

Are Human Rights Compatible with Islam?

The Issue of the Rights of Women in Muslim Communities

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Introduction

Though the Universal declaration of Human Rights is called "Universal", it "was articulated along the lines of historical trends of the Western world during the last three centuries, and a certain philosophical anthropology of individualistic humanism which helped justify them" [1]. The basic assumptions underlying the Declaration were a) of a universal human nature common to all the peoples, b) of the dignity of the individual, and c) of a democratic social order [2].

In the decades since the Declaration, the term "human rights" has become an integral part of both political and popular discourse, particularly amongst Western, and Western-educated, persons. Until very recently most of this discourse has been in largely secular terms. In fact, it is frequently assumed, as well as stated, by many advocates of human rights, in both Western and non- Western (including many Muslim) countries, that human rights can exist only within a secular context and not within the framework of religion.

Underlying the stance that the concept of human rights is fundamentally secular, and, therefore, outside of, and even antithetical to, the worldview of religion, is - of course - a certain view of religion in general, or of particular religions. In Muslim countries such as Pakistan, for instance, it is often remarked by secular-minded proponents of human rights that it is not meaningful to talk about human rights in Islam because as a religious tradition, Islam has supported values and structures which are incompatible with the assumptions which underlie the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

What needs to be pointed out to those who uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be the highest, or sole, model, of a charter of equality and liberty for all human beings, is that given the Western origin and orientation of this Declaration, the "universality" of the assumptions on which it is based is - at the very least - problematic and subject to questioning. Furthermore, the alleged incompatibility between the concept of human rights and religion in general, or particular religions such as Islam, needs to be examined in an unbiased way.

Western Perception of Islam and Muslims, and the Portrayal of Muslim Women in Western Societies

Since the nineteen-seventies there has been a growing interest in the West in Islam and Muslims. Much of this interest has been focused, however, on a few subjects such as "Islamic Revival," "Islamic Fundamentalism," "The Salman Rushdie Affair," and "Women in Islam," rather than on understanding the complexity and diversity of "the World of Islam." Not only the choice of subjects which tend to evoke or provoke strong emotive responses in both Westerners and Muslims, but also the manner in which these subjects have generally been portrayed by Western media or popular literature, calls into question the motivation which underlies the selective Western interest in Islam and Muslims. It is difficult to see this interest as being positively motivated given the widespread negative stereotyping of Islam and Muslims in the West.

Though there are a number of Americans who had not paid any serious attention to Islam or Muslims until the Arab oil embargo of 1973 or the Iranian Revolution of 1979, propaganda against Islam and Muslims is nothing new in the West. It is as old as the first chapter of Islamic history, when the new faith began to move into territories largely occupied by Christians. Dante, the great poet of medieval Christianity, perceived the Prophet of Islam as the "divider of the world of Christendom and assigned him to all but the lowest level of hell for his grievous "sin". St. Thomas Aquinas, the most outstanding scholastic philosopher who owed such profound debt to the thinkers of Muslim Spain, described Islam as nothing but a construct to accommodate the lust of Muhammad [3]. What far-reaching shadows were cast upon the future by powerful Christian voices such as those of Dante and Aquinas can be glimpsed from Thomas Carlyle's historic lecture on "The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam" in the series entitled *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and The Heroic in History*. Writing in mid-nineteenth century, Carlyle urged his fellow Christians to dismiss "our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Imposter, a Falsehood Incarnate, that his religion is a mere quackery and fatuity" [4].

