

WOMENS' RIGHTS IN ISLAM – MODERNISING OR OUTDATED? – PART 1

(Back Ground Azaan, By Brother Yusuf Islam)

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(Azan Continued)...

(Dr. Mohammed) Assalaamu Alaikum... May peace be on you all.

Honorable Justice Kazi, respected elders, distinguished guests, members of the press, friends, brothers and sisters.

There are many social traumas, problems and conflicts... women in society face today, and we sincerely need to find viable holistic and humanistic solutions to them.

In this context, the subject of 'Women's Rights' is of much contemporary analytical relevance, and human interest.

A reason enough, for all of us to have gathered here today, inspite of options of other pre occupations.

On behalf of the Islamic Research Foundation... I, Dr. Mohammed Naik, the co-ordinator for the programs, today welcome you all with earnest pleasure, and sincere appreciation from the heart.

We begin today's program formally with the Qiraat by Brother Ashraf Mohammey, which will be followed by the reading of its English translation.

(Ashraf Mohammedy) Asalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahai Wabarakatuhu.

(Arabic)...

The translation ... 'I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed

In the name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful'.

'O Humankind reverence your Guardian Lord who created you from a single person, created of like nature his mate and from them twain scattered like seeds countless men and women, Reverence God through whom you demand your mutual rights and reverence the wombs that bore you.

For God ever watches over you

To orphans restore their property when they reach their age nor substitute your worthless things for their good ones and devour not their substance by mixing it up with your own, for this is indeed a great sin.

Verily Allah speaks the Truth'.

(Dr. Mohammed) Assalaamu Alaikum... Thank, you brother Ashraf.

For those who may be introduced new to the IRF and its activities, I would like to briefly outline the IRF, and its work.

The IRF was initially started in February 1991, to cater to the need for proper Islamic knowledge amongst the educated Muslim youth - Youth who may be ignorant about Islamic teachings, youth who may tend to be wrongly apologetic about Islam, and youth who may not know how to properly present and practice Islam, for the whole world at large, to appreciate and look up to.

Now the IRF has been growing in many other deserving areas of its other objectives, specially in humanitarian relief activities and educational upliftment.

Amongst its popular services, IRF has a collection of more than 1,300 Video cassettes and more than 4,000 Audio cassettes, on Islam and Comparative Religion, available for free hire in Bombay.

It also has to its credit, more then 50 publications on Islam and Comparative Religion, which are available free on request, all over India.

To promote education, the need of the day, amongst our people, the IRF Educational Trust was established 1½ year back of which Dr. Zakir happens to be the chairman.

Today Dr. Zakir will be speaking on the topic... 'Women's Rights in Islam – Modernizing or Outdated?'

This would be followed by a Question and Answer session, in which you all have a right to question and cross examine him, on the topic and the matter presented in a very open format.

When we consider the rights and justice for women in this open court of ours today, in context of Islamic laws and views, it is very befitting, and our esteemed pleasure to have amongst us the eminent Judge, Honorable Justice Muhammad Mujeebuddin Qazi, to preside over this programme.

Justice Qazi has been for 13 years from 1968 to 1981, the government pleader at the Nagpur Branch of the Bombay High Court, being the highest law officer of the Government of Maharashtra, there of.

Then, Justice Qazi became the first Muslim, after Justice M. C. Chagra to be elevated from the Bar to the Bench, as a Judge of the Bombay High Court, where he has been delivering judgment, from 1981 till 1992.

On the eve of his retirement in 1992, a very leading Newspaper of Central India 'The Hitwada', had this to say about him... 'Justice Qazi belongs to the fast vanishing breed of gentlemen Judges'.

Justice Qazi, is at present a member of the Minorities Commission, and earlier has been a member of the advisory board Islamic and Comparative Law Journal, in New Delhi.

After his retirement as a high court Judge, Justice Qazi has been fortunate, and been honoured with the elevation, to the position of Chairman, Maharashtra Administrative Tribunal, opposed equal to that of the rank of the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

This high powered Tribunal, is the substitute and bifurcation of the Bombay High Court for all government service matters.

To top it all, his hand bill... 'Demeanor' and manners as well as a deep anguish and care for real human progress, make him an apt personality, to precede... to preside over today's proceedings.

He would be introducing the importance and significance of the topic for the day, as well as introduce Dr. Zakir Naik, who he is well acquainted with.

Brothers and sisters... Justice M. M. Qazi

(Justice M.M. Qazi) The distinguished speaker Dr. Zakir Naik, Dr. Mohammed Naik, former Governor and Ambassador Mr. Talyar Khan, the foreign dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen.

At the outset, I would like to thank the organizers of Islamic Research Foundation, for having invited me to preside over this function.

I would also like to thank Dr. Mohammed Naik, for having said few good words about me.

As you are already aware, the subject of the talk this morning is... 'Women's Rights in Islam - Modernizing or Outdated?'

Modernizing means... 'Something which is not antiquated, but in the context of the subject it would mean - the rights given to women in Islam, fourteen centuries back, are relevant even today'.

The debate, on the position of women in social spectrum, has been going on since centuries - but of late, it has assumed somewhat alarming proportions in certain matters.

Issues such as Talaq, Polygamy, participation of Muslim women in Socio-political activities, are subject of regular comment and discussion in the media.

There may have been problems, but at the same, time it is a fact that some of the issues were over played by the Media.

No doubt, the Western woman has today obtained, Socio-economic and Lego-political rights, through hectic struggle, which was carried on for over 200 years.

But friends, I would like to tell you, that in the struggle, in the process, she has lost everything.

She has lost, if you have closely observed the Western society... you will agree with me that she has lost her family life, she has lost peace of mind, she has lost even her honour and womanhood.

On the contrary... Islam has given, has bestowed on women innumerable rights, fourteen centuries back, when contemporary civilizations were still considering whether women could be regarded as a human being.

We are therefore to examine objectively, dispassionately and coolly, whether the rights, so given in Islam are really adequate, and therefore relevant even today.

You are fortunate to have an eminent speaker Dr. Zakir Naik, who is going to deal with the subject exhaustively, and therefore it is not necessary for me to refer to all those verses in the Holy Qur'an, and the number of traditions of the holy... of the Prophet of Islam, pertaining to the rights of women.

However I will refer to the two verses, in order to demonstrate that woman has been given a dignified position in Islam - Verse No. 228, Chapter 2, Surah Baqarah, as translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, whose work is supposed to be the most standard work, reads as under....

'And Women shall have rights, similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable, but men have a degree of advantage over them'.

I would like you to bear in mind, every word of this Verse - It has unequivocally being declared, that men and women have similar rights against each other.

These words... this part of the verse has no where been diluted anywhere in the Qur'an, however the verse further says that men have a degree of advantage over women.

It is really these words which we have to be... we have to be sure about, because it is here that most of the people have faltered, and even some of the commentators have misconceived these words.

But at the outset I would like to tell you, that these words have nothing to do with the rights between the parties... rights as I have already... we have already seen just now, have been unequivocally declared in the earlier portion of this Verse that... 'Men and women have similar rights against each other'.

In order to fully appreciate this Verse, these words namely that... 'Men have a degree of advantage over women', we will have to refer also to another Verse - Verse No. 34, Chapter 4, Surah Nisa.

It reads... its translation reads as under... 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one (more) into bracket (strength) bracket close than the other, and because they support them for their means'.

This Verse... Verse again lays down that... 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women'.

It further says that... 'God has given one more than the other'.

Admittedly, a woman is a weaker sex and she has got to be given special protection in certain matters.

Anthropologically, man is stronger and also different, which is also a biological truth.

