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**Response to the lies and distortions of christian missionaries about the position of women in islam**



**Part 3, Written by Kevin el-Karim**

*"The most perfect of believers are those most perfect of character; and the best of you are the best of you to your spouses." Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban*

*"None but a noble man treats women in an honourable manner. And none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully" At-Tirmithy*

### **He wrote:**

Everything that we have mentioned is based on the difference between men and women, because the male is not like the female. Allaah says: "And the male is not like the female" - Aal 'Imraan 3:36 ...

Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid of islam-qa said: "And men are different in intellectual terms, for men are known for their strength of understanding and their memory as compared to women. Women are weaker than men in memory and forget more than men do. This is well known, for most of the reputable scholars in the world are men. There are some women who are more intelligent and have better memories than some men, but this does not cancel out the general rule. Most cases are as we have described above..."

### **Response:**

Like i said before in my previous booklets, Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid and Islam-qa are well known for their extreme stances on certain issues. In my previous booklets i responded to their statements on women issues, and showed the reader that there was no support for their statements in the qu'ran nor in the authentic sunnah of our Prophet. The websites bases his view on women issues on a very biased view and interpretation of certain hadith and quranic verses. However the site sometimes contains also some good learnfull information. To read my responses to islam-qa's statements on women issues in islam, check my booklets:

Response to women in islam – part 3 G  
Response to women in islam – part 3 J  
Response to women in islam – part 3 I  
Response to women in islam – part 3 K  
Response to women in islam – part 3 L  
Response to women in islam – part 3 M  
Response to women in islam – part 3 N  
Response to women in islam – part 3 O

As for the shayk's comments on the differences of men and women, he's giving his own opinion, with no evidence or support for it. Instead of just mentioning that islam gives men and women different roles in society, because both have different natures and different specialities / qualities, which makes them equal in worth as as whole. The comments of the shayk are very biased, and clear in favor of suggesting that the males intelligence and memory is superior to women. Moreover the shayk argues that men have better memories then women, without showing the scientific proof. Well let's take a look at up to date research of scientist on this issue. I will quote from ScientificAmericanMagazine written by Doreen Kimura. Doreen Kimura studies the neural and hormonal basis of human intellectual functions. She is visiting professor in psychology at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia and a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

## Sex Differences in the Brain: Hormones and Intellect

What of differences in intellectual function between men and women? Major sex differences in function seem to lie in patterns of ability rather than in overall level of intelligence (measured as IQ), although some researchers, such as Richard Lynn of the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, have argued that there exists a small IQ difference favoring human males. (Note: on page 35 & 36 of this booklet, we see that the statement of Richard Lynn is proven wrong, Richard Haier, lead researcher and professor of psychology at the Department of Pediatrics at University of California, has recently proven that general intelligence is the same between men and women.) *Differences in intellectual pattern refer to the fact that people have different intellectual strengths. For example, some people are especially good at using words, whereas others are better at dealing with external stimuli, such as identifying an object in a different orientation. Two individuals may have differing cognitive abilities within the same level of general intelligence*

Sex differences in problem solving have been systematically studied in adults in laboratory situations. On average, men perform better than women at certain spatial tasks. In particular, men seem to have an advantage in tests that require the subject to imagine rotating an object or manipulating it in some other way. They also outperform women in mathematical reasoning tests and in navigating their way through a route. Further, men exhibit more accuracy in tests of target-directed motor skills--that is, in guiding or intercepting projectiles.

*Women, on average, excel on tests that measure recall of words and on tests that challenge the person to find words that begin with a specific letter or fulfill some other constraint. They also tend to be better than men at rapidly identifying matching items and performing certain precision manual tasks, such as placing pegs in designated holes on a board.*

In examining the nature of sex differences in navigating routes, one study found that men completed a computer simulation of a maze or labyrinth task more quickly and with fewer errors than women did. Another study by different researchers used a path on a tabletop map to measure route learning. Their results showed that although men learned the route in fewer trials and with fewer errors, women remembered more of the landmarks, such as pictures of different types of buildings, than men did. These results and others suggest that women tend to use landmarks as a strategy to orient themselves in everyday life more than men do.

*Other findings seemed also to point to female superiority in landmark memory. Researchers tested the ability of individuals to recall objects and their locations within a confined space--such as in a room or on a tabletop. In these studies, women were better able to remember whether items had changed places or not. Other investigators found that women were superior at a memory task in which they had to remember the locations of pictures on cards that were turned over in pairs. At this kind of object location, in contrast to other spatial tasks, women appear to have the advantage.*

*It is important to keep in mind that some of the average sex differences in cognition vary from slight to quite large and that men and women overlap enormously on many cognitive tests that show average differences. For example, whereas women perform better than men in both verbal memory (recalling words from lists or paragraphs) and verbal fluency (finding words that begin with a specific letter), we find a large difference in memory ability but only a small disparity for the fluency tasks. On the whole, variation between men and women tends to be smaller than deviations within each sex, but very large differences between the groups do exist--in men's high level of visual-spatial targeting ability, for one.*

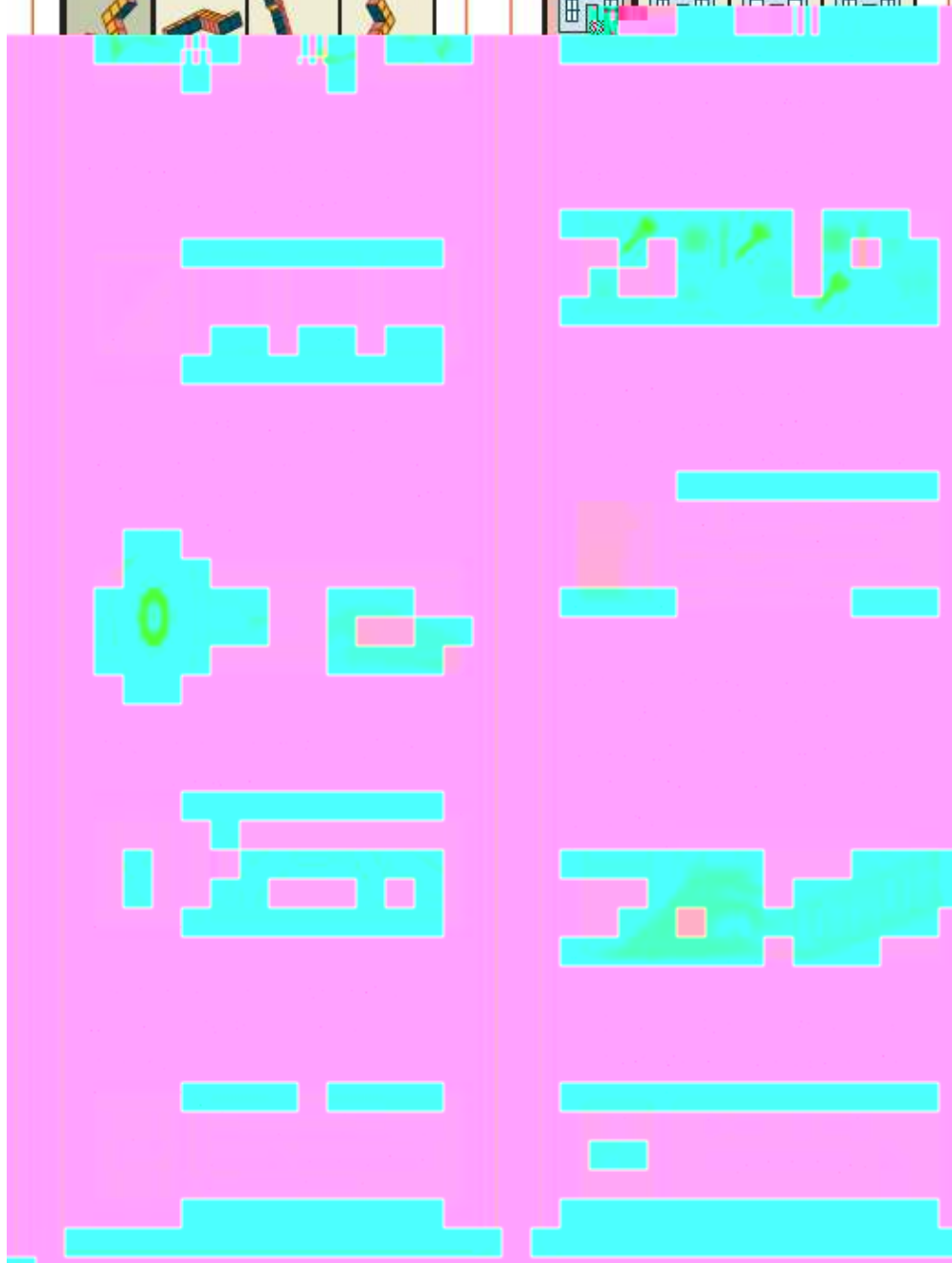
## Problem-Solving Tasks Favoring Men

Men tend to perform better than women on certain spatial tasks. They do well on tests that involve mentally rotating an object or manipulating it in some fashion, such as imagining turning this three-dimensional object



## Problem-Solving Tasks Favoring Women

Women tend to perform better than men on tests of perceptual speed in which subjects must rapidly identify matching items—for example, pairing the house on the far left with its twin:



The pink area contains several sets of geometric shapes and patterns. On the left side, there are two sets of shapes: one with a blue cross-like shape and a blue square, and another with a blue L-shaped figure and a blue square. On the right side, there are two sets of shapes: one with a blue L-shaped figure and a blue square, and another with a blue L-shaped figure and a blue square. There are also several horizontal bars of different lengths and colors (blue, green, red) scattered throughout the area.

Although it used to be thought that sex differences in problem solving did not appear until puberty, the accumulated evidence now suggests that some cognitive and skill differences are present much earlier. For example, researchers have found that three- and four-year-old boys were better at targeting and at mentally rotating figures within a clock face than girls of the same age were. Prepubescent girls, however, excelled at recalling lists of words.

**Source:**

2002 Scientific American, Inc. Sex Differences in the Brain; Special Editions; The Hidden Mind; by Doreen Kimura; pp 33-35

**Sex differences in the Brain, Structure & Function**

D:

Boys are more prone to mental retardation and learning disabilities than girls. This may be due to the fact that male fetuses require the maintenance of higher numbers of nerve cells in the cerebral cortex than female fetuses - early damage to the male developing brain could result in higher losses of needed neurons.<sup>6</sup>

E:

The cerebellum, an area of the brain important for posture and balance, and the pons, a brain structure linked to the cerebellum that helps control consciousness, are larger in men than in women.<sup>10</sup>

F:

As the brain ages, the amount of tissue mass declines and the amount of fluid increases. This effect is less severe in women than in men, suggesting that women are somewhat less vulnerable to age-related changes in mental abilities.<sup>11-14</sup> However, women are more prone to dementia than men, perhaps because of the potential greater susceptibility to loss of neurons and neuronal connections in women.<sup>6</sup>

### **Language Differences**

A:

Although men and women have been shown to process some language tasks similarly, in other aspects of language processing there are significant sex differences.<sup>15</sup>

B:

Imaging studies of the living brain indicate that in women neurons on both sides of the brain are activated when they are listening, while in men neurons on only one side of the brain are activated.<sup>16, 17</sup>

C:

Men and women appear to process single words similarly, but in the interpretation of whole sentences, women use both sides of the brain while men use one side.<sup>15</sup>

D:

Boys have a higher incidence than girls of developmental language disorders, such as developmental dyslexia. Despite these differences during childhood, it is not clear whether adult women have better verbal skills than men.<sup>15</sup>

## **Spatial Information Differences**

A:

Men and women process spatial information differently. <sup>18</sup>

B:

When negotiating a virtual reality maze, both men and women use the right hippocampus to figure out how to exit. However, men also use the left hippocampus for this task, while women do not, and women also use the right prefrontal cortex, while men do not. <sup>19</sup>

C:

In an imaging study, men were found to activate a distributed system of different brain regions on both sides of the brain while performing a spatial task. Women, however, activated these regions on only the right side of the brain. <sup>18</sup>

D:

Women appear to rely on landmarks to navigate their environments, whereas men tend to use compass directions. <sup>20</sup>

## **Memory Differences**

A:

Some functions of memory appear to be different in males and females. <sup>21</sup>

B:

Higher rates of blood flow in certain portions of the brain are associated with increased memory of verbal tasks in women, but not in men. <sup>22</sup>

C:

Compared to men, women have been shown to be better at remembering faces. <sup>23</sup>

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## **His Brain, Her Brain by Larry Cahill:**

On a gray day in mid-January, Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard University, suggested that innate differences in the build of the male and female brain might be one factor underlying the relative scarcity of women in science. His remarks reignited a debate that has been smoldering for a century, ever since some scientists sizing up the brains of both sexes began using their main finding—that female brains tend to be smaller—to bolster the view that women are intellectually inferior to men.

