

# The position of woman in islam

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I hope you don't mind receiving my letter. It is short but full of information.

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In Islaam, the woman is accorded a high position which she was not accorded in any of the previous religions and which no nation will accord her but Islaam. This is because, the honour that Islaam conferred on mankind is shared by both man and woman on equal basis. Mankind are equal before rules of Allaah in this world as they will be equal as regards His reward and recompense on the Last Day. Allaah says, And indeed, We have honoured the children of Adam. [1] He also says, There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related. [2] And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable. [3] The believers, men and women are auliya (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another. [4] And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents.

If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them a wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say; My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young. [5] So their Lord accepted their supplication (saying); Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female. [6] Whoever works righteousness whether male or female while he or she is a true believer (of Islaamic monotheism) verily, to him we will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and we shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do. [7] And whoever does righteous good deeds, male or female, and is a true believer (in the Oneness of Allaah), such will enter paradise and not the least injustice, even to the size of a

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speck on the back of a date–stone, will be done to them. [8]This honour that the woman enjoys in Islaam has no equal in any other religion, creed or law. Roman civilization had had it established that woman should be a slave and a subordinate of man and that she should absolutely has no rights at all. There was even a great conference in Rome where affairs of the woman were discussed.

The conclusion reached at the conference was that, the woman was a lifeless being and as such could not have share in the life of the hereafter and that she was impure. In Athens, woman used to be regarded as a scraps. She would be sold and bought like any other commodity and she was being regarded an abomination of Satan's handiwork. According to the ancient Indian statutes, the plague, death, hell, poison of serpents and fire are all better than woman. Her right to live used to end with the death of her husband who was regarded as her master. When she saw the corpse of her husband being burnt, she must throw herself into it and if she did not, she would be accursed. As for Judaism, the following judgement was passed on her in the Old Testament. I moved around with my heart in order to know, search and look for wisdom and intelligence, and in other to know that evil is ignorance and that stupidity is madness. And I found that worse than death is woman who is a snare and her heart is like a shoelace and her hands are shackles." [9]

Such was the condition of woman in the ancient times. As for medieval and contemporary times, the following events explain that. The Danish writer, Wieth Kordsten explained the position of the Catholic Church as regards woman when he said, During the medieval times, the concern that was had for European woman was very limited and this is in conformity with the view of the Catholic creed that used to regard woman as a second–class human being.

In France, a conference was held in the year 586 A.D. where the issue of woman was discussed as to whether she should be regarded as a human being or not. At the end of the discussion, the discussants concluded that she was a human being but that she was created for the service of man. In French law, article 217 says; The married woman– even if her marriage is based on separation between her right of ownership and that of her husband– should not give anyone ownership of anything of her property with or without compensation except with the participation of her husband in the transaction or his written consent to that. In England, Henry the VIII prohibited the English woman from reading the Holy Book, until 1850, women were not considered citizens of England and up till 1882, they had no personal rights. [10] As for the condition of woman in contemporary Europe, America and other industrial nations, she is regarded as a common creature that should be utilized for commercial purposes, for she is a part of commercial advertisement. This has even reached a situation where she is stripped naked in order to advertise commodities on her body. Her body and honour have become desecrated based on regulations laid down by men in order to make her an object of enjoyment everywhere.

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The contemporary woman is an abject of care and attention as long as she is able to give out her wealth, intelligence and body. But when she becomes old and loses her means of giving, the society individually and collectively abandons her and she lives lonely in her house or in the sanatorium. Compare the above although they cannot be equal with what the Noble Qur'aan says, The believers men and women are friends of one another. [11] And they (woman) have rights (over their husbands) similar (to those of their husbands) over them. [12]

And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: My Lord! Bestow on them your mercy as they did bring me up when I was young. [13] While Allaah honours woman, He makes it clear to all mankind that He created her to be mother, wife, daughter and sister; and ordained for these roles, special regulations that are peculiar to her.

By Dr. Muhammad bin Abdullaah As-Suhaym Translated by Abdur-Raafi Adewale Imaam

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[1] Al-Nisaa 17:70. [2] An-Nisaa 4: 7 [3] Al-Baqarah 2: 228 [4] At-Tawbah 9:71 [5] Al-Israa 17: 23-24. [6] Aal-Imraan 3:195 [7] An-Nahl 16: 97 [8] An-Nisaa 4: 124 [9] Sifru'l jaami 'ah 7:25-26. It is known that the Old Testament is hallowed and believed in by both the Christians and the Jews. Note: The two verses were translated directly from Arabic version quoted by the author because the translator could not find them in the Biblical version available to him nor could he find the name of the book in English. =Translator. [10] Silsilatu muqaaranatil adyaan Dr. Ahmad Shalaby 3/210-213 [11] At-Tawbah 9: 71 [12] Al-Baqarah 2: 229 [13] Al-Israa 17: 23-24

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