

## **"WOMEN's RIGHTS IN ISLAM"**

**Prepared by: Dr. Umer Farooq**

**Most of the contents are taken from the speech of Dr. Zakir Naik**

**([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wd7c4OPi\\_UY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wd7c4OPi_UY)) and from the book of**

**Said Abdullah Seif Al-Hatimy "Woman in Islam: A comparative study"**

**Abstract:** Islam gave true and due rights to women 1400 years ago when there was ignorance and darkness. Islam uplifted the status of the women in a society.

In Islam spiritually both men and women are equal. There are certain non-Islamic religions like Christianity that put the blame only on mother Havva "Eve" (Alaihis Salaam), who forced Adam to eat the forbidden fruits in Jannah and according to Christianity all human beings are born in sins because of Mother Havva. But Quran put the blame of eating forbidden fruits equally on man and woman, on Adam as well as on Havva.

Believing men and believing women are supporters of one another not only socially but also politically. Women have also obligation to spread the message of Allah and His Prophet (PBUH). They have also right to vote.

Islam gave economic rights to women 1400 years ago, 1300 years before the Western world. In Islam, any adult women whether married or un-married, she was allowed to own or dis-own her property without the permission of anyone else. If women works by following the Islamic Sharia then whatever she earns, she need not to spend on her family. She can keep all of her earning for herself. In Islam during marriage, women are also on the receiving end.

Prophet (PBUH) said, "It is obligatory on every Muslim to acquire knowledge".

The Prophet (PBUH) specially told the parents to educate their children specially their daughters. We have examples of many women 1400 years ago who were highly educated, learned and scholars in both religious and worldly knowledge.

With the advent of Islam, the darkness of that era vanished and Allah enjoined kindness, love and compassion towards girls. Prophet (PBUH) also said, "Anyone who up-brings two daughters with love and affection, and also did not favor his sons over daughters, he shall enter into Jannah".

Most of the other religions besides Islam consider women as an instrument of devil but Quran refers women as a "Mohsina" means a fortress against devil. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Among the Muslims the most perfect, as regards his faith, is the one whose character is excellent, and the best among you are those who treat their wives well. Prophet (PHUB) said, "Among you the most respectable is the one who respects women and the most disrespect is the one who disrespect the women".

Dear brothers and sisters, the topic of today speech is "Women rights in Islam".

Islam gave true and due rights to women 1400 years ago when there was ignorance and darkness. If we go back in the history and analyzed different civilizations, we found that:-

**In Babylonian civilization**, if man committed murder then instead of punishing him, his wife was sentenced to death.

When we read the **history of Greeks**, Greeks considered a woman a cause of evil and infortune in the society. A man is even permitted to kill his wife. In Egyptian civilization, they considered women a sign of a devil.

In **Arab civilization**, very often when female child was born, she was buried alive.

In some parts of the **Eastern Europe and in India**, if husband was died, his wife either killed or burn alive together with the dead body of her husband.

In **Egypty, India and all European** countries during the dark ages, women were treated worse than slaves. They were not regarded as human beings but as sort of sub-species between humans and animals.

After the revelation of Quran and teaching of Prophet (PBUH), Islam uplifted the status of the women in a society. Before discussing the women rights in Islam, I would like to point out few things. Dear brothers and sisters, there are more than 1.5 billion Muslims living in this world. Muslim today's are approximately 20-25%

of the world population. Some Muslim societies are close to Islam and some are far from Islam. Unfortunately, there is no Muslim society in the world at present time which is 100% according to Islam. If anyone wants to judge the women's right in Islam he should not judge according to what Muslim's do and what Muslim societies does. The women's right in Islam should be based on the authentic sources of Islam and the authentic sources are only the Quran and authentic Hadiths.

-If we read Quran as a whole and Hadith, we found that Men and Women in Islam are equal but they are not identical. Depending upon the biological makeup of the man and women, depending upon their physiology, depending upon their psychology, depending upon their physical makeup, Almighty Allah has given different roles to men and women. Our creator knows what is best for us. In this limited time for Khutaba, I have divided women rights into spiritual rights, political rights, economic rights, educational rights and social rights.

