

## Remarks in a Meeting with Thousands of Women and Girls - 17 /Dec/ 2024

In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful[i]

And all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our Master and Prophet, Abu al-Qasim al-Mustafa Muhammad, and upon his pure, immaculate, and chosen family, especially the remaining proof of Allah on earth.

I extend my congratulations to you all on the anniversary of the birth of Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.), and I am delighted that this gathering has been held again this year by God's grace. I believe this is one of the very beneficial and exceptional gatherings held in this Hussainiyah. [A gathering with] such a large audience of our dear women and girls, filled with such passionate sentiments and accompanied by the excellent remarks delivered by the esteemed speakers and presenters, honestly and sincerely, make this a memorable event.

Very good points were raised. And I am, right now, instructing the officials of our office—the research department of the office—from this very place that they pay serious attention to the remarks made by these women. Some of these matters are directly related to us, to myself or our office, while most pertain to governmental bodies and similar institutions. What concerns us should be addressed, and what pertains to other institutions should be followed up.

The subject of the "third model of woman," the revolutionary Muslim woman, was mentioned in the remarks, and the subject of the family in the digital space was presented very precisely and effectively. Addressing the population issue through the family unit, as one of the women mentioned, focused on matters such as population growth, increased fertility, and childbirth. Of course, she noted that she has two children herself, which is not many[ii]. The points raised about the arts, particularly cinema and Iranian theatre, which another woman highlighted here, are also important. Facilitating marriage is a very important subject; it is truly one of our current issues. The points raised by this young lady were very helpful and need to be pursued. These are important matters. I had previously seen Ms. Aida Sorour here on the very day she received the news of the martyrdom of her second son. We had a gathering here in the Hussainiyah, and I saw this lady here. I congratulate her in the spirit of this occasion and offer my condolences for the loss of her children.

I have prepared several points to make here, which I will present in as much time as time allows, God willing. A few sentences about Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.), followed by two or three points regarding the issue of women, a significant human and global matter today, and Islam's perspective. Lastly, I will also say a few words about what is happening in the region today.

Regarding Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.), I can say that this noble lady, this young woman, is one of the wonders of creation. If one were to comprehend and enumerate the dimensions of her being fully, one would become certain that she is indeed an extraordinary phenomenon in the creation of the universe—a being of such magnificence. She was a young woman who was martyred in the early years of her youth—according to one narration, at the age of eighteen, and according to other narrations, at twenty or twenty-two years old. Nevertheless, everything said about her by the Prophet and others pertains to her as a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old girl. In terms of spirituality and her celestial and transcendent rank, she reached a point where her anger caused the anger of God, and her satisfaction brought about the satisfaction of God. This narration has been transmitted in both Shia and Sunni sources. In Shia texts, it says, "Indeed, Allah becomes angry for Fatimah's anger and is pleased with her pleasure.[iii]" (This is how it

appears in our books.) In Sunni texts, the same narration is spoken by the Prophet to Fatimah herself, where the Prophet said: “O Fatimah! Indeed, Allah becomes angry because of your anger and is pleased because of your pleasure[iv].” With your satisfaction, Allah is satisfied, and with your anger, Allah becomes angry. It is truly astonishing! This is not a case where we say that this exalted servant becomes angry wherever God is angry; no, it is the opposite. Wherever she becomes angry, God becomes angry. Observe the magnitude of her greatness!

In hardship, she was the comforter of the Prophet; in jihad, the companion of Amir al-Mu'minin; in worship, she dazzled the eyes of the angels; and in politics, she delivered those eloquent, articulate, and fiery sermons. In the sermons of Fatimah al-Zahra—whether delivered in the mosque before the Muhajirun and Ansar or those shared with the women of Medina, there are politics, wisdom, complaints, and praises. Everything is there—a truly extraordinary phenomenon—all expressed in the finest and most eloquent language, resembling the sermons of the Nahj al-Balagha. She raised Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and Zaynab. Just reflect on this! When these characteristics come together, they honestly and justly reveal a great marvel of existence. Her childhood is an example, her youth is an example, her marriage is an example, and her way of life is an example. All of these represent the highest models demonstrating a Muslim woman's pinnacle. This is the peak. Islam invites Muslim women, all women, toward this pinnacle. Not everyone can reach it; that is true, but they can move in that direction. Moreover, this is the most beautiful, eloquent, and expressive statement about the model of a Muslim woman, which some of these women here have referred to as the "third model." Fatimah al-Zahra is that model. These are the few words about Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.) I had to say.

