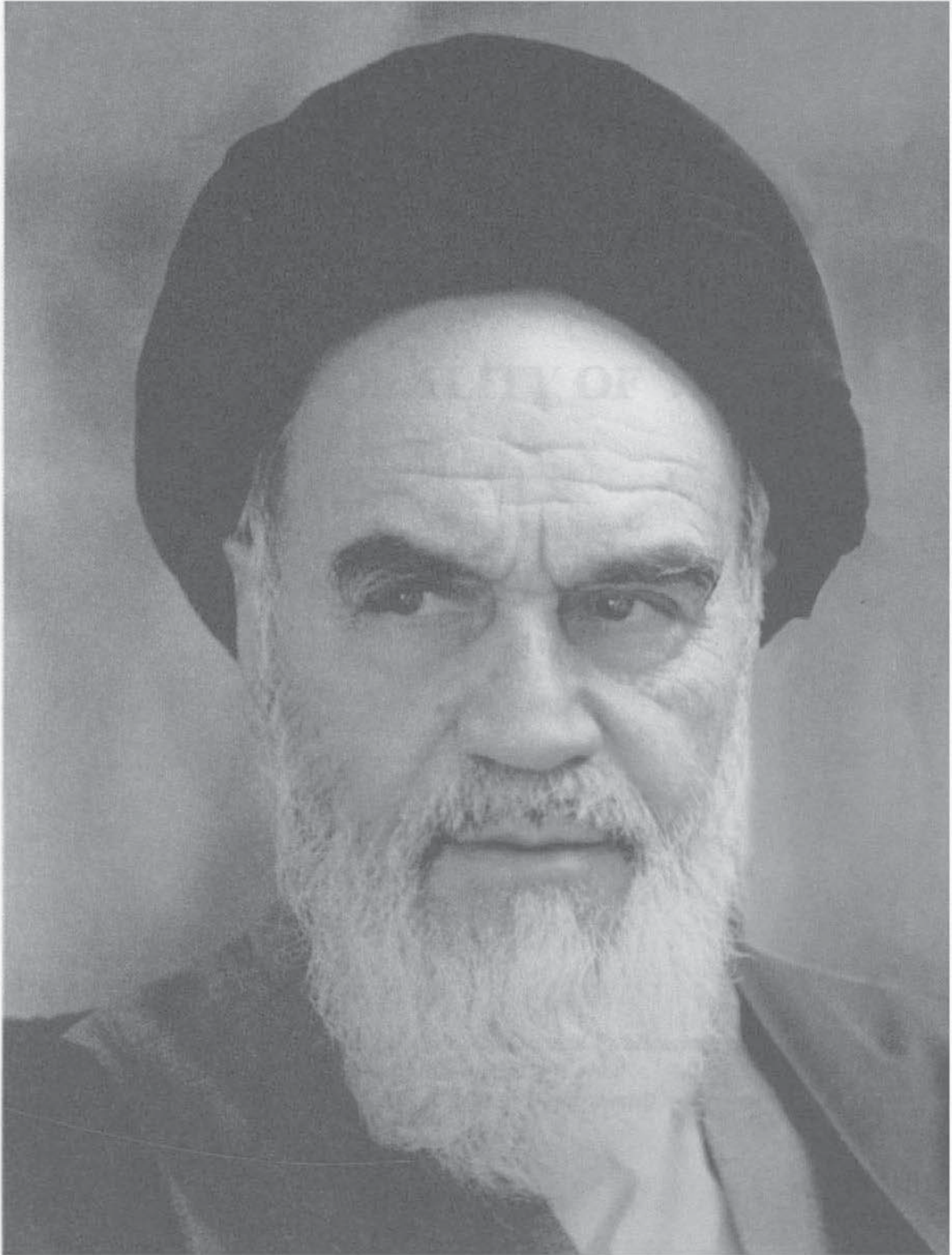


*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*



IMĀM KHOMEINĪ
And
THE PERSONALITY OF WOMAN

A Collection of Articles

*The Institute for Compilation and Publication
of Imām Khomeinī's Works
(International Affairs Department)*

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Transliteration Symbols

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>
ا, آ	a, 'a, (')
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	d
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	'
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ک	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ی	y
ہ	ah

Long Vowels

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>
آ, اَ	\bar{a}, \bar{A}
ای	\bar{i}, \bar{I}
او	\bar{u}, \bar{U}

Short Vowels

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>
اِ	a
اِی	i
اِو	u

Persian Letters

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>
پ	p
چ	ch
ژ	zh
گ	g

Preface

"Woman is the embodiment of realization of man's aspirations. Woman is a nurturer of honorable women and men. Man attains spiritual ascension from the bosom of woman.¹ The bosom of a woman is a place from where prominent women and men have been reared."

Imām Khomeinī
Sahīfeh-ye Imām, vol. 7, p. 341

Islamic Approach:

Among non-Islamic communities, the reason for failure to understand the thoughts of Imām Khomeinī (r) correctly is because of negligence of his Islamic attitude. To put it differently, Imām Khomeinī's viewpoints are liable to be interpreted in all fields including the subject of "woman" in the bedrock of Islamic thinking.

Therefore, many of the questions and misgivings promoted in the Imām's view regarding the personality of woman and the changes that have taken place in women society after the Iranian revolution is answered with a profound understanding of Islam. Hence, since theoretical basis constitute the

¹ M'erāj is ascension to the heavens and extraordinary spiritual event. None of the prophets had been blessed with such a spiritual experience previous to the honorable prophet of Islam. The holy prophet was made to pay visit from Mecca to al-Aqsa mosque by the might of God and from there he was ascended towards heavens. That night he was reached to such a spiritual degree which would never be achieved by any of the creatures.

infrastructure of definitions, values and rights, woman's role and status in an Islamic system can be clarified accordingly.

The questions related to the subject of women can be divided into two categories. The first category concerns "extra-religious issues" and includes explaining ambiguities such as lower nature of women in view of differences of rights between women and men; necessity for alteration of social laws of Islam in the modern era; putative (conventional-unwritten) and rational nature of social laws and regulations and finally the need for legal equality of women and men all belong to this category, because this issue is occasionally based on extra-religious assumptions by those raising them.

The second category is concerned with intra-religious issues meaning issues that can yet be realized by accepting religious hypothesis and canons. They include cases such as laws of *Diyeh*¹ and retribution, judgment and macro social management of women, reaching puberty, right of surrogating (*Guardianship*),² amount of mandatory alimony (*Nafaqah*)³ and scope of responsibility (*Usr wa Haraj*)⁴ in family life.

We divided these two groups in order to specify the method of investigation of each of them clearly. In the primary issues, initially we must describe the fundamental stances of Islam in comparison with human doctrines and thereafter mention the precise relationship of the canons.⁵ However, differences in the second category of issues can only be settled in the light of the approach of *Ijtihad* (religious decrees) and deduction.

Here, with slight difference, the first approach is the object under consideration.

In this short essay, attempt is made to depict the Islamic point of view about the personality of woman and is derived from basis of philosophy of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) in the mold of pure Islam.⁶

¹ *Diyeh* is applied on a kind of compensation which has been predicted for the damages and injuries. Its details are mentioned in the Islamic Jurisprudence.

² *Guardianship*: It is applied on the certain amount of financial support paid for bringing up a child to the close relatives in accordance with Islamic law.

³ *Nafaqah* obligatory expenses paid to maintain suitable living standards.

⁴ '*Usr wa Haraj*' the Islamic laws designated for the followers which don't push them toward any compulsions beyond the human power.

⁵ For instance Martyr Mutaharī in his two books entitled "*Legal System of Women in Islam*" and "*Hijāb*" has employed this approach to explain Islamic outlook.

⁶ '*Pure Islam*' is a term used by the leader of Islamic revolution to distinct the 'real Islam' from the fabricated one propagated by the arrogant World powers.

Scientology:

We should see how truly the doctrine of Islam defines and interprets man in the order of existence and for what purpose and aim the laws present in it have been founded. As to what status women enjoy in the holy Qurān is based on what status a human being enjoys in the Qurān for according to Imām Khomeinī (r):

“Woman is a human being - and that too a great one...”¹

When the holy Qurān raises the issue of woman and man, it states that one must not recognize these two from the appearance of masculinity or femininity; rather, through the appearance of humanity for the truth of human being is constituted by his soul or as put by other religious literatures by his “essence” and not the physical body.

Man’s humanity is secured by his soul and not by his physical body or by the combination of body and soul. In this sense, the body is simply a tool that is sometimes masculine and at other times feminine, whereas this does not apply to the soul.²

Therefore, naturally the discussion about equality of woman and man or differences of these two sexes is not relevant in issues dealing with truth of human being.

Where there is talk of the genesis of man, God has commanded that:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate³ and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a Watcher over you.”⁴

The above verse elaborates on two subjects:

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7, p. 339.

² *Woman in the Mirror of Beauty and Majesty*, p. 77.

³ Taratob of woman’s creation over man is time taratob not incipient-formative.

⁴ “O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a Watcher over you.” Chapter Nisā, verse 1.

1. All human beings, whether male or female, have been created out of one and the same essence and nature as is understood by the term “nas” (humankind) and the source of creation of all individuals are a single entity.
2. The first woman who was the wife of the first man has also been created from the same manifest essence and substance and not from another substance and not ancillary to man or superfluous to him or dependent on him.

Soul, spirit and heart all indicate that divinely exquisite sex that is a distinct entity.¹ However, since spirit is not absolutely fixed and has different status, thus it has been named commensurate with the status that it occupies.

God analyses a human being in terms of a primary attribute that is soul and a secondary one that is the physical body and assigns this subsidiary to nature, matter, clay and mud,² while the primary to Himself³ such that when the Sculptor created the form of the embryo and the question of being male or female was resolved, then the soul that is independent of him would arrive;⁴ and because God considers the job of father and mother as that of trustees while His own work as creation, and in order to lend value to creation of woman and man and not woman and man, He swears a single and uniform oath⁵

In Islamic teachings, the highest position for a human being is the position of vice-regency;⁶ that is, being vice-regent of Allah. This is a

¹ Allah receiveth (men's) souls at the time of their death, and that (soul) which dieth not (yet) in its sleep. He keepeth that (soul) for which He hath ordained death and dismisseth the rest till an appointed term. Lo herein verily are portents for people who take thought. Chapter Zumar, verse 42.

² “When thy Lord said unto the angels: lo! I am about to create a mortal out of mire...” Chapter Sād, verse 71.

³ So, when I have made him and have breathed into him of My spirit, do ye fall down, prostrating yourselves unto him. Chapter Hijr, verse 29.

⁴ Then fashioned We the drop a clot, then fashioned We the clot a little lump, then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators! Chapter Muminon, verse 14.

⁵ By the night enshrouding. And the day resplendent. And Him Who hath created male and female. Chapter Lail, verses 1, 2 & 3.

⁶ And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not. Chapter Baqarah, verse 30.

privilege enjoyed by man over other creatures that was granted to Adam because of being taught the Divine Names.¹

Therefore, the axis of teaching and learning is man's soul and not his body and that which gains the knowledge and learning is the spirit. In religious teachings of Islam, scientific and practical accomplishments provide for the humanity of human beings.

This same non-acquired knowledge that is born with man's birth in the frame of inner knowledge was the basis for acceptance of a covenant that God has taken from man - a knowledge and willpower which other creatures are not qualified to receive.

The vicegerent should resemble his Source and the One whose successor he is in all areas and due to this status, man is always moving on a path of ascension that culminates in nearness to God.

Man is so noble and exalted a creation that God has enabled him to gain control over whatever is in the heavens and earth ranging from the sun, the moon, seas and day and night in order to assist him in this journey and has sent His overt and covert bounties to him.²

With all his grandeur in the world of existence, man occupies a special position. Man is not self-made and is not pivotal so that creation does not revolve around his will. He is a distinguished member of the order of existence so that his survival and dynamism hinges on his observance of the order and system that prevails over the entire universe. However, since other creatures act only within the framework of mandatory laws, man is the only creature that with knowledge of the laws of existence and with his will and authority, change the prevailing condition in line with his desires on the journey towards that Exalted Truth

In Islam, in contrast to material doctrines, the world is not viewed through the narrow opening of man's myopic eye nor is it programmed through the loophole of mundane material desires for the universe and man. Basically, the mission of divine prophets is summarized in this point that releases man from the narrow limits of nature; and with correct interpretation of the truth, focuses his mind and spirit towards sublime goals and aspirations.

¹ And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. Chapter Baqara, verse 31.

² See ye not how Allah hath made serviceable unto you whatsoever is in the skies and whatsoever is in the earth and hath loaded you with His favors both without and within? Yet of mankind is he who disputeth concerning Allah, without knowledge or guidance or a Scripture giving light. Chapter Luqman, Verse 20.

Therefore, Islamic point of view on woman is also a progressive outlook. Islam emerged at a time when woman was viewed as an element of sin and an embodiment of Satan and thus detestable - thanks to the prevalent mentality of the age of ignorance.

As pointed out by Imām Khomeinī (r):

“Islam did a favor to human being by emancipation of women from the oppression of the age of ignorance. The age of ignorance marked a time when woman was viewed as being similar to animals; rather lower than them. Women were oppressed in the age of ignorance. Islam liberated women from the quagmire of the age of ignorance.”¹

In response to women’s helplessness in attaining lofty spiritual positions alongside pious men, the Qurān reminds of the devout and pious women. In Islamic history too there are many examples of eminent women - the most distinguished of whom being the daughter of the honorable prophet of Islam (SA) about whom Imām Khomeinī makes the following remark that:

“All the dimensions conceivable in a woman and a human being were manifested in Fatima Zahrā (‘a). She was no ordinary woman; she was a spiritual woman; she was an angelic woman; she was a complete human being; a true replica of a perfected human being; she was the whole reality of a woman; the whole reality of a human being...”²

In contrast to the assumption of some people who consider woman to be the prelude to existence of man, the holy Qurān categorically states that the earth and sky, the clouds and wind, the flora and fauna have all been created for man; however, it never states that woman was created for man; rather, that each of them has been created for the other and as an adornment for one another.³ The Qur’an considers woman as bringing peace to man and regards

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7, p. 337.

² *Ibid.*

³ It is made lawful for you to go unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and ye are raiment for them. Allah is aware that ye were deceiving yourselves in this respect and He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah expoundeth His revelations to mankind that they may ward off (evil). Baqarah 2: 187.

her existence to be beneficial for man. On the status woman in Islam, Imām Khomeinī observes:

“Islam has a special opinion of you women. Islam dawned at a time in the Arabian Peninsula when women had lost their esteem with men. Islam gave them honor and dignity; Islam gave them equality with men. The favor that Islam did to women is greater than it did to men.”¹

The doctrine of Islam does not differentiate between women and men in their spiritual journey “from the creature towards the Truth”; rather, it differentiates in their spiritual journey “from the Truth towards the creature”² which is the return from the Truth towards the people and acceptance of the responsibility of prophetic mission for which it considers man to be more suited for this task. However, this is no reason for superiority of men over women and thus, we observe that Islam considers Hadrat Zahrā ('a) to be superior to all her children who are the Infallible Imāms as well as to all prophets excluding the Last of the Prophets (S).³

Therefore, it is not inappropriate to note here that in the West the greatest blow has been dealt to women by eliminating religion and spirituality from sphere of human life and revolving the sovereignty of humankind around the axis of materialism. Also, by proposing the equality of the rights of women and men and granting similar rights to women and men has resulted in woman to forget their female identity.

Values that were previously established in the metaphysical world collapse into the bosom of the will of human being. Therefore, an individual should select his/her values on his own. In the course of the past three centuries, some western philosophers attempted to seek an independent basis for ethics and values but none of them have so far reached this conclusion.

In the same way that the modern age distanced human being from nature; likewise, it also separated human beings from one another by resorting to the thinking of “individuality”, claiming that the individual with all his peculiar characteristics was the criteria and yardstick.⁴

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 1, p. 300.

² '*Spiritual journey from creatures toward creator*' the mystic saints and pupils pave the way from the multiplicity of the corporeal world toward a spiritual unity where all goodness is referred to God the Almighty.

³ Refer to "*System of Women's right in Islam*", pp. 116-121.

⁴ Refer to "*History of Philosophy*" of Fredrick Kaplton, vol. 1, p. 126.

Women too were exploited on the pretext of selfishness and utilitarianism; and when they entered the society, it was with the beautiful slogan of freedom and as a cheap work force that resulted in their corruption. Thus, with the passage of time, women's movements were established in order to restore their lost natural rights.¹

Ontology:

The type of understanding and way of thinking that a doctrine offers about the world and existence is regarded as the intellectual infrastructure and basis of that school, commonly termed as "global view." If we consider any general opinion about existence and the world irrespective of its source being analogy and reasoning, deduction or understanding of revelation from the unseen world as being universal philosophical perspective, then universal religious perspective is also a type of universal philosophical perspective. In some religions such as Islam, universal religious understanding of the subject of religion has taken on a philosophical color meaning a tinge of logic.

Among the criteria for acceptability of universal perspective is provability, idealism, accountability and the power to sanctify human and social objectives that are all summarized in universal monotheistic perspective. Universal monotheistic perspective means understanding the genesis of the universe from a prudent will and that the order of existence is founded on the basis of good and in enabling creatures to attain their deserved perfection. This universal perspective is essentially characterized by the phrases "we are from Him" and "unto Him is our return" and is mono-axial and unipolar.

No creature is created without purpose and the world is administered by a series of fixed orders called "Divine traditions."

Among creatures, man enjoys a special dignity and is responsible for improving himself and his society. The world is place of training and education for human beings and God rewards each human being in accordance with his right intentions and endeavors.

Each leaf of a tree is a book of wisdom of God. The world of existence came into being based on a general, prudent and farsighted plan.² Therefore, harmony and disharmony of creatures and likewise, difference in capacities and resources all occupy a special position in that general plan. Universal monotheistic perspective gives soul and spirit to life, because it places man on the road towards unlimited perfection. It renders sublime goals and builds

¹ Refer to "*System of Right of Woman in Islam*".

² Dekhan: 38.

selfless and responsible human beings while saving a human being from the horrendous valley of nihilism.

The universal Islamic view is a monotheistic universal view in which monotheism has been expressed in its purest form.¹

The universe has a Creator and if He withdraws His attention from the universe for a single moment, it would be destroyed. The meaning that the universe is objective is:

1. Man and the universe are moving towards an objective and predetermined destination and events in existence do not consist of a series of blind and inconsequential occurrences.
2. The existing reality of the universe and man is in perfect harmony and coordination with that ultimate objective.

Existence is so extensive that the world of nature is considered to be its lowest and most abject level and in comparison with the universe, man is the greatest creature. God has chosen His angels from among these same human beings and emphasizes on their "humaneness".²

In contrast to materialist thinking that believes in ultimate cause and objectiveness of nature and is a reactionary dogma, one cannot speak of the fact that man is the noblest of creatures because this point in addition to the nature of dependency of creatures and their being under control of human being stems from an ancient astrological belief of the earth and sky that erroneously considered the earth to be the center of the universe and all planets to revolve around the earth. From the point of view of the west, all these are egocentricities that had befallen man in the past while modern man is humble and like other creatures, considers himself to be no more than a fistful of clay (soil). We are made from clay and to the soil we are returned and everything ends here. Modern man maintains no difference between thinking and spiritual practices and between the heat energy in coal in terms of nature and essence, because he regards all to be manifestations of matter and energy. Concepts such as justice and good, cooperation and charity and other ethical and human concepts are established by man himself based on the principle of survival of the species.

The world of creation is a book without a beginning and an end. Not only for other creatures, but also for man they conceive no end and objective (not conceivable). Moreover, not only do they not speak of creation as being purposeful; rather they openly hold nature to be responsible for historical

¹ *Islamic Sciences*, vol. 20.

² "That Allah may repay each soul what it hath earned. Lo! Allah is swift at reckoning." Chapter Ibrāhīm, verse 51.

injustices against women because by accepting the purposefulness of creation, one must accept that the status and worthiness of individuals is also subject to that same end and objectives. They must acknowledge the fact that commensurate with the differences between woman and man, there exist specific expectations from each of the two sexes - a subject that most of the women movements in the west shy away from commitment to them.¹

Epistemology:

The Qurān is not a book of philosophy, but it has expressed its view about the universe, human being and society that are the three main subjects of philosophy, resolutely.

The Qurān does not only teach canons to its followers and is not simply concerned with preaching and advising; rather, by interpreting creation, it gives them a special way of thinking and universal perspective. The infrastructure of Islamic regulations about social affairs is the interpretation that it presents about creation and inanimate objects.

Woman and man share a common view on two fundamental goals of creation which is achievement of happiness and devotion. This point is also definite that achievement of perfection requires appropriate resources and conditions. A thorough research into Islamic resources indicates that woman and man each follow the way to material and spiritual happiness commensurate with their capacities. Obviously, unity in goal does not necessarily mean unity in the direction leading to that goal.

The world of creation is fraught with differences and disparities in potentials. Each creature according to its peculiar function is equipped with a kind of natural make-up and system of creation and these structures find meaning only in line with those functions. The Qurān has defined this imperfections and perfections as “ranking” and “virtue”.²

In the context of creation, man and woman have been endowed with the necessary tools to achieve their ultimate goal. Therefore, it is not valid to argue that either is defective. Evidently, woman and man are not equal in exploitation of their respective power of intellect and these differences can be

¹ Refer to “*An Introduction to System of Character of Women in Islam*”.

² Is it they who apportion their Lord's mercy? We have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of the world, and raised some of them above others in rank that some of them may take labor from others; and the mercy of thy Lord is better than (the wealth) that they amass. Chapter Zukhuruf, verse 32.

conceived in three stages of theoretical mind, practical mind and instrumental mind (livelihood) and each of them must be studied separately.¹

A- The theoretical mind is a power that guides a man's understanding of the world of reality including the understanding of axioms and order of preliminaries for judgment of theoretical affairs. In this sense, defect of mind implies that woman and man both possess the theoretical mind as both are human beings; however, the power of reasoning and understanding of complex scientific issues is generally stronger in man.²

B- The practical mind signifies understanding the good and bad of objects and with the help of the mind one can discern good from evil. In this case deficiency of mind in women is weaker than in men while both are in possession of a practical mind. However, this imbalance does not pertain to sensitive and principal issues but to subsidiary and minor instances.

C- The instrumental mind (livelihood) means the ability to plan and manage affairs to reach the desired goal. Here, deficiency of mind implies that power of management and planning of affairs is predominantly greater in men.

However, as pointed out in section on pathology of human beings, these differences are no criteria for superiority; rather, the criterion is "Taqwa" or piety. As stated by Imām Khomeinī:

"There are no difference existing between groups in Islam except in 'Taqwa'³ and fearing the disobedience of the Almighty God."

¹ Refer to Tabātabāei, *Al-Mizān Exegesis*, V. 18, p. 141. Muhammad Taqi Jafari, translation and exposition of *Nahjul Balaghah*, V. 11, p. 290-299. Abdullah Javadi Āmulī, *Woman in the Mirror of Beauty and Majesty*, p. 185

² Refer to Chapter Zukhuruf, verse 18 "(Liken they then to Allah) that which is bred up in outward show, and in dispute cannot make itself plain?" And "Women who are divorced shall wait, keeping themselves apart, three (monthly) courses. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah hath created in their wombs if they are believers in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case if they desire reconciliation. 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." Chapter Baqarah, verse 228 And "Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High Exalted, Great." Chapter Nisā, verse 34.

³ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 5, p. 237.

Material, natural and spiritual traits:

The differences surfacing between women and men in the light of today's advancement of humankind becomes clearer everyday and has prompted some individuals to ascribe these differences to be the result of the imperfection of women and perfection of men. Some others aim to demonstrate for a thousand and one reason that on the contrary, man is an inferior being and woman is superior although, these differences in no way bear on superiority or inferiority of one of the two sexes. Creation has brought about these differences in order to strengthen family ties between men and women. These differences are similar to differences among organs of the body so that maintaining difference among them does not signify discrimination. The debate about differences between women and men are at least two thousand four hundred years old.

Nowadays, in the modern world one does not resort to guesswork and estimation; rather, in the light of deep medical, psychological and social studies, more differences have been discovered between women and men such as:

A) Material differences:

On an average, man is physically bigger, taller and harsher than woman. Woman's tone of voice is of a lower pitch while her physical growth and heart beat is quicker and her resistance to diseases is greater than of man. Woman reaches puberty earlier than man and ceases to become reproductive earlier than man. The average size of the brain of man is larger than that of woman, although if we consider the ratio of brain and body mass, the woman brain is larger.

B) Mental differences:

Man has a greater inclination to physical exercise, hunting and physically demanding tasks than woman. Man's feelings by nature are belligerent and aggressive while a woman's emotions are peaceful and calm. Woman is more prone to avoid resorting to violence against others and thus, men are more prone to commit suicide than women and use harsher methods. Women's sentiments are more effervescent than those of men; they are more excitable and at the same time more unstable. A woman is more cautious, fearful and formal than a man and shows more interest in ornaments and makeup. Maternal sentiments emerge in women from childhood and thus, significance of family ties is greater in them. In dry argumentative and

rational sciences, women lag behind men; however, in matters pertaining to arts and emotions such as literature, painting etc., women are no less talented than men. Men are more able to conceal their secrets than women and can keep unhappy secrets inside him. From the point of view of men, happiness means achievement of position and respect in society, whereas in the eyes of a woman, winning a man's heart and retaining him for life is regarded as the ultimate happiness for her.

From the point of view of feelings towards one another, a man seeks to win over a woman's heart while a woman seeks to win over a man's heart and to rule over his heart. Woman wants to see courage and support from a man while a man wants beauty and charm from a woman. A woman is more capable than a man in controlling her passions. A man's passion is elementary and aggressive while a woman's passion is passive and stimulating. A man is manifestation of a lover while a woman of being loved. A man is demanding in his feelings whereas a woman is desirous in her feelings.

Irrespective of the fact that whether differences between women and men trigger differences in rights and family responsibilities of woman and man or not, basically this matter is one of the most amazing magnum opus of creation and signs of wise and prudent orders of the universe. The enormous machinery of creation has created reproduction tools in creatures in order to ensure the survival of the species and generations of creatures and has equipped them with means of reproduction so that selfishness and self-interest in the two opposite sexes are transformed into love, absorption and balance.

If a woman was to possess a manly body, soul and disposition, it would be impossible for her to enable a man to serve her while if man possessed the physical features of woman, it would be impossible for the woman to consider him as the idol of her life and use her greatest skill to win over a man's heart. Man has been created to conquer the world and woman to conquer man. Strangely, some people cannot distinguish between passion and affection, considering the sole factor contributing to union of the two sexes to be greed and passion. This is while they interpret the history of relations between woman and man only in terms of feeling of possessiveness and the principle of survival whereas a union loftier than passion constitutes

the foundations of unity of the two sexes which the glorious Qurān mentions as “amity and compassion”.¹

Criteria of assessment and evaluation

Islamic culture has time and again stressed the point that purpose of creation of human being is sincere servitude and devotion and the singular criteria of superiority is the degree of his proximity to God. Likewise, the yardstick of nearness, devotion and sign of the guided man consists of faith, obedience and good deed. Hence, social and family status, mutual responsibilities and rights and finally, level of capabilities and creative qualities cannot be indicative of real value of persons considering that they by themselves do not signify guidance of man. However, in materialist doctrines because a human being is not analyzed in his bond with his own origin and in connection with the ultimate objective of creation and the universal order of creation is not taken into consideration, thus, he is evaluated only in relation to materialist rights and social status. Perhaps, that is why some people have imagined that since in Islamic jurisprudence woman’s blood money or her inheritance is valued at half of man’s, therefore Islam considers woman to be half of man. However, such canons are based on social functions and responsibilities of individual.

Standing of individual and society in Islamic doctrine

We note that in contrast to thoughts devoid of spirituality governing the world in which man’s spiritual and metaphysical dimensions are disregarded; rather, even complex aspects of earthy life and his various needs are considered only from the lowly animalistic aspects, in Islamic sciences the individual human being is viewed in light of all his material as well as spiritual needs and pays a lot of attention to the impact of social and family relations for the development and perfection of the individual. Hence, although Islamic teachings eventually takes into account the interests of individual and his needs, however, due to the many-sided relations between the individual, society and family, his social interests are always considered for the happiness of individuals. Therefore, regarding the standing of woman

¹ And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmates from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.

Chapter Rum, verse 21. Refer to “*System of Women’s Right in Islam*”, pp. 153-176.

in society, after the Iranian Revolution, we notice the transformations in values.

In the remainder of the above discussion, we shall describe the standing of woman taking into consideration the different elements and revolving round the points of view of Imām Khomeinī (r).

Woman and Family:

Now that we are living at the beginning of 21st century, the complaint of western thinkers about the disruption of family life, of the weakening of the institution of marriage, of avoidance of the youth in accepting responsibility of marriage, of despise for motherhood, of the decline of parental affection and in particular, of the maternal love for children, of the degradation of the modern woman and substitution of superficial lusts instead of love, of the rising divorce rate, of the increased and rising number of illegitimate children and of the absence of unity and cordiality among couples can be heard more clearly than ever before.

Islam seeks to make refined human beings for creation of a healthy society and while institutionalizing gratification of natural desires in man, it stresses the principle of spirituality in the structure of family life as the most important pillar of society and it encourages the youth to build family life for survival of the generation and for society to keep away from corruption. On this subject, Imām Khomeinī states thus:

“The benevolent spirit of the prophet of God and the Immaculate Imām s (‘a) are in a state of anxiety and horror at the prospect of the leaves of the tree of prophetic mission velayat (guardianship) falling and drying away.¹ The holy prophet has remarked that: “Marry in order to produce children. For, verily I take pride in you in relation with other nations even if the child is aborted.”²

In yet another instance, on the subject of recommendation of Islam to marry, he states:

“This invitation to marriage; this amount of encouragement to marry is in order to establish family life as well as to avoid deviation. The prophets intended to prevent these unconditional lusts from taking over; these centers of immoralities and not to suppress instinctive lust. If training and education

¹ Mustadrak al-Wasāel, *Book of Marriage*, Chapter One, section Preparations for Marriage, narration 17.