*To date, no one has uncovered any evidence that anatomical disparities might render women incapable of achieving academic distinction in math, physics or engineering [see box on page 47]. And the brains of men and women have been shown to be quite clearly similar in many ways. Nevertheless, over the past decade investigators have documented an astonishing array of structural, chemical and functional variations in the brains of males and females.* These inequities are not just interesting idiosyncrasies that might explain why more men than women enjoy the Three Stooges. They raise the possibility that we might need to develop sex-specific treatments for a host of conditions, including depression, addiction, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, the differences imply that researchers exploring the structure and function of the brain must take into account the sex of their subjects when analyzing their data—and include both women and men in future studies or risk obtaining misleading results.

## **Sculpting the Brain**

not so long ago neuroscientists believed that sex differences in the brain were limited mainly to those regions responsible for mating behavior. In a 1966 *Scientific American* article entitled “Sex Differences in the Brain,” Seymour Levine of Stanford University described how sex hormones help to direct divergent reproductive behaviors in rats—with males engaging in mounting and females arching their backs and raising their rumps to attract suitors. Levine mentioned only one brain region in his review: the hypothalamus, a small structure at the base of the brain that is involved in regulating hormone production and controlling basic behaviors such as eating, drinking and sex. A generation of neuroscientists came to maturity believing that “sex differences in the brain” referred primarily to mating behaviors, sex hormones and the hypothalamus.

That view, however, has now been knocked aside by a surge of findings that highlight the influence of sex on many areas of cognition and behavior, including memory, emotion, vision, hearing, the processing of faces and the brain’s response to stress hormones. This progress has been accelerated in the past five to 10 years by the growing use of sophisticated noninvasive imaging techniques such as positron-emission tomography (PET) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which can peer into the brains of living subjects. These imaging experiments reveal that anatomical variations occur in an assortment of regions throughout the brain. Jill M. Goldstein of Harvard Medical School and her colleagues, for example, used MRI to measure the sizes of many cortical and subcortical areas. *Among other things, these investigators found that parts of the frontal cortex, the seat of many higher cognitive functions, are bulkier in women than in men, as are parts of the limbic cortex, which is involved in emotional responses.* In men, on the other hand, parts of the parietal cortex, which is involved in space perception, are bigger than in women, as is the amygdala, an almond-shaped structure that responds to emotionally arousing information—to anything that gets the heart pumping and the adrenaline flowing. These size differences, as well as others mentioned throughout the article, are relative: they refer to the overall volume of the structure relative to the overall volume of the brain. Differences in the size of brain structures are generally thought to reflect their relative importance to the animal. For example, primates rely more on vision than olfaction; for rats, the opposite is true. As a result, primate brains maintain proportionately larger regions devoted to vision, and rats devote more space to olfaction. So the existence of widespread anatomical disparities between men and women suggests that sex does influence the way the brain works.

*Other investigations are finding anatomical sex differences at the cellular level. For example, Sandra Witelson and her colleagues at McMaster University discovered that women possess a greater density of neurons in parts of the temporal lobe cortex associated with language processing and comprehension. On counting the neurons in postmortem samples, the researchers found that of the six layers present in the cortex, two show more neurons per unit volume in females than in males. Similar findings were subsequently reported for the frontal lobe. With such information in hand, neuroscientists can now explore whether sex differences in neuron number correlate with differences in cognitive abilities—examining, for example, whether the boost in density*

## Conclusion:

The scientific facts, clearly tell us that men and women have different intellectual strenghts. This clearly therefor refutes the myth presented by some extreme muslim scholars, that woman have weak memories and an inferior intellect compared to men. On the contrary, the scientific facts show us that woman have a strong memory and intellect too. Men do excel women on certain tests, and women do excel men on certain tests. It's regretfull to see extreme muslim scholars always bringing up myths that women are supposed to be less intelligent and weak in memory compared to men. The scientific facts i quoted clearly shows us that islam-qa's statements (the website from which the christian missionay quoted all the time) on women are based on their own biased view about women, rather than neutral interpretation of texts and / or scientific facts. We have seen that professor Doreen Kimura confirmed that: major sex differences in function seem to lie in patterns of ability rather than in overall level of intelligence (measured as IQ). Only some researchers, such as Richard Lynn of the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, have argued that there exists a small IQ difference favoring human males. And even if we for the sake of argument accept this statement of Richard Lynn, then it's only a small / minor difference in overall level of intelligence, which in no way supports the statements of the muslim extremists, because it again moreover proofs that woman are not att all weak compared to men, but equal or like Richard Lynn suggest almost equal in overall level of intelligence (since there is only a small / minor difference according to him). However on page 35 & 36 of this booklet, we see that the statement of Richard Lynn ir proven wrong, Richard Haier, lead researcher and professor of psychology at the Department of Pediatrics at University of California, has proven that general intelligence is the same between men and women. The fact is men and woman have different intellectual strenghts, which makes them in practise and in total worth equal to each other. Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid's (of islam-qa) statement that women are weak in memory compared to men, is proven wrong. Moreover his comments have no support in the qu'ran nor in the authentic sunnah of our beloved Prophet. The next statements presented in "Sex differences in brain gray and white matter in healthy young adults: correlations with cognitive performance" perfectly sums up the facts:

Women have smaller brains than men, with women having more gray matter and men having more white matter. This finding may help explain why women are typically better than men at verbal tasks, while men are typically better than women at spatial tasks, as well as why the sexes perform equally well on intelligence tests in spite of males having larger brains.

### Source:

Gur, R.C., et al., *Sex differences in brain gray and white matter in healthy young adults: correlations with cognitive performance*. J Neurosci, 1999. 19(10): p. 4065-72.

Research in 2005 moreover showed us that Men and women *do* think differently, at least where the anatomy of the brain is concerned, according to a new study. The brain is made primarily of two different types of tissue, called gray matter and white matter. This new research reveals that men think more with their gray matter, and women think more with white ( see 35 & 36 of this booklet ). Researchers stressed that just because the two sexes think differently, this does not affect intellectual performance.

### Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 113; Ahmad, 25663

Aischa narrated that the Prophet said: "women are the twin halves of men." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi

Here again we clearly see that the Qu'ran and Authentic Sunnah are in perfect agreement with modern science. Islam recognizes the fact that men and women have different strenghts / specialties, which makes them equal / twin halves of each other in total worth.

As for the argument made by the shayk, that most scholars in the past were men and not women, and therefor women are less in intelligence then men is of no value. Since this has nothing to do with the intelligence or wisdom, but with the roles of each gender in society. A woman is overloaded by being a mother or a babysitter or pregnant. All these carriers are around the clock, which makes it more difficult for her to become a scholar then men, who are devoted to one career only. After work a man can easily follow a study to become a muslim scholar, while woman's duty as a mother and wife, namely caring about her children and doing household work, are carries around the clock. Therefor it's logic that in the past and still these days, more men become muslim scholar then women. This has nothing to do with intelligence or wisdom, but with the role of each gender in society. Moreover women are more shy then men, and therefor more likely would have less desire then men to become muslim scholar. However the fact that in islamic history also many women became muslim scholar, besides their duties as a mother of the family, shows how much strenght and character women posses ! Islamic history provides us with many examples of respected female Muslim scholars, who were respected by both men and women. For example Ayisha, the Prophet's wife was one of the most famous Muslim scholars. Not only was she very intelligent, she had an exceptional memory. That is why she was considered one of the most important sources of Hadith. It has been stated in some Islamic reports that the Prophet told the Muslims to go to Ayisha for guidance and learning of religious duties. The Prophet told his followers that a third of their religion could be learned from Aisha. Imam Zarkashi ( born in 745 Hijrah ) , one of the greatest scholars of the Shafi'i school in his time, devoted a book dedicated to Aishah's particular contribution in this field, entitled "Collection of Aishah's Corrections to the Statements of the Companions" (Al-'irada fi ma istadrakathu 'A'isha 'ala al-sahaba). Besides Aisha there were many,many other female scholars. I recommand the reader to check Aisha Bewley's book: "Islam The Empottha'—POJD/pnWfOENingWNPk/Oahy.W'JPGzONpW'OPNlpm/PJNJJDp W'JPGzONpW'K hisotry

#### **A'isha Bint Abu Bakr, Wife of Rasulallah:**

A'isha radi Allahu anha, the wife of Rasulallah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam, lived long after his death and provided great guidance to the first Muslim community, even to the renowned Sahabah and the Rashidun Khalifs. Her student 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said, "I did not see a greater scholar than A'isha radi Allahu anha in the learning of Qur'an, obligatory duties, lawful and unlawful manners, poetry, literature, Arab history and genealogy."<sup>1</sup>

Her cognizance in many fields of learning were praised highly by many others. Ibn Abi Malikah said, "We should not be surprised by her authority in the matter of poetry since she was the daughter of Abu Bakr who was a very eloquent and a great literary figure." What is surprising is her profound knowledge of medicine . Whenever individuals came to Rasulallah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam and discussed many remedies for illnesses, she used to remember them. She was excellent in mathematics that the Sahabah used to consult her on the problems concerning mirath ( inheritance)—POJzGptWfKk—GpaW'GPK-//OpnWNPkz/z-pcW'GPK-DGJpeW'GPK-DGJp)W'KI

large number of others. These include Amr ibn al -As, Abu Musa al Ash'ari, and Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr; great jurists and scholars of hadith like Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah ibn Abbas and Abdullah ibn Umar; and great scholars among the tabi'een like Sa'id ibn al Musayyab and 'Alqamah ibn Qays."<sup>2</sup>

#### **Sources:**

- 1: tadhkirah al huffaz
- 2: Ibn Hajar fath al bari vol vii p 82-83

Her reputation as a scholar reached many wherein people come from different places to ask about hadith of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. She was among the great hafiz of ahadith and narrated 2210 hadith in all. No other sahabi narrated so many hadith except Abdallah ibn Umar, Anas and Abu Hurayrah radi Allahu anhum. The great sahaba of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam usually referred to 'A'isha radi Allahu anha whenever they had any difficulty in understanding any juristic problem. One of her pupils, Urwah Ibn az-Zubayr said:” I did not see a greater scholar than Aishah in the learning of the Qur'an, obligatory duties, lawful and unlawful matters, poetry and literature, Arab history and genealogy.”

Abu Musa al-Ash'arsaid:” Whenever we Companions of the Prophet\* encountered any difficulty in the matter of any hadith we referred it to Aishah and found that she had definite knowledge about it.” Hafiz ibn Hajar said:” ... it is said that a quarter of the injunctions of the Shari'ah are narrated from her.”

Knowledge gained from 'A'isha radi Allahu anha was so authentic that the famous jurist of Medina, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr and the famous muhaddith Qasim ibn Muhammad always gave juristic opinions on the authority of the narrations of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha. Imam Ahmad said: “These were the two among those who relied on the authority of the narrations of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha and did not disgress from her statements, and gave their juristic opinions based on narrations of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha.”