Now, turning to the issue of women. Today, the matter of women is discussed globally from various perspectives. Every group in different corners of the world addresses and talks about the issue of women with their own motives and perspectives. In this matter, global capitalists and those politicians who rely on these capitalists intervene as they do in all aspects of life. Today, as in the past, global politicians and capitalists, the very ones who were the source of colonialism in the world, intervene in all matters related to human lifestyles. They also have the media; the most influential media outlets in the world are at their disposal, and they know how to use their language. Their motive for intervening in women's issues is not rooted in a theoretical or philosophical perspective. It is not that they have a philosophical theory about women that they want to promote; no, that is not the case. Nor does a sense of humanity drive them; it is not as though they feel women have been oppressed in some areas of the world and want to support them out of a surge of human compassion; no, this is not true either. It is also not about fulfilling a social or public duty. These are not the motives behind the interference of politicians and capitalists. What is the motive? The motive is political and colonial exploitation. They intervene to create a pretext and a cover for further exploitation, greater interference, and expanding their spheres of influence. They conceal this criminal and corrupt motive behind a philosophical facade, a theoretical impression, or a humanitarian guise. This is the insincerity of Western powers, the insincerity of Western capitalists who dominate the world today. This insincerity has been evident regarding various issues. We have witnessed this dishonesty, this deceit, and this hypocrisy in numerous matters and in the actions of Western political and economic actors.

One example is from about a century ago when they introduced the idea of women's freedom and financial independence, suggesting that women should have financial independence or freedom. It seemed appealing on the surface, but what was the underlying reality? The reality was that their factories needed workers, and male workers were not enough. They wanted to bring women into the workforce but at lower wages than men. This was the true motive. This primarily emerged in Europe and other Western societies; it was not exclusive to America. They concealed this under a humanitarian guise, presenting it as women gaining financial independence, freedom, the ability to leave their homes, and the opportunity to work. Humanity witnessed this same insincerity even then.

Another example, though unrelated to the issue of women, is the matter of the emancipation of enslaved people in America. In the late 19th century, around 1860, the Americans, under Abraham Lincoln, who was then the President of the United States and a member of the Republican Party, raised the slogan of freeing the enslaved people. On the surface, it appeared that the goal was to free the enslaved. They even assisted by smuggling slaves from the South to

the North of America, as there was a war between the North and the South. However, the underlying reality was different. The truth was that the Southerners dominated agriculture; they had farmlands where enslaved people worked for free, enslaved people who laboured for nothing more than bare subsistence. The Northerners had recently industrialised and needed workers. There weren't enough workers available, so they were eager to use these slaves as labourers in their factories. The solution was to declare, "You are free; come and work in our factories!" In reality, they shifted the slaves from agricultural and plantation slavery to industrial factory (wage) slavery. That was the true nature of the situation. This is the insincerity of Western powers.

The same is true today. In the current global uproar regarding women, such issues as feminism, women's rights, freedom for women, and the rights of women—are just superficial appearances. Behind them lie policies and unhealthy motives. Now, as for what those motives are, some we know today, and others will become known later and be uncovered in the future. However, the motive is not humane or altruistic. This insincerity exists even today. The motives are purely political and colonial, serving as a means of influence. Of course, a detailed discussion on this topic is not within the scope of our current gathering.

Now, we are faced with a situation where some people discuss the important issue of women but lack sincerity. As Muslims, we aim to speak, discuss, and present a rationale on the issue of women, establish that rationale within our society, and act according to it. This is our responsibility, and it must be carried out today. Of course, this should have been done since the beginning of the Revolution, and much work has already been done, but the task must be completed and perfected. I will share a few points on this subject.