² *Forty Hadith*, p. 147.

is realized in the manner prescribed by prophets, both the faith of man would be mended as well as discipline would be achieved ...”¹

The canons of the sacred religion of Islam are made up of various universal rules and regulations; and as it has teachings for all aspects of human life, it also has numerous prescriptions, recommendations and rules for the humanity of human being in order to create healthy souls and consequently a healthy society.

Therefore, family, as a place for building human beings is the objective of Islam so that it has prescriptions and instructions both for the time prior to giving birth to a child as well as before marriage it recommends what kind of spouse to marry in order to make the couple keep in line with the lofty goals of Islam. Thereafter, Islam has laid down rules and ethics right from exchanging marriage vows, to sexual intercourse and type of nutrition of the parents, the effect of timing of impregnation until the full term of pregnancy and caring for the mother during pregnancy, the manner of breastfeeding in the postnatal period, upbringing, etc. while it even pays attention to physical and spiritual disposition of the infant.² Imām Khomeinī (r) observes that:

“You should know that Islam incorporates all things before marriage occurs between a woman and a man until the time they are laid to rest. Islam has canons, it has teachings; it has progressive instructions, which are useful for man’s happiness both in this world and the afterlife.”³

According to the Imām, the special standing that Islam maintains for family is because of the impact that family life has in building human being and rearing pure and refined souls. Islam wants that both the mind of a human being to be human as well as his soul to be a human soul. The spirituality of a human being should be human and civilized both in its outward appearance as well as be endowed with human ethics and good manners. Therefore, Islam has a program for reaching man towards ultimate human perfection. The Imām further says:

“Islam has been sent to rear human being. The scripture of Islam which is the glorious Qurān, is a book of education. It educates man in all his dimensions including spiritual, physical, political, social, cultural and

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 8, p. 517.

² *Tebyān*, vol. 8, pp. 109-119.

³ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 191.

military dimensions. Islam has come to show us the path of training; we too must train in adherence to Islam.”¹

Excluding for the Divine religions, we have no other doctrine that has a program for all aspects of human life including his/her private life. In fact, it is significant to note that Islam pays greater attention to preventing ills rather than curing them. Hence, it strengthens the foundation of family life by attaching greater importance to role of woman and it even considers their role in the movement to be a special one because brave men are nurtured in their bosoms and reared by them. Therefore, society and the Revolution are indebted to women. Imām Khomeinī states:

“God’s mercy be upon these chaste bosoms that foster these lion-hearted youth.”²

Given the importance of the family in Islam, it is more than clear that women enjoy a superior status in view of the crucial responsibility that they shoulder. In a statement that he made, Imām Khomeinī describes the tutoring role of a woman to be like that of the prophets while in the role of nurturing human beings, she is like the glorious Qurān. He describes her bosom to be a scientific and religious school in which distinguished human beings are trained in it and addressing them he states: “Islam wants perfect human beings to be raised in your bosoms. ...” He considers education of a single human being to be of such importance that for this very reason, he regards the services rendered by a mother to be even superior to the services of the prophets and introduces the dignity of motherhood as being the benchmark for a woman’s superiority over man.

Imām Khomeinī considers self-purification and knowledge as necessities by which women must adorn themselves with on account of their fostering role in the family. He believes that by bringing up spiritually refined children, both one’s religion and worldly life will be safeguarded and in addition, the prosperity of a nation is dependent upon the self-purification of its leaders.”³

While giving a piece of advice to women, he acknowledges that in raising children, they should not take their role lightly because it is possible

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 531.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 18, pp. 326-327.

³ Refer to *Tebyan*, vol. 8, pp. 109-145.

that the same single individual corrupts or reforms the society. Imām Khomeinī observes further that:

“A morally upright human being may educate an entire world while a morally perverted or corrupt human may pervert an entire world. Immorality and purity begin from your bosoms; from your training and from the schools in which you are employed in.”¹

The Imām cites one of the conspiracies of the Pahlavi régime to be separation of children from their mothers and sending them to nurseries and considers this approach to be the factor responsible for psychological complexes. This is because he believes that many of the sufferings of the child can be alleviated with mother’s love and this cannot be substituted with anything else. Accordingly, the Imām stresses that women should take care of their children and also considers their destruction to lie with their mothers and remarks that one of the reasons for separating mothers from children was to combat the trend of development of true upright human being. Thus he observes that:

“They do not want true human beings to develop and for this reason, they have made the task of fostering children to be demeaning for the mother. They publicized it in such a manner that even mothers were perhaps taken in by the publicity and came to believe that they should send their beloved children to nurseries and so removed them from their bosoms to be trained in satanic ways.”²

Woman and Society:

According to the point of view of Imām Khomeinī (r) woman has been an effective member of society and as they compose half the society, they have a major impact on the other half. Her chastity and moral corruption both have a direct impact on society. Contrary to the view of some people who consider Shiite doctrine to call upon women to take care of the household and refrain from making a social appearance, the Imām observes:

“Shiism not only does not reject the presence of women on the social scene, rather, this school of thought maintains a superior status for them in society.

¹ Refer to *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 9, p. 292.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 9, p. 293.

We accept the progresses made by the western world but not the perversion of the west that they themselves lament.”¹

Imām Khomeinī considers woman to be trainer of society and underscores the need for the active participation of women in the social arena. Interestingly, in another instance, the Imām on the subject of local and provincial councils, opposes the presence of women in society. However, after the victory of the Revolution, he considers participation in different activities to be an obligation for women taking into account their freedom and independence. It is evident that the erstwhile presence of women was rejected by the Imām because it ran counter to Islamic teachings that is founded on ethical and human principles because he states that:

“From the point of view of Islam, women have a sensitive role in building Islamic society. Islam promotes woman to the level where she can restore her human dignity in society and be relieved of being regarded as an object and in line with such a development, she can accept to take responsibilities in an Islamic government establishment.”²

While recommending the social presence of women, the Imām states:

“Today, women must fulfill their social and religious obligations and preserve public modesty and while observing public modesty, perform social and political functions.”³

In the same way that in His Eminence’s aforesaid remarks reference has been made to public modesty; likewise, what was attempted by Imām Khomeinī (r) was to lay stress on freedom of women in all fields, and to define Islam’s limits to this freedom. The Imām did not believe in the concept of absolute freedom in its western form that causes a human being to be removed from human and spiritual perfections that are the criteria of progress in Islam. In fact, the freedom perceived by the Imām is freedom within the framework of religious canons of Islam. The Imām said:

“You must be involved in all fields and areas that are permitted by Islam ...the destiny of Iran is the destiny of all.”⁴

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 4, p. 508.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 436.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 193.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 18, p. 403.

The Imām's emphasis in connection with society and when women were his audience deal with several issues made within the framework of his statements:

- Having independence of thought and sense of responsibility
- Involvement of women in their destiny
- Occupying positions of responsibility
- Participation in building society
- Involvement in politics and basic destinies
- Participation in society in the form of student, civil servant and teacher, ...¹

With regard to the special emphasis that the Imām lays on education, he states:

“infinite salutations to the devoted women who are now engaged in training the youth, teaching the illiterates, teaching human sciences and teaching the rich culture of the Qurān.”²

“I hope that teachers wherever they are; sisters and brothers who are teachers; sisters and brothers who are students and learned sisters and brothers consider themselves as students and teachers. Their teachers should summon them to the straight path of guidance of the prophets and they also traverse on the straight path of guidance of the prophets.”³

It must not be forgotten that in Islamic thought and culture, engaging in individual, social and family activities are all means and prelude to perfection of human beings and their proximity to the source of perfection - meaning the God Almighty.⁴ None of them is pleasant by itself. Any activity is desirable and apt if it is directed towards human perfection and is on the route towards servitude of God. As to what issues bring about human elevation both in women and men, are definitely based on frameworks that are laid down in the holy Qurān, the traditions of the prophet (SA) and Immaculate Household of the Prophet (SA).

¹ *Tebyān*, vol. 8, Chapter two.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 14, p. 317.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 174.

⁴ Thou, verily, O man, art working toward thy Lord a work which thou wilt meet (in His presence). Chapter Al-Inshiqaq, verse 6.

As such, adjustment of all objectives and planning in Islamic society with religious yardsticks and teachings are the most fundamental of affairs that must be taken into consideration.

Considering that the aim of creation of human being is to attain ultimate perfection, it must be said that attainment of this goal is solely possible under the aegis of jurisdiction of perfected human beings and establishment of Islamic government. As pointed out in the verses of the glorious Qurān, establishment of an Islamic government and compliance with it is the duty of each and every Muslim woman and man. Moreover, it explicitly mentions that Muslim women in the conflict of their desires or interests with Divine commandments and laws of the Islamic government must not give preference to individual interests over those canons.¹ Imām Khomeinī has the following to say on this subject:

“Safeguarding Islam is a religious obligation that is above all obligations. In fact, in Islam there is no obligation higher than to safeguard Islam. If safeguarding Islam is among the great obligations and the biggest of obligations, then it is a supreme obligation of all of us and of the entire nation and of all clerics to safeguard this Islamic Republic.”²

Elsewhere the Imām said:

“Islam is a faith for which prophets, the holy prophet of Islam, the progeny of the holy prophet and the devoted companions of the holy prophet sacrificed their lives and bore great hardships. Islam is a religion that has been sent down by God. If God forbid, we suffer defeat due to laxity and weak propagation and our nations’ weak presence, then know that Islam will not be able to raise its head for centuries to come. Our duty is great and we must all accept to shoulder this great obligation.”³

In this way, if in the west the political participation of women has been taken seriously for less than a century, Muslims have been sensitive to this participation since the past fourteen centuries right from the advent of Islam and has in practice being committed to it. Basically, one of the important

¹ And it becometh not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should (after that) claim any say in their affair; and whoso is rebellious to Allah and His messenger, be verily goeth astray in error manifest. Chapter Al-Ahzāb, verse 36.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 15, p. 329.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 17, p. 57.

affairs to which the sacred religion of Islam is devoted to is the subject of the emancipation and raising the status of women.

With the advent of Islam, women gained fresh life, and under the leadership of the Prophet of Islam (SA) they made their presence felt in various fields, at times overtaking many men. Among the most important political participations of women in the early days of Islam were:

- 1- Presence of women in swearing allegiance,
- 2- Presence of women in migration,
- 3- Presence of women in Jihad,
- 4- Role of women in perpetuation of the mission of martyrs,
- 5- Participation in political reforms such as enjoining good and forbidding evil,¹
- 6- Women serving as guardians of political secrets.²

Some believe that although we have been witness to fundamental and effective cases of women's political participation in the history of Islam, however, these efforts run counter to women's family responsibilities and attending to household affairs and children.

With this belief, all verses that categorically oblige women to be well aware and have an effective presence in society and hold them responsible vis-à-vis dealings of Islamic society have been ignored. This matter is corroborated by women's role in the course of history of religions in social and political developments in society and consequently, in the family - individuals such as the mother of Moses ('a), Mary ('a), the wife of the Pharaoh and of the prophet of Islam (S).

In order to prove the reality of political participation of women from the religious perspective, it is important to take note of the following four points:

- A) The political activity of Hazrat Zahrā ('a)³
- B) Many of the political activities of women have been hailed directly by the Immaculate Imāms.⁴
- C) Many of the aspects of the political participation of women are such that the prophet or the Imāms ('a) have acknowledged them with their silence. This is because as a result of the obligatory nature of enjoining good and forbidding evil in Islam, the Imāms would voice

¹ 'Ordering good and forbidding from bad' is the essential principle of the sustained Islamic society.

² Refer to "Zahrā, Divinely Manifestation", Woman, Religion, and Politics.

³ Refer to Haj Sheikh Abbas Qomi, "Beit-ul Khazān".

⁴ *Woman, Religion, Politics*, p. 158.

their opposition in case they would observe that the practice did not earn the consent of God.¹

- D) The prophet and the Imāms in some cases have complimented women whose political performance was satisfactory.

Imām Khomeinī observes that:

“This propaganda that if Islam emerges, then for example, women must stay at home and also lock the doors so that she would not come out.” These are false allegations that they attribute to Islam? In the early days of Islam, women were active even in the army; they also joined the battle.”²

In numerous verses of the holy Qurān dealing with political movements, they stress the point that movements must be in the cause of God. Every Jihad, every uprising and struggle and every congregation and establishment must be directed towards divinity. The society is also obligated not to entrust its affairs to those who do not pursue this direction – whether they be women or men.

Therefore, in the course of Islamic Revolution in Iran too, Imām Khomeinī (r) held that the people’s role should be based on Islamic teachings and revolves round three major axes as follows:

1. Role of Women in Victory of the Movement:

The Imām says:

“The Islamic Movement thanks to Islam, created such a transformation in women and men in society that it traversed a 100 years path in the course of a single night. You dear people saw that our esteemed and committed women entered the scene ahead of men and smashed the enormous barrier of the monarchy - and we all are indebted to their uprising and action.”³

Elsewhere, the Imām has remarked that:

“I see an amazing sort of change taking place in women’s society that is greater than change in men; and the extent that this respected society has served Islam in this period, is greater than the service done by men.”⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 5, p. 216.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 257.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 509.

2. Role of Women in the Sacred Defense:

While stressing the presence of people from all walks of life in the Sacred Defense, Imām Khomeinī observes:

“The question is not the question of a rule; the question is not the question of one aspect; it is the question of Islam meaning that it is compulsory for women and men in this country to defend it. Every person must defend to the extent that he can. We must pursue this defense in order that God willing, we achieve the victories that the Almighty God wants.”¹

Or that the Imām has said that:

“May the Islamic movement of the dignified Iranian women be victorious and be honored! We are proud of this great stratum that led the Revolution to victory with their invaluable and courageous presence in defense of the Islamic homeland and the glorious Qurān. As of now also, they are active and prepared to sacrifice both on the frontline as well as behind the war fronts.”²

3. Role of Women in Perpetuating the Goals of the Revolution:

- A- Raising the level of her awareness in all areas that necessitates their presence in various arenas.
- B- Acting on their learning and rearing virtuous and upright human beings in family and society.

Rights

In its general term, divine laws denoting that man and the universe have a purpose are divided into two categories:

First Category: They are laws governing the phenomena of existence that establish the order and harmony in the system of existence and lead creatures towards their desired objective purpose of their creation. The second category are laws dealing with man’s conscious and willful behavior and reveal the program of man’s progress towards the objective. The latter laws that are called “Sharia” laws are in fact a practical program for transformation of human beings from existing capacities towards the desired model. These laws that stem from absolute knowledge of God in relation to

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 80.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 14, p. 337.

the reality of human being and his happiness in the world and the hereafter, teaches us how to exploit the present capacities and traverse the path of growth and progress to the higher stages of perfection step by step.

What is understood from the suitability of legislation to present conditions reverts to a debate on the philosophy of rights that is termed as “natural rights”. In a general classification, legal systems can be divided into two groups:

First group are systems that regard laws and rights merely as a contractual agreement subject to the will of a human being or a group of human beings. The second group are systems that consider laws and rights to arise from natural circumstance of individuals and in keeping with their real needs. Rights according to the latter definition are called “natural rights.”

In a single word, the theory of natural rights is indicative of the fact that the rights of individuals is not merely a simple contract rather, it is one that has its roots in physical realities and human capacities. Natural rights in fact draw the curtain from a fundamental discussion of the link between ontology and legal system.¹

Obviously, natural rights have not been applied uniformly everywhere. Different schools have each presented a particular interpretation of natural rights corresponding with their respective basic tenets.²

What has been accepted in Islam’s legal doctrine can be summarily called “natural-divine rights”³ According to this viewpoint, legal system is commensurate with circumstances of creation and is directed towards human perfections. However, at the same time it is emphasized that complete understanding of capacities and wants is beyond the capability of man’s limited knowledge. Although the mind can understand the generalities and fundamental principles, only the Creator Who is aware of the aspects of man’s existence and the universe can determine and regulate these kind laws. The Qurān teaches us that the Creator of existence Himself oversees guidance of mankind,⁴ and this guidance also covers the sphere of legislation.⁵

¹ Murtezā Mutaharī, *System of Women’s Rights in Islam*, p. 143 onward.

² Refer to Loei Shtraves, *History of Natural Right*, translated by Murād Farhād-pūr.

³ Refer to Mohammad Sharif Ahmad, *Fekratol Qānun al-Tabiei Endal Muslemin*.

⁴ The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne. Chapter Tāhā, verse 5.

⁵ “O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end”. Chapter Al- Nisā, verse 59.

The important point here is that the scope of legislation is not confined to individual and devotional affairs; rather it is applicable to social affairs as well. This point of view is rooted in the principle that the world and the hereafter or material and spiritual matters are tightly linked to one another.

The special features of Islamic tenets that clarify the status of legal discipline of Islam in the system of religious knowledge and distinguish it from the basis of law in the west consist of:

1. The legislator in Islamic canon is the knowing, just, kind and wise Creator Who commands all overt and covert aspects of the universe and mankind and in the position of legislation, has observed the interests of women and men in present and future times in the best possible form. Towards this end, He has also not neglected the interests of family and society.
2. Many of the descriptions, values and commands in some way enjoy such stability and permanence such that transformation in their social conditions would not bring about a change in them.
3. Islamic canons in general, constitute a concerted and harmonious legal system that has been designed and formulated by considering the sum of conditions and the entire interests of the individual and society. It is therefore appropriate to judge it in the light of such a comprehensive perspective.

From this point of view, one can say for certain that Islamic canons provide proportional and equal rights to both women and men.¹ As Imām Khomeinī (*r*) remarks that:

“Islam has placed women opposite men and granted them equality vis-à-vis men. Of course, there are special commands exclusive and conforming to men and are suitable for them; while there are also special injunctions for women conforming to women. This does not mean that Islam has discriminated between men and women.”²

If there are restrictions, they are for both of them. As pointed out by the Imām :

“And it becometh not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should (after that) claim any say in their affair; and whoso is rebellious to Allah and His messenger, he verily goeth astray in error manifest” Chapter Al-Ahzāb, verse 36.

¹ *Introduction to System of Women's Personality in Islam*, p. 49.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 5, p. 216.

“God has devised laws for restricting men so that they would not succumb to corruption as He has done with regard to women. All are in your interest. All Islamic laws are in the interest of society.”¹

Elsewhere, the Imām observes:

“As far as human rights are concerned, there is no difference between women and men, because both are human being and woman has the right to self-determination in the same way as men. Certainly, in some cases, there are differences between women and men that have nothing to do with their human dignity. Issues that are not contradictory to the honor and dignity of woman are uncontrolled.”²

What has always caused women to be deprived of their natural rights was that in earlier times, her status as human being was forgotten while in the present world, it is her womanhood that is a result of disregard for her natural and innate disposition. Today women in western societies have been so tormented by the troubles imposed on them in the name of freedom and equality that they have become openly hostile to freedom and equality.

Equality is only beneficial when both women and men are not derailed from their natural and inherent course. As Imām Khomeinī remarks:

“On the subject of women, Islam has never been opposed to their freedom. On the contrary, Islam is opposed with the concept of woman as chattel and has restored her dignity and honor. Like a man, a woman is free to determine her destiny and activities. ...”³

Friend and foe admit that the holy Qurān has revived the rights of woman because there is perfect harmony between the commandments of the Qurān and those of nature.

Among the various religions, no religion has got involved in different aspects of people’s living as Islam has done. For this reason, the question of modernization in life in connection with Islam has found special significance. In the same way that Islam has put forward the quality of relation of creatures with God; likewise, it has also charted out the main aspects of human relations and their mutual rights and duties.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 301.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 364.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 370.

Today's predicament of mankind lies in the fact that ethics and law have lost their sole backbone of religion.

Two fundamental differences exist between the rights of women in Islam and in the west. One is in the psychological area and attention to spiritual and psychological differences between women and men; while the second difference lies in the fact that whereas Islam acquaints women with their human rights and grants them personality and freedom, it has never urged them to rebellion, disobedience and cynicism towards the male sex. Islam has never destroyed their respect for fathers and husbands; it has not weakened the pillars of family nor made them unenthusiastic wives and mothers; it has not handed over women from the pure embrace of husbands and parents to the holders of administrative posts and the rich and it has not spread corruption in the society. ¹

As the outstanding son of the emancipating religion of Islam in the era of modern ignorance, Imām Khomeinī restored woman's real identity by granting them their social and individual rights and in fact brought to the fore the hidden dimensions of Islam from within the annals of history.

The rights that he emphasized upon the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in relation to women can be divided into two categories namely, social and individual rights:

Individual Rights:

- Right to Divorce
- Right to Education
- Right to Ownership
- Right of independence in emulation
- Right of freedom ²

Social Rights:

- Right to vote
- Right to be elected
- Right to employment
- Right to intervene in basic affairs of the country
- Right of authority in transactions
- Right to decide her own destiny
- Right to participate actively in building the society
- Right to participate in reconstruction
- Right to participate in politics
- Right to education and teaching

¹ *Order of Women's Rights in Islam*, pp. 71-82.

² Refer to *Tebyān*, vol. 8, pp. 53-101.

- Right to participate in the affairs/proceedings of parliament and government
- Right to participate in all activities. ¹

One of the most interesting revivalist moves of Imām Khomeinī (r) on the subject of women's rights was to take into consideration the terms of the marriage vow such that in this way, women benefited greatly from it and included gaining freedom in the family. On this subject, he states thus:

“Divorce in case when during proclamation of marriage with man (when they want to take the marriage vow) they set a condition and this condition is set while taking the marriage vow that divorce- that the legal attorney in divorce or the divorcee or in certain circumstance he has raised a question to the effect that what of the women who are now married? This is opposed to guardianship of the religious authority whereas they do not know that it is of the powers of the religious authority or ‘faqih’ that if a man treats his wife badly, to first counsel the husband and secondly, reprimand him and if he observes that these measures have failed, then to pronounce the divorce.”²

Or he states that:

“Women who want to marry can from the beginning retain certain rights for themselves that are opposed neither to religious tenets nor with their dignity. They can set conditions from the outset that if man was morally perverted; if he behaves badly with the wife and if he mistreats her, the woman is legally empowered to seek a divorce.”³

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The Institute for the publication and compilation
Of the works of Imām Khomeinī (r)**

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 10, p. 407.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 302.

Woman from Imām Khomeinī's Point of View¹

Sayyid Ziyā Murtazavī

One of the most important role models in knowledge of religion of Imām Khomeinī on the subject of women's issues that is in fact regarded as a fundamental aspect in differentiating between his thought and perspective and also of that of many other prominent personalities who spoke and who speak on the language of religion, is the widespread and extensive principle and axis which we call here responsibility and intervention in destiny. This important subject that exists in the numerous headings and subjects in finding its examples in the Imām's thought and can be put forward with other interpretations or in several separate chapters. The brevity of the article leaves no option except to offer a concise explanation and treat in an indexed form some of the headings that are placed under this principle. What is intended in this chapter is predominantly from the perspective of practical responsibility of woman in the two individual and social spheres and does not have a theological perspective and studies of human being. There is no doubt and no one can doubt the fact that a woman also has a role in her own destiny on an equal footing with a man, and is accountable for her own deeds. The range of obligations and responsibilities consist of will, authority and freedom of action on one hand and wisdom and knowledge on the other. Any human being, both woman and man, is a hostage to his or her deeds and actions - whether they be good or bad.

¹ *Imām Khomeinī and Role Models of Knowledge of Religion on Women's Issues*, p. 101.

“Every soul is a witness to its own deeds.”¹

And that:

“Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope. For it (is only) that which it hath earned, and against it (only) that which it hath deserved. Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget, or miss the mark! Our Lord! Lay not on us such a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us! Our Lord! Impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear! Pardon us, absolve us and have mercy on us, Thou, our Protector, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk.”²

Here, there is no doubt and no one has voiced any doubt and thus there is no need to elucidate and clarify it. What we take up in this brief examination from perspective of the Imām’s knowledge of religion is concerned with equality of women and men and their common responsibility in the realm of women’s action particularly in the area of social presence. Manifestations of social presence including cultural, educational, political, artistic, study, employment as well as industrial, agricultural and livestock production efforts and other social activities by “observing religious aspects” is not restricted to a special strata or sex. Not only are women also entitled to engage in them; rather, in many cases these activities are regarded as their religious and social obligations. The efforts of Imām Khomeinī in the years of struggle and thereafter in the position of a supreme religious authority and spiritual leader who speaks solely within the context of religious tenets and Islamic obligations, were devoted to bringing the women on to the scene and untying the chains of superstitions and self-imposed deprivations that beset their social efforts and their pioneering role - thanks to the conspiracies hatched by the enemies and ignorance of some friends – and to reach them to a stage of growth and maturity. Thus, the Imām in the preamble of his politico-religious testament declares this to be one of his honors and glories and also that of the Islamic society with the following words:

“We are honored that our women, old and young, minors and adolescents are present in the cultural, economic and military spheres on par with men - if not bettering them. They are active in the cause of promotion of Islam and objectives of the glorious Qurān. ... and of the deprivations that the plots of

¹ *Sūrah Muddathir*, Verse 38.

² *Sūrah Baqarah*, Verse 286.

enemies and ignorance of a smattering of friends of the injunctions of Islam and the Qurān have imposed on them; rather on Islam and the Muslims, they courageously and devotedly liberated themselves from the chains of superstitions that the enemies in order to secure their interests, spread among Muslims at the hands of the ignorant and some clerics that are uninformed of the interests of Muslims.”¹

The principle of equality of women and men in social standing and their constructive and active presence in various arenas of society as an independent human being is not something to be denied by those acquainted with the pure Islam and that are free of preconceived notions and self-imposed obligations. The renowned theologian Allamah Tabātabāei² in describes the social standing of women.³

To put it briefly, the gist of this part of the words of Allamah implies that women are equal with men in fulfilling her human and social needs and can decide independently and act independently and is responsible for her own achievements. In his opinion, there are only two features present in women that naturally and accordingly assign specific responsibilities to her.⁴

These two features, one, woman's position and responsibility in the cycle of shaping the existence of mankind and his development on which the survival of species is dependent upon and pursuant to that, in legislation and regulation of social relations in accordance with that and no more, creates for her responsibilities; and second, it is her delicate structure and subtleties of her perceptions that are somehow influential in the responsibilities entrusted to her. The details of this subject have been discussed in another chapter of this article entitled “Woman's Emotion: The Turning Point of Life.” As necessitated by his multidimensional and profound understanding of religious teachings, Imām Khomeinī, as mentioned previously in the introduction, considers his mission and the mission of the Islamic Revolution to be attainment of sublime human values by women in a way that they can shape their own destiny.

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 21, p. 397

² Allama Tabatabāei is an Iranian Islamic scholar and interpreter of Quran's exegesis.

³ 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. So those who fled and were driven forth from their homes and suffered damage for My cause, and fought and were slain, verily I shall remit their evil deeds from them and verily I shall bring them into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. A reward from Allah. And with Allah is the fairest of rewards. *Sūrah Al-e Imrān*, Verse 195.

⁴ *Al-Mizān*, vol. 2, p. 271.

“We want woman to reach to her lofty human position. Woman must shape her own destiny.”¹

If the holy Qurān considers the fate of communities to lie in their own hands and introduces their wellbeing and welfare in the shadow of efforts of all individuals in society while also regarding moral and cultural decline, the destruction of blessings and defeat of civilizations to stem from the actions of people themselves,² this “people” does not refer to a special group. A manifestation of this principle of the Qurān is what Imām Khomeinī has repeatedly stressed in his remarks including the following:

“Islam authorizes women to intervene in all aspects of life in the same manner that it does for men.”³

As was pointed out, Imām Khomeinī considers determination of one’s own destiny and social position to be not only the right of women but also a religious obligation and acceptance of divine invitation. It is a model that helps us to understand religion better; it is a basic factor in the superiority of Islam in testimony of the personality of women and support for their social and political rights as well as an emphasis on their participation and presence in various social fields in comparison with other religions and systems.

Who has mobilized these women that they are involved in all aspects of the country - and that too an apt involvement? Who has summoned them? They have been summoned by God. They are giving a positive response to God.⁴

Right from the first day of his divine mission, the benevolent prophet (SA) directed his call to all strata of society. The second person to respond to his call was a woman who was steadfast in her faith until the end and sacrificed so much that her name has been recorded as one of the four outstanding women of the world of monotheism. Women were present in all fields, a responsible presence out of a sense of religious duty and faithful mission; a presence in response to the call of the prophet of Islam (SA). Of the first to swear allegiance to the prophet of Islam (SA) in Aqaba before

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 300.

² That He might cause the Truth to triumph and bring vanity to naught, however much the guilty might oppose. *Sūrah Anfāl*, Verse 8.

³ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 300.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 37.

migration by a number of people of Yathrib that had still not been named 'Medina', was a woman by the name of Hafra daughter of Obeid ibn Sa'alaba. On the importance of her presence, it suffices to say that some people consider her to be the reason for naming that allegiance as "allegiance by the women." At least two women were also present in the second allegiance in the following year. In the general allegiance of the people of Mecca too at the time of its conquest, everybody participated. The holy Qurān too has referred to the issue of the reception of women to swear allegiance and has mandated the prophet of Islam (SA) for its acceptance.¹ In the course of migration also that was a vital issue for Muslims, whether in their secret migration to 'Habasha' (Abyssinia) in which some 20 participants from among the approximately 100 migrants were women or the migration to Medina before the migration of the prophet (SA) or after it when Muslims left behind their wealth and properties in Mecca and departed to Medina along with the prophet (SA), traversing some 500 kilometers of road with great difficulty, women were actively involved.

On the need for participation of women in those matters that are concerned with the destiny of Islamic society, the Imām has made numerous statements on different social subjects. However, to deal with all those subjects and their discussion is beyond the scope of the present article. What is reiterated in this rather short article are brief references to some sections of the main topics and headings in addition to what has been presented in other chapters of the article.