No doubt nature has given him this advantage, for which no credit goes to man, and no discredit to women on that account - But I would like to tell you that this advantage, is also being given to men in order, so that he is.. he is able to effectively discharge his functions.

Honorees task has been cast on him, that of a protector and maintainer and therefore this advantage which has been given to him, has nothing to do with the rights, as I have already said earlier.

In fact this advantage, in no way reduces the rights of women ... nor it, her importance.

Therefore the real question that would arise, would be... I would request you to ponder over, and think about the state of affair, in the social set up today.

According to me, this is one of the most important and delicate function of the men... to give protection to women.

It is in a very... you see, in a very deep sense, which has to be understood - It is not wholly an ordinary protection, in the sense of saving one's life - Please try to understand and appreciate.

I would request you to... to think over, whether men are discharging their functions... and if you closely examine, I have no doubt, you will come to this conclusion, that... that... that men have abdicated their most important function... that of giving protection to women, and therefore have neglected their... their elementary duty.

I do not want to enter into a dialogue or a debate at this time, because there is no time at my at my disposal, as to who is responsible for bringing about this tragic situation.

May be that women may... may have also been responsible for this... bringing about this situation.

But the fact remains, that this has exposed women to forces of crime and oppression, leading to widespread cases of violation of her honour and dignity. *** 16 Sec

In the back drop of Indian ethos, we shall sanctify womanhood.

No woman would like to bargain for such liberty, and no man would like to give up his... agree to give up his role as a 'protector'.

This extremely delicate aspect of relationship between man and woman, has been explained by one of the great thinkers and the... and Poet... Doctor Iqbal, in a poem titled - 'Women's Protection'.

Of course the poem is in Urdu – It ... it consists of three couplets... but I will translate them... these three couplets... there after I have recited these three couplets.

Iqbal says... 'Ek Zinda Haqiqat Mere Seene Mein Hai Mastoor, Ek Zinda Haqiqat Mere Seene Mein Hai Mastoor, Kya Jaanega Woh Jiske Ragon Main Hai Lahoo Sard, Kya Janega Woh Jiske Ragon Main Hai Lahoo Sard, Na parda Na Taleem, Nai Ho Ke Purani, Nisfaniyat E Zan Ka NigeBaan Hai Faqat Mard, Jis Kaum Ne Zinda Haqi Jis Qaum Ne Is Zinda Haqiqat Ko Na Paya, Us Qaum Ka Kursheed Bahut Jald Huwa Zard'.

The translation would be that... 'Jis Kaum Ne Ye Zinda haqiqat Kon Na Paya' - The nation which has not realised this truth ...sorry.

'Ek Zinda haqiqat Mere Seene Mein Hain Mastoor' - a living truth lies deep into my heart.

'Kya Samjhega Woh Jiske Ragon Mein Hai Lahoo Sard'- It is not for those whose senses are frozen.

'Na Parda Na Taleem, Nai Ho Ke Puranee' - It is neither veil nor education... new or old.

'Niswaniyat e Zan Ka NigeBan Hai Faqat Mard' - The protector of the dignity of women, is man alone.

'Jis Qaum Ne Ye Zinda Haqiqat Ko Na Paya' - A nation which has not discovered this... this truth.

'Us us Kaum ka Kurshid Bahot Jald Huwa Zard' - It's sun is bound to fade away.

Friends, as I have already said... that I have extremely limited time at my disposal, and Dr. Zakir is already there, who is going to deal with the subject exhaustively... exhaustively, sufficiently suffice.

I have... non the less; I would like to tell you, that woman has been given a very dignified position, in Qur'an.

And the real problem is only, one of our own ignorance, of Quran's real spirit

Therefore the real solution would be, to educate and enlighten the people.

May I remind you at this moment, the great words of Thomas Jefferson that... 'A nation which expects... which expects to be ignorant and also free, it expects what never was, and never will be'.

'Wo Mauzis The Zamane Mein Musalman Hokaar, Aur Tum Khwar Piye Tarike Qur'an Hokaar'.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have amidst us, Bombay's young but brilliant and irradate speaker, Dr. Zakir Naik.

Though he is a doctor by profession, but he has dedicated himself to the cause of propagation... propagation of Islam, in its right perspective.

He is founder General Secretary of Islamic Research Foundation, which was established in 1991.

He is... he has widely traveled within and outside country, and has delivered number of lectures.

At such a young age, he has developed deep insight into Qur'an - which reminds us what Tagore has said that... 'A lamp cannot light another lamp, unless it continues to burn its own flame'.

It would be most unfair, if on this occasion, I ignore, I do not mention the distinguished parents of Dr. Zakir Naik, but for whose guidance and blessings, he would not have been what he is today.

I once again thank you very much - Thank you very much.

(Clapping)...

(Dr. Mohammad) The talk by Dr. Zakir Naik, on today's topic - Dr. Zakir Naik.

(Dr. Zakir) (Arabic

Honorable Justice M. M. Qazi, respected elders and my dear brothers and sisters, I welcome all of you with the Islamic greetings... 'As-salaamu Alaikum Warahamatullahi Wabarakatuhu'... meaning... 'May peace blessing and mercy of Almighty Allah, be on all of you'.

The topic of today's day is - 'The Women's Rights in Islam - Modernising or Outdated?'

According to the Oxford dictionary, 'Women's Rights are the rights, that promote a position of social and legal equality, of women to men'

According to the Oxford dictionary, 'they are the rights, claimed for the women, equal to those of men, as regards to suffrage that right to vote, as regards to property, etc'.

'Modernising', according to the Oxford dictionary means, 'to make modern, to adapt to modern needs or habits'.

And according to the Webster's dictionary it means... 'To make modern, or to give a new character or appearance - e.g., to modernise ones ideas'.

In short, modernising is a process of updating or opting for the betterment of the present status itself - It is not the present modern status itself.

Can we modernise ourselves, to master our problems, and to realize a new way of life, for the whole human race?

I am not concerned about the modern ideas, the conclusions and the categorical statements made by scientists and inexperienced armchair experts, as how a life should be lived by a woman.

I am going to base my conclusions and considerations on truth, which can be proved by experience

Experience and unbiased factual holistic analysis, are the sure test, between the gold of truth, and the glitter of theory.

We have to check our thinking against reality, otherwise many a times, our mental process will go astray - Indeed the great brains of one time, believed that the world was flat.

If we agree with the 'Women's rights in Islam', as portrayed by the Western media, you have no option, but to agree that the 'Women's rights in Islam' are outdated.

The Western talk of women's liberation, is actually a disguised form of exploitation of her body, deprivation of her honour and degradation of her soul.*** 10 Sec

The Western society which speaks of upgrading the status of women in Islam, have actually reduced her status to concubines, to mistresses, to society butterflies, which are mere tools in the hands of sex marketers and pleasure seekers, which are disguised behind the colorful screen of art and culture.

Islam's radical revolutionary support, gave women their due right and status in the days of ignorance... 1,400 years ago.

Islam's objective was and continues to be, to modernise our thinking, our living, our seeing, our hearing, our feeling and striving for the women's upliftment and emancipation in the society.

Before I dwell further with the topic, I would like you to make note of a few points.

The first point is that, 'approximately one fifth of the world's population, consists of Muslims'

There are different Muslim societies - Some may be close to Islam, some may be far away from Islam

The 'Women's rights in Islam' should be judged according to the authentic sources, and not what individual Muslims do, or what the Muslim society does.

The authentic sources of Islam, are the Qur'an, which is the word of God, and the authentic Sunnah, and the traditions of our beloved Prophet (may peace be upon him).

