

Women Rights in Islam - Modernizing or Outdated?

Dr. Zakir Naik

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Definition

According to the Oxford dictionary, 'Women's Rights are the rights that promote a position of social and legal equality, of women to men. They are the rights, claimed for the women, equal to those of men, as regards to suffrage that right to vote, as regards to property, etc.'

Modernizing according to the Oxford dictionary means, 'to make modern, to adapt to modern needs or habits.' And according to the Webster's dictionary it means 'to make modern, or to give a new character or appearance - e.g., to modernize ones ideas.' In short, modernizing is a process of updating or opting for the betterment of the present status itself - It is not the present modern status itself.

Can we modernize ourselves, to master our problems, and to realize a new way of life, for the whole human race?

I am not concerned about the modern ideas, the conclusions and the categorical statements made by scientists and inexperienced armchair experts, as how a life should be lived by a woman.

I am going to base my conclusions and considerations on truth, which can be proved by experience.

Experience and unbiased factual holistic analysis, are the sure test, between the gold of truth, and the glitter of theory.

We have to check our thinking against reality, otherwise many a times, our mental process will go astray - Indeed the great brains of one time, believed that the world was flat.

Women Rights in the West

If we agree with the 'Women's rights in Islam as portrayed by the Western media, you have no option, but to agree that the 'Women's rights in Islam are outdated.

The Western talk of women's liberation, is actually a disguised form of exploitation of her body, deprivation of her honor and degradation of her soul.

The Western society which speaks of upgrading the status of women in Islam, have actually reduced her status to concubines, to mistresses, to society butterflies, which are mere tools in the hands of sex marketers and pleasure seekers, which are disguised behind the colorful screen of art and culture.

Women Rights in Islam

Islam's radical revolutionary support, gave women their due right and status in the days of ignorance 1,400 years ago.

Islam's objective was and continues to be, to modernize our thinking, our living, our seeing, our hearing, our feeling and striving for the women's emancipation in the society.

Before I dwell further with the topic, I would like you to make note of a few points.

- Approximately one fifth of the world's population, consists of Muslims. There are different Muslim societies - Some may be close to Islam, some may be far away from Islam.
- The 'Women's rights in Islam should be judged according to the authentic sources, and not what individual Muslims do, or what the Muslim society does.
- The authentic sources of Islam, are the Qur'an, which is the word of God, and the authentic Sunnah, and the traditions of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him).
- Qur'an will never contradict itself, nor will the authentic Hadith contradict itself neither will these two authentic sources, contradict each other.
- Sometimes the scholars differ, and many a times, these differences can be removed by analyzing the Qur'an as a whole, and not just by quoting one particular Verse. Because if one particular verse of the Qur'an is ambiguous many a times the answer is given somewhere else in the Qur'an - Some people quote one source and neglect all the other sources.
- It is the duty of every Muslim, male or female, to seek the pleasure of God, and to act as His trustee on this world, and not to try and gain fame or satisfy one's own ego.

Islam believes in equality of men and women. But equality does not mean identity.

In Islam, the role of a man and woman is complimentary, it is not conflicting. It is that of a partnership, it is not contradictory, so as to strive for supremacy.

Where 'Women's rights in Islam' is concerned, I have divided it into 6 broad categories.

Six Categories of Women Rights in Islam

The six categories of rights are -

- a. The Spiritual rights
- b. The Economical rights
- c. The Social rights
- d. The Educational rights
- e. The Legal rights
- f. The Political rights

Sex is Not the Criteria to Enter Paradise:

The greatest misconception that the West has about Islam, is that they think paradise in Islam, is only meant for the male - it is not meant for the female.

This misconception can be removed by quoting from Surah Nisa, Ch. No. 4, Verse No 124, which says, 'If any of you do deeds of righteousness, whether it be male or a female and has faith, they shall surely enter Paradise and not the least injustice shall be done to them.'

