



Status of Woman in the Holy Quran and the Narrations of Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH)

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Abstract

Women over the centuries have been the victims of various forms of discrimination and violence as they are being treated as second-class creatures. The primary aim of this study is to explore the status of women as depicted in the Quran and is complemented by the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt to understand the foundational Islamic principles on women's rights, roles, and responsibilities. The study begins with a historical overview of pre-Islamic Arabian society, contrasting it with the transformative changes introduced by the Quran, which emphasized women's spiritual, social, and economic rights. Using a narrative-analytical methodology, the research draws from classical Quranic commentaries, hadith collections, and scholarly interpretations of Ahl al-Bayt narrations. Findings reveal that both the Quran and the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt advocate for the dignity, autonomy, and equitable treatment of women, underscoring their essential role in society. The conclusion emphasizes that the Quranic and Ahl al-Bayt teachings jointly promote a holistic vision of justice and respect for women, challenging misinterpretations that undermine these principles.

Keywords: Women's Rights in Islam, Quranic Teachings on Women, Ahl al-Bayt Narrations, Womanhood in the Quran

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Introduction

The study of past human civilizations clearly portrayed that the status of women varied greatly from one civilization to another. Generally speaking, it is observed that women in most of those civilizations have suffered great misery and humiliation as they were deprived of their legitimate rights. The position of a woman vis-a-vis a man in these tribes and societies is exactly the same. According to their belief, a woman was created for a man. She was her man's appendage even in existence and life. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d., 5)

In Roman civilization, a woman's values were unstable as she was at first regarded as a slave and servant of man; without freedom but thereafter, she was overestimated and given unlimited freedom. During the Greek civilization, the woman was regarded as a devilish infection, as she was sold and purchased in those ages. (cf. As- Sadr, 2005, 262-263)

In the ancient Persian civilization, due to the prevalent religious ideology of Zoroastrianism, women were held in high esteem and they were considered as equal to men. They had a certain degree of freedom that allowed them to gain economic independence and the upper class women had a right to participate in government and to succeed to the throne. (Bahrami, 2008, 25) Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī in this regard, writes: *"The class system in Iranian society, gave women of the upper class a right to participate in government and state and to succeed to the throne. Also, it recognized as valid a marriage with women having close affinity, like the mother, daughter or sister."* However, Ancient Persian society was still patriarchal, as men held higher positions and were considered superior to women. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d., 6)

The pre-Islamic period of the Arabian Peninsula was generally referred to as the age of ignorance (i.e., *Jahiliya Period*); because it was characterized by patriarchal cultures, uncivilized social and cultural practices, and rudimental religious beliefs (Hanapi, 2013, 215), the status of women from place to place was diverse. Generally speaking, considering the tribal law existing in Arabia before the rise of Islam, women were treated unequally and they were deprived of their rights. (As Sadr, 2005, 264)

During this period, women were often seen as part of a family's property, with little or no control over their own lives

or assets. Practices such as female infanticide and the treatment of women as property were prevalent. The Quran directly addresses and condemns the practice of female infanticide, which was common in pre-Islamic Arabia. The verses emphasize the injustice of this act, portraying it as a moral and spiritual crime: *"When the girl buried-alive will be asked, for what sin she was killed."* (Quran 81:8-9)

This verse highlights that on the Day of Judgment, those who engaged in this practice would be held accountable, underscoring the Quranic emphasis on the value of every human life, regardless of gender: *"One of the most dreadful and most savage actions of the pagan Arabs was female infanticide, which is made reference to, repeatedly, in the Quran. ...It is noteworthy that the Quran condemns this action and counts it so disgraceful and hateful that it considers the crime of prime accountability prior to the Records in the Hereafter or pleading for justice about other matters."* (Imani, 1997, 19/185)

