¹⁴³ The word (mutual consultation) in this verse means two-sided consultation. This may refer to the fact that the husband and wife should ask each other's views regarding the education of children. In fact, the joint experience and understanding of two managers directs the family members. In Majma' al-Bayan, we read:

“‘Mutual counsel’ means joint consultation between man and woman in the family. The agreement of the two parents is necessary for deciding about children. Since, mother knows things about the children of which the father

*is-unaware, not consulting may harm the children.”*¹⁴⁴ Based on this Islamic principle, man and woman should manage the family jointly. Though the family tasks should be divided between husband and wife, its management should be done by their cooperation.

This cooperation of man and woman in the family issues and the education of children is stated in another verse, too: (... Then if they (wives) suckle (the children) for you, give them their recompense and enjoin one another among you to do good; and if you disagree, another woman shall suckle for him (the child).)¹⁴⁵

For the phrase (enjoin one another among you to do good) three meanings have been mentioned:¹⁴⁶

1. Accepting each other's opinion if it is a good one; because Allah has ordered the breastfeeding woman and her husband to follow Allah's command, and each other's opinion if logical.

2. Ordering each other about the breastfeeding in a good manner 3. Consulting with each other A fourth meaning is said by Aminul Islam Tabarsi: “*You manage among you the affairs of the child and the taking care of his mother so that not to make the child miss his mother's kindness ...*”¹⁴⁷

In all the four notions, there are joint concepts that respect woman's personality, consulting with her, and respecting her opinion in family and children's concerns. The Holy Qur'an commands: Discuss with each other, suggest ideas, and accept each other's opinions. This verse in general denies the superiority of men or fathers. Therefore, the husband and wife should cooperate and consult with each other regarding the physical and mental education and growth of children. The husband should not impose his own opinion and tendency on the others.

Chapter Eleven: Superiority

Discussing man's superiority is necessary in defending woman's rights, since this superiority means the absolute ruling of man in the family and his managing of his wife and children.

Man's superiority or any other kind of superiority is a relationship among people based on the individual's needs, desires, and opinions that are imposed on others paying no attention to others' wants and ideas. This kind of relationship resembles a tyrant oppressor's relationship, since there are some hidden criteria in such relations that exist in the autocratic ruling.

One of the reasons behind superiority is the sense of self-admiration. It can be present in small- or large-scale social relations, between two people or one person and a group. Just as a ruler can rule in this way, a father or a mother can manage the family, imposing their own opinions on the other family members. Thus, the concepts of 'tyrant' or 'despot' mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are generalizable to any relationship based on one side's self-admiration and oppression. It also includes any kind of disrespecting of other people's positions and opinions.

The one, who considers her/himself better than others, humbles them, and considers their opinions wrong, is an oppressor and a tyrant in the Islamic teachings, whether s/he acts this way in the society or in his/her own family. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, *“Anyone, who despises people and unduly imposes his power on them, is a tyrant.”*¹⁴⁸

Social or managerial self-admiration is rooted in the personal ethical vices. Pride is an inner cause of superiority-based relations, just as humbleness is a moral that respect other people and appreciate their personalities, achievements, opinions, and intellect.

We read in some tradition sources:

The Prophet (a.s.) said, *“Avoid pride, because some slave may still be proud until Allah the Almighty will say: 'Record my this servant among the tyrants.’”*¹⁴⁹ Therefore, a proud person can be a tyrant even in the limited round of his/her affiliates, such as teacher, student, employee, employer, husband, wife, or friend.

The Holy Prophet of Islam (a.s.) is quoted to say, *“Someone may be considered an oppressor even if he is in no charge except of his own family.”*¹⁵⁰ In fact, even the management of a family may be autocratic. Such Islamic teachings refer to superiority of one person in the family that is when man or woman acts autocratically and imposes his/her ideas and wants on others.

Imam Sadiq said, *“Be humble before your teachers and not be tyrant scholars, that your untruth may take away your truth.”*¹⁵¹ Scholars and professors can have autocratic relations and behave superiorly with their students that is unlike the humble nature of man. The satanic self-admiring autocratic tendency (and its consequences that lead to the belittling of others) is something undivine and it results from the weak faith in Allah. In fact, the one, who knows the Creator's greatness, accepts Him as the Creator of all the creatures and the Keeper of all these creatures in the future, does not consider himself independent of and better than other people.

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, “*One, who knows the greatness of Allah, should not see himself as great.*”¹⁵² For avoiding any autocratic behavior when in power, one should think of Allah's infinite Power, so that his ending power does not make him neglect Allah's ever-lasting Might.