A similar thing is repeated in Surah Nahl, Ch.16, Verse No.97 which says 'If any of you perform good deeds, be it a man or a woman and is a believer, We shall give you good life and We should reward you for all your good works.'

Just because in Islam, sex is not the criteria to enter Paradise, will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Spiritual rights

Another misconception is that, which the Western media has, that, 'The woman has no soul.'

In fact, it was in the seventeenth century, when the Council of wise men, when they gathered at Rome, and they unanimously agreed that the woman had no soul.

In Islam, man and woman have the same spiritual nature. It is mentioned in Quran, Ch.4, Verse No.1, which says that, 'O humankind reverence your Guardian Lord, who has created you from a single person and created like nature his mate.'

A similar thing is mentioned in Surah Nahl, Ch.16, Verse No.72, which says that, 'We have made for you companions and mates of your own nature.'

In Surah Al-Shura, Ch.42, Verse No.11, it says, 'He is the one who has created the heavens and the earth and has made for you pairs from among yourselves.'

Just because the spiritual nature of a man and woman is the same in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam, as modernizing or outdated?

The Qur'an clearly mentions that, 'God has breathed somewhat of His spirit into the human beings.'

If you read Surah Hijr, Ch.15, Verse No.29, it says, 'When I have fashioned you in due proportion and have breathed into you something of my spirit, fall you down in obeisance.'

A similar thing is repeated in the Qur'an, in Surah Sajdah, Ch. 32, Verse No.9, which says, 'Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit..'

Here, when God refers to as 'Something of My Spirit, is breathed into the human beings- it does not mean, a sort of incarnation or a pantheistic form.

It means that Allah has given to every human being something of His spiritual Nature, and the Knowledge of God Almighty, and coming closer towards Him.

Here it refers to both Adam and Eve (peace be upon them) - Both were breathed something of God's Spirit.

Again we read in the Qur'an, that Allah has appointed the human being as His vicegerent, as His trustee, as is mentioned in Surah Isra, Ch.17, Verse No.70, which says, 'We have honored the children of Adam and bestowed on them special favors.'

Note, here all the children of Adam have been honored, male as well as female.

There are some Religious scriptures, for example the Bible, which puts the blame on Eve for the downfall of humanity.

In fact if you read the Qur'an in Surah Araf, Ch.7, Verse No.19 to 27, Adam and Eve (may peace be upon them both) are addressed, more than a dozen of times.

Both disobeyed God, both asked for forgiveness, both repented, and both were forgiven.

In the Bible, if you read Genesis, Ch. 3, only Eve is held responsible (May peace be upon her) for the downfall of humanity.

And according to the doctrine of 'Original Sin because of Eve (may peace be upon her) the whole of humanity is born in sin.

Does Pregnancy Uplift the Women or Degrade?

If you read the Bible in Genesis, Ch. 3, Verse No.16, it says that, 'To the woman He (God) said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."'

That means, pregnancy and child birth has been said in the Bible to degrade the women and the labor pain is a sort of punishment.

In fact if you read the Qur'an, pregnancy and child birth have uplifted the women.

If you read Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.1, it says, 'Respect the womb that bore you.'

It's mentioned in Surah Luqman, Ch.31, Verse No.14, it says, 'We have enjoined on the human being to be kind to the parents, in travail upon travail did their mother bore them and in years twain was their weaning.'

A similar thing is mentioned in Surah Ahqaf, Ch.46, Verse No.15, it again repeats, which says, 'We have enjoined on the human beings to be kind to his parents.'

To be kind to the parents - in pain did their mother bore them, and in pain did she give them birth - Pregnancy in the Qur'an has uplifted the women not degraded her.

Just because pregnancy has uplifted the women in Islam will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Criteria in the Sight of God to Judge Male and Female

The only criteria for judgment in the sight of Allah is 'Taqwa 'God consciousness' or 'righteousness'.

It is mentioned in Surah Hujurat, Ch.49, Verse No.13 'O humankind, We have created you from a single pair of male and female and have divided you into nations and tribes, so that you shall recognize each other not that you despise each other and the most honored in the sight of God, is the one who is the most righteous.'