In addition, women had no social status among the Arabs in the pre-Islamic era, except as sex objects. They were considered a burden, a second-class citizen, and an unproductive class of society. They were treated as lowly, imperfect creatures in society. During this period, a woman was regarded as a devil who was inspired by sinning and evil. Similarly, the women were deprived of their rights and they inherited just like properties or riding animals. Nicholson states that the women in Arabia before the rise of Islam were only considered as the object of lust as even the poetry praising women focused primarily on their physical attributes; seldom was there any appreciation of moral beauty (Nicholson, 1966, 88). Similarly, Hanapi writes that women during the pre-Islamic period were not given the status they deserved within the family or in society. Because of this, due to economic problems, they bury their daughters alive. (Hanapi, 2013, 216)

Under the customary tribal law in the Arabian Peninsula, women generally had no right in the family setup or the society; as they were considered as a liability and second-class citizen. Thus, they were deprived of their rights in areas, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. They were often deprived of their basic rights to select their husbands freely, to divorce when being ill-

treated, or to inherit from their families and relatives. They were in most cases considered as parts of the husbands' estate. And that was the reason why a son could have inherited all his father's wives. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d., 3)

Women in the Holy Quran

The Quran, the central religious text of Islam, presents a multifaceted view of women, emphasizing their spiritual equality, legal rights, and social responsibilities. Through various verses, the Quran addresses both general principles and specific issues related to women.

a. Equality and Human Dignity

The Quran establishes a foundation for equality and human dignity that emphasizes the inherent worth of every individual, regardless of gender. In several verses, the Quran highlights that all humans, men, and women alike, are created with equal potential for spiritual growth, responsibility, and dignity before God. This section outlines the Quranic principles related to equality and human dignity and provides scriptural evidence underscoring these values.

Creation from a Single Soul

One of the fundamental principles of equality in the Quran is the shared origin of all human beings. The Quran emphasizes that both men and women are created from a single soul, reaffirming the shared dignity and worth of both genders. This concept is introduced in the Quran to establish the fundamental equality of all human beings before God. The Quran says: *"O mankind! Be wary of your Lord who created you from a single soul and created its mate from it, and from the two of them scattered numerous men and women."* (Quran 4: 1)

This verse illustrates that both men and women are identical in their humanity, regardless of gender, and share a common origin. It emphasizes that men and women are part of the same essence, reinforcing the idea of equality and rejecting any inherent superiority of one gender over the other. Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī in the explanation of the verse, writes: *"The verse calls them to the fear of their Lord, to the piety, concerning their selves, as they all are human beings, identical in their humanity; there is no*

difference among them in this reality; man and woman, big and small, old and young, weak and strong, all are the same in their humanity." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970, 4/134)

Meanwhile, a claim by some Muslim scholars that women are created from the crooked ribs of men in the same way Eve was created from Adam's ribs using certain verses of the Holy Quran (Quran 4: 1; 7: 189; 39: 6) and some hadiths to buttress the inferiority of women is baseless. For instance, verse 1 of Quran 4 says: *"O mankind! Be wary of your Lord who created you from a single soul, and created its mate from it, and from the two of them scattered numerous men and women..."*. The verse according to some Quranic exegetes indicates the common origin of both genders and that all human beings belong to two equal and alike individuals. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970, 4/136)

In other words, this verse, like other related verses (such as Quran 7: 189; Quran 30: 21; Quran 39: 6) discusses that the spouse of man being his mate and counterpart and from his self, neither being alien to him nor a part of him or created from him "his body". (Javad Amoli, 1428, 44)

Besides, there are some traditions from the Infallible Imams in which it was categorically stated that Hazrat Hawwa [Eve] was created from the remaining) clay from which Adam was created, not his rib. (Majlisi, 1982, 11/115) Imam Ja'far As-Ṣādiq ('a.s) was once questioned thus: *"Some people are of the opinion that Eve was created from Adam's rib, what is your view, sir? He (a.s) replied: "Verily, God is absolutely pure and free from this. Is God unable to create a spouse for Adam from other than his rib? So that to close the door leaving no room or excuse to be exploited by some evil-minded to raise any doubt, to say that Adam has gotten married to himself? May God judge between us and such people."* (Ḥurr 'Āmili, 1988, 20/352)