Political Participation:

One of the main points stressed by Imām Khomeinī in relation to social presence of women is concerning their political participation:

"Women must be involved in their own destiny; women in the Islamic Republic must cast their vote in the same way that men have the right to vote."²

"In the same way that men must be involved in political affairs and safeguard their community; likewise, women must also be involved and

¹ O Prophet! If believing women come unto thee, taking oath of allegiance unto thee that they will ascribe nothing as partner unto Allah, and will neither steal nor commit adultery nor kill their children, nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet, nor disobey thee in what is right, then accept their allegiance and ask Allah to forgive them. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. *Sūrah 60. Al-Mumtahana*, Verse 12.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 300.

safeguard the society. Women must also participate shoulder to shoulder with men in social and political activities.”¹

The main theme pursued in this article is the central point that Imām Khomeinī reiterates all of them from the standpoint of religion and towards introduction of Islam. The picture he depicts of religion and religious teachings is not other than the fact that women must have an active and responsible presence in various fields of social activity and aspects of living alongside men:

“Women do not come out into the open and allow their children to be killed in order to gain something or for example, occupy a post. It is Islam and the Qurān that have brought women out into the open and brought them on to the political scene alongside men if not ahead of them.”²

Presence in the field of reconstruction:

Yet another broad area of participation is the subject of all-round reconstruction of the country and society. No one must and can doubt that without the active presence of women in Islamic society, it is possible to succeed fully in this important affair. On this subject, Imām Khomeinī has placed a lot of emphasis and observes that:

“The entire Iranian nation whether women or men must reconstruct these ruins that they have left behind for us. It is not possible for the men to engage in reconstruction alone; men and women must rebuild these ruins together.”³

“The lion-hearted and devoted women alongside the cherished men have embarked on rebuilding the beloved Iran in the same way that they have undertaken to restore their science and culture. You will not find a city or village in which cultural and scientific societies of committed women and honorable Islamic ladies have not been created.”⁴

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 18, p. 403.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 306.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 275.

Cultural Endeavor:

One of the spheres of social presence that women from the religious perspective are mandated to participate actively in is to endeavor in the cultural sphere in the wider context of the term. Imām Khomeinī has repeatedly stressed this important point that obviously covers a major portion of social life that:

“You know that Islamic culture was oppressed in this period; in the past several hundred years if not from the beginning of the era of the prophet (PBUH) until the present time. The culture of Islam was subjugated; the commandments of Islam were suppressed - and we must revive this culture; and you ladies must engage in this type of activity in the same way that men are engaging; in the same manner that the men are preoccupied on the scientific and cultural fronts.”¹

Participation in general supervision:

Active and committed supervision over what is happening in Islamic society, particularly in the workings of the Islamic order and efforts at proper functioning of affairs is a moral obligation of each and every member of society, both women and men. Women must also consider themselves to be responsible for supervision of the affairs. In addition to the required knowledge, responsible supervision calls for an active presence and expression of opinions on issues:

“All women and all men must be acquainted with social and political affairs and be supervisors; they should observe both the workings of the parliament as well as the functioning of government, and also express their views.”²

The above statement of the Imām is a reflection of the commandment of the holy Qurān that explicitly reiterates the responsible and religious bond of believing men and women and considers them to be responsible for enjoining good and forbidding evil, in the same way that it mandates them to perform obligatory prayers, pay Zakat (religious tax) and to obey God and the Prophet:

“And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 20, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 193.

they pay the poor-due, and they obey Allah and His messenger. As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise.”¹

Yes, as mentioned in the Qurān, it is such a society with such bonds of faith and responsible social relations and all-round supervision alongside carrying out other religious obligations that is blessed and favored by God.

Presence in Defense and Providing Logistics to the Warfront:

The imposition of an unnecessary war on the revolutionary Iranian nation provided a historical opportunity for the devoted and selfless women to display the gem of their dedicated existence and human values in the most beautiful and expressive manner. It also served as a ground for Imām Khomeinī to reiterate another aspect of women’s participation in the basic destinies of society as well as in their own destiny. For this reason, one of the main subjects of the statements made by Imām Khomeinī on the imposed war and the sacred defense revolved around the necessity and procedure for participation of women and their engaging in sacred struggle which ranged from military training to providing logistics to warfronts, training children and encouraging spouses and relatives to join the warfront; to join the Revolutionary Guards Corps; to join the army and even make their presence felt in defensive Jihad that is a mutual responsibility of both women and men. All of these have clear and undeniable analyses and arguments from the religious point of view.

“Women in the early days of Islam participated in battles alongside men. We are witnessing and we have witnessed that women have stood shoulder to shoulder with men if not ahead of them in the line of battle and have sacrificed themselves, their children and their youth and have yet continued to resist.”²

“If, God forbid, the Islamic land is subjected to an attack, then all people, be they women or men, must move. The question of defense is not a subject that is restricted to men or a certain group; all must go and defend their country.”³

“I am optimistic of all that has been accomplished through the efforts and courage of the honorable and warrior men and women; I hope that with the

¹ *Sūrah At- Tauba*, Verse 71.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 300.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 425.

endorsement of the Almighty God, they succeed in the general mobilization from the military, ideological, ethical and cultural education and training and successfully complete the practical military, guerilla, and partisan warfare training and exercises in a manner that is deserving of an Islamic and awakened nation.”

The argument on the necessity of military training for women in its various forms is also quite clear. Thus, while addressing a gathering of women, Imām Khomeinī observes that:

“If defense is made obligatory for all, preliminaries for defense must also be acted upon including the order of military, learning various military matters for those for whom it is possible. We are not obliged to defend if we do not know how to defend. We must know how to defend. Of course, the environment in which you undergo military training must be a sound environment; it must be an Islamic environment; all aspects of chastity¹ must be safeguarded; all Islamic aspects must be observed.”²

The end of this key section is yet another statement made by Imām Khomeinī before the victory of the Revolution which is an emphasis on women’s responsible participation in sacred struggle as well as on their active presence in society and participation in affairs that pertain to their future:

“The propaganda that if Islam appears on the scene then women must for instance, be confined to their homes with locked doors lest they come out is a wrong mindset attributed to Islam. At the dawn of Islam, women were also enlisted in the armies; they would also go to the battlefield.”³

¹ *Chastity* refers to a kind of restrain and control of carnal desires.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 20, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 216.

Review of Imām Khomeinī's Point of View
In Quest of Muslim Women's Social Role and Position:

Fātemeh Safarī

Reference:

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution and establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the style of administration of the state and the basis of the legitimacy of political power changed. This transformation stemmed from a monotheistic global perspective and theoretical expanse of Islam; meaning that it was a product of a unique outlook vis-à-vis social concepts and phenomena that cited the influence of power of God in social living in addition to individual living. The social model of woman's role and standing in Islamic society is among the social issues that are worthy of examination on this basis. This article is a synopsis of the book entitled "Social Model: Role or Perspective of Muslim Woman in Islamic Society" according to the point of view of Imām Khomeinī (*r*), has been written within this framework.

Introduction:

In modern history in the western world, concurrent with the growth and progress of empirical sciences, technical know how and technology, the cultural and social order has also undergone enormous transformations. This development has its roots in scientific and cultural activities and thinking of the Renaissance. In other words, in Europe after the Middle Ages, a culture emerged that paved the way for the Industrial Revolution, the growth of capitalism and emergence of different social phenomena based on this

culture. This culture that carried the weight of Jewish-Christian tradition passed through the secularization process due to problems of European communities with the Church, emergence of differences among clerical authorities of the church with scientists and researchers as well as because of the emergence of materialist thoughts and their expansion in this era. Thus religious thought and practice lost its social significance.

Due to reasons such as proliferation and propagation of ideas and thoughts, particularly with the growth and expansion of mass media apparatuses as well as expansion of the phenomenon of colonization in military, cultural, political, economic forms ... the above mentioned culture spread to different parts of the world including in the Islamic countries and influenced the entire communities – albeit with some strengths and moderations.

In this climax, in Muslim countries the phenomenon of progression emerged. This mindset introduced Europe as a model of progress and an example for Muslim countries such that Seyed Hasan Taqizadeh, the Iranian constitutionalist wrote in the daily Kaveh in 1917 that: “The only way out for the people of Iran is to follow the path and approach of the Europeans and to emulate their way of life.” On the one hand, an overwhelming majority of governments of Islamic societies as of late 19th century and early 20th century, especially after the Second World War (such as Ataturk in Turkey and Pahlavi regime in Iran) with the help of capitalist western societies embarked on modernization of their countries based on acceptance of western values in place of Islamic values and separation of religion from social environment. This development greatly affected the ethical system and values of Islamic societies. Individual and social life of women and family order were among the ones that bore the impact of this influence. Books were written on the subject of Muslim women based either on the theory of modernization or on Marxist points of view....Many of these studies have applied the model of the duties of the ideal woman in the west as criteria for study of Muslim women and sympathized with their bad conditions and presented modernization and westernization of their way of life as the path of salvation to their problems.”¹ As such, from this period what was put forward by foreign and even domestic writers and speakers (in some cases) as standard representing the base and role of woman are predominantly those same benchmarks of western societies that disregarded the cultural model and the social and historical basis of Islamic countries.

¹ Hussein, Freda, *The Ideal and the Contextual Realities of Muslim Women*, in *Muslim Women*, ed. Freda Hussein London, Croom Helm, 1984, p, 1

In Iran, as an Islamic country, such a trend was pursued by the Pahlavi regime in theory and in practice until the Islamic Revolution occurred as a unique and unexpected event for both the east and the west - a religious society in which all the strata and especially the masses, rose up on the basis of a monotheistic global perspective and an Islamic ideology.

The world was astounded by the active and progressive role of Muslim women in this Revolution. The Islamic Revolution saw women as prominent and determinant factors beside men. These women derived their force and firmness from theoretical expanse of Islam- a religious Islam that programs and guides the most personal elements of their life up to their political and social participation and other roles.

After the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran the source of legitimacy of political power changed and a peculiar perspective vis-à-vis social concepts and phenomena was offered that took into consideration the influence of God's power in social living in addition to individual living. This type of perspective is naturally decisive in the study of social model of woman's position and role in Islamic society as well. This implies that in an Islamic society, the status and role of human being (woman or man) in general and woman in particular, is based on monotheistic global perspective with special view of a human as God's creature and benevolent vicegerent of God on earth with the expansive shelter of spiritual leadership of the Immaculate Imām s (a) hanging over the life of this human being throughout history. This compares with a human being's position and role in general and of woman in particular in a society (west) in which God-oriented thoughts have been overcome by secularist, non-religious and materialist philosophies in which a human being is free to indulge in his desires in any form while individualism and utilitarianism dominate and the marketplace is the ultimate focus of a human being's life is basically different at all levels. Even similar or apparently similar roles such as political participation or economic activity in these two type of societies and in a sense, in these two cultures, do not pursue the same goals and the determinant values of the role and position of women is different in these two type of societies.

The supreme religious authority in the Islamic society of Iran is responsible for leadership and guidance of the people and society towards growth and perfection on the basis of Islamic culture. The founder of the Islamic establishment in Iran theoretically and practically is Imām Khomeinī (r) and he has presented his points of view on various social issues including the subject under discussion. This point is noteworthy that in addition to having a precise and comprehensive awareness of the culture and history of

Islam, he was also uniquely acquainted with problems that plagued Islamic societies and even other human societies.

The role of women and manner of their presence and participation in society in the modern world has been among the pivotal issues under discussion. With the presentation of the version of the ideal duties of woman in capitalist system and materialist western version in Islamic societies, determining the version of the position and role of women in Islamic society has been among the necessities of the modern era. Accordingly, Imām Khomeinī (r) has presented his point of view on this subject on the basis of the fundamentals and principles of Islamic culture. This article describes his opinion on the subject briefly.

1- Political and Social Role of Women:

Participation of women in the Islamic Revolution of Iran: Table No. 1 indicates the role of women in the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Below, the indices of this role are explained in brief.

A) Direct Political Role of Women in Islamic Revolution of Iran:

1. Primary role of women in political movements of the last 100 years (Constitutional and Tobacco Movement):

As is evident, this indicator does not deal with the role of women in the Islamic Revolution; however, these two movements have occurred in the modern history of Iran and are of importance in the struggle against despotism and colonialism in their various dimensions. Imām Khomeinī (r) considers the role of women in the Constitutional Movement and the Tobacco Agitation to be useful, positive and in line with the interests of the country and Islam as is their role in the Islamic Revolution and he compares it with the negative role played by women in the Pahlavi regime which was aimed at destruction of the country and Islam. Imām Khomeinī (r) has observed that:

“Super criminals consider their perpetuation and survival to lie in colonization of nations and particularly Islamic nations. In this recent century since finding their way into oil rich and wealthy countries, they have discovered that only the religious strata can be a thorn in their sides and obstruct their attempts at colonization. They realized that a brief ‘Fatwa’ issued by a popular religious authority is so powerful that it could bring the British government and the powerful Qajar court to their knees. They also realized that women had a fundamental role in those movements

and that in the Constitutional Movement and thereafter too, women, particularly from the deprived middle-class strata could with their uprising, pull along the men into the arena. They also felt that as long as these factors are in place, their plots would be foiled and so they found it necessary to weaken the foundation pillars of religion, religious leadership and the religious strata in order to colonize these countries and plunder their rich resources...until they found a Reza Khan to serve them and brought him to power. ... Those who remember those days know that this criminal traitor with the help of his unpatriotic agents treated women with so much contempt, and used all possible means to earn a swift victory and to corrupt the innocent women and drive them towards consumption and immorality. It suffices for the present generation who do not comprehend those dark days to refer to the books, poems, writings, plays, dailies and magazines of those days and ask those who have seen the centers of vice, gambling houses, liquor shops and cinemas of that period.”¹

2. Uprising and struggles of women in Islamic Revolution in Iran:

The awakening of the nation and uprising of women against the Pahlavi regime; their protest demonstrations and resistances in the face of machine guns and tanks of the butchers of the Pahlavi regime even while holding their children in their bosoms and observing Islamic dress code or ‘Hijab’ were instrumental in the victory of the Iranian nation and Islamic Revolution. In this way, the satanic plots of the west and their affiliates to corrupt and thus harm the women were thwarted. In this movement, women emulated the Islamic role models such as their Holinesses, Hazrat Fatemeh (‘a) and Hazrat Zeinab (‘a), thereby placing them on the same level as the women and soldiers of the advent of Islam. The ‘Hijab’ covering observed by Muslim women during the Islamic Revolution although a factor of resistance, however, it in fact symbolized the identity of the Muslim woman. Therefore, in order to gain independence from the chains of being viewed as objects of desire and pleasure and immoralities that prevailed in the society of that period, it was considered to be among the fundamental and primary conditions.

3. Uprising and struggles of women and men in the Islamic Revolution of Iran:

In the course of the Islamic Revolution, women and men were transformed and their moral dispositions changed. This caused them to become more steadfast and resistant and led to the victory of the Revolution.

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 16, p. 193.

Thus towards this end, by altering the spiritual attachments of women and men and thereafter by changing their state of mind in the course of the Islamic Revolution, religious thought and practice in individual and social life and likewise, fighting the plans and programs of domestic despotism and foreign colonialism became important for them. As such, their practical steps in this path led to the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

4. Martyrdom-seeking role of women in Islamic Revolution and in Islamic government in attainment of victory:

The martyrdom-seeking mood and self-sacrificing spirit of women caused the alien forces to become impotent in their confrontation with the people of Iran and contributed to the fructification of the Islamic movement. In fact, the emergence of a martyrdom-seeking spirit is that same change in emotional disposition and attachments that plays a decisive role in identity of society, in political, social and cultural changes... in society.

5. Uprising and struggles of women on an equal footing with men in the Islamic Revolution of Iran:

Under the veil of chastity, women participated in the Islamic Revolution with one voice alongside men, and in the process, assured victory for Islam and the Revolution. A point worth noting is that in the past; that is, during the Pahlavi regime, the equal footing of women and men in our society was within the framework of the imported culture of the west. Eliminating the veil from women¹ and disregard for Islamic tenets in relations between men and women was an inseparable principle of this equality of men and women. Moreover, its course and direction was also different. However, in the Islamic Revolution, this equality of women and men in political, social, cultural... fields was specifically within the framework of Islamic ideology. Therefore, abiding by religious teachings in the interaction of men with women and observing the 'Hijab' covering was of its inseparable principles.

6. Women were pioneers and leaders in the uprising and struggles of the Islamic Revolution in Iran:

Women played a pioneering role in the Islamic Revolution and in comparison with men they played the lead role in the Revolution.

¹ *'Abandoning Islamic Veil'* was a negative movement undertaken by Reza Khan. The move ignored the Islamic and local culture. Ultimately it produced sever counter productive by the women and the Islamic scholars.

1. Presence of women in the Islamic Revolution in Iran triggered bravery in men:

We stated that Iranian women were placed directly in the first line of struggle and combat in the course of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Now, we would like to add the point that the uprising of Iranian women, particularly the middle and deprived classes in all historical events and movements in the last century, particularly during the Islamic Revolution, encouraged the involvement and participation of men and in their show of bravery. For this reason, again women were on the frontline of the movement and led the way. Therefore, women gave inspiration, were teachers and served as examples for the men to emulate and as such, their lead, share and role in the Revolution were greater than that of men. As mentioned by Imām Khomeinī (r), the Islamic Revolution has arisen from the transformed characters of women and men. It can be said that spiritual transformation in women determines not only women's intellectual and physical performance in different political, social, economic and cultural fields of the Revolution and the Islamic establishment, rather it plays a decisive role in the spiritual transformation and intellectual performance and finally, in the physical performance of men in various arenas of the Revolution and the Islamic establishment. Therefore, Imām Khomeinī (r) observes that: "Women strengthen and embolden nations." Of course, this also holds true in the degenerating role of women meaning that when they degrade themselves to the level of being a plaything for those seeking carnal pleasures and the materialist, they play a decisive role in the spiritual, intellectual and moral decline of men and all strata of society.

2. Role of self-sacrifice of the mothers of martyrs in the Islamic Revolution:

Positive presence of women in the role of mothers, spouses and sisters in the Islamic Revolution was effective in the spiritual, intellectual and moral transformation of children, husbands and brothers and lead to the perpetuation and development of the revolutionary spirit in the family by women and mothers that itself served as a contributing factor in the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

B) Right and share of women in Islamic Revolution of Iran (direct and indirect role):

Based on the opinion of Imām Khomeinī, (r) women have a greater right over nations compared to men and the Islamic Revolution of Iran is more indebted to women than men. Thus, he has observed that: “Victorious and honored be the Islamic Revolution of the great Iranian women.”

2- Socio-Political Role of Women in Islamic Society (Islamic Republic of Iran):

Table No. 2 indicates the political and social role of women in Islamic society and we shall explain below its indicators briefly.

1. Active Involvement of women in political and social issues of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Arrival of women on the political and social scenes and their involvement in these issues has been a result of the intellectual and spiritual development that has taken place in them in the course of the Revolution that we have already discussed. Women’s participation in the political and social affairs of society and their freedom in this matter on an equal footing with men and other strata of society and even forging ahead of others are due to the following objectives:

Towards independence from superpowers; towards objective of Islam and performing one’s religious obligations; for the administration of the country and running the affairs by themselves; fighting the superpowers and satanic forces; propagation and development of Islamic ethics and righteous deeds ...

Furthermore, political insight and awareness in these affairs and interest in social and political issues and women’s participation in this field resulted in the invulnerability of the nation and in victory and thwarted the plots of the enemies against men and women in their attempt to corrupt them and advanced the goals of Islam. However, basic elements in political and social movement of women are observance of dress code or ‘Hijab’ and issues relevant to it such as separation and illicit interaction and social intercourse of women and men. The significance of this point stems from the fact that in the modern history of non-observance of the female dress code or “Hijab” and lack of restrictions on relationships between men and women were regarded as an inseparable element of progress and of the political and social movement of women.¹

¹ For more information refer to the book “Social Pattern of Role and Base of Women in Islamic Society according to the point of view of Imam Khomeini”, relevant chapter.

2. Participation of women in building society and in modernization of the country and its necessity:

Society and the country will not modernize and thrive only at the hands of men; rather, involvement of both women and men in the modernization of the country conveys the true meaning of freedom of women and men in a society; and not freedom in centers of sexual pleasures and illicit interactions.

On the one hand participation of women in modernization of the country such as for example, participation in the 'Reconstruction Jihad' activities resulted in a wave of rebuilding activities across the country and in motivation and increased participation of men in these affairs. Moreover, the training of capable youths to undertake reconstruction and development of the country is yet another step at modernization aimed at reducing dependence of the country in all areas, eradicating poverty and injustice, modernizing the country, rebuilding the ruins of the Pahlavi era and safeguarding the Islamic society.

3. Right to vote and participation of women in elections and its necessity:

Participation of women in referendum, casting ballot and electing and being elected to the parliament is a political right granted to them as is granted to men that must be exercised for independence of the country, its freedom and realization of genuine Islam. Active, free and eager participation of women in the referendums in the Islamic Republic of Iran contributed to the exemplary victory of the Islamic Republic in the world.

Imām Khomeinī (*r*) considers the entry of women to the parliament of the Islamic Republic to be different from their entry to the parliament during the era of the Pahlavi reign. On this subject he states that:

“Today is different from yester years; today women must fulfill their social duties and religious obligations and uphold public decorum and while observing public decorum, perform social and political works unlike in the past when they for example, entered a woman in parliament. However, what sort of woman she was and what did she want to do was irrelevant? Now also some women have entered the parliament, but this entry differs from that one. That was an entry and this too is an entry...they would organize

parties, Woman's Day celebrations and celebrate the day when they eliminated the 'Hijab (woman dress code)...."¹

4. Economic Jihad and social relief of women in the Islamic agitation and rule:

Economic Jihad and Muslim women taking the lead in these affairs for the oppressed, the needy and refugees as well as taking care of patients and the handicapped is yet another part of the activities undertaken by women in the Islamic Republic. The worth of women's activities in this respect outpace the activities of men in this field and is one of the best developments resulting from the Islamic Revolution.

5. Necessity for the active involvement of women in political and social affairs in the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Islam wants women to undertake deep-seated and serious tasks like the men. Therefore, it is the duty of women to intervene in shaping the basic destinies of the Islamic land both indirectly, by rearing capable youth for Islam and the state as well as directly, by their participation in all social and political affairs of society and taking the lead in these affairs in order to sustain the freedom and independence of the country, establish and perpetuate Islamic rule, support the oppressed, revive the divine tradition² by following in the footsteps of the Household of the Prophet (SA) and to safeguard human values.

6. Primary and special role of women in society:

Although quantitatively, the number of denominations of this indicator is low, however, considering the definitions, limitations and explanations that are present in the speeches of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) on the primary and special role of women in society, the qualitative significance of this indicator is quite high.

Women are the sources of either reform or degeneration in every society and therefore, their role in society is greater than the role of men. This is because apart from being active in political, cultural and economic affairs, women also nurture the active strata in their bosoms. They are capable of either nurturing human beings that possess resistance and lofty human values

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 13, p. 193.

² 'Divine Practices' the universe system is well organized and all the tasks are being done through causes designated by God the Almighty.

or contrastingly, weak-willed and callous human beings. Therefore, both reform and degeneration of society is in the hands of women such that in an Islamic society, devoted women constitute the foundation pillars of that nation and society.

Considering this as well as other subjects discussed in this chapter, the leading role of women on different political and social issues will guarantee the safeguarding and perfection of political and social structure of Islamic society in Iran. Imām Khomeinī (*r*) considers women's role in an Islamic society to be constructive while being destructive in non-Islamic and degenerate societies. The table below illustrates this point:

This table indicates the determinant role political and administrative structure and social relations of every society in all aspects of social and even individual living. This is because the policies and social principles are determined by this structure, relations and policies and its principles. Therefore, in a society in which social relations give rise to many moral and spiritual corruptions of individual members of that society, thus the role of women too is destructive because it takes place within this framework and is intertwined with moral degeneration. This is the basic reason for the opposition of Imām Khomeinī with political and social responsibilities of women in the Pahlavi regime and his consent with these responsibilities and activities in the Islamic Republic (Islamic society). Therefore, we notice in his statements that: "Express your antipathy for the involvement of women in society that necessitates extensive degeneration of the Pahlavi women." While elsewhere, he remarks that: "Respect for social and moral dignity of women is responsible for the ban by Islam on their presence and interaction that is contrary to the dignity and honor of women in the parliament of the Pahlavi regime; or to making women in the form of dolls and sending them to government offices that cause the men and the Pahlavi regime to become leisurely and led to its downfall. On the other hand, creation of conflict between family responsibilities and motherhood with social responsibilities and degradation of the duties of motherhood during the Pahlavi reign, were carried out towards this end.

Islam, Woman and Feminism as interpreted by Imām Khomeinī (r)

Dr. Zahrā Rahnavard

Why are women not happy yet at the outset of the 15th century A.H. calendar coinciding with the end of the 20th century A.D., despite the fact that two ways of thinking in two corners of the world unceasingly defend and back her and each in its own way gives her good tidings of happiness? Which obstacle stands in the arduous path to prosperity of woman? Are these obstacles environmental or historical, cultural or economic, political or social and finally, of men or women themselves? Following the declaration of two theories for research on women's issues, can we find any solutions for them?

These two theories are formulated based on the two independent variables of "Islam and feminism." In the first theory that is formulated in the following manner, feminism is an independent variable:

A- If feminism governs the world, women will be happy.

In the second theory, Islam is an independent variable and women's happiness is the dependent variable.

B- If Islam governs the world, women will be happy.

Therefore, two ways of thinking each claim to bring happiness to women; one with non-religious basis while the other with monotheist foundations and religious teachings have each influenced the world of theory and practice and while making generalizations, they attempt to guarantee the happiness of women using descriptive, theoretical and practical methods and

solutions. In fact, today there is a basic challenge and fundamental dialog between Islam and feminism on women's issues such that although the vociferous proponent of Islamic perspective in the contemporary world dealing with women's issues is Imām Khomeinī, however, the feminist perspective is so diverse that one can barely find a single voice for it except on some commonalities. Now let us point to this general view of feminism so that we can open the door to challenge in this discussion: ¹

Feminists attempt to present a model of human experience with the point of view of supporting women, because they believe that the present empirical world is nothing but micro perception of male activists and their experiences. However, in order to understand the surrounding environment correctly, we need the experiences of the other half of mankind which is of women. By raising two basic questions, feminists put forward the issue of women as:

A- What do we know about women?

B- Why are women in such a situation?

After raising these two big questions, they present their views and begin to study the situation of woman and offer solutions: in a macro perception, the root of all predicaments, disasters, backwardness and miseries of woman lies in the "patriarchal order" that is exercised through the direct medium of patriarchy. When feminism mentions patriarchy to be the main cause of sufferings of women, it opines that in the trend of patriarchy, the general administration of affairs and establishments, basic orders and arrangements, legal and judicial in the two private (family) and public (society) spheres have been biased in favor of men. Now by eliminating the main hypothesis of feminism which is that of patriarchy from the world, we must present such arrangements and orders so that both women and men seek to participate equally and freely and seek their true share. ²

In fact, patriarchy is a sign of distribution of power in which man has all the power and is the commander while the woman is submissive and subordinate. They have gone so far in this path that they seek the most amazing solution to achieve a means that changes the power relationship and guarantees equality and freedom which is the method of "combating motherhood." Thereafter they abandon this method that is unbecoming and resort to "acceptance of motherhood" and finally, reach to the "other society"; a society that is exclusive to women and entirely distinct from the

¹ For further information of precise approaches of feminism refer to *"Islam, Woman, Feminism"* by Zahra Rahnavard, Office of Studies Magazine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

² George Retirz, *"Theory of Contemporary Sociology"* translated by Mohsen Salasi, Tehran, Elmi, 1374, p. 461.

society of men in which women hold all the power.¹ Finally, if one can visualize a mixed society in which patriarchal power relationship has been eliminated from it and woman and man live at the side of each other in equality, then this society will be in possession of a developed structure of family that has in a way been organized. Patricia Ireland, head of the National Organization of Women of the United States cites an example of such a society in which a man can freely choose to have a girl friend while also having a wife and children.²

Because the underlying structure of this type of perspective is elimination of gender (in cultural and educational sense) of human beings as the determinant element in new structures and adjustments in the private and public spheres, one can envisage such a development for the family. Moreover, the single-parent family as a product of elimination of patriarchy – in which a woman or a man willfully accepts the responsibility of custody of the family – is by itself regarded as a kind of development of new family modifications at the development stage. In this manner, feminism embarks unceasingly on presenting ideas of development in the two spheres of society and family so that through these modifications, it is able to eliminate the patriarchal structure whose byproduct is the miserable, abased, submissive and backward woman from the arena of history and to cause freedom and equality to thrive from the dark and isolated history of patriarchy thereby restoring happiness and dignity to women.

Methodology of the views of Imām Khomeinī (r):

Imām Khomeinī is among the few leaders and thinkers of the world of Islam who inculcates the idea of the positive presence of women in history into the consciousness of society. Strangely, he favors the aspects of patriarchy, equality and freedom which are the main topics of feminist discussion and similarly, the wide spectrum of their corollaries such as employment, education, participation and involvement in the power structure and active role in destiny of the nation. However, he views and analyses these subjects from the angle of his own unique outlook. In fact, the vision of Imām Khomeinī (r) lies in the approach of his own point of view.

¹ Julia Christoabe, translated by Niko Sarkhosh, in the essay “*Era of Women*” has discussed in detail the relation between power, elimination of mother and acceptance of mother and other society. Refer to the book: “*Confusion of Signals*” Mani Haqiqi (Tehran, Markaz Publisher, 1374), pp. 104-135

² John Leiand Bisexuality Newsweek (19 July 1995), p. 44.

Imām Khomeinī inherits an outlook that was revealed by God to the benevolent prophet of Islam through revelations and he regulated his ethics also on that basis. Despite these, a study of the fundamental teachings of the thought of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) all issues and particularly on the important and critical issue of women indicates that he has taken into account the element of time and place in the realm of special mental and behavioral innovation courageously and without taking a single step away from divine revelation and the prophetic tradition, he has presented a new idea of philosophical, political and social insight and action in relation to woman. Whereas Islam in the opinion of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) has presented an amazing vista of innovation and creativity in all fields, then why should it not on the subject of women?

Thus, it is apt to mention the variables that have influenced the words and deeds of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) in order that he would state his point of view on women:

In addition to divine revelations of the Qurān, the prophetic tradition¹ and jurisprudential findings, there were numerous variables of time and place that influenced Imām Khomeinī's philosophies - variables that caused him to think about the status of women in the modern world in order to discover the truth and to analyze and explain it on the basis of ideals.

