

## **Outline**

**Thesis Statement:** There is a parallelism in the role of men and women in both the Koran and the New Testament text, which is the subordinate position of women.

### I. Introduction

A. Belief systems provide some authority and guidance on the way men and women would relate to each other.

B. This paper argues that there is a parallelism in the role of men and women in both the Koran and the New Testament text, which is the subordinate position of women.

### II. Body

A. In both the Qu'ran text and the New Testament text, women are always to be under the power and will of men.

B. The objectification of women in the relationship between men and women is emphasized in both Qu'ran and the New Testament.

C. There is also the systemic view of women in Qu'ran and in New Testament as unable to speak wisely about spirituality.

### III. Conclusion

A. The role of women in this case could be based on the need to rationalize the structure of the old society.

B. The relationship between men and women would be functional to the stability of the society.

## Qu'ran and the New Testament

Religion being enmeshed in the general culture of people can provide a great influence in the way people live their lives. The situation of women in many societies for example is widely a function of the belief system that dominates the community. Belief systems provide some authority and guidance on the way men and women would relate to each other. This is the context of analysis that would be described as this paper explores the statement: "The Koran (p. 1418) is to Moslems what the New Testament is to Christians (p. 755)." This paper argues that there is a parallelism in the role of men and women in both the Koran and the New Testament text, which is the subordinate position of women.

First, there is the basic hierarchy, where women are always to be under the power and will of men. Sura 2:228 states that even though women have specific rights and obligations in the practice of faith and in the community, men are always above women in all degrees. The relationship between men and women should be within measurable justice. This means that women should treat their husbands the way husbands treat their wives but the superiority clause of the text puts women directly under the control of men (Roark). The subordinate position of women is also emphasized in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 it says, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ." This is similar to the context of relationship between men and women in Qu'ran. Women in this case are under men and therefore, there is the subtle command for women to submit to their husbands and obey their husbands in all their affairs.

The second point that should be considered is the objectification of women in the relationship between men and women. Consider this text from the Qu'ran, which forms the basis of polygamy. "They ask you about menstruation: Say, it is harmful; you shall avoid sexual

intercourse with the women during menstruation; do not approach them until they are rid of it... Your women are the bearers of your seed. Thus, you may enjoy this privilege however you like, so long as you maintain righteousness. You shall observe God, and know that you will meet Him. Give good news to the believers." 2:222, 223. This text would indicate the objectification of women. In 1 Corinthians 11: 8-9, it is said that, "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." This means that women are made for men, which also connotes the instrumentality of women.

Thirdly, there is also the systemic view of women in Qu'ran and in New Testament as unable to speak wisely about spirituality. Sura 5:6 advocates purification of men and shows women as the main source of these impurities. Women always have to cast their eyes down as they may convey impure thoughts. They are always to be seen as someone with error of judgment especially in witnessing. Sura 2:282 shows that women witnesses are seen as rather with great probability of error (Roark). The New Testament also explores a similar view of women when it says that "As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church" (1 Cor. 14:33b-35).

The parallelism in the illustration of relationship between men and women in Qu'ran and in the Bible, which puts women in subordinate position, could lead to accusation of women's oppression. The point is, there is a need to shift the fundamental perspective towards more rigorous interpretation of the Holy Books—Qur'an and Bible. The role of women in this case could be based on the need to rationalize the structure of the old society. It is through the text

that relationships between men and women would be established. The relationship would be functional to the stability of the society.

#### **Works Cited**

Roark, Dallas M. "Women in the Quran." 15 July 2007.

<http://answering-islam.org.uk/Authors/Roark/women.htm>.

The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1952.