Imam Kadhim (a.s.) said, “*When you remember your power over the people, remember Allah's Power over you tomorrow (on the Day of Judgment).*”¹⁵³ The inhumane autocracy may happen in the simplest forms of social life as well as in the most complex forms. We read in some tradition sources: The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*Beware of pride, because pride may exist in someone who even if has nothing but a cloak on him.*”¹⁵⁴ Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has narrated a story from the Prophet's life, which shows the conceptual variety of tyranny and oppression. “*Pride may exist in any race and kind of people...The Prophet (a.s.) was passing in some road in Medina when there was a black woman who was collecting dung. She was asked to clear the way, but she said, 'The way is very wide.' Some men wanted to push her away, but the Prophet (a.s.) said, 'Leave her alone because she is arrogant.*”¹⁵⁵

Sheikh Majlisi has explained this last phrase as: “*... She is proud and arrogant.*”¹⁵⁶

If someone has not trained his/her own soul, he or she may become arrogant. Neither empty-handedness nor knowledge can prevent this vice. Of course, it is more limited in weaker people and more extended in powerful ones. This vice may even exist in some scholars and scientists, since their social relations are wider and they present their opinions in vaster managerial circles.

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, “*Fear Allah, fear Allah for the bad end of pride; it is the greatest trap of Satan and his biggest plot that overcomes the hearts of men like fatal poisons. It does fail or leave no one; neither a scholar for his knowledge, nor a poor man with his rugged dress ...*”¹⁵⁷ So any relationship has a tint autocracy, arrogance, or self-deceit that lead to the degrading and belittling of people is rejected in Islam.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) his saying: “*I curse seven kinds of people whom Allah and every responded-to prophet curse ... (one of them is he) who rules with arrogance in order to honor those whom Allah has degraded, and to degrade those whom Allah has honored ...*”¹⁵⁸

Any kind of management should be away from seeking arrogance and superiority. Two individuals, regardless of their apparent scientific, religious, financial, and social differences, should have equal relations.

Islam has warned the people who think they can gain higher social positions and more supporters by autocratic methods. In fact, it is humbleness that raises man's position, gains support for his opinions, and confirms his social base. Hence, those who want to gain more respect in their management realms, small or large, should replace autocratic behavior with humble one. Men, for instance, should avoid superior behavior in the family.

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, “*Humbleness brings you gravity.*”¹⁵⁹ The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*Surely, humbleness brings sublimity, so be humble that Allah*

may raise you high”¹⁶⁰. By being humble and respecting others' thought and character, all opinions are benefited from and everybody participates in all activities. This way, all the activities are done collectively and supported by public power, and thus the public power replaces the individual power.

Imam Ali (a.s) stated, “*With humbleness all affairs are carried orderly.*”¹⁶¹ By humbleness and avoiding of arrogance and self-admiration, friendship and love spread among the people of a society (whether small or large), and the safety and soundness of the society become certain, and collective relations are stabilized.

Imam Ali (a.s) said, “*The fruit of humbleness is love, and the fruit of pride is curse.*”¹⁶²

Imam Ali (a.s) also said, “*Humbleness brings you safety.*”¹⁶³

Imam Ali (a.s) said, “*Try to put humbleness on your heads, throw the appearance of mighty under your feet, and take pride out of your necks ...*”

¹⁶⁴ Equal, and even humble, relations is the sign of wisdom in Islam, because only wise people understand the human position well and believe in human greatness. They evaluate human beings by their humane characteristics, rather than temporary social, economic, or political status. Therefore, wise men and women avoid superiority in relations, which is the outcome of self-admiration. They treat all the people of all social classes humbly.

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, “*A wise man humbles himself and he is raised high, and an ignorant one raises himself and he is lowered.*”¹⁶⁵

This is a great lesson of Islam to people that any kind of autocracy (that leads to superiority) prevents growth of the human wisdom. An arrogant self-admiring person trusts and relies only on his/her own mind, not consulting with others, thus s/he is deprived of more knowledge. This way, an arrogant one is always confused in solving the life problems. S/he is also deprived of new ways and solutions of wise people, because no one knows everything.

Imam Kadhim (a.s) said, “*Surely, a seed grows in the plain and not in the hard rocks. So is wisdom; it grows in the heart of a humble person and does not grow in the heart of an arrogant proud one, because Allah has made humbleness as the tool of wisdom and made pride as the tool of ignorance.*”¹⁶⁶

Materializing the human rights -the base of social relations- is possible by right relations. Violation of the human rights, on the other hand, happens because of superiority and autocracy in relations.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated from the Prophet (a.s.) his saying, “*The greatest of pride is the despising of people and ignoring the truth.*” The Prophet (a.s.) was asked what the meaning of the despising of people and the ignoring of the truth was, and he said, “*It means ignoring the truth and criticizing its people ...*”¹⁶⁷

Because of the importance of this issue, another statement of the Prophet (a.s.) is mentioned here:

The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*Pride is to desert the truth and seek other than it, and look at people and see that no one's honor is like your honor and no one's lineage is like yours.*”¹⁶⁸ The main reason for despising people and

violating their rights is the disrespecting of the human personality of their persons, as is mentioned in some Islamic teachings:

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “*Pride is the deserting of the truth and the despising of people.*”¹⁶⁹ Ignoring the truth and denying it is autocracy. Avoiding pride and superiority is the main factor of seeking the truth and avoiding the violation of others' rights, either in a large society or a small society of family.