One of the variables was the dictatorial-capitalist order affiliated to the west that governed Iran that Imām Khomeinī (*r*) viewed critically and based on it, he analyzed the predicament and subjugation of women. The west's value system was yet another variable that Imām looked at critically and his finding was that in most cases in this system, women were oppressed and vulnerable. The critical perspective of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) of other variables that it would be better to call "the traditional order"² that is closed and

¹ *The conduct of the holy prophet* includes his social and religious practices which are criterion for all the Muslim community.

² The traditional reactionary society according to the point of view of the present article, is a society that has been established solely in the name of Islam and not genuine Islamic contents. These types of societies are usually traditional and are masked with a touch of religion. In reality, the behavior and thinking of these societies are remnants of the past prior to the advent of Islam. They have assumed the Islamic title with a reactionary interpretation of religion and both Islamic countries and the world of Islam are in some manner hostage to them. Such traditional, reactionary societies are characterized by unsavory situation of women. In such establishments, woman is an inferior creature and her body, mind and spirit from the beginning and in the course of training in a discriminatory culture and supremacist notions of reactionary societies are organized to serve the superior being called 'man'. In this system, she holds an inferior position and is deprived of the right to choose and free will, learning, education, wisdom, sentiment, criticism and involvement in society. The inferior status of

reactionary governing the world of Islam was particularly inspiring so that by means of it, while analyzing the problems of women throughout history (both before and after the dawn of Islam) precisely, he could present appropriate solutions. Finally, the heroic deeds of Iranian women throughout history, particularly during the Iranian Revolution and the glorious account that they presented of themselves compelled the Imām to voice his most amazing ideas, words and political performances to the extent that his reforms regarding the rights and status of Muslim woman approached the innovation and freshness of the dawn of Islam.

Imām Khomeinī (r) viewed the topic of woman from various angles and presented solutions for her salvation and happiness. Each of these approaches is a kind of theoretical view about woman so that through it he gets close to the issue, analyzes and reviews it and finally, offers a solution. The aforesaid approaches consist of the following:

1. Paradigm approach
2. Critical- argumentative approach
3. Supra Authority approach
4. Freedom approach
5. Subservient approach
6. Civil rights approach
7. Participative approach
8. Maternal approach of tutoring and spiritual cleansing

Let us explain each of the aforesaid solutions as below:

1- Paradigm Approach: In this type of theorizing, that is in fact based on the pathology of woman, Imām Khomeinī by drawing inspiration from the superior beliefs of Islam that stem from the teachings of the holy Qurān, discovers sublime and celestial personality and character in woman. This finding has been programmed based on the ideal of the exemplary woman of Islam manifested by the personality of Her Holiness Hazrat Zahrā ('a). This approach provides the Imām with the opportunity to interpret all the superior ideals and aspirations including from ontology and heavenly feature to earthy character and political, economic and social activities and above all, woman's status, standing and dignity for to define woman, he grips firmly at the handle of divinity which no one can deny. In this superior approach, Imām Khomeinī describes Hazrat Zahrā ('a) as the ideal personality of a

women in these societies has converted them into submissive and wretched creatures while the man is transformed into a master and power-hungry superior. This reactionary traditional system is governed by male political, social and educational institutions.

woman, discovers the dimensions of her personality and finally argues that women can ascend “from the earth unto the heavens” and towards Him, “remove the veil of nature and proceed to the stage of the unseen, annihilation and divinity.” Therefore, they achieve the merit for every kind of growth and progress that makes this journey possible. In this connection, Imām Khomeinī (*r*) has makes the following statement:

“All the dimensions conceivable for woman and for a human being has been manifested in Her Holiness Fatemeh Zahrā (*'a*). She was no ordinary woman; she was a spiritual, celestial and a perfect human being; she was the entire manifestation of humanity; the entire reality of a woman, the entire reality of a human being. She was no ordinary woman; she was not only a celestial creature appearing in the form of a human being in this world, rather, she was also a divine and celestial creature appearing in the form of a woman ... a woman who incorporates all the features of the prophets...the entire dignity and the entire personality of woman ... Tomorrow Hazrat Zahrā (*'a*) shall be born. There are different dimensions to a woman as it is for a man and for a human being. This natural external body is the lowest rung of a human being; it is the lowest stage of woman and the lowest stage of man; however, this lowly stage is a movement towards perfection.”¹

A brief and passing comparison between this approach of Islam and feminism and a cursory look at preliminaries of modernity and intellectual thought, modernism and post-modernism and eventually, feminism (that is a product of this trend of thought) speak of a horrific return to ideal mythologies of the golden age of civilization of ancient Greek based on which in the west, the existential philosophy of woman has been designed. There are two sets of Western ideas as below:

- 1- *Religious Idea*: that leans on the personality of Her Holiness Mary (*'a*). This idea began to be eliminated gradually as a role model for western women with the outset of the Renaissance until today so that there is no mention of this great lady in social processes.
- 2- *Olympian patterns*: These ideas that were propounded by the founders of the Renaissance and the pioneers of modernism and feminism involve indulgence in a life of debauchery and pleasure in the mountains of Olympia while only in Athena, goddess of the city

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7 p. 338; also refer to: Status of woman in the Thinking of Imam Khomeini, booklet 8 (Tehran, Institute for Compilation and Publication of the works of Imam Khomeini) in collaboration with Department of Centers and Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 1374), pp. 28-51.

of Athens, a semblance of wisdom and philosophy is observed. However, the superior image is that of the goddess of beauty, Venus¹ symbolizing the emancipated woman that is unrestrained for a life devoid of ethical objectives. With these mythological figures, modern ideas such as Madonna come into being that on their own diminish the sublime capacity of woman to the lowest possible extent. Thus, one cannot consider any ascension for them and regulate a suitable political, social and intellectual life unless we say that in any feminist planning, this existential philosophy is any case observed about woman because the ideas reveal the prospect of growth and in the west this prospect has not been in line for an ascending growth to lofty stages of existence.

2- Critical-Argumentative Approach: In this approach, Imām Khomeinī criticizes the political, economic and value-oriented orders that have trapped woman in lowliness, subjugation and isolation. In this process, different types of dictatorial, capitalist systems and past historical systems in all their political and economic forms, particularly their value system are subjected to criticism.

In this approach, Imām Khomeinī presents one of his greatest intellectual and behavioral differences vis-à-vis women in connection with feminism. Feminism calls the oppressive system that is administered by man as “patriarchy”; whereas Imām Khomeinī (r) considers the tyrannical system to be the evil “Taghut” system that symbolizes violation of individual, social, natural and contractual rights of human beings in which both man and woman are victimized and their rights have been oppressed. Structure-oriented opinion of Imām Khomeinī (r) in this field goes so far as to raise this question that does he not know that the executive of many of the oppressions have been men who exercised control over social orders and reforms. In addition, by formulating and ratifying laws based on their own interests and in many cases seeking their own objectives. In the Imām’s ideal, struggle is initially proposed in the structural dimension which is to engage in a struggle against the oppressive system. However, because he considers empathy between women and men to be the cornerstone of family and social behavior, he regards both of them to be responsible and effective in transforming the oppressive “Taghut” order. He expects both women and men to liberate themselves from injustice and subjugation in the course of

¹ Pier Grimani “*Dictionary of Greek and Roman Myths*” translated by Ahmad Behmanesh, Tehran, Amir Kabir, 1356.

struggle against such systems. He believes that the basis of seeking recourse to Her Holiness Zahrā ('a) lies in struggle against oppressive orders and he states thus that:

“Her Holiness Zahrā ('a) spoken out to the extent of her capacity ... against the contemporary rulers and has condemned them. You must follow her example in order to accept that today is the ‘day of woman’.”

It is in the course of this struggle when lives turn out superior; such a struggle is very deep-seated and it not only involve the form of government, rather, the structure of value and socio-economic order as well. From this aspect too, Imām Khomeinī (r) clashes with the majority of the feminist points of view including with the Marxist-feminist viewpoint that considers liberation of women to lie only in struggle against the exploitative systems (and not in struggle against men and superficial legal structures that is related to the non-Marxist feminists). He believes that value-oriented and divine systems are not favored by Marxists and thus considers political and economic attempts to suffice for overthrowing the established systems. He also does not consider the Marxist philosophy of viewing women like the other views of this doctrine, to be a theory of ascension towards superior boundaries. In any case, Imām Khomeinī (r) immediately after engaging in a struggle against this establishment – that on its own possesses profound cultural aspects - in order to eliminate subjugation and injustice launches the next stage which is the educational one in order to guide women and men to equality-seeking Islamic training.

3- Supra Authority Approach: The holy Qurān by means of an example eliminates “power relationship” between woman and man while rejecting any coercion, subjugation and submission to oppression of women. A case in point of such a woman is ‘Asiya’, the wife of the pharaoh who was a woman who stood up against the tyranny of her husband and in so doing became a model for all male and female believers. ¹ Imām Khomeinī (r) carries forward this exemplar that is an illustration of elimination of relationship between woman and man based on power to the point where it forges ahead

¹ “And Allah citeth an example for those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh when she said: My Lord! Build for me a home with thee in the Garden, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from evil doing folk; And Mary, daughter of Imrān, whose body was chaste, therefore We breathed therein something of Our Spirit. And she put faith in the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was of the obedient.” *Sūrah Tahrim*, Verses 11 and 12.

of one of the most famous feminist points of view that revolves around the theory of equality. Whereas it is customary in traditional societies to base the relationship between woman and man on distribution of power implying that man is superior and woman is inferior and obedient.

From the point of view of Imām Khomeinī (r) when a woman regulates her philosophy of life on the basis of the moral and behavioral standards of Her Holiness the immaculate Hazrat Zahrā ('a) and in the process of fighting secular and anti-people systems arises in struggle, she is then liberated from all these categories of relationships and passes the station of equality and assumes leadership and guidance. To play such a role in feminist thinking becomes apparent provided that women are able to achieve the “other society”; meaning a society that is purely feminine with a leadership, policy-making and active presence of women. However, in Imām Khomeinī’s interpretation of Islam in the era of the Islamic Revolution, a woman is looked at differently. Thus he states that:

“In this Islamic Revolution, the role of you women was superior to that of men. You were active yourself as well as induced the men to activity. Therefore, the honor you achieved is highly praiseworthy.”¹

Elsewhere, the Imām remarks that:

“I regard women to be the forerunners in this agitation and have said repeatedly that women have a greater right over Islam. This is particularly true of women from downtown Tehran; they serve as motivation for the Islamic uprising and as guide for the other strata.”²

While addressing a group of women, the Imām observes that:

“You demonstrated that you are ahead of them; men draw inspiration from you; Iranian men took lessons from Iranian women and learnt from them; the men in Qum also took lessons from you beloved ladies.”³

Here one must ask if such scenes have not existed throughout history for an intellectual to analyze. The answer is that it has existed, however, what counts is the interpreter of history. He brought out women from the unknown

¹ Imam Khomeini’s speech at a gathering of women in Qum, *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 18, P. 402.

² *Status of Woman in the Thinking of Imam Khomeini*, p. 175.

³ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 358.

dimensions of history and an ambiguous presence in the subconscious of man and society onto the scene of self-awareness and an active presence. He is the one who could see the equality of women and men and depict a situation in which a woman forges ahead on the issue of equality and consequently, have such an interpretation of historical events and of the role of woman.

Imām Khomeinī (*r*) summons women to the scene of struggle against satanic systems and thereafter he admires these heroes and acknowledges their leadership position. "Our agitation is indebted to women. Men followed women in pouring onto to the streets. Women would give confidence to the men; they themselves were in the front rows. A woman is such a being who that can kill an all-powerful satanic power.

Indeed, Imām Khomeinī, in eliminating the authoritarian relationship based on the authority of man and subservience of woman, not only arrives at equality; rather, he also goes beyond it and with a unique psychology, refers to the special power of woman that has controlled man and society throughout history and has seldom come out from behind the curtain and stepped onto the realm of self-awareness. If this power has also entered the realm of self-awareness of man, woman and society, it has often done so with a negative face and a critical perspective.

Imām Khomeinī knows that woman in a sacred face or a gallant and courageous face, or a selfless face replete with self-sacrifice, love and affection has always stirred up and fired up the hearts and more so of that of the men. The Imām (*r*) probes, understands and admires this power. Was it not the impact of Her Holiness Zainab's message on the heart and soul of history and human beings that immortalized the uprising of Imām Hussein (*'a*) and transformed his innocence into an energizing teardrop? Thus the Imām states that:

"Man is sensitive in relation to women"¹

Elsewhere, the Imām says:

"The service rendered by men is largely indebted to women...there is a sensitivity in a man that when he sees women coming out of homes for a certain purpose, (the men) their strength gets multiplied tenfold as it occurred in our country."²

¹ *Status of woman According to the Thinking of Imam Khomeini*, p. 169.

² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

In any case, he considers women and men two wings flying towards perfections that with the flapping and raising each of the wings, the flight that is the goal of life is made possible. Because this idea is the desired perfection of Imām Khomeinī (r), he attempts to realize it by means of women and men and to enable it with the participation of both of them.

The basic point is that this standing and position is achieved in the course of fighting against the system of oppression and blasphemy and not in fighting against man for in this struggle he is alongside, in company and shoulder to shoulder with women. In order to attain this leadership, woman has traversed a winding course that not only arises from her courage, faith and smashing of restraining traditions, rather, it is also because her sense of honor and admiration have been aroused and been brought to the fore due to her influence over heart and conscience of men. On this subject, Imām Khomeinī states that:

“Man is sensitive vis-à-vis woman...if he sees a woman showing disrespect, he becomes sensitive.”

Imām Khomeinī (r) is not critical of equality and says:

“A woman is equal to a man.”¹

While endorsing on the equality of woman and man, Imām Khomeinī also stresses a woman’s ability to take the lead and also provides for the conditions and potential for this leadership with the participation of women.

4- Freedom Approach: Although Imām Khomeinī (r) has a unique interpretation of equality and also goes beyond that; however, freedom according to his point of view is a debatable topic. In fact, key topics are not problematic by themselves unless interpreted in different intellectual mechanisms. One of these topics is “freedom.”

Imām Khomeinī criticizes that sort of freedom that looks at human dignity like a worn-out garb and discards it. This dishonored and disrobed freedom may perhaps have been obtained in the course of colonialist, despotic and capitalist systems or in the course of secular value systems. At any rate, that which strips human beings of the power of recognition and selection is against human freedom and dignity. In response to a question on freedom, Imām Khomeinī remarked that:

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 6, p. 358.

“Regarding women, Islam has never been opposed to their freedom; on the contrary, Islam is opposed to woman becoming subservient and treated as an object of desire and has restored her honor and dignity. Like a man, a woman is free to choose her destiny and activities; however, it is attempt by the Shah’s to hinder the freedom of women by submerging them in immoral affairs and Islam is strongly opposed to such affairs.”¹

5- Subservient approach: In order to enter the discussion on freedom and opinion of Imām Khomeinī on this subject, let us first refer to the “philosophy of freedom.” Philosophy of freedom is release from any bondage that hampers the sublime human soul – that has been called upon to praise the Glorious Creator and been addressed to recite eternal praise of his Creator - from seeking spiritual ascension and proximity to God.² Yes, on the basis of that system, structure, behavior, culture and values that drive man towards misery, humiliation and descent into the quagmire of the materialist world are programmed towards violation of freedom and binding the hands and feet of man’s soul. Misery and humiliation of woman also lies in their transformation into objects of desire and in the exploitation of her body, spirit and special attributes in order that a person, system, rule and economy are strengthened. A woman or any human being for that matter treated as an object is a person who is abused and exploited economically, politically or sexually.

From the point of view of the Imām , a woman in authoritarian systems is converted into an object of desire much in the same way that in capitalist orders she is made a plaything by multi-national companies by advertising to increase production of goods or to corrupt the minds of the youth. It is also possible that in closed traditional systems, a woman is subjugated in the family environment and is converted into an object only as a means to earn the consent of man and to serve him and bear children; or she may be exploited at the social level for special political and economic motives. Of course, in feminism absolutely no mention has been made of the topic of subjugation that implies exploitation of the body and soul of a woman in the service of either capitalist or authoritarian systems. Although violence and rape are titles around which the dishonoring of the standing of woman are

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 358.

² *Proximity toward God* the devotee undertakes efforts to reach the absolute truthful essence.

categorized under,¹ However, a special form of subjugation whose elimination is symbolized by chastity and emancipation in a society in which mutual respect of woman and man has been guaranteed is among innovations of Islam and Imām Khomeinī (r) who has observed on this issue that:

“In taking away the “Hijab” veil, they in fact, tore apart the veil of humanity.”²

Elsewhere, the Imām comments on women becoming a plaything and as a means to corrupt the society as follows:

“They wanted to make women a means for pleasure and entertainment of the youth and to prevent them from undertaking important tasks.”³

Feminism authorizes women to exploit their own bodies and souls or the exploitation of their bodies and souls by men provided that they give their consent. However, the subjugation or object of desire approach and its rejection considers this method as misuse and in conflict with the value of the standing of woman and her position that deserves of paradise.

In spite of all these, Imām Khomeinī does not content himself with description and interpretation of the personality of woman and by means of other approaches, presents the active and constructive circumstance of women in the Islamic system. The other recent approaches are not descriptive, interpretational or explanatory; rather they are behavioral, pragmatic, educational and cleansing. In the legal approach, the Imām analyzes the legal bottlenecks of woman and by presenting solutions such as granting right to divorce, acceptance of the condition of marriage, alimony and other legal rights of women during separation and the question of being kept away from her children proposes the main primary steps in designing laws suitable for special circumstances of woman in modern society so that in this manner, he fills the legal vacuum commensurate with the personality of woman. In the participation approach, he encourages the presence of women in all practical, industrial, executive, political, legislative ... areas; while in maternal approach of tutoring and spiritual cleansing, he views woman in the position of a mother to be superior to the teacher and in the

¹ Antoni Gidenz *Sociology*, translated by Manouchehr Sabouri, Tehran, Nei Publishing House, 1373, pp. 206-200.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 3, p. 299.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 191.

position of the teacher, to be on par with the prophets. He regards motherhood deserving of paradise and even counts it superior to the role of the father and states:

“You women have the honor of motherhood and in this honor are ahead of the men and hold the responsibility of raising children in your bosoms. The first school a child is nurtured and trained in is the bosom of the mother.”¹

To sum up, while challenging about Islam as defined by Imām Khomeinī (r) and feminism, it can be said that the most important difference lies in discerning the philosophy of existence and creation of woman and man. The missing link of feminist thought lies in the fact that it is not ready to recognize the existential value of woman and man and special and the unique and incomparable position of each one of them in the order of creation. Especially, that it analyzes woman in the length of history and breadth of geography and not in the depth of existence and existential essence while it also places woman and man opposite each other. In methods of salvation and deliverance, it regards freedom from any previously mentioned principles and structures to be a principle without noting that the essence of a structure by itself is not bad even though it belongs to a particular period unless it contains identity problems. The most important of these structures that are suppressed unceasingly in feminist thought is the structure of family.

Islam considers man’s existential essence to be Divine and superior while it introduces woman and man as each other’s companion and partners in overthrowing the satanic ‘Taghuti’ system, while oppressive man who commits many injustices against woman is himself innocent and has been trained by oppressive systems whereas woman and man without having any shortcoming in their respective creations, complement one another. The family system comprising the father, the mother and the children is not only a religious structure, rather it is also a structure built in accordance with the want and nature of each of the two sexes so that its ability to accept change for its elevation lies in love and affection and compassion of woman, man and children towards each other so that the family unit becomes a hub for nurturing exemplary human beings. Any sort of blow dealt to this general structure towards making it single parent or changing gender relationships is in fact regarded as making it sick and not changing it for the better. Therefore, participation and presence of woman in all affairs is

¹ *Status of woman in the thinking of Imam Khomeini*, p. 146. Meanwhile, participation, legal and other approaches can be examined in the above book.

recommended in a way that freedom and equality - not chaos and anarchy - are regarded as two means for spiritual development.

Imām Khomeinī (r) and Ethical Approach to Women's Social Interaction

Mrs. Mozhgān dādfar

Introduction

Effective and essential presence of woman in the arena of social order in all dimensions and fields depend on the quality and extent of expectations of society of the feminine role of woman. These expectations arise from proposed and defined models of the status and position of woman that is formed based on the principles and fundamentals of human knowledge and global perspective of every culture.

Based on this, presentation of a universal model of a Muslim woman that includes all aspects of her being and that defines her physical presence in various arenas facilitates for her growth and development. Absence of finding a suitable role model of woman and being content with macro slogans and micro achievements results in the reemergence of western and alien models. This is because basically, social thoughts of western philosophy have penetrated our society due to inattention to social issues and improper interpretation of the demands of modern society. In fact, lack of systematic thinking and judgment of social structure that covers all issues and the major elements of a system in different arenas has resulted teachings and subjects associated with western culture and civilization to easily find their way in the cultural, political and economic spheres of other societies -

including our Islamic society- and to be considered as the main theories of growth and development of all communities.

This was at a time when basically, western modernism had based its movement on crossing the process of secularization; and therefore, in the process of accepting the model of the west as a practical model for development of Islamic societies, many of the socio-humanitarian issues took on a western content and moved away from their own civilization origins.

Based on this, considering that the process of intellectual progress and social growth of the modern woman - that began with her entry into the field of social activities – occurred in the west and in the field of industrial civilization; thus, the western woman was readily turned into an acceptable model and pattern for growth and development of women's affairs. Also considering that the development of the west was founded on the axis of secularization, the progress of woman too was defined on the same basis. On this same basis, ethics and spirituality as an individual subject and not a social obligation was inducted in the social presence and interaction of woman.

It was on this basis that the model of the western woman came into open conflict with the teachings and tenets of Islam on the role and place of woman and therefore its acceptance by Islamic societies confronted the Muslim woman with a crisis and a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, she was faced with an imported model that in many respects did not conform with her judgment and thinking as well as her spiritual, ethical and ideological inclinations and leanings, while on the other hand too, the interpretations and findings of the image of woman in Islamic philosophy was such that it was not compatible with the capabilities and talents of the natural disposition of woman.

However, victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was a turning point in restoration of the noble identity of Muslim women in all aspects of life. Basically, the Revolution that took shape on the basis of paradigm of social religion, claimed to offer a religious model of social order, calling for necessity to reproduce many of the social norms and subjects that had been formerly defined on the basis of western culture and philosophy, raising it on the basis of its own desired system. Within the framework of this proposed structure that had taken place on the basis of the interpretation of Imām Khomeinī of the point of view of Islam, social issues regained their unique place and interpretation within the above mentioned structure.

One of the fundamental topics in the course of revival of social philosophy of Islam was the issue of woman. From Imām Khomeinī's point

of view, the desirable model of Muslim woman had been depicted on the basis of the version of the personality of the honorable daughter of the holy prophet of Islam. Her Holiness Fatemeh Zahrā ('a) and was grouped on the two axes of individual and social ethics.

The above model that had provided for woman's social presence based on ethical perfection, in continuation, guided the process of development and elevation of women on the basis of spiritual journey of the Imām which was a source of inspiration of human-social relations in the expanse of Iranian society on the one hand and spiritual and celestial status of Her Holiness Fatemeh Zahrā ('a) on the other, through the corporeal channel.

Therefore, Muslim woman by resorting to this model attained a high level of moral, spiritual and mental elevation; and by rearing individuals of Islamic society played an appropriate role during the Revolution and the war.

Based on this and in order to depict the ascending trend of Muslim woman on the two ethical and spiritual fronts, the present essay has been organized in two chapters:

The first chapter portrays the course of transformation of the personality of woman in her social presence based on desirable model for Muslim women and on the basis of the ideas of Imām Khomeinī.

The second chapter provides the ground for divine and spiritual journey of woman based on spiritual findings of Imām Khomeinī.

Quality of transformation of woman's social presence

The historical record of woman and the social ideas present in it regarding her value and identity predominantly reveal the existence of a point of view during which woman played a passive role and was regarded as an element removed from current social developments. This historical fact in woman's social life emerged as a result of domination of patriarchal notion, prevented woman from playing the requisite role in the course of the movement of history.

Although there are different answers to how a phenomenon named patriarchy emerged in human society and consequently, the inferior status of woman, however, it appears that simple analyses in which woman's role as mother stands out will be presented. Based on this analysis, women due to the physical demands of childbirth and also the necessity of post-natal care, naturally accepted the role of nursing the infant and therefore were deterred from social activities which men engaged in freely and became dependent on

men for social affairs and their livelihood and were relegated to what Simon Dubois, the French has called “the second sex”.¹

Following the Industrial Revolution and the need for employment of a larger and obviously cheaper work force, women found their way into industrial workshops. At this time, in addition to their role as mother, women accepted social roles as well. Although from the outset of entry into the ranks of wage earners, their fundamental preoccupation was securing the livelihood of the family and contributing to its economy, however, with the economic growth of societies and relative elimination of livelihood concerns, the social and cultural activities of women assumed new dimensions.

The expanse of dimensions of woman’s social presence paved the way for emergence of knowledge and new insight into capabilities and talents of her being and therefore, this gave rise to feminist movements directed towards restoration of equal social rights for women and opened new avenues for her participation in the new era.

However, considering that the presence of woman in human-social relations of the modern era occurred in the realm of the industrial society of the west, the western woman came to be regarded as a suitable model for progress in the affairs of women and attainment of the goal of seeking equality. This was while the role model of western woman had been defined on the basis of secularist ideas and revolved around the axis of liberal thinking - a thinking according to which the individual was regarded as more real than the group and his rights and demands took precedence over society and the human being was granted a high degree of self-sufficiency and independence.

What granted an individual person such autonomy and independence was the concept and essence of human being from the liberal point of view based on which human actions was recognized to stem from natural energies of inclinations and inherent desires and their guidance was handed over to the power of intellect and wisdom that was itself considered to be among human capitals.

Based on this, the understanding of the concept of individual opposite the congregation laid the foundation for specific moral and political stances and therefore this supremacy of pure ontology of place of human being found its way into the ethical perspective of liberalism such that through it, the world of realities was considered to lack any kind of moral dimension while human being as an independent observer of reality, was introduced as the factor

¹ *Sociology*, p. 187.

responsible for laying the foundation of those values that were within the scope of his authority and selection.

On the other hand, liberalist thinking in the arena of political system resulted in the plan for separation of religion from politics. Development of this thinking that took place on the basis of inner cultural substance of western civilization occurred in religious societies - including Islamic societies - that as opposed to the past when all political, social, cultural and knowledge links of man was taking shape within the expansive religious gatherings and all these elements would derive their direction and content from religion. However, in the expanse of the modern age and in the course of influence of western civilization, it resorted to accepting models independent of religion, from new philosophies - philosophies that were intrinsically individualistic and endorsed unrestricted and unconditional freedom and regarded a prominent role for the individual.

As such, in the modern age that was a showcase for achievements of western culture and civilization, a model for personality of women emerged that was based on unrestricted freedom implying removal of ethical principles in the social presence and interaction of women. As a result of this process, intellectual transformation conforming with cultural and economic policies of the west that guaranteed growth and expansion of western capitalism with cultural essence of constant rise in consumption and uniformity of global pattern of consumption, the identity and personality of woman that gave emphasis to her sexual attractions under the slogan of individual freedom and in the name of development and progress of woman, was exposed to many economic, political and cultural exploitations.

Betty Friedan projects the incarceration of women within the framework of gender issues, their disinterest in public affairs and social struggle while observing that:

“Freudian survey of gender motives in human behavior, his ideas and wars was easier than looking at society with a critical view and performing something useful in order to correct the wrongs to rights. A kind of individual retreat existed; even the most farsighted and optimistic among us removed our sights from the horizon and then resorted to dealing with the self.”¹

Discussion of this subject assumes significance given the depth and sphere of influence of western civilization and the spread of its appropriate

¹ *Freedom of Women*, pp. 181-182.

model of human-social relations in the core of Iranian society. In fact, creation of the big global village in the modern era that materialized with the aid of communications technology expanded the environment surrounding today's man to cover the entire universe that not only crossed national frontiers, rather, it also went far beyond the frontiers of civilization. It was on such a scale that human beings embarked on compiling and selecting different cultural standards; and of course, this was accomplished in the context of supremacy of western idea.

Therefore, although according to prevailing western philosophies particularly liberalist thought, the human being himself is the criteria of selection of human and cultural premises in his surroundings, however, western models were put forward as the best selection vis-à-vis communities whose civilization and culture were on the decline.

Thus, the essence of western culture and its intellectual substructures - that were based on non-religious rationality - because of intellectual enrichment, economic benefits and political power of western countries, penetrated the mainstream of modern world including the Islamic societies, extensively. Based on this too, model of the western woman was accepted in Iranian society as a model of growth and development of women by the cultural policy makers of the country.

On the subject of promotion of this model in society, Imām Khomeinī has made detailed remarks some of which we shall mention in this article as follows:

“Unfortunately, woman has been oppressed in two stages: one in the age of ignorance or “Jaheliya” when she was oppressed and Islam granted favor to human being and liberated woman from the oppression she was embroiled in during the age of ignorance or “Jaheliya”. The age of ignorance or “Jaheliya” stage was a phase when woman was treated like an animal if not worse than that... Islam rescued woman from the quagmire of that ignorance or “Jaheliya.”. At another time in our Iran when woman was oppressed was during the reign of the former Shah. The Shah indeed oppressed woman in the name of liberating her; they brought down woman from the position of dignity and honor that she enjoyed...it is not known whether the amount of degeneration of women in this century was greater than during the era of ‘Jahiliya’ ignorance or not.”¹

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7, pp. 339-340.

“The era of repression wanted to transform our warrior women into ignoble women, but God willed otherwise; they wanted to treat women like a plaything and like a consumer product.”¹

“Of the great treachery that was committed against us was that they deprived us of our manpower; they pushed back the power of our youth; they wasted the power of our women and made our women decadent...”²

We lost all our way of life because of them ...with the slogans of ‘great civilization’ we were embroiled in a society devoid of culture for 50 years and that too with the slogan of ‘progressive culture!’³

Thus, Imām Khomeinī in the midst of the above mentioned historical situation and in order to reform Iranian society on the theoretical base of revival of religious thought and towards elimination of the western model of thought, took charge of leading a revolutionary movement aimed at changing the status quo that was based on acceptance of intellectual and cultural models of the west and transforming it in to a situation that conformed with the basis of Iranian-Islamic culture and civilization. It was a Revolution whose direction ran counter to the general movement of modern thinking that spoke of elimination of religion from various facets of social living and leads it towards a religious society that would culminate in establishment of religious sovereignty.