Spiritual Equality and Accountability

The Quran presents men and women as equally responsible for their actions and equally capable of earning rewards for righteous deeds. In several verses, the Quran addresses men and women together, listing virtues and promising rewards without distinction. For instance, when a complaint was made to the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his Household) that

nothing about the excellence of women was revealed in the Quran, this verse was revealed: *"Indeed the Muslim men and the Muslim women, the faithful men and the faithful women, the obedient men and the obedient women, the truthful men and the truthful women, the patient men and the patient women, the humble men and the humble women, the charitable men and the charitable women, the men who fast and the women who fast, the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, the men who remember Allah greatly and the women who remember [Allah greatly]—Allah holds in store for them forgiveness and a great reward."* (Quran 33: 35)

In this verse, the Quran pairs men and women side by side, affirming that both are equally valuable in their spiritual and moral development. It underscores that righteousness and virtue are not tied to gender but to individual actions and intentions. Ayatollah Imani in this regard, writes: *"...The above verse was revealed and gave them certainty that the men and women are equal with Allah from the point of nearness and rank. The important thing is that they should have the conditions of excellence from the view of belief, action, and Islamic morals. This verse has enumerated ten virtues for the general men and women in the subjects of belief, ethics, and practice."* (Imani, 1997,14/324)

Human Dignity and Respect

The Quran establishes human dignity as a central principle, applicable to all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social status. Every human being, by virtue of being a creation of God, is inherently valuable and worthy of respect. Allah says: *"Certainly, We have honoured the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and preferred them with a complete preference over many of those We have created."* (Quran 17: 70)

This verse stresses that dignity is bestowed upon all "children of Adam," meaning that all human beings -either male or female- are endowed with honor and worth. (cf. Suyūṭī, 1983, 4/193; Huwayzi, 1994, 3/187) This concept of dignity serves as a foundation for fair treatment and respect across all social roles and interactions.

Equal Rights to Education and Knowledge

The Quran places a strong emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge for all believers, men, and women alike, considering education a vital aspect of individual growth, moral development, and social contribution. The Quran encourages the acquisition of knowledge, viewing it as a way to understand God's creation, fulfill one's duties, and contribute meaningfully to society. The verses that mark the beginning of revelation (Ṭabari, 1991, 30/161), thereby emphasize the significance of literacy and learning: *"Read in the Name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging mass. Read, and your Lord is the most generous, who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know."* (Quran 96:1-5)

It is pertinent to mention that the command to "read" is general and inclusive, addressing all human beings. This foundational directive has been interpreted as encouraging both men and women to seek knowledge, as elucidated in the narrations from the Prophet and his pure Household. (cf. Adeel, 2010, 5)

In addition, those who seek knowledge are promised elevation, suggesting that learning and faith work together to increase one's rank. (Qara'ati, 2009, 9/515) Since the Quran addresses men and women alike, this elevation through knowledge is available to all believers, indicating that both genders are encouraged to pursue education: *"...Allah will raise in rank those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge, and Allah is well aware of what you do."* (Quran 58:11)

Equality in Accountability on the Day of Judgment

The Quran repeatedly emphasizes that men and women alike are equally accountable for their actions and will be judged based on their deeds. This principle supports the notion of equal dignity and responsibility, as everyone is equally subject to divine justice. Allah says: *"Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do."* (Quran 16:97)

This verse reassures us that both men and women are equally capable of achieving success in this life and the hereafter, given their actions and faith. Thus, the criterion here is 'faith' and the

righteous acts emerged from it, and, therefore, there is no other condition for it from any point of view: neither from the point of race, gender, nor from the point of position, and social rank. (Imani, 1997, 8/569)

b. Social and Family Roles of Women

The Quran offers guidance on the roles, rights, and responsibilities of women within social and family contexts. These teachings emphasize mutual respect, compassion, and justice, forming the basis for a balanced and equitable relationship within families and communities. Some key aspects of the Quranic perspective on women's social and family roles are discussed as follows.

