

Female Leadership in Islam

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Abstract

In this research ,women leadership in Muslim is evaluated .And we want to respond to this question : what is the female leadership issue ?And also what is women's participation rate in hierarchy of power in society .This term "leadership" has widespread concepts .One of them is political leadership and the other one is religious .Which in the past has been included , doing Ijtihad in Shitte (shia) and judicial decree (fatwa) in tradition . As time went , political and religious leads were merging together . It became a common phenomenon. Because of Renaissance period and acceptance of humanism ideas in society. Men and women have been equal in political and social rights. So gender differences lost their values among people. In this regard, after we study agree and disagree views about female leadership in society, we conclude that : there are no problems , facing their leadership and they can be religious , political , social heads .As with the thoughts of humanism and the feminist movement . Women have been able to gain the highest political & social authorities.

Key Words: woman , leadership , Islam, religion , politics.

Women's leadership in Islam & Christianity

Throughout the history , women play an important role in promote the society and social goals .They according to Their positions in family and their flounce on family's member play indirect role on society evolution . Due to women almost constitute the half of the community's population, They always play Indirectly insignificant roles in critical situations .And this fundamental role as leader was considered by holy books like Quran and Bible .

One of important viewpoint which criticized and reviewed in these religious books was women's leadership, and their positions at the top of the power pyramid.

The term leadership has wide concept, and it can included religious, political,.....aspects. The most comprehensive definition of leadership was provided by social psychologists that they know it as the process whereby a member of group will affect the other members .And this effect in order to achieve the specific group goals (Agha yosefi ,2002:274).

For a careful and better study about the issue of women in government and their leadership in society from Islam and Christianity viewpoint and holy books like Quran and Bible were reviewed.

Women's leadership in Islam

There are two points of views which are contrasted several centuries. One of them, an intellectual & modern perspective about Islam & life and the others traditional view about Islam practices. Meanwhile traditionalist do not deserve women as leaders, But also they are suspected women are human being as men are(Mahdavi zadegan,2001:40).

On the other hand forward thinking and west – oriented scholars who Reject religious literature and have humanist perspective about women leadership . they believe all men’s rights are also possess to women . But there is third viewpoint, which is using rational justification & religious texts try to provide a situation for women in Modern world.

Opponent’s evidences

Opponents of government power and women power in Islam to prove their theory ,invoked to Quran verses. We point out the most important ones :

1-Ghavammiat(Excellence) verse: الرجال قوامون على النساء بما فضل الله : Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath men the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). (AlNisaa:,34)

The argument about this verse is that the general rule is for all men who are in relation to women just in social affairs .Man’s strength is not exclusive to family’s relationship but also this verse launches all areas, it means, men were dominated on women , their authority did not cover their wives.

The general reason which has been brought for men dominance in this verse . it is given by sentence which expressed the male authority up to female , and also it is common like judgment or ruling which society life and both men and women life depend on (Tabatabaei,1996,volume 4 : 507).

One of contemporary scholars said: Assuming that the purpose of this verse is men dominance over women in family environment, He adds Almighty God who did not put women guardians & supervisor s and authority in her house .

How she became a guardian of all houses in the society.

Is it reasonable that God said the woman cannot be the authority of her house but also she can be dominate of all men and women (HoseiniTehrani ,2000 ,volume 3:175).

So who are argued this verse, extended the circle of authority beyond of the family life .

-Heliyeh (Ornament)verse: (Liken they then to Allah) that which is bred up in outward show, and in dispute cannot make itself plain?(AlZukhruf:18)

How to argue about this verse from opponent of women’s rule and authority is in this way that women according to this verse are interested in jewelry and guard and in the other hand female are dominated by feeling and emotions while the politics needs thinking &contemplation,

As result of existence and description, loving jewelry, weakness in sophistry and argument , all of them are reasons for their disqualifications in government(Mehrizi,2003:169).

A few of scholars who most of them believed in sunnit had same ideas.

For instance, ImamFakhr-e-Razi when state the reasons of women's deficiencies pointed to this verse . he believed that woman’s passion to jewelry and finery is her natural deficiency because if woman is not incomplete ,she will never seek for adornment.