Given the reservoir of negative images associated with Islam and Muslims in "the Collective Unconscious" of the West, it is hardly surprising that, since the demise of the Soviet Empire, "the World of Islam" is being seen as the new "Enemy" which is perhaps even more incomprehensible and intractable than the last one. The routine portrayal of Islam as a religion spread by the sword and characterized by "Holy War", and of Muslims as barbarous and backward, frenzied and fanatic, volatile and violent, has led, in recent times, to an alarming increase in "Muslim-bashing" - verbal, physical as well as psychological - in a number of Western countries. In the midst of so much hatred and aversion toward Islam and Muslims in general, the out-pouring of so much sympathy, in and by the West, toward Muslim women appears, at a surface level, to be an amazing contradiction. For are Muslim women also not adherents of Islam? And are Muslim women also not victims of "Muslim-bashing"? Few Muslims can forget the brutal burning of Turkish Muslim girls by German gangsters or the ruthless rape of Bosnian Muslim women by Serbian soldiers.

Muslim Women and Human Rights: The Unarticulated Quandary

Since the modern notion of human rights originated in a Western, secular context, Muslims in general, but Muslim women in particular, find themselves in a quandary when they initiate, or participate in, a discussion on human rights whether in the West or in Muslim societies. Based on their life experience, most Muslim women who become human rights advocates or activists, feel strongly that virtually all Muslim societies discriminate against women from cradle to grave. This leads many of them to become deeply alienated from Muslim culture in a number of ways. This bitter sense of alienation oftentimes leads to anger and bitterness toward the patriarchal systems of thought and social structures which dominate most Muslim societies. Muslim women often find much support and sympathy in the West so long as they are seen as rebels and deviants within the world of Islam. But many of them begin to realize, sooner or later, that while they have serious difficulties with Muslim culture, they are also not able, for many reasons to identify with Western, secular culture. This realization leads them to feel - at least for a time - isolated and alone. Much attention has been focused, in the Western media and literature, on the sorry plight of Muslim women who are "poor and oppressed" in visible or tangible ways. Hardly any notice has been taken, however, of the profound tragedy and trauma suffered by the self-aware Muslim women of today who are struggling to maintain their religious identity and personal autonomy in the face of the intransigence of Muslim culture, on the one hand, and the imperialism of Western, secular culture, on the other hand.

Sources of the Islamic Tradition

Before addressing the issue of human rights in Islam, it is useful to clarify that the Islamic tradition - like other major religious traditions - does not consist of, or derive from, a single source. Most Muslims if questioned about its sources are likely to refer to more than one of the following: the Qur'an or the Book of Revelation which Muslims believe to be God's Word transmitted through the agency of Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad; Sunnah or the practical traditions of the Prophet Muhammad; Hadith or the oral sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad; Fiqh (Jurisprudence) or Madahib (Schools of Law); and the Shari'ah or code of law which regulates the diverse aspects of a Muslim's life. While these "sources" have contributed to what is cumulatively referred to as "the Islamic tradition", they are not identical or considered to be of equal weight. Of all the sources of the Islamic tradition, undoubtedly, the most important is the Qur'an which is regarded by Muslims in general, as the primary, and most authoritative, source of normative Islam.

To many Muslims the Qur'an is the Magna Carta of human rights and a large part of its concern is to free human beings from the bondage of traditionalism, authoritarianism (religious, political, economic, or any other), tribalism, racism, sexism, slavery or anything else that prohibits or inhibits human beings from actualizing the Qur'anic vision of human destiny embodied in the classic proclamation: "Towards Allah is thy limit" [5].

In the section entitled "General Rights" which follows, an account is given of the Qur'an's affirmation of fundamental rights which all human beings ought to possess because they are so deeply rooted in our humanness that their denial or violation is tantamount to a negation or degradation of that which makes us human. From the perspective of the Qur'an, these rights came into existence when we did; they were created, as we were, by God in order that our human potential could be actualized. Rights created or given by God cannot be abolished by any temporal ruler or human agency. Eternal and immutable, they ought to be exercised since everything that God does is for "a just purpose" [6].

General Rights

A. Right to Life

The Qur'an upholds the sanctity and absolute value of human life [7] and points out that, in essence, the life of each individual is comparable to that of an entire community and, therefore, should be treated with the utmost care [8].

