Chapter V
EDUCATION AND INHERITANCE
IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN ISLAM "WOMEN ARE NO EXCEPTION"

The Holy Prophet said, "The quest of knowledge is obligatory for every muslim". Receiving education and acquiring more and more knowledge has never been confined to only men community. In Islam men and women have been given equal right to seek knowledge to the extent of their maximum ability. An intensive study of the Holy Quran and Ahadît will show that in Islam no distinction has been made between male and female, so for the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. The Holy Quran says;

"God will exalt (you in) ranks (unto Him), those who believe among you, and those who have been granted knowledge; "and God is all aware of what so ever ye do"

(S. LVIII - A. 11)

In this verse human beings have been advised that those who gain knowledge would be exalted high ranks. This verse clearly tells us that those who acquire knowledge and believe in God would be raised in ranks whether male or female. In Islam knowledge is supposed to be as a God gift for human being. The gift of knowledge is much important because a person without knowledge, i.e. an illiterate person, would neither be able to understand the Holy Book nor he would comprehend the greatness of Allah.
There might be persons, who might gain some knowledge but true education is that which modifies human behaviour. An educated person is supposed to be honest and just. Such an education would be acquired only if a person has full faith in Allah and the Holy Quran. Unless a person receive true knowledge he would not be able to appreciate both of the two. It is feared that such persons would interpret the Quranic sayings according to their vested interest. For them the Holy Quran says:

"He it is who hath send down to thee (O' our Apostle Mohammad!) the Book of it there are (some) verses decisive, these are the Basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous. "...But those in whose heart there is perversity, they are after that which is ambiguous therein seeking to mislead and seeking to interpret (to suit their selfish motives) while none knoweth its hidden interpretation except God and those firmly rooted in knowledge; say they: "we believe in it all is from our Lord", but none mindeth save those endowed with (wisdom).

(S.III, A.6)

The Ayat clearly distinguishes between two categories of people. In the first place, there are persons who might
have acquired certain knowledge but they are still ignorant if they are devoid of God’s grace. These are the persons who try to interpret the Holy Book in the way that suits their selfish motives. But those who have acquired true knowledge by the grace of God, they have firm believe, that, the universe has been created by God. He is all powerful and Omnipresent. These are the persons who have knowledge and also have the wisdom to understand the Holy Book and Allah. They are the real scholars about whom the Holy Prophet has said,

"A scholar is superior to a martyr. A martyr is superior to pious one. An Apostle of God is superior to whole mankind. The Holy Quran is superior to all scriptures as God is over all this creation. The superiority of scholar over mankind is like that of the full moon. That is superior to hundred and thousands of stars."¹

No where, a true scholar has been defined so beautifully as it has been described by the Holy Prophet himself. It is the true scholar about whom sixth Holy Imam, Jafar Ibne Mohammad Sadiq (AS) said that, "on the day of judgement, the ink of the scholar would be superior to the blood of the martyr".² Such is the importance of an educated person in Islam. It may also be added here, that there are
person who have God gifted knowledge. They are those whom God Himself has purified.

The importance of education is so much in Islam that the superiority of a person over the other is established by the quality of knowledge one possesses. It is neither established arbitrary nor by the temporal position, any one enjoys. Education, basically is the basis of determining the superiority of one person over the other. The Holy Quran says: “all are equally born, male and female, and with God, there is no distinction between them except by the merit and by the piety faith, and knowledge. Thus it is education, faith in Allah, and the piety that makes a man superior to other. It is the an accepted criteria of exaltation. The same view has been expressed in (S. 6, A.165 and S.4, A.95).

All these passages show that the only distinction recognized by Islam is, undoubtedly perfect knowledge. The real insight can not be attained without divine help or guidance and that the gift of Almighty Allah i.e. (knowledge), is not confined to only men, because women have never been deprived of the divine gift of knowledge. They stand on equal piety to men because of their piety, faith, devotion and love to God and the Holy prophet. It is universally admitted by the Islamic world that all the Holy fourteen i.e. the Holy prophet. Ali, Fatima and eleven Holy
Imams, had never received any education under formal institution, and yet were the fountain heads of knowledge. To the wonderful store of knowledge that Ali was divinely gifted, about which Umar Ibne Khattab, openly declared 'La Aliyan lahlak Omar'\(^3\) i.e. Had Ali not been there, Umar would have been perished. It is this perfect and deep knowledge of Ali for whom the Holy Prophet said 'I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate'.\(^4\)

At another place the Holy Quran says,

"...... Say thou (O'our Apostle Mohammad!) what! can those who know be equal to those who know not? Only the men of understanding take the Warning".