Point number four - the Qur'an will never contradict itself, nor will the Shahih Hadith contradict itself... neither will these two authentic sources, contradict each other.

Point number five - 'Sometimes the scholars differ, and many a times, these differences can be removed by analyzing the Qur'an as a whole, and not just by quoting one particular Verse'.

Because if one particular verse of the Qur'an if its ambiguous many a times the answer is given somewhere else in the Qur'an - Some people quote one source and neglect all the other sources.

And the last point is - 'It is the duty of every Muslim, male or female, to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT), and to act as His trustee on this world, and not to try and gain fame or satisfy one's own ego.

Islam believes in equality of men and women - 'Equality' does not mean 'Identity'.

In Islam, the role of a man and woman... it is complimentary, it is not conflicting - It is that of a partnership - it is not contradictory, so as to strive for supremacy.

Where 'Women's rights in Islam' is concerned, I have divided into 6 broad categories.

The first are 'the Spiritual rights', second are 'the Economical rights', third are 'the Social rights', fourth are 'the Educational rights', fifth are 'the Legal rights', and last are 'the Political rights'.

Let us analyze 'the Spiritual rights' of women in Islam

The greatest misconception that the West has about Islam, is that they think... 'Paradise in Islam, is only meant for the male - it is not meant for the female'.

This misconception can be removed by quoting from Surah Nisa, Ch. No. 4, Verse No 124, which says.

(Arabic)...

Which means - 'If any of you do deeds of righteousness, whether it be male or a female and has faith, they shall surely enter Paradise and not the least injustice shall be done to them'

A similar thing is... a similar thing is repeated in Surah Nahl, Ch.16, Verse No.97 which says... 'If any of you perform good deeds, be it a man or a woman and is a believer, We shall give you good life and We should reward you for all your good works' .

Just because in Islam, sex is not the criteria to enter Paradise... will you call such rights in Islam as modernising or outdated?

Another misconception is that, which the Western media has, that... 'The woman has no soul'.

In fact, it was in the seventeenth century, when the Council of wise men... when they gathered at Rome, and they unanimously agreed that the woman had no soul.

In Islam, man and woman have the same spiritual nature, and that was clarified by our young Qari, Brother Ashraf Mohammedy, who recited the Verse from Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.1.

(Arabic)...

Which that... 'O humankind reverence your guardian lord, who has created you from a single person and created like nature his mate' .*** 15 Sec

A similar thing is mentioned in Surah Nahl, Ch.16, Verse No.72, which says that... 'We have made for you companions and mates of your own nature'

Again in Surah Al-Shura, Ch.42, Verse No.11, it says... (Arabic)...

'He is the one who has created the heavens and the earth and has made for you pairs from among yourselves'

Just because the spiritual nature of a man and woman is the same in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam, as modernizing or outdated?

The Qur'an clearly mentions that... 'Allah (SWT) has breathed somewhat of His spirit into the human beings'.

If you read Surah Hijr, Ch.15, Verse No.29, it says... 'When I have fashioned you in due proportion and have breathed into you something of my spirit, fall ye down in obeisance'

A similar thing is repeated in the Qur'an, in Surah Sajdah, Ch. 32, Verse No.9, which says...

(Arabic)...

Means... 'We have fashioned you in due proportion and have breathed into you something of My spirit' .

Here, when Allah (SWT) refers to... 'As something of My Spirit, is breathed into the human beings' - it does not mean, a sort of incarnation or a pantheistic form.

It means that Allah has given to every human being something of His spiritual Nature, and the Knowledge of God Almighty, and coming closer towards Him

Here it refers to both Adam and Eve (may peace be upon them) - Both were breathed something of Allah (SWT)'S Spirit.

Again we read in the Qur'an, that Allah has appointed the human being as His vicegerent, as His trustee, as is mentioned in Surah Isra, Ch.17, Verse No.70, which says....

(Arabic)...

That... 'We have honoured the children of Adam and bestowed on them special favours'.

Sorry... Here all the children of Adam have been honoured, male as well as female.

There are some Religious scriptures, for example the Bible, which puts the blame on Eve for the downfall of humanity.

In fact if you read the Qur'an in Surah Araf, Ch.7, Verse No.19 to 27, Adam and Eve (may peace be upon them both) are addressed, more than a dozen of times.

Both disobeyed God, both asked for forgiveness, both repented, and both were forgiven.

In the Bible, if you read Genesis, Ch. 3, only Eve is held responsible (May peace be upon her) for the downfall of humanity.

And according to the doctrine of 'Original Sin', because of Eve (may peace be upon her) the whole of humanity is born in sin.

If you read the Bible in Genesis, Ch. 3, Verse No.16, it states that the God of... 'the Bible' it is saying 'Unto the woman you shall bear in conception and in sorrow shall you give birth and your desire shall be of your husband and he shall rule over you'

That means, pregnancy and child birth has been said in the Bible to degrade the women and the labour pain is a sort of punishment.

In fact if you read the Qur'an, pregnancy and child birth have uplifted the women.

If you read Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.1, it says... 'Respect the womb that bore you'.

Its mentioned in Surah Luqman, Ch.31, Verse No.14, it says ... (Arabic...).

That... 'We have enjoined on the human being to be kind to the parents, in travail upon travail did their mother bore them and in years twain was their weaning'

A similar thing is mentioned in Surah Ahqaf, Ch.46, Verse No.15... (Arabic)...

It again repeats, which says... 'We have enjoined on the human beings to be kind to his parents'.

To be kind to the parents - in pain did their mother bore them, and in pain did she give them birth - Pregnancy in the Qur'an has uplifted the women not degraded her

Just because pregnancy has uplifted the women in Islam will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

The only criteria for judgment in the sight of Allah is 'Taqwa', 'God consciousness' or 'righteousness'

It is mentioned in Surah Hujurat, Ch.49, Verse No.13 'O humankind, We have created you from a single pair of male and female and have divided you into nations and tribes, so that you shall recognize each other not that you despise each other and the most honored in the sight of Allah, is the one who is the most righteous'.

Sex, colour, caste, wealth has got no criteria in Islam - The only criteria in the sight of Allah it is 'Taqwa', neither is sex the criteria for Allah (SWT) to reward or to punish a person.

If you read Surah Imran Ch.3 Verse No.195 it says 'I will never suffer the loss of any of you, be it male or female, you are companions unto each other'.

I had started my talk by quoting a verse from the Qur'an From Surah Al Ahzab, Ch.33, Verse No.35, which says

'Innal Muslimeena Was Muslimati' - 'For Muslim men and Muslim women'

'Wal maomineena Wamomiminati' - 'For believing men and women'

'Wa Kaniteena Wakantaati' - 'For devout men and women'

'Wa Saadikeena Wasaadkaati' - 'For true men and women'.

'Wa Sabireena Wa Saabiraati' - 'For men and women who are patient and constant'.

'Wa Musaddikeena Wamusadikaati' - 'Or men and women who give in charity'.

'Wa Saaeemeena Wasaaimaati' - 'For men and women who fast and deny themselves'.

'Wal hafizeena Furoojaheen Wa hafizati' - 'For men and women who guard their chastity'

'Wa Zaakireenallahu Kasuraon Wazaakiraati' - 'For men and women who engage much in Allah's (SWTala's) praise'

And the verse ends by 'Aradallahu Wa magfirataon Wa Airframe Azeena' - 'That for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and ample of reward'

This verse indicates that the spiritual duties, the moral duties, for the men and women in Islam are the same - Both have to believe, both have to pray, both have to fast, both have to give Zakat, etc, etc.