The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*Be humble so that no one may oppress the other.*”¹⁷⁰

When man believes in other people's personalities and positions, he regards himself less important and sees others better than him. Therefore, he respects their opinions, actions, and rights. This way, superiority and autocracy do not appear in the social relations. Such people believe that everybody has an opinion. Even in a family, everyone can talk about his/her opinion, so that the family members find out new solutions and guidelines, and thus they shall have a warm life.

The believing in the human personality and value has also a deep effect in worshipping Allah. The worship of autocrat and proud people is not accepted, since pride leads to the lack of belief in others and removes the essence of the loyalty to Allah. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “*Allah the Almighty has said: 'Surely, I accept the prayer only of one who is not arrogant and proud towards My people.'*”¹⁷¹

These were instructions for the kind of social relation with all people. There are special teachings about the quality of relations between man and woman in the small society of 'family' as well. These teachings necessitate respect, mutual understanding, and avoidance of autocracy. They also indicate that neither man nor woman is superior in the family relations; the true criteria in personal and collective relations are understanding, consultation, value, insight, and knowledge. The family management should be based on understanding and capability.

When some woman asked him what the women's rights over men were, the Prophet (a.s.) replied, “*My brother Gabriel (a.s.) often and always recommends me about women, until I thought that a husband has no right to say to his wife even “ugh”.* (He said to me), 'O Muhammad! Fear Allah the Almighty as to women, for they are deposits in your hands. You have taken (married) them by the covenant of Allah the Almighty, and so they have obligatory rights on you for what you have get lawful of their bodies and enjoyed their pleasures, and for that they bear your children in their inners until they suffer bitter labor (of childbirth) because of that. Therefore, be kind to them and delight their hearts, so that they continue living with and assist you. Do not force them to do anything (they hate), do not make them angry, and do not take back anything from what you have granted to them, except with their satisfaction and permission ...’”¹⁷² Some phrases of the Prophet's statement said by Gabriel deny the imposition of husbands' opinion upon the wives, such as 'delight their hearts!' or 'Do not force them to do anything the hate!' The ending phrase, too, rejects men's superiority over women. Islam orders men to get permission from women for taking

their property, so it is clear that their opinion, mind, and mood should be taken into account in all other issues, too.

In sum, these Islamic criteria are incongruous with the least amount of men's superiority and autocratic behavior.

The 'goodness' principle was also discussed in previous chapters. This principle rejects any superiority of man in the family, since it is in contrast with the 'goodness', respect, and the value of woman's personality.

Chapter Twelve: Additional Advocacy

In this last chapter of 'supporting woman's rights' it is worth mentioning that the Islamic teachings have widely advocated woman, more than her legal rights and far better than the feminism movements. In fact, these teachings are 'in addition to the rights'. All the cases of such rights are innumerable; only some are mentioned here:

Equality between children

Equality is a doubtless Islamic principle, which is applicable to all fields of life and all people. According to some traditions, equality should be considered even in paying attention to and looking at people.

Equality in the family and among the children is emphasized too: One day, Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) saw a man with two kids. The man kissed one of his children and left the other. Then, the Prophet (a.s.) said to him, *"Would it not be better to treat them equally?"*¹⁷³

The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) has emphasized the treating of family members equally:

The Prophet (a.s.) said a man who had granted something to one of his children, *"Did you give the same to all your children?"* That man replied, *"No!"* The Prophet (a.s.) said, *"Fear Allah and treat your children justly!"*¹⁷⁴ Though equality is emphasized in Islam, the Islamic teachings sometimes permit to overlook the origin of equality in dealing with daughters and sons:

The Messenger of Allah (a.s.) said, *"When one of you goes to the bazaar, buys something, and brings it to his children, let him first begin (in distributing it) with the daughters ..."*¹⁷⁵

We understand from this Prophetic speech that girls are more preferred. It is also narrated in some traditions:

The Prophet (a.s.) said, *"Treat your children equally in giving. If I wanted to prefer, I would prefer women."* That is why the great author of wasail al-Shi'a has called this chapter of his book: *"The Chapter of the recommendation of buying gifts for wife and children and beginning (in distributing them) with daughters"*.