B. Right to Respect

The Qur'an deems all human beings to be worthy of respect [9] because of all creation they alone chose to accept the "trust" of freedom of the will [10]. Human beings can exercise freedom of the will because they possess the rational faculty, which is what distinguishes them from all other creatures [11]. Though human beings can become "the lowest of the lowest", the Qur'an declares that they have been made "in the best of moulds" [12], having the ability to think, to have knowledge of right and wrong, to do the good and to avoid the evil. Thus, on account of the promise which is contained in being human, namely, the potential to be God's vicegerent on earth, the humanness of all human beings is to be respected and considered to be an end in itself.

C. Right to Justice

The Qur'an puts great emphasis on the right to seek justice and the duty to do justice [13]. In the context of justice, the Qur'an uses two concepts: "adl" and "ihsan". Both are enjoined and both are related to the idea of "balance", but they are not identical in meaning.

"Adl" is defined by A.A.A. Fyzee, a well-known scholar of Islam, as "to be equal, neither more nor less." Explaining this concept, Fyzee wrote: "...in a Court of Justice the claims of the two parties must be considered evenly, without undue stress being laid upon one side or the other. Justice introduces the balance in the form of scales that are evenly balanced." [14]. "Adl" was described in similar terms by Abu'l Kalam Azad, a famous translator of the Qur'an and a noted writer, who stated: "What is justice but the avoiding of excess? There should be neither too much nor too little; hence the use of scales as the emblems of justice" [15]. Lest anyone try to do too much or too little, the Qur'an points out that no human being can carry another's burden or attain anything without striving for it.[16]

Recognizing individual merit is a part of "adl", The Qur'an teaches that merit is not determined by lineage, sex, wealth, worldly success or religion, but by righteousness, which consists of both right "belief" ("iman") and just "action" ("amal") [17]. Further, the Qur'an distinguishes between passive believers and those who strive in the cause of God pointing out that though all believers are promised good by God, the latter will be exalted above the former [18].

Just as it is in the spirit of "adl" that special merit be considered in the matter of rewards, so also special circumstances are to be considered in the matter of punishments. For instance, for crimes of unchastity the Qur'an prescribes identical punishments for a man or a woman who is proved guilty [19], but it differentiates between different classes of women: for the same crime, a slave woman would receive half, and the Prophet's consort double, the punishment given to a "free" Muslim woman [20]. In making such a distinction, the Qur'an while upholding high moral standards, particularly in the case of the Prophet's wives whose actions have a normative significance for the community, reflects God's compassion for women slaves who were socially disadvantaged.

While constantly enjoining "adl", the Qur'an goes beyond this concept to "ihsan", which literally means, "restoring the balance by making up a loss or deficiency" [21]. In order to understand this concept, it is necessary to understand the nature of the ideal society or community ("ummah") envisaged by the Qur'an. The word "ummah" comes from the root

"umm", or "mother". The symbols of a mother and motherly love and compassion are also linked with the two attributes most characteristic of God, namely, "Rahim" and "Rahman", both of which are derived from the root "rahm", meaning "womb". The ideal "ummah" cares about all its members just as an ideal mother cares about all her children, knowing that all are not equal and that each has different needs. While showing undue favour to any child would be unjust, a mother who gives to a "handicapped" child more than she does to her other child or children, is not acting unjustly but exemplifying the spirit of "ihsan" by helping to make up the deficiency of a child who need special assistance in meeting the requirements of life. "Ihsan", thus, shows God's sympathy for the disadvantaged segments of human society (such as women, orphans, slaves, the poor, the infirm, and the minorities)

D. Right to Freedom

As stated earlier, the Qur'an is deeply concerned about liberating human beings from every kind of bondage. Recognizing the human tendency toward dictatorship and despotism, the Qur'an says with clarity and emphasis in Surah 3: Al-'Imran: 79:

It is not (possible)
That a man, to whom
Is given the Book,
and Wisdom,
And the Prophetic Office,
Should say to people:
"Be ye my worshippers
Rather than Allah's"
On the contrary
(He would say):
"Be ye worshippers
Of Him Who is truly
The Cherisher of all." [22]