(S.XXX, A.9)

In the above Ayat a clear cut line of demarcation has been drawn between those who are educated and those who are illiterates. The Quran says that, who possess knowledge cannot be equal to those who are not educated. It is only the educated and knowledgeable person who have the ability to follow the sayings of Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad (SWA).

(S.A.W.)

Attainment of knowledge has been again emphasized for the believers if they wish to gain high rank in the eyes of Allah. Acquisition of knowledge has, therefore, become a compulsion for a true muslim, whether he is a male or female. Further, the education of muslim is more important because
without having the ability to read and write, one can not read the verses of the Holy Quran with wisdom and understanding. The Holy Quran says.

'He it is who hath send among the unlettered one’s a messenger of their own, to recite unto them the revelation and to make them grow and to teach them the scripture and wisdom though here to before they were indeed in error manifest' (S.LXII, A.2).

In this Ayat it has been made clear that the messenger of God was sent to teach illiterates and help them grow mentally, so that they would be able to read the Holy Quran and acquire wisdom, because without this they will always remain in darkness.

It may also be inferred from the above verse that it is not enough for a person to gain true knowledge and education only for himself, but it is also his responsibility to educate other human beings, who are illiterate.

A few of the Ayats which have been presented above and also the Ayat which will be presented at later stage, provide us enough material to ponder over one pertinent question, as why again and again the people of the world, have been commanded and inspired to learn, to read and write and acquire more and more knowledge? Apparently, the reason of
this emphasis lies in the fact that unless muslims are not truly educated they would not be able to understand the sayings of the Holy Quran and would not be able to give correct interpretation and thus they would be failing to acquire wisdom from it.

Infact, every muslim believes that the Holy Quran revealed on the Prophet Mohammad (SWA) is the last heavenly book and Prophet Mohammad (SWA) is the last Prophet. It means that no other heavenly book is going to be sent in this world and no messenger has to come after Holy Prophet (SWA). Thus it is believed, that the Holy Quran is perfect in all respect. It will remain for all time to come as a protector and a guide for the human race.) In other words, according to 'Kafi' our sixth Imam said, surely, "God has revealed in Quran, the norm of every thing. Surely, God did not leave any thing which people would not need to know. All have been revealed in the Holy Book. This Book is comprehensive and complete in all respect. Obviously, if the believers do not acquire correct knowledge they would not be able to understand the message hidden in this Holy Book. And if, at all they acquire knowledge which is not 'God gifted', they will simply mislead people and would interpret the Holy verses according to their own choice and interest. It has thus become doubly important for the believer to acquire knowledge.
According to Prof. Abdul Salam there are seven hundred and fifty verses of the Holy Quran (almost one eight of the book), exhort believers to study Nature, to reflect, to make the best use of reason in their search for the ultimate end, to make the acquiring of knowledge and scientific comprehension part of the community's life. The Holy Prophet of Islam (S.W.A) emphasised that the quest of knowledge and science is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman. Education establishes the superiority of human being over other creation:

The quest for knowledge has repeatedly been emphasized because the creation of human being was purposeful and they were enriched with such a great power which no other creation had ever enjoyed. God endowed the human being with the power to unravel the mysteries of nature and to harness them to its use. The distinction he enjoys of having been taught 'All the names' is indicative of his intrinsic worth and merit, and is symbolic of his high position as a representative of God on earth. This has been pointed out in (S.2, V.30-33). "Where in Allah has told that when He was to make Adam, He said to angels, that He was going to make a vicegerent on earth. Thereupon, the Angels said to Allah 'O! Allah, Thou are going to make human beings on earth who will shed blood and create mischief where as we have been all the time praying our Lord. Allah said in reply, "I know what you do
not know". He taught Adam all the names and nature of the things and asked angels to tell these names if they know". The angels there upon said to Allah; "Glory be to Thee; of knowledge we have none save that thou hast taught us". Allah said to Adam; "tell the names and nature of the things if you know"; where upon Adam told all the names and nature of the things". This shows the great position that Allah has assigned to the human beings. In another verse the Holy Quran reveals,

'It is God who hath created the heavens and the earth and sendeth down rain from the skies, and with it bringeth out fruits where with to feed you; it is He Who hath made ships subject to you; that they may sail through the sea by His Command; and the rivers (also) hath, He made subject to you. And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses, and the Night and the Day hath, He (also) made subject to you". (S.14, A.32,33).