Subsequent to the above mentioned transformation process, human-social relations were re-defined around the thought of Imām Khomeinī (r) and were based on his religious interpretation of the model of social system. Towards this end, the subject of woman, their role and support as well as the aspect of their social presence underwent fundamental change. In fact, with a basic turnabout in perspective of ontology, the model of social system that was proposed by the Imām and was aimed at prosperity of human society, offered a model of a woman based on which by giving prominence to ethical elements of the personality of women, the principle of social reforms was made possible.

According to this interpretation, on the one hand the ethical aspect of woman's personality will be extended in the expanse of social system within the framework of family and through woman's role in its educational process

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 300.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 300.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 173.

while on the other hand, woman's presence in society by relying on this moral guideline, guaranteed social ethics. Imām Khomeinī states:

“Woman by her upbringing builds human being and by her correct upbringing, develops the country. The source of all successes emerges from the bosom of women; woman must be associated with all successes.”¹

Therefore, according to Islamic perspective, woman's personality is shaped around the lever of faith and ethics while the prerequisite to woman's positive and constructive involvement in different issues lies in this essential aspect of her personality. On the basis of this perspective, a model is defined according to which woman's social presence in different spheres is mingled with subject of faith and the expected gender-related moral behavior.

By benefiting from radiant personalities such as Fatemeh Zahrā ('a) and Her Holiness the heroic Zeinab ('a), this point of view was able to depict clearly the structure of the personality of the Muslim woman and the expanse of her capabilities and talents. As a cultural personality, Her Holiness Fatemeh Zahrā ('a) laid the foundation of role models for woman in the family in the roles of daughter, wife and mother respectively. Also with regard to her sublime position of a learned scholar in divine tenets and commandments as well as that of Her Holiness the heroic Hazrat Zeinab ('a) as the great flag-bearer of the Hussein Uprising and as a political and revolutionary figure of Muslim women, they both were practical and conspicuous models of this point of view.

Therefore, Muslim woman by emulating these role models in the course of the revolutionary transformation in Iran; with her presence in the arena of struggle towards seeking her human-Islamic rights regained her place in the new social establishment; while in the two political and cultural areas, she achieved something within the framework of the model of Muslim woman.

In the above mentioned point of view, the cultural role of a woman was defined specifically within the framework of educational system so that Imām Khomeinī has stressed this role in many of his proposals and has described it as worthy and significant considering its achievement to be either a source of reform or corruption of society. Thus, in this area, the place of woman due to her effective role in raising human beings was described as being superior to that of men.

Considering that the cultural system covers the knowledge structure as well as the system of beliefs and social values, therefore, interpretation of the

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7, p. 339.

role of woman within the above system in the two areas of knowledge and ethics was depicted in such a way that with cultivation of thinking and acquisition of knowledge, woman in various faculties of learning – that were compatible with piety and spiritual purity – combined her spiritual, ethical and intellectual maturity of her personal spiritual journey with her nurturing role in the family in the mold of the role of mother thereby contributing to the growth and development of human societies. For this reason, according to the point of view of Imām Khomeinī, the role of mother is considered to be the most supreme social base for woman and remarks:

“The occupation of child-rearing of women is superior to all occupations. If you present an upright child to society, it is better for you than the entire universe. This job is the job of prophets - and the prophets arrived in order to train decent human beings.”¹

The political sphere of woman's activity- that in the new revolutionary process provided a vast sphere of political and social activities for women - constituted one of the main grounds for her involvement in society that covered right from the formation of the Revolution to political struggle for victory of the Revolution and finally, to active participation in the process of institutionalization of the new political system. In fact, this sphere was a paradigm of equality of the role of women and men in their rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis society and its ideals.

Imām Khomeinī describes the political role of woman in the following terms:

“In this Revolution, women have a greater right than men. Women reared gallant men in their bosoms. The holy Qurān is all about training human beings and so are women. If brave and human-building women are taken away from nations, the nations would suffer defeat and fall into decadence...Woman must play a role in the fundamental affairs of the country. In the same way that you played a fundamental role in revolutions, likewise you must have a share in the victory and not forget that the country is yours.”² According to the point of view of Islam, women have a sensitive role in building Islamic society, and Islam promotes woman to the level where she can regain her standing in society as a human being and avoid being treated as a plaything. Moreover, commensurate with such a

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 8, p. 90.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 300.

development, she can accept responsibilities in the structure of Islamic government.”¹

In this way, in Imām Khomeinī’s view, woman not only enjoys the right to involve herself in social activities, rather, the interaction of women in the sphere of communal living and towards achievement of human goals is also within the sphere of her responsibility.

Fundamentally, based on theoretical infrastructure of religious thought in the course of the Revolution, Imām Khomeinī presented an approach by means of which the world of matter and nature is the passing stage of man to the world of truth. Thus in this world man undertakes responsibilities that link him and the society around him to the mainstream of legislations that govern the world of existence. Based on this, in Islamic thinking, two themes of human self-awareness and social awareness towards understanding humanitarian-social responsibilities and duties oversee the process of individual growth and social development.

It is for this reason that within the framework of lofty human objectives, all strata and variety of human groups have duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis the self and society towards attainment of individual and social happiness.

Based on this, alongside different social groups, Imām Khomeinī has underscored the need for the Muslim woman to fulfill her duties and responsibilities and has emphasized its significance, by observing that: “Man ascends to heaven from the bosom of woman.” This statement reveals the fundamental role of woman in securing the happiness of human society.

The Imām’s emphasis on the prominent role of Muslim woman in raising the socio-historical movement of society takes place initially in the educational and training structure and in the role of mother and thereafter, in different social arenas. According to the point of view of the Imām:

“The men and women of this country are all guardians of Islam. The question is the question of belief; the question is not that of materiality.”²

It is thus that the Muslim woman is actively involved in different arenas in order to fulfill her humanitarian role in relation to herself, to society and to God.

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 4, p. 436.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 27.

Social Role of Women

Development of the ideas of Imām Khomeinī on the subject of Iranian society that initially makes social reforms possible primarily within the frameworks of religious and ethical commandments – in continuation of the course of social transformation has resulted in development of spiritual perspective in the expanse of human-social relations.

In fact, the spiritual journey of Imām Khomeinī (r) given his charismatic personality - that has now manifested itself in the form of spiritual development of a human being – became the basis for exploring many topics on human beings in the course of an intuitive journey. Therefore, application of Unitarian interpretation of the entire existence – that had been formed on the basis of monotheistic perspective - in the sphere of social life with this fundamental hypothesis that all elements of existence including human being are derived from a single existence – drove pious human beings towards deeper bond between themselves and the society around them in line with lofty objectives and spiritual journey towards the Truth. Imām Khomeinī's remarks at various times are indicative of this profound mystical understanding:

Among the advantages of monotheistic doctrine as compared to all other doctrines in the world is that in monotheistic schools people are trained and educated while bringing them out of darkness and guiding them towards light. All the non-monotheistic doctrines are materialist and these doctrines divert people from the world of light and summon them to enter the world of the material and materialism, thereby drawing their attention away from the world of light....”

However, monotheistic doctrines headed by Islam at the same time as being involved with the materiality and material things, nonetheless their objective is to train people in such a way that worldly things do not prevent them from attaining spirituality...

“Monotheistic religions do not want to conquer lands and do not want to behave with people violently; rather, they want to bring out people from the darkness of the material towards light; to draw them towards God; to draw their attention to God.”¹

Imām's message on the occasion of liberation of Khorramshahr is an outstanding example of the God-seeking spirit of the Imām that attempts to expand it in the spiritual journey “from creature to God”:

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 9, pp. 288-289.

“While being confident of Victory “that cometh only by the help of Allah”¹
I would like to thank the offspring of Islam and the courageous armed
forces...”

O, children of the glorious Qurān and the armed forces, the Guards Corps, the Baseej volunteers, the gendarmerie, the police, the Komiteh, the tribal people and popular volunteers as well as the beloved nation! Be vigilant lest victories, however great and astounding cause you to neglect the remembrance of God in Whose hands lies victory and conquest; and that pride and victory does not engage your attention as this is a big blight and a dangerous trap that chases human beings upon the temptation of Satan and that destroys the children of Adam in its wake.”²

This is the same intuitive spiritual journey that has been interpreted as “positive spirituality.” Positive spirituality is the same true spirituality that begins with the awakening of human being from the slumber and dream of an absolute natural life and knowledge of the fact that in the search for the path of good and perfection, his being is placed within the core of the objective of creation of the world of existence.

This spirituality whose path is rational life and whose destination is to be placed in the orbit of absolute perfection culminating in proximity to God. This spirituality is positive as it does not eliminate any truth of the world of existence whether it pertains to human being or other creatures; rather, it polishes the entire universe with a single inner spiritual factor and makes it transparent revealing the reflection of divine light in all the particles and relations of the components of this universe.

Based on the approach of spiritual knowledge of humanity, Imām Khomeinī embarks on the process of transformation of revolutionary society - that was witness to the changes in the mindset in line with global Islamic perspective – and restoration of values governing human relations and interactions revolving around divine intuition. This is an approach by means of which a human being views all conveniences of life not as a means for showing off power in the sphere of material life and its ever greater acceptance; rather as a sign of the power of God and proof of His infinite favor in facilitating the material human passage; and before all else, he pursues this aim with his spiritual passage.

¹ *Sūrah Anfāl*, Verse 10.

² *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 16, p. 258.

However, a prominent example of the Imām's spiritual understanding in addition to his statements in which he continually explained the infinite Divine power in all affairs in the realm of existence is quite evident in his verses:

Based on this, finding the trend of spiritual insight in the bedrock of revolutionary society - that was above all things was influenced by the spiritual passage of Imām Khomeinī (r) - generated basic alterations in socio-human relations, resulting in agreement of different social strata and groups - including Muslim women - with this movement.

However, a correct understanding of this aspect of acceptance to change of woman's personality would be possible by drawing comparison between two approaches of contemporary anthropology that is the same humanism thinking and spiritual perspective.

Towards this end, requisite perception of western culture from the viewpoint of application of experience of epistemology can be studied in the bedrock of new civilization. This means that with the development taking place in the sciences - that was achieved with the assistance of the physical world and resulted in receiving answers to many human conundrums regarding current natural affairs; and subsequently in controlling nature with the help of advancing technology - a basic turnaround occurred in manner of approach to "objectivity" and the physical world that had been transformed into an area for growth of human talents and innovations, finding a special favor with modern man such way that in an extremist understanding, it resorted to rejection of idea and idealism and consequently, of metaphysics and concentrated its efforts on greater understanding of the physical world and having closer bonds with it. As Dr. Young points out that:

"Our world has become totally material and has become devoid of what psychologists call "psychological identity" or "spiritual participations." We have become deprived of all this to such an extent that if we come across such a feature, we feel a sense of estrangement with it. These phenomena have remained below the threshold of our self-awareness; and if they emerge accidentally, we go so far as to consider these events as being unusual."¹

The above point of view caused humanistic philosophy to be regarded as the interpretation of choice of the western world about place of human being in the totality of existence. This doctrine that began from the Renaissance

¹ *Man and His Symbols*, Carl Gustav Young.

and its aim was to revert the theoretical attention about God to study of the works of human beings as a philosophy that gives importance to human being vis-à-vis others - including even God - to the feeling of human being vis-à-vis his soul and to experimental philosophy vis-à-vis metaphysical philosophy and it emerged as the dominant philosophy in western society.

Noble human values also in consort with this dominant culture discovered a special meaning. For example, "freedom was regarded no longer as a license in the realm of conscience; rather as a foundation of self-determination of individual in relation to any authority and power whose control the individual refuses to accept."¹ The outcome of this trend was transformation of mindsets towards the decisive role of human being in exercising power over the world.

This pivotal change from God to human being gave a renewed definition of the basis of anthropology in western philosophy, causing it to become removed from spiritual perception and religious understanding.

Discovery of deep difference between the two above approaches by putting the focus of analysis on the pivot of explanation of "the self" as the innermost element of knowledge would be feasible in the human-knowledge approach. In this sense, the self "is the factor responsible for management of life that undertakes to regulate the relationship of life with the surrounding environment of the self."²

Fundamental difference intended to explain the nature of the self with the two above mentioned points of view consists of the factor of acceptability from the standpoint of either its rejection or its acceptance.

"Acquisition implies expertise and expertise consists of that which results in superiority of an object over other objects. In this way, if a feature is added to an object, its concept would be augmented so that such an object has been acquired and specialized.³ Acquisition means ever greater acceptance of the special features of matter and material life in a way that in the entirety of existence, in some way it drives a human being to a kind of restriction and allocation in selection while preventing contact with different levels of life in a way that inclusiveness and fullness of his existential dimensions is diminished.

According to this interpretation, humanist approach is based on self-acquisition and thus "self-determination" is the focal point of analysis of human knowledge of this point of view and the principle of acquisition

¹ *Liberalism*, p. 37.

² Translation and interpretation of *Nahjul Balāghah*, vol. 1, p. 111.

³ *Philosophical Dictionary*, p. 242.

depends on the acceptance of this aspect that the human being is a creature who can choose his own destiny in the sense that human being determines his own destiny with the aggregate of the natural resources around him.

Therefore, He created man as a creature with an unspecified destiny and granted him a place in the midst of the universe, addressing him in the following words:

“O, Adam! We gave you neither a fixed dwelling, nor specific form; and nor do We do demand of you to perform a specific task so that you would choose the dwelling, form and work you desire in accordance with your own liking and will. Nature of all creatures is restricted to borders and laws that We have ordained; however, you are not confined to any limit and you will determine the limits of our essence in accordance with your own free will and according to your choice. We have placed you at the center of the universe so that from there you can easily observe whatever exists in it. We have created you neither from the heaven nor the earth and made you neither mortal nor immortal so that you can shape yourself in any form that you wish as if you are your own creator and architect.”¹

Thus accordingly, the western human being endeavored to give identity to his “self” based on his overall capabilities in various spheres and in the bedrock of natural life - that had a special novelty for him - such that in the sphere of emotions, he attained a kind of instinctive and natural love while in the sphere of wisdom and thinking he replaced thinking on the topic of metaphysics with a type of non-religious rationality and reckoning of material living.

In contrast, however, spiritual philosophy is based on the elimination of material acquisitions. “The non-acquisitive self” in the route of his spiritual passages, seeks unity of perspective and focuses on his inclinations so that through elimination of material acquisitions and distinctions imposed on him by the material and natural world, he attains a kind of harmony with the world of unity and gets closer to the One Creator.

Therefore, on the basis of the two above approaches, patterns take shape that reveal many differences in the manner of looking at existence, God and the human being and the type of linkage with these elements. This difference can be clearly seen in behavioral patterns of different social groups and strata.

¹ *Humanism*, pp. 128-129.

Towards this end, application of the above analytical model on the issue of woman and womanhood presents models that are quite different from her personality in human-social relations. The western woman in the bedrock of historical conditions – who because of it had got the opportunity for involvement – started to make efforts at developing her character on the basis of on humanist perception. Considering that this material endowment while being in the sphere of natural life, had taken shape on the basis of liberal philosophy, therefore, the natural criteria of woman - whose main criteria was considered in the whole of her form of personality which lay in her lure and beauty - emerged prominently without any moral obligation and framework, around the sphere of material values and in the field of boundless freedom. The gender aspect - as one of the natural endowments differentiated woman from other humans - stood out conspicuously in the society of the west.

Thus it was that the western woman, although successful in various political, economic, legal and social fields, nevertheless, the bedrock for realization of these achievements was the model inspired from unethical and secular perspectives, thereby paving the way for moral and spiritual decline of woman and consequently, of human society.

In contrast, the woman conforming to spiritual Islamic perspective of human being placed the flow of her existential movement on the basis of management of life according to monotheistic perspective and in conformity with lofty divine ideals. Thus, by relinquishing her natural and material endowments, she attained deeper mental and spiritual links with the world of existence.

Before all else, the Muslim woman, by accepting the dress code of “Hijab” as the most fundamental issue for covering her values and abandoning the highest symbol of her natural life – that was her adornment, beauty and inherent lure – took a big stride in the route to conforming “herself” with the whole of existence.

On this very basis, Muslim woman put into action her spiritual capabilities - that could be regarded as part of woman’s material endowment in the course of linkage with natural affairs - efficiently in the path to the Truth and directed the essence of her being consisting of lofty features such as love, emotion and compassion away from the path of material endowment and towards greater linkage with the spiritual world. Thus, in the bosom of Muslim women, such men were nurtured who would sacrifice their lives and connect to the Creator in order to reach the One and Only Truth.

With this understanding of ontology, the Muslim woman in her individual spiritual passage, by overlooking her natural beauties and material attractions of life, opened her eyes to the world of spiritual beauties and in perpetuation of the flow of her existence and in the sphere of her social spiritual passage in the route to linking with the whole of existence, became a source of spiritual inspirations in Islamic society.

According to this statement that “beauty and attraction disposition of woman although it is not the ultimate objective for creation of woman, can be the major cause in establishing relations of the parts of the universe, including man...and basically, beauty in woman is the language of her absolute wants that exists involuntarily in her and is moving towards collective parts and placement on the ladder of progress and highways leading to perfection. Beauty in woman is in fact, her movement from the individual “Me” and individual desires of “Me” towards the society of “We” and “social desires.”¹

On this basis, the Muslim woman by turning her back to models of western philosophy and on the basis of spiritual understanding in line with the flow of her existential movement attained a fundamental change in the structure of her personality that guaranteed to her the course of profound spiritual maturity in the expanse of individual and social life. Thus, in keeping with human-divine goals of the Revolution, she was transformed into an element that was effective in generating the flow of the historical movement of society.

¹ *Woman in the System of Existence*, p. 9.

Sociological Analysis of Educational Point of View of Imām Khomeinī (r) concerning the role of Woman in Family

Shahlā Bāqerī

In this article, by referring to and analyzing the contents of the words of Imām Khomeinī, (r) in the first stage we have undertaken to explain the educating role of woman in family and the position of the family in the system of guidance Imām Khomeinī (r). On this basis, we have come to the conclusion that from his point of view, the family is the first and foremost place of training of human beings and is the venue for manifestation and outpouring of human emotions and is the main pillar of society. Among the various roles of the members of the family, the role of the mother is a fundamental one and critical for upbringing of children while other roles of the members of family such as that of the father besides other environmental factors and even the role of teacher and mentor have an impact in subsequent stages. The importance of this subject is such that Imām Khomeinī (r) considers many training irregularities and problems of society to be the result of separation of the child from the mother and lack of appreciation of maternal love and emergence of complexes thereof. He evaluates the health of society on the basis of the soundness of the family and healthy relationship of mother and child.

In the second stage, we have attempted to look at his system of training from the sociological perspective of the family and to deal with the role of

the mother in the family from Imām Khomeinī's point of view in the mold of theories of sociology such as the theory of "socialization", "acculturation", "symbolic mutual action" and "learning". In each of these viewpoints, by stressing the mechanism and dynamism of socialization, acculturation, role-acceptance, learning and model-making, we have emphasized the significance of the role of mother in family and in rearing the child.

Introduction:

The system of training of Imām Khomeinī's view is influenced by features of the perfect human¹ being. The perfect human being that is compatible with the needs of the unambiguous religion of Islam and is thus a manifestation of all the qualities of the Almighty God and is the reflection of the sacred light of God; a human being who is the essence of all creatures and is the distillate of the entire universe. Therefore, humane characteristics, definition of training from point of view of Imām Khomeinī (*r*), actualization of the hidden potentials and lofty talents of human being are directed towards making him divine. Therefore, the desired system of upbringing endorsed by him is an objective-oriented system that is directed at the straight path of reaching Allah.

According to the opinion of Imām Khomeinī, the universe is based on the training of human being so that it is at the top of all affairs. This matter reveals more than ever before, the significance of training and education from the point of view of Imām Khomeinī (*r*).

Preferred system of training from the point of view of Imām Khomeinī (*r*)

The next question according to his view is the dimensions of the preferred system of training. Imām Khomeinī (*r*) considers the training of mankind based on the existential essence of human being to possess two material and spiritual dimensions. That is to say, considering that a human being essentially possesses material and spiritual considerations, his training also is undertaken with a view to the two dimensions of his human existence. This in turn explains this important and contemplative point which is that in contrast to the existing systems of training that maintain no compatibility between humanitarian traits of a human being with his training needs and present modern sciences as being separate from human values, the desired system of training of Imām Khomeinī (*r*) has been designed and prepared

¹ 'Perfect Human' is applied on immaculate prophets and the holy Imams who had reached the highest levels of spirituality and deserved to be called as the caliph of God.

precisely in line with a human beings existential values. This is one of the most conspicuous and principal differences between the theories of human knowledge of the west and training systems tied to it with the training system propounded by Imām Khomeinī (r).

Yet another noteworthy point is that the main administrator and overseer of divine training and education is the prophet, because his mission - by divine leave - has been basically programmed for this purpose. The prophet was commissioned to guide human beings and to remove them from darkness and guide them towards light. In other words, prophets are the great tutors of humanity and want to transform the intrinsic supremacy of human being into practical supremacy. It is the prophet who is equipped with this understanding of the skill and the insight relevant to this mission and causes the flowers of the essence of human beings to bloom and thus naturally, the most fundamental issue that is revealed to the prophet is the psyche of human beings. This is because he should understand the soul in order to be able to "nurture the soul". He should understand human nature in the way it is in order to be a good tutor for others. A noteworthy point is that the methodology of the path of training and education depends on the knowledge that the trainer has of the human being and the teacher or trainer will embark on training and educating him in the same way that he perceives him.

Position of family in training system of Imām Khomeinī (r)

After clarification of the definition of subject and educational dimensions preferred from the point of view of Imām Khomeinī (r), we will now take up the position of the family in his system of training.

The family in the training system proposed by Imām Khomeinī occupies a special position. In keeping with his philosophy about extraordinary significance of human training, the family retains its position as the focus of this training and as the cradle for nurturing thoughts, ideas, ethics and transcendence of human spirit. The family is the source for emergence and manifestation of human emotions and is the major pillar of society. However, in the midst of these, and in the midst of the various roles of members of the family including mother, father and children, according to Imām Khomeinī, it is the mother who plays the major and primary role in rearing the child to the extent that no other person and not even the father can catch up with her. Even other administrators of training and education such as the teacher, professor, etc., find a secondary role in comparison with the role of mother. Towards this end, Imām Khomeinī (r) remarks that:

“The mother’s lap is the greatest school where the child receives his education. What the child hears from the mother differs from what she hears from the teacher. The child hears better from the mother than from the teacher. In the bosom of the mother the child is raised better than beside the father; than beside the teacher...”¹

Or he states that:

“... Your homes must be the homes for bringing up children...Religious training, ethical refinement, attention to their destiny is the responsibility of the fathers and of the mothers. Mothers have greater responsibility; and mothers are righteous. Maternal righteousness is greater than paternal righteousness. The mother also has a greater influence on the morale of children than the father. ...”²

Or that:

“... It is the mother in whose bosom the child is reared and who shoulders the greatest responsibility and who the noblest of professions. The job of childcare is the noblest of jobs in the world; it is that of raising a child and of handing over a human being to society. This is the job that God Almighty has sent down to the prophets in the course of history from Adam until the Seal of the Prophets. Prophets arrived in order to train human beings...”³

From what can be inferred from the priceless words of Imām Khomeinī, the education of the child and human being begins from the bosom of the mother and the mother’s bosom is the foremost center and place for rearing of the child. This is because the intensity of role-acceptance of the child from the mother and transfusion and inspiration of the mother to the child is more than from others. Thus, due to dominance of the actions and words of the mother over the deeds and words of the child, it is necessary that mothers undertake their critical responsibility - that is the same job of the prophets - meaning the bringing up of children in the proper Islamic way. This primary and constructive role of the mother in shaping the personality of the child causes “men to ascend to the heaven from the bosom of women”⁴ or great

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 9, p. 293.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 504.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 464.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 341.

and influential women or men to be born in society and history. Therefore, woman is the trainer of society and her social roles gain special prominence.

“... Woman is a human being, and that too a great human being. Woman is the trainer of society. Human beings emerge from the bosom of women. The first stage of the virtuous man and woman begins from the bosom of woman. Woman is the trainer of human beings. The happiness or misfortune of countries depends on woman. ...”¹

Yet another point is that Imām Khomeinī (r) attributes disorders and problems of rearing in society on separation of the child from the mother and to the emergence of complexes stemming from it. He considers the root of most felonies, harms and social ills to result from lack of appreciation of maternal love and being deprived from it. Similarly, he observes that:

“... Children who have been parted from the warm embrace of the mother and brought up in nurseries ... have not experienced mother’s love and suffer from complexes. These complexes are the source of all corruptions or most of the corruptions that plague mankind. The wars that are waged...these thefts, these treasons ...”²

Educational sociology of family and theories

The family and its related issues are placed at the center of sociological discussions. Every sociologist deals with it from special point of view and angle. Basically, sociology has approached the phenomenon of family in consideration of the study of the relationship of the individual and society and the issue of “socialization” and “acculturation.”³

According to sociologists, socialization is the process of learning to become a human being and becoming a human being. The main theories of sociology presented at the micro level for defining and explaining this process are all of the theories of learning type. Many of the present studies and activities in this case have behavior-oriented roots and basically all theories focus on the mechanism of learning. Some other researches follow the theory of mutual symbolic interaction and emphasize different aspects of role-playing in learning. The third group of theories presented in the area of

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7, p. 339.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 293.

³ Soghra, Fatemeh, *Social Role of Muslim Woman in Islamic Society*, Tehran: Publication and Distribution Center of Islamic Propagation Organization, 1370, p. 88.

socialization underscores the stages of growth in the process of socialization. In this field, the Swiss psychology, Jean Piaget, and his supporters have embarked on explanation of different stages of growth.¹

Theories of learning are established on the basis of conditional and fortified principles and laws. Individuals learn those things for the performance of which they have received incentives. Although the theory of learning in the course of conditioning and fortifying is not compatible with the process of comprehension and thinking in training and education and is overlooked, however, what is certain and is also confirmed by the result of researches is the effectiveness of reward and punishment in either establishing or abandoning a behavior. Individual human beings are also influenced by these two factors and we also look at this theory from the point of view of influence - and no more.

The subject that is significant in creation of relationship between theory of learning and socialization is the issue of unlearned responses or forgetfulness and silence. One of the important rules of forgetfulness is that in a series of events and incidents, the possibility of forgetting the first event is substantially lower. Therefore, one must endeavor that children in special situations and circumstances become acquainted with any new phenomenon in the most suitable and desirable manner possible. The results of studies indicate that if an individual at the time of learning is emotionally involved in situation and circumstances, the learnt behavior is not easily forgotten; and considering that in primary childhood learning, emotions are always involved, these primary educations will be highly permanent and resistant in the face of subsequent changes.²

From here one can realize the logical comprehension of the words of Imām (r) regarding the significance of the role of mother in the family and upbringing of children. It is because firstly the bosom of the mother is the foremost place for rearing human beings. Secondly, the mother is a more emotional creature than other members of the family including the father. Therefore, the child from the emotional point of view in his/her first educational experience gets involved in the circumstance and the behavior learned from the mother in the primary educations of the child and because it is accompanied with maternal love and affection is not easily and quickly forgotten and turned off.

Yet another important and basic kind of learning is modeling and emulation. Emulation is one of the characteristics of socialization of human

¹ *Today's Society*, translated by Farhang Kolaei, 1356, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*

beings. Strengthening also normally plays an important role in emulative learning. Bandura and Elterz have shown that children probably emulate a behavior that the model observed for performance of that behavior has been rewarded. For example, it is noticed that the mother first tastes the food and smacks the lips making a sound in order to convince the child that the food is delicious and by eating the food because of it being delicious, he earns a reward.

Word of the Imām also in this regard is as follows:

“... When the child is in the bosom of his or her mother, he sees that his mother is well disposed and is virtuous in her moral behavior. Right from there, the words and actions of the mother are emulated and those children get nurtured by emulating the mother - that is superior to all emulations - and by her inculcations which, is the most effective of all inculcations. ...”¹

As revealed by one of the classic research studies on the role of emulation in socialization, the conciliatory reaction of the parent towards the aggressive behavior of the children results in a decrease in aggressive behavior in them whereas cantankerous reactions and punishment by parents will increase aggressive behavior in children. Considering that the parents are stronger than children, their cantankerous behavior will be effective in the short term and in fact, they show to their children that aggressive behavior is effective and can be employed provided that they are strong.

The words of Imām Khomeinī on this subject are stated as below:

“... All eyes and ears are focused on your words and actions (child). If he/she does not hear a lie from you, he/she would not tell out to be a liar. If the child sees the mother telling a lie and finds out that the father tells a lie, this child would become a liar. If the child observes that the mother is upright person and father the father is an upright person, then this child would be brought up rightly ...”²

Because of the emphasis on behavior based on role model, the proponents of mutual symbolic interaction also pay special attention to the

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 7, p. 283.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 286.

method of developing the capabilities of children for performing the role. These scientists have noted the impact of performing certain roles in the development of children and on this subject they have identical views with the theoreticians of social studies meaning that they consider emulation to be an important feature of sociability of the child. Therefore, individuals who are selected as role models shoulder a critical responsibility because if the father, mother, friend or teacher, who is the role model of the child, is a weak individual, the children who emulate them would also turn out to be weak fathers, mothers, friends or teachers.

The words of Imām Khomeinī (r) on this subject are as follows:

“... A good mother educates a good child and, God forbid, if the mother is deviant, then the child also will emerge deviant from the very bosom of the mother. ...”¹

The eminent sociologist Talcot Parsons underscores the significance of simulation or conformity in learning and sociability. According to his theory that is established on the theory of social learning, it is said that the child simulates with the father and mother who are more powerful. Research on the theory of Parsons has indicated that his theory offers the best explanation about simulation of boys and girls in the United States of America and by studying his experiences, one can determine the effectiveness of simulation in learning and sociability and observe the scientific analysis of modeling from the point of view of sociologists.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 283.