Women who being non- expression in((hatred)) . because her language disability , lack of wisdom , and weakly nature (FakhrRazi, 1993:202).And also Doctor VahbeZehaili said women’s disability in dispute because their femininity and lack of logic & decision(Zehaili ,1990:129).

-verse about stay-at-home

و And stay in your houses. Bedizen not yourselves with the bedizenment of the Time of ignorance.(Al-Ahzab,33)

Some scholars believe: above verse indicate that women need to stay at home and do not participate in political activities. Because It is impossible have any political activities, attendance in society without leaving house. and also this view is incompatible with what we understand from this verse.

-Fazlita verse (wisdom verse)

لهن مثل الذي عليهن بالمعروف و الرجال عليهن درجه And they

(Women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is Mighty, Wise.(Al-Baqara,228)

Some scholars refers to (للرجال عليهن درجه) and state :men have a degree in this verse And approve that the men are above in governance issues and judgment .And they believe governor and judge should be men .And a few go beyond this and assume degree as the men existential superiority and perfection .In this case , this verse show the existential and intellectual impairment of women against men(Hoseini,2001:178).

-Advocate's evidence

Although Quran was discussed about women's leading role in society but according to traditional scholars viewpoints toward women .This issue do not receive enough attention. Because there were anti – feminist thoughts in ancient human societies.

And the history is full of the innocence of women and also scholars affected by their environment &time. they don't pay attention to this issue sufficiently However Imam Khomeini contemporary mystic & supreme leader stated in this regard (time and place) are two determined elements in Jurisprudence , it is possible there is a such law in the past but it changes to different law in another political ,social ,economical circumstance .

According to this verse, It means by understanding new economical , social ,political relations .It will be inevitable to create new warrant . Priest should be surrounded by his time issue(Imam Khomeini ,1996,Volume 21:98).

Now we are looking at advocate's evidences and criticizing the related verses :

1-Some of the scholars believe while in this verse

Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath men the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). (AlNisaa,34)has been used common words like men or women but in the following symmetry the aim of men are husbands here and there is no relation to social –political field such as government .leadership and judgment . all we can say is first of all, this verse is about woman's relations with her husband not with man in general .

Second this men guardianship is not wisdom criteria of family (JavadiAmoli, 1998:393).

Allameh sayyed Mohammad Hosein Fazl Allah also write in this regard, however a few people think the guardian which is stated in this regard is included common issues like government, judgment and so on. But we believed this verse does not have such concept .the common meaning of this point to the family.(Fazlol Allah, 2002:64)

AyatollahMakaremShirazi , when we translated this verse as family custody , he stated : men are women's servants and supporters (Shirazi,1994:369).

Ayat Allah Jafar Sobhani said : family manage mat is related to two achieved points in man (his strength and his capability in handle problems and tolerated the problems).And his capability in spend money and resolve finical needs. And he said women cannot take this responsibility .And also he added it does not mean his superiority against God or divine steam scale .

It is not acceptable to explain this verse as being authority on women or being injustice in his right and interfere in issues which are out of marital relationship who is interpreted the mentioned verse like this , libel the God (SobhaniTabrizi, 2002:21,22)

Ayatollah NematollahSalehi Najaf Abadi is one of the priest who mentioned two reasons in centrality of women's judgment .He tries to reject the first view point , his reasons are

1 :The verse which related to family's system and wife –husband life not to social life and Judgment and statement ship issue because this verse cited in couples life men take women's responsibility for two reasons : A) God gives male more physical and psychological abilities and some in this verse refer to men, but it is not stated directly not to raised female emotions .

B)men give women **Mahryiyeh**(Dowry) (gift men give to woman when they got married) and their life cost .so women should be financial custody by men .

2)The expression(انفقوا من اموالهم)pointed to the honorable verse the money which men give to women for their life and this topic has no related to rule and Judgment .

In other hand this verse shows men's superiority and financial supporting that are recognized as men's consistency .not females's superior .So , pay money to women . should not be neglected . and just pay attention to male's power , and it also generalized to the Judiciary and ruling the society and exclusive them to men .