The above Ayats suggest that we (as human beings) must realise that behind all our strength, skill, and intelligence, there is a power and goodness of God, Who gave us all these things. Man can understand and control the forces of nature so as to bring them at his own service, the human being can only do so, because:
1. He has got these gifts from God, and
2. God has fixed definite laws in nature of which he can take advantage only through education and knowledge, and of course, by God's command.

It is only the human beings who can use rain to produce food, make ships to sail in the sea; use rivers as highways and cut canals for irrigation. Not only this, but even the heavenly bodies can (by God's command) contribute to human needs. Such as the sun gives out heat which is a source of all life and energy on this planet. It produces the seasons of the year and so on so forth. It is the privilege of the human being, who through his education and knowledge, can bring these things at his service. He can fulfill his needs in the shape of light, heat and other blessings. Since these things exist under some specific natural law, which only man can understand and calculate, he can use all such things for his own service but through education and knowledge. It would not be unjust to say, 'that Allah has subjugated all that is on earth and the heavens for exploration and for the use of human beings to bring about welfare of the human society.'

Similarly the Holy Quran says:

"(ye, the same that) has made for you the earth (like a carpet) spread out, and has made for you roads (and channels) there in, in order that ye may find guidance (on the way);"
that sends down (from time to time) rain from the sky in due measure; - and We raise to life their with a land that is dead; even so will ye be raised (from the dead); - That has created pairs in all things ......

(S.XLIII - A. 10,13)

It is to be noted that the use of the word 'carpet spread out' indicates that the human beings have been given the freedom of movement from one place to another. And the use of word 'roads' and 'channels' gives us the idea of 'means of transportation' and 'communication'. The expression 'due measure' about rain indicates the normal rain fall. And similar other similes given in this Ayat show the necessity and importance of education. A person who is illiterate, who has not been enlightened by the light of knowledge and education, how can he understand these facts?

It is, surely, a person who has gained knowledge, under right directions, can only understand and interpret these secrets. The Holy Quran addresses to the persons who can think and use their intelligence, and asks

"Can they not look up the clouds that, how, they are created; and to the Heaven how it is appraised; and the mountain how they are
rooted, and to the earth how it is out spread?"

(S.88- A.17)

It further says:-

"Verily in the creation of the heavens and of the earth, and in the alternation of the night and of the day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding".

(S.3, A.189,190)

The Ayats quoted above and many similar Ayats are sufficient to convince, the people of world that only if they can understand and acquire correct knowledge, and develop required skills in reading, writing and comprehension, then they could take advantage from the Holy Quran in matters of day-to day life. It is through education that human being could be benefited from this comprehensive book and would understand the subjects of great significance such as physics, biology, medicine, agriculture, chemistry and Geography.

It has been reported that the Holy Prophet while preaching the value of knowledge has said, "Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of Lord, performs an act of piety, who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts to its fitting objects performs
an act of devotion to God. 'Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not;'\textsuperscript{10} He further says "It lights the way to Heaven; It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against our enemies. With knowledge, the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness, and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next world.'\textsuperscript{11}

We have learnt from Misbahush-Shariat and from Jamiul-Akhbar, that our Holy Prophet repeatedly impressed on his disciples, that in search of knowledge you can go even into China". "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge, walks in the path of God". "He who travels in search of knowledge", to him God shows the way to paradise."\textsuperscript{12} The Holy Quran itself acknowledging the supreme values of learning and science has presented valuable thought-provoking challenges before the human being.

Commenting on Surah 'Al Alaq' a learned scholar Zamakh Shari has explained the meaning of the Quranic verse in the following words, "God taught human beings (male and female) that which they did not know, and this testifieth to the greatness of His beneficence, for He has given to His
servants knowledge of that which they did not know. And He was brought them out of the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge, and made them aware of the inestimable blessings of the knowledge of writing, for great benefit occur there from which God alone compasseth; and without the knowledge of writing no other knowledge (Ulum) could be comprehended, nor the sciences placed within bounds, nor the history of the ancient be acquired and their sayings be recorded, nor the revealed books be written; and if that knowledge did not exist, the affairs of religion and the world, could not be regulated.\textsuperscript{13}

The importance of learning, reading and writing was so important in the eyes of our Prophet that he did not miss even a single opportunity in preaching his disciple to acquire more and more knowledge. As a result the word of Prophet gave a new impulse to awaken energies of the race. Below are given a few sayings of the Holy Prophet about significance of acquiring education and knowledge. The Holy Prophet said:

"To listen to the instruction of science and learning for one hour is more meritorious than attending the funerals of a thousand martyrs, ---- more meritorious than standing up in prayer for a thousand night's". "To the student who goes forth in quest of knowledge, God will allot a high place in
the mansion of bliss; every step he takes is blessed, and every lesson he receives has its reward".