The institution of human slavery is, of course, extremely important in the context of human freedom. Slavery was widely prevalent in Arabia at the time of the advent of Islam, and the Arab economy was based on it. Not only did the Qur'an insist that slaves be treated in a just and humane way [23], but it continually urged the freeing of slaves [24]. By laying down, in Surah 47: Muhammad: 4, that prisoners of war were to be set free, "either by an act of grace or against ransom" [25], the Qur'an virtually abolished slavery since "The major source of slaves - men and women - was prisoners of war" [26]. Because the Qur'an does not state explicitly that slavery is abolished, it does not follow that it is to be continued, particularly in view of the numerous ways in which the Qur'an seeks to eliminate this absolute evil. A Book which does not give a king or a prophet the right to command absolute obedience from another human being could not possibly sanction slavery in any sense of the word.

The greatest guarantee of personal freedom for a Muslim lies in the Qur'anic decree that no one other than God can limit human freedom [27] and in the statement that "Judgment (as to what is right and what is wrong) rests with God alone" [27]. As pointed out by Khalid M. Ishaque, an eminent Pakistani jurist:

The Qur'an gives to responsible dissent the status of a fundamental right.
In exercise of their powers, therefore, neither the legislature nor the executive
can demand
unquestioning obedience...The Prophet, even though he was the recipient of
Divine revelation, was
required to consult the Muslims in public affairs. Allah addressing the Prophet
says:
"...and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And...when thou art

resolved, then put
thy trust in Allah" [29].

Since the principle of mutual consultation ("shura") is mandatory [30], it is a Muslim's fundamental right, as well as responsibility, to participate in as many aspects of the community's life as possible. The Qur'anic proclamation in Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 256, "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith" [31] guarantees freedom of religion and worship. This means that, according to Qur'anic teaching, non-Muslims living in Muslim territories should have the freedom to follow their own faith-traditions without fear or harassment. A number of Qur'anic passages state clearly that the responsibility of the Prophet Muhammad is to communicate the message of God and not to compel anyone to believe [32]. The right to exercise free choice in matters of belief is unambiguously endorsed by the Qur'an [33] which also states clearly that God will judge human beings not on the basis of what they profess but on the basis of their belief and righteous conduct [34], as indicated by Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 62 which says:

Those who believe (in the Qur'an)
And those who follow the Jewish (scriptures),
And the Christians and the Sabians,
Any who believe in God
And the Last Day,
And work righteousness,
Shall have their reward
With the Lord: on them
Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. [35]

The Qur'an recognizes the right to religious freedom not only in the case of other believers in God, but also in the case of not-believers in God (if they are not aggressing upon Muslims) [36].

In the context of the human right to exercise religious freedom, it is important to mention that the Qur'anic dictum, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" [37] applies not only to non-Muslims but also to Muslims. While those who renounced Islam after professing it and then engaged in "acts of war" against Muslims were to be treated as enemies and aggressors, the Qur'an does not prescribe any punishment for non-profession or renunciation of faith. The decision regarding a person's ultimate destiny in the hereafter rests with God.

The right to freedom includes the right to be free to tell the truth. The Qur'anic term for truth is "Haqq" which is also one of God's most important attributes. Standing up for the truth is a right and a responsibility which a Muslim may not disclaim even in the face of the greatest danger or difficulty [38]. While the Qur'an commands believers to testify to the truth, it also instructs society not to harm persons so testifying [39].

E. Right to Acquire Knowledge

The Qur'an puts the highest emphasis on the importance of acquiring knowledge. That knowledge has been at the core of the Islamic world-view from the very beginning is attested to by Surah 96: Al-Alaq: 1-5, which Muslims believe to be the first revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad.