Therefore , it had not been accepted to use this verse for illegitimate women's Judgment .meanwhile became husband' s custody on wife which is stated in this verse show us , if any wise , imprudent ,rich women had poor ,empty – handed & mental backward husband , and she pay his life' s cost here , the woman should be custody on her husband. Because there is custody critical in this woman .any where there is custody this verse included. (Salehi Najaf Abadi,2006:21,22)

2-The second verse which used for no enterprise license for women's leadership is the verse that means use a lot of jewelry.

With this explanation , the management and politics requirement is wisdom and foresight , while the female on the one hand immersed in jewelry .and the other side she didn't have appropriate sophistry and reasoning capability .

To contend to this verse, we should pay attention to a few points : with consideration of Quran public identity and effect this idea to the other Quran verses , there is no evidence to approve this . but also aforementioned conclusion of this verse had conflicted with men and women equality in creation and their incompleteness of them .

فاستجاب لهم ربهم انى لا اضيع عمل عامل منكم من ذكرا و انثى بعضهم من بعض

And their Lord hath heard them (and He saith): Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost. Ye proceed one from another.(**Al-Imran**,195)

هو الذى خلقكم من نفس واحدة و جعل منها زوجها ...

He it is who did create you from a single soul, and there from did make his mate that he might take rest in her. .. (**Al-A'raf**,189)

On the assume that we accept these verses like men have degree on women (albaghara:228)& men predominate on women (النساء:34) show us the men are above on women . But it can be a reason of men's predominance in creation and perfection if we accept the women's natural defect and ignorance. How can we respond this fact which Based on Quran and history Testimony (JavadiAmoli, 1998:142&294)and some of the scholars in history . there were a few women who are better and stronger than men ? It is obvious .if this verse does not refer to this kind of women but also believe defect and weakness are noticeable women's features .

In addition to this, there is no reason for answer to this question. Even this claims which said women has intrinsic defeat is being invalid (Esmailizadeh, 2004:239).

In other hand this expression) in the mentioned verse .we can get this Quran explains , the impact of the education environment . This means that women can take the strong thoughts and movement.

As , there are some examples about social life in Quran which men and women are equal .And also in history and modern life there are a few women who has the power of debate and defend of themselves and have strong will & determination .

These results indicate that women's weakness is not required by their human nature .but It is derived from their educational qualifications and situations (Mehrizi,2004: 87).

Third verse which was used by opponent of women's social and political activities

From advocates of women's leadership, this verse does not imply or their claims .because the expression (oye women) which in the beginning of previous verse refer to prophets wives and it is not included the other Muslim women . It is clear from the style of the verse that the absence of women in the society is considered . In this verse prophet's wives like ordinary women in age of ignorance were prohibited from appearing in community(Tabatabaiyi,1997 ,volume16:315).

So , if a woman observes all religious and moral values , her appearance in society has no obstacle .as the God cited(Albagara :234)

فلا جناح عليكم في فعلن في أنفسهن بالمعروف And when they reach the term (prescribed for them) then there is no sin for you in aught that they may do with themselves in decency. Allah is Informed of what ye do.**Al-Baqara,234** interpretation of this verse .

In the social, lawful relation and sociability, friendly relationship, there is no difference between man and woman, and if in her social appearance does not appear in society cocky and flirtation . she is free to develop her relations (Hassan zadehAmoli,2006:132)

The great contemporary scholar Imam Khomeini emphasized on women social and political appearance and he believed .The both men and women are responsible for social issues .therefore he stated that : today women should fulfill Their social and theological duties .so he said :women do their social and political works based on common modesty (Imam Khomeini, 1982, volume13:69).

The other topic is , assuming that the verse is included all Muslim women but it does not mean stay at home completely and does not leave house .

But also it means women should avoid in necessary commute or inappropriate behaviors, so the continuous of verse show us ولا تبرجن تبرج الجاهليه الاولى

It show that , first of all , history and prophet's wives' life show us not either they go out of house but also they participate in economical issue and even in battle field .

And second : the verses about prohibited from bad and enjoined to good .due to wide meaning of rights and bads and their different ways .It is claimed that men and women attended in various carters and sciences and meetings . It can be witness of this fact it does not imperative for Muslim female to stay at home .But sometime the opposite side will be necessary .