#### **Saffiyah, Wife of Rasulullah:**

Saffiyah radi Allahu anha was also very learned in fiqh. Imam an Nawawi said; “She was the most intellectual among the learned women.”

#### **Source:**

tahdhib asma was sifaat vol 2 p 349

#### **Umm Salamah, Wife of Rasulullah:**

Ibn Hajar has given he names of at least 32 great scholars who learned ahadith fro her and then narrated them on her authority. Marwan and many like him turned other her to learn various fiqh issues. He used to say “Why should we turn to others when Rasulullah’s sallallahu alayhi wa sallam wives among us?”

#### **Source:**

musnad Ahmad vol. 6 p 323

**Rabi'ah Bint Mu'awwad:**

She was a great scholar of fiqh. The intellectual scholars of Madina like Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdallah ibn Umar, Salman ibn Yasar, Abbad ibn Walid and Nafi' use to go to her to learn from her.

**Source:**

tahdhib at tahdhib vol.12 p 444

**Umm 'Atiyah:**

Some Sahabah and learned scholars among the tabi'een used to come to her to learn various aspects of Islamic jurisprudence from her in Basrah. She also narrated many ahadith of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. Imam Nawawi said, "She was a scholarly Sahabiyah and one of those who went on jihad with Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam.

**Source:**

taghib al asma was sifaat vol w p 364

**A'isha bint Sa'd bint ibn Abi Waqqas:**

She was the daughter of a great Sahabi. She was very learned in Islamic sciences to the point that Imam Malik, Hakim ibn Utaybah and Ayyub as Sakhtiyani, the famous jurists and scholars of ahadith were her pupils.

**Sources:**

- 1: The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 8 & 9, by Aisha Bewley
- 2: Tadhhib al Tahdhib Vol 12 p 436



**Sayyida Nafisa, Granddaughter of Hasan:**

A large number of pupils came to her from different places to learn from her. Imam Shafi'i was one of her pupils.

**Source:**

wafayat al-a'yan vol 2 p 169

**Amrah Bint abdu Rahman:**

Her knowledge was "as vast as the sea". She was one of the Tab'un and was close to Aisha. She was known fagiha. She is one of those who gave legal opinions in Madina after the Companions, and she was the foremost expert on the traditions of Aisha, the Umm al-Mu'minin. Her opinion overrode the views of other authorities. Ibn Sa'd called her 'alima (scholar), and Malik Ibn Anas used her as a source. Umar Ibn Abdul - Aziz commanded Abu Bakr Ibn Hazm to write down all ahadith from her. Az-Zuhri was advised by Qasim ibn Muhammad to sit in her assembly. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Dawud said, "The masters of the women among the Tabi'un are hafsah bint Sirin and 'Amra bint 'Abdu'r-Rahman .

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 17 & 18, by Aisha Bewley

Amra bint 'Abdu'r-Rahman was one of the best students of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha. Imam Ahmad said, "She was an eminent theologian and a great scholar. She was tutored in the lap of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha, narrated many ahadith from her and she is very reliable, had an excellent memory and is one whose narration can be accepted." ibn Habban says the same about her.

**Zaynab, daughter of UmmSalama:**

Like her mother, she was also an expert in jurisprudence. ibn Abdul Barr said, "She was a theologian of greater status than others of her contemporaries."

**Source:**

al isti'ab fi asma' al as hab

**Umm ad darda:**

She was the wife of the famous sahabi Abu darda' and was learned in the sciences of hadith. Imam Bukhari referred to her as an authority in sahih al Bukhari: "Umm darda used to sit in tashahhud in her prayers like a man ( in worship) and she was an expert theologian." ibn Adbul Barr calls her "an excellent scholar among women, and a woman intellectual, being at the same time extremely religious and pious."

**Source:**

al isti'ab fi asma' al as hab

**Fatimah bint Qays:**

Her learning was so deep that she discussed a juristic point with 'Umar and 'A'isha radi Allahu anha radi Allahu anha for a long time and they also could not change or challenge her views. Imam Nawawi said, "She was one of those who migrated in the early days, and possessed great intellect and excellence."

**Source:**

tahdhib at tahdhib vol.2 p 353

**Umm salim, Umm Anas:**

She was the mother of the famous sahabi Anas. She was a highly respected Sahabiyah. ibn Hajar says, "Her laudable qualities are too many to mention and she was very famous." Imam an Nawawi calls her an excellent scholar among the Sahabiyah."

**Source:**

tahdhib at tahdhib vol.2 p 363

**Hamda Bint wathig al-Hiyatta:**

A preacher in Madina and Baghdad. She held gatherings for instructions and guidance and also transmitted hadith. She studied fiqh and hadith with Ibn as-Sam'ani.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 69, by Aisha Bewley

**Hamida ar-Ruwayshtiyya:**

A scholar of Ruwaysht, Isfahan, Persia. Her expertise was in hadith and the science of the men of transmission. She taught women and wrote some glosses on the books of hadith.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 69, by Aisha Bewley

**Hajar bint 'Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Halabiyya:**

A hadith scholar who had ijazas from a number of people, including Aisha bint 'Abdul' L-Hadi. A number of scholars related from her and she gave an fatwa ijaza to as-Sakhawi.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 68, by Aisha Bewley

**Hajar bint Muhammad:**

A hadith scholar who studied several texts with several scholars, including at-Tanukhi and al-Amidi, as well as the notable women scholars of the time. She gave ijazas to several scholars. As-Suyuti studied the Risala of ash-Shafi'i with her.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 68, by Aisha Bewley

**Habiba bint Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi:**

One of the shayks of hadith. Scholars listened to her in Damascus from 656/1258 to 713/1313 and she transmitted a large number of ahadith to her students.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 64, by Aisha Bewley

**Ghazal:**

A hadith scholar in Jerusalem who related from a number of scholars. More than one of the shayks of as-Sakhawi listened to her. She gave an ijaza to Abu'L-Fath al-'Uthmani.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 61, by Aisha Bewley

**Fayruz Khunda bint 'Ala'd-din:**

An intelligent princess who shared with her brother, Sultan Shihabu'd-din, in ruling the sultanate of Delhi. Her brother never made decision without following her advice.

**Source:**

The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 58, by Aisha Bewley

The list of learned women in Islam is endless. The above examples are sufficient proof and see that woman too possesses a great deal of strength in intelligence and knowledge. So a lot of females in the history of Islam, became Muslim scholars, besides their most important duty as a mother and wife, namely caring about her children and doing household work, which are carried around the clock. This proves that women have a great deal of strength and wisdom and will inside of them, because it requires a lot of strength to become a Muslim scholar besides the tremendous important work she does as a mother !

**Women Scholars of Hadith:**

Islam, as a religion which (unlike Christianity) refused to attribute gender to the Godhead,<sup>1</sup> and never appointed a male priestly elite to serve as an intermediary between creature and Creator, started life with the assurance that while men and women are equipped by nature for complementary rather than identical roles, no spiritual superiority inheres in the masculine principle.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the Muslim community was happy to entrust matters of equal worth in God's sight. Only this can explain why, uniquely among the classical Western religions, Islam produced a large number of outstanding female scholars, on whose testimony and sound judgment much of the edifice of Islam depends.

Since Islam's earliest days, women had been taking a prominent part in the preservation and cultivation of *hadith*, and this function continued down the centuries. At every period in Muslim history, there lived numerous eminent women-traditionists, treated by their brethren with reverence and respect. Biographical notices on very large numbers of them are to be found in the biographical dictionaries.

During the lifetime of the Prophet, many women had been not only the instance for the evolution of many traditions, but had also been their transmitters to their sisters and brethren in faith.<sup>3</sup> After the Prophet's death, many women Companions, particularly his wives, were looked upon as vital custodians of knowledge, and were approached for instruction by the other Companions, to whom they readily dispensed the rich store which they had gathered in the Prophet's company. The names of Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Maymuna, Umm Salama, and A'isha, are familiar to every student of *hadith* as being among its earliest and most distinguished transmitters.<sup>4</sup> In particular, A'isha is one of the most important figures in the whole history of *hadith* literature - not only as one of the earliest reporters of the largest number of *hadith*, but also as one of their most careful interpreters.

In the period of the Successors, too, women held important positions as traditionists. Hafsa, the daughter of Ibn Sirin,<sup>5</sup> Umm al-Darda the Younger (d.81/700), and 'Amra bin 'Abd al-Rahman, are only a few of the key women traditionists of this period. Umm al-Darda' was held by Iyas ibn Mu'awiya, an important traditionist of the time and a judge of undisputed ability and merit, to be superior to all the other traditionists of the period, including the celebrated masters of *hadith* like al-Hasan al-Basri and Ibn Sirin.<sup>6</sup> 'Amra was considered a great authority on traditions related by A'isha. Among her students, Abu Bakr ibn Hazm, the celebrated judge of Medina, was ordered by the caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz to write down all the traditions known on her authority.<sup>7</sup>

After them, 'Abida al-Madaniyya, 'Abda bin Bishr, Umm Umar al-Thaqafiyya, Zaynab the granddaughter of Ali ibn Abd Allah ibn Abbas, Nafisa bint al-Hasan ibn Ziyad, Khadija Umm Muhammad, 'Abda bint Abd al-Rahman, and many other members of the fair sex excelled in delivering public lectures on *hadith*. These devout women came from the most diverse backgrounds, indicating that neither class nor gender were obstacles to rising through the ranks of Islamic scholarship. For example, Abida, who started life as a slave owned by Muhammad ibn Yazid, learnt a large number of *hadiths* with the teachers in Median. She was given by her master to Habib Dahhun, the great traditionist of Spain, when he visited the holy city on this way to the Hajj. Dahhun was so impressed by her learning that he freed her, married her, and brought her to Andalusia. It is said that she related ten thousand traditions on the authority of her Median teachers.<sup>8</sup>

Zaynab bint Sulayman (d. 142/759), by contrast, was princess by birth. Her father was a cousin of al-Saffah, the founder of the Abbasid dynasty, and had been a governor of Basra, Oman and Bahrayn during the caliphate of al-Mansur.<sup>9</sup> Zaynab, who received a fine education, acquired a mastery of *hadith*, gained a reputation as one of the most distinguished women traditionists of the time, and counted many important men among her pupils.<sup>10</sup>

This partnership of women with men in the cultivation of the Prophetic Tradition continued in the period when the great anthologies of *hadith* were compiled. A survey of the texts reveals that all the important compilers of traditions from the earliest period received many of them from women *shuyukh*: every major collection gives the names of many women as the immediate authorities of the author. And when these works had been compiled, the women traditionists themselves mastered them, and delivered lectures to large classes of pupils, to whom they would issue their own *ijazas*.

In the fourth century, we find Fatima bint Abd al-Rahman (d. 312/924), known as al-Sufiyya on account of her great piety; Fatima (granddaughter of Abu Daud of *Sunan* fame); Amat al-Wahid (d. 377/987), the daughter of distinguished jurist al-Muhamili; Umm al-Fath Amat as-Salam (d. 390/999), the daughter of the judge Abu Bakr Ahmad (d.350/961); Jumua bint Ahmad, and many other women, whose classes were always attended by reverential audiences.<sup>11</sup>

The Islamic tradition of female *hadith* scholarship continued in the fifth and sixth centuries of *hijra*. Fatima bin al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn al-Daqqaq al-Qushayri, was celebrated not only for her piety and her mastery of calligraphy, but also for her knowledge of *hadith* and the quality of the *isnads* she knew.<sup>12</sup> Even more distinguished was Karima al-Marwaziyya (d.463/1070), who was considered the best authority on the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari in her own time. Abu Dharr of Herat, one of the leading scholars of the period, attached such great importance to her authority that he advised his students to study the *Sahih* under no one else, because of the quality of her scholarship. She thus figures as a central point in the transmission of this seminal text of Islam.<sup>13</sup> As a matter of fact, writes Godziher, 'her name occurs with extraordinary frequency of the *ijazas* for narrating the text of this book.'<sup>14</sup> Among her students were al-Khatib al-Baghdadi<sup>15</sup> and al-Humaydi (428/1036-488/1095).<sup>16</sup>

Aside from Karima, a number of other women traditionists 'occupy an eminent place in the history of the transmission of the text of the *Sahih*.'<sup>17</sup> Among these, one might mention in particular Fatima bint Muhammad (d.539/1144; Shuhda 'the Writer' (d.574/1178), and Sitt al-Wuzara bint Umar (d.716/1316).<sup>18</sup> Fatima narrated the book on the authority of the great traditionist Said al-Ayyar; she received from the *hadith* specialists the proud tittle of *Musnida Isfahan* (the great *hadith* authority of Isfahan). Shuhda was a famous calligrapher and a traditionist of great repute; the biographers describe her as 'the calligrapher, the great authority on *hadith*, and the pride of womanhood.' Her great-grandfather had been a dealer in needles, and thus acquired the sobriquet 'al-Ibri'. But her father, Abu Nasr (d. 506/1112) had acquired a passion for *hadith*, and managed to study it with several masters of the subject.<sup>19</sup> In obedience to the *sunna*, he gave his daughter a sound academic education, ensuring that she studied under many traditionists of accepted reputation.