Sex, color, caste, wealth has got no criteria in Islam - The only criteria in the sight of God is 'righteousness' neither is sex the criteria for God to reward or to punish a person.

If you read Surah Imran Ch.3 Verse No.195 it says 'I will never suffer the loss of any of you, be it male or female, you are companions unto each other.'

Equal Moral Duties for Men and Women

I had started my talk by quoting a verse from the Qur'an from Surah Al Ahzab, Ch.33, Verse No.35, which says,

'For Muslim men and Muslim women,
for believing men and women,
for devout men and women,
for true men and women,
for men and women who are patient and constant,

for men and women who give in charity,
for men and women who fast and deny themselves,
for men and women who guard their chastity,
for men and women who engage much in God's praise,
God has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.

This verse indicates that the spiritual duties, the moral duties, for the men and women in Islam are the same
- Both have to believe, both have to pray, both have to fast, both have to give in charity, etc, etc.

But the women has been given certain concession in Islam.

If she is undergoing her menstrual period or pregnancy, she does not have to fast - She can keep those fasts later on, when she is more healthy.

During the menstrual period and during the postnatal period, she needs not pray also - she has been given the concession, and neither does she have to compensate it later on.

Just because the moral duties of the men and women are equal in Islam will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Economical rights

Islam gave economical rights to the women 1,300 years before the West.

An adult Muslim woman can own, she can dispose or disown any of her property without consulting any one, irrespective whether she is married or she is single.

In 1870, it was the first time in England, that the West recognized the rights of the married woman, where she was allowed to own or dispose any of her property without consultation.

I do agree that the women were given their economic rights 1300 years ago - these are ancient rights - but the question is 'Are they modernizing or outdated?'

Women on Job

A women in Islam, if she wishes to work she can work - There is no text in the Qur'an or the authentic Hadith which prevents or makes it prohibited for a woman to do any work, as long as it is not unlawful, as long as it is within the preview of the Islamic Shariah, as long as she maintains her Islamic dress code.

But natural, she cannot take up jobs, which exhibit her beauty and body - Like for example, modeling and film acting, and such kind of jobs.

Many of the professions and jobs which are prohibited for the woman are also prohibited for the man, for example serving alcohol, working in gambling dens, doing any unethical or dishonest business. All these jobs are prohibited for both men and women.

A true Islamic society requires women to take up profession such as doctors.

We do require female Gynecologists, we do require female nurses and we do require female teachers.

But, a woman in Islam has got no financial obligations - The financial obligation is laid on the shoulders of the man in the family - Therefore she need not work for her livelihood.

But in genuine cases, where there are financial crisis in which both the ends do not meet, she has the option of working.

Here too, no one can force her to work - She works out of her own, absolute free will.

Financial Security for Women

A woman in Islam has been given more financial security, as compared to the man.

As I told you earlier, the financial obligation is not put on her shoulder - It is put on the shoulder of the man in the family. It is the duty of the father or the brother, before she is married and the duty of the husband or the son, after she is married to look after her lodging, boarding, clothing and financial aspects of her.

Compulsory Marital Gift for a Woman

When she gets married, she is on the receiving end.

She receives a gift - she receives a dower or a marital gift, which is called as 'Meher'.

And it is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Nisa, Ch.4 Verse No.4 which says, 'Give to the woman in dower, a marital gift.'

For a marriage to solemnize in Islam, 'Meher is compulsory.'

But unfortunately in our Muslim society here, we just keep a nominal 'Meher' to satisfy the Qur'an, say 151 Rupees, or some people give 786 Rupees and they spend lakhs and lakhs of Rupees on the reception, on the decoration, on the flowers, on the lunch parties, on the dinner parties.

In Islam, there is no lower-limit, nor is there an upper limit for 'Meher'- But when a person can spend lakhs of Rupees on the reception, surely the 'Meher' should be much more.