Women as Integral Family Members

The Quran highlights the importance of family as a foundation of society and assigns both men and women roles that ensure family stability, support, and compassion. Women's roles are presented with a sense of dignity and purpose, essential for nurturing and maintaining strong familial bonds: *"We have enjoined man concerning his parents: His mother carried him through weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me is the return."* (Quran 31:14)

In this verse, the Quran acknowledges the sacrifices mothers make, recognizing the physical and emotional challenges they endure. By highlighting the role of the mother, the Quran emphasizes the respect and gratitude due to her, thereby honoring the vital role women play in family life. (Qara'ati, 2009, 7/249-250)

Mutual Rights and Responsibilities in Marriage

The Quran describes marriage as a partnership built on mutual rights and responsibilities. It provides guidance for an equitable relationship where both spouses fulfill their duties while supporting each other emotionally and spiritually: *"...The wives have rights similar to the obligations upon them, in accordance with honourable norms; and men have a degree above them, and Allah is all-mighty and all-wise."* (Quran 2:228)

This verse establishes the concept of mutual rights and

responsibilities between spouses, advocating for a balanced relationship rooted in kindness and fairness, thereby affirming equality in the spiritual and moral obligations of both spouses. (Imani, 1997, 2/265)

Mothers' Responsibilities and Honor in Parenting

Mothers hold a particularly respected position in the family, with the Quran recognizing their critical role in nurturing children and shaping future generations. The responsibility and sacrifice involved in motherhood are honored, and both parents are seen as deserving of respect and care from their children: *"Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents. Should any of them or both reach old age at your side, do not say to them, 'Fie!' And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words."* (Quran 17:23)

This verse highlights the value of respect and care toward parents, placing particular emphasis on kindness and patience, especially as parents age. The mother's role is elevated, and children are reminded of the honor and duty owed to both parents. (Qara'ati, 2009, 5/40)

Women's Role in Community Life and Decision-Making

The Quran does not limit women's roles to the family; it also encourages active participation in social life, moral guidance, and community development. Women in the Quran are depicted as active members of society, involved in decisions that impact the community and their families: *"But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong..."* (Quran 9:71)

This verse highlights that both men and women are considered allies in promoting justice and righteousness in society. This principle empowers women to take on roles in community affairs, enjoining good and preventing harm, which reflects their broader responsibility beyond the family sphere. (Qara'ati, 2009, 3/463)

Economic Rights and Financial Independence

The Quran grants women distinct economic rights, including the right to earn, own, manage, and inherit wealth independently of their male relatives. These provisions were revolutionary for the time of revelation, empowering women financially and

ensuring their financial independence. Below are Quranic verses that highlight women's economic rights, which form a foundation for financial security, autonomy, and equality.

Employment and Earning Rights

The Quran explicitly grants women the right to own and manage their own wealth and property independently, allowing them full control over their finances, whether earned or inherited. Women's property is not the property of their husbands or male guardians, establishing financial autonomy within the Quranic framework: *"Do not covet the advantage, which Allah has given some of you over others. To men belongs a share of what they have earned, and to women a share of what they have earned."* (Quran 4:32)

This verse makes it clear that both men and women have an independent right to what they earn, acknowledging their individual contributions and efforts. This equitable distribution highlights that women have the same right to earn and benefit from their income as men, establishing the foundation for financial independence. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970, 4/337-338)

Inheritance Rights

Contrary to the predominant custom in the Arabian Peninsula prior to the advent of Islam, the Quran grants women a defined share of the inheritance, ensuring financial security for women in their familial roles as daughters, wives, and mothers. This right to inherit gives women access to resources, which can be utilized for personal or family needs: *"Men have a share in the heritage left by parents and near relatives, and women have a share in the heritage left by parents and near relatives, whether it be little or much, a share ordained [by Allah]."* (Quran 4:7)

