

23. How does Islam elevate the status of women?

"O humankind! Be conscious of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread countless men and women. Be conscious of your Lord through Whom you demand your mutual rights and honor the wombs; God always watches over you." (Qur'an 4:1)

Islam recognizes women as individuals with specific rights. Among these are: the right to life, the right to learn; the right to earn, own and dispose property; the right to choose a husband; the right, as a wife, to her pre-marriage standard of living; the right to be treated equally; and the right to inherit. Women, like men, are rewarded by God for a righteously led life.

Muslim women dress in a way that is modest and dignified. The purpose of clothing is not only to protect oneself from physical elements, but also to protect oneself from immorality and pride. Some traditions of dress, and more generally, the treatment of women in some Muslim countries and societies, are often a reflection of culture. This is very often inconsistent and even contrary to Islam teachings. Prophet Muhammad said: "The most perfect in faith among you believers is he who is best in manner and kindest to his wife." ♦