There are various cultures which have crept into the Muslim societies, especially in the Indo-Pak area.

They give a small amount of 'Meher' and they expect the wife to give a fridge, to give a T.V set, they expect the wife to give an apartment, to give a car, etc., and a large sum of dowry, depending upon the status of the husband.

If he is a graduate, they may expect 1 lakh - If he is an engineer they may expect 3 lakhs - If he is a doctor they may expect 5 lakhs.

Demanding dowry from the wife, directly or indirectly is prohibited in Islam.

If the parents of the girl give the girl something out of their own free will, it is accepted - But demanding or forcing directly or indirectly, it is prohibited in Islam.

No Financial Liabilities

If a Woman works, which she does not have to - whatever earning she gets, it is absolutely her property.

She need not spend on the household - if she wants to spend it is her free will.

Irrespective how rich the wife is, it is the duty of the husband to give lodging, boarding, clothing and look after the financial aspects of the wife.

In case of divorce or if a wife gets widowed, she is given financial support for the period of 'Iddah'- and if she has children, she is also given child support.

Right to Inherit

Islam gave the right to the women to inherit, centuries ago.

If you read the Qur'an - in several verses, in Surah Nisa, in Surah Baqarah and in Surah Maidah, it is mentioned that a woman, irrespective she is a wife or she is a mother, or a sister, or a daughter, she has a right to inherit. And it has been fixed by God Almighty in the Qur'an.

Social rights

Broadly it can be categorized into four sub-headings. Social rights given to a daughter, to a wife, to a mother and to a sister.

Social Rights to a Daughter

Islam prohibits, female infanticide. The killing of female children is forbidden in Islam.

It is mentioned in Surah Taqveem, Ch. 81, Verse No. 8 and 9, 'when the female child is buried alive and when she questions you, for what crime was she killed.'

Not only female infanticide has been prohibited, all sorts of infanticides has been prohibited in Islam, whether it be a male child or a female child.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah A'nam Ch.6, Verse No.151 that, 'Kill not your children for want of sustenance for it is God that will provide sustenance for you and for children.'

A similar thing is mentioned in Surah Isra, Ch.17 Verse No.31 which says 'Kill not your children for want of sustenance, for it is God that will provide sustenance to you and your children, for killing of children is a major sin.'

In the pre-Islamic Arabia, whenever a female child was born mostly she was buried alive.

Alhamdulillah, after the spread of Islam this evil practice has been discontinued.

But unfortunately it still continues in India - According to a BBC report, in the program assignment the title of which was 'Let Her Die' there was a British reporter by the name of Emily Beckenen, who came all the way from Britain to India to give us the statistics of the female infanticide.

In that program, it gives the statistics, that every day more than 3,000 fetuses are being aborted on being identified that they are females.

If you multiply this figure by the number of days, that is multiplied by 365, you get a figure of more than one million female fetuses are being aborted every year in our country.

And there are big hoarding and posters in states like Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, which says spend 500 Rupees and save 5 lakh Rupees.

What does it mean? - That spend Rupees 500 on medical examination like Aminocententus or Ultra Sonography, and identify the gender of child.

If it is a female you can abort it and you'll save 5 lakh Rupees - How?

The couple of lakhs you spend on upbringing her and the remaining lakhs of Rupees you spend on giving dowry to the man who will marry her (a custom in India).

According to the report of the Government Hospital of Tamil Nadu out of every 10 female children that are born, four are put to death- No wonder the female population in India is less than the male population.

Female infanticide was continuing in India since centuries - If you analyze the statistics of the 1901 census, for every 1000 males there were 972 females.

According to the 1981 statistics and census, it tells you for every 1000 males you have 934 females.

And the latest statistics of 1991 tells you that for every 1000 males you have 927 females.

You can analyze that the female ratio is dropping every year - And since science and medicine has advanced, it has helped in this evil practice.

Just because Islam tells you that you should not kill any children whether it be male or female will you call these rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Qur'an not only prohibits female infanticide, it rebukes at the thought of you rejoicing at the birth of a male child and getting saddened at the birth of a female child.