The Imām, Women and Time

Dr. Mrs. Jamileh Kadivar

A study of theories, stances and performance of Imām Khomeinī (r) during his political and social life indicates the fact that commensurate with developments of time and place and influenced by social-political conditions and based on the period of time under study, as on many other subjects, a noticeable change is observed in his point of view vis-à-vis the activity of women. In other words, by studying the Imām's texts (writings, words and actions) within the framework of political and social basis, one can come to know of the transformation in the point of the view of the Imām in relation to women and their activities.

One of the major distinguishing features of Imām Khomeinī in relation to eminent and high-ranking sources of religious emulation and the clergy in this period and previous and perhaps future eras was his sensitivity to issues dealing with time and place as well as consideration for the newly emerged conditions, while giving serious thought to the fundamental principles of Islam and progress within this framework. To put it differently, it was his flexibility in the face of new conditions within the mold and framework of safeguarding the fundamental principles of Islam such that his opinions on women and their social activities were also not made an exception.

By accepting this issue that for analyzing the spoken words of the Imām , we have no choice but to explain the relationship between his writings and words (texts) with the historical, cultural, social and political milieu. During

his political lifetime, one can recount several periods of dialog periods in relation to women and their activities. It is natural that in keeping with the conditions of each period, the point of view of the Imām vis-à-vis women and their activities differ so that these different perspectives reveal the Imām's dynamism in relation to the issues.¹ The periods cited above may be classified under different categories as outlined below:

- 1- From the latter period of the reign of Reza Shah to the early 1960's decade (death of Ayatollāh Boroujerdi and beginning of the Imām's religious authority)
- 2- From the early part of the years of 1960's decade to the beginning of the preliminaries of the Islamic Revolution in 1977
- 3- From the year 1977 until the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in the year 1979
- 4- From the victory of the Revolution in the year 1979 until the demise of the Imām in 1989.

Further, we will undertake to examine the Imām's views in each of the aforesaid periods and the transformations of his views.

First period: From the latter part of the reign of Reza Shah to the early 1960's decade

The first period that specifically started from the latter part of the reign of Reza Shah and ended with the death of Ayatollāh Burūjerdī in the early 1960's decade is influenced by the atmosphere that emerged as a result of the anti-religious policies of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza in the field of revival of traditions and ancient values of Iran before the arrival of Islam and fading of religious values. In particular, the forceful policy of Reza Khan in compelling women to remove their mandatory 'Hijab' or veil as laying the groundwork for emancipation of half the population of the country for involvement in society. This measure according to the Imām was considered to be a link in the chain of policies of the regime to anesthetize people and cause them to become immune to the fundamental concerns of society. It is natural that in such a poisonous climate he would show a negative reaction to any measure taken by the government in support of women and their

¹A noteworthy point that has been overlooked by the respected writer is that the Imām's viewpoints towards women's issues have not undergone a change or transformation. Imām Khomeini (*r*) presented his viewpoints in keeping with the demands of time, place and condition of society. There is a clear distinction between the two views. Institute for Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imam Khomeini (*r*).

activities, describing it as being detrimental to feminine strata in particular and to the society in general.

By adopting clear-cut stance on the subject of abolishment of the 'Hijāb' covering for women, the Imām described it as the "most damaging oppressive action of the cunning dictator"¹ and recounts it as the great act of treachery by Reza Khan.² In the book "Kashful Asrār,"³ while being critical of the government of Reza Khan and this measure taken by him, he writes that:

"... Those who consider civilization and honor of the country to depend on women roaming naked in the streets and by their foolish words imply that with abolishing the veil, half the population of the country would be inducted in the work force (however, what type of work that everybody knows and we know) are not ready to manage the country in a more rational manner and in accordance with the laws of God and the mind. Those who do not have this much power of differentiation and that consider the decadence of the remnants of the European marauders as progress of the country, we have neither anything to discuss with them nor do we expect them to understand our words of wisdom. Their mind, intelligence and feeling have been stolen from them by the foreigners."⁴

In the most historical documents of his struggle for freedom, Imām Khomeinī on the 11th of Jamadiul Awwal 1363 A.H. (1940) while asserting that adversity and misery of the country was because of revolting for personal interests, states:

"It was revolt for the self that removed the 'Chador' (black robe covering women from head to toe) from the head of chaste Muslim women; and even now this practice that runs counter to religion and the established laws of the country is in place - and no one protests against it."⁵

The period under consideration was influenced by policies of modernization and superficial reforms of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza

¹ Khomeini, Ruhullāh: *Kashful Asrār*, p. 239.

² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

³ '*Kashf al-Asrār*' is a spiritual writing by the great leader of the Islamic revolution Hadrat Imam Khomeini (r) Which include a variety of topics and guidance.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

⁵ Khomeini, Ruhulāh: *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 1, p. 22. (Tehran: Center for Cultural Documents of Islamic Revolution, 1261), p. 4. [11 Jamādiul Awwal 1363].

such that it maintains that the covering of women – the ‘Hijāb’ – was the main obstacle in the path of activities of women. For this reason, Imām Khomeinī (r) considers the presence of women in such an atmosphere (in society in which the removal of the veil is a compulsory condition) to be inadvisable and repeatedly announces his position in the face of measures taken by the regime.

Second period: From the early 1960’s to the beginning of Islamic Revolution in the year 1977

The policies of this period are the natural extension of the earlier period. In addition, the regime of the Shah consolidates its power in this period and in such an atmosphere it works with greater power to implement its policies. With a view to the resultant corruption in connection with involvement of women in society during the period under discussion and the dire exploitations of the Shah’s regime of the activity of a limited spectrum of women; and basically, the particular and restricted perspective of the regime in relation to the social activities of women, the Imām repeatedly declared his opposition to the measures of the Shah’s regime on this issue during this period. Accordingly, he addressed the religious preachers and sermonizers with the following words:

“Express your resentment with the involvement of women in social gatherings that necessitates numerous corruptions and come to the assistance of the religion of God; and know that, “Those who assist Allah shall be assisted by Him; and be firm in your resolve.”¹

Imām called the employment of women in offices in the above mentioned years in accordance with the policies pursued by the regime to be mischievous and causing disruptions in the normal course of activities, because the purpose behind the employment of women in certain services and specific jobs was not intended to serve women; rather, he regarded as being directed at hindering the affairs. In the year 1962, two decades after abolishing the women’s dress code or “Hijāb”, the Imām observes that:

“You see it is more than twenty years or so since the notorious abolishment of the “Hijab” dress code of women; reflect on what you have done ever since! You have employed women in administrative offices. You see in whatever office they were employed, that office was paralyzed...the

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 1, p. 180. (28/2/42)

theologians argue not to develop this move and not to send them to the provinces. If a woman enters an organization, she disrupts its workings. Do you want women to attain your independence?"¹

It is noteworthy that considering the exploitation of women as tools – in particular, of their bodies for various purposes - their entry on the social scene in this period was harmful and dangerous according to the point of view of the Imām.

In the year 1962, the Imām while addressing Alam, adopted a resolute stand against ratification of legislations concerning state and provincial assemblies that called for the entry of women into legislative assemblies and state and provincial councils and municipalities and considered it to be in contravention of the established canons of Islam. He declares that the judgment on this issue be referred to the text of the constitution and be delegated to the prominent religious scholars and sources of emulation who are solely entitled to issue fatwa on the issue. By raising the point that the religious jurisprudents of Islam and the sources of emulation of Muslims have issued and shall issue fatwa on its illegitimacy² due to prevalent conditions in that period and exploitation of the presence of women in some social organizations. Thus, they shall issue a fatwa declaring it to be illegal.

The Imām considers the proposal for the entry of women onto the scene of elections and state and provincial assemblies designed more to be an excuse to cover-up the regime's opposition to Islam and the Qurān, and remarks that:

“We saw right from the day that this uncultured and infamous government of bad reputation came to power, that it had targeted Islam. In newspapers they wrote in bold letters that women have been granted the right to participate in elections; but it was a mischievous measure designed to show that it reflected the general public opinion on the subject so that their view of invalidation of Islam the Qurān did not turn out to be right. Therefore, in the beginning when we noticed here and the gentlemen gathered together to work out a solution, our attention in the first instance was drawn towards the same issue. Later when we examined the question, we saw that sir, the issue was not concerned with women; this was a trivial matter; the issue was one of hostility with Islam.”³

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 118. (11/9/41)

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 80.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 209. (10/1/41)

Imām and other sources of emulation or 'Marāja' construed the ratification as violation by the regime in power of the sacred laws of Islam and the indisputable commandments of the Qurān, announcing that the tyrannical government by ratifying legislation that ran counter to religious canons and the constitution wanted to bring shame to the virtuous women and humiliate the Iranian nation.

The despotic regime intended to approve and implement equality of the rights of women and men, thus trampling upon the indisputable commands of Islam and the holy Qurān. In other words it implied that the government wanted to conscript eighteen year-old girls to undergo compulsory military service in the barracks at the point of the gun meaning that they wanted to take away young and chaste Muslim girls and transfer them to centers of vice and immorality.¹

While the regime attempted to gain a foothold and consolidate its position by means of some symbolic and superficial measures in various internal and external spheres; and in conditions whereby the majority of Iranian women and even men were confronted with unspeakable problems, the Imām resolutely states that:

“Is progress achieved by sending a few women to parliament? Did the men who were until now in the parliament bring about any progress for you that you expect your women to bring about progress? We contend that sending the girls to these centers, brings nothing but vice which you shall experience later. You see in another ten, twenty or thirty years after you have sent them, you think you will see anything other than corruption. We are not opposed to the progress of women; we are opposed to vice and immorality; we are opposed to these wrong measures.”²

By raising this question that whether the men were free that the women want to be free, the Imām makes the point that freedom of individuals - be they men or women - is not achieved simply by words and utterances; rather, this subject necessitates change from domain of words to that of action. With a precise understanding of the reasons for the emphasis laid by the regime to involve a strata of women in certain occupations, he would mention the vice and corruption resulting from the participation of this group to be unjustifiable and detrimental to the progress of women.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 153. (dated 1341)

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 305. (25/2/43)

By stating that Islam has taken into account all aspects of women's rights more than everybody else and by respecting their social and moral standing, it has resulted in prevention of interaction that is opposed to the dignity and piety of woman and in treating them like convicts and condemned individuals,¹ and has precisely stated his reasons for his opposition to the presence of women in this period; and while praising women's position and circumstances, he challenges any factor that harms their honor and dignity. By putting forward the issue that during the reign of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah respectively, women were oppressed more than any other strata, Imām Khomeinī observes:

“During the reign of this father and son, our women were subjected to oppression more than any other strata... during the reign of Reza Shah... in the name of transforming Iran into a European country and modernizing it ... you do not know what all they did to women. They tyrannized two groups more than any other: one group was the women and the other was the clerics.²

Therefore, we observed that despite the fact that in this period women enjoyed some superficial rights such as right to elect and be elected and to participate in certain levels of social activities, however, due to the prevalent corruption and insecure atmosphere, women and their families were not willing to participate and be involved in activities so that this state of affairs was restricted to certain limited layers of society.

Secondly, in this period, participation did not exist in the real sense of the term while the limited spectrum of women who were active at the higher echelons, consisted mainly of relatives and confidants of the court and government - not other levels. The activity of women at the lower strata was confined to secretarial duties, services sectors and superficial activities. On this basis, it was the physical body and beauty of woman that was of major consideration and around which their activities revolved and it was for this reason that Imām Khomeinī (*r*) was opposed to the participation and active involvement of women.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 149. (dated Esfand 41)

² *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 354. (11/4/58)

Third period: From the year 1977 until the victory of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979

In the period between the years 1977 and 1978-79, with the events that culminated in the victory of Islamic Revolution, a crucial transformation occurred in Iran's society. This transformation appeared in various affairs and levels. What is relevant to the subject under discussion of this article is the transformation in attitude of women vis-à-vis themselves and change in the society's attitude in relation to women so that this transformation justified the need for the involvement of women in society and their participation in construction of a new edifice that the people had presented.

The Imām while endorsing the oppression of women in both the Age of Ignorance 'Jaheliyah' and the Pahlavi era makes an implicit comparison of the two periods and observes as follows:

"Unfortunately, woman was oppressed in both the eras. In the Age of Ignorance or 'Jaheliyah', woman was oppressed and Islam did a favor to mankind and emancipated woman of the injustice to which she was subjected. 'Jaheliyah' or the Age of Ignorance was a period in which when women were treated like animals or even inferior to animals. Woman in the Age of Ignorance or 'Jaheliyah' was oppressed. Islam liberated woman from the cesspit of the Age of Ignorance or 'Jaheliyah'. At another time, in our Iran, woman was oppressed which was during the reign of the former Shah and the criminal Shah during which time in the name of wanting to liberate her, woman was oppressed; they did great injustice to woman and brought her down from the position of dignity and spirituality that she possessed and turned her into a plaything. In the name of freedom, - free women and free men - they deprived women and men of freedom... they pulled down woman from the position of humanity and lowered her to the stage of an animal. In the name of wanting to raise the status of women, they sank woman to a lower position than she held - and he made a plaything out of woman.¹

By raising the point that Islam is never opposed to freedom of women and on the contrary, Islam has voiced its opposition with the concept of treating women as object of desire and plaything and has restored her dignity and status, the Imām declares that:

A woman is equal to a man. A woman is as free as a man to choose her vocation and activities. However, it was the former regime of the Shah who

¹ *Standing of woman in Imam Khomeini's thought*, p. 258.

preoccupied them in affairs that were unethical in order to prevent the emancipation of women. Islam strongly opposes this attitude. The Shah's regime has of course done away with and trampled upon the freedom of woman in the same way that it did with freedom of man.¹

It is clear from the above comments that the Imām in this era deems the activity of women and their right to self-determination in a healthy and ethical atmosphere to be necessary; and states his objection to the exploitation of women to satisfy the objectives and desires of men.

Considering the special conditions generated, while the Imām during the era of the former regime because of the prevailing situation and the policies carried out by the regime, expresses his doubts and voices concern at the presence of women in social activities, however, in this period he himself encourages women to get involved in society and take charge of their own destiny. By raising the issue that at present the Muslim women of Iran are actively involved in the political protests and demonstrations against the Shah, the Imām stresses that in the Islamic Republic, a woman enjoys the same rights as a man such as the right to education, employment, ownership, voting, being elected - in all areas that men enjoy these rights, women also are entitled to enjoy those rights.²

Being convinced of this issue that from the point of view of human rights there is no difference between men and women, because both are human beings and that a woman has the right to self-determination in the same way as a man, the Imām was of the opinion that the differences existing between woman and man has no connection with their respective human dignity.³

By raising the point that according to Islam, a woman has a sensitive role in building Islamic society and that Islam elevates woman to a level that can restore her status as a human being in society and to release her from being viewed as a plaything or subject, the Imām declares that a woman can accept responsibilities in an Islamic government appropriate with such a growth.⁴

Based on this premise, and in the course of the revolutionary movement of the people, he repeatedly declares that in an Islamic system, woman as a human being can participate actively with men in building the Islamic society, but not in the form of a plaything or an object of desire. Neither she

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 3, p. 370. (16/12/57)

² *Standing of woman in Imam Khomeini's thought*, p. 61.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

has the right to lower herself to such a level and nor men have the right to think of her in such terms.¹

By stressing the need for involvement and active participation of women on the social scene in this period, the Imām declares repeatedly that the Shiite doctrine not only does it not eliminate women from the scene of social living, rather, it places them on the lofty pedestal of humanity in society.²

By rejecting misgivings regarding restrictions on women in an Islamic system, the Imām would insist that women should be present on the social scene in the same way as the men. He opined that women were involved in all spheres. By reiterating that he wanted women to attain the lofty human status and that a woman must have a say in her destiny, the Imām thus rejected the past attitude as well as expressed his opinion in relation to the future. Based on this perspective, women responded positively to repeated calls of the Imām during the months that lead to the victory of the Islamic Revolution, so that they suddenly appeared in protest demonstrations and engaged in other social activities that led to the collapse of the Pahlavi regime thereby rejecting the image of a plaything and announcing her presence on the social scene. It is noteworthy that in this period, the involvement particularly of those women who in the past did not find the environment appropriate for the involvement of themselves and their families draws one's attention more than ever before. In other words, with the reassuring words of Imām Khomeinī about the involvement of women, from then onwards, throngs of women from various guilds, classes and age groups make their presence felt on the scene and consider it their duty and fundamental right to be involved in activities.

Fourth Period: From the victory of Islamic Revolution in 1979 to the demise of Imām Khomeinī in 1989

The fourth period covers the period from the year 1978 until 1989. In the first month following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Imām declared categorically that Islam involves woman in all spheres in the same way that it involves the men in all spheres of living. By raising the point that Iran cannot be developed only with the hands of men, the Imām declares that the ruins left behind must be rebuilt by the entire Iranian nation - both men and women.³

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³ *Ibid.*, p.66.

In the new era age that had begun, the Imām held the opinion that women must be involved in determining the basic destiny of the country and start a movement and an uprising whenever it is necessitated.¹

While admitting that what was more significant than everything else in Iran was the transformation that occurred in Iranian women² the Imām believed that if this movement and Islamic Revolution had no result for our country other than the transformation that it brought about in our women and youth, it would suffice.³

By making the point that the change that had occurred in women in the post-Revolution period was far greater than the change taken place in men, the Imām declares that:

“The amount of service that this respected group of people has rendered to Islam in this period is far greater than the service rendered by the men.”⁴

An important and noteworthy point in the point of view of Imām Khomeinī in this period in addition to his wish that women be present in the arena was his reiteration of the need for women’s involvement in politics and the comparison he makes regarding involvement of women and clerics in politics. On this subject, the Imām states:

“Women have the right to take part in politics; this is their duty. The clerics are also entitled to be involved in politics; it is their duty. Islam is a political religion in which everything is political; even its acts of worship.”⁵

In view of the fact that normally, the area of politics is considered a male stronghold and the misgivings instilled by the regime of the idea of separation of religion from politics during the years of the Pahlavi reign, these remarks of the Imām are very meaningful and thought-provoking. In other words, in this sentence, the Imām draws a comparison between women’s involvement and activities in the arena of politics with those of clerics in politics and considers both to be equally important. Furthermore, he regards involvement in the arena of politics to be both the right and duty of women.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Yet another important and noteworthy point in this period was his stress on participation of women in elections and voting. This idea that was previously rejected and condemned by the Imām and other sources of emulation or 'Maraja' due to peculiar political and social atmosphere prevalent and subsequent corrupt practices was however, in this period put forward as a religious duty and obligation. This is one of the sensitivities of the Shiite leaders' vis-à-vis the time and the prevailing conditions that for an established action in two different periods of time two different rulings are issued. In this period, the Imām has repeatedly stressed the right to vote of women and states:

“Women have the right to vote. The rights we uphold for women are superior to those in the west. Women in Iran have the right to vote, to elect and be elected.”¹

While paying tribute to women as a stratum that played a major role in the victory of the Islamic Revolution beside men, rather ahead of them, he draws the attention of women to the fact that with their active participation, they guarantee the victory of the Iranian nation, because participation in this matter is a national and Islamic duty.²

By endorsing the social involvement and activities of women and reiterating its necessity in the new era, the Imām has also dealt with the question of his opposition to this issue during the Pahlavi era stating:

“Of course, there is no objection to the employment of, the right kind of employment of women, however, not in the way that they (the Pahlavi regime) wanted. They did not hold the view that a woman should find a job. Their aim was to degrade women and men and bring them down from the position of dignity that they held and not permit women to develop naturally.”³

On the principle of maintaining dignity and honor while fulfilling social duties the Imām believed that today women must fulfill their social and religious duties and safeguard public honor and perform their social and political tasks based on that public honor.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

While making the point that in the same way that men must participate in political affairs and safeguard their society, women too must be on par with men in social and political activities; however, the Imām believes that it is essential to safeguard Islamic principles in these activities¹ and analyzes and justifies the activities of women within the framework of this fundamental principle.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Involvement of woman in creative fields

With regard to the point of view of Islam and philosophical
and divine opinion of Imām Khomeinī (r)

Dr. Ahmad Ali Eftekhari

Introduction

If we turn the pages of the sorrowful story of the book of the journey of the socio- historical life and innocence of woman with the capable fingers of research, at first sight our eyes would focus on the fact that this true story is sometimes funny while at other times it is mournful and sad causing teardrops to trickle down the ashamed cheeks of the emotional reader. Many a time in most of the pages of the times it is the source of love and fascination as well as of feast and excitement in every get-to-know you gathering in the mold of an artist.

At each point of time, the pen of destiny has written a page on the eventful history of her life in accordance with the demands of philosophies, tastes, global perspectives, power and sovereignty of religious and cultural values as well as national and group traditions.

For example, in the explicit words of the glorious Qurān, once upon a time they were buried alive and regarded as a source of disgrace. Sometimes they were taken as captives and as history testifies, they were not owners of the product of their own labor and even of their own children. At other times, they were treated as properties and left behind as inheritances. In certain places on earth, soon after the death of the guardian, they were denied the

right to live and burnt alive. Nowhere did they have dignity, personality, freedom or even the right to petition.

However, after investing her chastity and honor as capital, she finds a place within the household. Consequently, she attains matriarchy and adds to her domination of her environment. She receives inheritance; gains financial independence; amasses wealth and then grants loans to friends, relatives, husband and children and receives interest.

Once upon a time she would be set free by addressing her with the following words: "You are free like this camel," rather they would make her the prey of wild boars of the valleys whereas today, she disregards her marital obligations and anytime she wishes pays a visit to a home. For a moment she mourns her loved ones and shares in the grief of orphans and the disabled left over from the world wars. In order to play her critical role, she visits workshops, farms, factories and labor complexes, enters labor unions and syndicates alongside men. For long years she engages in labor, animal husbandry and farming and while being aware of the oppression of the era, she chants the slogan of freedom and launches political movements in order to be on equal terms with men and dreams the flight of fancy. She steps into the arena of politics, commerce, sport, culture, art, service, education and the entire social gamut and eventually, success becomes her constant companion.

After the irreversible passage of time, ebb and flow of efforts and movements, now we ask, "What freedom does she enjoy? What is her status, identity and desired place? Or...

In this magnificent gathering, on the pretext of renewing our allegiance with the lofty ideals of the beloved mentor of spiritualists; with the perspectives and profound and divine ideals of the Imām in relation to the status, personality, standing, freedom, glory and mission of Muslim woman in society and in cultural, artistic and other social spheres, and to take a reflective view and learn from the brilliant and reproofing guidelines of his eminence for solving the problems of our lives so that perhaps, we would be of the virtuous followers and act in accordance with the ideology of the Imām and of genuine Islam.

Obviously, any society wanting to attain the desired circumstances in ethics, art, civilization, the sciences, knowledge, perfection and development, must avail of its productive elements (women or men) in a healthy and prudent manner removed from any kind of discrimination etc... These two elements have assumed the name of 'human being' in the lexicon of existence. As far as features of human being are concerned, man has been described as the embodiment of majesty while woman as the manifestation of

beauty of the Exalted God. Rather, one must say that, human beings who have traversed the course of worship fully are in possession of both characteristics of beauty and majesty on a moderate level. Hence, in the world of humanity and spirituality neither has prerogative over the other. Before dealing with freedom and equality of women from the Islamic perspective and the late Imām's ideology in different social, political, artistic, ideological and cultural spheres, I would like to offer all the liberated women in the world, particularly our sisters in faith in our Islamic country of this valuable piece of advice that learn how to live from the most appropriate models in the world of Islam and to follow a route that the phoenix of happiness flies on it. Do not display yourselves like the aliens, the deviant, the ill wishers, the immoral, the overtly beautiful but indecent women and the soulless and demoralized westernized scarecrows. Look at the examples of the fluctuating histories of the fall and decay of ancient nations and the chronic corruption of western societies. Never distance yourself from morals and spirituality in any social sphere of activities. Do not ever lead family and society to oblivion, corruption and destruction. Safeguard your honor and majesty and do not implore aliens for what you possess. Listen attentively to the core substance of the message of the Imām on liberation and release from westernization, when he had observed that:

“They engaged in propaganda in order to disrobe you of the dignity that you command and westernize you. Cosmetics and fashions are imported from abroad; everything you need be imported from the west. Everyday that they undergo changes, you too change accordingly. All had got used to either becoming westernized or becoming nothing.”

Adding that:

“As long as you do not rid yourself of this imitation, you cannot become independent. If you want to be independent and you want to be recognized as a nation, then you must abandon aping the west.” (September 1979)

“Seek refuge in Islam for Islam brings happiness for you.” (May 1979)

“Women should not be deceived into thinking that the position of a woman demands that she paints herself with cosmetics to beautify her and appear on the street without observing the “Hijab” covering. (Dress for Muslim women) is a status they gain. This is not the status of a woman; this is playing with dolls.” (February 10, 1980)

We hope that all heroic and freedom-loving women of our society seek refuge under the shelter of Islam and seek happiness and honor in chastity and be liberated from becoming slaves to passion under the auspices of monotheism while beautifying their actions with moral virtues and human ideals and in private, protect, support and guard the society as stated by the late Imām that:

“I hope that Islam is strengthened with the devotion of women who are the future and backbone of this nation.” (May 1981).

Woman and the history of freedom

Since time immemorial and ancient civilizations, among all tribes and nations the pen of the wrath of time has sketched no destiny except wretchedness and contempt, isolation and slavery, deprivation and silence in the face of injustice, vagrancy, oppression and being victim of hardheartedness and mercilessness of tyrants, annihilation in the cause of decadent and superstitious beliefs and toleration of injustice and tyranny etc...on the colorful tablet of woman's life. Her weak body under the unmanly whiplashes of narrow-minded and brutally superstitious people has at every time become more emancipated and compels her to think how best she must respond to all these mischief. When will the time come for breaking the chains and shackles of slavery? How long must she tolerate harassment and torture? When will the phoenix of happiness and freedom fly over the airspace of her fortune?

She was eternally hopeful of regaining her lost rights. She would pass her life in apprehension and hope so that an opportunity would come her way and she would trap and defeat the enemy. She looked forward to drawing out the sword of revenge from the scabbard of age-old fury and punishing the men who fight the oppressed and subjugate the deprived. In the sphere of human societies she worked to demonstrate her powerful, glorious and competent presence and to lean on the elevated seat of her lofty hopes and aspirations and to defend her equality, personality, values, social base, ownership and finally, her freedom. At last the great events in the world like the world wars and industrial revolutions etc...provided this golden opportunity to her. The world wars placed an additional burden on the shoulder of woman and changed her life that was replete with hardship and suffering, dramatically. Woman who had for a lifetime been engaged in guardianship and was preoccupied with the thought of her children and family, with this bolt of resurgence began mourning the heartrending sorrow of the loss of her children, husband and other beloved. She had lost her

guardian while being surrounded with orphaned and disabled children. In response to the agonizing cries of children and spending her years, she is drowned in the sea of shock and incredulity. She thinks about getting rid of the clutches of poverty and threat of oblivion and a step forward towards management and supervision so that with her powerful hands unties the hidden knots of life. Next she turns to the factories, farmlands and various workshops and takes advantage of the absence of an efficient work force in society while the worldly capitalists keep a watch on these pigeons exhausted by the cruelty of the bitter cold of time, featherless and wingless searching for seeds with exhausted, trembling and weakened legs. They welcome them in the best possible manner and make the best use of the available opportunity and gather them all in a labor assembly and now, they all are laborers and wage-earners.

It is here that the family system is disrupted; the honor and dignity of woman is violated. Enthusiastic youth, women and men liberated from the chains and shackles of the church converge and fearless and unperturbed by social disgrace, undertake any immoral action. Identities are unknown and there is no past record. Now they can establish a party and association on an equal footing; enter labor syndicates and with freedom of writing and speech, voice their demands in unity.

This unprecedented change weakened the foundations of peaceful family life and violated all its aspects. Urbanization was quickly established and new life with fresh methods was took shape. Sloppiness in the labor environment like fiery torches set fire to the pure and unencumbered living of the people. Economic hunters sought help from this favorable condition forcing the chaste woman to flee the peaceful and secure family environment. She must yield to corruption, abstain from marriage and take off the garment of chastity so that novels would be written, magazines would be printed, exciting films produced, and beauty queens would be chosen while young girls would aspire to become the woman of the day. Desires would be fulfilled; their naked bodies would be advertised for exploitation and profits in the name of art. Here we would like to remind of the words of His Eminence in endorsement of this policy of the charlatans of our time, when he had stated that:

‘The deviant poisonous pens and speeches of uncultured speakers introduced woman as a consumer good. Anyone desiring to get a hint of those crimes may take a look at the newspapers, magazines, books, compositions and writings to see what oppression and crime were committed against woman - this trainer of human beings and tutor of the times - in the

name of freedom and progress of woman. May they be disgraced and may the pens of their intellectuals be broken.” (May 5, 1980)

Yes! Their personality and identity must be crushed and be placed like wax in the hands of political and economic leaders.

Alas! In this sphere of life, women put on show exactly that which the satanic directors wanted. Since time immemorial, they had charted out a calculated and clear-cut plan for achievement of this sinister objective.

After a time, when she had succumbed to the abortive scenarios of these global actors, woman came to realize that she had surrendered the rein of authority. She was no longer the one to decide on her work, education, art, sport and all aspects of life. At the side of colorful clothes that she was wearing, the dyes that she rubbed on her face and exhibited herself; in her thoughts when she reflected, she was like an unpaid slave who had entrusted the light of her existence free of charge at the disposal of the carnal desires of men by appearing in artistic, marketing and gratification societies as well as political, economic ... spheres, and had dulled her. She carefully reviewed these indecent behaviors and abuse by charlatans and lustful men lurking in ambush in the initial lines of this sinister plan and reverted to her true self. She realized that this time too she had been overwhelmed by the ruling capital, labor and production system and art. She became aware that she must respond to the incessant tyranny of man. Her troubled spirit and disturbed thoughts gave promptings of the movement for liberation and gave tidings of total freedom. At this stage too, a group of exploitative men pretended to support her and would chant the slogan of freedom alongside women in order to ensure the survival of their own industry and capital and make additional gains thereby further igniting the flame of women’s passion for liberation. With this deceitful camaraderie, they made woman their sympathetic friend for implementing their sinister plans and caused them to fall into a deep slumber and dream the bewitching visions of liberation. They paved the way for elimination of values, lofty ideals, religious beliefs, tribal and family traditions, ethics and dignity and the entire valued cultural, social, artistic and ... principles, and continued with their silent, creeping, purposeful and desperate movement.