Sentimental Treatment towards Daughters The parents' kind treatment to their children is recommended in Islam, but it is more recommended towards girls: Imam Ridha (a.s.) narrated from the Prophet (a.s.) his saying, *"Allah the Almighty is kinder to females than He is to males ... no one delights a woman of his near kin, except that Allah will delight him on the Day of Judgment."*¹⁷⁶ As a result, this chapter of Wasa'il al-Shia is entitled: *"The Chapter of the Recommendation of being more kind and compassionate to girls (than to boys)"*. And this is an evident privilege for woman and an exception to the law of equality.

Woman and the Position of Motherhood

In the Islamic teachings, father and mother have very high positions and should be honored. As for mother, this attention is more emphasized and that she has a higher position than the father's.

The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) said, *"If you are offering a recommendable (not obligatory) prayer and your father calls for you, do not cut it (the prayer), but you can cut it if your mother calls for you."*¹⁷⁷

The Prophet (a.s.) said, *“The Paradise is beneath the feet of mothers.”*¹⁷⁸ Imam Baqir (a.s) narrated, *“Prophet Moses (a.s) begged Allah saying, 'O my Lord, advise me!' ... Allah said to him, 'I recommend you about (being kind to) your mother.' Moses (a.s) asked again, 'O my Lord, advise me!' Allah said to him, 'I recommend you about your mother.' The third time Moses (a.s.) asked, 'O my Lord advise me!' Allah said to him, “I recommend you about your father!’ Imam Baqir (a.s) stated, “That is why two thirds of kindness and dutifulness should be for the mother and one third for the father.”*¹⁷⁹

Imam Ridha (a.s) said, *“Know well that the right of mother is the most essential and most obligatory right on you, because she bears the hardships of pregnancy like no one else. She delightfully and wholeheartedly cares for her child and resists all the problems that no one can ever be patient with. She is satisfied to remain hungry but her child satiate and thirsty but he is quenched. She remains without clothes, but her child clothed. She puts him in the shadow and she remains under the sun. So let gratefulness, dutifulness, and kindness be to her as much as that; though you cannot satisfy the least of her due right except with the assistance of Allah.”*¹⁸⁰

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated that one day a man came to the Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) and said, *“I had a daughter whom I brought up until she became adolescent. Then I dressed and adorned her with fine clothes and ornaments and took her to a well. I threw her to the bottom of the well. The last word I heard from her was 'O father!' What is the ransom of that?”* The Prophet (a.s.) asked him, *“Is your mother alive?”* The man said, *“No!”* *“Do you have a maternal aunt alive?”* the Prophet asked. The man said, *“Yes!”* The Prophet (a.s.) then said, *“Be dutiful to your aunt, because she is like your mother and this can ransom what you had done.”*¹⁸¹

Allama Majlisi says, *“This tradition shows the preference of the mother and her relatives to father and paternal relatives. It also indicates the importance of dutifulness to maternal aunt among other relatives of the mother.”*¹⁸²

This statement of the Prophet (a.s.) shows the greatness of motherhood and the most remarkable Divine position of woman. The major sin of killing one's child, which seems too cruel and obscene to be forgiven, is forgivable only by doing good to the mother or the maternal aunt. Making them happy is the compensation of this major sin. This shows the importance of the mother and then the aunt. if the mother is not available, the aunt replaces her, but not even the father, the paternal uncle, or any other male relative.

Another worthy point is that the only reparation for such a major sin is kindness and dutifulness to the mother or the aunt, and not their prayer. In other words, only their happiness makes up for this cruel sin and brings about Allah's forgiveness.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated, *“One day, someone came to the Prophet (a.s.) and asked, 'O messenger of Allah, to whom should I be pious?' The Prophet (a.s.) said, 'To your mother.' The man asked, “then to whom?’ The Prophet (a.s.) said, 'To your mother.' The man asked again, 'then to whom?’ The Prophet (a.s.) said, 'to your mother.' Then the man asked, 'then to whom?’ The Prophet (a.s.) said, 'To your father.”*¹⁸³

Allama Majlisi says, “Due to this tradition, it is derived that three fourths of kindness and piety should be for the mother. It is also said that it is to exaggerate in being kind to the mother. The reason behind that is clear, because the mother tries and tolerates hardships for her children more than the father. Some verses in the sura of Luqman confirm this fact.”¹⁸⁴ Imam Ridha (a.s) narrated from his father from Imam Sadiq (a.s) his saying, “If Allah knew something less than (ugh), in order to give up the undutifulness to parents, He would surely mention it.”¹⁸⁵

As it is clear, the holy Qur'an mentions the mother's rights more than the father's. (And We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with trouble did his mother bear him and with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and weaning of him was thirty months.)¹⁸⁶

“Doing of good to the parents is not dependent on their belief or religion; even if the parents do not follow the true religion, serving and respecting them is necessary according to the clear commands of the Qur'an.”¹⁸⁷