She married Ali ibn Muhammad, an important figure with some literary interests, who later became a boon companion of the caliph al-Muqtadi, and founded a college and a Sufi lodge, which he endowed most generously. His wife, however, was better known: she gained her reputation in the field of *hadith* scholarship, and was noted for the quality of her *isnads*.<sup>20</sup> Her lectures on *Sahih* al-Bukhari and other *hadith* collections were attended by large crowds of students; and on account of her great reputation, some people even falsely claimed to have been her disciples.<sup>21</sup>

Also known as an authority on Bukhari was Sitt al-Wuzara, who, besides her acclaimed mastery of Islamic law, was known as 'the musnida of her time', and delivered lectures on the *Sahih* and other works in Damascus and Egypt.<sup>22</sup> Classes on the *Sahih* were likewise given by Umm al-Khayr Amat al-Khaliq (811/1408-911/1505), who is regarded as the last great *hadith* scholar of the Hijaz.<sup>23</sup> Still another authority on Bukhari was A'isha bint Abd al-Hadi.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from these women, who seem to have specialized in the great *Sahih* of Imam al-Bukhari, there were others, whose expertise was centered on other texts. Umm al-Khayr Fatima bint Ali (d.532/1137), and Fatima al-Shahrazuriyya, delivered lectures on the *Sahih* of Muslim.<sup>25</sup> Fatima al-Jawzdaniyya (d.524/1129) narrated to her students the three *Mu'jams* of al-Tabarani.<sup>26</sup> Zaynab of Harran (d.68/1289), whose lectures attracted a large crowd of students, taught them the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the largest known collection of *hadiths*.<sup>27</sup> Juwayriya bint Umar (d.783/1381), and Zaynab bint Ahmad ibn Umar (d.722/1322), who had travelled widely in pursuit of *hadith* and delivered lectures in Egypt as well as Medina, narrated to her students the collections of al-Darimi and Abd ibn Humayd; and we are told that students travelled from far and wide to attend her discourses.<sup>28</sup> Zaynab bint Ahmad (d.740/1339), usually known as Bint al-Kamal, acquired 'a camel load' of diplomas; she delivered lectures on the *Musnad* of Abu Hanifa, the *Shamail* of al-Tirmidhi, and the *Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar* of al-Tahawi, the last of which she read with another woman traditionist, Ajiba bin Abu Bakr (d.740/1339).<sup>29</sup> 'On her authority is based,' says Goldziher, 'the authenticity of the Gotha codex ... in the same isnad a large number of learned women are cited who had occupied themselves with this work.'<sup>30</sup> With her, and various other women, the great traveller Ibn Battuta studied traditions during his stay at Damascus.<sup>31</sup> The famous historian of Damascus, Ibn Asakir, who tells us that he had studied under more than 1,200 men and 80 women, obtained the *ijaza* of Zaynab bint Abd al-Rahman for the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik.<sup>32</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti studied the *Risala* of Imam Shafii with Hajar bint Muhammad.<sup>33</sup> Afif al-Din Junayd, a traditionist of the ninth century AH, read the *Sunan* of al-Darimi with Fatima bin Ahmad ibn Qasim.<sup>34</sup>

Other important traditionists included Zaynab bint al-Sha'ri (d.524/615-1129/1218). She studied *hadith* under several important traditionists, and in turn lectured to many students - some of who gained great repute - including Ibn Khallikan, author of the well-known biographical dictionary *Wafayat al-Ayan*.<sup>35</sup> Another was Karima the Syrian (d.641/1218), described by the biographers as the greatest authority on *hadith* in Syria of her day. She delivered lectures on many works of *hadith* on the authority of numerous teachers.<sup>36</sup>

In his work *al-Durar al-Karima*,<sup>37</sup> Ibn Hajar gives short biographical notices of about 170 prominent women of the eighth century, most of whom are traditionists, and under many of whom the author himself had studied.<sup>38</sup> Some of these women were acknowledged as the best traditionists of the period. For instance, Juwayriya bint Ahmad, to whom we have already referred, studied a range of works on traditions, under scholars both male and female, who taught at the great colleges of the time, and then proceeded to give famous lectures on the Islamic disciplines. 'Some of my own teachers,' says Ibn Hajar, 'and many of my contemporaries, attended her discourses.'<sup>39</sup> A'isha bin Abd al-Hadi (723-816), also mentioned above, who for a considerable time was one of Ibn Hajar's teachers, was considered to be the finest traditionist of her time, and many students undertook long journeys in order to sit at her feet and study the truths of religion.<sup>40</sup> Sitt al-Arab (d.760-1358) had been the teacher of the well-known traditionist al-Iraqi (d.742/1341), and of many others who derived a good proportion of their knowledge from her.<sup>41</sup> Daqiqa bint Murshid (d.746/1345), another celebrated woman traditionist, received instruction from a whole range of other woman.

Information on women traditionists of the ninth century is given in a work by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi (830-897/1427-1489), called *al-Daw al-Lami*, which is a biographical dictionary of eminent persons of the ninth century.<sup>42</sup> A further source is the *Mu'jam al-Shuyukh* of Abd al-Aziz ibn Umar ibn Fahd (812-871/1409-1466), compiled in 861 AH and devoted to the biographical notices of more than 1,100 of the author's teachers, including over 130 women scholars under whom he had studied.<sup>43</sup> Some of these women were acclaimed as among the most precise and scholarly traditionists of their time, and trained many of the great scholars of the following generation. Umm Hani Maryam (778-871/1376-1466), for instance, learnt the Qur'an by heart when still a child, acquired all the Islamic sciences then being taught, including theology, law, history, and grammar, and then travelled to pursue *hadith* with the best traditionists of her time in Cairo and Mecca. She was also celebrated for her mastery of calligraphy, her command of the Arabic language, and her natural aptitude in poetry, as also her strict observance of the duties of religion (she performed the hajj no fewer than thirteen times). Her son, who became a noted scholar of the tenth century, showed the greatest veneration for her, and constantly waited on her towards the end of her life. She pursued an intensive program of learning in the great college of Cairo, giving *ijazas* to many scholars, Ibn Fahd himself studied several technical works on *hadith* under her.<sup>44</sup>

Her Syrian contemporary, Bai Khatun (d.864/1459), having studied traditions with Abu Bakr al-Mizzi and numerous other traditionalists, and having secured the *ijazas* of a large number of masters of *hadith*, both men and women, delivered lectures on the subject in Syria and Cairo. We are told that she took especial delight in teaching.<sup>45</sup> A'isha bin Ibrahim (760/1358-842/1438), known in academic circles as Ibnat al-Sharaihi, also studied traditions in Damascus and Cairo (and elsewhere), and delivered lectures which eminent scholars of the day spared no efforts to attend.<sup>46</sup> Umm al-Khayr Saida of Mecca (d.850/1446) received instruction in *hadith* from numerous traditionists in different cities, gaining an equally enviable reputation as a scholar.<sup>47</sup>

So far as may be gathered from the sources, the involvement of women in *hadith* scholarships, and in the Islamic disciplines generally, seems to have declined considerably from the tenth century of the *hijra*. Books such as *al-Nur al-Safir* of al-Aydarus, the *Khulasat al-Akhbar* of al-Muhibbi, and *the al-Suluh al-Wabila* of Muhammad ibn Abd Allah (which are biographical dictionaries of eminent persons of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries of the *hijra* respectively) contain the names of barely a dozen eminent women traditionists. But it would be wrong to conclude from this that after the tenth century, women lost interest in the subject. Some women traditionists, who gained good reputations in the ninth century, lived well into the tenth, and continued their services to the sunna. Asma bint Kamal al-Din (d.904/1498) wielded great influence with the sultans and their officials, to whom she often made recommendations - which, we are told, they always accepted. She lectured on *hadith*, and trained women in various Islamic sciences.<sup>48</sup> A'isha bint Muhammad (d.906/1500), who married the famous judge Muslih al-Din, taught traditions to many students, and was appointed professor at the Salihyya College in Damascus.<sup>49</sup> Fatima bint Yusuf of Aleppo (870/1465-925/1519), was known as one of the excellent scholars of her time.<sup>50</sup> Umm al-Khayr granted an *ijaza* to a pilgrim at Mecca in the year 938/1531.<sup>51</sup>

The last woman traditionist of the first rank who is known to us was Fatima al-Fudayliya, also known as al-Shaykha al-Fudayliya. She was born before the end of the twelfth Islamic century, and soon excelled in the art of calligraphy and the various Islamic sciences. She had a special interest in *hadith*, read a good deal on the subject, received the diplomas of a good many scholars, and acquired a reputation as an important traditionist in her own right. Towards the end of her life, she settled at Mecca, where she founded a rich public library. In the Holy City she was attended by many eminent traditionists, who attended her lectures and received certificates from her. Among them, one could mention in particular Shaykh Umar al-Hanafi and Shaykh Muhammad Sali. She died in 1247/1831.<sup>52</sup>



Throughout the history of feminine scholarship in Islam it is clear that the women involved did not confine their study to a personal interest in traditions, or to the private coaching of a few individuals, but took their seats as students as well as teachers in public educational institutions, side by side with their brothers in faith. The colophons of many manuscripts show them both as students attending large general classes, and also as teachers, delivering regular courses of lectures. For instance, the certificate on folios 238-40 of the *al-Mashikhat ma al-Tarikh* of Ibn al-Bukhari, shows that numerous women attended a regular course of eleven lectures which was delivered before a class consisting of more than five hundred students in the Umar Mosque at Damascus in the year 687/1288. Another certificate, on folio 40 of the same manuscript, shows that many female students, whose names are specified, attended another course of six lectures on the book, which was delivered by Ibn al-Sayrafi to a class of more than two hundred students at Aleppo in the year 736/1336. And on folio 250, we discover that a famous woman traditionist, Umm Abd Allah, delivered a course of five lectures on the book to a mixed class of more than fifty students, at Damascus in the year 837/1433.<sup>53</sup>

Various notes on the manuscript of the *Kitab al-Kifaya* of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, and of a collection of various treatises on *hadith*, show Ni'ma bin Ali, Umm Ahmad Zaynab bint al-Makki, and other women traditionists delivering lectures on these two books, sometimes independently, and sometimes jointly with male traditionists, in major colleges such as the Aziziyya Madrasa, and the Diyaiyya Madrasa, to regular classes of students. Some of these lectures were attended by Ahmad, son of the famous general Salah al-Din.<sup>54</sup>

#### Footnotes:

1:

Maura O'Neill, *Women Speaking, Women Listening* (Maryknoll, 1990CE), 31: "Muslims do not use a masculine God as either a conscious or unconscious tool in the construction of gender roles."

2:

For a general overview of the question of women's status in Islam, see M. Boisiers, *L'Humanisme de l'Islam* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Paris, 1985CE), 104-10.