"The seeker of knowledge will be greeted in heaven with a welcome from the angles".

"To listen to the words of the learned, and to instill into the heart the lesson of science, is better than religious exercises ------- better than emancipating a hundred slave".

"Him who favours learning and learned, God will favour in the next world".

The Holy Prophet said, "he who honours the learned honours me".14

"The chief disciple of the Prophet (SWA) Hazrat Ali (AS), also followed his master in preaching the importance of learning and gaining knowledge in the following words.

"Eminence in science is the highest of honour"; "He dies not who gives life to learning"; "The greatest ornament of man is education".

Such were the ideas of the Holy Prophet and his chief disciple Hazrat Ali (AS) towards learning and knowledge.
As a result of their continuous effort and their liberal policy the quest of learning awakened almost among all Muslims.

The above verses of the Holy Quran followed by the precious saying of the Holy Prophet and his chief disciple Hazrat Ali (AS) help the investigator to draw the following inference:

1. The Holy Quran has addressed to the whole human community, the Muslim women are no exception. Both men and women are equally important so for the human community is concerned. All the sayings of the Holy Quran and the declaration of Prophet Mohammad (SWA) are binding on every believer unless otherwise specified.

2. Emphasis on acquiring knowledge does not mean religious education only. Gaining knowledge in almost all the disciplines is equally important in the eyes of Allah.

3. The emphasis on religious education is given because it is hoped, that if persons with religious orientation gain knowledge in other disciplines they would never misuse their knowledge against the cause of humanity. Whereas there is always a danger that the education of non-religious persons may any time be misused against the cause of humanity. The people may use their knowledge with selfish motives and for
their vested interest as it has been pointed out in the Holy Quran in (S.2, A.6).

The use of nuclear weapons against human population by Americans and Europeans are the best example of this Quranic declaration. The Holy Quran says.

'-------- the Book of it there are (some verses decisive these are the Basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous, But those in whose hearts there is perversity, they are after that which is ambiguous there in seeking to mislead and seeking to interpret (to suit their selfish motives) while none knoweth its (hidden) interpretation except God and those firmly rooted in knowledge; say the: "We believe in it, all is from our Lord" but none mindeth says those in endowed with (Wisdom). (S.3, A.6)

The investigator feels the necessity of reproducing the above surah at the end of this chapter because many important facts have been revealed in it. The one who fails to comprehend the real meaning of this surah may always be misguided by those who with certain superficial knowledge try to interpret the meaning of the verses of Holy Quran to mislead innocent persons.

According to S.V. Meer Ahmad Ali Hony Secretary Husaini Trust Madras "this verse loudly sounds a clear warning against any imagination, that every thing in the Holy Quran
can not be intelligible to any one but the Holy Prophet. Most of its verses being open, clear, plain and decisive about their meanings, of which there can be no doubt for those with average intelligence. They are called the 'Muhkamat'. These are the verses relating to the cardinal doctrine or the articles of faith viz. the unity of God, the directions relating to the practice of the faith, the law governing the practical life of the faithful. These verses, the meanings of which is fully secured against being changed or altered. These verses form the basic principles of its faith and its practices and have been revealed in clear cut words but there are verses in the Holy Quran which could not be understood and interpret by ordinary minds. They need higher thoughts fit for the tested mind of higher intellectuals. It is because of this reason the shias believe that there is always a need of a perfect man with divinely gifted knowledge, so that he could impart true education, and could save the believers from being misguided and misled by 'those in whose heart there is perversity'. This perfect man can be no one else to except our twelth Imam Hazrat Mehdi (AS) the last Imam from the family of the Prophet of Islam (SWA).
THE IMPORTANCE OF LAW OF INHERITANCE IN ISLAM AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN

During pre-Islamic period women, in general, forefeit their right on the property of their parents as soon as they are married. It was Islam which introduced a specific and perfect law of inheritance and recognized that women should have a right to share the property of their parents, even if they are married. By introducing the law of inheritance in which women can also inherit from the property of the parents, Islam has enhanced the social and economic security and status of women:

Paradoxically, in some cases, women absolutely did not inherit any property from their parents. However in cases where they got some share from the parent's property they were not having a full right on it, which meant they did not have the right to pass on the inherited property to their own children. While in some cases daughters also got an equal share from their parent's property, but that was only when the same had been mentioned in the 'will' of the parents. There had never been any occasion when the daughter was lawfully entitled to have a fixed share as inheritance from her parent's property. It was Islam and only Islam, which introduced the law of inheritance in which the shares of mothers, daughters, sons, sisters and brothers, were
specified. Historically, this specification provided an excellent example of the general process of the development of human right in Islam. Within the framework of Islam's legal system as a whole, the laws of succession occupy, particularly a prominent and an important position. In fact, the manner in which the law of inheritance was introduced, it becomes a religious binding on the relatives and the legal heirs to share the property as specified in the Holy Quran.

Islam ensures material support to women:

The supreme purpose of the introduction of inheritance in Islam is the material support for surviving dependents and relatives, after the death of the head of the family. One of the spirit behind the implementation of the law is to bind the deceased family by mutual ties and responsibilities which stems from blood relationship. Hence family ties remain intact even after the binding figure is dead. Apart from ensuring material support to the female members of the family of the deceased, persons, the law of inheritance promises many legal rights for the benefit of the heirs.

In the first place female members of the family develop a sense of self confidence and self-dependence. This feeling boosts up their moral and social status, they do not feel themselves helpless. Secondly, it keeps the family ties
intact, and members of the family are ready to share the family problem.

Thirdly, even if the deceased person did not leave a will, there would be no fighting between the family members.

In the Holy Quran, the law of inheritance has been prescribed in a rigid and an uncompromising terms. Any deviation from the specification given in the Holy Quran has been vehemently condemned and is treated as a sin. The Holy Quran say:

"For men shall be a share in what their parents and kindred leave and for women shall be a share in what their parents and kindred leave, and be it little or much (it is a decreed (allotment of) share".

(S.IV, A.7)

The above ayat is not simply a suggestion or advice, but it is an order which should be followed under all circumstances. The same has been expressed in the Holy Quran in the following words.

"It is prescribed for you when death approacheth (any) one of you, if he leaveth behind any goods that he maketh a bequest for parents and (the nearest) kinsmen—in goodness
(this is ) a duty (incumbant) upon the pious ones.

(S.II, A.180)

The Holy Quran further warns:

"And who so ever altereth the bequest after he has heard it, the gult shall be on those who alter it".

(S.II, A.181)

The warning of Holy Quran does not end here. It has further been said,

"--------- those who eat away property of the orphans, unjustly, they swallow (only) fire into their ballies; and anon shall they enter the blazing HELL fire".

(S.IV, A.10)

It may be pointed out here that the shares from the property of the deceased have to be distributed among men and women according to the specification of the Holy Quran. Any deviation from the prescribed law is, in the eyes of Allah, unexcusable offence. Regarding the sharing of the property of the deceased the Holy Quran says:

"For you, shall be half of what leave your wives if they have no issue, but if they have an issue, then for you shall be a fourth of
what they leave after paying the bequest they have an issue, then for you shall be a fourth of what ye leave after paying the bequest they had bequeathed and the debt; and for them shall be a fourth of what ye leave if ye have no issue. If ye have an issue then for them (shall be) the eight of what ye leave after paying the bequest ye had bequeathed and the debt, and if a man or women leavith (his property) to be inherited by (not the lineage but) any side relation and he or she has a brother or a sister each of these two shall have the sixth; but if there be more than this, then they shall be sharers in the one-third after paying the bequest he had bequeathed, and the debt, without loss to (any one) this is an ordinance”.

(S.IV, A.12)

Without appreciating the reason and logic involved in this excellent distribution of wealth and property of the deceased, the investigator is presently interested in the emphasis which has been given for the implementation of the law. There is no doubt, that the clarity with which the law of inheritance has been worked out, visualizing the interest of every survival of the deceased family, is beyond human
comprehension and capacity. However, it has clearly been pointed out in the Holy Quran, that those who implement this law honestly will be justly rewarded and those who disobey, will be severely punished. This is clearly mentioned in following Ayat:

"And who so disobeyeth God and his Apostle (Mohammad) and transgresseth his limits, him shall God admit in Hellfire to abide there in and for him shall be a shameful torment"

(S.4, A.13,14)