But the women has been given certain concession in Islam.

If she is undergoing her menstrual period or pregnancy, she does not have to fast - She can keep those fasts later on, when she is more healthy

In fact, during the menstrual period and during the postnatal period, she need not pray also - She has been given the concession, and neither does she have to compensate it later on.

Just because the moral duties of the men and women are equal in Islam will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Let us analyze the Economical rights - Islam gave economical rights to the women 1,300 years before the West.

An adult Muslim woman can own, she can dispose or disown any of her property without consulting any one, irrespective whether she is married or she is single.

In 1870, it was the first time in England, that the West recognized the rights of the married woman, where she was allowed to own or dispose any of her property without consultation.

I do agree that the women were given their economical rights 1300 years ago - these are ancient rights - but the question is - 'are they modernizing or outdated?'

A women in Islam, if she wishes to work she can work - There is no text in the Qur'an or the authentic Hadith which prevents or makes it prohibited for a woman to do any work, as long as it is not unlawful, as long as it is within the preview of the Islamic Shariah, as long as she maintains her Islamic dress code

But natural, she cannot take up jobs, which exhibit her beauty and body - Like for example, modeling and film acting, and such kind of jobs.

Many of the professions and jobs which are prohibited for the woman are also prohibited for the man, for example serving liquor.

For example working in gambling dens - For example doing any unethical or dishonest business - All these jobs are prohibited for both men and women.

A true Islamic society requires women to take up profession such as doctors.

We do require female Gynecologists - We do require female nurses - We do require female teachers

But, a woman in Islam has got no financial obligations - The financial obligation is laid on the shoulders of the man in the family - Therefore she need not work for her livelihood.

But in genuine cases, where there are financial crisis in which both the ends do not meet, she has the option of working

Here too, no one can force her to work - She works out of her own, absolute free will.

Besides the professions I mentioned, she can work in the house and take up tailoring, she can take up embroidery, she can do pottery, she can make baskets etc

She is also allowed to work in factories and small scale industries in which, which has been designed exclusively for the ladies.

She can work in places which have got separate sections- gents and ladies, because Islam does not agree with intermingling of the sex

She can also do business, and where it comes to doing transactions, where it involves interaction with a foreign male, with a Na-Mehram, she should do it through a father or a brother or husband or a son

And the best example I can give you is of Bibi Khatija (may Allah be pleased with her) who was the wife of our beloved Prophet (may peace be upon him)

She was one of the most successful business women of her times and she did the transaction through her husband, Prophet Muhammed may (May peace be upon him)

A woman in Islam has been given more financial security, as compared to the man.

As I told you earlier, she... the financial obligation is not put on her shoulder - It is put on the shoulder of the man in the family

It is the duty of the father or the brother, before she is married and the duty of the husband or the son, after she is married to look after her lodging, boarding, clothing and financial aspects of her.

When she gets married, she is on the receiving end.

She receives a gift - she receives a dower or a marital gift, which is called as 'Meher'.

And it is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Nisa, Ch.4 Verse No.4 which says.... (Arabic)...

'Give to the woman in dower, a marital gift' .

For a marriage to solemnize in Islam, 'Meher' is compulsory.

But unfortunately in our Muslim society here, we just keep a nominal 'Meher' to satisfy the Qur'an, say 151 Rupees, or some people give 786 Rupees and they spend lakhs and lakhs of Rupees on the reception, on the decoration, on the flowers, on the lunch parties, on the dinner parties.

In Islam, there is no - there is no lower-limit, nor is there an upper limit for 'Meher' - But when a person can spend lakhs of Rupees on the reception, surely the 'Meher' should be much more.

There are various cultures which have crept into the Muslim societies, specially in the Indo-Pak area

They give a small amount of 'Meher' and they expect the wife to get a fridge, to get a T.V set, they expect the wife to give a flat, to get a car, etc., and a large sum of dowry, depending upon the status of the husband

If he is a graduate, they may accept - they may expect 1 lakh - If he is an engineer they may expect 3 lakhs- If he is a doctor they may expect 5 lakhs.

Demanding dowry... a husband demanding dowry from the wife, directly or indirectly is prohibited in Islam.

If the parents of the girl give the girl something out of their own free will, it is accepted - But demanding or forcing directly or indirectly, it is prohibited in Islam

If a Woman works, which she does not have to - whatever earning she gets, it is absolutely her property.

She need not spend a single pai on the household - if she wants to spend it is her free will.

Irrespective how rich the wife is, it is the duty of the husband to give lodging, boarding, clothing and look after the financial aspects of the wife.

In case of divorce or if a wife gets widowed, she is given financial support for the period of 'Iddah' - and if she has children, she is also given child support

Islam gave the right to the women to inherit, centuries ago.

If you read the Qur'an - in several verses, in Surah Nisa, in Surah Baqarah and in Surah Maidah, it is mentioned that a woman irrespective, she is a wife or she is a mother, or a sister, or a daughter, she has a right to inherit - And it has been fixed by Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an.

And I do know, there are bound to be questions - that the inheritance law of in of Islam is unjust.

But time does not permit me to clarify this - Insha Allah I will expect a question on this and then I can deal with this topic more in detail.

Let us go further and analyze the social rights of a women in Islam.

Broadly it can be categorized into four sub-headings... Social rights given to a daughter, to a wife, to a mother and to a sister.

Coming to the social rights given in Islam, to a daughter - Islam prohibits, female infanticide - The killing of female children is forbidden in Islam

It is mentioned in Surah Taqveem, Ch. 81, Verse No. 8 and 9, 'when the female child is buried alive and when she questions you, for what crime was she killed'.

Not only female infanticide has been prohibited, all sorts of infanticides has been prohibited in Islam, whether it be a male child or a female child.

It is mention in the Qur'an in Surah A'nam Ch.6, Verse No.151 that, 'Kill not your children for want of sustenance for it is Allah that will provide sustenance for you and for children'

A similar thing is mentioned in Surah Isra, Ch.17 Verse No.31 which says... 'Kill not your children for want of sustenance, for it is Allah that will provide sustenance to you and your children, for killing of children is a major sin'.

In the pre-Islamic Arabia, whenever a female child was born mostly she was buried alive.

Alhamdullillah, after the spread of Islam this evil practice has been discontinued.

But unfortunately it still continues in our country India - According to a BBC report, in the programe assignment the title of which was 'Let Her Die', there was a British reporter by the name of Emily Beckenen, who came all the way from Britain to India to give us the statistics of the female infanticide.

This programe was shown more than a year back on the star T.V. and Alhamdullillah, it is being shown every month, and just a few days ago it was again retecast.

In that programe, it gives the statistics, that every day more than 3,000 fetuses are being aborted on being identified that they are females

If you multiply this figure by the number of days, that is multiplied by 365, you get a figure of more than one million female fetuses are being aborted every year in our country.

And there are big hoarding and posters in states like TamilNadu and Rajasthan, which says spend 500 Rupees and save 5 lakh Rupees

What does it mean? - That spend Rupees 500 on medical examination like Aminocententus or Ultra Sonography, and identify that the child the mother is carrying

If it is a female you can abort it and you'll save 5 lakh Rupees - How?

The couple of lakhs you spend on upbringing her and the remaining lakhs of Rupees you spend on giving dowry

According to the report of the government hospital of Tamil Nadu - 'out of every 10 female children that are born, four are put to death' - No wonder the female population in India is less than the male population

Female infanticide was continuing in our country since centuries - If you analyze the statistics of the 1901 census, for every 1000 males there were 972 females

According to the 1981 statistics and census, it tells you for every 1000 males you have 934 females

And the latest statistics of 1991 tells you that for every 1000 males you have 927 females

You can analyze that the female ratio is dropping every year - And since science and medicine has advanced, it has helped in this evil practice

Just because Islam tells you that you should not kill any children whether it be male or female will you call these rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Islam not only prohibits killing of infant children, it also prohibits, and it rebukes you on rejoicing on the birth of a male child and you getting saddened on the news of a female child.