3:

al-Khatib, *Sunna*, 53-4, 69-70.

4:

See above, 18, 21.

5:

Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 355.

6:

Suyuti, *Tadrib*, 215.

7:

Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 353.

8:

Maqqari, *Nafh*, II, 96.

9:

Wustenfeld, *Genealogische Tabellen*, 403.

10:

al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, XIV, 434f.

11:

Ibid., XIV, 441-44.

12:

Ibn al-Imad, *Shsadhara al-Dhahah fi Akhbar man Dhahah* (Cairo, 1351), V, 48; Ibn Khallikan, no. 413.

13:

Maqqari, *Nafh*, I, 876; cited in Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 366.

14:

Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 366. "It is in fact very common in the *ijaza* of the transmission of the Bukhari text to find as middle member of the long chain the name of Karima al-Marwaziyya," (ibid.).

15:

Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, I, 247.

16:

COPL, V/i, 98f.

17:

Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 366.

18:

Ibn al-Imad, IV, 123. Sitt al-Wuzara' was also an eminent jurist. She was once invited to Cairo to give her *fatwa* on a subject that had perplexed the jurists there.

19:

Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil* (Cairo, 1301), X, 346.

20:

Ibn Khallikan, no. 295.

21:

Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 367.

22:

Ibn al-Imad, VI. 40.

23:

Ibid., VIII, 14.

24:

Ibn Salim, *al-Imdad* (Hyderabad, 1327), 36.

25:

Ibn al-Imad, IV, 100.

26:

Ibn Salim, 16.

27:

Ibid., 28f.

28:

Ibn al-Imad, VI 56.

29:

ibid., 126; Ibn Salim, 14, 18; al-Umari, *Qitf al-Thamar* (Hyderabad, 1328), 73.

30:

Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 407.

31:

Ibn Battuta, *Rihla*, 253.

32:

Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, V, 140f.

33:

Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Udaba*, 17f.

34:

COPL, V/i, 175f.

35:

Ibn Khallikan, no.250.

36:

Ibn al-Imad, V, 212, 404.

37:

Various manuscripts of this work have been preserved in libraries, and it has been published in Hyderabad in 1348-50. Volume VI of Ibn al-Imad's *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, a large biographical dictionary of prominent Muslim scholars from the first to the tenth centuries of the *hijra*, is largely based on this work.

38:

Goldziher, accustomed to the exclusively male environment of nineteenth-century European universities, was taken aback by the scene depicted by Ibn Hajar. Cf. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 367: "When reading the great biographical work of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani on the scholars of the eighth century, we may marvel at the number of women to whom the author has to dedicate articles."

39:

Ibn Hajar, *al-Durar al-Karima fi Ayan al-Mi'a al-Thamina* (Hyderabad, 1348-50), I, no. 1472.

40:

Ibn al-Imad, VIII, 120f.

41:

Ibid., VI, 208. We are told that al-Iraqi (the best know authority on the *hadiths* of *Ghazali's Ihya Ulum al-Din*) ensured that his son also studied under her.

42:

A summary by Abd al-Salam and Umar ibn al-Shamma' exists (C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, second ed. (Leiden, 1943-49CE), II, 34), and a defective manuscript of the work of the latter is preserved in the O.P. Library at Patna (COPL, XII, no.727).

43:

Ibid.

44:

Sakhawi, *al-Saw al-Lami li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tasi* (Cairo, 1353-55), XII, no. 980.

45:

Ibid., no. 58.

46:

Ibid., no. 450.

47:

Ibid., no. 901.

48:

al-Aydarus, *al-Nur al-Safir* (Baghdad, 1353), 49.

49:

Ibn Abi Tahir, see COPL, XII, no. 665ff.

50:

Ibid.

51:

Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 407.

52:

al-Suhuh al-Wabila, see COPL, XII, no. 785.

53:

COPL, V/ii, 54.

54:

Ibid., V/ii, 155-9, 180-208. For some particularly instructive annotated manuscripts preserved at the Zahiriyah Library at Damascus, see the article of Abd al-Aziz al-Maymani in *al-Mabahith al-Ilmiyya* (Hyderabad: Da'irat al-Ma'arif, 1358), 1-14.

### **Women as Mufti and Qadhi**

Interpretation of revelation was free of gender restrictions. A woman's legal opinion (fatwa) was just as valid and morally binding as the legal opinion of a man. Thus a woman could legitimately be a mufti, a legal expert whose task it was to communicate legal rules to non-specialists including, at times, judges and other holders of political power. There was complete agreement among Sunni jurists that women could be mufti. It was as a result of the law's acceptance of women as mufti, moreover, that al-Tabari was led to argue that a woman could be a judge in all areas of the law.

#### **Source:**

Fadel, Mohammad (1997), "Two Women, One Man: Knowledge, Power, and Gender in Medieval Sunni Legal Thought.", pages 189, 190 & 200

## **Can women teach men in christianity, or become scholars ?**

We have seen the great rights islam gives to women. Islam recognizes women's intellect, wisdom and ability to teach. Islamic history shows us many examples of female scholars, who were respected by male scholars. Islamic history shows us that in time, when islam was followed in its true teachings and spirit, gender discrimination was out of the picture. It was hundreds of years after the death of the prophet and his companions, that male domination and cultural influences started to poison the true spirit and teaching of islam, with cultural male dominated rules. In my previous response we clearly see that islam's true spirit and teachings, and the way it was practised by the prophet and his companions, clearly honored women ! Now let us take a look at the bible. Does christianity view women as intelligent, and does it give them the right to become teacher and scholar of men and women ? The bible says:

### **1 Timothy 2:1-14**

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

In other words women according to the bible cannot teach men and cannot have any leadership positions which would give them authority over men. The verse and its context are clearly general, which is confirmed by renowned classic bible commentaries, which i shall quote now.

### **John Darby's Synopsis of the New Testament , 1 Timothy Chapter 2**

Paul has plainly now laid the foundations, and he proceeds therefore to details. Men were to pray everywhere, lifting up pure hands, without wrath, and without vain human reasonings. Women were to walk in modesty, adorned with good works, and to learn in silence. A woman was forbidden to teach or to exercise authority over men; she was to abide in quietness and silence. The reason given for this is remarkable, and shews how, in our relations with God, everything depends on the original starting-point. In innocence Adam had the first place; in sin, Eve It was she who, being deceived, brought in transgression. Adam was not deceived, guilty as he was of disobeying God. United to his wife, he followed her, not deceived by the enemy but weak through his affection.

#### **Source:**

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/DarbysSynopsisofNewTestament/dby.cgi?book=1ti&chapter=002>

## **John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible The Book of 1 Timothy Chapter 2**

2:12

To usurp authority over the man - By public teaching.

2:13

First - So that woman was originally the inferior.

2:14

And Adam was not deceived - The serpent deceived Eve: Eve did not deceive Adam, but persuaded him. "Thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife," Genesis 3:17. The preceding verse showed why a woman should not "usurp authority over the man." this shows why she ought not "to teach." She is more easily deceived, and more easily deceives. The woman being deceived transgressed - "The serpent deceived" her, Genesis 3:13, and she transgressed.

### **Source:**

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/WesleysExplanatoryNotes/wes.cgi?book=1ti&chapter=002>

So according to the bible only eve, as a woman was in transgression and not the man ! Therefore all women are viewed as inferior and less intelligence then men and therefor cannot teach men, since teaching requires intelligence and wisdom. Women in the bible are viewed as the gender whose easily deceived and therefor not fit to teach men ! Compare this to islam which allows women to be a mufti and teach men ! Read and compare this gift given to women in islam with the curse given tot hem (to be in silence and forbidden to teach men) by paul in christianity. Women in islam were scholars and teached men (read page 13 t/m 32), see also:

<http://www.islamfortoday.com/womenscholars.htm>

[http://www.answering-christianity.com/karim/womens\\_education.htm](http://www.answering-christianity.com/karim/womens_education.htm)

Moreover the bible even views it as a shame for women to speak in the church or in public assemblies, which moreover proofs that women in christianity never can hold any position of leadership or teacher. In christianity women are not given this right

## **1 Corinthians 14:34-35**

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.



## Matthew Henry Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible , Chapter 14

Verses 34-35 Here the apostle,

1.

Enjoins silence on their women in public assemblies, and to such a degree that they must not ask questions for their own information in the church, but ask their husbands at home. *They are to learn in silence with all subjection; but,* says the apostle, *I suffer them not to teach,* 1 Tim. 2:11, 12. There is indeed an intimation (ch. 11:5) as if the women sometimes did pray and prophecy in their assemblies, which the apostle, in that passage, does not simply condemn, but the manner of performance, that is, praying or prophesying with the head uncovered, which, in that age and country, was throwing off the distinction of sexes, and setting themselves on a level with the men. But here he seems to forbid all public performances of theirs. They are not permitted to speak (v. 34) in the church, neither in praying nor prophesying. The connection seems plainly to include the latter, in the limited sense in which it is taken in this chapter, namely, for preaching, or interpreting scripture by inspiration.

*And, indeed, for a woman to prophesy in this sense were to teach, which does not so well befit her state of subjection. A teacher of others has in that respect a superiority over them, which is not allowed the woman over the man, nor must she therefore be allowed to teach in a congregation: I suffer them not to teach. But praying, and uttering hymns inspired, were not teaching. And seeing there were women who had spiritual gifts of this sort in that age of the church (see Acts 22:9), and might be under this impulse in the assembly, must they altogether suppress it? Or why should they have this gift, if it must never be publicly exercised? For these reasons, some think that these general prohibitions are only to be understood in common cases; but that upon extraordinary occasions, when women were under a divine afflatus, and known to be so, they might have liberty of speech. They were not ordinarily to teach, nor so much as to debate and ask questions in the church, but learn in silence there; and, if difficulties occurred, ask their own husbands at home. Note, As it is the woman's duty to learn in subjection, it is the man's duty to keep up his superiority, by being able to instruct her; if it be her duty to ask her husband at home, it is his concern and duty to endeavour at least to be able to answer her enquiries; if it be a shame for her to speak in the church, where she should be silent, it is a shame for him to be silent when he should speak, and not be able to give an answer, when she asks him at home.*

2.

We have here the reason of this injunction: It is God's law and commandment that they should be under obedience (v. 34); they are placed in subordination to the man, and it is a shame for them to do any thing that looks like an affectation of changing ranks, which speaking in public seemed to imply, at least in that age, and among that people, as would public teaching much more: so that the apostle concludes it was a shame for women to speak in the church, in the assembly. Shame is the mind's uneasy reflection on having done an indecent thing. And what more indecent than for a woman to quit her rank, renounce the subordination of her sex, or do what in common account had such aspect and appearance? Note, Our spirit and conduct should be suitable to our rank.

*The natural distinctions God has made, we should observe. Those he has placed in subjection to others should not set themselves on a level, nor affect or assume superiority. The woman was made subject to the man, and she should keep her station and be content with it. For this reason women must be silent in the churches, not set up for teachers; for this is setting up for superiority over the man.*

### Source:

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/MatthewHenryComplete/mhc-com.cgi?book=1co&chapter=014>

## **John Darby's Synopsis of the New Testament, 1 Corinthians Chapter 14**

Women were to be silent in the assembly: it was not permitted to them to speak. They were to remain in obedience and not to direct others. The law moreover held the same language. It would be a shame to hear them speak in public. If they had had questions to ask, they might inquire of their husbands at home.

With all their gifts, the word did not come out from the Corinthians, nor had it come unto them only; they ought to submit to the universal order of the Spirit in the assembly. If they pretended to be led by the Spirit, let them acknowledge (and this would prove it,) that the things which the apostle wrote to them were the commandments of the Lord: a very important assertion; a responsible and serious position of this wonderful servant of God.

