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Women's Dignity, Rights and Empowerment in Islam.

-Shah Abdul Hamman

(Continued from the previous issue)

4. At the time of creation Allah attributed human beings as *Khalifa* (Caliph: representative). He said to His angels, "... I will create a vicegerent (*Khalifa*) on earth...." ^[Al Quran 2:30]

Allah did not say that he was sending women or men. He did not even say that he was sending human beings. He told that he was sending representatives. He sent human beings but he called them representatives. The entire human being is his representative irrespective of the sex. But if we disobey Him, commit crime, commit murder, carry out oppression, and lose faith in Him then it is obvious that we will lose our status as *Khalifa*. ^[Al Quran 35:39] But basically we all are His representatives.

The foundation of woman's empowerment lies with this status as *Khalifa*. No one can perform ones responsibility without power or authority. In *Khilafat* lies the foundation of empowerment of all women, men, poor and weak. So this is the fourth proof of fundamental equality of men and women. Islam wants every man and every woman i.e., each and every person to be empowered. But as women are deprived now they should be empowered first. If men are deprived at anytime they must be empowered. We must have to think about anyone who is deprived. At present we must have to put efforts for the empowerment of women. We must not confine women within our home. We must let them come forward. If any woman freely decides to stay at home, she of course has rights to do that. But Almighty Allah has never said anywhere that women will have to stay at home and will not be able to do anything outside. There is no legal provision in either the *Quran* or the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAWS) which prohibits women from seeking a career or a job. On the contrary He has assigned both men and women with some responsibilities. In a verse of *Surah Tawba* Allah says:

"The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger....."

[Al Quran 9:71]

In this verse Allah says that men and women are the *Wali* (guardians) of one another. By this

verse Allah has given women the right of being guardians of men also. Through these instructions Allah has accredited the participation of women in all good activities. He declares that He will shower blessings on those who will perform these responsibilities. So I express my firm belief that all men and women are equal as far as these six responsibilities are concerned. All activities including politics and social work fall within its purview.

Bringing An End to The World of Extremism

-----Fatima Nasreen Hasan.

Islam is the clear straight path, which recommends moderation and balance in every thing: in brief, *Ibadah*, conduct and legislation. Allah calls this path '*Al Sirat Al Mustaqim*', one distinct from all others. It is important to point out that moderation or balance is not only a general characteristic of Islam but also a fundamental landmark. The *Quran* states: "Thus have we made of you an *Ummah* justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over the nations and the Messenger a witness over yourselves...." [2:143].

Reading the above verse one might realize the significance of a balanced *Ummah*. The word balance simply means neither too little nor too much (i.e., excessiveness) but something in between the two. So in order to be on the right path we would have to oppose all the extremism. In the following discussion we would look at the concepts of religious extremism.

Literally, extremism means being situated at the farthest possible point from the center. Figuratively, it indicates a similar remoteness in religion and thought, as well as behavior. It is clear that failure to define and comprehend religious extremism and to leave the issue to the whimsical desires of people will lead to discord among Muslims. The *Quran* states: "If the truth has been in accord with their desires, truly the heavens and the earth and all the beings therein would have been in confusion and corruption".

Here importance should be drawn to two observations. First: The degree of a person's piety as well as that of the society in which lives affect his judgement of others as far as extremism, moderation and laxity are concerned. A religious society usually produces a person of sensitivity opposite to that of deviation or negligence. On the other hand, one

who is brought up in an environment, which neglects *Shariah*, will consider even minimal adherence to Islam a kind of extremism. Some Muslims, who are influenced by alien ideologies and practices, consider the call for the application of *Shariah* and the establishment of an Islamic state as a sign of ‘religious extremism’. To such a person, a young man with beard or a young woman with *Hijab*, are both extremists!

Second: It is unfair to assure a person of religious extremism simply because he has adopted a ‘grand-line’ juristic opinion of certain *Fuqaha*. As for example Ibn Abbas (one of the companions of the Prophet) facilitated religious matters while Ibn Umar was strict.

There are mainly three kinds of extremism: *Ghuluw*(excessiveness), *Tanattu*(transgressing meticulous religiosity) and *Tashdid* (strictness).

[Based on ‘ Islamic Awakening Between Rejection & Extremism’ by Yousuf Al Qaradawi.]

[To be continued]

Laugh will kill me. I’m afraid that deep down inside I’m nothing, that I’m just no good, and that you’ll see and reject me. So I play my games, my desperate, pretending games, with a façade of assurance on the outside and a trembling child within.

I’d really like to be genuine, spontaneous and me; but you have to help me. You have to help me by holding out your hand, even when that’s the last thing I seem to want or need. Each time you are kind and gentle and encouraging, each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings. Very small wings. Very feeble wings. But wings. With your sensitivity and sympathy and your power of understanding, I can make it. You can breathe life into me. It will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls. But love is stronger than strong walls, and therein lies my hope. Please try to beat down those walls with firm hands, but with gentle hands, for a child is very sensitive, and I AM a child.

Who am I, you may wonder? I am someone you know very well. For I am every man, every woman, every child.....every human being you meet.

[Source: Training Guide for Islamic Workers, III]

Hypocrisy Versus Reality

Don’t be fooled by my mask. Here what I am not saying!

Don’t be fooled by me. Don’t be fooled by the mask I wear. I wear a thousand masks, mask I’m afraid to take off, and none of them is me. Pretending is an art that is second nature with me, but don’t be fooled.

I give the impression that I am secured, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without; that confidence is my name and coolness is my game; that the waters are calm and that I’m in command and I need no one. But don’t believe it; please don’t.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever-varying and ever concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness, no coolness, no complacency. Beneath dwells the real me, in confusion, in fear, in loneliness. But I hide this; I don’t want anybody to know it. I panic at the thought of my weakness being exposed. That’s why I frantically create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant sophisticated facade to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation. It’s the only thing that can liberate me from myself, from my own self-built prison walls, from the barriers that I so painstakingly erect. But I don’t tell you this. I don’t dare. I am afraid to.

I’m afraid your glance will not be followed by love and acceptance. I’m afraid that you will think less of me, that you’ll laugh, and your

SADADASDASDAS

Ruku in Sidney

This is a recently discovered phenomenon in a forest near Sidney. The bottom half of a tree trunk is bowed in such a way that it resembles a person in a posture of Islamic prayer-the ‘Ruku’. The ‘hands’ are resting on the knees. The most amazing thing is the ‘man’ is directly facing the Holy Kaaba in Mecca, which is the direction makes you think. Does it not?

Editorial

“Women’s Dignity, Rights and Empowerment in Islam” has come to the ending part. Expecting it to be able to draw the attention of the society. To establish a balanced society we all should fight strongly against the extremism in religious affairs. “Bringing An End to The World of Extremism” by Fatima Nasreen Hasan is a summarized extract from “Islamic Awakening Between Rejection & Extremism” by Yousuf Al Qaradawi. With intense pleasure we are congratulating her for joining the team of “The Window”.

Endless gratitude to Allah (SWT), we are with the 4th publication.

Ma As Salam.

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