Were we to draft a charter outlining Islam's perspective on women, which would include several principles, I believe the first topic in this charter should be the issue of "zawjiyyah" (pairing). What does this mean? It means that men and women are pairs, complements of one another and that men and women were created for each other. This is explicitly stated in the Quran: "And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates[v]." (Quran 16:72). The phrase "has made for you" (مُكَلَّلَ لَعَجًا) is not addressed solely to men; it is addressed to humanity, to both men and women. "And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates", O mankind! Allah has created for you mates from your own kind. Now, the term "zawj" (spouse) is not exclusively used for men. In the Quran, the word "zawj" is used for both men and women. I have noted the verse where "zawj" refers to a woman: "O Adam! Dwell, you and your spouse, in Paradise.[vi]" (Quran 2:35). Here, "zawj" refers to the female spouse, the woman. In another verse, [Allah says]: "Indeed Allah has heard the statement of her who disputes with you concerning her spouse[vii]." (Quran 58:1). Here, "zawj" references the man. Therefore, from your own kind, We created mates for you. Of course, this is not exclusive to humanity. Let me add in passing that this is a topic for those with the relevant expertise to explore further.

According to the teachings of Islam, the foundation of creation, human history, and the history of the universe is based on harmony[viii], pairing, and connection. This is in direct opposition to what exists in the dialectics of Hegel, Marx, and similar philosophies, which consider the foundation of the world to be based on conflict. They say when an entity comes into existence, its opposite emerges. From this conflict, a third entity is created, which in turn also develops its particular opposite, and so on. This, they claim, is how history progresses. Islam, however, denies this. An entity comes into existence, and another entity is created to accompany and align with it. A third entity emerges from the harmony, union, and pairing of these two. This is how history progresses, according to Islam. As I mentioned, this is something that experts should contemplate, pursue, and follow through, starting from this thread to see where it leads. It is an important subject.

So, regarding humanity, Allah created men and women as pairs, meaning they complement one another. The concept of zawjiyyah (pairing) implies that a new unit is formed; otherwise, there is no pairing. When two entities come together, unite and align, a third unit is created: the family. Thus, the concept of family has this foundational Islamic framework. The family is a divine tradition, a tradition of creation. The mere exchange of greetings or even more than that between a man and a woman as they cross paths does not constitute pairing (zawjiyyah). Pairing means the

formation of a third unit—the establishment of a family. This is the meaning of zawjiyyah.

The family is also emphasised in Islam. Fortunately, the traditional Iranian family is a significant marker of the strength and depth of Iranian cultural identity in Iran. So, the first article of the Islamic charter is about the formation of a family, the matter of zawjiyyah (pairing), and the complementary nature of men and women who complete one another.

The second point is that this pair, these two individuals, have no difference between them in their journey toward hayat tayyibah (the pure and wholesome life), which is the ultimate goal of human creation. Neither is superior to the other. Of course, individuals are not all the same; among women and among men, some possess greater abilities in something, and others have less. However, between men and women, as men and women, there is no difference in achieving hayat tayyibah. This is also mentioned in the Quran, “Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer, We will surely grant them a pure life[ix].”(Quran 16:97). Men and women are equal if they perform righteous deeds and have faith. This is stated in Surah al-Nahl. Or in the noble verse from Surah al-Ahzab, which I have recited on several occasions in gatherings of women: “Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the devoutly obedient men and devoutly obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their chastity and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so...[x]” (Quran 33:35). It lists ten qualities shared equally between men and women. There is absolutely no difference in the spiritual journey toward God, toward hayat tayyibah, and toward human elevation in the realms of the divine, spiritual, and monotheistic heights. This is another principle that must be included in this charter.

The next point is that although, outwardly, there are physical differences between men and women—for instance, one may be taller or have a deeper voice— both genders possess infinite potential in terms of intellectual and spiritual abilities, and there is no difference between them. This means that in the pursuit of knowledge, both men and women can compete. It is not the case that men are inherently more learned than women. No. Great and prominent women have held distinguished scientific and scholarly positions throughout history. Today, their numbers have multiplied many times over, both in universities and religious seminaries. In terms of knowledge, art, intellectual and practical innovation, social, intellectual, and political influence, as well as economic activities, these abilities exist in both genders—women and men. Therefore, a woman can—and sometimes must—enter these fields. She can engage in these areas, and in certain instances, it is necessary and obligatory for her to do so—in politics, economics, international affairs, scientific endeavours, and cultural and artistic matters in every sphere. This principle is undoubtedly included in the Islamic charter regarding women.