This verse provides a clear directive that women are entitled to inherit from their family members, regardless of the size of the estate. Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes: "It is a general statement, without any shade of restriction; thus, it covers all women without any qualification or condition." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970, 4/199)

Rights to Dowry (Mahr)

The Quran mandates that women receive a *Mahr* (dowry or bridal gift) from their husbands at the time of marriage, which

becomes solely their property. The *Mahr* acts as a financial safeguard, ensuring that women have resources of their own within marriage: *"Give women their dowries, handing it over to them; but if they remit anything of it of their own accord, then consume it as [something] lawful and wholesome."* (Quran 4:4)

This verse emphasizes that the dowry is a woman's right, and it should be given with goodwill. Women are free to keep it or, if they choose, to give part of it to their husbands, affirming their control over the assets granted to them within marriage. *"Dowry is the gift of man to the woman, and never it is her cost. However, we must know that the dower is a financial support for the woman at the probable time of separation and as a compensation of her damage. A woman has the right of possession of her dower. Thus, the parents and relatives of the lady have no right at all to take it for themselves."* (Imani, 1997, 3/405-406)

Financial Security in Case of Divorce

The Quran provides directives to ensure that women are not left destitute after divorce. Financial provisions during and after the marriage allow for fair compensation and protection of women's economic interests, ensuring that they are supported even if the marriage ends: *"For the divorced women there shall be a provision, in accordance with honourable norms—an obligation on the Godwary."* (Quran 2:241)

Ayatollah Imani writes: "The ordinance in this verse, similar to what was said in verse 236, is about the women whom are not appointed a dowry for at the time of wedlock, and they are divorced before any sexual intercourse. This provision is a gift which is paid from the side of the husband, and it is appreciated." (Imani, 1997, 2/302)

Charity, Almsgiving, and Zakah

The Quran encourages women to contribute to society through acts of charity, emphasizing that they, like men, have the right to give from their own wealth. Women's economic rights extend beyond self-support; they are also encouraged to contribute to the welfare of society: *"The faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and maintain the prayer, give the zakat, and obey Allah and His*

Apostle." (Quran 9:71)

This verse underscores that both men and women participate in societal responsibilities (Qara'ati, 2009, 3/463), including giving Zakah (almsgiving) and supporting charitable causes.

d. Legal Rights and Justice

The Quran grants women legal rights and calls for justice, equality, and fairness in dealings with women. This legal framework includes women's rights in marriage, divorce, witness, inheritance, and punishment, ensuring women's access to justice and protection under the law. The Quran's teachings aim to promote a society where women's rights are respected and safeguarded. Here are some key Quranic verses that highlight women's legal rights and emphasize justice.

Right to Fair Treatment in Marriage

The Quran calls for justice and kindness in marital relations, giving women the right to fair and respectful treatment within marriage. This includes obligations of mutual respect and compassion between spouses, as well as the right to consent to marriage and seek divorce if necessary: *"Consort with them in an honorable manner; and should you dislike them, maybe you dislike something while Allah invests it with an abundant good."* (Quran 4:19)

This verse instructs men to treat their wives with kindness, highlighting the importance of compassion and respect. It sets the standard for fair treatment within marriage, establishing that women deserve kindness and consideration. (cf. Imani, 1997, 3/433)

2Justice in Punishment and Accountability

The Quran emphasizes equality before the law, making both men and women equally accountable for their actions and subject to the same legal consequences. This approach promotes justice and fairness, ensuring that both genders are equally bound by moral and legal standards: *"As for the fornicatress and the fornicator, strike each of them a hundred lashes, and let not pity for them overcome you in Allah's law..."* (Quran 24:2)