Asking rhetorically if those without knowledge can be equal to those with knowledge [40], the Qur'an exhorts believers to pray for advancement in knowledge [41]. The famous prayer of the Prophet Muhammad was "Allah grant me Knowledge of the ultimate nature of things" and one of the best known of all traditions ("ahadith") is "Seek knowledge even though it be in China."

According to Qur'anic perspective, knowledge is a prerequisite for the creation of a just world in which authentic peace can prevail. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of the pursuit of learning even at the time, and in the midst, of war [42].

F. Right to Sustenance

As pointed out by Surah 11: Hud: 6, every living creature depends for its sustenance upon God. A cardinal concept in the Qur'an - which underlies the socio-economic-political system of Islam - is that the ownership of everything belongs, not to any person, but to God. Since God is the universal creator, every creature has the right to partake of what belongs to God [43]. This means that every human being has the right to a means of living and that those who hold economic or political power do not have the right to deprive others of the basic necessities of life by misappropriating or misusing resources which have been created by God for the benefit of humanity in general.

G. Right to Work

According to Qur'anic teaching every man and woman has the right to work, whether the work consists of gainful employment or voluntary service. The fruits of labour belong to the one who has worked for them - regardless of whether it is a man or a woman. As Surah 4: An-Nisa': 32 states:

...to men
Is allotted what they earn,
And to women what they earn [44]

H. Right to Privacy

The Qur'an recognizes the need for privacy as a human right and lays down rules for protecting an individual's life in the home from undue intrusion from within or without [45].

I. Right to Protection from Slander, Backbiting, and Ridicule

The Qur'an recognizes the right of human beings to be protected from defamation, sarcasm, offensive nicknames, and backbiting [46]. It also states that no person is to be maligned on grounds of assumed guilt and that those who engage in malicious scandal-mongering will be grievously punished in both this world and the next [47].

J. Right to Develop One's Aesthetic Sensibilities and Enjoy the Bounties Created by God

As pointed out Muhammad Asad, "By declaring that all good and beautiful things to the believers, the Qu'ran condemns, by implication, all forms of life-denying asceticism, world-renunciation and self-mortification.[48] In fact, it can be stated that the right to develop one's aesthetic sensibilities so that one can appreciate beauty in all its forms, and the right to enjoy what God has provided for the nurture of humankind, are rooted in the life-affirming vision of the Qur'an.[49]

K. Right to Leave One's Homeland Under Oppressive Conditions

According to Qur'anic teaching, a Muslim's ultimate loyalty must be to God and not to any territory. To fulfill his Prophetic mission, the Prophet Muhammad decided to leave his place of birth, Mecca, and emigrated to Medina. This event ("Hijrah") has great historical and spiritual significance for Muslims who are called upon to move away from their place of origin if it becomes an abode of evil and oppression where they cannot fulfill their obligations to God or establish justice.[50]

L. Right to "The Good Life"

The Qur'an uphold the right of the human being only to life but to " the good life ". This good life, made up of many elements , becomes possible when a human being is living in a just environment. According to Qur'anic teaching, justice is a prerequisite for peace, and peace is a prerequisite for human development. In a just society, all the earlier-mentioned human rights may be exercised without difficulty. In such a society other basic rights such as the right to a secure place of residence, the right to the protection of one's personal possessions, the right to protection of one's covenants, the right to move freely, the right to social and judicial autonomy for minorities, the right to the protection of one's holy places and the right to return to one's spiritual center, also exist [51].

Rights of Women: Qur'anic Ideals Versus Muslim Practice

Muslim men never tire of repeating that Islam has given more rights to women than has any other religion. Certainly, if by "Islam" is meant "Qur'anic Islam" the rights that it has given to women are, indeed, impressive. Not only do women partake of all the "General Rights" mentioned in the foregoing pages, they are also the subject of much particular concern in the Qur'an. Underlying much of the Qur'an's legislation on women-related issues is the recognition that women have been disadvantaged persons in history to whom justice needs to be done by the Muslim "ummah". Unfortunately, however, the cumulative (Jewish, Christian, Hellenistic, Bedouin and other) biases which existed in the Arab-Islamic culture of the early centuries of Islam infiltrated the Islamic tradition and undermined the intent of the Qur'an to liberate women from the status of chattels or inferior creatures and make them free and equal to men.