If you read Surah Nahl, Ch.16, Verse No.58 & 59, it tells you that... 'when news is brought to one of them of a birth of a female child his face darkens and is filled with inward grief'.

He hides himself in shame from his people because of the news he has received.

Should he let her live in suffering or should he bury her in dust - Ah! what a evil choice they have

Qur'an not only prohibits female infanticide, it rebukes at the thought of you rejoicing at the birth of a male child and getting saddened at the birth of a female child

In Islam, a daughter should be brought up correctly

And according to a Hadith in 'Ahmed', the Prophet (may peace be upon him) he said 'Anyone who brings up two daughters properly, they will be like this to me on the day of judgment' – Means, 'will be very close to me on the day of judgment'

And there's another Hadith which says, that 'Anyone who up brings 2 daughters properly and takes good care and brings them up with love and affection, they will enter Paradise'

In Islam, there should be no partiality in upbringing of the daughters or the son.

According to a Hadith, of our beloved Prophet it said that, 'In the presence of the Prophet, once a man kissed his son and placed him on his lap but did not do the same to his daughter.

The Prophet immediately objected and said that you are unjust - You should have even kissed your daughter and placed her on the other lap'.

Prophet Muhammed (may peace be upon him) he did not only speak about justice, he also practiced it.

Let us analyze, the rights of a wife in Islam.

All the previous civilizations, they have considered the women to be an 'instrument of the devil'.

The Qur'an refers to the women as 'Mohsana', that is a 'fortress against the devil'.

And if a woman, who's good, marries a man, she prevents him from going on the wrong path and keeps him on the 'Siratulmustakeem' – that is the correct path.

There's a Hadith in which Prophet Muhammed (may peace be upon him) he said that, 'there is no monasticism in Islam' .

And again according to Sahih Bukhari, Volume No. 7, Ch. No. 3 Hadith No 4 it says that 'the Prophet ordained the young men, all those who have the means to marry, they should marry - For it will help them to lower their gaze and guard their modesty.

There is another Hadith related by Anas, in which the Prophet said... 'Any one who marries completes half his deen'.

Once somebody asked me, that... 'does it imply that if I marry twice I will be completing my full deen?'

The person misunderstood the message of the Prophet.

When the Prophet said that... 'When you marry you complete half your deen' - It means that when you marry it shields you from promiscuity, it shields you from fornication, it shields you from homosexuality, which lead to half the sin in this world

Only when you marry, do you have opportunity to become husband or a wife - Only when you marry do you have opportunity to become a father or a mother

And the duties of the mother and the father and that of a husband and wife are very important in Islam

So it makes no difference whether a man marries once twice or thrice or four times - He yet completes only half his deen.

The Qur'an says that... 'We have put love into the hearts of the husband and wife' .

If you read Surah Rum, Ch. 30, Verse No. 21 it says that... 'And amongst our signs We have created for you mates or companions, so that you may dwell in them in tranquillity and we have put love and mercy between your hearts'.

According to Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.21, marriage is considered as a misaq, a sacred agreement, a sacred contract.

According to Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.19, it says... 'You are prohibited to inherit women against their will' - Means, to marry the permission of both the parties are required.

It is compulsory that the man and women both should agree to marry No one - not even the father can force their daughter to marry against her wishes.

There's a Hadith in Sahih Bukhari, Volume No. 7, Ch. No. 43, Hadith No. 69, which says 'that a lady she was forced by her father to marry against her wishes' - And she went to the Prophet and the Prophet invalidated the marriage'

Another Hadith in Ibn-e-Humbal, Hadith No. 2469, it says 'that a daughter was forced by her father to get married - And when the daughter approached the Prophet, the Prophet said you can either continue, or if you wish you can invalidate the marriage.

That means, the consent of both the male and the female is required

In Islam, a women is considered as a homemaker - She is not considered as a housewife, because she is not married to the house

Many people use terminology, without understanding what it means - 'Housewife' means 'your the wife of the house'

So I believe, from now onwards the sisters would prefer calling themselves 'homemakers', than 'house wives', if they are occupied more in the home

In Islam, a woman, she is not married to a master that she should be treated like a slave - She is married to it is equal

And there is a Hadith which says in Ibn-Hambal - Hadith No 736, 7396. - It says that... 'the most perfect of the believers are those that are best in character and behavior, and those that are best to their family and their wives'.

Islam gives equal rights to the man and woman and as mentioned by the honorable justice M. M. Kazi, that Qur'an clearly mentions that men and women, husband and wife have equal rights in all aspects, except leadership in the family.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Baqarah Ch.2, Verse No.228.
- It says that... 'the women have been given rights similar against them on equitable terms but the men have a degree higher'

And I perfectly agree with Justice M.M. Kazi when he said that most of the Muslims have misunderstood this verse, when it says 'a men have a degree higher' - As I said we should analyze the Qur'an as a whole.

And its mentioned in Surah Nisa, Ch. 4, Verse No.34 which says - (Arabic...).

'The men are the protectors and maintainers of the women, for Allah (SWT) has given one of them more strength than the other and they give them their means'

People say the word 'Kawwam' means, 'one degree higher in superiority' - But actually the word 'Kawwam' comes from the root word 'Ikamah'

'Ikamah' means for example 'when you give the Ikamah before prayers - You stand up'.

So 'Ikamah' means to standup - so the word 'Kawwam' means one degree higher in responsibility, not one degree higher in superiority.

Even if you read the commentary of 'Ibne-Kathir' - He says that the word 'Kawwam' means one degree higher in responsibility, not one degree higher in superiority.

And this responsibility, should be carried out by mutual consent of both husband and wife.

It is mentioned in Surah Baqarah, Ch.2, Verse No.187, which says - (Arabic)

Which means... 'Your wives are your garments, and you are their garments'

What's the objective of garments - It is used to conceal and to beautify

The husband and wife, should conceal each others faults, and they should beautify each other - Its a relationship of hands and gloves

The Qur'an mentions that... 'even if you do not like your wife, you should treat her kindly'.

It is mentioned in Surah Nisa, Ch.4, Verse No.19, that... 'Treat your wives on a footing of equity and kindness even if you dislike her - For you may be disliking a thing for which Allah has made good for you'.

Even if you dislike your wife you have to treat her kindly and with equity

Just because the rights of a wife are equal to those of the husband in Islam, will you call such rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Let us analyze the rights of a Mother

The only thing above respect to Mother, is the worship of Allah (SWT) - It is mentioned in Ch.17, Verse No.28-29

It says that... 'Allah has ordained for you - that Allah has ordained for you, that you worship none but Him, and to be kind to our parents

And if any one or both of them reach old age do not say a word of contempt or repel them but address them with honour, and speak to them with kindness, and lower your wing of humility and pray to Allah (SWT) - 'My Lord, bless them as they have cherished me in childhood'

Surah Nisa, Ch. No. 4, Verse No. 1 says... 'Respect the womb that bore you'.

Surah A'nam, Ch.6, Verse No.151, says... (Arabic)...

That... 'You have to be kind to your parents'.

Again in Surah Luqman Ch.31, Verse No.14

It again says the same thing that... (Arabic)...