This verse makes clear that men and women are treated equally regarding moral and legal accountability. Equal

punishment for both genders underscores the Quranic principle that both men and women are fully responsible for their actions. (cf. Qara'ati, 2009, 6/143)

Right to Justice and Fair Trial

The Quran upholds the right of all individuals, including women, to seek justice and due process. This principle is foundational to the Quranic legal system, which calls for fairness and impartiality in all legal proceedings: *"O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah, even if it should be against yourselves or [your] parents and near relatives, and whether it be [someone] rich or poor, for Allah has a greater right over them."* (Quran 4:135)

This verse encourages justice and integrity, even if it involves personal sacrifices. It reinforces that women, like men, are entitled to seek justice and stand as witnesses, regardless of who may be involved in the case.

Women in the Ahl al-Bayt¹ Narrations

The Prophet pure Household (Ahl-al-Bayt) holds a significant place in Islamic tradition, particularly within Shia Islam. Their teachings and narrations (hadith) provide profound insights into various aspects of life, including the status and roles of women. They played a crucial role in exemplifying and expounding upon the Quranic teachings regarding women. Their sayings and actions provide a rich repository of guidance on various aspects of women's lives, reflecting both their intrinsic value and practical roles. This section explores key narrations from the Ahl-al-Bayt, highlighting their contributions to the understanding of women's rights and responsibilities in Islam.

The Spiritual Status and Honor of Women

The narrations of Ahl al-Bayt highlight the profound spiritual status and honor of women in various roles, emphasizing respect, kindness, and equality. Daughters are described as

1 . The Ahl-al-Bayt, literally meaning "People of the House," but in the study, it refers primarily to the Prophet Muhammad, his beloved daughter; Lady Fatimah, his cousin and son-in-law; Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and nine Infallible Imams from his descendants.

divine blessings beloved by Allah (Ibn Babawayh, 1992, 3/481; Kulaynī, 1986, 6/6); while mothers are revered for their sacrifices, symbolized by the hadith *"Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."* (Nūri, 1987, 15/181) Women are also honored as wives, with the Prophet (PBUH) teaching that *"The best of you are the best to your wives and daughter,"* (Ibid, 14/255; Rāzī, 1996, 3/294) linking a man's character to his treatment of his spouse. The Ahl al-Bayt further elevates women by setting examples such as Lady Fatimah al-Zahra, who embodies piety and virtue as the *"Leader of the Women of the Worlds."* (Majlisī, 1982, 8/22; Ibn Babawayh, 1997, 57)

These narrations collectively emphasize the spiritual status and honor of women across different roles. The Ahl al-Bayt's teachings encourage treating women with compassion, kindness, and respect, emphasizing their unique contribution to the family and society. This perspective challenges any negative cultural attitudes toward women and highlights the spiritual rewards associated with respecting and honoring them.

Daughters: A Source of Blessing and Pride

Contrary to the pre-Islamic custom in the Arabian Peninsula, the birth of a baby girl is welcomed with happiness and considered a special blessing of God. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a.s) said: *"Daughters are a blessing and beloved by Allah, and sons are a mercy. Allah grants His mercy to whomever He wills."* (Ibn Babawayh, 1992, 3/481; Kulaynī, 1986, 6/6)

In this hadith, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a.s) offers a unique perspective on the value of daughters and sons, framing daughters as a "blessing" and sons as a "mercy" from Allah. By describing daughters as a blessing, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a.s) emphasizes that daughters bring a special type of spiritual favor and positivity into a family and encourages parents to treat daughters with kindness, respect, and affection. In addition, this statement challenges any cultural bias that might regard daughters as less valuable than sons. Instead, it elevates daughters as a direct gift from Allah, beloved by Him, which encourages the family to value, cherish, and care for them.

Similarly, Imam al-Rida ('a.s) was reported to have said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "Indeed, Allah, Blessed and

Exalted, is more compassionate toward females than He is toward males. And there is no man who brings joy to a woman with whom he shares a bond of sanctity, except that Allah, Exalted, will bring joy to him on the Day of Resurrection." (Kulaynī, 1986, 6/6). These narrations collectively elevate the status of daughters, encouraging love, gratitude, and respect while rejecting any cultural biases that may undervalue them.