A review of Muslim history and culture brings to light many areas in which - Qur'anic teaching notwithstanding - women continued to be subjected to diverse forms of oppression and injustice, often in the name of Islam, while the Qur'an because of its protective attitude toward all downtrodden and oppressed classes of people, appears to be weighted in many ways in favor of women, many of its women-related teachings have been used in patriarchal Muslim societies against, rather than for, women. Muslim societies, in general, appear to be far more concerned with trying to control women's bodies and sexuality than with their human rights. Many Muslims when they speak of human rights, either do not speak of women's rights at all,[52] or are mainly concerned with how a women's chastity may be protected[53]. (They are apparently not worried about protecting men's chastity).

Women are the targets of the most serious violations of human rights which occur in Muslim societies in general. Muslims say with great pride that Islam abolished female infanticide; true, but, it must also be mentioned that one of the most common crimes in a number of Muslim countries (e.g., in Pakistan) is the murder of women by their husbands. These so-called "honor-killings" are, in fact, extremely dishonorable and are frequently used to camouflage other kinds of crimes.

Female children are discriminated against from the moment of birth, for it is customary in Muslim societies to regard a son as a gift, and a daughter as a trial, from God. Therefore, the birth of a son is an occasion for celebration while the birth of a daughter calls for commiseration if not lamentation. Many girls are married when they are still minors, even though marriage in Islam is a contract and presupposes that the contracting parties are both consenting adults. Even though so much Qur'anic legislation is aimed at protecting the rights of women in the context of marriage[54] women cannot claim equality with their husbands. The husband, in fact, is regarded as his wife's gateway to heaven or hell and the arbiter of her final destiny. That such an idea can exist within the framework of Islam - which, in theory, rejects the idea of there being any intermediary between a believer and God - represents both a profound irony and a great tragedy.

Although the Qur'an presents the idea of what we today call a "no-fault" divorce and does not make any adverse judgements about divorce [55], Muslim societies have made divorce extremely difficult for women, both legally and through social penalties. Although the Qur'an states clearly that the divorced parents of a minor child must decide by mutual consultation how the child is to be raised and that they must not use the child to hurt or exploit each other[56], in most Muslim societies, women are deprived both of their sons (generally at age 7) and their daughters (generally at age 12). It is difficult to imagine an act of greater cruelty than depriving a mother of her children simply because she is divorced. Although polygamy was intended by the Qur'an to be for the protection of orphans and widows[57], in practice Muslims have made it the Sword of Damocles which keeps women under constant threat. Although the Qur'an gave women the right to receive an inheritance not only on the death of a close relative, but also to receive other bequests or gifts during the lifetime of a benevolent caretaker, Muslim societies have disapproved greatly of the idea of giving wealth to a woman in preference to a man, even when her need or circumstances warrant it. Although the purpose of the Qur'anic legislation dealing with women's dress and conduct[58], was to make it safe for women to go about their daily business (since they have the right to engage in gainful activity as witnessed by Surah 4: An-Nisa' :32 without fear of sexual harassment or molestation, Muslim societies have put many of them behind veils and shrouds and locked doors on the pretext of protecting their chastity, forgetting that according to the Qur'an[59], confinement to their homes was not a normal way of life for chaste women but a punishment for "unchastity".

Woman and man, created equal by God and standing equal in the sight of God, have become very unequal in Muslim societies. The Qur'anic description of man and woman in marriage: "They are your garments/ And you are their garments" (Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 187) implies closeness, mutuality, and equality. However, Muslim culture has reduced many, if not most, women to the position of puppets on a string, to slave-like creatures whose only purpose in life is to cater to the needs and pleasures of men. Not only this, it has also had the audacity and the arrogance to deny women direct access to God. It is one of Islam's cardinal beliefs that each person -man or woman- is responsible and accountable for his or her individual actions. How, then, can the husband become the wife's gateway to heaven or hell? How, then, can he become the arbiter not only of what happens to her in this world but also of her ultimate destiny? Such questions are now being articulated by an increasing number of Muslim women and they are bound to threaten the existing balance of power in the domain of family relationships in most Muslim societies.

