EQUAL YET DIFFERENT

Men and women have equal rights in Islam, however the specific rights and responsibilities each has are not the same. Men and women have different roles that complement each other. These differences highlight unique specialisations rather than suggesting one is better than the other.

Beyond physical differences, studies show that men and women process language, information, and emotions differently in their brains. Edward O. Wilson, a socio-biology expert from Harvard University, found that women generally excel in verbal skills, empathy, and social abilities, while men often perform better in independence, spatial and mathematical skills. It is unwise to treat both genders exactly the same and overlook these differences. Islam teaches that men and women have distinct roles that align with their natural qualities.





In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Many people believe that women in Islam are treated poorly and oppressed, but is that really the case? Are countless Muslims truly oppressive, or are these views shaped by a biased media? Over fourteen hundred years ago, Islam granted women rights that women in the West have only just begun to receive.

In the 1930's, Annie Besant observed:

> *"It is only in the last twenty years that Christian England has recognised the right of woman to property, while Islam has allowed this right from all times. It is a slander to say that Islam preaches that women have no souls." Qur'an (94:6)*

(The Life and Teachings of Mohammed, 1932).

OPPRESSION OF WOMEN BEFORE ISLAM

Before the advent of Islam, in the ancient Arab world, women were often viewed as a burden, with female infanticide taking place at times. Prostitution was widespread, and divorce was solely at the discretion of the husband, leaving the woman with no rights. The Inheritance laws favoured only the strong, and women were often excluded.

Islam then came and abolished these practices. Yet even in so-called "developed" nations today, women still struggle to receive the respect, dignity, and equal pay that Islam entitles them to. Indeed, Islam regards women as precious, valuable and worthy, not to be disrespected or demeaned.

The mistreatment of women in certain countries or families is often due to cultural practices that deviate from true Islamic teachings.

This is evidenced by the many women around the world who willingly embrace Islam.

In the Qur'an chapter 33 verse 35, Allah says:

> *"Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obedient men and the obedient 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…Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward."Qur'an (33:35)*

EQUAL IN BOTH WORLDS

In Islam, men and women worship God in the same manner. They both pray to the same God, carry out the same acts of worship, follow the same scriptures, and share the same beliefs. Allah, which means the One true God in Arabic, judges everyone with fairness and equality.

> *Allah has promised to the believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss.' Qur'an (9:72)*

> *Never will I allow the loss of the work of any worker amongst you, male or female; you are of one another.' Qur'an (3:195)*

These verses illustrate that rewards depend on a person's actions rather than their gender. In Islam, gender does not influence how someone is rewarded or judged. When we look at Islam compared to other religions, we can see it promotes fairness between men and women. For instance, Islam rejects the notion that Eve is more at fault than Adam for eating from the forbidden tree. In Islam, both Adam and Eve sinned, both asked for forgiveness, and God forgave them

THE FAMILY UNIT

In Islam, the family unit is very important. The man's primary responsibility is to take care of the family's financial needs, whilst also supporting the woman who focuses on raising a family as she is more adept at nurturing with empathy and warmth. This approach promotes teamwork instead of rivalry. When both partners fulfil their roles, they build strong families, which leads to strong communities.

AS A WIFE

As a husband, the Prophet (pbuh) encouraged men to treat their wives kindly. He stated that the best among them are those who treat their wives well. Aisha, his wife, described him as gentle and generous at home, helping with household tasks, sewing his clothes, and fixing his shoes. His example of support and cooperation in the home was established over 1400 years ago.

AS A MOTHER & DAUGHTER

> *And we have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents, His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship." Qur'an (46:15)*

A mother profoundly impacts her child, especially during the early years, through her love, care, and support. The strength of a society is largely attributed to the role of mothers. This is why Islam holds mothers in high regard and elevates their importance.

In Islam, rewards are not just for treating mothers well. There is a specific reward exclusively for raising daughters . The Prophet Muhammad , peace be upon him, said, "Whoever Allah has given two daughters and is kind towards them, they will be a reason for him entering Paradise