The next point is that men and women have different roles within the family environment; this does not indicate superiority. For instance, providing for the family is the man's responsibility; this does not make him superior. Childbearing is the woman's responsibility; this does not make her superior. Each of these is a distinct privilege that men and women possess. The rights of men and women are not calculated based on these roles; their rights are equal. This is also mentioned in the Quran: "And for them (women) is a right similar to what is upon them (men)[xi]." (Quran 2:228). The rights of men and women within the family are equal. This means that, from a legal perspective, the family consists of two individuals who are equal in rights, living together and completing one another. Of course, women possess unique emotional characteristics. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said about women, "A woman is like a delicate flower, not a servant.[xii]" (Nahj al-Fasahah). Within the home, a woman should be regarded like a flower—she should be cared for, her freshness preserved, and her fragrance used to bring beauty to the atmosphere. This pertains to emotional qualities, but with respect to rights, men and women are equal. This is another vital point in this charter.

Another point in this charter is that men and women have certain limitations in social interactions. This is something that Islam calls for. Of course, the moral laxity found in the West today has not always been the case; it is a

phenomenon of the modern era, perhaps dating back only two or three centuries. When one reads certain books, particularly novels from the 18th and 19th centuries, and observes the descriptions of European women in those times, it becomes evident that there were many considerations and sensitivities that are no longer existent in Western societies today. Islam insists upon these considerations; it places importance on the issues of hijab, modesty, and proper conduct regarding the gaze. This is another characteristic that should be included in this charter.

The spiritual value of motherhood is very important. Motherhood is a state of honour. Today, I see that some people, following the policies I previously mentioned, namely, the policies of capitalists, colonialists, and those who are opponents of independent societies, particularly against our society, portray motherhood in a negative light. If someone suggests that having children is necessary for families, they mock and ridicule them, saying, "You only value women for having children." Motherhood is an honour. The effort to nurture a human being—both within yourself during pregnancy and in the early stages of their life outside—enduring all the challenges and raising them as a complete human being is no small achievement. This is immensely significant and highly valuable. That is precisely why Islam places such emphasis on the role of the mother.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked, "Whom should I honour and show goodness to above others?" He replied, "Your mother." The questioner asked, "Then who?" The Prophet again said, "Your mother." For the third time, the man asked, "Then who?" The Prophet replied once more, "Your mother." Finally, when the man asked, "After that, who?" The Prophet replied, "After that, your father[xiii]." (i.e., the father ranks fourth after the mother). Another person once came to seek permission to join the jihad and said, "My mother is not pleased with me going." Apparently, there were sufficient forces for this cause at the time. The Prophet responded, "Serve your mother; its reward is greater than that of jihad[xiv]." Of course, as I mentioned, this applies when sufficient forces are available (man bihi al-kifaayah) to fight. This is the significance of motherhood.

The narration that says, "Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers[xv]" is metaphorical. "Beneath the feet" is an expression that means paradise is within the reach of the mother. If you seek paradise, turn to your mother; she will grant it to you. Show her love, kindness, service, obedience, and respect; she will grant you paradise. This is another principle.

These are a few points regarding the issue of women and the perspective on women in Islam. Of course, if someone were to draft this charter, it might contain thirty or forty key articles, and I have only mentioned just a few of them.

Based on this perspective, our country has fortunately witnessed the growth of faithful, knowledgeable, and active women from the beginning of the Revolution until today. Of course, even in the later years of the struggle, particularly in its final months or its last year, the presence of women was decisive. Hence, the Imam (may God's mercy be upon him) never compromised on this issue. Some people opposed the participation of women in demonstrations, but the Imam (may God's mercy be upon him) strongly rejected such thoughts and views. The presence of women was impactful—truly impactful. When women entered the arena, men—even those who had been indifferent—felt compelled to join it. When women entered the arena, their husbands and young children also felt a sense of duty to join. In a sense, it was women who brought about the victory of the Revolution.

After the victory of the Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, women entered various fields. The remarks made by these women were very measured, precise, and reflective of mature and outstanding thought. Undoubtedly, there are hundreds, if not more, of such intellectuals among this audience, and across the country, there is undoubtedly a large number of women who excel in science, thought, innovation, creativity, and even ijtehad. Truly, significant progress has been made. With her dignity, modesty, and chastity, the Iranian woman has managed to safeguard the nation's identity and culture and its authentic and historical traditions. She has entered universities, engaged in political activities, and participated in international endeavours, yet she has not succumbed to corruption, which is highly significant. Issues and adverse effects did not influence what we see today afflicting women in many Western countries, and she did not fall victim to them. The Iranian woman has progressed this way