### **Source:**

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/DarbysSynopsisofNewTestament/dby.cgi?book=1co&chapter=014>

Anyone with common sense can see that women in the bible hardly have any rights, women in the bible are viewed as inferior to men. They were not allowed to teach men or to have any leaderships position. Islam on the other hand allows women to teach men and to become judges. Also Muhammad's wife Aishah has been known to have corrected Abu Hurairah in respect of traditions which were in conflict with the Qur'an. She was consulted on her knowledge of the Sunnah by the believers. Imam Zarkashi ( born in 745 Hijrah ), one of the greatest scholars of the Shafi'i school in his time, devoted a book dedicated to Aishah's particular contribution in this field, entitled "Collection of Aishah's Corrections to the Statements of the Companions" (Al-'irada fi ma istadrakathu 'A'isha 'ala al-sahaba).

### **He wrote:**

Here, also, are their quotations from al-Baghawi: And al-Baidawi regarding Sura 4:34:Al-Baghawi said in his Tafseer 2/206: "because Allaah has made one of them to excel the other' means, men excel women because they have more powers of reason and religious commitment and they are in charge of affairs. And it was said that this refers to giving testimony, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): 'And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women' [al-Baqarah 2:282]. And it was said that it refers to jihad, or to worship i.e., Jumu'ah and prayers in congregation, or that it refers to the fact that a man may marry four wives, but a woman is not permitted more than one husband; or the fact that divorce is in the man's hand; or that it refers to inheritance, or to diyah (blood money), or to Prophethood."

Al-Baydaawi said in his Tafseer 2/184: "'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women' means that they are in charge of them and take care of them. He gave two reasons for that, one that is inherent in them and one that is acquired subsequently, and said: 'because Allaah has made one of them to excel the other', because Allaah has favoured men over women by making men more perfect in reasoning and running affairs, and has given them more strength with regard to work and acts of worship. Hence men are singled out when it comes to Prophethood, leadership, guardianship, establishing rituals, giving testimony in legal matters, the obligation to engage in jihad and pray Jumu'ah, and so on, and they are given a greater share of inheritance, and divorce is in the man's hand. 'and because they spend (to support them) from their means' refers to what they spend with regard to marriage, such as the mahr and maintenance, etc." ...

**Response:**

The comments made by al-Baghawi are based on his own personal interpretation of Surah 4:34.

**Qu'ran 4:34**

Men are the protectors and maintainers (Qawama) of women, because Allah has given each preference over the other, and because they support them from their means

So Allah swt tells us that men are the protectors and maintainers of women. The beauty of the Quranic expression is illustrated in the statement that: "Allah has given each preference over the other " and not merely that Allah gave preference to men over women. This is because men are preferred in some aspects and women are preferred in others. So men are given the task to protect and maintain women, because Allah swt has favoured them in some aspects. The question is , in what aspects are men favoured ? According to al-Baghawi one of the main aspects is: "men are more perfect in reasoning then women" . We have seen that the quran and authentic sunnah of our beloved prophet, nowhere supports this opinion, moreover modern science doesn't support this statement:

An imaging study of 48 men and women between 18 and 84 years old found that, *although men and women performed equally on the IQ tests, the brain structures involved in intelligence appeared distinct*. Compared with women, men had more than six times the amount of intelligence-related gray matter, while women had about nine times more white matter involved in intelligence than men did. Women also had a large proportion of their IQ-related brain matter (86% of white and 84% of gray) concentrated in the frontal lobes, while men had 90% of their IQ-related gray matter distributed equally between the frontal lobes and the parietal lobes, and 82% of their IQ-related white matter in the temporal lobes. The implications of all this are not clear, but it is worth noting that the volume of gray matter can increase with learning, and is thus a product of environment as well as genes. The findings also demonstrate that no single neuroanatomical structure determines general intelligence and that different types of brain designs are capable of producing equivalent intellectual performance.

**Source:**

Haier, R.J., Jung, R.E., Yeo, R.A., Head, K. & Alkire, M.T. 2005. The neuroanatomy of general intelligence: sex matters. *NeuroImage, In Press, Corrected Proof, Available online 16 January 2005*

**Society for Women's Health Research, March 1, 2005**

Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, recently discovered structural differences in the brains of men and women in the areas responsible for thinking and transferring information. "*We studied general intelligence, which is the same between men and women,*" said Richard Haier, lead researcher and professor of psychology at the Department of Pediatrics at University of California, Irvine. "But we looked at structural brain differences and found that gray and white matter areas differed. This suggests to us that the brain has different ways to accomplish the same thing in men and women."

Gray matter is where information is processed in the brain. White matter is a bundle of fibers that contain connections among brain cells. *“The connections among neurons might be better in women,”* Haier theorized. *“Women’s brains may be more efficient.”*

*Women and men perform equally well on intelligence tests,* but a growing body of research shows that the brains of women and men process information differently at a biological level. More studies are needed to understand the functional effects of these differences. *Previous studies have shown that, in general, men seem to perform better on tasks that require spatial reasoning and advanced mathematical skills; whereas women outperform men in areas including verbal reasoning and memory.* These differences may explain why some women and men often take different career paths. *“The difference in the number of women in high end mathematical reasoning careers may be a reflection of differences in gray and white matter,”* Haier said. Women may gravitate toward careers involved more with verbal reasoning. *But because there are no apparent sex differences in measures of intelligence and intellectual capacities, other factors may play a role in career choices.*

There is a tremendous amount of overlap between the abilities of men and women, so it is important to examine cultural, social and economic influences as well. In many countries, for example, the difference in performance in science and mathematics between boys and girls is not statistically significant. This implies that factors beyond brain structure play a role. *“There is so much overlap between the abilities of men and women that we cannot predict an individual’s performance solely on the basis of whether they are male or female,”* Sherry Marts, vice president of scientific affairs for the Society for Women’s Health Research said. *“We must be careful to not over apply generalizations about brain structure to individuals.”*

Marts points to social and environmental factors as indicators of brain performance. *“In addition to biological sex,”* Marts said, *“many other factors have an impact on brain development. Beginning with the environment in uterus and continuing throughout an individual’s life, the body’s internal environment combines with external conditions such as nutrition, physical activity, parental educational levels and the availability of educational opportunities to have a profound impact on brain development and function.”*

The UC Irvine study may also help elucidate gender differences in neurological diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease. *“You may not see the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease in women as early in the disease process as you would in men,”* Haier said. Stronger verbal and memory skills in women may explain why some women are diagnosed later with the disease than men. In addition, certain diseases that cause brain cell loss in the cerebral cortex are more damaging to women because women appear to have a lower number of brain cells in that specific area of the brain when compared with men.

There are gender differences in certain brain injuries as well. Frontal brain injuries can be more serious in women: *“cognitive impairment is greater in women,”* Haier said. These types of injuries can be more harmful to the intelligence and cognitive processing of women than men. From intelligence to illness and injuries, additional brain research holds the key to understanding much of human health and performance.

#### **Sources:**

Kimura D. Sex Hormones Influence Human Cognitive Pattern. *Neuroendocrinology Letters* 2002; 23(Suppl.4):67–77.

Haier, R. *Neuroimage*, Jan. 16, 2005 online edition. News release, University of California, Irvine.

Rabinowicz, T., et al., Structure of the cerebral cortex in men and women. *J Neuropathol Exp Neurol*, 2002. 61(1): p. 46-57.

## Read also:

<http://www.womenshealthresearch.org/press/newsservice/030105.htm>  
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/1999/05/990518072823.htm>  
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/01/050121100142.htm>  
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/PTO-20030624-000003.html>

## Conclusion:

The myth that men are superior in reason and intelligence compared to women, is scientifically proven wrong. Science has proven us that men and women have different intellectual strengths, and like professor Richard Haier said quite recently: *"We studied general intelligence, which is the same between men and women,"*. Therefore the scientific facts prove us that Allah swt hasn't favoured men with more intelligence than women, this argument is a myth, which some scholars in the past came up with. Now we know it's wrong and not correct to say that Allah swt favoured men with a superior intelligence, and therefore men are the protectors and maintainers of women. Such argument is now proven wrong, and moreover not supported in the Quran itself. Let us take a look again at Surah 4:34, which is so often misinterpreted.

### Qu'ran 4:34

Men are the protectors and maintainers (Qawama) of women, because Allah has given each preference over the other, and because they support them from their means

So Allah swt tells us that men are the protectors and maintainers of women. The beauty of the Quranic expression is illustrated in the statement that: "Allah has given each preference over the other" and not merely that Allah gave preference to men over women. This is because men are preferred in some aspects and women are preferred in others. So men are given the task to protect and maintain women, because Allah swt has favoured them in some aspects. The question is, in what aspects are men favoured? al-Baghawi's argument that this refers to "men are more perfect in reasoning than women, and have more powers in reasoning" is proven wrong. Moreover caretaking and protection doesn't require superior reason or intelligence, but physical strength and ability to work! The context therefore and reasons behind caretaking and protection already prove the claim made by al-Baghawi wrong. Surah 4:34 has nothing to do with intelligence or reason. The fact is that men have been given more physical strength than women, and therefore have more ability to play the roles as protector and maintainer of the family. We should also remember that back then (in the prophet's time) work was mostly physical, and quite heavy on the lands. Therefore men have more ability to do this work than women, and therefore men again have more ability in this context to take care of women, and protect them from any harm (like heavy physical work or danger from evil men etc.). A study of the word "Qawama" which is translated as protector and maintainers, moreover proves my statement. Like Dr Ahmed Shafaat said: The verse begins with the statement that "men are qawwamun over women". The root of the key word, qawwamun (pl. of qawwam), is qama which means "to stand or to make something stand or to establish something". It is often used in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of establishing religion or prayer. A related word is qa'im which means "one who stands or makes something stand". Qawwam is an intensive form of qa'im and has a sense of continuity in the action involved. So it means one who is continuously standing over something (as, for example, a guard or caretaker) or one who is continuously making something stand, i.e. is maintaining it. In the Qur'anic usage of qawwam and related words there is almost always present an idea of propriety. For example, aqamah of salah is not only praying but also praying properly. The function of qawwam is also understood in the Qur'an to be characterized by fairness. Thus in 4:135 and 5:8, the only other passages in the Qur'an where the word is used, the believers are told:

"O you who believe! Be qawwamin with fairness..."

"O you who believe! Be qawwamin for God as witnesses to fairness..."

Thus to be a qawwam over something or someone is to guard, maintain or take care of that something or someone in a proper and fair manner (protector, guardian, maintainer).

**The meaning of The Holy Qur'an" Abdullah Yusuf Ali , Page 195, An Nisa, Note 545:**

Qawwam: one who stands firm in another's business, protects his interests, and looks after his affairs; or it may be, standing firm in his own business, managing affairs, with a steady purpose.

**Muhammad Asad "The Message of The Quran", Dar Al Andalus Limited, Gibraltar, page 109, Note 42:**

"more on some of them than on the others" – The expression qawwam is an intensive form of qa'im ("one who is responsible for" or "takes care of" a thing or a person). Thus, qama 'ala 'l-mar'ah signifies "he undertook the maintenance of the woman" or "he maintained her" (see Lane VIII, 2995). The grammatical form qawwam is more comprehensive than qa'im, and combines the concepts of physical maintenance and protection as well as of moral responsibility: and it is because of the last-named factor that I have rendered this phrase as "men shall take full care of women".

Thus to be a qawwam over something or someone is to guard, maintain or take care of that something or someone in a proper and fair manner. To perform these tasks, one has to have physical strength, to perform work and to protect the family. These qualities have nothing to do with reason or intelligence. Moreover science has proven us now that women general intelligence between men and women is on the same level. Therefore Surah 4:34 clearly refers to the physical strength by which Allah swt has favoured men. The Surah does not all refer to intelligence or reason. Moreover men are more stable in controlling their emotions, women get faster in panic and get faster scared. Therefore the roles of protector and maintainer fits better to men.