This advocacy of woman, as mother, is an Islamic principle. Now, compare it with the claims of the western feminists and their method of supporting woman in the western society! The western society treats old men and old women in a bad way and teaches this to the society at large: “... Today's society is very indifferent to old people. To me, this is the first civil society in which old parents are not available in their grown-up children's homes. Surprisingly, they do not condemn it. If we look at such bad and immoral behavior from a non-western point of view, we would find it so obscene ...”¹⁸⁸

The outcome of the western capitalism's behavior toward the old is their sadness and loneliness in the aging process, which may lead to horrible suicides, leaving a stigma on the face of the present century's humanism of the western capitalist systems. “... The suicide rate among old people is the lowest rate in Iran, compared to the same statistics of the West. The reason for this may be the strong family ties and the great respect to the old in the Iranian culture.”¹⁸⁹

The western capitalism is based on capital and profit, and not on the human and spiritual values, and still boasts of defending the human rights. Therefore, it is evident that a mother woman has more rights than the father man does. The question here is that: have the extremist supporters of woman's rights really defined such rights for her? Or could women have reached the high position that Islam has taken them to?

'Treating women kindly and taking much care of them' is an Islamic advocacy, in addition to the original rights. The Holy Qur'an states:

(... And treat them (women) kindly.)¹⁹⁰

As we have mentioned earlier, 'goodness' (or kindness) includes observing not only the legal rights, but also the humane-ethical values. If some people treat woman only as far as her legal rights, they do not follow the Qur'anic command, because 'goodness' is more than the usual and specified legal rights.

The Last Will

Great men mention their best and most valuable experience at their last moments of life and recommend of the most important principles and most necessary matters of life. Therefore, it is very interesting that according to Imam Ali (a.s) the last will of Prophet Mohammad (a.s.) was about women.

Imam Kadhim (a.s) narrated from Imam Ali (a.s) his saying, *“Fear Allah! Fear Allah as to women! Because the last word of your Prophet (a.s.) was: ‘I recommend you to be kind to women ...’”*¹⁹¹

Following the prophet's way, Imam Ali (a.s) emphasized advocating women's rights and safety, using important phrases, especially the name of the Almighty 'Allah', which is above any other word. It means remember Allah or fear Allah in your behavior towards women and in observing their rights. These two unique and divine figures mention the woman's rights in their last wills. It shows the importance of the woman's rights in Islam that are much more than the positive laws of defending the rights of woman of nowadays.

The Cause of Blessing

Women and girls are the cause of Allah's blessing and mercy. Imam Sadiq (a.s) said, *“When a girl is born for a man, Allah sends an angel who spreads his wings over the girl's head and chest... and one who spends on her is helped (by Allah).”*¹⁹²

Some families, especially in the past, considered daughters a burden, because they could not work and earn money. Sons then worked and daughters remained at home. The Infallible Imams (a.s), however, stressed that though women or daughters remain at home and do not do economic activities, they bring about Allah's blessing and mercy.

Once, Ishaq bin Ammar asked Imam Sadiq (a.s): *“Is the tradition narrated by people true that someone came to the Prophet (a.s.) complaining of his poverty and the Prophet (a.s.) recommended him to get married... until he ordered him of that for three times?”* Imam Sadiq (a.s) said, *“Yes, it is true. Livelihood comes when there are women (wives) and children (in one's house).”*¹⁹³

Better than Jihad

The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) often declared that the serving of mother would be better than jihad (the holy war). Jihad and its value in Islam is beyond any doubt. It is the most valuable activity according to some traditions. Every worthy activity may have less value than another worthier one, except jihad and the martyrdom in the way of Allah, which is the best activity. However, one night of being with one's mother and serving her is considered worthier than one year of jihad along with the Prophet (a.s.).

One day, a man came to the Prophet (a.s.) and said, *“I am an active young man and I like to go to jihad, but I have a mother who hates that.”* The Prophet (a.s.) said to him, *“Go back home and stay with your mother. By Allah Who has sent me with the truth as prophet, her (the mother) delight with you one night is better than your jihad in the way of Allah for one year.”*¹⁹⁴

Gabriel and Women

Gabriel (a.s.), the Revelation Angel, always recommended about women. This is mentioned in this Prophet's tradition:

The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*Gabriel often and always recommended me about woman, until I thought that divorcing her would not be allowed at all, except because of a proved sin (adultery).*”¹⁹⁵

The word 'always' in this tradition is very clear; it means that Gabriel recommended about women's rights any time he came down to the Prophet (a.s.), advocated them, and reminded the Prophet (a.s.) of their concerns. This was so much repeated and stressed that Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) thought that the divorcing of women was forbidden, except in case of an obvious adultery. And this is another case of the Islamic advocacy of women more than their usual rights.