Marriage and the Rights of Wives

In the narrations from Ahl al-Bayt, marriage and the rights of wives are addressed with an emphasis on respect, compassion, and mutual rights within the marital relationship. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) famously said, *"The best of you are those who are best to their wives, and I am the best of you to my family,"* (Ibn Babawayh, 1992, 3/555; Tabarsi, 1991, 216) underscoring that a husband's character is reflected in his treatment of his wife and encouraging men to uphold their wives' dignity and well-being. Furthermore, Imam al-Sadiq ('a.s) taught that providing financial support and protection are fundamental rights of wives, highlighting a husband's responsibility for his wife's security and comfort within the home. (cf. Kulaynī, 1986, 5/511) These narrations collectively emphasize the reciprocal nature of marriage, where the rights of wives are upheld through respect, kindness, and support, establishing a foundation for a harmonious and balanced marital relationship.

The Role of Women in Society

The narrations of Ahl al-Bayt emphasize the significant and respected role of women in society, emphasizing their dignity, rights, and active participation in various domains. Women are considered indispensable members of society and they enjoy the irrefutable and undeniable rights as Allah's creation. They are endowed with all potential for development and perfection without any defect in the essence of their entity. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) praised the pursuit of knowledge for all believers, saying: *"Seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim, male and female,"* (Kulaynī, 1986, 1/30; Majlisī, 1982, 1/172) which affirms the importance of education for women as essential to societal progress. Similarly, Lady Fatimah ('a.s) is an

exemplary model, who demonstrated piety, courage, and leadership in their support for justice and truth. Thus, women just like men have been given freedom to engage in every social activity; so far it does not result in the violation of their sanctity and dignity.

While describing the status of Lady Fatimah, His Eminence, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said: "Lady Fatima Zahra was an outstanding figure in her political and social characteristics to such an extent that all distinguished women of the world who struggle for religion can learn from the short, brilliant life of this woman who spent her entire childhood in the arms of a father [Prophet Muhammad] who was fighting for a great, unforgettable global cause." (Khamenei, 1990)

Conclusion

A comprehensive study of the Quran reveals a progressive, compassionate, and equitable framework for women's rights that extends to various aspects of life, including social, legal, economic, and spiritual domains. Far from marginalizing women, the Quran emphasizes their intrinsic value, autonomy, and dignity, while providing specific protections and rights to support their well-being. These teachings affirm that men and women are spiritually equal before Allah, and both are encouraged to pursue knowledge, contribute to society, and uphold justice.

On the other hand, the narrations of the Ahl-al-Bayt offer profound insights into the respect, rights, and responsibilities of women in Islam. Their teachings emphasize the spiritual and moral equality of women, advocate for their rights, and provide exemplary models of virtuous women. By studying these narrations, Muslims can gain a deeper understanding of the balanced and respectful treatment of women advocated by Ahl-al-Bayt, enriching contemporary discussions on gender roles and women's rights in Islam.

By granting women rights to education, financial independence, inheritance, and legal protections, Islam aims to empower them within family structures and society at large. Therefore, there is a need to differentiate between cultural practices and the authentic principles of Islam, highlighting that the Quran and Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) uphold a just,

balanced vision for gender relations and the empowerment of women. The teachings of the Quran and the pure Ahl al-Bayt further underscore this vision, advocating for a society where women are respected, protected, and able to fulfill their potential. Meanwhile, misconceptions and misinterpretations about the status and rights of women in the Quran have often led to misunderstandings about Islamic teachings regarding gender roles and equality. Many of these misconceptions stem from cultural practices, historical contexts, or selective readings of Quranic verses, rather than from a holistic understanding of the Quran and its principles of justice, equity, and compassion.

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