

In a meeting with thousands of women and girls, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said: - 27 /Dec/ 2023

In a meeting with thousands of women and girls on 27 December 2023, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution elucidated Islam's reasoned stance regarding the various aspects of women's roles in the family and their extensive engagement in society, politics and management across levels. He said, "In Islam, the way is open for women, like men, to participate in any kind of social activity provided that two important sensitive issues are heeded: the issue of the family and the dangers of sexual attraction."

In the gathering, held on the eve of the birth of Her Excellency Fatima Zahra (PBUH), Ayatollah Khamenei said that the greatness of the Lady of the Two Worlds defied comprehension. He said, "According to an authentic hadith, God is angered when Fatimah (PBUH) is angered and happy when she is happy. There is no virtue higher that can be imagined for a human being. Therefore, whoever desires the satisfaction of the Almighty must follow her recommendations, teachings, and directions concerning the family in taking on roles as daughter, mother, and spouse, and in the areas of society and politics."

He considered a woman's identity, values, rights, duties, freedoms and limitations as vital and highly defining matters. Regarding this significant issue, He said there are two general approaches in the world, the Western and the Islamic, which are antithetical to each other.

Pointing to Western civilisation's avoidance of rational discussion on significant women's issues, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution added, "Since Westerners are not rational about women, they resort to sensationalism and theatrics in response to any question or topic. They seek to manipulate political and non-political figures, utilise artistic and literary tools, dominate social media, and control international women-related centres."

Referring to alarming official statistics on moral corruption in the West, Ayatollah Imam Khamenei stated: "**Why is it that any issue undermining the family becomes more prominent day by day in the West? In contrast, there is no serious condemnation or punishment for those who attack women in hijab.**"

They considered Islam's rational approach to the issue of women to be the opposite of the West and added, "The issue of women is a strong point of Islam, and it should not be assumed that we need to be on the defensive about it."

The leader of the Islamic Revolution deemed the equality of women and men in the matter of human dignity and values to be components of the strong logic of Islam. He said, "**In terms of human values and spiritual growth, there is no difference in aptitude between women and men; both are equally capable of climbing the ladder of spiritual ascension with the same efforts and abilities.**"

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei added, "**In spiritual fields, God has even sometimes preferred women over men in the Qur'an and has presented women such as Pharaoh's wife and Maryam as role models for all believers. These examples negate men's tendencies towards male domination based simply on their material and physical conditions.**"

he said, "Therefore, there is no difference between men and women in their sense of duty and public responsibility."

He considered women's presence in society and social responsibilities among the equal roles of women and men. He added, "According to the honourable Imam, involvement in the politics and basic destiny of the country is the right

and responsibility of women. In addition, according to transmitted narrations, everyone has a responsibility to deal with the affairs of society. This includes paying attention to the affairs of Muslims, such as the issue of Gaza today.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution considered family responsibilities to be a category in which men and women have different duties according to their physical and mental capabilities. He said, “Based on this, the slogan of ‘**gender equality**’, which some people proclaim in an absolute form, is wrong; the correct term should be ‘**gender justice**’.”

Concerning the concept of justice as putting everything in its proper place, Ayatollah Khamenei identified the specific duties of women, such as childbearing and child-rearing, as appropriate to women's mental, physical and emotional makeup. He said, “**Although the family responsibilities of men and women are different, their family rights are the same according to the Holy Quran.**”

He called the home a place of peace and comfort for a woman and said, " Husbands' negative behaviours, such as verbal abuse or physical harm, are by no means acceptable."

Ayatollah Khamenei deemed the enactment of laws containing severe penalties as the way to address such internal family trauma. Referring to a law in the process of approval in the parliament, he stated, “**This law should be pursued, and we also recommend that harsh punishments be considered for men who make the home environment unsafe for women.**”

He mentioned that there are many questions about the presence of women in various jobs and managerial positions in social and government administrations, saying, " Gender is not an issue in this area either, so there are no restrictions on the presence of women.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution considered meritocracy the only criterion for assigning social and political responsibilities to men and women. He said, “**In a place like a ministry or parliamentary representation, if there is a competent and qualified woman, Islam imposes no restrictions on her assuming the position.**”Top of Form

He said that one condition for women's presence in the workplace is that they should not be deprived of performing the most fundamental of women's work, i.e. housekeeping, childbearing and motherhood. He said, “Some occupations such as medicine and teaching are even mandatory for women and girls and if sometimes a woman's employment conflicts with housekeeping, childbearing and related ancillary matters, the country's officials must find solutions so that none of these two duties become neglected.”