'We have enjoined on the human beings to be kind to his parents

In travail upon travail, did their mother bore them and in years twain was their weaning'

A similar thing is repeated again in Surah Ahqaf, Ch.46, Verse No.15

(Arabic...).

That... 'We have enjoined on the human beings to be kind to his parents

In pain did their mother bore them and in pain did she give them birth'.

According to a Hadith related in 'Ahmed', as well as in 'Ibn-e-Majah' - It says 'Paradise lies at the feet of the mother'.

That does not mean that if my mother is walking on the road and if she steps on muck and filth - that thing becomes Paradise

It means that after you fulfill your basic duties, if you respect your mother, if you are kind to your mother, If you are honorable to your mother, you will Inshaallah enter Paradise.

Another Hadith related in Sahih Bukhari in Volume 8, Ch. No. 2 Hadith No. 2, as well as in Sahih-Muslim - It says that a man asked the Prophet... 'Who requires the maximum love and respect and my companionship in this world?

The Prophet replied - 'your mother'

'Who is next?' - 'your mother'

'Who is next?' - 'your mother'

The man asked for the fourth time, - 'Who is next'

The Prophet replied 'your father'

75% of the love and respect goes to the father, sorry goes to the mother and 25% of the love and respect goes to the father

Three fourth of the better part of the love and respect goes to the mother – One fourth of the remaining part of the love and respect goes to the father

In short, the gold medal goes to the mother, the silver medal goes to the mother, the bronze medal goes to the mother and the father may be he gets the consolation prize.

I am very happy that my brothers have appreciated it - Otherwise normally I always apologize, that if I have hurt the feelings of my brothers, I am sorry – That is what Islam tells me

But, I'm glad, that my brothers here, they have appreciated Islam, Al-hamdullillah

Let us analyze the rights of the sisters in Islam

According to Surah Tawbah, Ch. 9, Verse No.71, it says... (Arabic)...

That... 'The men and the women they are maintainers and supporters of each other'

The word 'Auliya' here means 'supporters' and 'maintainers' - they are supporters and maintainers of each other

In short they are brothers and sisters unto each other, unless otherwise

Prophet Muhammed (may peace be upon him) he said, 'The women are the 'Shakat' - 'Shakat' means sister'

It also means 'half', as humankind has been divided into two halves - men and women - It refers to as 'half', also as 'sisters'

There are so many social rights that we can, that we can speak for weeks together.
*** 07 Sec

But due to short of time, I will not be able to touch on the important topics such as Polygamy, such as divorce, such as Talaq, divorce, because I have opted to spend more time on the other topics

Because experience tells me that these topics, Inshallah, will be covered in the question and answer time

And I hope you will ask questions and whatever - whatever clarification you require on this topic, I will try my level best to give you

Now let us analyze - now let us analyze the Educational rights given to the women in Islam

The first 5 verses which were revealed of the Qur'an Shareef were from Surah Alaq, or Surah Iqra, Ch. 96, Verse No. 1 to 5 which says - (Arabic...)

'Read, recite or proclaim in the name of thy lord, (Arabic...) Who has created the human beings from a congealed clot of blood, a leech like substance

(Arabic...) - Read, thy Lord is most bountiful

(Arabic...) - Who has taught the use of the pen

(Arabic...) - Who has taught the human beings that which he knew-not'.

The first guidance given in the Qur'an Shareef to the humankind was not to pray, was not to fast, was not to give charity - It was read - Islam pays utmost importance to education.

The Prophet ordained the parents, the father and the mother, to see to it that they gave Religious education to their daughter

And after a lady married, it was the duty of the husband to provide her with the Religious education

If he couldn't do it himself, and if she wanted, he should allow her to go somewhere else to acquire the education

According to Sahih Bukhari, the women were very enthusiastic to acquire knowledge, and they once told the Prophet... 'You are usually surrounded by men - why do not you give us one particular day so that we too can ask you questions' - And the Prophet agreed.

Beside he himself going, he sent many other of his Sahabas to the women, to give them education

Imagine, 1400 years ago, when the women were ill treated and were only used as chattels - leave aside being educated, Islam asked the women to be educated

We have examples of several Muslim women who are scholars

And the best example I can give you is of Bibi Ayaisha (may Allah be pleased with her), who was the daughter of Hazrat Abubaker, the first Khalifa of Islam, (may Allah be pleased with him), and the wife of our beloved Prophet Muhammed (may peace be upon him)

She gave guidance even to the Sahabas and to the Khalifas - One of her famous student Urwah-Ibn-Zubair

She said that... 'I have not seen a greater scholar than Ayaisha in the field of learning of the Qur'an, in obligatory duties, in lawful and unlawful matters, in literature and poetry, in Arab history'

She was not only expert in the Religious field, she had profound knowledge of medicine - Whenever the foreign delegates came to the Prophet and discussed, she used to memorize the remedies

She was well versed in the field of math, and many times the companions came to her to ask problems of 'Mirath' that is, 'Inheritance' - And how much share could be divide how much share should be given to the each individual

She has - she is said to have guided all the four Khalifas, including the companions.

And she also gave guidance, many a times to Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) and she herself has narrated 2210 Hadiths.

According to AbuUmm... according to Abu Moosa, who was a famous Jurist, he said that... 'Whenever we companions had lack of knowledge on a matter, we went to - we went to - Hazrat Ayaisha (May Allah be pleased with her), and definitely she had knowledge about it'.

She is said to have taught more than 88 scholars - In short, she was a scholar of the scholars.

There are several examples, even of Safiya (may Allah be pleased with her) who was the wife of the Prophet, who was an expert on Fiqah Islamic Jurisprudence.

And according to Imam an Nouvi 'She was the most intellectual women of that time'.

Another example is Umme - Salma (may Allah be pleased with her) who was the wife of the beloved Prophet

According to Ibn Hajar... 'She has taught 32 different scholars'.

There are several examples - Fatima-Binte-Kais, she is said to have a discussion on Fiqh, for a full day with Hazrat Ayaisha and Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), and still they could not prove her wrong

According to Imam an Nauvi, 'she migrated in the early days and she had profound knowledge'

Other examples like Umme Salim, who was the mother of Anas - she is said to be very well versed in the field of Dawah.

Other examples are Saeeda Nafisa, who was the grand daughter of Hasan and she also said to have taught Imam Shafi, who was the founder of the one of schools of thought.

There are several examples - Even Umme-Ad-darda, who was the wife of Abul -Ad-darda, she is said be an expert in science

And even Imam Bukhari has said that she was an expert in her field - You can give several examples

At the time when the women were ill treated, at the time when women were buried alive, when they were born, at that time Islam had women scholars, in the field of medicine, in the field of science, in the field of Religion

Because Islam tells that every woman should be educated, - Will you call such women's rights in Islam as modernizing or outdated?

Let us discuss the legal rights given to a woman in Islam

According to the Islamic law, men and women are equal - The Shariah protects the life and property of a man and woman both.

If a man murders a woman he too will receive the 'Hurth' punishment - That is Capital punishment of 'Kisas'

According to Surah Baqarah Ch. 2, Verse No.178 and 179, 'he too shall be killed'.

Like wise if a woman murders, she too will be killed

According to the Islamic law of 'Kisas', men and women - irrespective the injury be of the eye, of the nose, of the ear, of the body - both receive equal punishment

And if the guardian of the murderer, even it be a woman - If she says, that forgive the murderer and she accepts 'Dia', that is compensation - her opinion cannot be rejected - They have to accept it

And if there's difference of opinion between the relatives of the person whose murdered - And some say that the murderer should be killed and some say that he should be forgiven and 'Dia' should be accepted - people should prevent the relatives from killing that murderer.