In Islam, a daughter should be brought up correctly.

In Islam, there should be no partiality in upbringing of the daughter or the son.

According to a Hadith, 'In the presence of the Prophet Muhammad, once a man kissed his son and placed him on his lap but did not do the same to his daughter.

The Prophet immediately objected and said that you are unjust - You should have even kissed your daughter and placed her on the other lap.'

Social Rights to Wife

All the previous civilizations, they have considered the women to be an 'instrument of the devil'.

The Qur'an refers to the women as 'Mohsana' that is a 'fortress against the devil'.

And if a woman, who's good, marries a man, she prevents him from going on the wrong path.

There's a Hadith in which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) he said that, 'there is no monasticism in Islam.'

And again according to Sahih Bukhari, Volume No. 7, Ch. No. 3 Hadith No 4 it says that 'the Prophet Muhammad ordained the young men, all those who have the means to marry, they should marry - For it will help them to guard their gaze and guard their modesty.

The Qur'an say's that, 'We have put love into the hearts of the husband and wife.'

If you read Surah Rum, Ch. 30, Verse No. 21 it says that, 'And amongst our signs We have created for you mates or companions, so that you may dwell in them in tranquility and we have put love and mercy between your hearts.'

According to Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.21, marriage is considered as a strong agreement, a strong contract.

According to Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.19, it says, 'You are prohibited to inherit women against their will' - Means, to marry the permission of both the parties are required.

It is compulsory that the man and women both should agree to marry. No one - not even the father can force their daughter to marry against her wishes.

There's a Hadith in Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 62, Number 69, which says 'that a lady she was forced by her father to marry against her wishes' - And she went to the Prophet and the Prophet invalidated the marriage.

Another Hadith in Ibn-e-Humbal, Hadith No. 2469, it says 'that a daughter was forced by her father to get married - And when the daughter approached the Prophet, the Prophet said you can either continue, or if you wish you can invalidate the marriage.

That means, the consent of both the male and the female is required.

In Islam, a women is considered as a homemaker - She is not considered as a housewife, because she is not married to the house.

Many people use terminology, without understanding what it means 'Housewife' means 'you are the wife of the house.'

So I believe, from now onwards the sisters would prefer calling themselves 'homemakers' than 'house wives' if they are occupied more in the home.

In Islam, a woman, she is not married to a master that she should be treated like a slave - She is married to it is equal.

And there is a Hadith which says in Ibn-Hambal - Hadith No 736, 7396. It says that, 'the most perfect of the believers are those that are best in character and behavior, and those that are best to their family and their wives.'

Islam gives equal rights to the man and woman. Qur'an clearly mentions that men and women, husband and wife have equal rights in all aspects, except leadership in the family.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Baqarah Ch.2, Verse No.228. It says that, '..the women have been given rights similar against them (men) on equitable terms but the men have a degree higher...'

Most of the Muslims have misunderstood this verse, when it says 'a men have a degree higher' - As I said we should analyze the Qur'an as a whole. And its mentioned in Surah Nisa, Ch. 4, Verse No.34 which says, 'The

men are the protectors and maintainers of the women, for God has given one of them more strength than the other and they give them their means.'

People say the word 'Kawwam' means, 'one degree higher in superiority'- But actually the word 'Kawwam' comes from the root word 'Ikamah' 'Ikamah' means for example 'when you give the Ikamah before prayers - You stand up.'

So 'Ikamah' means to standup - so the word 'Kawwam' means one degree higher in responsibility, not one degree higher in superiority.

Even if you read the commentary of 'Ibne-Kathir'- He says that the word 'Kawwam' means one degree higher in responsibility, not one degree higher in superiority.

And this responsibility, should be carried out by mutual consent of both husband and wife.

It is mentioned in Surah Baqarah, Ch.2, Verse No.187, which says, which means 'Your wives are your garments, and you are their garments.'