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "Of course, these responsibilities can be combined. We are well aware that women who are the cream of the crop in their fields and successful women in the scientific and executive sectors have also raised good children."

After emphasising the fulfilment of women's family duties, he considered the second sensitivity of Islam in the matter of women's social presence as a danger and slippery slope for sexual attraction. He said, “One reason why Islam emphasises hijab is to limit the risk of sexual attraction, and this sensitivity must be observed. Thus, the hijab is not a deprivation, but a form of preservation and keeps women safe.”

The Leader of the Revolution considered the role of a mother to be the most important and noble role in humanity because it guarantees the continuation of generations and human life. The idea that housework such as cooking and washing is a woman's duty is entirely wrong. In the family, tasks should be performed with mutual understanding just as there are men who assist women with household chores.”

The issue of the age for marriage was another subject on which Ayatollah Khamenei elaborated upon. He stated Islam's opinion about avoiding postponing it to older ages. He said, "This does not mean that children should get married, of course, but it means that young men and women should get married as early as possible, which is better."

He said that the progress of women in various fields, such as science, literature, sports and art, during the period of the Islamic Republic has been ten times greater than before the Revolution, saying, "Although we still haven't been able to Islamize the country in the true sense, and the country has not yet arrived at that level, nevertheless successes have been achieved, and if Islam is fully implemented, these successes will be multiplied."

At the end of his speech, the Leader of the Revolution referred to the important upcoming elections of March 2024 and called the role of women in this area as something essential for society and the family. He said, "Your most important role in the home is to encourage your spouse and children to be active in the elections and do proper research. In some situations, women are especially adept at looking at a scene more accurately and subtly than men, including recognising people, strategies, and trends. You can, therefore, play an essential role in identifying election candidates and encouraging people to go to the polls."

This meeting included ten women and girls active in various areas. They were:

Zeena Ibrahim, mother of six martyrs and wife of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky. Maryam Shabani is the director of Iran's first and only professional women's theatre group. Isra al Buhais is a correspondent from Al-Alam Network (who expressed their statements from Gaza in a video format). Ruqayyah Sadat Mu'min; PhD in Women's Studies - Women's Rights. Fatimah Sharif Noqabi, former coach of the National Futsal Team. Meena Mehrnoosh has a PhD in Economics and is a faculty member at the University of Tehran. Qayeq Haqqju is a full professor at the School of Medicine, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Faezeh Ghaffar-Haddadi: author and mother of four children Rayheneh Sadat Mahmudi is a very talented student. Zahra Muwwahidnia is an assistant professor in social medicine at Iran University of Medical Sciences. They discussed their viewpoints and suggestions, and the chair of the event addressed the following points and themes: The necessity of revising laws and regulations related to women and the family and speeding up the approval of some supportive laws that have been delayed for several years. Discussing the problems and limitations of women entering the field of the performing arts. The expression of gratitude by a Palestinian reporter for the unparalleled support of the Iranian people and the Islamic Republic for the oppressed people of Palestine and Gaza. Emphasis was placed on the resilience of the people of Gaza and their refusal to abandon their land despite the unprecedented atrocities by the occupying regime. Transforming Iranian women athletes into a significant and pride-instilling medium for the Islamic Republic against hostile and false portrayals of Iran. Request for increased attention to women's sports and support for female athletes. The need to empower women to prevent harm in cyberspace. The necessity of producing and developing specialised artificial intelligence for women. The necessity of enhancing the capacity for women's social activism commensurate with their growth in knowledge, education, and capabilities after the Islamic Revolution. The necessity to increase efforts to convey the position of women in Islam and the Islamic Revolution to the youth in the West facilitated by communication tools.

The necessity of enforcing laws protecting women's privacy in various sectors, including health and treatment, and the production and distribution of appropriate clothing.