The Criterion of Preference

The criterion of preference, value, and nearness to the position of the Prophet (a.s.) in the Hereafter is the doing of good to women and wives. The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*The nearest of you to me in my sitting place on the Day of Judgment is the best of you to his wife.*”¹⁹⁶ Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) also said, “*The best of people in faith are those who are the kindest to their wives, and I am the kindest of you to my wife (wives).*”

This behavior of the Prophet (a.s.) is the criterion for superiority and preference in Islamic.

The Great Reward

In the Islamic teachings, great reward is promised to be given in the afterlife to those who tolerate their wives' anger and bad-temperedness, do not seek to avenge on them, and do not separate the family by divorce.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated from the Prophet (a.s.) his saying: “*One, who is patient with his wife's bad temper seeking the reward of Allah, Allah will give him (as) the reward of the grateful servants.*”¹⁹⁷

Imam Ali (a.s) mentions some behavioral, conversational, and thinking faults of some women in a sermon of Nahjol Balagha. He stresses the doing of good to such women:

He said, “*Humor them (women) in any case and speak to them kindly that they may improve their behaviors.*”¹⁹⁸ As we see, kind and courteous treating is recommended even towards women with bad behavior and conduct, but not violence and revenge. The statements of the Commander of the Believers (Imam Ali) (a.s) also indicate that ethical and humane treatment is an educational principle. This is a delicate point in the family relations for changing a bad behavior with logical speech and conduct.

Women's Artistic Feelings

Husbands should respect their wives' artistic feelings, not imposing their own mood on the family life.

Sheikh Kulayni in his book al-Kafi¹⁹⁹ narrates a tradition from Imam Baqir (a.s) under the chapter “*make up and ornament*”. This constructive tradition is about the behavior of Imam Husayn (a.s) towards his wife:

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said, “*One day, some people came to (Imam) Husayn bin Ali and said to him, 'O son of the messenger of Allah! We see some things in your house that we hate.' There were simple carpets and cushions in his house. He (Imam Husayn) said, 'We get married to women and pay them their dowries by which they buy whatever they like that we have nothing to do with it.'*”²⁰⁰

It is clear that according to the Islamic criteria this kind of life is not luxurious extravagance, which is forbidden and not allowed for any Muslim. The phrase 'simple carpets' in the tradition implies the same thing, too.

Keeping away from the forbidden extravagance, the rest of lawful and moderate furniture is up to women's taste and artistic feelings. They can decorate the house as they like and feel beauty. This is the most amount of respect to women's thought, understanding, and taste in the family, denying any imposition and superiority of men.

When two different tastes exist in the family, sometimes men's tastes and feelings overcome the women's. This is in fact a non-Islamic moral, contrary to what was mentioned about the life of Imam Husayn (a.s). Woman's opinions should also be taken into account concerning food and men should follow their family's taste. This has been stated in the following Prophet's tradition.

The Messenger of Allah (a.s.) said, “*A faithful man eats as his wife likes, but as for a hypocrite, his wife eats as he likes.*”²⁰¹ This is another moral of true Muslims, who regard their wives' artistic feelings and tastes, contrary to hypocrite people. Can we find such importance and value given to women in the western feminist movements? Do they really advocate women?

Love of Women and its Position in Faith

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “*Whenever one loves his wife more, his faith increases.*”²⁰²

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in another tradition has compared the love of the Divine leaders with the love of women. He said, “*... whenever he (an adherent) loves us more, he loves women more.*”²⁰³

Keeping in mind that Islam denies excessive lust as the only goal of marriage, the meaning of such traditions becomes clearer, proving the value of compassion to women. Loving women approaches people to the position of the Prophet (a.s.) in the Hereafter, too.

The Prophet (a.s.) said, “*The nearest of you to me in my sitting place on the Day of Judgment is the best of you to his wife.*”²⁰⁴ It was pointed out that one's faith depends on the kind of one's behavior toward women; serving and treating them kindly promotes one's position. As was mentioned in part (the Criterion of Preference) of the same chapter, the Prophet (a.s.), the ever-best one in ethics, was the kindest of all to his family, and this is the criterion of the Islamic beliefs.

One's religious perfection depends on marriage, too. The Islamic teachings emphasize marriage and the marital relations as perfection of one's belief. Abandoning the marital relationship, on the other hand, is a destructive factor and a non-Islamic moral. In other words, leaving the society and living a life of loneliness is incongruous with the Islamic teachings. Only one tradition is sufficient in this regard:

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated from the Prophet (a.s.) his saying: *“One, who gets married, preserves a half of his religion...let him fear Allah in the other half ...”* ²⁰⁵

Thus, the true faith is guaranteed by marriage and marital relations, while deserting marriage is a lack in faith. This completing role is a great position given to woman in Islam, and not in any other school of thought or other religion. The playing of this role is possible in two ways; either the woman completes her husband's faith, or the marital relations develop and maintain the faith. Anyhow, the value of woman and her vital role in maintaining and strengthening the religious beliefs become manifest.