Surah An-Nisa 4:34 which talks about men having responsibility over women intends to establish a responsibility of men for the protection and maintenance of women in a restricted social context. Biologically, only women can bear the future generations of Muslims. The Qur'an creates a harmonious balance in society by establishing a functional responsibility for males to facilitate this biological function of females. This verse does not give men inherent superiority or authority over women. It establishes mutual responsibility in society. Responsibility is not superiority. The next commentary by Sayyid Qutb on this soerah clearly refutes all misinterpretations and misconceptions about Surah 4:34.

### **Commentary by Sayyid Qutb on soerah 4:34 , quoted from his book 'In the shade of the quran':**

The family is the first institution in human life, in the sense that its effect is felt in every stage of human life. It is within the family that man (= mankind, male and female) , the most noble of all creatures, according to the Islamic concept of life, is brought up. The running and administration of much inferior institutions, such as those engaged in financial, industrial and commercial affairs, is normally assigned to those who are most qualified for the job by their education, training and natural abilities. It is only logical that the same rule be applied to the family, the institution which looks after the upbringing of the most noble creature in the universe, namely, man.

The divine code of living takes him and his nature in consideration, as well as the natural abilities given to both man and woman to enable them to discharge the duties assigned to each of them. It maintains justice in the distribution of duties, giving to each of them only the type of duties to which they are suited. It is needless to say that both man and woman are the creation of Allah who does not wish to do injustice to anyone He has created. Indeed He gives each of His creations the abilities and talents which befit the duties assigned to him or her.

Allah has created human beings as males and females, following the "dual" role which is central to the system of creation. He has given the woman the great tasks of child-bearing, breast-feeding and looking after her children. These are not tasks of the type which may be fulfilled without careful preparation, physically, psychologically and mentally. It is only just, therefore, that the other part, i.e. man, should be assigned the task of providing the essential needs and the protection required for the woman to fulfill her highly important duties. She could not be given all those tasks and be still required to work in order to earn her living and to look after her children at the same time. It is only fair as well that man should be given the physical, mental and psychological qualities which enable him to fulfill his duties in the same way as the woman is given the abilities to help her fulfill her duties. All this is part of the reality of human life, because Allah maintains absolute justice among all.

Among the qualities the woman has been given are tenderness, good reaction and instinctive response to the needs of childhood without waiting for much deliberation and reflection. The essential human needs even of a single individual are not left for leisurely reflection and planning. Response to them is made instinctively so that they may be met more or less involuntarily. There is no external compulsion in this. It is an impulsive reaction which the woman enjoys, despite the fact that it requires sacrifice from her. This is part of Allah's work which is always perfect.

These are not superficial qualities. Indeed, they are implanted in the woman's physical, mental and psychological constitution. Some leading scientists believe that they are present in each cell in the woman's constitution because they are rooted in the first cell which multiplies to form the fetus and the child.

On the other hand, among the qualities the man is given are toughness, slow reaction and response as well as proper thought and reflection before action. All these functions, ever since he lived on hunting in the early stages, to fighting for the protection of his wife and children, to earning his living in any way, require some deliberation and consideration before taking any decision and implementing it. These qualities are also deeply rooted in the constitution of man.

It is man's qualities which make him more able and better equipped to take charge of the family. Similarly, his duty of supporting his family as part of the distribution of duties, makes him more suitable to be in charge. That is because earning the living of his family and all its members is part of being in charge. Moreover, looking after the finances of the family is closer to his family duties.

There are two elements which the Qur'an highlights as it states that in Islamic society, men are required to look after woman. It is an assignment of duties on the basis of natural abilities and fair distribution of responsibilities. Each party is assigned the duties to which he or she is most suited by nature.

That man is better equipped to be in charge is part of human nature. He has the proper natural abilities for that role which is essential for the proper progress of human life. It is a simple fact that one party is equipped for this role and assigned the duty to play it while the other is not. Hence, it is totally unfair that the latter should be required in any situation to take up these responsibilities in addition to her own natural duties. If this latter party is given the necessary practical and scientific training to fulfill these duties, her ability to play the other role, i.e. that of motherhood, is undermined. That is a role which requires certain abilities of the type we have mentioned, such as good reaction and immediate response along with the natural physical and mental abilities.

These are very serious questions which may not be left to human beings to decide at will. Whenever they have been left to human beings to decide, whether in the past or in recent times, the very existence of mankind was threatened and the essential human qualities which distinguish men from other creatures was in danger of extinction.

There is plenty of evidence which points out that the rules of human nature force themselves on man even when people deny them altogether. One aspect of that is the decline in the quality of human life and the serious danger to which it has been exposed whenever this rule which gives man the task and the authority to look after the family has been violated. Such violation leads to serious repercussions. Another indication is that the woman prefers that man assumes his role of being in charge of the family. Many women experience feelings of worry, dissatisfaction and unhappiness when they live with men who relinquish their role of being in charge for any reason. This is readily admitted by women who try to challenge man's role.

Another example of the social repercussion of this unnatural family situation, where the father does not play his role either because of his weak character which allows the mother to overshadow or control him, or because of his early death or in one-parent families, is that very often the children suffer instability which may lead to mental perversion and behavioral deviation.

These are only a few examples through which nature indicates its presence and the need to organize human life according to its laws. It must be finally stated that the way Islam distributes family responsibilities does not by any means lead to the negation of the woman's character or role in the home and in society at large. Neither does it mean the cancellation of her civil status.

It simply defines her role within the family and how it is run. For the family is a very important institution which must be protected and maintained. In any institution, the observance of certain values does not mean the abrogation of the character or the rights of the partners or the workers. Islam defines the role of the man and what his being in charge means as well as his duties as one who takes care of his family, protects it and earns its living..

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This lengthy quotation from Sayyid Qutb amply explains the meaning of the verse in great detail. There is no suggestion of any superiority given to men.

This verse does not give men inherent superiority or authority over women. It establishes mutual responsibility in society. Responsibility is not superiority ! Muslim scholar Fathi Osman adds to this:



**Fathi Osman comments:**

The view that a man is superior to a woman because he is physically 'stronger' lacks the support of the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah. The divine sources mention 'care' and 'responsibility' within the family, but not superiority. Muslim men and women are equal in their individual and social responsibilities, being in charge (protectors) of one another and of the whole society (awliyya), as stated in Surah al-Taubah 9:71

**Source:**

Fathi Osman (1996), Muslim Women in the Family and the Society, Reprint, Kuala Lumpur: SIS Forum (Malaysia) Berhad., p. 48

**He wrote:**

They are not quite finished: Allaah has commanded the testimony of two women so as to be sure that they remember, because the mind and memory of two women takes the place of the mind and memory of one man. - See I'laam al-Muwaqqa'een, part 1, p. 75

Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid of islam-qa said: This does not mean that a woman does not understand or that she cannot remember things, but she is weaker than man in these aspects - usually. Scientific and specialized studies have shown that men's minds ARE MORE PERFECT THAN THOSE OF WOMEN, and reality and experience bear witness to that. The books of knowledge are the best witness to that; the knowledge which has been transmitted by men and the ahaadeeth which have been memorized by men far outnumber those which have come via women.

This has to do with gender, i.e., the gender of men IS MORE PERFECT than the gender of women... Nevertheless, there are some women who are far superior to men in their reason and insight, but they are few, and the ruling is based on the majority and the usual cases...

**Response:**

I'm glad the christian missionary quoted this comments made by they shayk, because Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid of islam-qa shot himself in his own leg now. His statements exposes his very biased view on women. His statements are based on his very biased personal view on women, moreover the shayk doesn't give honest and correct information about science. Nowhere does science support his claims, on the contrary modern science (up to date) clearly refutes his biased extreme view on women:

An imaging study of 48 men and women between 18 and 84 years old found that, *although men and women performed equally on the IQ tests, the brain structures involved in intelligence appeared distinct*. Compared with women, men had more than six times the amount of intelligence-related gray matter, while women had about nine times more white matter involved in intelligence than men did. Women also had a large proportion of their IQ-related brain matter (86% of white and 84% of gray) concentrated in the frontal lobes, while men had 90% of their IQ-related gray matter distributed equally between the frontal lobes and the parietal lobes, and 82% of their IQ-related white matter in the temporal lobes. The implications of all this are not clear, but it is worth noting that the volume of gray matter can increase with learning, and is thus a product of environment as well as genes. The findings also demonstrate that no single neuroanatomical structure determines general intelligence and that different types of brain designs are capable of producing equivalent intellectual performance.

**Source:**

Haier, R.J., Jung, R.E., Yeo, R.A., Head, K. & Alkire, M.T. 2005. The neuroanatomy of general intelligence: sex matters. *NeuroImage, In Press, Corrected Proof, Available online 16 January 2005*

Now let's take a look at some more up to date scientific facts on the next page:

Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, recently discovered structural differences in the brains of men and women in the areas responsible for thinking and transferring information. *"We studied general intelligence, which is the same between men and women,"* said Richard Haier, lead researcher and professor of psychology at the Department of Pediatrics at University of California, Irvine. "But we looked at structural brain differences and found that gray and white matter areas differed. This suggests to us that the brain has different ways to accomplish the same thing in men and women."

Gray matter is where information is processed in the brain. White matter is a bundle of fibers that contain connections among brain cells. *"The connections among neurons might be better in women,"* Haier theorized. *"Women's brains may be more efficient."*

**Source:**

Haier, R. Neuroimage, Jan. 16, 2005 online edition. News release, University of California, Irvine.

Other investigations are finding anatomical sex differences at the cellular level. For example, Sandra Witelson and her colleagues at McMaster University discovered that women possess a greater density of neurons in parts of the temporal lobe cortex associated with language processing and comprehension. On counting the neurons in postmortem samples, the researchers found that of the six layers present in the cortex, two show more neurons per unit volume in females than in males. Similar findings were subsequently reported for the frontal lobe. With such information in hand, neuroscientists can now explore whether sex differences in neuron number correlate with differences in cognitive abilities—examining, for example, whether the boost in density in the female auditory cortex relates to women's enhanced performance on tests of verbal fluency.

**Source:**

Scientific American Magazine; May 2005; Page 40 t/m 45. by Larry Cahill;

Previous studies have shown that, in general, men seem to perform better on tasks that require spatial reasoning and advanced mathematical skills; whereas women outperform men in areas including verbal reasoning and memory.

**Source:**

Kimura D. Sex Hormones Influence Human Cognitive Pattern. Neuroendocrinology Letters 2002; 23(Suppl.4):67–77.

How in the name of God can Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid of islam-qa claim that men's mind is more perfect than woman's ! It's quit annoying to see him spreading these lies, and brainwashing muslims with these statements, while neither science nor islam supports his claim. The most disturbing part is, that he claims science supports his statements, while the scientific facts clearly refutes his statements. Moreover the Prophet said:

**Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 113; Ahmad, 25663**

Aischa narrated that the Prophet said: “women are the twin halves of men.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi

How in Gods name can a twinhalve be less perfect ? How in Gods name can Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid of islam-qa claim that men’s gender is more perfect then woman’s . It really annoys me to see him spreading these lies and false statements. If he was honest , he would understand from the above hadith, that it is impossible in islam to claim such a thing. Men and women are each others twinhalves. Modern science has shown us that both have different intellectual strenghts, but in total worth of all things they are equal to each other, like the Prophet said: “twin halves of each other”. Moreover Richard Haier, lead researcher and professor of psychology at the Department of Pediatrics at University of California, Irvine, said: “*We studied general intelligence, which is the same between men and women,*”. Therefor the shayk’s claim that there are only a few women who are superior to men in intelligence, is again also proven wrong. And reality bears witness to that, and backfires at the shayk himself. All around the world women too teach at univesites men, girls at schools perform equally well with boys etc. Moreover scientific tests show us that general intelligence between men and woman is the same.