Now we ask those that cried out for freedom that for what purpose and on what issue was freedom intended? In what matter is a woman free? What objective does she pursue with freedom? What is its harvest? And ...we obtain the answer on the practical scene as follows:

By chanting this slogan and attaining freedom, at first sight woman felt a sense of magnanimity and came to believe that she had ascended to her lofty place.

She was enthusiastic about attaining values and acquiring virtues. She viewed the despotism of bygone days with humiliation and considered her role in all basic destinies of society to be constructive; and with all her being, she announced her readiness in various social, political, economic, cultural, artistic and ... spheres on an equal footing with men. She would build towering castles of hope and aspiration in the air; oblivious of the fact that she was like a glass exposed to the dangers of stone. The deceptive culture of liberation formally enslaved her and made out of her a respected maidservant, a polished slave and a plaything for flirtations. How beautifully the Imām unveiled the plots of the colonialists on this subject stating that:

“Women were corrupted in recent times. They made a plaything of women, like dolls; this was an insult to the dignity and status of woman.” (February 1, 1979)

In the ‘message of enlightenment’, he added:

“Wake up and do not be deceived by these devils. They are deceptive and are seeking charming women.” (September 24, 1979)

In denouncing the civilization of the west and its deceptive policy, the Imām remarks that:

“This is their civilization. This is what they want from civilization. This is what they want from the freedom of woman and man. The freedom wanted by the west is that they should be free to do whatever they want; that they be free to indulge in illegitimate sensuality.” (July 7, 1979)

Elsewhere, he states:

“We are not opposed to civilization; we are opposed to immorality and prostitution; we are opposed to these wrongful acts.” (25/2/58).

In a more profound look, we view the goals of the harbingers of freedom of women in the world beyond this sloganeering and colonialist culture as follows:

The jobs awarded to women consist of acting, dance and singing, sex workers, air hostesses, hoteliers, models for fashion wears, advertisers of various merchandise, something at the level of table, office furniture and decoration of the room of director general; in the role of a personal secretary with a golden belt and ...

We see the sinister objective of the criers and supporters in the practical arena where there is no interesting announcement except that it is adorned with the nude body of a woman. Those films and television serials draw the attention that screens the levels of nudity. Those magazines are bought that discuss sexual issues; those trade centers become more successful and beat the competition that display the charming and ravishing bodies of the stars and artistes advertising for them in the best possible form.

A country is ranked first in attracting tourists whose sea side resorts and brothels are saturated with silver-bodied girls. The television channel which arouses excitement using physical attractions created by these masters of creation that are broadcast hours after midnight would attract the largest number of viewers. Thus, freedom was not meant for woman; rather it was meant for wicked men to exploit these charming and thrilling girls. The only achievement of freedom for women was in discarding her formal clothing in favor of underwear (pioneering African modernity).

Alas! She did not know that the self-centered powers aimed to destroy her, conquer her soul, thought and will; and by means of this ominous conquest, attempted to corrupt the other half (man) of the globe and to obliterate values, sanctity of the family and the noble ideological, social and cultural pillars. On this pervasive policy of colonialism too, the profound-thinking Imām states thus:

“They built cinemas, bars and brothels in order to corrupt women and men and destroy the two in the name of freedom.” (August 24, 1979)

He also alludes to the bitter fact of Iran’s westernized society before the Islamic Revolution and states: They wanted to present our women as they wished and to destroy these large strata of society so that with their degeneration, the entire country and future generations would be destroyed. However, the Almighty God did a favor to this nation and granted this victory to our country so that I am hopeful that with the commitment of women, the future and backbone of this nation and Islam will be strengthened. (May 2, 1981).

Yes! They simply desire the destruction of values, arousing carnal passions, coquettishness, fashionableness, nudity, advertising and displaying

sexual prowess in brothels and ... They wish you (women) to be brainless such as a doll, a scarecrow and a model...and nothing else. Alas! You too responded positively to their sinister invitation; everyday with colorful dresses, fashion magazines, artificial dyes, cosmetics and every kind of association with men take a step towards reaching the illusory heights of modernity designed and presented by the west. Based on their policies of domination, interests and capital, they must produce and supply; and towards this end, what person can be better exploited than you?!

You are both a determined advertiser as well as an eager buyer. For this reason, your hair, voice, body and taste is exploited by them in the mold of 'art' and you like whatever they produce. You buy whatever they advertise. What additional profits they amass out of your being. They are sitting at leisure and with precise and profound researches; they design your hairstyle for today; your dress and make-up for tomorrow and your recreation and entertainment for the other days. They advertise them all over the world for people like you who are after imitation and display - and that too with all the power and means of mass media apparatuses at their disposal. .

Today, after all those bitter experience of the mischievous acts of bygone days, by submitting to whims, you fall like a bait straight into the mouth of the whale of deceit in the turbulent and wavy sea of propaganda of global imperialism. In this black market of poisonous axes, those who pluck the flowers of lusts have targeted the petals of your beauty, dignity, morality and ... And all the ill-wishers want your talents without ethics and without spiritual perfection; and desire your facial beauty without the spiritual beauty. Before the 'glass' of your life is shattered with the stone of treason of ruthless seekers of pleasure, by relying on the mind, intuition and sound judgment, you can carry the messages of sublime human, ethical and artistic values based on Divine convictions; and in the shelter of chastity give the gift of serenity and peace to your family and society for verily, your glorious mission and praiseworthy talent is concealed in this critical affair. Our great Imām has depicts this vital role of woman so beautifully stating that:

“You must endeavor to be useful and guide men, advise government administrators and be good counselors for society.” (February 24, 1981).

He adds:

“The good and bad of a society stems from the good and bad of women in that society. Woman is the trainer of society. The foremost stage of the perfect man is spent in the bosom of woman. Woman is the trainer of

human beings; the prosperity and misery of countries depend on women. The source of all prosperities arises from the bosom of woman. A woman's duty is to train human beings. It is women who strengthen nations, who give courage and raise courageous men in their bosoms. If women that rear human beings are taken away from nations, the nations would be defeated and corrupted; they would be defeated." (May 16, 1979)

It is hoped that this invaluable advice given by the sage of the nation of Islam is used as a guiding light of political, social, artistic and cultural path for all Jihad-nurturing and merited women of the Islamic society of Iran. As underscored by His Eminence, they must be grateful for this great value-based transformation and not be deceived by the poisonous pens and words of cultural conspirators and not revert to their former circumstances. (March 15, 1981)

Woman from viewpoint of Islam and perspectives of Imām Khomeinī (r):

Islam is the foremost religion that grants equal rights to women and men, independence, right to ownership and self-determination etc. for woman and is the foremost great harbinger of woman's freedom in the world in contrast to the opinions of some uninformed claimants who argue that it is the western world that has granted freedom to woman. 10On this subject, Imām Khomeinī has also observed that:

"Islam has never been opposed to freedom of woman; rather it has objected to treatment of woman as a plaything. Islam has restored woman's dignity and prestige. A woman is equal to a man; she is as free as a man. We want to rescue woman from the corruption that threatens her." (May 6, 1978).

The Imām further remarks that:

"Islam has not rendered as much service to man as it has done to woman. The service that Islam has rendered to woman is unprecedented in history." (November 17, 1978).

At the first step, Islam has introduced woman as manifestation of creation of the glorious God, proclaiming that she is better than man and of one and the same essence and substance.

Involvement of woman in creative fields

“And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmates from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.”¹

In fact, Islam believes that self-respect of woman is superior to that of man. The criteria for superiority of man lie in knowledge and ‘Taqwa’ or piety. The deplorable behavior of the Arabs in burying innocent girls alive has been roundly condemned in Islam. It calls upon their blameworthy conscience to judge for what sin was they killed and informs them of their crimes. It grants a daughter to the Prophet of Islam (SA) and calls her “Kauther” or ‘abundance of bounty’ while it renders the ignorant detractors childless thereby transforming the criteria and revolutionizing the ideas of the age of ignorance or ‘Jabiliya.’

Where Islam praises great and renowned men, it remembers beside it the name of a noted woman as well. It remembers the prophets Adam and Abraham and their wives; the prophets Jesus and Moses and their mothers; the Pharaoh and his upright and illustrious wife and the prophets Noah² and Lot and their unworthy wives. It names His Holiness, the prophet Solomon and queen of Sheba and His Holiness, the chaste Joseph and Isabel who is a slave to her lust.³

Islam extols heroic women everywhere and considers existing differences to lie in their natural attributes, explains the plus point of each attribute to be distinct from the other. It never prefers apple to pear and gillyflower to lily. It considers the differences to lie in the type of obligation, not holding that the existence of woman is the key to the existence of man.

It notes the role of one to be that of a ship and that of the other to be of the captain. Islam considers woman to be made up of the same substance as man. Thus the holy Qurān commands:

“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made `you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.”⁴

¹ *Sūrah Ar-Rūm*, Verse 21.

² ‘*Hadrat Noah*’ was one of the famous prophets of God who built arch by the command of God to save creatures from severe storm. He preached for God many years among his nation.

³ *Image of Woman in the Words of Imam*.

⁴ *Sūrah Al-Hujurāt*, Verse 13.

Islam rejects the illusory and superstitious ideas that woman is the offspring of Satan; that she is a sinful soul that is born into this world; that she does not possess a soul and is the prelude to existence of man.

In yet another verse, woman is described as the source of peace; rather, a garment for covering psychic and spiritual imperfections and deficiencies stating that: "They are raiment for you."¹

By reminding of the story of Adam and he and his wife's residence, it addresses both of them and categorically states that both had wronged themselves and due to practice of banishment of the former, both are driven out of the Garden of Eden. Islam does not regard woman to be responsible for the sin of Adam as in Christianity. Woman in Islam is not the origin of calamity and death and cause of expulsion of man from paradise, nor is she referred to as the cause for the death of Jesus Christ. She is not an obstacle to perfection; both were deceived by the respective wills that each possessed and were expelled.

In all stages of canonizing, setting the duties, enforcement of legally binding religious limits of "Hudood", acceptance of repentance, materialization of prayer, reforming the affairs, divine guidance and favor, reward and punishment for acts, blasphemy and invalidation of deeds, acceptance or rejection of devotions and acts of worship, enjoining piety and release from the psychic afflictions and ills (such as lying, jealousy, suspicion, backbiting, derision, finding fault etc...) does not differentiate between woman and man.² The Imām also refers to this valid Islamic principle and observes:

"In the same way that man must shun immorality, woman must also shun immorality. Woman should not become a plaything in the hands of lewd youths. They should not bring down their status; they must come out of their homes with make-up on and expose themselves to licentious people. Women have a position of dignity; they have authority and hold the status of mothers; they embody the realization of man's aspirations and have a great role to play in society. (February 1, 1979 and May 17, 1979)

We see that in the timeless religion of God and statements of the elite advocates of the dynamic doctrine of Islam that following the position, personality status and mission of woman, reference has been made to the prescribed limits of her relations in various social spheres. The Muslim

¹ *Sūrah Al-Baqara*, Verse 187.

² *Woman and Bringing Message*.

woman has been directed to preserve her beauty and adornments; protect her sexuality and gaze; enjoin good and forbid evil; observe the conventions of talking to strangers; refrain from joking and being soft-natured; avoid using cosmetics and make-up in presence of strangers; avoid unnecessary traveling and sight-seeing in every neighborhood and district; take care to walk in a style that does not display her hidden physical attributes and ornaments; observe Divine piety in marital life and safeguard her human dignity and status as well as maternal honor under the shelter of monotheism and religious and moral obligations etc...

Yes! The Muslim woman knows that the blood of the religion of Islam is modesty and dignity while the affliction of religion is carnal desire and that abstinence is superior to action. The 'Hijab' (Islamic mode of dress for women) prescribed by Islam for women aims to preserve their values and is not intended to isolate them. Thus, by safeguarding chastity, they seek proximity to God and considers the manifestation of inner adornment to lie in the outer adornment or 'Hijab'.

The pathway to attainment of lofty objectives lies is through preserving values and refusing to transgress the limits of moral behavior and chastity. Islam considers piety or 'taqwa' to reinforce love and compassion in conjugal relations and attracts divine favors in socio-artistic etc... spheres. She seeks her heavenly and true personality in the shelter of shunning what is forbidden, for verily, the future of the affairs and the world belongs to the deserving and the virtuous - and this is the promise of the Truth and the promise of Divine Favor.

Art and role of woman

As art stems from mankind's sound taste and essence, it is something inherent and common between both woman and man and with regard to the aforesaid matters from the point of view of freedom, status and mission of woman in human society and various perspectives, we believe that women like men have the right to choose from various artistic arenas and to develop their talents and tastes as well as to fulfill their mission in this area.

Before dealing with woman's role in artistic fields, let us first provide a definition of 'art' in the context of the modern era and present various points of view as an introduction to the closing remark.

- Art is the foundation of human civilizations, because speaking, moving, drawing, carving tools, calligraphy and writing ... is among the arts. In other words, art generates human knowledge and now

knowledge and science that have reached their maturity have forgotten the bosom that has nurtured them.

- Yet another definition states that religion places the meaning of life in the worship of the One God and in implementation of His will. Art is sentiments emanating from love of this God and arises from belief in His law. In this statement, art has been regarded as being on par with the motto of prophets and the heavenly scriptures and is based on observation of the principles of religion and expression of the positive aspects of living. The result is that superior art is inevitably linked to religion and the God-seeking spirit of mankind.
- Again, it has been said that whenever the meaning of life is in freedom of soul from creature attachments, good and sublime art is instigation of feelings for elevation of spirit and good moral behavior. In other words, art emanates from moral ethics and spirituality so that if an art speaks of moral deficiencies, passions, carnal desires and ..., it is removed from the realm of art. Art must therefore observe ethical criteria so as to create a healthy social life and provide suitable basis for spiritual and ethical growth and perfection of human beings.
- By yet another definition, art is the embodiment of life that provokes the most profound feelings of well being and the most profound perceptions in a human being. Art as such is a call to happiness and perfection of idea. It reaches its transcendental horizons when it has a single system and superior harmony in form, frame, content, attraction and reality.
- Art arises from beauty, simplicity, ethics, freedom etc... and is one of the astounding and practical manifestations of human life. It is the discoverer of human genius and illustrates man's love of the physical and of the truth of existence in a most suitable manner.
- Art conquers the inner space of human beings and thus, one must know from which human being art has originated and what is happening in the soul of the art-loving human being and the patrons of art. Which art are they enthusiastic about and patronize and of what person? One must not ignore the amazing impact of art on the behavior, words, thought and action of human beings. Each work of art is presented to society is never confined to the individual border. Therefore, art must be supplied by human beings who are experts in the sphere of human life and practical and superior art. Art is to be implemented with total sincerity and motivation for the rational life

of man because the outcome and achievement of art is for the life of people and not simply for pleasure and beauty. Towards this end, we see that art in most artistic circles of the world today is devoid of these criterions. The profit and pleasure motives - as two idols of today's industry-oriented man - necessitate no attitude except this.

- Art in many parts of the world, particularly in the Occident, has been corrupted because of the unbridled relations of woman and man and indulgence in sexual issues. They must be told that the movement of sexual instinct is so rapid and accelerating that it does not require your skilful encouragement and inducement.
- Modern art has brought in its wake nothing more than psychic disorders and disintegration of the families, collapse of human values and rational living.
- The aim of art in the contemporary world is designed to disrupt monotony of life and trigger bewilderment in the artistically inclined and not influence rational, enlightened and objective living of human beings. Their art is a pioneering art. In other words, it is cut off from all knowledge, experience, public sentiments, customs and traditions of society and the environment and does not take into consideration any social and visual origins in its proposed units, indicating a future that is removed from the present and current realities while being estranged from the ideals of the society and intellectual and ideological movements of the people of the era and its society. Such arts are of no use to people and are only useful for imaginary artists and such and such artistic foundations.

It is appropriate to note that from the Islamic point of view, originality rests with rational life and one must pay attention to the useful aspects of any form of scientific genius and artistic work etc...as a means for human beings to attain ethical perfection and spiritual growth or else it is to be rejected. The result is that:

The art of Muslim woman manifests itself from the window of her faith. Safeguarding her 'Hijab' covering, innocence, beauty, perfection as well as the family environment and stability of Islamic society is an art that cannot be put into words. The art of pure and Godly woman is in taking good care of the husband and raising virtuous children. It is in striving and development as well as in involvement in political, scientific, religious, cultural, service and educational spheres.

Her art is understanding, cooperation in the family economy, keeping trust, commitment to ethical marital life, unison with mutual objectives of

life, inculcating values and teaching righteous traditions and valued ethics. Her exemplary art is to raise perfect human beings and men of holy struggle and martyrs of glorious stature.

It is involvement in all political-devotional scenes of the Revolution; it is pursuing the aspirations of the late leader and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran; it is guarding the bunker of social ethics. The talent of our heroic women lies in their participation in the bunker of legislation, scientific and research conventions of the world, health, treatment, service and educational centers. Her art is to rely on the seat of judgment, teaching, interpretation, enlightenment and spirituality.

Her art is to endeavor in worship of the Deity and be patient and steadfast in the path of building, development of the soul and safeguarding of Islamic values.

Her art is to be a mother and to safeguard maternal honor. Her art is to participate in the struggles for elimination of oppression and in political movements. Her art is constructive, motivating and effective. She is actively involved and encourages others to participate and how superior her advice falls on the ears and hearts of the husband and children. It is here that the Imām , while paying tribute to the extensive involvement of women in all scenes of the Revolution states:

“Your bosom is the bosom of innocence, chastity, dignity and purity. You have served Islam well and have a big share in this Revolution.” (May 13, 1979)

Yes, the art of our women lies in shunning fashion, luxury, submerging in material trimmings and temptations of living; it lies in denunciation of consumerism, moral decline, corruption and perversion as opposed to women of other societies.

Our women’s role model is the chastity of Mary, the dignity of Zahrā, the courage and forbearance of Zeinab, the sacrifice of Asiyah, the selflessness of Khadijah and the martyrdom of Somayyah and virtuous and God-fearing behaviors of other heroic women of Islam and the role models extolled in the glorious Qurān.

They are guardians of society and trusted custodians of religion and the nation. (And this age-old ideal of the true essence of Islam, was what the old sage of Jamaran had stated)

Thus, our women set foot in the arenas of art while preserving these values and with the objective of art for prosperity and perfection. We shall make references to how well they have fared in the end.

Involvement of woman in creative fields

Most of our women are employed in handicrafts, weaving, spinning, embroidery, carpet weaving, pottery, dyeing, needle work, sculpture, tailoring, crocheting, beadwork, filigree work etc...and in some instances in their respective occupations they have earned universal fame for themselves and for our country.

A vast majority of the respectable women of our country have turned to the art of painting, miniature, poetry and verses, writing, music, acting (in the theater, cinema, television, radio) and various branches of dramatic arts, sports etc...By preserving their Islamic and human dignity, they have ascended the ladder of success so that each of them in their own right enjoy a unique popularity. May their name and memory remain immortal and honored and may the hand of divine success come to their assistance.

In conclusion, the place of woman in sublime art and Islamic philosophies is that she becomes a messenger and guide to the best of things, to be an enjoiner of virtue and good as well as motivator of action. She should be a devoted artist and a teacher of the arts. She should breathe the spirit of hope, movement, commitment, sincerity and piety in the heart and soul of individuals and society. She should guide the society to happiness and prosperity by her able rearing. She should crystallize the genuine religious and national aspirations. Her art should be dynamic, purposeful and express values; it should neither be opportunistic nor fuel the flames of immorality, lewdness nihilism, deviation and perversion in the hazardous course of material living and break away from ethics, honor and spirituality.

It is hoped that our artistic society crystallizes Islamic and revolutionary values and the great talent of the artists of the modern world place elimination of tyranny, sincerity, humbleness, literature, spirituality, enlightenment, leadership, wiping out poverty, global solidarity, sacred struggle and faith at the head of their priorities for their normal living in order to belong to Hezbollah - the party of God – and be the followers of ‘Ruhullah’ - the spirit of God.

The Compassionate God willing!

Ethics and family rights according to philosophy of Imām Khomeinī¹

Dr. Mohaqeq Dāmād

We seek God's grace and favor for the soul of all prophets, saints and martyrs in the cause of truth, particularly Imām Hussein ('a) as well as the departed soul of Imām Khomeinī and implore God to make us their true disciples.

I have been asked to dwell on the practical and theoretical points of view and ways of the Imām concerning the duties of couples or so-called family rights. In this short time, I shall mention a few points as briefly as possible. What step has the Imām taken on the issue of woman in Islamic society? The Imām is an outstanding 'Faḳīh' or Muslim jurist. He practices jurisprudence or 'Fiqh' using the traditional method and treads the same path that the jurists have treaded. On no occasion does he invent a new method and he follows the method of traditional Muslim jurisprudence 'Fiqh' emphasizing traditional religious jurisprudence while at the same time we note that he brings about such massive transformation in family relations, movement of women, status of women and their position in society. I request you to focus on how must the question be answered? He is a personality who

¹ The paper is a speech delivered by Dr. Mohaqeq Dāmād at the Eighth Seminar on the Theoretical and Practical Ways of Imām Khomeini (r).

follows in the footsteps of great theologians of the past and who continues to insist and endorse their ways. To the extent that we are aware, if a person was to deviate from the normal method, he would be the first to voice his protest while at the same time we see that in practice, he brought about such a massive transformation. Thus, where must we search to find the secret of the issue? What has he done and from what route has he brought about such a change. Today, I would like to answer this question within this short span of time.

Ladies and gentlemen! You know that the Imām's Revolution began in 1963 and it began from the time that the issue of women's participation in electoral jobs was put forward. However, this beginning resulted in such a manner that he himself observed: "We can say that our Revolution is indebted to women." How must one reconcile the two attitudes? What route did he follow on this issue? Please note that as far as I am aware of, the secret to this question is hidden in one issue which is that the Imām is a religious authority or 'faqih'; that he was a practicing jurist; that he is a competent religious authority of 'Mujtahid' while at the same time being a teacher of moral principles. Please take note, that the question is that I think in our session, the ladies and gentlemen are predominantly learned; they are well-read. They know how to raise the question. Do you know the relationship between jurisprudence or 'Fiqh' and ethics? What is 'fiqh' and what is ethics? They are two disciplines and institutions. How can we separate the two? What does the professor of jurisprudence or 'Fiqh' teach that the professor of ethics does not; and vice versa?

Which person is called a jurist or 'faqih' and which person is called a scholar of ethics? Sciences have definitions and the definitions distinguish them from each other. Tell me, what is a moral predicate; and what is a 'fiqh' predicate? I ask in order to make it clearer. If we say that it is forbidden to tell a lie, then is this 'Fiqh' or is it ethics? What then is ethics? What kind of lie if I had said would make it ethical? If I say that breach of trust is bad, that it is condemned and forbidden, then is this jurisprudence or ethics? How should we say that a predicate is jurisprudence or 'Fiqh' and how should we say that it is ethics? Please note that law is that which has functional guarantee in the world whereas ethics does not have a functional guarantee. In other words, it is law if we say homicide is a crime, because a person who commits homicide must pay the legal penalty, whereas if we say such and such act is indecent, but it is ethics if it is not liable to be punished should a person commit it. Can we make such a distinction in jurisprudence of 'Fiqh'? No, because punishment in jurisprudence or 'fiqh' includes

as a result of bearing hardships and toiling. Now, this man desires to have a new woman and to remarry. If one asks of jurisprudence, it immediately says that it is within his rights; that he can on the spur of the moment even without having any justification, divorce the first wife. He can immediately after “eddeh” (period during which a divorced or widowed woman is prohibited to remarry another man) provide her with a limited means of livelihood and expel her from the house and then bring in the new wife. Whereas the religious jurist considers this practice to be legitimate and correct and is in keeping with the criteria of jurisprudence, however, what about ethics? What about manliness? What about fidelity? What about justice? These concepts that are value-based concepts argue that this is disloyalty; that it is cowardice; that it is unjust. However, it is not forbidden. Please note, it appears that if we want to involve the entire ethics in religious canons in this manner, then the word of such and such Jew becomes acceptable. In other religious canons we do not have ethics. In religions that have canons such as in Judaism and Islam we fall short. Whatever is forbidden in religion is bad and whatever is allowed is good. If we translate it in this way, ethics is no longer meaningful. However, it is a different story if we look at ethics, the laudable ethics, and the very contents of practical wisdom that we mentioned as being a pre-jurisprudential principle. What is the meaning of pre-jurisprudential principles? It means that if during deduction, we came across those principles, jurisprudential interpretation is within the framework that conforms to ethics, and thus we have not transgressed the ways of the religious jurists and have not changed the method, although we have accepted the pre-jurisprudential principles in their original form. In other words, in the course of practicing the religious canons and deduction of canonical laws and tertiary injunctions, the principle is justice, loyalty, kindness, friendship, safety, comfort, association with what is good. The holy Qurān has not provided the details of a formula for family life; rather, it has stated an ethical principle. “Association with what is good” is a general ethical instruction. As for this command, a religious jurist will argue that this ethical command should be discarded because the jurist is present and has universal applications etc... However, if we say the main principle is “association with what is good”, then what does good mean? Today’s good deed may differ from yesterdays. What counts is the good. ‘Good’ implies good deeds that are recognized generally. In my opinion, this is the new work that was undertaken by the Imām and is unprecedented in the history of jurisprudence.

He came and provided functional guarantee for affairs that were a series of pure ethical instructions and had no functional guarantee in legal terms prior to arrival of this great religious jurispudent. You see if I attribute this to the Imām, it is because the Revolution has emerged victorious and the revolutionary council has been set up; of the primary laws of the Revolution Council that were definitely referred to the Imām and can certainly be attributed to his consent or verbal or practical endorsement is the law to establish special courts for family. Please note that the legislation for establishing special civil courts was written in 1979 and the Imām as a traditionalist jurispudent and keen follower of Javāherul Kalām,¹ and clearly endorsing previous jurispudents, gave his stamp of approval to it. In the special civil courts legislation, the issue was raised - and you see what a transformation it has brought about! Prior to this law, the religious jurispudents quoting article 1150 would say that a man can divorce his wife any moment that he wishes. Article 1150 of the civil law from the viewpoint of jurisprudence says that divorce is the prerogative of man; the authority lies with him. There is no need to display reluctance; he can also grant a divorce willingly. However, the Qurān commands that, “wa in khiftom shiqaq bainahoma wa man ahleh” which the previous jurispudents interpreted as ethic; an ethical advice. “Wa in khiftom shiqaqa bainahoma wa man ahleh” means that if at some time they want to separate, it was better that they send an arbitrator. This is a pure recommendation. You see the books of the previous religious authorities were written in this manner. However, this honorable man (the Imām) has come and given his stamp of approval for the special civil court, endorsed this ethical instruction legally and guaranteed its operation and thereby brought about an amazing transformation. This ethical instruction became a law. This ethical instruction that had no legal functional guarantee until then so that if a man wanted to divorce his wife, he should go to the court of law, write a petition giving reasons for seeking separation so that the court would investigate it, give its verdict and the arbitrators prepare on the reasons for the separation. Divorce without permission of the special civil court was prohibited and no divorce was entertained during the early days of the Revolution which took place in 1979. The transformation that one can maintain was an ethical instruction that was treated in all the books on jurisprudence simply as a recommendation and advice to the effect that it was better or recommended that you act in this way or that way, the Imām

¹ '*Jawahir al-Kalam*' is the famous work by Sheikh Mohammad Hasan Najafi. This is a comprehensive encyclopedia of jurisprudence includes the views and sayings of scholars.

arrived on the scene and insisted that this ethical instruction must now become a legally binding act.

This matter must be performed in many of the issues in this manner and the Imām approached this subject in this manner. Now let me leave the discussion of the family. Sirs, you know that in the glorious Qurān there is a clear and long verse about wastefulness and extravagance. It states that, “Innal mobazerin kano akhavan al-Sheitan” which means that squanderers and wasters are the brothers of Satan and in fact, are ahead of the brothers of Satan. It is clear that these are very evil individuals, however, have you ever seen anyone being flogged in court because of committing a wasteful act? Have you seen anybody being whipped because of extravagance? How does the court treat these individuals? In spite of the fact that their deed is forbidden religiously and the Qurān refers to them as the brothers of Satan, yet no religious jurispudent has approached the matter as a legal commandment. If a jurispudent of Islam practices jurisprudence according to the model proposed by the Imām, he would issue a ‘Fatwa’ or religious verdict in this manner and say that from now on since an Islamic government has been established and holds power, it must punish the prodigal and extravagant people. This is exactly the method of the Imām that a directive which until now was regarded as a pure ethical issue and had no legally-binding functional guarantee is from now on legally binding. I do not say that all ethics must be transformed into law - not at all. I say that because society has many deviations from religious decrees, thus in any case there must be worldly functional guarantees placed on these issues. Islamic philosophies must both touch the soul of the people and inject morality through spirituality; or it must place legal guarantees on these issues if it wants to reform through religious decrees. If you believe the two can be reconciled, then why not? Men of spirituality were successful in educating people. We do not deny this. However, those who like us maintain that there must be both religious decrees and the traditional methods, the why for such directives that God has so often considered evil in the Glorious Qurān, you do not counter with any legally binding guarantee? It states such categorically in the verse on polygamy and the jurispudents immediately say that these decrees are ethical. It appears as if that God forbid, quarantine has been placed on this verse of the Qurān. However, a religious authority should come and treat this issue legally and grant legal guarantee to this ethic. When it states that, “Wa anakhaftom wala al-vajedah...means that there should be no fear of injustice. There should be confidence in justice and this confidence must be obtained from the court as pointed out in that same special civil

court bill. If one wish to remarry, the court should not grant him permission to remarry unless and until he demonstrates that he has the power to observe justice; to observe justice in alimony and that he has need for a family. This is the very verse of the Qurān and is the method of jurisprudence; however, another type of approach to it draws another inference of it.