And irrespective whether the witness or the opinion is given by a man or woman, it has same weight.

According to Surah Maida, Ch.5, Verse No.30 - It says... 'As to the thief, whether he be man or a woman, cut off his or her hand as a punishment for his crime, an example from Allah (SWT)'.

Means, if a person robs, irrespective whether he is a man or a woman his or her hands should be chopped - The punishment is the same

According to Surah Nur, Ch.24, Verse No.2, it says 'If any commits fornication, be it a man or a woman, flog them with 100 stripes'

The punishment for fornication in Islam irrespective whether it is a man or a woman, it is the same - Flogging with 100 stripes.

The punishment for men and women, is the same in Islam.

In Islam a woman is allowed to give witness

Imagine, Islam gave right to a woman to be a witness, 14 centuries ago

Even now in as late as 1980, the Jewish Rabai, they are considering, they were considering that whether the women should be given a right to act as a witness or not - And Islam gave that right 1400 years ago

According to Surah Nur, Ch.24, Verse No.4, it is said 'If any of you put a charge against the chastity of a woman, produce 4 witnesses, and if they falter, flog them with 80 stripes'

In Islam for a small crime, you require 2 witness - for a big crime you require 4 witnesses

Accusing a woman falsely is a big crime in Islam, therefore you require 4 witnesses.

Now a days you see in the modern society, you find men abusing women and calling them all sorts of name. They call them prostitutes etc, and what nothing is done

In a Islamic State, if a man calls her a 'prostitute' in public or anywhere else, and if she takes that man to court - And if that man cannot produce 4 witnesses or even if he produces 4 witnesses and any one of them falter, all of them will receive 80 lashes each, and in future all their evidence will be rejected

Islam gives utmost importance to the chastity of the woman

When a lady marries, she normally adopts the name of her husband

In Islam she has the option of either keeping her husband's name, either adopting the name of the husband, or maintaining her maiden name

And maintaining the maiden name is recommended in Islam - And we find in several Muslim societies that women, even after they get married they maintain their maiden name, because according to the Islamic law men and women are equal

Will you call such rights in Islam modernizing or outdated?

Let us analyze the political rights

According to Surah Tawba, Ch.9, Verse No.71, which I quoted earlier, which says.

(Arabic...).

Which says... 'The men and the women they are supporters of each other'. *** 06 Sec

Supporters not only Socially - even Politically - Politically, men and women should support each other

Islam gives women the right to vote

If you read Surah Al Mumtahina, Ch.60, Verse No.12, it says that... 'O Prophet when the believing women come to thee with an oath of fealty'.

Here, the Arabic word is 'Bayan' - And 'Bayan' means much more than our modern, present day election, - because Prophet Muhammed (may peace be upon him), he was not only the messenger of Allah, but he was also the head of the state

And women came to the Prophet and they agreed with him being the head of the state.

So Islam gives the woman even the right to vote

Women can even take part in law making

And according to the famous Hadith in which Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), he was discussing with the Sahabas, and considering putting an upper limit on the 'Meher', since young men were discouraged from getting married - a lady from the back seat she objected and said When the Qur'an says in Surah Nisa Ch.4, Verse No.20 that... 'you can even give a heap of treasure, a heap of gold in 'Meher', when Qur'an puts no limit on 'Meher', who is Umar to put a limit (may Allah be pleased with him)

And immediately Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) he said... 'Umar is wrong and the lady is right'

Imagine, she was a common lady - If it would have been a famous lady, the name of the lady would be mentioned in the Hadith

Since the Hadith does not mention the name of the lady, we can understand that the lady was a common lady

Means, even a common lady can object to the 'Khalifa', the head of the state

And in technical terms it would be called that - 'she is objecting to the breach of the constitution',- because Qur'an is the constitution of the Muslims - That means a woman can even take part in law making

Women have even taken part in the battle fields

There is a full chapter in the Sahih Bukhari mentioning women in the battle field - Women gave water - they give first aid to the soldiers

And there is a particular mention of a woman by the name of Nasiba, who were among the few, who protected our beloved Prophet during the battle of Uhud

Because the Qur'an says 'Man is the protector of the 'Woman'

Under normal circumstances, the women should not go to the battle field. It is the duty of the man

Only when required, under necessity are women allowed - and they should go to the battle field - Otherwise no

Otherwise you'll have the same position as you are having in the USA.

There... women were allowed to join the battle since 1901 but they were not allowed to take active part - They only played the part of a nurse

Later on after the 'Feminist Movement' had started in 1973, the 'Feminist movement' demanded - 'Why aren't women allowed to take active part in the battle field?'

So the American government allowed - After 1976 women, were allowed to take active part in the battle field

And last year according to a report of the defense department, of the defense department of America, which was released on the 23rd of April, 1993 it said that - '90 people were sexually assaulted in a convention, of out which out of which 83 were women and 117 officers were charged with in disciplinary action' - Imagine in one convention only, 83 women sexually assaulted.

What was the crime of those 117 officers?

They made the women run and they snatched at their clothes - They made them parade absolutely nude without even covering the genital parts - They were made to have sex in public

Is this what you call 'Women's rights'?

If you think that this is what is 'Women's right', then you can keep your rights to yourselves

We do not want our sisters, our daughters our mothers to be sexually assaulted.

And there was a uproar in the parliament and the President, Bill Clinton - he himself had to apologize - publicly apologize and he said... 'Necessary action will be taken'

And you know when politicians say 'necessary action will be taken, what happens.

So Islam allows women to take part in the battle field only when required

But there also they should maintain their Islamic Hijab and the Islamic ethics, and their modesty.

Before I conclude my talk, I'd like to give an example

As I said in the beginning of my talk, Islam believes in equality between men and women - Equality does not mean identicality.

Suppose in a classroom 2 students, student 'A' and 'B', during an examination both come out first - Both secure 80% marks - 80 out of 100

Out of the hundreds of students, 2 come out first 'A' and 'B'

When you analyze the question paper, the question paper has 10 different questions, each carrying 10 marks.

In question 1 student 'A' got 9 out of 10, and student 'B' got 7 out of 10 - So in question 1 student 'A' was higher than student 'B'.

In question 2, student 'A' got 7 out of 10 and student 'B' got 9 out of 10, - Student 'B' was higher than student 'A' in question number 2.

In question 3 both of them got 8 out of 10, both were equal

So when we add up the marks of all the ten questions, both student 'A' and 'B' got 80 out of 100

So in short, student 'A' and student 'B' are over all equal

In some question 'A' is higher than 'B', in some question 'B' is higher than 'A', in others both are equal

In the same fashion, taking the example that since Allah has given man more strength - Suppose a thief enters the house will you tell, 'I believe in women's rights - I believe in women's rights' - will you tell your mother, your sister and your daughter, to go and fight the thief?

No, but natural you'll fight him - If required they may interfere - under normal circumstances since Allah has given you more physical strength, you have to go and tackle the thief.

So here, in physical strength, man is one degree higher than the woman

Let us take another example where... where it comes to giving respect to the -where it comes to respecting the parents - The children are supposed to respect the mother 3 times more than the father.

Here the women have one degree higher than the men - Over all both equal

So Islam believes in equality, not identically - Men and women are over all equal in Islam.
*** 09 Sec

'This was in brief, not in detail', as Justice Kazi said, time does not permit me to speak in detail - this was in brief, the highlights, of 'the Women's Rights in Islam'.