However, despite everything that has gone wrong with the lives of countless Muslim women down the ages due to patriarchal Muslim culture, there is hope for the future. There are indications from across the world of Islam that a growing number of Muslims are beginning to reflect seriously upon the teachings of the Qur'an as they become disenchanted with capitalism, communism and western democracy. As this reflection deepens, it is likely to lead to the realization that the supreme task entrusted to human beings by God, of being God's deputies on earth, can only be accomplished by establishing justice which the Qur'an regards as a prerequisite for authentic peace. Without the elimination of the inequities, inequalities, and injustices that pervade the personal and collective lives of human beings, it is not possible to talk about peace in Qur'anic terms. Here, it is of importance to note that there is more Qur'anic legislation pertaining to the establishment of justice in the context of family relationships than on any other subject. This points to the assumption implicit in much Qur'anic learning, namely, that if human beings can learn to order their homes justly so that the human rights of all within its jurisdiction - children, women, and men - are safeguarded, then they can also order their society and the world at large, justly. In other words, the Qur'an regards the home as a microcosm of the "ummah" and the world community, and emphasizes the importance of making it "the abode of peace" through just living.

Notes

1. Raimundo Panikkar, "Is the Notion of Human Rights a Western Concept?" in *Breakthrough*, p.31 (New York: Global Education Associates, Spring 1989).
2. Ibid.
3. Aquinas quoted by E.W. Fernea in her presentation on "Roles of Women in Islam: Past and Present", at the Ta'ziyeh Conference held at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, on May 2, 1988.
4. Thomas Carlyle, "The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam," in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, pp. 47-77.
5. Reference here is to The Qur'an, Surah 53: An-Najm: 42; the translation is by Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 57 (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf; 1971).
6. For instance, see Surah 15: Al-Hijr: 85; Surah 16: An-Nahl: 3; Surah 44: Ad-Dukhan: 39; Surah 45: Al-Jathiyah: 22; Surah 46: Al-Ahqaf: 3.
7. Reference here is to, Surah 6: Al-An'am: 151.
8. Reference here is to, Surah 5: Al-Ma'idah:32.
9. For instance, see Surah 17: Al-Isra': 70.
10. Reference here is to Surah 33: Al-Ahzab: 72.
11. Reference here is to Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 30-34.
12. Reference here is to Surah 95: At-Tin: 4-6.
13. For instance, see Surah 5: Al-Ma'idah: 8 and Surah 4: An-Nisa': 136.
14. A.A.A. Fyzee, *A Modern Approach to Islam*, p. 17 (Lahore: Universal Books, 1978).
15. Ibid.
16. Reference here is to Surah 53: An-Najm: 38-39.
17. Reference here is to Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 177.
18. Reference here is to Surah 4: An-Nisa': 95-96.
19. Reference here is to, Surah 24: An-Nur:2.
20. Reference here is to, Surah 4: An-Nisa': 25; Surah 33: Al-Ahzab: 30.
21. G.A. Parwez, *Tabweeb-ul-Qur'an*, (Urdu), Volume I, p. 78 (Lahore: Idara-e-Tulu'-e-Islam, 1977) .
22. Abdullah Yusuf Ali(translation) *The Holy Qur'an*, p. 148 (Brentwood, Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989).
23. For instance, in Surah 4: An-Nisa': 36.