**Let's first discuss the spiritual Rights of Women:** Dear brothers and sisters, in Islam spiritually both men and women are equal. It is duty of all men and women to seek the pleasure of Allah and get Jannah. Allah says in Surrah Al-Nisa verse 124.

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ  
 أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ  
 الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٥﴾

**But whoso does good deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer, such people shall enter into Heaven.**

Dear brothers and sisters, there are certain non-Islamic religions like Christianity that put the blame only on mother Havva (Alaihis Salaam), who forced Adam to eat the forbidden fruits in Jannah and according to Christianity all human beings are born in sins because of Mother Havva. But you cannot find any single verse in Quran which could blame only on Havva. Quran put the blame of eating forbidden fruits equally on man and woman, on Adam as well as on Havva. And if we read Surrah Al-A'raf verse 19-27, Allah said both of them made mistake. Both of them repented and both of them were forgiven. There is no single verse exclusively in Quran which says that mother Havva is responsible for such a big sin.

Furthermore, when we read the Bible, it is written in Bible that God says, "I will multiply the pain during conception and women will give the birth in pain and sorrow and your Husband will rule over you". So according to the Bible, all pains and sufferings during pregnancy is a curse for a woman; it is a punishment from

God to the women because of the sin which Havva (Alaihis Salaam) made in Jannah.

But if you read the Quran, there is a great contrast. There is a great difference between Bible and Quran. The Quran says exactly the opposite. The Quran uplift the status of Women because of all the hardships which women faced during pregnancy. The Quran says in Surrah Luqman verse 14

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ  
 وَهِنًا عَلًى وَهْنٍ وَ فِصْلَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ  
 أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ﴿١٥﴾

**And We have ordered on man concerning his parents — his mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years — ‘Give thanks to Me and to thy parents.**

Same subject is again repeated in Surrah Al-Ahqaf verse 16. So Quran says respect to your parents especially to your mother because she gives birth to you with pains and sorrows. **The Prophet (PBUH) said: “The woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth is a martyr”.** So Islam uplift the status of women after giving her the status of mother and it does not degrade her. The only criterion in Islam to differentiate one human being from another is Taqwa. It is not sex, cast, color, wealth, tribe and age. It is only Taqwa.

**Let's discuss the political Rights of women:** Dear brothers and sisters, Allah says in Surrah Taubah verse 71.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ  
بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ  
الْمُنْكَرِ وَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ  
الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ  
سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

**And the believers, men and women, are friends of one another. They instruct good and forbid evil and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is these on whom Allah will have mercy. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise.**

This means believing men and believing women are supporters of one another not only socially but also politically. Women have also obligation to spread the message of Allah and His Prophet (PBUH). They have also obligation to struggle for making Islamic societies and Islamic governments.

Dear brothers and sisters, woman can also take parts in law making. There are few societies in the world where the ordinary citizen can confront with the ruler face to face and challenge his policies. But in pure and true Islamic societies, rulers of the

time were always open and accessible. This freedom of expression is demonstrated by a famous incident when Hazrat Umar (R.A) objecting the people and ordering them not to give excessive amount of dower (Mahr) at the time of marriage. An ordinary woman whose even name is un-known in the history stood up and shouted, "Umar!!! You have no right to intervene in a matter which Allah has already announced in the Quran. When Allah did not put the upper limit of dower then who is Umar to put the upper limit. And then she quoted the verse 20<sup>th</sup> of surrah Al-Nisa that "If husband gave her wife bundles and bundles of wealth as dowry even then he cannot demand anything after divorce." After hearing this verse, Umar withdrew his order and saying "I am in the wrong and she is correct."

At the event of Hudabiya prophet (PBUH) consulted hazrat umm-e-Salma and acted on her advice to move on.

Dear brother and sisters, Women even took part in the battlefield. They provide first aids to the soldiers, give water to them. In the battle of Uhud, Hazrat Nafeesa was amongst another sahaba who was around the Prophet (PBUH) and received many wounds and Prophet (PBUH) made dua for her.

