

The Qur'an respects the human dignity of both men & women

BS Foad, MD 2015

We will discuss the following concepts

- 1-We all came from the same source, therefore no one race is superior to others, and no one gender is superior to another
- 2-The relationship between the spouses is based on kindness, love and mercy, and the fruit of this relationship is tranquility and happiness
- 3-The Qur'an respects and safeguards the human dignity of both men & women
- 4-What brings us closer to God is our character & behavior, not our gender or ancestry
- 5-Some misunderstand Qur'anic verses

Our origin is the same, therefore no one is superior to another through race or gender

The Qur'an states that all human beings came from one soul, and out of that soul came its mate; and from these two came countless seeds of men and women. We need to remember our accountability to God and to be good to our relations

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ

مِنْهَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا



O mankind revere your guardian Lord who created you from a single soul; and out of that soul created its mate; and from them created countless seeds of men and women; and be conscious of your Lord through him you ask for your rights, and be mindful of your relations; for God is ever watchful over you

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 1

The Qur'an explains that the relationship between the spouses is based on kindness, love and mercy, not dominance or oppression. Such relationship is good for both partners as they find happiness and tranquility

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ ﴾

﴿ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾

And among his signs is that he created for you spouses in order that you may find tranquility and happiness in them; and he established your relationship on the basis of kindness, love and mercy; indeed in this are signs for those who reflect

Ar-Rum (the Romans) 30: 21

The relationship between the spouses is based on kindness, love and mercy, which implies respect and trust, not dominance or oppression. It means seeking each other's opinions and consultation before decisions are made. It means working together and not one dominating the other or asserting his views. It means valuing and respecting the potential and contribution of each partner, and not taking them for granted. Such relationship is to be cherished and nurtured as it is a gift from God.

The Qur'an respects and safeguards the human dignity of both men & women

As one of God's creation human beings were chosen to be God's representatives on earth, and were preferred to other creations of God, and everything on earth was subjected to man's use and control

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ ۗ ﴾

﴿ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٧٠﴾ ﴾

We have honored the children of Adam, and carried them on land and at sea; and provided for them of all good things; and favored them over many of our creations

Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 70

And

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَهْرًا وَبَاطِنًا ۗ ﴾

Do you not see that God has subjected to your use everything in the heavens and earth, and bestowed his blessings on you, both openly and secretly

Luqman 31: 20

And

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۗ﴾

Your Lord said to the angels: “I am going to have on earth a vice-regent”

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 30

The Qur’an stresses that **both men and women are rewarded or punished according to their deeds, and that none is wronged in the least by God.** There is no difference between men or women regarding their accountability to God. Each person is held accountable as an individual for his behavior

﴿لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا تَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظَلَّمُونَ فِيهَا ۗ﴾

It is not your wishful thinking, nor that of the people of the book, that will prevail; whoever does evil will be requited accordingly, and will find no one besides Allah as a guardian or helper. And whoever does righteous deeds, male or female and has faith, such will enter paradise and will not be wronged in the least

An-Nesa’a (The Women) 4: 123 & 124

Our good effort will not go to waste, it is noted and rewarded by God

﴿فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ ۗ﴾

And their Lord responded to them, saying: “I will not let the work of any one of you, male or female, to be wasted

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 195

Those who do good deeds will be rewarded, both in this life, as well as in the Hereafter

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ ﴾

Whoever works righteousness, male or female, and has faith to such we will let him live a good life, and we will reward them according to the best of their deeds

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 97

When God described the example of righteous persons he gave the example of two women: the wife of Pharaoh and Mariam (Mary)

﴿ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴾

God gave the example of those who believe the wife of Pharaoh when she said: “My Lord build for me a house with you in paradise, and rescue me from Pharaoh and his deeds, and from wrong-doers. And Mary, the daughter of Imran, who safeguarded her chastity, and we breathed into him of our spirit, and she bore witness to the words and the books of her Lord, and was among the devout worshippers

At-Tahreem (Forbidden) 66: 11 & 12

There is no difference between men and women regarding their accountability

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّامِتِينَ وَالصَّامِتَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾

Indeed Muslims, men and women; and believers, men and women; and devout obedient men and women; and true men and women; and patiently persevering men and women’ and humble obedient men and women; and giving in charity, men and women; and fasting men and women; and those safeguarding their chastity, men and women; and those who remember God often, men and women, God has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward

Al-Ahzab (The Confederates) 33: 35

What brings us closer to God is our piety. Not our gender or race or noble heritage

It is our morals, character and righteous behavior that brings us closer to God, and allows us to receive his guidance & mercy

﴿ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ ﴾

Indeed the most honored, amongst you, in the sight of God is the most righteous

Al-Hujerat (The Apartments) 49: 13

Being a man does not brings us closer to God versus being a woman. Being born to a noble family does not confer immunity or prevent us from facing God's punishment if we do wrong.