-hejab (veil)verse like :

قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم و يحفظوا فروجهم...قل للمؤمنات يغضضن من ابصارهن و يحفظن فروجهن ولا يبدين زينتهن إلا ما ظهر منها وليضربن بخمرهن علي جيوبهن....(نور: 38)

Or although this verse said: It is necessary for women to cover their bodies or hairs and exploit them dishonestly. But also allowed women to take apart in different life areas . Because if stay at home and do not go out is intransitive why should they cover their bodies, renounce their eyes from bad things .

All of these items and the others are witnessed of this fact which the verse(وقرن في بيوتكن...)

It does not mean to clarify that women should stay at home ".we should interpret this verse in the way which is get along with other verses and Qurans beliefs and doctrine.

4-The fourth verse that is about opponents of women's enterprise authority والرجال عليهن بالمعروف وللرجال عليهن (بقره: 228) this verse known as virtuous verse .To respond to people who interpreter the word (degree)as a means axntial superiority and consider third verse as women's defect and in ability .

We should say the degree in this verse doesn't have the meaning of existential superiority and legal superiority, but in common sense degree refer to hierarchical authority which mass as a family manger has this option . Because first of all this verse is about women's rights not about their existential behavior .the second it is about The double and interactive wife and husband relation .but not women and men relations in general. Because out of family male and female has no rights, so there is no priority foremen.

So, actually in this mentioned verse, there is another expression about men's consistent in family which is kind of management and Administrative rule in family . the only thing in men& women mutual rights , men specially have a divorce right , which is only men have (Hoseini,2002:178).

Or we can say Because this verse is about couples life who take part with reversionary divorce and this verse show such a power men have .due to his psychological & physical capability which has been provided genetically. so to generalized This rule to all men and women we need to find a symmetry in the verse which cannot be found . so we cannot understand from the expression

(و للرجال علمهن درجه) The men have superiority and province because women are week and decrepit (Davoodi, 2004: 309).

From supporters of women's governance perspective in Islamic society, there are another reasons which were below.

1.Female and male equality

Quran has an explicit reference to nature of men and women in creation which is the same. They are created by one substance and one gender (يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة) (Alnisa:1)

In above verses the reference of single breath is Adam .The mean of wives are Eve .who are the parents of human being(Tabatabaei ,1997,volume 4:139) but in explanation of word(منها) we should say , most of scholars believe the purpose of that

It means that Eve was created by Adam's mud and type (same :940)

In other words it means Adam and Eve mud are the same and both of them are divine whiff (Mahalati ,1985,Volume5 :113).

In other Quran verses even we can see the men and women equality .for instance

يا أيها الناس انا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثي و جعلناكم شعوبا و قبائل لتعارفوا إن اكرمكم عندالله اتقكم أن الله عليم خبير (حجرات:13)

The holy Quran with express this fundamental and central principle about women will invalidate all theories which assumed women insignificant from human values viewpoints or even they don't have human spirit whether had been doubted in being human – and the only critic for supremacy has been virtue.

-Equality in acquire rewards & excellence

One of discriminatory thoughts had ever been had against women that doubts about the acquisition of spiritual virtues and perfections .this means that women like men cannot gain to the higher authorities and spiritual & human excellence .

But Quran in a few verses make it clear.

Gender has nothing to do with acquisition human excellences and perfections & hereafter rewards. But it is related to human faith and practice .whether is the male or the female based on Sufi's interpretation.

In the movement toward God, there is no difference between men and women.

ومن عمل صالحا من ذكر أو أنثي وهو مؤمن فاولئك يدخلون الجنة يرزقون فيها بغير حساب (غافر:40)

In other verse , God counts ten virtues for human which is common in men and women. Everyone has these virtues, God gives her /him rewards.

Standpoint of Quran the criteria for quality is their act .there is no difference between men and women .

إن المسلمين والمسلمات والمؤمنين والمؤمنات والقانتين والقانتات والصادقين والصادقات والصابرين والصابرات والخاشعين والخاشعات والمتصدقين والمتصدقات والصائمين والصائمات والحافظين فروجهم والحافظات والذاكرين والذاكرات أعد لهم مغفرة واجرا عظيما(احزاب:35).

