



254478 - Woman in Islam is for the purpose of building a life that is based on obedience to Allah, and is not to be looked at merely as a sexual object

the question

My question is a question that is on the minds of many females: were we females created to worship Allah, then to be an item of pleasure for the fulfilment of men's desires? Did Allah create us to complement the life of men in principle, so that we should serve them by enabling them to fulfil their physical desires in a permissible manner, and that is why they marry us? Often when people speak of woman, they only speak of her beauty and physical shape, as if she is nothing but an image, and not a soul that feels and wants people and her husband to love her for what she is, because of her character, attitude and manners. I am not saying that beauty is not important at all, for even we women want our partner to be handsome and look smart, as much as he wants us to be beautiful, but physical beauty should not be the basis of the relationship, as if we are nothing but bodies. When I think about this, I feel very depressed and I feel that there is no use for me except to give pleasure to a man. If we exclude the fact that woman gets pregnant and gives birth, and that she is a mother, is it true that woman was created only to be a source of pleasure for man in this world and the hereafter, and that Hawwa was created from Adam's rib to tell us that she is part of and complementary to him, and that motherhood is the only thing that distinguishes woman and makes her something other than an object of physical desire?

Summary of answer

Conclusion:

It hurts us to

see any of the Muslims having a distorted concept of the female gender and limit his understanding thereof to the framework of physical desire, for this framework is inferior and base, and does not come anywhere near the



sublime concepts that the Holy Qur'an teaches us and that are confirmed by our Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

And Allah knows best.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Our clear and spontaneous answer to your many questions is that it is not correct at all to say that woman was created only for physical purposes or to be a sexual object, and to be nothing but a source of pleasure for a man and an object for fulfilling his physical desires. This is not only a misconception; rather we see it as a devious understanding that is connected to the nafs that is inclined towards evil, and it is based on the desires that overwhelm the thinking of many people, and cause them to miss out on the true purpose of creation and life.

Here we will work out our answer on the basis of the teachings of our religion, which we all follow, praise be to Allah, and we are certain that it is the perfect religion which tells us what Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, wants from all people in terms of worship, righteous deeds, beliefs, and morals and manners.

From the teachings of Islam we know that the main purpose behind the creation of humans and jinn, both male and female, is to attain soundness and well-being on the basis of free will and reason, because of which people are regarded as accountable, in all aspects of life - soundness of worship, soundness of deeds, soundness of morals and soundness of knowledge, understanding and concepts - and to attain the highest possible level of human perfection, as Islam calls us to attain the highest and most sublime in all things, and to avoid all forms of corruption, wrongdoing, ignorance and bad manners and deeds, by way of showing devotion to Allah, may He be exalted, and drawing closer to Him, and in an attempt to reach the highest possible level of human perfection, which Allah loves for us. Therefore we strive for it wholeheartedly, and this aim should



become our main focus and concern, for the sake of which we spend all our lives and our money and physical energy, until we attain real, perfect life in in the hereafter, which is the true life, as the Qur'an tells us. With regard to this holistic principle, there is no differentiation between male and female at all.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)): ‘Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrâhim (Abraham), Hanifa [i.e. the true Islâmîc Monotheism - to believe in One God (Allâh i.e. to worship none but Allâh, Alone)] and he was not of Al-Mushrikûn.’

Say (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)): ‘Verily, my Salât (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).

‘He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims’”

[al-An'aam 6:161-163].

I wonder where do you see physical desire - whether of males or females - in this religion and straight path; do you find any mention of it in any of the sublime aims mentioned in the passage quoted above?

If you think in a fair-minded manner, far removed from the social phobia that is caused by the misconceptions that people have in their minds, this will inevitably lead you to realise that the physical body - and all that is connected to it of shortcomings and desires - has no place in the list of objectives of man's creation and the purpose of his existence. The purpose of the physical body comes under the heading of means and tools that could help one to achieve that objective, but it does not go beyond being a means, for it is not the only means; rather it is one of several means that may vary among people, in terms of power and ability, health and sickness. Therefore divine wisdom dictated that the body should be made a means of attraction, for the purpose of



perpetuating the human race and populating the earth, and for the purpose of creating love and mercy in homes, and for the purpose of trials and tests, so that Allah may know who is a wrongdoer and who is righteous. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect”

[ar-Room 30:21].

But if we examine all the verses of the Qur’an and all the hadith of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), from beginning to end, we will not find a shred of evidence to suggest that the purpose of woman’s creation is to be a source of pleasure for man in this world and the hereafter. By the same token, we will not find a shred of evidence that differentiates between man and woman with regard to the sublime aims and great purpose behind their creation and existence. Rather they are all equal in that regard, because reason – which is the cause of being accountable and is the basis of man’s free will – is something that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has granted to both sexes, therefore both of them are included in all the religious texts which outline for humanity a path that leads to sublimity and happiness in this world and the hereafter. Similarly, if you reflect upon the Prophet’s biography – which represents the most sublime human model and the ultimate representation of the purpose of the creation of mankind – you would realise that the concept of the body cannot be taken out of its real framework, which is the framework of means, and the most sublime aims may be summed up as piety and righteous deeds.

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [i.e. he is one of the Muttaqûn (pious). Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-



Aware”

[al-Hujuraat 49:13]

“Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islâmic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)”

[an-Nahl 16:97]

“Verily, the Muslims (those who submit to Allâh in Islâm) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islâmic Monotheism), the men and the women who are obedient (to Allâh), the men and women who are truthful (in their speech and deeds), the men and the women who are patient (in performing all the duties which Allâh has ordered and in abstaining from all that Allâh has forbidden), the men and the women who are humble (before their Lord Allâh), the men and the women who give Sadaqât (i.e. Zakât, and alms), the men and the women who observe Saum (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadân, and the optional Nawâfil fasting), the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) and the men and the women who remember Allâh much with their hearts and tongues. Allâh has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise)”

[al-Ahzaab 33:35]

“The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ’ (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma’rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden)”

[at-Tawbah 9:71].

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah does not look at your (outward) forms and



your wealth, rather He looks at your hearts and your deeds.”

Narrated by Muslim (2564).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It should be understood that beauty may be divided into two categories: apparent and hidden.

Hidden beauty is that which is loved for what it is; it is the beauty of knowledge, reason, generosity, dignity and courage. This hidden beauty is what Allah likes to see when He looks at His slave, and it is the cause of His love for a person. This hidden beauty adorns the outward image of a person, even if that image does not possess beauty per se, so it gives the individual beauty, respect and sweetness commensurate with what his soul has of those characteristics. For the believer will be given respect and sweetness commensurate with his faith; then whoever sees him will respect him, and whoever mixes with him will like him. We see this with our own eyes. You may see a kind, righteous man who has a beautiful attitude as one of the most beautiful of people in appearance, even if he is not good-looking, especially if he is blessed with a share of qiyaam al-layl, for it gives light to the face and makes it handsome.

End quote from Rawdat al-Muhibbeen (221-223).

Among the most well-known proofs which demonstrate that the body is not the basis on which a woman’s personality is measured is the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: “Women may be married for four things: their wealth, their lineage, their beauty and their religious commitment. Choose the one who is religiously-committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper).” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (4802) and Muslim (1466).

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The correct view concerning the meaning of this hadith is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was speaking of what people usually do. They seek these four characteristics, and the lowest of them in priority, in their view, is religious commitment. So the one who is



seeking advice concerning marriage should look for the one who is religiously committed.

End quote from Sharh Muslim (10/52).