Inferences

According to M.J. Coulson, the law of inheritance prescribed under Islamic law has sociological justification, significance and religious impact. He says, "From the sociological stand point, the laws of inheritance reflect the structure of family ties and the accepted social values and responsibilities within the Islamic Community. For in the eyes of the law, rights of inheritance are generally regarded as the consideration of duties of protection and support owed to the deceased during his/her life time; so that the stronger the family bonds the greater the right of inheritance". There is also a specific rule that the duty of a person to maintain his needy collateral relative, depends upon and proportion to the right to inherit from that
relative. Juristically, the law of succession is a solid technical achievement, and Muslim scholars may take justifiable pride in the mathematical precision with which the rights of various heirs, in any given situation, can be calculated. Coulson M.J., further says "Above all however, the great esteem which this branch of legal science enjoys among Muslim people, stems from its strong religious significance." In short, it may be said, that the laws of inheritance appear as a vital aspect of the individual's supreme duty, in Islam, because, it provides the basis for the continuity of the family group as one complete unit. Obviously, the unity in the community can exist only when, women in the family also inherit from their parent's property.

It has been pointed out earlier that women, in general, were not enjoying the right to share the property of her deceased parents. In cases where they were given the right of inheritance there were no definite rules regarding the distribution of share in the property.

Seemingly, the causes of women being deprived of inheritance might be manifold.

1. It was feared that if women are given share in the parents property the property will automatically be
transferred to another family where the daughter or sister was married.

In order to prevent the transfer of the property from one family to another family, women, in general, were deprived of the right of inheritance. This shows a general attitude of indifference towards women. The argument which was commonly given to deprive the women from the right of inheritance was that the wife, daughter, the daughter's daughters of the deceased were unable to arm themselves and fight against the enemies. It is the male member of the family who had to take the sword and defend them. So the wealth should also go to male members only. It was the moment when the Holy Prophet recited to them the commandments of God from the Holy Quran and defended women's right to have their shares from parents' property.

4. Undoubtedly, Islam, by introducing the law of inheritance and specifying the share of women in their parents' property did not only provide economic security to women but had also strengthened their status in the society.

5. This radical change, in the then prevalent custom, forced people to recognize women's importance and accepted them as a living member of the family.
A logical appraisal of criticism against the law of inheritance

There are, however, certain objections against the law of inheritance about the share of women. For example, in Islam a son inherits twice as much as a daughter, a brother, twice as much as a sister and a husband twice as much as a wife. It is only in the case of father and mother that if the deceased has children and his father and mother are also alive, both the father and mother will inherit one sixth of the property of the deceased.

Before examining the validity of this objection the investigator would like to rephrase the concept of womanhood in Islam. It may be recalled that Islam has given women an unprecedented advantage in financial and economic matters. On the one hand, it has given her full financial independence and freedom. In clear words Islam has prevented man from having any power over her property and earnings. It has taken away from man the right of ownership over the affairs of women. Under the Quranic laws, women are free from the responsibility of family expenses. They are exempted from any liability or obligation to maintain the family or earn money for the family. If we could appreciate these facts the share of women in inheritance as half of the men will be very easily understood. Infact the problem is self explanatory.
DUTIES OF CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS

There are many Ahadith which confirm that love and respect for the parents was very much liked by the Holy Prophet himself. Abu Zubair Al Makki says:

"I heard Jabir Ibne Abdillah Al Ansari saying, "0 people of Ansar teach your children the love of Ali and if any one rejects it, then investigate the morality of his mother".19

A similar hadith about parents revealed that, 'Any one who beats parents is an illegitimate child'.20 However, a review of Ahadith and Ayats from Holy Quran, lead us to infer that love for parent is love for Allah, and one who disobeys his parents cultivates love with those who are enemy of Allah and is far from paradise. Similarly, the person who hurts the feelings of his parents is an enemy of Allah and is far from paradise.21

Obedience to parents is infact a mirror to obedience to Allah. In confirmity to this fact it is said in Hadith, 'Al Qudis, "tell 'O' Prophet' to the child who is obedient to his parent", "Do what ever good deeds (you want to do) to them you will never enter the fire (of Hell) and say to the child who is disobedient to his parents; do whatever (good deeds) you want (to be) you will never enter paradise".22
Al Imam Ibne Ali Mosa Al Raza (A.S.) said that he had learnt that the Holy Prophet used to say: "Verily Allah has ordered three things joined with three other things. He ordered prayer and Zakat (wealth tax). Thus if any one performed prayer and did not pay zakat his prayer will not be accepted. He asked people to show gratitude to Him and to their parents. Any one who did not thanked his parents, he did not thank Allah."