**Let's discuss the economic rights of women:** Dear brothers and sisters, Islam gave economic rights to women 1400 years ago, 1300 years before the Western world. In Islam, any adult women whether married or un-married, she was allowed to own or dis-own her property without the permission of anyone else. If we read the history, the first times the Western world gave rights to married women to own or dis-own the property without the permission of her husband in 1870 in England under the "special married women property act". Imagine Islam gave this right 1400 years ago. In Islam, a woman is financially well secured. Before she is married, it is duty of her father and brother and after she is married, its duty of her husband and son to look after her financially, lodging, clothing, and boarding everything. She needs not to work for providing the necessities of life. It is duty of the man in the house to earn for living. Islam has put financial burden on the shoulders of a man.

But if both ends don't meet and if a woman wants to work, she can work as long as it is within the preview of Islamic Sharia. She maintains the hijab and can adopt many noble professions e.g. teaching and medicine, where modesty is protected and hijab is maintained. It is a need of Islamic societies that women should become teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers and traders. If women works by following the Islamic Sharia then whatever she earns, she need not to spend on her family. She

can keep all of her earning for herself. That is her right and no one can force her to give anything to the family.

In Islam during marriage, women are also on the receiving end. The Quran says in Surrah Nisa verse 4

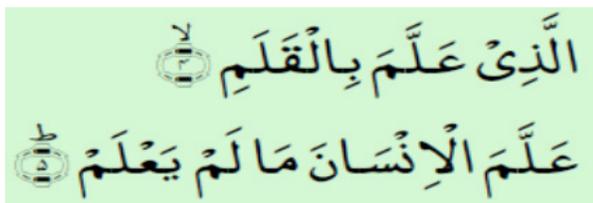
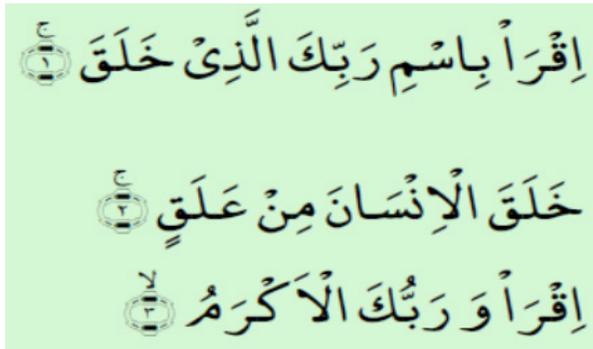
وَأْتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً ط

And give the women their dowries willingly

In Islam, Mahr (Dowry) is compulsory for a man to give it to woman.

Unfortunately in our Indian-Pakistani culture it is opposite, the woman gives dowry to her husband. In Islam to demand dowry from your wife is Haram, demanding directly or in-directly both are haram. Unfortunately, custom of receiving dowry from parents of women is common even in religious families. Even religious people in our Indo-Pak societies do not try to stop this humiliating, shameful and non-Islamic custom. According to Islam women are on receiving end during marriage. Furthermore if woman is very rich, even then its duty of her husband to provide everything for new life.

## Educational Rights of Women: Allah says in Quran



The first guidance revealed by Allah to all of human kind "It was Iqra", "It was to read". Prophet (PBUH) said, "It is obligatory on every Muslim to acquire knowledge". The Prophet (PBUH) specially told the parents to educate their children specially their daughters. It is duty of husband to give education to his wife especially religious education.

We have examples of many women 1400 years ago who were scholars. The best example is Mother Ayesha (R-HA). One of her very famous student whose name was Arwa, she said, "I was not see any scholar greater than Ayesha (R-Ha) in learning of the Quran, obligatory duties, in lawful and un-lawful things, in literature, in poetry, in Arabic history. And when we read serrah of Hazrat Ayesha (R-Ha), we find out that she lived many years after the Prophet (PBUH) and many

of sahaba gained guidance from her. Ayesha (R-ha) was also expert in mathematics; many sahaba came to her specially when dealing with inheritance.

Ayesha (R-ha) taught 100s of scholars. She was scholars of the scholars.

Umme-Salama (R-Ha) was also wife of Prophet (PBUH) and according to Imam Nowi she was the most intellectual women of the time. She was known in society for her intelligence and political understanding. Umm Salama was very famous for her political wisdom and judgment during difficult situations.

