

Misconception: Women confined to houses



Background: Some think that in Islam a woman's place is in the home and they are not allowed outside or without the permission of their husbands or male family members. Some also think that women should not be allowed out by themselves unless chaperoned.

The Quran has several examples in which women are able to go freely and be amongst the community. The most clear example are in the references to Mary, some of which are shown below:

And relate in the Scripture Mary, when she withdrew herself from her family to a place which was to the east. [19:16]

So she was pregnant with him, and she retired to a far place. [19:22]

"So eat and drink and be happy. If you see any person, then Say: "I have made a vow of abstention for the Almighty, and I will not talk today to any person." Then she came to her people carrying him. They said: "O Mary, you have come with something totally unexpected!" [19:26-27]

The above verses prove beyond doubt that she was alone in a location where it was possible other people may have met her, and then she returned to her people.

Women were also free to petition and interact with the prophet directly (who would have been the leader of the community at the time):

O you prophet, if the believing women come to make allegiance to you that they will not set up anything beside God, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor fabricate any falsehood, nor disobey you in any matter which is righteous, then you shall accept their allegiance, and ask God to forgive them. God is Forgiver, Merciful. [60:12] also see [58:1] & [2:235]

There is also a clear example in The Quran of Moses speaking to two unmarried women in public, one of whom he married later: [28:23-25]

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