To sum up, in my opinion, the method adopted by Imām Khomeinī on the question of family rights, is a transformation that places legal functional guarantee on ethical decrees of living. In his era, many ethical issues were converted into law and were granted legal guarantees for their implementation.

**Role of Women in
the two revolutions of Ashūrā and Islamic Revolution**
Sixth Seminar on Theoretical and Practical Methods of Imām Khomeinī (r)

Hujjat al-Islām Mas'ūm Borujerdi

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
Alhamdullilahi Rabal 'Ālamīn wa Salavāt wa Salām 'alā Rasūlallāh (SA) wa
'alā ālehi al-tāherīn

Topic of Discussion

What is of note in this paper is a study of the role of women in the tragedy of *Ashūrā*¹ and in the Islamic Revolution of Iran from the point of view of Imām Khomeinī.

However, the main focus of this writing is indeed, the words of the Imām in his politico-religious will and testament regarding women. In the preamble of the will, he writes:

¹ *Ashūrā*: tenth day of the Islamic lunar month of Muḥarram. Imām Ḥusayn ('a), the third infallible Imām from the Prophet's Progeny rose against the corrupt rule Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah in 61 AH in spite of a handful number of supporters to safeguard and set right the course of Islamic religion. In the bloody epic confrontation that took place in the desert of Karbalā in contemporary Iraq, Imām Ḥusayn and 72 of his supporters were martyred on the tenth day of the lunar month of Muḥarram and the day came to be called *'Ashūrā* [the tenth]. The followers of Imām Ḥusayn still mark those eventful days by holding mourning ceremonies

“We are honored that our women, young and old, prominent or anonymous are involved in the cultural, economic and military scenes on equal terms with men or sometimes are better than them in raising the status of Islam and achieving the goals of the Holy Qurān. Those of them that have the ability to fight and take part in military training programs, which is a crucial obligatory duty for the defense of Islam and Islamic nations and who courageously and devotedly liberate themselves from the deprivations imposed on them and also on Islam and Muslims by the enemies of Islam and by the ignorance of friends of Islamic tenets and the Holy Qurān. They have bravely discarded the superstitions created by enemies to serve their own interests through some clerics that are ignorant of the interests of the Muslims.

Those women who are unable to fight have served behind the front lines with such distinction and valor that it has caused the heart of the nation to brim with joy and delight while causing the hearts of the enemies and the ignorant, who are worse than the enemies, to tremble with wrath and anger. We have repeatedly witnessed our honorable women cry out, as did the venerable Zeinab (‘a) that they are proud of losing their sons in the way of Allah and the beloved Islam, and that they are willing to sacrifice everything they have. They know well that what they have earned as reward is higher than the bountiful paradise, not to mention the insignificant worldly belongings.”

In this part of the last will that is perhaps the most detailed part, he has dwelt on the subject of women, a number of points have been taken into consideration.

First is the presence of women on an equal footing with men in various fields including that of the war. Second is that those who keep women at home and do not permit them to participate in society are either ignorant friends or intelligent enemies of Islam. Third, the glorious Qurān and the decrees of Islam necessitate women’s involvement in society. Fourth, the enemies, by promoting themselves and the belief of some ignorant clerics of the interests of Muslims, have eliminated women from the social scene. Fifth, women must voice their protests at the enemies like Hazrat Zeinab (‘a) did. Sixth, women of Islamic society of today have sacrificed their all including their children in the cause of the Almighty God and the beloved Islam.

The author in the midst of his points and analyses will discuss some aspects of the remarks of the late Imām Khomeinī mentioned earlier and by making a comparison between today’s women in Islamic society and women

at the time of shaping of the Ashūrā movement, underscores the significance of the involvement of women in various social spheres.

Raising the Question

If you refer to the books dealing with the events of Ashura, you would come across many questions that every writer and speaker attempts to respond to them. They are questions which if put forward and responded to indicate the point of view of the researcher vis-à-vis the colossal Hussein ('a) epic. It is appropriate for the author to point to a number of these questions so that in their light, he can develop the subject of his concentration in this article. If we fail to query about a historical event, then not only have we been negligent in understanding the causes and motives of that event; rather, we have also allowed amateurs to interpret that event in any way they desire. For this reason, it is necessary for any thinker who regards himself to be a follower of the doctrine of Ashūrā and who has quenched his soul from the clear waters of the philosophies of Hussein and Zeinab ('a) to inquire about any event, however big or small and pertaining to the revolt of Imām Hussein ('a), to resort to an analyses and not avoid coming up with tough and occasionally ambiguous questions for the pathway to perfection of philosophy lies hidden in querying and theorizing.

As we look at Ashura, we ask: Why did Imām Hussein ('a) revolt against Yazid and not against Muawiyya? Why did he journey to Kufa? Why did he visit Mecca before departing for Kufa? Why did he bring along his wife, children and other family members? Why did he say, "If you leave me alone, I shall return from this very path? Why did he break the allegiance with his companions on the night of Ashura? Why did he tell his companions to use the dark of the night and flee the scene along with the men of his kith and kin and did not say so in relation to the women and children? Why did he not fight like the prophet of Islam (SA) and His Holiness Ali ('a) at the forefront of the battle but was the last to go to the battlefield to fight? Why did the people of Kufa who had invited him revolt against him? And why did they lament on the next day?

The subject of this article deals with the two latter questions, whereas the former questions require speaking and writing and an input of opinions.

The two latter questions however, that deal with the cunning and unfaithful behavior of the people of Kufa are the most long-standing of questions that can be traced to the day after when Imām Sajjād ('a) had remarked that: "Are they shedding tears for us? Who then killed us?" Upon entering the city of Kufa, when the Imām was faced with the weeping and

wailing of people, he protested thus that if the people of Kufa were these same massive gathering of moaning and wailing people, then which person was the murderer of the young men of the clan of Bani Hashem and the offspring of the Messenger of Allah (SA)? The one who in the searing desert of Karbala behaved in the most violent manner and was afraid of committing the most heinous of crimes?

In response to this question, numerous views have been presented and whoever reads a book about Ashūrā is familiar with these views and the author does not intend to examine, review and evaluate these views. However, it is necessary to discuss a number of them briefly.

It is our view that the people of Kufa were so far removed from the genuine Islam that the Islam presented by Yazid and Muawiyya was in their view the true Islam while the teachings and thoughts of Imām Hussein ('a) were devious in their opinion. Although no more than 60 years had elapsed since Hijra (migration of the prophet of Islam) of the holy prophet (SA) yet a large number of the companions of the prophet (SA) who had observed the administration of the prophet (SA) were alive. However, the evil propaganda and soul of carnality had so distorted the realities of the genuine Islam that a foreigner who was an alcoholic had become the leader of the Muslims and was the Commander of the Believers.

Obviously, in this analyses an elementary answer crosses one's mind that it were the people of Kufa who had invited Imām Hussein ('a) to set up an Islamic government in Kufa against Yazid. Therefore, they had not been too removed from the pure Islam in the manner mentioned in the aforesaid analyses. Yet another theory is that the people of Kufa were supporters of the family of the Prophet and had invited Imām Hussein ('a) to Kufa to establish a genuine Islamic administration and thereby, revive the memory of the just administration of the Commander of the Faithful Hazrat Ali ('a). However, the sudden arrival of Ibne Ziyad to that city, created such fear and terror in the hearts of the people of Kufa that they forgot their treaties and trampled upon them; and not only did they not support the progeny of the Prophet of Islam; rather, with the fear and terror that Ibne Ziyad had instilled in their hearts, they even went to the battlefield, fought against the Imām and took the members of his family as captives!

The problem that exists in acceptance of this theory is the sycophancy of the people of Kufa. Although this theory explains the engagement of the people of Kufa in war, yet it does not explain their myriad savageries and oppressions. A soldier participates in the battle out of fear of the ruler;

however, burning down tents, placing severed heads on spears and engaging in other acts of savagery is not compatible with such an explanation.

On the third theory, in view of the social fabric of Kufa, some people have said that Kufa is a city of barracks; it is a garrison town that was converted into a city; and that *modus operandi* of the soldiers naturally and among the Arabs of that era in particular was blind obedience of the commanders or tribal chiefs who might as well have been the commanders. Before the arrival of Ibne Ziyad the Arab tribes of Kufa and the masses sided with Imām Hussein bin Ali ('a) because tribal chiefs and military commanders have been supporters; however, after the arrival of Ibne Ziyad and intimidation of a number of the chief and bribery and promises of bounties to some others. Thus because the chiefs and commanders supported Ibn Ziad, the ignorant people of Kufa also blindly followed suit and waged a war against the family of the prophet of Islam while a group that were neither cowed down by the power and authority of Ibne Ziyad nor tempted by his offers of gold and glitters were martyred.

From various aspects, this analysis is good and acceptable and it is necessary to remind the point that social issues are among the events that call for very exact statistics and information for their precise analysis. Just on this very day when we pay attention to our surroundings, we cannot readily analyze the events minus statistics and information. Therefore, what are expressed as analysis of the past events are simply speculations based on limited information and sparse evidence quoted in history books. The analysis is accepted that could explain various aspects of an event, linking together divergent evidences.

The theory about the war of the people of Kufa on the one hand and their remorse on the other can be put forward as the fourth theory. In this theory, the role of women has been scrutinized carefully and the activity they have shown in this matter has been duly analyzed. According to the author of this article, the role of women in the tragedy of A'shura can be considered from diverse angles. The women who were present on the side of right and supported Imām Hussein ('a) fulfilled their duties so boldly that they would be a model for freedom-loving women and men of the world until posterity - brave women who were either martyred or whose offspring were martyred. Those who were left behind conveyed the message of A'shura to subsequent generations. Only a person like Her Holiness Zeinab ('a) who was present in the camp of the right can be the harbinger of the message of Ashūrā and activate Kufa and Damascus and shake the tottering foundations of tyranny even if he or she is not being martyred and not one who relaxes in the

security of the home and considers himself to be a follower of Imām Hussein ('a). In the frontline of God brave women were scanty, because the frontline of God is "small"; men of God were also small in numbers; women were also insignificant in numbers although numerical inferiority is no obstacle to victory. In the Ashūrā camp, there were women like Zeinab ('a) and Ummah Kulsūm ('a). Ummah Wahab, wife of Abdullah ibn Amir, encouraged her husband to join the army of Imām Hussein ('a) asking him to take her as well. She achieved martyrdom on the day of Ashūrā after her husband.¹

The mother of Wahab ibn Hubab sent her son to the battlefield and spoke the following words to him that, "I will not be pleased with you until you get killed in front of Imām Hussein ('a); and in this manner, she made herself a shining example of mothers of martyrs of the doctrine of martyrdom.² Although the wife of Zahir ibn Qein was not present on the scene of Ashura, yet it was she who sent her husband to the assistance of God. Although Zahir came to know about Ashūrā through Salman Farsi, yet without the encouragement of his wife he would not have been among the followers and meet the grandson of the prophet of Islam (SA).³ The courage and spirit of martyrdom was personified in the wife of Jenad ibn Hares. After the martyrdom of her husband, she sent her adolescent son to help the Imām ('a). The son told the Imām ('a) that, "My mother has ordered me to participate in the war and come to your assistance."⁴

The author has no intention of describing and detailing the events of Ashūrā and the women in the forefront of the truth; rather, in this paper, special attention has been paid to women in the frontline of evil. The women of Kufa too, like the family of the Messenger of God (SA) played a major role in the events of Ashura.

The role of that group of women who were not present in the tragedy of Ashūrā and whose husbands and sons committed the most heinous crimes on earth is far greater than has been dealt with. It is necessary to state categorically that "women had no role whatsoever in the event of Ashūrā and this ignominy shall remain apparent on their foreheads until posterity." I need to explain that the women of Kufa by being removed from the crimes perpetrated by their husbands and children, played no role in preventing them and rendered no support to the grandson of the Messenger of God (SA) so

¹ *Life-style of the Immaculate*, translated by Hussein Vojdānī, vol. 5, p. 159.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 161.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 131.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 168.

that this is a great shame as odious as the eternal infamy of the people of Kufa (God's damnation be upon them all). In the Kufa community, women were unimportant being confined to their homes and oblivious of society and political events taking place in society. Women were not involved in social issues and this detachment caused the women of Kufa to be ignorant of the shameful of war of their husbands. Negligence of women of the war their husbands were engaged in caused them not to perform their duties so that on the next day when the captives reached the city of Kufa and women came to know about the events in Ashura, the city of Kufa were thoroughly steeped in mourning. The city was transformed and women took to the streets moaning and wailing and a sort of revolution occurred in the society of Kufa.

Therefore, the responsibility for all that took place rested with the women of Kufa. It was they who did not prevent their husbands from going to the war; it was they who when they came to know about the happenings, caused Kufa to revolt against the tyrannical government.

To prove and describe the fourth theory, there is need for an introduction that would make it clear in respect of Islamic culture.

Women's Role in Reformation of Society

Obviously, it can be understood that women in an Islamic society should be the enlightened conscience of men. Due to their belligerent disposition and temperament, men immediately decide to go to war, to commit robbery, to plunder and to oppress whereas women due to their elegant spirit and lenient disposition avoid violence, anger and particularly war and fighting. The nature of women and their dislike for oppression and war cause husbands and sons to be controlled by their spouses and mothers and to avoid conflict and violence. Which person commits murder and engages in fighting with the knowledge of one's wife or mother? Do men commit theft and plunder people's property with the knowledge of their wives? In a Muslim community in which women undergo Islamic training, this fact is more apparent and is better revealed. Women are the awakened conscience of men and if they get to know about the violent decisions of their men, they would definitely prevent their wrathful actions.

Reconciliation of Evidence

With a view to the preceding introduction, the women of Kufa too in the footsteps of other women of Islamic society had the ability to restrain their husbands. However, their negligence and ignorance of their surrounding environment is the reason for their shortcoming. The culture of humiliation

of women and confinement of women to the home was prevalent not only in those days in Kufa, but is also present in the city today even among the Shiite men of religion. In their opinion, women must be confined to the home and this is what Islam has demanded of them – a thinking much like that prevalent in the Kufa of bygone eras. There are numerous evidences substantiating the claim of the author:

A- Woman who came to know about the events after the return of their husbands and opposed them and defended the family of the holy prophet of Islam (SA) against them is one of the evidences.

When Khūli (Damnation of God be upon him) took the blessed head of the Doyen of Martyrs to his home and his wife came to know about it, she deserted him while the second wife of Khūli during the revolt of Mukhtar, revealed the hiding place of her husband to them so that they arrested and punished him for his evil deeds.¹

When Ka'ab bin Jaber, the killer of Barir, returned to his home, he was faced with the wrath and disgust of his wife and had this same wife been aware of the intention of her husband on the previous day, she would definitely have prevented him from joining the battlefield.²

Malik ibn Nasr Kandi brought home the helmet stained with the blessed blood of Imām Hussein ('a) and his wife threw him out of the home and did not allow him to stay in that house.³

The above mentioned incidents are covered only sporadically and briefly in the history books; however, these witnesses help us to understand and analyze them.

B- Some events in historical books reveal the unawareness of women and occasionally of men being removed from society in relation to the events of Ashura.

For example, the old man who was standing at the gates of Damascus and was under the impression that the captives of Ashūrā were deviant, foreign⁴ and disbelieving individuals is a case in point. The reader can by referring to historical books, get to know the details of the above mentioned incidents; while the author, in order to facilitate access to materials, has referred only to translations and Persian books so that he can shed light on the dark aspects of the events of Ashura, by referring those interested to use their mind and imagination.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 185.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 161.

³ *Dam' al-Sujū*, p. 192.

⁴ *Life-style of Immaculates*, vol. 5, p. 193.

On arrival of the captives in to the city, a women from Kufa asked them to which tribe they belonged; but when she came to know the truth, she immediately brought them chador veils and clothing to cover them. ¹

Moslem Gachkar who had not participated in the war had no information of the events of Ashūrā and he only comes to know of the depth of the tragedy after the arrival of the caravan of captives and decapitated heads to Kufa. ²

A- One of the evidences that indicate the women had no information of the heinous crimes of their husbands and only came to know about them after the events had occurred and instigated Kufa to revolt against the palace of injustice is that there is no difference between the sermons of the Doyen of Martyrs in Karbala and on the day of Ashūrā with the sermons of their holinesses, Imām Sajjād ('a), Zeinab ('a) and Umma Kulsūm ('a). The sermons only deal with exposing the palace of oppression and denouncing the people of Kufa. The Doyen of Martyrs has repeatedly introduced himself and the sermons of Kufa and Syria also deal with introduction of the martyrs of Karbala - the difference is observed only in the audience. Women set Kufa on fire following the fiery sermons of Zeinab ('a) and Ummah Kulsūm ('a), whereas the men not only did not pay heed for the suckling infants in Karbala; rather they also set fire to their tents.

This exposure was done to present the martyrs and captives in any way possible. Long sermons on the one hand and the words of Ummah Kulsūm ('a) that "that accepting alms is forbidden for us"³ on the other, had synchronized the words and actions against the oppressors and their mischievous propaganda.

B- Had it not been recorded in history that women mourned and covered their heads with mud,⁴ we could still understand from the implications that the uproar in Kufa and Syria was raised by women and if men too wailed and wept, they did so following the wailing and mourning of women. The women who were until then confined to their homes and indifferent, soon thronged the streets and would beat their heads and faces in mourning in front of the family of the Messenger of God (SA), however, of what use was it when they had martyred the best of men of the world.

I think I was able to pour out what I had closeted in my chest from the ink of my pen and put in writing a part of the role played by women in the

¹ *Dam' al-Sujū*, p. 214.

² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 215 & 220.

tragedy of Ashura. Let me now touch on the significance of the question of Imām Sajjād ('a) that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. The Imām ('a) had stated that, "Are they crying for us? Who then killed us?"

The answer to this question is so clear that I cannot fail to notice it. Hours after this question was put forward, Her Holiness Ummah Kulsūm ('a) stated. "O, the people of Kufa! Your men are killing us while your women wail for us!"¹ As I have dealt with it in the fourth analysis in detail and given the clarity of the reply, we find that Imām Sajjād ('a) in this brief sentence highlights the role of women in the tragedy of Ashura. His holiness intends to say that there was no difference between a woman who has not fulfilled her responsibility and has not prevented her husband from joining the battle and those that had killed them. The responsibility for the martyrdom of the Doyen of Martyrs weighs heavily on the shoulders of the women of Kufa who weep and mourn for the captives. Both the killers and the mourners have contributed to this tragedy.

Comment of the Late Imām (r)

With regard to the analysis that was mentioned in detail earlier, the comments of the late Imām (r) become clear and the importance that he gives to the role of women in Islamic community also becomes evident. There is so much difference between the way of thinking of the Imām and the religious scholars who imprison women in the home on the pretext of not exposing them to strangers thereby depriving them from involvement in the social sphere. Which one of these two ways of thinking stems from genuine Islam?

If women were to be confined to the home, then the first person who has violated it – according to some of the religious scholars - is either, God forbid, Her Holiness Zahrā ('a) or their Holinesses Zeinab and Ummah Kulsoom! After all, is it possible that confinement to home be necessary for women for whom war is not obligatory – rather, for whom to defend is obligatory? How can the mindset that causes women to join the battlefield – although it was not obligatory for them and they can refrain from taking part – confine them to the isolation of the home?

Considering the importance for participation of women in society, Imām Khomeinī encourages them to do so and teaches them to seek martyrdom and sacrifice in the cause of God alongside patience in the face of hardships. The Imām sets Her Holiness Zeinab ('a) as their role model and enlightens them

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

about the ignorance of a certain group that wrongly confine woman behind closed doors.

Revolutionary Power of Iranian Women, a Great and Hidden Truth from the West

Fānī Achuā Uchuā

“Iranian women were at the forefront of this Revolution.”¹

Women have shown a more spectacular involvement in this revolutionary movement than men. As a woman, according to narrations and traditions of the West and as a professional journalist, I embarked on a study of one of the extremely complex revolutions in human history – meaning the Islamic Revolution of Iran that was an amazing occurrence. I say amazing, because our western hemisphere has only praised and extolled the French and American revolutions as the zenith of ideal revolutionary symbol. I cannot deny that in these agitations there was no glorious political and social progress; however, when one wants to study and examine the role played by women in the aforesaid revolutions, one would clearly find that they would fill the public squares and were big rioters intent on registering the great movements in their name such as in the French revolution when the entire world commemorates Charlotte De La Cordiere as the greatest active woman of unity center in the country; or regarding my country Colombia, where

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 8, p. 207.

statutes were erected in honor of Antonia Santos and Policarpa Salabarita as prominent figures of our national independence in the war against the Spanish monarchy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Nevertheless, in all the legendary histories of our western women, there is a contradiction that a very few of them deserve to be researched and analyzed. None of these great women found their way into revolutionary circles. They neither had a seat, nor did speech and not even the right to vote exist in great negotiations of these famous and renowned revolutionary committees. There, only men were present. Women were only hired for shouting slogans and causing chaos and rioting. Charlotte De La Cordiere had herself said:

“How is it possible that we women have the right to go to the guillotine (death sentence) but have no right to go to legislative assemblies.”

Today, this influential opinion continues to affect the destiny of western woman who apparently enjoys many rights but who is the biggest slave of consumerist society.

As a university-educated individual and then because of the profession of journalism I belonged to the feminist movements of 70s and 80s that influenced all women of my generation both in Europe and in the United States. Generally, we were taught to detest men and to lead a chaotic and undisciplined life. Every woman was free to create moral rules and laws of her own liking.

The profession of journalism caused me to take interest in the circumstance of eastern women, particularly the women of the Muslim world that were looked down upon because of the antipathy of the west for the east and hatred for the Islamic Revolution - a revolution that was in those days referred to as a product of fanaticism and fundamentalism preached by Ayatollāh Khomeinī (r).

At that time in the first program that was launched in my country Colombia; meaning that compiling the first encyclopedia, doing the job, writing the question and presenting it was undertaken by the Colombians who called it “The Treatise.” In this program, I prepared the main section. Among the many subjects I selected for research was the issue of Islamic countries and Islam. I had the opportunity to interview and meet with cultural attaches and ambassadors of Egypt, Morocco, India, etc... I began to discover a different world, the fascinating world of the east that for we westerners who were used to seeing it only in the light of rationality and materialism was extremely faraway and exotic. Immediately, I found that I

was confronted with the phenomenon of great civilizations that were not considered in our academic training programs that only eulogized the great histories of Greco-Romans and the “Jewish-Christian” Renaissance. In the west, the glorious history of Islam has been saved and is saved for us as a unilateral way and voluntary approach of viewing the history of mankind. History is only that of the west and nothing else. The East is only imagination and savagery; and of recent - with the victory of the Revolution in Iran - it is bigoted and fundamentalist.

Likewise, I also found that this deviating war is a war in which we westerners are the conquerors because we have the privilege of the mass media and what we actually do is to present to the east and especially, to the Islamic Civilization, is a new war and we let it affect the depth of religion and faith itself.

The mass media war affiliated to the powerful west was not against Iran’s revolution and Imām Khomeinī (*r*); this war was not aimed against a particular country such as “Iran” and even an Ayatollāh named Khomeinī; rather, at a civilization that had rediscovered its lost path, its historical identity and its true moral, social and spiritual capabilities. What Khomeinī achieved was exactly what the ancient prophets had achieved and what the prophets Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ and Mohammad had done which was to warn and admonish their people and the world of their respective periods and eras; to warn the human being of our modern period and era in relation to forgetting the Divine laws and exposure of the powerful ones of the earth that are corrupting the earth and are filling it with disgrace and shame. Every epoch and era needs a leader, mentor and guide. Today, I am convinced that Imām Khomeinī (*r*) was the greatest man of the Twentieth century, because he knew how to present a political, ideological and spiritual plan to serve humanity. Khomeinī (*r*) did not bring a new religion and ideology with him; however, by applying the flexible Islamic laws themselves, he made the Divine laws to conform to the realities of the day. Amazingly, he introduced change both in theory and in practice that divine laws are not a series of antiquated commandments. The west is ignorant of the fact that the greatest struggle of Khomeinī before being directed at the capitalist and communist world was directed at decaying and reactionary structure of monarchical culture of his own.

There were many psychological and sociological elements that caused Imām Khomeinī to put an end to the 2500 year long monarchy. One of them was the awakened pride of the people of Iran – a thousand year-old psychological element rooted in the soul and spirit of the people of Iran.

Khomeinī realized that he must awaken the enormous dormant pride - the pride that once ruled over the world stretching from India to the Aegean Sea and from Egypt to the Black Sea. In order to achieve this goal, he refined and purified the culture of Ashūrā by shedding light on and describing each of the virtuous believers of this great clan meaning "Hussein, Abulfazl or Zeinab;" and in the most sorrowful instance, "Hur" who sacrificed wealth and power at the altar of truth in the final moments of his life, despite knowing that all would be lost.

Yet another element that motivated Imām Khomeinī to attain victory was the amazing and extraordinary driving force and movement that dominated Iranian society; an extraordinary force that today, neither the foreigners nor Iranians themselves can understand; meaning a spiritual, psychic and sociological force that an Iranian woman possesses and that controls all aspects of daily living of this people!

Opposite the bewildered eyes of the western world, Iranian society is not a patriarchal male-dominated and open society dating back to the age of desert-dwelling and traditional mythological Arabs descendants of Sam. This society is a truly matriarchal and female-dominated family. Those who see in the "black chador" head to toe covering an element of subservience and obedience by Iranian women are mistaken. On the contrary, it is by means of the culture of this "Chador" that they dominate the world. Women are those who control all aspects of family life and were and are the actual engines of the Revolution. The advice and admonitions of the Imām are not unfounded when he states that, "The anger and wrath of our cherished women were infused into our men. We are indebted to the women more than the men for this victory."

What was important for Iran more than all else was the change in situation of women. Most certainly, Iranian women were the first people who came forward in opposition to the former monarch meaning the Shah. They were the first who discovered that everything would be lost if they did not act first and before the men did. With extraordinary speed, they noticed that if they did not destroy the Pahlavi dynasty sooner, their families, their homeland and their thousand-year old traditions would be obliterated. For this reason, it was these same Iranian woman that not only motivated their husbands and children to take to the streets in protest against the monarchical regime; rather, they themselves also while crying "Allahu Akbar" (God is the Greatest), poured onto the big and small streets and squares in the cities of the country.

Much before the men had come to realize that they must embody the spirit of Imām Hussein ('a), the Iranian woman was the first person who discovered that each one of them embodied the spirit of Zeinab in the war against the tyrannical and sinful caliph Muawiyya of the Umayyad dynasty.

The war imposed by the big superpowers on Iran lasted for eight years (1988-1980) and was launched with the aim of destroying the fledgling Islamic Revolution. It marked one of the most remarkable pages of the history of woman in all eras; because it was the mothers, wives and sisters that provided greater motivation to the men to defend the nation and Islam.

I know that I have a lot of problem in describing my world for you. This article is bold and daring; however, it is the result of my extensive studies and analyses of the Revolution especially, after living for more than one and a half years in the embrace of this society – a place where my wife and I conducted various research works on the art, culture, mysticism and politics of the world of Islam and Shiite doctrine.

In this article in which I attempt to discuss the power of Iranian woman, perhaps being a woman has helped me to understand the other hidden side of this society and the Revolution that has jolted the world because no woman can conceal herself from another woman even with the best covering and “Hijab” that is available. God has granted all of us women an advantage that is simultaneously a great weapon which is that of perception and talent for astute and ingenious scrutiny. I never imagined that in a society women enjoy so much of power to do good or bad. During the rule of the former regime, the majority of western critics were in agreement on this subject. The real power of the throne rested with the sister of the Shah and of course the United States of America. The west is used to evaluate and measure everything in qualitative and quantitative terms. For this reason, when it wants to analyze the rights of woman in Iran, it focuses on the women who are the offshoots of the country’s national power; women and executive rights or right to legislate laws or judicial rights. It is interesting that they think about assessing the power of woman in Iran whereas in fact, the western woman herself does not hold half the national positions and it is now a couple of decades since they are demanding them fervently. In Islamic society and in eastern societies in general, the family constitutes the main pillar of the social order. In general and in particular, family is the real factor of reinforcement of the society. The west lost this power by disrupting the nucleus of the family. The west compels the woman to leave the home in order to compete with men under unfair terms and conditions, because in case she undertakes to perform the job of housekeeping, she remains alone

and most probably, our world does not pay equal compensation and wages for professional work of man and woman. For a woman, it always considers a lesser remuneration although she performs the same duties as done by men. Equality of woman and man in our hemisphere is a simple euphemism with many approaches towards hell and few approaches towards heaven (happiness and prosperity).

The power of Iranian woman is both qualitative and quantitative, because twenty years after the Revolution we see women holding several seats in parliament; we see them occupying the post of vice-president. Thus for instance, we see Mrs. Masomeh Ebtekar who is not only the vice-president but is also head of the Environment Organization. We also see Iranian woman in the health and education ministries in almost the same percentage as the men in the health and education ministries. Imām Khomeinī (*r*) had stated that:

“In the Revolution undertaken by Muslims; by our nation; all of you observed that women were at the forefront.”¹

“If human being-rearing women are taken away from nations, those nations will suffer defeat and degeneration; they will suffer defeat and become decadent.”²

“The welfare and corruption of a society depends on the welfare and corruption of women of that society.”³

However, the power of Iranian woman is also necessarily a qualitative power, because woman is one who controls the public and private ethics of this society. Her soul and spirituality carries forward all aspects of daily living of this society.

Generally, Imām Khomeinī's (*r*) point of view is that women are the leaders of our movement. Women are definitely crucial and enjoy real power. In general, I am sure that these observations of the Imām has not been appreciated neither by the western world to which I belong and nor by the majority of the men of Iranian society. What is the reason for this?

The hidden charm and magic of this nation and this Revolution has ordained the change and transformation of the world!

¹ *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 10, pp. 183-184.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 300.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, p. 192.

The article was originally in English and has been included in the section on English articles.