

Is there equality between men and women in Islam?

In the eyes of God it is not about gender, race, nationality or ethnicity. Why? Because we have all been created to recognise the fact that there is a Creator who was there from the beginning and who sustains everything around us, including us.

Hence, regardless of gender, race, nationality or ethnicity, it is those who recognise their Creator, and try their best to be a good person and perform good actions that will have the highest statuses in paradise.

This is why God states in the Quran:

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may recognise one another. Yet, the most noble from among you in the sight of Allah (God) is the most righteous of you.” (Quran 49:13)

Conclusion:

Throughout history women have been subjected to inferior social norms, and treated as commodities to enhance some form of trade.

Over 1400 years ago Islam sought to change that and provide women with a status as an equal and respectable individual in the eyes of God and man.

Whilst the Western world has provided women with rights in the past century, in today's age, there are groups of men who still do violate the rights of women; yet, this is not just in Islam, but can be found across all faiths and cultures.

In Islam, women are seen and respected as individuals, wives and mothers, and the unjust treatment of women goes against the teachings of the faith and the commands of the Creator.

Hence, in Islam, women are not objects of commodities used to enhance products and trade – women are individuals and people who deserve respect; both in the eyes of God and men.

For more information on this topic or the hijab; please visit our website.

References:

- Allen, E. A. (1889) *History of Civilisation*, Vol 3, p.144
- Matsuda, M. J. (1985) *The West and the Legal Status of Women: Explanations of Frontier Feminism*, *Journal of the West* 24: 47–56.
- *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11ed. (1911) Vol 28, p.782

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*“And live with
them in kindness.”*

(Quran 4:19)

In the name of God,
the Most Kind, the
Most Merciful

Does Islam Really Oppress Women?

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How were women treated throughout history?

Throughout history, women were often regarded and treated as subordinates.

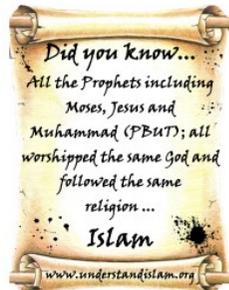
In India, "subjection was a cardinal principle" and "day and night, women" were "held by their protectors in a state of dependence" (The Encyclopaedia Britannica 1911 p.782).

In Greece, "Athenian women were always minors" who were "subject to some male" (Allen 1889 p.144).

Throughout the Roman Empire, and into early and middle Europe, women were seen as the property of men. According to "Roman Law a woman was, even in historic times, completely dependent" and "if married, she and her property passed into the power of her husband" (The Encyclopaedia Britannica 1911 p.782).

In America, even with the establishment of the Declaration of Independence which promoted equal opportunities and rights for all centred on the American Dream, "under contemporary American law derived from English common law, married women were considered legally united with their husbands, and all their legal rights were surrendered to their husbands" (Matsuda 1985 p.47-56).

Hence, throughout the world and different cultures, women were seen as inferior to men, of a lower status with little legal rights, and any possessions they had were immediately passed onto their husbands upon marriage.



What is the Islamic perspective on women?

Over 1400 years ago, Islam sought to change these perceptions.

Muslims recognise, believe and worship in One God alone, and believe in all the prophets including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, John (known as John the Baptist) and Muhammad (PBUH), who also worshipped this same God alone.

God is the Creator of everything, and He is the One who has established certain rights and commands for

both genders in Islam. Both genders are moral equals in God's sight, and both are expected to fulfil the same duties of worship which include the prayer, faith, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca.

However, there are instances where rights centre specifically on men and women. Below are some common questions asked in regards to the rights of women in Islam:



What is the status of a mother in Islam?

The status of a mother in Islam is so high that the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has said:

"Paradise lies at the feet of your mother" (i.e. in serving and obeying her) (Ahmad, An-Nasâ'i and Ibn Mâjah)

Furthermore, a man came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and said,

"O Messenger of God! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship (i.e. love)? The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Your mother." The man said, "Then who?" The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Then your mother." The man further asked, "Then who?" The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Then your mother." The man asked again, "Then who?" The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Then your father."" (Bukhari and Muslim).



What about forced marriage in Islam?



Forced marriage is forbidden in Islam.

Ibn Abbas (RA) reported that a girl came to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and explained that her father had forced her to marry without her consent.

The prophet (PBUH) gave her the choice of either accepting the marriage or annulling it...(Ibn Hanbal). It is reported that the girl said; "actually, I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right (to force a husband on them)." (Ibn Majah).

So how are men encouraged to treat their wives?

Men are encouraged to treat their wives with kindness. God states in the Quran for men to "... live with them in kindness." (Quran 4:19). The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said:



"The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character; and the best of you are those who are the best to their women." (Tirmidhi)