Fatima bint Qays (R-Ha) was also very capable, intelligent and scholarly woman and companion of the Prophet (PBUH). Imam Muslim related that Fatima was very generous and felt satisfaction in serving her guests. When Umar (R.Ho) died in 23 AH, the meeting of the shura committee was held in Fatima's home because she was a woman of understanding, wise judgment and good opinions. The members of the committee thought that it would be appropriate to consult her.

Dear brothers and sisters, just imagine the days when people were hardly educated and we have several examples of women who were highly educated, learned and scholars of that time in both religious and worldly knowledge.

**Let's discuss the social rights in Islam:** With the advent of Islam, the darkness of that era vanished and Allah enjoined kindness, love and compassion towards girls. Islam prohibited any killings of female children. Allah says in Surrah Al-An'am verse 151 and in Surrah Bani-Israil verse 31

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ ۗ  
 نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ  
 كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾

Kill not your children for fear of poverty. It is Allah Who provide for them and for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin.

Dear brothers and sisters, there was a program on BBC named "Let her die". It was reported in the program that in India there are more than 3000 fetuses which are being aborted in India every-day after the parents came to know that expected baby is a girl. This means every year more than million girls are being killed in the wombs of their mothers even only in India. It is advertised on the boards that spend 500 Rs and save 500,000 Rs. Means do the ultrasound and if the child is female then abort her and save 500,000 Rs which parents have to spend in the form of dowry for marriage.

Dear brothers and sisters, Allah does not only prohibit the killing of female children, Allah even rebuked and badly criticized the thought of a person who is becoming sad at the news of the birth of a female child. All says in Surrah Al-Nahl verse 58-59.

**And when to one of them is conveyed the tidings (news) of *the birth of a female*, his face become darkens, while he suppresses *his inward* grief. He hides himself from the people because of the bad news he has had: ‘Shall he keep it in spite of disgrace or bury it in the dust?’ Verily, evil is that which they think.**

Unfortunately this attitude is also common in our societies. People arranged feasts, distributed sweets and celebrated the birth of son but if girl is born then they became sad. Even in-laws of woman blame her that she is responsible for giving birth to girl. Parents of man forced their son to divorce her wife because she is giving birth to girl. It is common in our societies.

Dear brothers and sisters, Quran criticizes even the thoughts of becoming sad at the birth of a female child. Islam considered girls as blessing of Allah and shield of person against the fire of hell. Prophet (PBUH) said, "That any one who up-brings two daughters with love and affection will be as close to me as these two fingers on the Day of Judgment". Prophet (PBUH) also said, "Anyone who up-brings two

daughters with love and affection, and also did not favor his sons over daughters, he shall enter into Jannah".

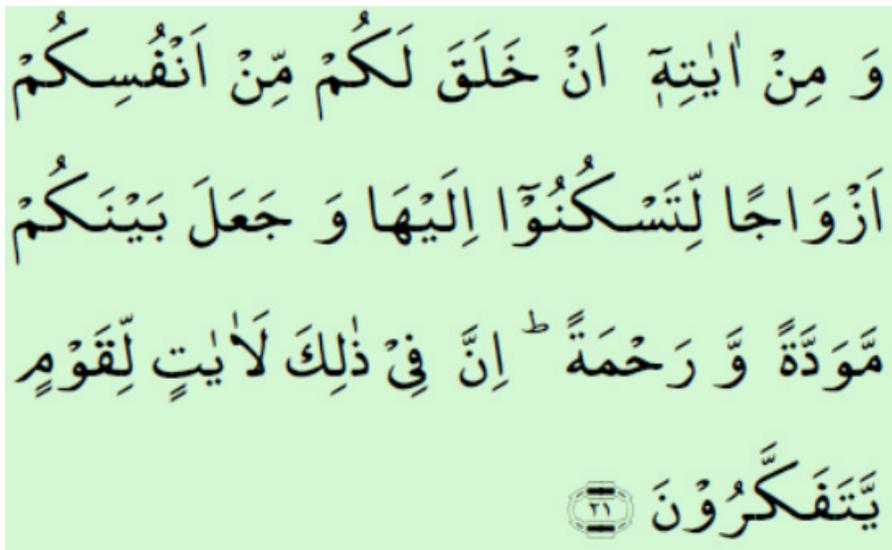
Prophet (PBUH) did not only talk about the equality, he actually practiced it. Once a person kissed his son and pleased him on his laps but did not do same for his daughter. The Prophet (PBUH) objected and said that you are doing un-just. If you want to do justice you should kissed your daughter as well and placed her on your other lap. Prophet (PBUH) also called her a blessed woman whose first child is a daughter.

