

The Role of Women in the Islamic Media in the Khilafah

When we as Muslims think about the woman's role in media, there are two prevalent realities that come to mind. The first is based on the current reality which we see across the world where women and girls are most often objectified and exploited across the various mediums of media, by being dressed in revealing clothing, used as a decorative object rather than a whole person and where stereotypical sketches of women and their sex appeal are used for monetary benefits. The second is that of the doom scenario presented to us by the current media world of women being completely banished from the media altogether like we see in some Muslim countries. Are these the only two options women can have in media; to either be sexualized and objectified or to be made completely invisible?

We need to define what media is to be able to answer this question. Media in itself is a neutral means of mass communication. Today it consists of television, internet, cinema, newspapers, radio and magazines. Viewers can see some form of pictorial representation of messages through certain types of broadcasting and advertising. The purpose is to influence the other. Although media is a neutral tool, it is always streamed through a specific lens depending on the views in that society. Governments use it to influence intellectual and political opinion and through media programmes, these views are pushed into society.

According to liberal societies, the media will promote liberal freedoms and capitalistic goals through its medium e.g. unlimited sexual freedom, including changing sexual orientation and gender, the absence of strong family values and children as they represent a burden and an obstacle to personal consumption, lack of financial responsibility and a life on credit. Simultaneously, it will marginalize anything contradicting that framework such as religiosity and religious symbols.

Also the role of women will emanate from this same viewpoint of life and that is why her femininity is used as a means of entertainment or a way to further her social and financial status and that of others.

In the same way, media in an Islamic society will be an effective tool in promoting Islamic values and concepts and creating a specific perception of life based on the Islamic ideology. *"Under the Khilafah the media institution is a department that undertakes devising an information policy for the state to serve and execute the interest of Islam internally: to build a robust and strong Islamic society that gets rid of its impurities and reflects its goodness."* (**Article 103:** Hizb ut Tahrir's Draft Constitution of the Khilafah)

For this reason, Islamic media will greatly differ to the current media world.

Everything presented will be beneficial for both the individual and society at large. Anything that causes harm to Islam and the Muslims will be prevented. News, documentaries, discussion shows and other programs will be according to the sharia

rules, which will not involve mixing between men and women, revealing of Awrah and Haram acts, and all things that are non-beneficial.

The role of women in Islamic media will be based on the viewpoint of Islam and her given rights. *“The woman has been given the same rights as man, and whatever was obliged upon man is also obliged upon the woman, except that which was specified for her or him by the Shari’ah evidences. Accordingly, she has the right to partake in trade, agriculture and industry, and to undertake contracts and transactions, to possess all forms of property, to invest her wealth whether personally or through proxy, and to personally carry out all worldly affairs.”* (Article 114 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of the Khilafah)

Her role will be presented with the utmost respect, protecting her dignity at all times as is mentioned in the many Islamic evidences.

The Prophet (saw) said: « إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَفَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ، مَا أَكْرَمَهُنَّ إِلَّا كَرِيمٌ وَمَا أَهَانَهُنَّ إِلَّا «أَلَيْمٌ» **“Women are the twin halves of men. None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner, and none but an ignorant treats women disgracefully.”** [Abu Dawood]

The Prophet (saw) also said: «اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا» **“Treat women well.”** [Bukhari and Muslim]. Therefore, the Khilafah will place the protection of women’s dignity and security as a key pillar of state policy, including within its media institution. *“She (the woman) is an honour (‘ird) that must be protected.”* (Article 112, Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of the Khilafah)

Also acquiring knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim whether male or female, as is carrying the Islamic dawah and imparting Islamic knowledge in order to educate, nurture and instil the Islamic personality within individuals in the society. Media is an important tool to achieve this in the masses and for this reason women will play a vital role in the media to build strong Islamic societies by promoting Islamic knowledge and commanding the Al Marouf (the good) and forbidding the Al Munkar (the evil) and more specifically inspire other females to be great role models as mothers, wives, scholars and dawah carriers and subsequently build self-esteem and confidence based on the correct Islamic concepts.

We pray that we will soon be able to feel the direct effects of Islamic media which will play a vital role in freeing society from the constant stream of poisons we allow into our homes, a media where both men and women will work hard to change the viewpoints and concepts of society at large towards the noble Guidance of their Creator.

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