until now; God willing, she will continue to move forward in the same manner. Our women have shone brightly in significant events: in the war, the defence of the holy shrines, political struggles, research centres, and likewise in universities and seminaries. Back in the days when I was in the seminary, I do not recall a single woman attaining the level of ijthad in jurisprudence. [However], today, fortunately, there are quite a few women who have reached the level of ijthad in jurisprudence. I believe that in many issues related to women, where the subject concerns women and about which men do not fully understand, women should perform taqlid (emulation) of a female mujtahid. Thus, during the era of the Revolution, women's progress in our country has been remarkable. We never had this many devout female scholars, female university professors, female poets, female writers, or female artists than at any time in the past. Today, fortunately, we have all of these. However, let us not forget that the enemy is not idle; they are also busy scheming and planning.

The enemies of the Islamic Republic quickly realised that the Revolution could not be defeated through hard tactics. So, they turned to soft tactics. They understood that with war, bombings, subversive forces, ethnic divisions, and similar methods, they could neither bring down Islamic Iran nor force it to its knees. Thus, they resorted to the soft approach. Soft tactics include propaganda, enticements, and the dishonesty present in their slogans, which one can observe: they label and name their actions as defending women, defending the women's community, defending a group of women, or defending a particular woman. In the name of defending a single woman in a country, they incite unrest. They employ soft tactics. Our daughters, women, professors, students, and the entire community of women must consider themselves obligated in this regard (to respond). One of the women here rightly mentioned: "Whoever wakes up without concern for the affairs of Muslims is not a Muslim." [xvi] This is not exclusive to men. It applies to women as well. An important matter concerning Muslims that requires attention is precisely these enticements, insidious strategies, and the enemy's use of soft methods and warfare to deviate values, particularly in issues related to women. This must be understood and addressed.

A word about what's happening in the region. In the region, with the developments in Syria, the crimes being committed by the Zionist regime, the crimes perpetrated by the United States, and the assistance provided by some others to these actions, they imagined that the question of the resistance would be ended. They are gravely mistaken. The spirit of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is alive, and the spirit of Sinwar is alive; martyrdom did not remove them from the realm of existence. Their bodies are gone, but their spirit remains, their thoughts endure, and their path continues. Look at Gaza—it is being attacked daily, and there are martyrs every day! Yet they still stand firm and resist; Lebanon continues to resist. Of course, the Zionist regime imagines that it is preparing itself to encircle and uproot Hezbollah forces through Syria. However, the one who will be uprooted will be Israel. We stand side by side with the Palestinian fighters and with the devoted Mujahideen of Hezbollah. We support them and will help them in every way we can. We hope, God willing, they will witness the day when their malicious enemy is trampled under their feet.

And may the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

[i] At the beginning of this meeting, six activists in the field of women and girls shared their insights and views. Additionally, Mrs. Aida Sorour, the mother of two martyrs from Hezbollah Lebanon, representing the women of the Resistance Axis, delivered remarks on the continuation and triumph of the resistance.

[ii] [Laughter from the audience]

[iii] Amali al-Saduq, Session Sixty-One, p. 384

[iv] Usdu al-Ghaba, Vol. 6, p. 224

[v] Surah An-Nahl, part of verse 72: "And Allah has made for you spouses from among yourselves..."

[vi] Surah Al-Baqarah, part of verse 35: "O Adam! Dwell, you and your wife, in this garden..

[vii] Surah Al-Mujadila, part of verse 1: "Allah has indeed heard the words of [the woman] who was disputing with you concerning her husband..."

[viii] Harmony, cooperation

[ix] Surah An-Nahl, part of verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer..."

[x] Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 35:

"Indeed, the Muslim men and women, the believing men and women, the devoutly obedient men and women, the truthful men and women, the patient men and women, the humble men and women, the charitable men and women, the fasting men and women, the chaste men and women, and the men and women who remember Allah often..."

[xi] Surah Al-Baqarah, part of verse 228:

"And for them (women) is a right similar to what is upon them (men) in fairness..."

[xii] Al-Kafi, Volume 5, Page 510.

[xiii] Al-Kafi, Volume 2, Page 159.

[xiv] Al-Kafi, Volume 2, Page 160

[xv] Mustadrak al-Wasail, Volume 15, Page 180

[xvi] Al-Ilal al-Shara'i, Page 13.