Some misunderstand Qur'anic verses

﴿ الرَّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنِينَتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ ۖ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۗ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٣﴾ ﴾

Men are protectors and maintainers of women because Allah favored some over the others, and because they spend of their money; therefore righteous women are obedient safeguarding in their husband's absence what Allah would have them guard; as to those on whose part you fear disloyalty, admonish them, then refuse to share their beds, and last beat them; but if they return to obedience seek not against them means of annoyance, for Allah is most high, great

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 34

Some misunderstand this verse to imply that men are favored by Allah because he gave them the position of leadership and authority in their homes, and that their wives must obey them and be subject to them. What the Qur'an is stating is that someone must lead his family, support, protect and maintain his family. Traditionally this position belonged to the man or husband because he was the bread-winner. This position of authority does not mean that the husband is better than his wife. It is a position of responsibility and accountability. The husband must carry on his duties and be just and set an example to his family. At the same time, the wife has her own duties and both husband and wife work together to ensure that their family is sound and successful.

Since the relationship between the spouses is based on kindness, love and mercy there is no place in such a union for wife-beating, especially in an American society. It is humiliating and degrading for a wife and a mother to be beaten by her mate. It will change the whole relationship and dynamics of the family, and result in hatred and psychological problems that affects every member of the family, including the children. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not approve of wife-beating and wondered how can a man beat his wife like a slave, then seek intimacy with her later on? Though the verse refers to a group of stubborn women, who will not listen to reason and it shows gradual steps to be taken in discipline, this verse is not applicable in our society today. This verse certainly does not mean or imply that men take matters in their own hands and do whatever they wish.

Sometimes the wife or woman is better suited to lead her family than her husband, because she is more rational and has abilities that her husband does not have. In these situations she is the one in authority, because the verse explains why God gave the leadership and authority position. This was granted traditionally to the man because throughout history the man was more rational and the source of support for his family. If the situation changes and now the woman plays that role, then obviously she should be in charge. Some women have done that indirectly and rule their family, though on the surface they give their husband the appearance that he is leading.

The Qur'an respects and safeguards the human dignity of both men & women

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1-No race is superior to another race, and no gender is superior to another gender

"O mankind revere your guardian Lord who created you from a single soul, and out of that soul created its mate; and from them scattered countless seeds of men and women; and be conscious of your Lord through whom you ask for your rights" An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 1

2-The Qur'an respects and safeguards the human dignity of both men & women

"We have honored the Children of Adam, and carried them on land and at sea; and provided for them of all good things; and favored them over many of our creations" Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 70

3-The relationship between the spouses is based on kindness, love and mercy and is a source of peace *"And among his signs is that he created for you spouses, from among yourselves in order that you may find tranquility and happiness in them; and established your relationship on the basis of kindness, love and mercy; indeed in this are signs for those who reflect" Ar-Rum (The Romans) 30: 21*

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (The best amongst you is the best to his wife and family) Termedhi

In his advice he said: (Be good to your women) Bokhari

4-Both men and women are accountable and will be rewarded or punished according to their deeds *"Whoever does evil will be requited accordingly, and will find no one besides Allah as a guardian or helper; and whoever does righteous deeds, male or female and has faith, such will enter paradise, and will not be wronged in the least" An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 123 & 124*

"Their Lord responded to them, saying: "I will not the work of anyone of you, male or female, to be wasted" Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 195

Whoever works righteousness, male or female, and has faith to such we will let him live a good life, and we will reward them according to the best of their deeds" An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 97

"Indeed Muslim men and women; and believing men and women; and devout obedient men and women' and true men and women; and men and women who patiently persevere; and humble devoted men and women; and fasting men and women; and men and women who give in charity; and men and women who safeguard their chastity; and men and women who remember Allah often, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward" Al-Ahzab (The Confederates) 33: 35

5-What brings us closer to Allah is our piety, not our gender

"Indeed the most honored, amongst you in the sight of Allah, is the most righteous" Al-Hujerat 49: 13

6-Some misunderstand Qur'anic verses. Man is the leader in his home, but that does not mean that he is better than his wife. Each plays a vital role and decisions are only made after adequate consultation. There is no place for wife beating in a Muslim society today

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not approve of wife-beating in his time, and he never beat his wives