And also Quran say about Mary her position reached to high level of human virtue and spiritual authority that angels always spoke to her in altar (و إذ قالت الملائكة يا مريم إن الله اصطفاك وطهرك واصطفاك على نساء العالمين(آل عمران:42)

In slavery she reach to the degree that God send her food from heaven

كلما دخل عليها زكريا المحراب وجد عندها رزق قال يا مريم إتني لك هذا قالت هو من عندالله (آل عمران:37)

Eventually because of this slavery , Mary deserved to be a Jesus Mother

إذ قالت الملائكة يا مريم إن الله يبشرك بكلمه منه اسمه المسيح ابن مريم وجيها في الدنيا والاخره ومن المقربين(آل عمران:45)

Equality in Accumulation of knowledge:

From this verse of holy Quran

الرحمن * علم القرآن * خلق الانسان * علمه البيان (الرحمن:4-1)

It follows that apparently the important philosophy of human creation is acquiring the science and knowledge. It is clear from Quran priority on human creation that the real human is who has Quranic knowledge, and learn Quran science and revolution science whether in this verse was spoken about human being's creation. the message of this verse refers to both men and women.

Specially, Women always formed the half of human society.

So, scientific activities, particularly Quranic and revelation science. in two areas educational and learning fields not only their inevitable rights. But also is the men and women duty (SadoghiArzegai,2011:239).

The science specially Islamic science does not belong to specific class of people and dear Ladies can participate in social and political activities along side of men, and they can give Islam and Muslims valuable services. In Education and training women are pioneered (Imam khumeyni, 1983, volume 19:33).

In other verse, God says

هو الذى بعث فى الاميين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته و يزيهيم و عليهم الكتاب و الحكمة و ان كانوا من قبل لفي ظلال مبين... (جمعه: 2)

As you know the main important prophet's goal who are selected among people, is referring people from badness and abomination and giving them knowledge.

It is clear the prophets didn't only come to give people knowledge. The Quran in various verses make it obligatory to acquiring knowledge and science for Muslims. The God pointed to the fact that the position of scientist and scholars are so high and they are not equal with ignorant people. one also was encouraged them to solve or avert their practical needs, and equipped themselves with modern scientific advancements.

يرفع الله امنوا منكم و الذين آمنوا منكم اوتوا العلم درجات (مجادله: 11)

هل يستوى الذين يعلمون و الذين لا يعلمون (زمر: 9)

-Equality in social participation

as men are independent in social and political activities, women also have required political independence. And they have same rights as men have in social activities. and they are responsible for their society and their destiny. The best examples which implies this issue are the 10th & 12th verses of Momtaheneh chapter:

يا ايها الذين امنوا اذا جاءكم المومنات مهاجرات فامتحنوا هن الله اعلم بايمانهن فان علمتموهن مومنات ولا ترجعوهن الي الكفار لا هن حل لهم ولا هم يحلون لهن و اءاتوهم ما أنفقوا... (ممتحنه: 10)

Here immigration and disagreement with the uninformed system and express freely their faith in heart is one of their important social movement and also Quran makes it allowable for women.

In this verse, women's immigration from Mecca to Medina even after they are signing the peace agreement with pagans. It showed their fundamental role in strengthened Islam more and more.

And this issue represents that: believing in God, fighting against injustice and immigration for God are not only belongs to men but also women like men play determinant role in society and swear allegiance is one of these roles.

Women who swear allegiance with Mohammad prophet, indicate this truth that women are independent in social issue. and they became Muslim or migrated with their own will and authority.

يا ايها الذين امنوا اذا جاءكم المومنات يبايعنك على ان لا شريكن بالله شيئا و لا يسرقن و لا يدينن و لا يقتلن اولادهن و.... (ممتحنه: 12)

God in this verse says to holy prophet: women should be participate in swear Allegiance and declare to the all with this work: woman is one of the Islam fundamental bricks. And should be play their role in stability and sustain ability of this foundation (Kamali,1993 :26).

After all, swear allegiance in Arab culture when Quran was descend to prophet Mohammad means keep promised and obey someone and toe the line of Mohammad.

This is like selection phenomena in contemporary political legitimacy to government .And people can obey from Government.