A Half of the Martyrs' Reward

The human activities and attempts have different values and hence require different rewards. The highest value and reward belongs to the martyrs' sacrifice of their lives. So few activities may have as a half of the reward of martyrdom. The Prophet (a.s.) has set such a reward for women's work at home:

One day, some man came to the Prophet (a.s.) and said, *“I have a wife who welcomes me when I come home, and escorts me when I leave. When I am sad, she asks me, Why are you sad? If you are worried about your livelihood, know that our sustenance is not in your hands. And if you are worried about your Hereafter, may Allah increase your sadness.”* Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) said to him, *'Surely, Allah has laborers, and this (wife) is one of His laborers. She shall get like the half of the reward of martyrs.’* ²⁰⁶

Woman's work at home and her kind behavior to her husband is as working for Allah and it equals a half of the reward of martyrdom; a position far above the specified rights of women.

Instances of valuing and advocating women are numerous in the Islamic teachings, only some of which were mentioned in this cursory research. In these last lines, a tradition of the great Prophet of Islam (a.s.) deserves to be pointed out:

The Messenger of Allah (a.s.) was informed of Sa'd Ibn Ma'ath's death. Hearing this, the Prophet (a.s.) hastened to Sa'd's house along with his companions. The Prophet (a.s.) ordered to wash Sa'd's body while he (the Prophet) was leaning to the door (looking sadly). Sa'd's body was washed, embalmed with camphor, enshrouded, and put in a coffin. Then the Prophet (a.s.) followed Sa'd's body (to the graveyard with others) without his shoes and cloak.

He sometimes carried the right side of the coffin and sometimes the left side, until they reached the graveyard. The Prophet (a.s.) then came down in the grave, put the body inside it, placed bricks, and frequently said, 'Give me some bricks! Give me some mud!' He leveled the bricks by putting mud between them. Then, he poured soil on it and smoothed its surface. He said, “I know that this grave would become old and ruined, but Allah likes His servants when doing something to complete it properly ...”

Then Sa'd's mother said, 'O Sa'd! May you enjoy the Paradise!' The Prophet (a.s.) told her, 'Be quiet! Do not judge on your Lord's verdicts! Sa'd is being afflicted by the pressing (of the grave) ...' Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) returned and people followed him, asking, 'O messenger of Allah! We saw

*that you did to Sa'd what you have never done to anyone else; you followed his dead body with no shoes or cloak, ordered to wash his body, offered the prayer on him, and put him in the grave yourself. Then, you said that Sa'd was afflicted by the grave pressing! The Prophet (a.s.) said, 'Yes, that is right, because there was something bad in his treatment toward his wife.'*²⁰⁷

Such respect and valuation from the Prophet (a.s.) implies that Sa'd was certainly not sinful, disobedient, or oppressor servant, not violating the obligatory rights of his wife and family. If he was so, the Prophet (a.s.) would undoubtedly not regard him so highly or behave so respectfully in his funerals, but would behave normally as toward others. Sa'd was very pious Muslim and he certainly observed the rights of his wife and family. The words of Prophet Muhammad (a.s.), however, are about something more than the normal rights; it was the observing of ethical values in treating women. In fact, Sa'd was pressed in the grave because he was not good-tempered and humorous with his wife.

These delicate criteria exist in no other school, but in Islam. In the end, it would be fit to mention a high and valuable saying of Sheikh Saduq, whose deep knowledge of Islamic sciences is manifest to everyone. The nearness of his age to the age of the infallible Imams (a.s) makes his narrations still more authentic. In defining the obligations and criteria of Shiism, he says, “... *from the conditions of the Twelver Shia are 'certainty' (absolute faith in the oneness of Allah) ... 'trustworthiness to good and bad people (giving back deposits to their faithful and unfaithful owners)' ... 'and being kind to women'.*”²⁰⁸ Those who claim to be Shi'a should follow the principles of Shiism principles and treat women accordingly.

Note from the Translator

“Fatima is a part from me ...”

These are the words of Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) about his daughter Fatima az-Zahra (a.s), in the Arabian pagan era of burying the daughters alive! It is the tribute of a father to his daughter in the same age and place as the Arab fathers got dark faces from the news of their daughters' birth! In fact, this is the praise and value Islam has given to Muslim women, which is not observed in any other religion or school of thought.

The present book seeks to review the Islamic support of woman's rights, away from going to extremes, in order to manifest the woman's high status and enlighten the opinion of the existing generation, and especially women.