In another hadith Al Iman Jafare Sadiq said, "there are three things in which Almighty Allah has not given any option to his believers. First to return to the owner the thing, whether the owner be a pious or a debauchee. Second to fulfill the promise whether it was (made) to a pious or a debauchect. Third to do good to parents whether they are pious or sinner".

The Holy Prophet said about the parents in one of hadith that, "any one who hurts his parents hurts me and who hurts me hurts Allah and who so ever hurts Allah is cursed in Torait, Injeel, Zaboor and Quran".

There are so many hadith which go to the extent of saying that the duty of the children towards their parents does not end even if any one expires. It continues in the same way as it is for Almighty Allah. Islam ordained that as the Lordship of Allah does not come to an end, like wise, the
lordship of the parents does not end by their death, rather it continues so long as the a person is alive. Al Imam Mohd. Al Baqar (A.S.) said:

"Varrily, a servant of Allah remains good to his parents, when they are alive: when they die and he neither repays their loans nor asks pardon of (Allah) for them. Before Allah such a person is a disobedient child. And, varrily if a person remains disobedient to their parents during their life time not being good to them, but when they die, he repays their loans and ask pardon (of Allah) for them. Their Allah considers him as 'obedient and good' child".26

Once a man from Banu Salmah, asked the Holy Prophet, 'After the death of parents, Does their right still remain on us which we should perform (by which we should do good to them)? The Holy Prophet said, "Yes, praying for them, asking pardon of Allah for them fulfilling their promise and respecting their friends".27 In support of the Ahadith presented above there are several Ayats in the Holy scripture regarding an individuals relationship with his/her parents. Precisely speaking Allah has asked the whole community of muslims to worship none but Allah alone. Then in the same verse and in the verses that follow. He asks each individual to hold his/her parents in the highest esteem.
A few of the verdicts of the Holy Scripture has been presented below in this regard.

The Holy Quran says:

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour and out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say, My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood".

(S.XVII, A.23,24)

In the following two verses of the Holy Quran the reasons and the logic as to why we have to respect our parents, have been explained, says the Holy Quran:

"And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents in Travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning" (hear the command), "show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) goal".

(S.XXI, A.14)
Further, highlighting the importance of mother the Holy Quran says:

"We had enjoined on man kindness to his parents: in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth......

"O My Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for thy favour which thou hast bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents.

(S.XLVI, A.15)

These are the few verses of the Holy Quran which show that the respect of father and mother has been so dear to Allah and His messenger.

For the Holy Prophet (SWA) the respect of mother had been so great that he used to say "Heaven lies under the feet of mother". The same can be understood by the conversation which took place between our Prophet (SWA) and Hakim-ibn Hezam.

It is reported that the Hakim asked the Holy Prophet whom should he respect, the Holy Prophet replied, 'Your Mother'. He asked the same question repeatedly for three times and every time the reply remained the same. When he asked the fourth time, Holy Prophet said, 'Your Father'.
It is on the basis of this hadith we can say that the right of mother is three time greater than the right of father upon their children.

In references
1. It has been commanded that parents have a great obligations of their sons and daughters and in return the sons and daughter are required to pay due respect to them. This obedience, respect, support love and affection are liked by the Almighty Allah and his messanger the Holy Prophet (SWA) very much. It is equal to the respect and love to Allah and to the Prophet of Islam. Secondly, It must be noted here that in issuing such commands there is no discrimination between fathers and mother, or men and women. Therefore it many be inferred that in the eyes of Allah and the Holy Prophet the father and the mother are of equal status and therefore they command equal respect, love and obedience from their children.

3. There are authentic ahadith which confirm that in the eyes of Holy Prophet (SWA) the status of mother is much higher as compared to the father. These inferences may help us to conclude that the status of women has never been considered lower than the status of men in Islam.
Our Holy Prophet has particularly given much importance to the status of women during his life time. He practically made concerted efforts to make people understand the importance of girl in a family. To his own daughter Fatima Zehra (A.S.) he has said, "Fatima is a part of my life". Who so ever hurts her hurts me and who so ever hurts me hurts Allah.

Importance of female child in Islam

During the age of ignorance preceding to Islam girl were considered disgrace objects for their families in Arabian Penninsula. The birth of a girl has been described in the Holy Quran in following words:

"And when a daughter is announced to one of them his face became black and he was full of rath (S.16, A.58).

