

Two equal halves

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

According to Islamic teachings, both men and women are equal in status. In fact, men and women are two equal halves of a single unit. Both are intellectual and spiritual partners to each other. In the chapter entitled Al-Imran (The Family of Imran), the Quran emphasises on this principle. The relevant Quranic verse is as follows: "Their Lord accepted their Prayer, saying, I will deny no man or woman among you the reward of their labours. You are members one of another" (3:195) "**Members one of another**" does not mean that both are one and the same in every respect. It does not mean that both are each other's counterparts. It implies that both are made in such a way that they can play a complementary role to each other. So, both are complementary partners to each other rather than each other's counterparts. There is a saying: "If all think alike, no one thinks very much."

So, uniformity between men and women could never have been good for mankind. The creation of man or woman is based then not on uniformity but on difference. Due to this, each is capable of becoming a useful partner for the other. According to the divine scheme, man and woman were made on the principle of mutual support. Both are intellectual partners to each other; both can discuss and exchange with their partners ideas and experiences. According to the divine scheme, marriage is a communion of two such partners. Man and woman are like two wheels. A cart runs on two wheels. Such is the case of human life: human life also needs two wheels to run smoothly and man and woman after marriage provide those two wheels. The wheels may be on different sides of the cart but both play important roles and both are equal.

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