What's the objective of garments - It is used to conceal and to beautify.

The husband and wife, should conceal each other's faults, and they should beautify each other - Its a relationship of hands and gloves.

The Qur'an mentions that, 'even if you do not like your wife, you should treat her kindly.'

It is mentioned in Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.19, that, '..consort with them (your wives) in kindness, for if you hate them it may happen that you hate a thing wherein God has placed much good.'

Even if you dislike your wife you have to treat her kindly and with equity

Just because the rights of a wife are equal to those of the husband in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Social Rights to a Mother

The only thing above respect to Mother, is the worship of God - It is mentioned in:

Ch.17, Verse No.28-29, It says that 'God has ordained for you, that you worship none but Him, and to be kind to your parents. And if any one or both of them reach old age do not say a word of contempt or repel them but address them with honor, and speak to them with kindness, and lower your wing of humility and pray to God - 'My Lord! Bless them as they have cherished me in childhood.'

Surah Nisa, Ch. No. 4, Verse No. 1 says, 'Respect the womb that bore you.'

Surah A'nam, Ch.6, Verse No.151, says that, 'You have to be kind to your parents.'

Surah Luqman Ch.31, Verse No.14, says that, 'We have enjoined on the human beings to be kind to his parents. In travail upon travail, did their mother bore them and in years twain was their weaning.'

A similar thing is repeated again in Surah Ahqaf, Ch.46, Verse No.15, that 'We have enjoined on the human beings to be kind to his parents. In pain did their mother bore them and in pain did she give them birth.'

Another Hadith related in Sahih Bukhari in Volume 8, Ch. No. 2 Hadith No. 2, as well as in Sahih-Muslim - It says that a man asked the Prophet Muhammad 'Who requires the maximum love and respect and my companionship in this world?

The Prophet replied 'Your mother.

'Who is next?'

'Your mother.'

'Who is next?'

'Your mother.'

The man asked for the fourth time, - 'Who is next?'

The Prophet replied 'Your father.'

So 75% of the love and respect goes to the mother and 25% of the love and respect goes to the father.

Three fourth of the better part of the love and respect goes to the mother one fourth of the remaining part of the love and respect goes to the father.

Social Rights to a Sister

According to Surah Tawbah, Ch. 9, Verse No.71, it says that, 'The men and the women they are friends of each other.'

Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) he said, 'The women are the "Shakat"'. 'Shakat' means sister.

Educational rights

The first 5 verses which were revealed in the Qur'an were from Surah Alaq, or Surah Iqra, Verse No. 1 to 5 which says:

'Read, recite or proclaim in the name of your Lord, Who has created the human beings from a congealed clot of blood (a leech like substance).

Read, your Lord is most bountiful.

Who has taught the use of the pen?

Who has taught the human beings that which he knew-not?

The first guidance given in the Qur'an to the humankind was not to pray, was not to fast, was not to give charity - It was read - Islam pays utmost importance to education.

Education is Compulsory in Islam.

According to Quran: 'God will exalt those of you who believe and those who are given knowledge to high degrees.' (58:11)

And say, O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge. (20:114)

And whoever is given knowledge is given indeed abundant wealth. (2:269)

According to a saying of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) "It is obligatory for every Muslim, male or female, to acquire knowledge (Al-Bayhaqi).

Imagine, 1400 years ago, when the women were ill-treated and were only used as property, Islam asked the women to be educated.

Because Islam tells that every woman should be educated, - Will you call such women's rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Legal rights

According to the Islamic law, men and women are equal - The Islamic Law protects the life and property of a man and woman both.

If a man murders a woman he too will receive the capital punishment of 'Kisaas'.

According to the Islamic law of 'Kisaas' men and women - irrespective the injury be of the eye, of the nose, of the ear, of the body - both receive equal punishment.

And if the guardian of the murderer, even it be a woman - If she says, that forgive the murderer and she accepts 'Dia' that is compensation - her opinion cannot be rejected - they have to accept it.