After this what the Muslim society did is different - Many of the Muslim societies did not give the women their rights and they deviated away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The Western society is largely responsible for this - because of the Western societies, many Muslim societies have become over protective, over precautions and have gone to one extreme and deviated away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.B

On the other extreme, some of the Muslim societies upgrade with the Western culture, and followed their culture.

I want to tell the Western society that if you analyze the women's rights in Islam according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah - you will realize it is modernizing and not outdated

Lastly, I would like to thank those people who have helped and supported me

If there is any one person who requires credit for me being here, it is my... it is my beloved mother Mrs. Roshan Naik - It was because, it was because of her love, care and guidance that I am here today.

I will be doing injustice if I do not include the name of my father Dr. Abdul Karim Naik, as well as my other family members, specially, my Brother Mohammed Naik

And last, but not the least my wife, who has encouraged me since one and a quarter year, since we have been married and thus I have been able to strive harder in this field.
*** 15 Sec

Wa aakhirudda-waana Anilhamdulillahi Rabbil Aalamin

Clapping

(Dr. Mohammed)

A thank you all for that appreciation

Before we start the question and answer session, an announcement to make.

We, the Islamic Research Foundation and it's trustees are very thankful to the Al-Baraka Finance House Ltd. Bombay and it's managing director Mr. Raashid Umar for kindly sponsoring the U-matic video recording of broadcast quality, of this programme which is going on - Thank you Mr Raashid Umer and the Al-Baraka.

(Clippings of Question & Answer)

(Q). Asalam Allakum, my name is Sabha, and I am a student.

I would ask... I would like to ask you a question Zakir Bhai - A man will have 'Hoors', that is, beautiful maidens when he when he enters Paradise

What will a woman get, when she enters Paradise?

(Q). My name is Sheila - I would like... I would like to ask - Why is Polygamy permitted in Islam, and that is why... is a man allowed to marry more than one wife?

(Dr. Zakir). Qur'an happens to be the only Religious book on the face of the earth, which says... 'Marry only one'.

There is no Religious book on the face of the earth, which says... 'Marry only one'.

You read the Geeta, you read the Veda, you read the Ramayan, you read the Mahabharata, you read the Bible - No where it is mentioned... 'Marry only one' - It is only mentioned in the Qur'an

(Q). I am Vimla Dalal, Advocate - I would like to ask, that Islam preaches women's rights are equal to men.

Why women should be in 'Purdah', and why there should be a segregation of men and women, in this sort of meeting also?

(Dr. Mohammed) The next question

(Q). Aslam Allaikum - My name is Bilal Lala, and I am a revert - By profession, I happen to be a lecturer in computers

There is one question which has baffled me over the years, and that question is -Why does Islam permit a Muslim man to marry a woman of his choice from Ahle Kitab... may be Jews or Christians, and the vice-versa is not permitted?

(Q). My name is Roshan Rangwala... a businessman.

Question is Dr. Naik, as you said that Islam gives equal right to both ladies and gents - Then why man is allowed to keep 4 wives, and ladies are kept away from this privilege?

As men can think of another woman, at the same time after marrying a one wife... man can think for another women - why ladies cannot think for another?

(Dr. Mohammed) The next question please.....

(Q). I am Prakash Lote - first of all I will thank organisation for calling people of all faiths... and so I am asking another question.

For all the Religions, whether it is Hinduism, Christian, or Islam... in books there are many good things.

But for years, after thousands of years, the practices of all the Religion have been discriminatory towards women, and no Religion is a exception to this.

So the question is - What is written in the books... whether it is Bible, Qur'an or Gita or whatever it is... whether that is more important, or the practice of the society, which is more important?

And if practice is more important, then we should give very little importance to what is being written in all such holy books, including Qur'an, Gita whatever it is

So on this, I will expect answer, where in practice what could be done... instead of saying what is being written in this book or that book.*** Sec

(Dr. Mohammed) The next question from the top please

(Q). As salam Allaikum, I am Saima Kadri, and my question is that... 'Why there are no women Prophets in Islam?'

(Dr. Mohammed) This is from Bijay, from IIT Powai Bombay.

He asks... 'Islam does not allow intermingling of sex in work place - Is this modernizing or outdated - Please explain?'

(Q). Another connected question is... 'Can a woman work as an Airhostess, since it is a decent and highly paid job?' - This is from Sudat.

(Dr. Zakir). According to statistics, it tells us that 50% of the women in America who go to universities and work places, are raped - Do you know that? .

50% - why?... Because most of the jobs in America, involve intermingling of sexes.

If you think that a lady should be raped, it is modernising... then Islam is outdated - If you think not, then Islam is the most modernizing.

(Q). In the name of Allah most Gracious, Merciful and Bountiful.

As-Salam-Alaikum - I am Parveen Alaviya... a practicing lawyer, and a researcher in world Religions.

My question to you Dr. Naik is... you mentioned the solitary illustration of a woman, who told the body, that she was forced into a marriage, and her marriage was allowed to be invalidated.

This incident took place years ago, around the year, if possible the body.

Qur'an is the constitution of the rights of women and men - Is there a body? If so name it, which also enforces the breakage and rights - Thank you.

(Dr. Mohammed). The next question from the chat.

(Q). Is co-education allowed in Islam? - This is from Rasheed Shaikh... he is a student.

Is co-education allowed in Islam?.

(Q). This is from Jennifer - It says... 'Is it only the husband who can say 'Triple Talak' and get one... and get one? - What has a woman to do, if she wants to get divorce or 'Talak'?'

(Dr. Zakir). The question asked is - Why are not women allowed in the Mosque?

You go to Saudi Arabia, women are allowed in the Mosque - You go to London, women are allowed in the Mosque - You go to America, women are allowed in the Mosque - It is only in India, that they are prevented, and a few countries close by.

You go to the Haram-Sharif in Mecca, in Masjid-E-Nabvi, they are allowed.

But Alhamdulillah, there are few Mosques in India... even in Bombay, which have started allowing women in the Mosque - Hope the other Mosques will follow.

(Dr. Mohammed). Thank you - the next question.

(Q). Dr. Naik, my question is... 'For last fourteen hundred years... One thousand and four hundred years, only main Ulemas have interpreted Qur'an and Hadith.

Of course, I was enlightened by your speech in the beginning, that Aisha Ji was a Religious scholar, and she used to interpret.

My question is... how many women, female Ulemas or Religious scholars are today to interpret Qur'an and Hadith, today - How many?... What is the percentage? - And another thing another thing, I am just... I am finishing... this question arises from 'the Taslima of Bengal' - that when she made a sentence, I mean, Moulvi started shouting - there was not a lady Ulema to, I mean reply to these Moulvis or take the side of Taslima or anything.

We have not read what Taslima has said, because we can not get all the literature here in India - either from Pakistan or from Bengal or anywhere.

(Dr. Zakir). Why did not any lady support the cause for Taslima Nasreen? - The first question arises... Should she be supported?

Regarding the answer for the question on Taslima Nasreen, this cassette is available outside in the foyer.

This cassette... we had a debate in the Bombay Union of Journalist - Bombay Union of Journalist had a debate between myself and Dr. Vyas and Father Peirera as well as Ashok Shahani, who translated into Marathi 'Lajja'.

And many people objected, many people guided me, that do not go to that debate... It will be a problem, they will misquote you - And believe me, I have had two minds.

But finally my father guided me... 'Take the name of Allah and go', and I went...Al-Hamdulillah.

Al-Hamdulillah, it was only because of Allah's support, that the debate was successful - It was so successful, that not a single paper reported it... you know that - Not a single paper reported it... you know that? - Not a single paper.

(Back Ground Azaan, By Brother Yusuf Islam)

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(Azan Continued....).*** 05 Sec