



THE SALAAM NETWORK

Striving to make our Beloved Community of Louisville Whole

“NORMATIVE ISLAMIC EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM WOMEN”

INSTRUCTOR: DR. RIFFAT HASSAN. CONSULTANT: DR. JOE BRENNAN

PARTICIPANTS: MUSLIM WOMEN AND FIVE MEMEBERS OF *THE SALAAM NETWORK* (GUESTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND)

VENUE: THOMAS JEFFERSON UNITARIAN CHURCH

DATE/TIME: December 1, 2019 (4.00 - 7.00 p. m.)

SESSION EIGHT

THEOLOGICAL AND FRAMEWORK OF THE QUR‘AN

PART THREE: *THE QUR‘AN ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS*

In this Part, an account is given of the Qur‘an’s affirmation of fundamental rights which all human beings ought to possess because they are so deeply rooted in our humanness that their denial or violation is tantamount to a negation or degradation of that which makes us human. From the perspective of the Qur‘an, these rights came into existence when we did; they were created, as we were, by God in order that our human potential could be actualized. It is to be noted that when referring to fundamental human rights, the Qur‘an does not distinguish between men and women. It is also to be noted that in Islam, fundamental rights are given not by a man, a ruler, or a government, but by God, and that rights created or given by God cannot be abolished by any temporal ruler or human agency. Amongst the most important rights, the following may be mentioned:

Right to Life:

The Qur‘an upholds the sanctity and absolute value of human life (Surah 6: *Al-An‘am*: 151) It points out in Surah 5: *Al-Maa‘idah*: 32, that, in essence, the life of each individual is comparable to that of an entire community and, therefore, should be treated with the utmost care: “...this did We ordain unto the children of Israel that if anyone slays a human being - unless it be (in punishment) for murder or for spreading corruption on earth - it shall be as though he had slain all humankind: whereas if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all humankind”.

Right to Respect:

In Surah 17: *Al-Israa‘*: 70, the Qur‘an states: “Now, indeed, We have conferred dignity on the children of Adam.” On account of the promise, which is contained in being

human, namely, the potential to be God's vicegerent on earth, the humanness of all human beings is to be respected and considered an end in itself.

Right to Justice:

The Qur'an puts great emphasis on the right to seek justice and the duty to do justice (Surah 5: *Al-Maa'idah*: 8 ; Surah 4: *An-Nisaa'*: 135) It enjoins "'*adl*" (legalistic justice) and "*ehsan*" (compassionate justice) to ensure that while everyone is equal before the law, those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged are treated with compassion. The Qur'an also distinguishes between passive believers and those who strive actively in the cause of God (Surah 4: *An-Nisaa'*: 95)

Right to Freedom:

The Qur'an is deeply concerned about liberating human beings from every kind of bondage. The greatest guarantee of personal freedom for a Muslim lies in the Qur'anic decree that no one other than God can limit human freedom (Surah 42: *Ash-Shura*: 21) and in the statement that "Judgment (as to what is right and what is wrong) rests with God alone" (Surah 12: *Yusuf*: 40). The Qur'anic proclamation in Surah 2: *Al-Baqarah*: 256, "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith"³⁰ **guarantees freedom of religion and worship**. The Qur'an also states clearly that God will judge human beings not on the basis of what they profess but on the basis of their belief and righteous conduct (Surah 2: *Al-Baqarah*: 62; Surah 5: *Al-Ma'idah*: 69)

Amongst other Fundamental Rights affirmed by the Qur'an are: Right to Acquire Knowledge; Right to Sustenance; Right to Work; Right to Develop one's Aesthetic Sensibilities and Enjoy the Bounties Created by God; Right to Privacy; Right to Protection from Slander, Backbiting, and Ridicule; and the Right to Leave one's Homeland under Oppressive Conditions:

REQUIRED READING FROM THE RESOURCE BOOK BY DR. RIFFAT HASSAN WILL BE EMAILED TO EVERYONE ATTENDING THE SEMINAR.