And if there's difference of opinion between the relatives of the person whose murdered - And some say that the murderer should be killed and some say that he should be forgiven and 'Dia' should be accepted - people should prevent the relatives from killing that murderer.

And irrespective whether the witness or the opinion is given by a man or woman, it has same weight.

According to Surah Maida, Ch.5, Verse No.30 - It says 'As to the thief, whether he be man or a woman, cut off his or her hand as a punishment for his crime, an example from God.'

Means, if a person robs, irrespective whether he is a man or a woman his or her hands should be chopped - The punishment is the same.

According to Surah Nur, Ch.24, Verse No.2, it says 'If any commits fornication, be it a man or a woman, flog them with 100 stripes.'

The punishment for fornication in Islam irrespective whether it is a man or a woman, it is the same - Flogging with 100 stripes.

The punishment for men and women, is the same in Islam.

In Islam a woman is allowed to give witness.

Imagine, Islam gave right to a woman to be a witness, 14 centuries ago.

Even now in as late as 1980, the Jewish Rabai, they were considering that whether the women should be given a right to act as a witness or not - And Islam gave that right 1400 years ago.

Accord-ing to Surah Nur, Ch.24, Verse No.4, it is said 'If any of you put a charge against the chastity of a woman, produce 4 witnesses, and if they falter, flog them with 80 stripes.'

In Islam for a small crime, you require 2 witness - for a big crime you require 4 witnesses.

Accusing a woman falsely is a big crime in Islam, therefore you require 4 witnesses.

Now a days you see in the modern society, you find men abusing women and calling them all sorts of name. They call them prostitutes etc, and nothing is done.

In an Islamic state, if a man calls her a 'prostitute' in public or anywhere else, and if she takes that man to court - And if that man cannot produce 4 witnesses or even if he produces 4 witnesses and any one of them falter, all of them will receive 80 lashes each, and in future all their evidence will be rejected.

Islam gives utmost importance to the chastity of the woman.

When a lady marries, she normally adopts the name of her husband.

In Islam she has the option of either keeping her husband's name, either adopting the name of the husband, or maintaining her maiden name.

And maintaining the maiden name is recommended in Islam - And we find in several Muslim societies that women, even after they get married they maintain their maiden name, because according to the Islamic law men and women are equal.

Will you call such rights in Islam modernizing or outdated?

Political rights

According to Surah Tawba, Ch.9, Verse No.71, 'The men and the women they are friends (supporters) of each other.'

Supporters not only socially - even politically, men and women should support each other.

Women can even take part in law making.

And according to the famous Hadith in which Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), he was discussing with the Sahabas, and considering putting an upper limit on the 'Meher' since young men were discouraged from getting married - a lady from the back seat she objected and said When the Qur'an says in Surah Nisa Ch.4, Verse No.20 that 'you can even give a heap of treasure, a heap of gold in 'Meher' when Qur'an puts no limit on 'Meher' who is Umar to put a limit (may Allah be pleased with him).

And immediately Hazrat Umar (peace be upon him) said 'Umar is wrong and the lady is right.'

Imagine, she was a common lady - If it would have been a famous lady, the name of the lady would be mentioned in the Hadith.

Since the Hadith does not mention the name of the lady, we can understand that the lady was a common lady.

Means, even a common lady can object to the 'Khalifa' - the head of the state.

And in technical terms it would be called that 'she is objecting to the breach of the constitution - because Qur'an is the constitution of the Muslims - That means a woman can even take part in law making.

Women in the Battle Field

There is a full chapter in the Sahih Bukhari mentioning women in the battle field - Women gave water - they give first aid to the soldiers.

Because the Qur'an says 'Man is the protector of the woman.'

Under normal circumstances, the women should not go to the battle field. It is the duty of the man.

Only when required, under necessity are women allowed - and they should go to the battle field if they want.

Otherwise you'll have the same position as you are having in the USA.

Women in USA are not safe

In USA women were allowed to join the battle since 1901 but they were not allowed to take active part - They only played the part of a nurse.