He hides himself from the people because of the evil which was announced to them. He had to keep the child with disgrace. In order to avoid shame they would bury the female child alive in the dust. Now surely evil is what they judge. (S.16, A.59)

This was the position of girl when our Prohet Mohammad (SWA) started his campaign to uphold the prestige and respect of the girls in the eyes of the society. Since the change in attitude of general people was not possible, with in a short
period and it could not be conceived that the people would altogether stop the socially approved bad treatment against their daughters. The messenger of God thoughtfully started a campaign against the prevalent customs and traditions steadily and very intelligently. He did not introduce all the changes at once. He issued injunctions against any custom when he thought that the time was matured for that particular reform.

It was the time when women lived in society in solitude, deprivation and neglect, no attention was paid to her rights even, the right to be alive was denied to her. At that moment God sent Hazrat Mohammad (SWA) to protect women and all the deprived and oppressed people of the world from sufferings and injustice. One of the most important and radical serious change brought by Islam was to put an end the aggression against women rights in general and to defend their birth right to live like a human being. This contribution of Islam during period of ignorance might be considered as one of the most important contribution for the human welfare. It gave her the right to life, welfare and comfort, the right to gain knowledge, right to ownership. The right to own her property which belongs to her alone, the right to lodge complaint against her husband for his misbehaviour and the right for struggle for her right and to seek justice. Precisely it can be said that after the advent
of Islam women were able to handle their own social political and religious affairs for the first time in their life time. In order to bring change in the attitude of the people towards the female sex from the era of extreme darkness to the age of enlightenment, continuous efforts were made by Prophet Mohammad (SWA) himself and his followers. Our Prophet used to say the best among your children are your daughters. This slogan indeed brought a revolt in the belief practices of that age. Islam professed, just like a male child, a girl has the same right to life. No one is superior to other as a human being. The Holy Prophet (SWA) in his practical life had shown great respect for girls. He said, who so ever has a daughter the lord! would make that girl a shield for him before the flames of Hell. Who so ever has two daughters, the Lord! will take him into heaven. The importance of girls in a family was so high in his eyes that our Prophet (S.W.A.) the great messenger of God used to say, 'among the blessings of the Almighty for women is that her first child be a girl.28

Referred to an authentic Hadiths, it is said that, "a person sitting before our Prophet was informed by one of his friends that a girl baby was born to him. On hearing this news the Holy Prohet blessed him in the following words. "The earth will bear her weight, the sky will cast her shadow on her, the Lord! will give her subsistence. 'She is like a fragrant flower. The support and assistance of God will be
with him who ever has a daughter, the blessings and forgiveness of God will be bestowed upon him". The Holy Prophet further added, that who so ever raises three girls three gardens of Heaven will be given to him. He had also said, 'who so ever raises two or three girls will be with me in the paradise'.

In view of the important role played by women in family and in the society, Islam has given much importance to the up bringing of a girl child as compared to a male child. Islam holds the view that girls of today are the mothers of tomorrow. A competent and an able mother brings up children who are brave and honest, selfless and competent. The modern scholars of science and sociology also agree with the old Islamic sayings that 'if you wish to build a healthy society, build mothers'. Islam had has been so much concerned with the raising up of a girl child and their education that it has prescribed a comprehensive syllabus for their education, so that they could be able to serve the purpose of an Islamic society.

A believing women in Islam has to perform a multiple role during her life time. She has to play a role of a daughter, a wife, a mother and a custodian of future Islamic society. According to the Holy Quran, woman is a sign of God. 'The creator of a human race she has been given the quality to control stubborn men so that they may humanise
them and prepare them to create a friendly environment".  

In the role of a wife, women hold a social position. She is beloved of her husband. As a good wife she is an honest person; she is interested in leading a life with mutual trust, agreement, cooperation and peaceful coexistence with her husband. She is always proud of fulfilling her responsibilities and duties as a faithful wife. A believing woman does not lose control on her emotions at the moment of hardship and difficulties. Under every circumstances, she remains balanced and faithful to her husband. In her practical life she is polite but firm in domestic affairs the responsibilities assigned to her. She is the real custodian of the respect, honour and dignity of her husband.

A believing women trains her daughter through her own behaviour so that she may be able to play the important role as an adult women in the family and the society of which she is a member.

In short the love, respect and proper training of a girl child in an Islamic society ensures a happy family life, which is a positive step in constructing a true Islamic society.

A society in which its womenfolk follow the Islamic laws and Shariat in words and spirit, the sayings, that "the
reward for the believing women is the salvation on the way of resurrection. Every moment of her life is filled with divine reward". Would came twice to them.
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