So in this holy verse frankly approve that women take their share in the important issue ,like political destiny of society and mutual command – obey relation between government and the people .and force the prophet to accept the religious and political leadership (Hoseini, 2002:173).

Women's leadership and prophecy

Women have access to reach to the highest administrative position in the society .and take the people's responsibility in two areas: leadership and prophecy. In other word if women's potential talents bring up and cultivate properly, she can achieve such a excellent position that Quran and Bible approve that by introduce some historical examples ...

Example of women's leadership in Quran

the most manifest example of women's leadership in Islamic society refers to Bilqis Queen of Sheba, who Quran explains it precisely. (Naml:22-24).

Holy Quran brings forward the Queen saba in the way which explain her wisely management and conscious and efficiently diplomacy and successful , organized administrative.

ultimately it showed that how a woman accepts the reality. this woman being enlightened . and realist .

Whereas she is as a powerful Queen ,ruled the country and great land and has a lot of facilities and armies and her Politicians and captains who settle in the palace count or their military power . so where the Saba told them about Solomon's invitation and send ut their ideas. They replayed

نحن اولوا قوه و اولوا باس شديد (نمل: 33)

We understand from this verse that Biliqis had a powerful and gallant soldiers .Her strong management, controlled thesabe army in the great way. They said to Quran after they state to their power

والامر اليك فانظريماذا تامررين (نمل:33)

This verse specified that the Quran Saba as a women has a strong and great policy which her armies and her force her commend it demonstrates that she has obeyed an executive capability in spite of army's head opinions Queen Saba suggested the peaceful and civil way to conflict with Solomon except armed way .

ان الملوك اذا دخلوا قريهافسدوها وجعلوا اعزه اهلها اذله و كذلك يفعلون (نمل : 34)

This verse indicate the experiences , reasonableness, contrivance deep political diplomacy of Queen Saba.

It is clearly that how she keep her political position and her administration as well as the army position .against foreign enemy with using her dipbmaey and tactics .

So that after Solomon illuminated to her as a God send prophet not a conqueror king .She accept him with love and affection .

رب انى ظلمت نفسى و اسلمت مع سليمان لله رب العالمين(نمل:44)

and also .(SadeghiArzgni, 2011:225)

Her competence and police ,peaceably and her admirable commitment to human elements indicates that the women not only has the management capability but also prevent the violent war which conduct by more leaders. By considering the series of issues and Quran's verses we can admit this truth that women can take over the statesmanship .

And there is no legal prohibition about that. so I dare say in equal situation , there are no differences between women & men about take over the religious , political , social positions .

Women's prophecy in holy Quran

We can divide prophecy in two groups , legislative and prophecy , we can say about women's prophecy in Quran's legist native prophecy stated as mission and it's a executive work.

Assembling with people who leading the war & peace and receiving financial issues & Tavy property ,arranging society work are handled by men .

و ما ارسلنا من قبلك الا رجالا نوحى اليهم فاسالوا اهل الذكر ان كنتم لا تعلمون (نحل:43 وانبياء:7 ويوسف:109)

Mission is in executive work and before Mohammad prophet nobody was sent by God as a messenger except men And God just give men this responsibility ,so mission means conduct the society , tell people what is lawful and unlawful obligatory or free ,and Detestable and permissible and so no .

It is special prophecy that is executive officer which is held by men .

But there is another prophecy which is means some are be informed through revelation of what is happening in the world .

What is future of the world ?see the future of herself/ himself .be aware of the others future .

This kind of prophecy is referred to province not to executive mission and legislative prophecy.

Even thought this kind of legist ration for any mission and prophecy.

these are not specialized just for men but also women can reach this position

About Mary prophecy , some of the scholars believe from these verses .The meaning of prophecy is a prophecy which all mystics and scholars who interpreted .Quran and also will accepted that (Javadi Amoli,1997:167).

It was said in Quran when talking about prophets among people and their self -talk comes to people .never talk about any women as a prophet.

that is Ayat Allah JavadiAmali' s interpretation of prophecy . but if the meaning of prophecy is to receive divine inspiration. in holy Quran women like Moses' mother and Mary has such a prophecy .

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