Later on after the 'Feminist Movement' had started in 1973, the 'Feminist movement' demanded 'Why aren't women allowed to take active part in the battle field?'

So the American government allowed women to take active part in the battle field.

And according to a report of the Defense Department of America, which was released on the 23rd of April, 1993 it said that, a lot of people were sexually assaulted in a convention, out of which 83 were women and 117 officers were charged with disciplinary action. Imagine in one convention only, 83 women sexually assaulted.

What was the crime of those 117 officers?

They made the women run and they snatched at their clothes. They made them parade absolutely nude without even covering the genital parts. They were made to have sex in public.

Is this what you call 'Women's rights'?

If you think that this is what 'Women's right' is then you can keep your rights to yourselves. We do not want our sisters, our daughters our mothers to be sexually assaulted.

And there was an uproar in the parliament and the President, Bill Clinton - he himself had to apologize publicly and he said, 'Necessary action will be taken'.

And you know when politicians say 'necessary action will be taken, what happens.

So Islam allows women to take part in the battle field only when required.

But there also they should maintain their Islamic dress and the Islamic ethics, and their modesty.

USA has one of the highest rates of rape

United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. It also has one of the highest rates of rape in any country in the world. According to a FBI report, in the year 1990, every day on an average 1756 cases of rape were committed in U.S.A alone. Later another report said that on an average everyday 1900 cases of rapes are committed in USA. The year was not mentioned. May be it was 1992 or 1993. May be the Americans got 'bolder' in the following years.

Islamic Law Let's Women Breathe Easily

Consider a scenario where the Islamic law is implemented in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic dress as mentioned in Quran. After this if any man commits rape he is given capital punishment. I ask you, in such a scenario, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same, or will it decrease?

If Islamic law is implemented in any part of the world, women will breathe easier.

Conclusion

Before I conclude, I'd like to give an example.

As I said in the beginning of my talk, Islam believes in equality between men and women - Equality does not mean identicality.

Suppose in a classroom 2 students, student 'A' and 'B' during an examination both come out first - Both secure 80% marks - 80 out of 100.

When you analyze the question paper, the question paper has 10 different questions, each carrying 10 marks.

In question 1 student 'A' got 9 out of 10, and student 'B' got 7 out of 10 - So in question 1 student 'A' was higher than student 'B'.

In question 2, student 'A' got 7 out of 10 and student 'B' got 9 out of 10 - Student 'B' was higher than student 'A' in question number 2.

In question 3 both of them got 8 out of 10, both were equal.

So when we add up the marks of all the ten questions, both student 'A' and 'B' got 80 out of 100.

So in short, student 'A' and student 'B' are over all equal.

In some questions 'A' is higher than 'B' in some questions 'B' is higher than 'A' in others both are equal.

In the same fashion, taking the example that since God has given man more strength - Suppose a thief enters the house will you tell, 'I believe in women's rights - I believe in women's rights' - will you tell your mother, your sister and your daughter, to go and fight the thief?

No, but natural you'll fight him - If required they may interfere - Under normal circumstances since God has given you more physical strength, you have to go and tackle the thief.

So here, in physical strength, man is one degree higher than the woman

Let us take another example where it comes to respecting the parents - The children are supposed to respect the mother 3 times more than the father (as mentioned earlier).

Here the women have one degree higher than the men - Overall both equal

So Islam believes in equality, not identically - Men and women are over all equal in Islam.

This was in brief, the highlights, of 'the Women's Rights in Islam'.

After this what the Muslim society did is different - Many of the Muslim societies did not give the women their rights and they deviated away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The Western society is largely responsible for this - because of the Western societies, many Muslim societies have become over protective, over precautions and have gone to one extreme and deviated away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

On the other extreme, some of the Muslim societies turned to the Western culture, and followed their culture.

I want to tell the Western society that if you analyze the women's rights in Islam according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah - you will realize it is modernizing and not outdated.