24. For instance in Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 177; Surah 4: An-Nisa': 92; Surah 5: Al-Ma'idah: 89; Surah 9: At-Tawbah:60; Surah 24: An-Nur: 33; Surah 58: Al-Mujadalah: 3.
25. Muhammad Asad (translation) The Message of the Qur'an, p. 778 (Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus, 1980).
26. G.A. Parwez, Islam: A Challenge to Religion, p. 346 (Lahore: Idara-e-Tulu'-e-Islam, 1986).
27. Reference here is to, Surah 42: Ash-Shura: 21.
28. Reference here is to Surah 12: Yusuf: 40.
29. "Islamic law - Its Ideals and Principles" in The Challenge of Islam, p.157(A. Gauher, editor, 1980; London: The Islamic Council of Europe).
30. Reference here is to the Qur'an, Surah 42: Ash-Shura: 38.
31. The Message of the Qur'an, p. 57.
32. For instance, see Surah 6: Al-An'am: 107; Surah 10: Yunus: 99; Surah 16: Al-Nahl: 82; Surah 42: Ash-Shura: 48.
33. For instance, see Surah 18: Al-Kahf: 29.
34. For instance, see Surah 6: Al-An'am: 108.
35. The Holy Quran, pp. 33-34.
36. For instance, see Surah 6: Al-An'am: 108.
37. Reference here is to Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 256; The Holy Quran, p-106.
38. Reference here is to Surah 4: An-Nisa': 135.
39. Reference here is to Surah 2: Al-Baqarah; also see G.A. Parwez, "Bunyadi Haquq-e-Insaniyat" (Urdu), in Tulu'-e-Islam, pp. 34-35 (Lahore, November 1981).
40. Reference here is to Surah 39: Az-Zumar: 9.
41. Reference here is to Surah 20: Ta-Ha: 114.
42. Reference here is to Surah 9: At-Tawbah: 122.
43. For instance, see Surah 6: Al-An'am: 165; Surah 67: Al-Mulk:15.
44. The Holy Qur'an, p. 194.
45. For instance, see Surah 24: An-Nur: 27-28, 58; Surah 33: Al-Ahzab: 53; Surah 49: Al-Hujurat : 12.
46. Reference here is to Surah 49: Al-Hujurat: 11-12.
47. For instance, see Surah 24: An-Nur: 16-19; also see Surah 4: An-Nisa': 148-149.
48. The Message of the Qur'an, p. 207.
49. For instance, see Surah 7: Al-A'raf: 32.

50. For instance, see Surah 4: An-Nisa': 97-100.

51. In this context, reference may be made to several Qur'anic verses. e.g., Surah 2:Al-Baqarah:229; Surah 3: Al-'Imran: 17,77; Surah 5: Al-Ma'idah:1; 42-48; Surah 9: At-Tawbah: 17; Surah 17: Al-Isra': 34; Surah 67: Al-Mulk:15.

52. For example, R.A. Jullundhri, "Human Rights in Islam", in Understanding Human Rights (A.D. Falconer, editor: Dublin: Irish School of Ecumenics, 1980).

53. For example, A.A. Maududi, Human Rights in Islam (Lahore: Islamic Publications: 1977).

54. For instance, see Surah 4: An-Nisa': 4,19; Surah 24: An-Nur: 33; Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 187; Surah 9: At-Tawbah:71; Surah 7: Al-A'raf:189; Surah 30: Ar-rum: 21.

55. For instance, see Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 231,241.

56. The reference here is to Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 233.

57. The reference here is to Surah 4: An-Nisa': 2-3.

58. For instance, see Surah 24: An-Nur: 30-31; Surah 33: Al-Ahzab:59.

59. The reference here is to Surah 4: An-Nisa': 15.

“Are Human Rights Compatible with Islam? - The Issue of Rights of Women in Muslim Communities,” in *Human Rights in China and Islam*, edited by Daniel C. Maguire, The Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics, Washington D. C., 1995, pp. 25-38. An excerpt from this articles entitled “Rights of Women: Qur'anic Ideals versus Muslim Practice,” was published in *An Anthology of Living Religions*, edited by Mary Pat Fisher and Lee W. Bailey, Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2008, pp. 295-297