Being my third translation effort in the Islamic topics, this work is hoped to be a little more successful than the other two, namely 'Shiism in Sunnism' and 'Commentary on Du'a Kumayl'. However, I still need the readers' probable suggestions and criticisms regarding my translation. You can communicate with me at... haminia@gmail.com.

**Qom, Birthday anniversary of Fatima al-Ma'suma (a.s).
November, 2007.**

Notes

- 1 Qur'an, 3:195.
- 2 Qur'an, 33: 35.
- 3 Qur'an, 49: 13.
- 4 Qur'an, 30: 21.
- 5 Imam Ali's tradition, Nahjol Balaghah, 607. There are also other traditions with the same meaning, such as, 'One's value is as much as his attempt.
- 6 Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) stated, 'Take advantage of your own being to build up yourself before you get sick... and before you die'. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 11/ 382.
- 6 Bihar al-Anwar, vol.1 p. 180.
- 7 Qur'an, 4:1.
- 8 Qur'an, 7:189.
- 9 Qur'an, 30: 21.
- 10 Qur'an, 3:164.
- 11 Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11 p. 221, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 14 p.2.
- 12 Bihar al-Anwar, 11/222.
- 13 Qur'an, 4:1.
- 14 Qur'an, 16:72.
- 15 Bihar Al-Anwar 11/222 & 223.
- 16 The Arabic word "min" that is mentioned in the verse.
- 17 Bihar al-Anwar, 11/222 & 223.
- 18 Qur'an, 33:35.
- 19 Qur'an, 3: 195.
- 20 Qur'an, 4: 124.
- 21 Qur'an, 16: 97.
- 22 In Arabic, it recites as masculine.
- 23 Al-Hayat, 1/180; Persian translation 1/304.
- 24 Imam Ali's tradition, Bihar Al-Anwar, 1/160.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Imam Ali's tradition, Mizan Al-Hikma, 6/431.
- 27 Imam Baqir's tradition, Bihar Al-Anwar, 78/186.
- 28 Nahjol Balagha, 330.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Imam Ali's tradition, Mizan Al-Hikma, 6/420 & 417.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 The important topic of "to know obstacles" is discussed in chapter 41 of Al-Hayat 1/294-312.
- 33 Tradition of Imam Ali (a.s), Mizan Al-Hikma 6/ 414.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Tradition of Imam al-Baqir (a.s), Bihar Al-Anwar 78/ 229.
- 37 Tradition of Imam as-Sadiq (a.s), Al-Hayat 1/113.
- 38 Tradition of Imam al-Kadhim (a.s), Al-Hayat 1/114.
- 39 Al-Hayat 1/49, Persian translation 1/77.
- 40 Ibid., 1/113, Persian translation 1/189.
- 41 Ibid., 1/135; Persian translation 1/227.
- 42 Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 14/130.
- 43 The brain developmental period is also different in boys and girls: "... brain size increases in 10 or 11 years of age. Then it partially stops in girls, but continues gradually in boys." Lotfabadi, H. (1373). Growth Psychology. P. 74. Tehran, Samt Publications.
- 44 According to these two principles, if a tradition is in balance with another one or a Qur'anic verse, it is accepted. If, on the other hand, two traditions are not in accord with each other, the one that is more preferred should be accepted (translator).
- 45 Al-Hayat, 1/193.
- 46 Qur'an, 9:71.
- 47 Qur'an, 60: 12.
- 48 Majrna' al-Bayan, 9/276.

- 49 Qur'an, 60: 10.
50 Majma' al-Bayan, 9/273.
51 Al-Ayyashi's exegesis, 1/65, Asr-i Zendegi, p.75.
52 Asr-i Zendegi, p.104; Muntakhab al-Athar, 485
53 Majma' al-Fa'ida wel-Borhan fi Sharh Irshad al-Athhan, 2/15.
54 Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 18/100.
55 Wasa'il al-Shi'a, 18/6.
56 Al-Kafi, 7/407.
57 At-Tahthib, 10/150, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, 18/582.
58 Majma' Al-Bahrayn, 2/224, Daftar Nashr Farhang Islami Publication.
59 Al-Hayat, 1/70, Persian translation.
60 Kifayat Al-Osul, vol. 1 Section of "Amr".
61 Will Du Rant, Philosophy Enjoyment, p. 158.
62 Elvin Toffler, the Future Shock, pp. 239-249.
63 Ibid., pp. 289 & 396.
64 Hussein Nijati, Growth Psychology, p 67, 1st ed., Mahshad Organization, Autumn 1371.
65 Future Shock, p. 240.
66 Ibid., p. 258-9.
67 Elvin Toffler, Toward a New Civilization, p. 12-13.
68 The Third Wave, p. 490.
69 Philosophy Enjoyments, p. 149.
70 Qur'an, 30: 21.
71 Philosophy Enjoyments, p. 247.
72 Philosophy Enjoyments, p. 149.
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