Ayesha (R.Ha) related: "A poor woman came to me with her two daughters. I gave her three dates; she gave each of them a date and was about to eat the third one when one of her daughters asked her for it, so she divided it between her two daughters and ate nothing herself, and I liked what she did. After this, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) came, so I told him what she did, and he (PBUH) said: 'Allah obligated Paradise for her due to this date, and (also) freed her from Hell.'"(Muslim)

A daughter is a great bounty and an honor granted by Allah. 'Ayesha (R-Ha) said: "Whenever Fatima (R-ha) would enter into his presence, Prophet (PBUH)

would stand up and seat her in his place. This is how our Prophet (PBUH) cared for his daughters.

**Rights of wife in Islam:** Most of the other religions besides Islam consider women as an instrument of devil but Quran refers women as a "Mohsina" means a fortress against devil. Because the pious woman keeps the husband on "right path" on Siratul-Mustaqeem and stops him for deviating to wrong paths. Therefore, she is called a "Mohsina" in Islam. Allah says in surrah Al-Rum verse 21



**And one of His Signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.**

**Prophet (PBUH) also said, anyone who married, he completes half his religion**

Dear brothers and sisters, Islam does not allow marrying the girls without their permission. Taking permission from the woman is very important. Allah says in Surrah Nisa verse 19.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا  
النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا ط وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا

O ye who believe! it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will;

Once a lady approached Prophet (PBUH) and said my parents forced me to marry a man against my wishes and the Prophet (PBUH) said she has the option either to continue or nullified the marriage.

Once a lady named Khansa (R-Ha) approached the Prophet (PBUH) and said that my father has married me to a person against my wishes. The Prophet (PBUH) nullified the marriage after hearing this.

**Dear brothers and sisters,** if parents forced their daughters to marry someone against their wish then it is against the teachings of Islam.

Dear brothers and sisters, actually Islam considers the relationship between husband and wife as relation of love, affection and cooperation.

Allah says in Surrah Al-Baqara verse 187:-



نِسَائِكُمْ ط هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ  
لَّهُنَّ ط عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ

They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them.

Islam considers husband and wife as garments to one another. What is the role of garment? The role of garment is to beautify, to protect or to conceal the person. The husband and wife conceal the faults of each-other, they do not expose the faults of each other, they beautify each other, and they help each other. It is a role of love and affection. Allah even orders us to treat our wives with love, compassion and equity even if you dislike her.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Among the Muslims the most perfect, as regards his faith, is the one whose character is excellent, and the best among you are those who treat their wives well (Al-Tirmidhi)". Prophet (PBUH) also said, "Women have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives, only under

Allah's trust and with His permission. Do treat your women well and be kind to them.

**Dear brothers and sisters,** Men and women are equal but not identical. Their physiology, psychology and biology all are different from men. Depending upon this our almighty Allah set some special roles for both and whose knows human being better than our creator. Allah says in Surrah Nisa verse 32

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى  
بَعْضٍ ۗ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبُوا ۗ  
وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَ ۗ وَسَأَلُوا  
اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ  
عَلِيمًا

**And do not make desire in those things in which Allah has made some of you excel other. Men shall have a share of that which they have earned, and women a share of that which they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Surely, Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.**

Everyone knows Islam claim that it is a complete code of life. Therefore Islam is not only complete code of life for men it is also complete code of life for women. It gives equal rights to men and women. It is very important for everyone that there is big difference of meaning between the words “equal” and “same”. As women and man cannot same physically so there rights can also not same due to their duties but they have equal rights on or the other way. This equal terminology can also be explained by taking a very simple example. There are two students in class one called Saeed scored 4 in economics,3 in political studies and 3 in social studies and another called Sadia scored 2 in economics, 4 in political studies and 4 in social studies. Saeed got  $(4+3+3)=10$  and Sadia got  $(2+4+4)=10$ ,that shows both Saeed and Sadia scored equal marks that is total 10 but they score different marks in different areas. It illustrates the real meanings of equal and it's similar to the meaning of equal rights of men and women in Islam. If father has more rights and responsibilities economically than women then mother has more rights and responsibilities that balance their rights in all circumstances.

