

A Brief Glance at Islam's View on Women

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According to many experts, human resource is one of the main resources of sustainable development, in which culture, knowledge, skill, and creativity of people play a significant role. Besides forming half of this source of development, women have always been the nurturers and guides to both halves of human society and have played a significant role in forming the foundation of the human dimensions of development. Of course, this role can either appear as a positive and influential one or vice versa. Since the personality and identity of people are formed on the basis of values and beliefs, it is obvious that culture is a determining factor in the development of human resources, and all economic, social, and political orientations and activities in every society are affected by the specific culture of that society, on which religious beliefs and values have a significant impact. Thus, if the women of the society derive their identity from the religious



culture, it will naturally have an influence on their activities and efforts in various fields.

As the most complete divine religion, Islam encompasses certain elements, the revival of which can create a lofty cultural, economic, and social model for development. The economic and cultural elements of Islam such as work and production, the interconnection between physical and spiritual life, the condemnation of poverty, the importance of family life, cooperation and collaboration, productivity in work and life, and the evolutionary role of men and women in their relationships, and respect for the principle of justice and mutual rights are all important in presenting a correct model for the role of a Muslim woman with regard to development.

Right from the beginning of Islam, social and economic activities have always been a part of the lives of Muslim women.

The teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the way of life of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the infallible Imams (AS) have not only approved of women's social and economic activities but have also asserted that the rewards and benefits of their activities belong to themselves. In the words of the Holy Qur'an: "To men belongs the benefits of what they have earned and to women the benefits of what they have earned." (Surah Al-Nisa', Verse 32).

At the beginning of Islam and during the time of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), many women engaged in economic activities outside their homes and could generate income for themselves and own it. Based on the revealed teachings of Islam, the principle of justice in society, and by regulating the presence of women in social activities women engaged in such activities as weaving, hairdressing, perfumery, medicine, craftsmanship, and trade, and were able to have constructive roles in their society.

Islam has never prohibited women from participating in income-generating economic activities, and the Holy Sharia of Islam has taken notice of the fact that sometimes women

need to work to provide for themselves and their families, and at times society needs their involvement in various fields.

But it is to be noticed that as per the teachings of Islam, the management of the family's expenses and financial requirements is the responsibility of the man: "Men are the maintainers of women" (Surah Al-Nisa', Verse 34)

In addition to providing for the expenses of his parents and children, the man is responsible for providing for the expenses of his wife, who should be diligent in this task according to her status; even if the wife is wealthy.

The important thing is that this is not just an obligatory duty, but it is also considered a debt on the part of the man, which means that if the husband does not provide the necessary requirements of his wife, he will be indebted to her. Therefore, it is not the wife's responsibility to provide for the expenses of the family. On the other hand, it is natural that the husband's right to manage the financial affairs of the family should be respected and, thus, from the Islamic point of view, the issue of democracy in the family or the distribution of the duties of the guardian between parents is not in the interest of the family and leads to the disintegration of the family system.

In determining how to divide the responsibilities, attention should be paid to the natural talents of men and women, more than anything else, and this will not be possible without resorting to the superior divine teachings, because the human mind alone, and without inspiration from the Creator, will never be able to recognize the talents embedded in one's being.

Therefore, in determining the pattern of division of responsibility in the family, we can look for such examples that are supported by divine revelation and we must turn to the lives of the best divine examples in order to search for the most perfect model, including the life of Imam Ali and Hazrat Fatima (AS), who are the most perfect role models with regard to family life and social issues.