Dear reader you have now been witness of Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid’s (from islam-qa) biased / dishonest interpretations and view on women issues. His behaviour and comments are clearly not neutral. The site presents a lot of dishonest and false statements about women in islam and in general. I respect the shayk for his good fatwas, but it is my duty as a muslim to spread the truth, and point out his false / biased comments and view on women issues. I strongly recommend readers to stay away from their site, when it comes to fatwas on women issues. I urge the reader to visit islamic sites, which are neutral and unbiased in their interpretations and views on women issues. I recommend readers to visit websites like islamonline.net, ourdialogue.com, sunnipath.com and livingislam.org. I also recommend the next sites:

<http://www.jannah.org/sisters/women.html>  
<http://www.jannah.org/sisters/quran.html>  
<http://www.jannah.org/sisters/famous.html>  
<http://www.islamfortoday.com/women.htm>  
[http://www.themodernreligion.com/w\\_main.htm](http://www.themodernreligion.com/w_main.htm)

As for Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid’s argument for his biased view on women, that: “*The books of knowledge are the best witness to that; the knowledge which has been transmitted by men and the ahaadeeth which have been memorized by men far outnumber those which have come via women.*” I have actually already refuted this weak argument on page 14 – 25 , I shall repeat in short my reply:

As for the argument made by the shayk, that most books of knowledge has bee transmitted by men and not women, and therefor women are less in intelligence then men is of no value. Since this has nothing to do with the intelligence or wisdom, but with the roles of each gender in society. A woman is overloaded by being a mother or a babysitter or pregnant. All these carriers are around the clock, which makes it more difficult for her to write books of knowledge then men, who are devoted to one career only. After work a man can easily follow a study to become a muslim scholar and write a book of the knowledge he learned, while woman’s duty as a mother and wife, namely caring about her children and doing household work, are carries around the clock. Therefor it’s logic that in the past and still these days, that most books of knowledge have been written by men then women. This has nothing to do with intelligence or wisdom, but with the role of each gender in society.

However the fact that in Islamic history also many women became Muslim scholars, besides their duties as a mother of the family, shows how much strength and character women possess! Islamic history provides us with many examples of respected female Muslim scholars, who were respected by both men and women. For example Ayisha, the Prophet's wife was one of the most famous Muslim scholars. Not only was she very intelligent, she had an exceptional memory. That is why she was considered one of the most important sources of Hadith. It has been stated in some Islamic reports that the Prophet told the Muslims to go to Ayisha for guidance and learning of religious duties. The Prophet told his followers that a third of their religion could be learned from Aisha. Imam Zarkashi (born in 745 Hijrah), one of the greatest scholars of the Shafi'i school in his time, devoted a book dedicated to Aishah's particular contribution in this field, entitled "Collection of Aishah's Corrections to the Statements of the Companions" (Al-'irada fi ma istadrakathu 'A'isha 'ala al-sahaba). Let's take a look at the next examples:

**A'isha bint Sa'd bint ibn Abi Waqqas:**

She was the daughter of a great Sahabi. She was very learned in Islamic sciences to the point that Imam Malik, Hakim ibn Utaybah and Ayyub as Sakhtiyani, the famous jurists and scholars of ahadith were her pupils.

**Sources:**

- 1: The book: "Muslim Women, A Biographical Dictionary" page 8 & 9, by Aisha Bewley
- 2: Tadhīb al Tahdhib Vol 12 p 436

**Sayyida Nafisa, Granddaughter of Hasan:**

A large number of pupils came to her from different places to learn from her. Imam Shafi'i was one of her pupils.

**Source:**

wafayat al-a'yan vol 2 p 169

It's important to know that Imam Malik is the founder of the Maliki school of thought, and Imam Shafi is the founder of the Shafi'i school of thought. These are two of the 4 Sunni schools in Islam. These two Imams are considered as the most knowledgeable Imams of Islam, and most of Islam's rulings and teachings come from these Imams. The fact is these two Imams were pupils of FEMALE SCHOLARS WHO TEACHED THEM.

### **A'isha Bint Abu Bakr, Wife of Rasulullah:**

A'isha radi Allahu anha, the wife of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam, lived long after his death and provided great guidance to the first Muslim community, even to the renowned Sahabah and the Rashidun Khalifs. Her student 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said, "I did not see a greater scholar than A'isha radi Allahu anha in the learning of Qur'an, obligatory duties, lawful and unlawful manners, poetry, literature, Arab history and genealogy."<sup>1</sup>

Her cognizance in many fields of learning were praised highly by many others. Ibn Abi Malikah said, "We should not be surprised by her authority in the matter of poetry since she was the daughter of Abu Bakr who was a very eloquent and a great literary figure." What is surprising is her profound knowledge of medicine. Whenever individuals came to Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam and discussed many remedies for illnesses, she used to remember them. She was excellent in mathematics that the Sahabah used to consult her on the problems concerning mirath (inheritance) and the calculation of shares.

A'isha radi Allahu anha had a very sharp memory and remembered the teachings of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam very well. Ibn Hajar names 88 great scholars who learned from her and then says that there were a large number of others. These include Amr ibn al -As, Abu Musa al Ash'ari, and Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr; great jurists and scholars of hadith like Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah ibn Abbas and Abdullah ibn Umar; and great scholars among the tabi'een like Sa'id ibn al Musayyab and 'Alqamah ibn Qays."<sup>2</sup>

### **Sources:**

1: tadhkirah al huffaz

2: Ibn Hajar fath al bari vol vii p 82-83

Her reputation as a scholar reached many wherein people come from different places to ask about hadith of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. She was among the great hafiz of ahadith and narrated 2210 hadith in all. No other sahabi narrated so many hadith except Abdallah ibn Umar, Anas and Abu Hurayrah radi Allahu anhum. The great sahaba of Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam usually referred to 'A'isha radi Allahu anha whenever they had any difficulty in understanding any juristic problem. One of her pupils, Urwah Ibn az-Zubayr said:" I did not see a greater scholar than Aishah in the learning of the Qur'an, obligatory duties, lawful and unlawful matters, poetry and literature, Arab history and genealogy."

Abu Musa al-Ash'arsaid:" Whenever we Companions of the Prophet\* encountered any difficulty in the matter of any hadith we referred it to Aishah and found that she had definite knowledge about it." Hafiz ibn Hajar said:" ... it is said that a quarter of the injunctions of the Shari'ah are narrated from her." Knowledge gained from 'A'isha radi Allahu anha was so authentic that the famous jurist of Medina, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr and the famous muhaddith Qasim ibn Muhammad always gave juristic opinions on the authority of the narrations of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha. Imam Ahmad said: "These were the two among those who relied on the authority of the narrations of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha and did not disgress from her statements, and gave their juristic opinions based on narrations of 'A'isha radi Allahu anha."

So here we see that Female Scholars of islam had an extreme influence on the development of islam. We have seen that that a quarter of the injunctions of the Shari'ah are narrated from Aicha, a woman ! Moreover the great imams, Imam Shafi and Imam Malik, studied and learned under a woman ! On page 14-25 there are many more examples, which shows the important and valuable role woman played in the development of islam and it's teaching for the world with their knowledge ! The most respected imams and even sahaba learned islam and it's teachings from women. So anyone who claims that men are more perfect in mind and gender then women, and that woman are weak compared to men in mind, is ignorant and dishonest to himself ! Moreover modern science confirms that men and women perform equally well on general intelligence (see page 43 of this booklet).

As for the statement presented on the website (islam-qa) quoted by the christian missionary that: *“Allaah has commanded the testimony of two women so as to be sure that they remember, because the mind and memory of two women takes the place of the mind and memory of one man.”* We have already showed that this argument has no value at all. This claim is extreme redicilous and completely un-islamic. First modern science has already proven that woman’s memory is very strong, and even better then men. See page 43 for the scientific facts. It’s therefore impossible to say that the mind of two women takes the place of the mind of one men. This fairy tale and myth is exposed and proven wrong in this booklet. It’s annoying to see some extremist spreading these fairy tales and myths around on their website, to brainwash young muslims. May Allah swt protect us gainst the lies and false comments made by the extremists.

In fact, the Qur’an actually teaches us that the witness of a woman was just as valid as that of a man, and made no distinction regarding the sex of a witness in every single reference except one – the concession of granting two female witnesses in the case of buisness transactions, which are dealt with in Surah 2:282. The reason behind this stipulation, is that women in general are less familiar with buisness procedures and therefor more likely could forget certain details of the testimony. This has nothing do with intelligence, memory or mind, but with unexperience ! Moreover we need to understand that Surah 2:282 was revealed in a social historical context when women were mostly not involved in business transactions, and therefor didn’t have any experience with it. Even in some societies today, women have not as much experience in business transactions as men (due to their role as mother etc.). Therefor they may not be completely cognizant of what is involved.

**Allama Muhammad Asad in “The Message of the Qu’ran” writes:**

The stipulation that two women may be substituted for one male witness does not imply any reflection on woman's moral or intellectual “capabilities: it is obviously due to the fact that, as a rule, women are less familiar with business procedures than men and, therefore, more liable“to commit mistakes in this respect. <sup>1</sup>

**The scholars of ourdialogue.com comment on the soerah:**

This is in business transactions only. It does imply that, as a rule, women are less familiar with business procedures than men and, therefore, more liable to commit mistakes in this respect. Besides, there are certain cases when only women witnesses are acceptable, and one woman witness is sufficient to prove her case. <sup>2</sup>

**Dr. Ahmad Shafaat writes:**

The Qur'an says that one of the two male witnesses may be replaced by two women witnesses. The reason given is that "if one (of them) forgets, the other can remind her." Thus the basis of the rule is that women, being generally less involved in business matters, may be more prone to forget the details of a deal. Clearly, if we know that certain women or women in a certain society or age have the same knowledge and experience in business matters as the average man, then the rule will not be applicable. It should be noted here that in another matter in which a woman is expected to have as much knowledge as a man the Qur'an accepts a woman's witness at par with that of a man (see 24:6-9). <sup>3</sup>

In every other kind of case, the witness of one woman is enough and complete equal to the witness of a man, and no distinction of either sex was made or necessary. For example:

**Qu'ran 24:4**

Those who accuse a chaste woman of fornication and do not produce four witnesses to support their allegation, shall be flogged with eighty lashes and their testimony shall not be accepted ever after, for they are the ones who are wicked transgressors

The text implies any four witnesses, who could be of either sex. In societies where it is insisted that the witnesses should all be male, this is really a cultural gloss on the rule, since any text in the Arabic masculine plural grammatically includes both men and women, unless specifically stated otherwise. Assumptions that women's evidence would be unreliable because of the inferiority of women in intellectual capacity, memory, or character stem from a patriarchal perspective in a male-dominated community which tried to limit the appearance of their women in public. Moreover modern science has refuted these fairy tales and myths, spread around by extremists. The Qur'an does not bear this attitude and established the equality of men and women before Allah.

**Sheikh Shaltut writes:**

There is a stronger proof for equality in the Qur'an's statement that the woman is just like the man in the type of testimony known as the oath of condemnation [Translator's note: An oath in which either the husband or the wife accuses his or her partner of adultery and the only witness is one of them.]

"And as for those who accuse their wives but have no witnesses except themselves, let the testimony of one of them be four testimonies (i.e. testifies four times) by Allah that he be one of those who speak the truth. And the fifth (testimony) (should be) invoking the Curse of Allah on him if he be one of those who tell a lie (against her). But it shall avert the punishment (of stoning to death) from her, if she bears witness four times by Allah, that he (her husband) is telling a lie. And the fifth (testimony) should be that the Wrath of Allah be upon her if (her husband) speaks the truth". [ Surah 24:6- 9]

That is, four repetitions of the oath or testimony by the man concluded by an invocation of his damnation by Allah if he is lying, countered by and invalidated by four repetitions of the woman's counter statement, also followed by an invocation of Allah's wrath upon her if she is lying.

**Source:**

Islamic Beliefs and Code of Laws, Sheikh Shalt, p.111 – 112



**Sources:**

1:

<http://www.geocities.com/masad02/002c>

2:

<http://www.ourdialogue.com/e3.htm>

3:

<http://www.islamicperspectives.com/FinancialDealings.htm>