Dear brothers and sisters, unfortunately non-Islamic world spread lots of misconception about the Islam and they mainly criticized the Women rights situations in Muslim countries where in-fact their supported rulers are sitting whether it is Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt and even in Saudi-Arabia. But I want to

show you some glimpse of Women condition in USA. In USA, more than 1,000 women were killed by their partners only in one year. US Justice Department reported that there were 1 Million sexual assaults committed against women in 2008. The projected number of violent crimes committed by intimate partners were almost half million in only one year.

Dear brothers and sisters, here I would like to quote some statements of newly converted Muslims women. -**Yvonne Ridley** is a British journalist. Ridley came to prominence on 28 September 2001, when she was captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan whilst working for the *Sunday Express*. She entered on 26 September and spent 2 days undercover in Afghanistan. It was on her return, traveling with her guides, that she was captured by Taliban. The British high commissioner to Pakistan, met the Taliban ambassador in Islamabad, and opened negotiations for her release. On 8 October she was released and was handed over to the Pakistani authorities. During her captivity she was asked by one of Taliban to convert to Islam; she refused, but gave her word she would read the Quran after her release. Once freed, she kept this promise and read the Quran. She decided to accept Islam by saying, "the Koran makes it clear that women are equal in spirituality, worth and education. What everyone forgets is that Islam is perfect; but people are not." She converted to Islam in the summer of 2003.

US Navy petty officer, Heather Ramaha accepted Islam after September 11. She says "Islam gives Elevation to women; not Degradation"

Another newly converter human right activist says that in my Women's Studies courses I had read about Muslim women who were not allowed to leave their homes and were forced to cover their heads. Of course I saw hijab as an oppressive tool imposed by men rather than as an expression of self-respect and dignity. But when I read Quran, I was surprised that Islam actually liberates the women, given them rights in the 6th century that we have only gained in this century in this country: the right to own property and wealth and to maintain her original name after marriage; the right to vote; and the right to divorce."

Dear Brothers and sister, before finishing this speech, I want to give one more example that shows how Quran protects the Women. In our so-called Islamic countries and modern world, it is very easy to abuse about the character of a woman and put doubt about her modesty and chastity. It is very common to abuse the women with dirty names, call her prostitute. According to Quran, if someone raised questions about the chastity and modesty of a woman and does not produce 4-witnesses, then he should face 80-lashes, 80 stripes. This is how much Islam protected the women. This means in pure Islamic society where Islamic law

prevails, man will think 1000 times before telling anything bad against the character of a woman.

Today Muslim woman is facing problems not because of lack of her rights in Islam but due to the male driven, illiterate societies and due to western backed tyrant dictators and non-Islamic governments. Unfortunately there is no Islamic government in the world and any struggle of making such governments is badly crushed. Islam promised women respect, honor and safety before and more than any other religion, civilization and moderation. Islam gave women all rights before 15 centuries which any one can expect in today's highly modern world. American new Muslim Khaled Yaseen explained it by beautiful example. He said that every person can be a father; but if a father does not turn out to be a good father then it's not fatherhood that we would blame. Similarly, Islam is a rule and order. If a Muslim who does not act according to that rule and order then by all means it's not Islam that should carry the blame.

Prophet (PHUB) said, "Among you the most respectable is the one who respects women and the most disrespect is the one who disrespect the women".

In khutaba of hijtul Weda, the Prophet (PBUH) said, "O, people fear from Allah in the matter of women, treats them carefully and fairly as Islam teaches you."

Prophet (PBUH) also said, "It is the generous (in character) who is good to women, and it is the wicked who insults them."

May Allah give us wisdom and courage to truly act upon our religion, May Allah give us courage to show the beauty of our religion to the western societies, May Allah give us courage to give rights to all those who are being oppressed every where in the world