



Rethinking Morality and Gender in the Narration of "*Khiṣāl al-Nisā*" (Characteristics of Women)

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(Received: April 2024, Accepted: November 2024)

DOI: 10.22034/hsr.2024.51237.1014Abstract

Abstract

A well-known saying in *Nahj al-Balāghah* attributed to Imam Ali (AS) states that feminine morality is distinguished from and at times conflicts with masculine morality. According to this saying, the three traits of arrogance, fear, and stinginess are considered the worst vices for men and the best virtues for women. If this statement holds true, it implies the existence of two different moral systems for women and men, which is inconsistent with certain moral teachings of the Quran. Past commentators on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, influenced by the prevailing beliefs of their time, accepted the content of this statement as correct and passed over it without much scrutiny. However, contemporary

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interpreters and commentators have sought to defend the validity of this saying by either changing the meanings of these traits or limiting their scope. Nonetheless, these defenses often raise multiple issues and create new problems instead of resolving the existing ones. Therefore, the author examines and analyzes this alleged hadith, assessing its validity from a different perspective. To do this, the author first reviews the sources where this saying is mentioned for the first time and conducts a textual analysis of their chains of narration. Then, the intrinsic meaning of the hadith is analyzed, and the strength of its arguments is evaluated. In the next step, based on biological findings that some commentators have utilized, the claim of distinction is scrutinized. Finally, the difficulties that this saying faces from both an intra-religious and an ethical perspective are articulated, and its credibility is challenged.

Keywords: Moral Hadiths, Feminine Morality, Masculine Morality, Moral Virtues, Moral Vices, Characteristics of Women.

Introduction

In Islamic tradition, the moral differences between men and women are generally accepted, with multiple hadiths serving as evidence for such beliefs that emphasize the distinctions between masculine and feminine moral virtues. Fifteen years ago, in an article titled "Morality and Gender in the Hadith of Characteristics of Women," (Eslami Ardakani, 2008 AD/1387 SH: No. 49-50) I began this issue by focusing on a famous hadith in this context and have since expanded upon it, encountering various questions and points of discussion along

the way. Now is an opportunity to rethink this issue and attempt to shed clearer light on the topic.

One of the most famous hadiths in this regard, narrated from the Imam Ali (AS) is quoted as follows:

"The best traits of women are the worst traits of men: To be arrogant, to have ill feelings, and to be stingy. If a woman is arrogant, she does not submit to herself; if she is stingy, she keeps her wealth and her husband's wealth; and if she has ill feelings, she fears everything that approaches and manifests itself to her." (Raḍī, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 503)

1. Background and Method

Researchers and commentators of the past generally accepted this saying attributed to Imam Ali and did not engage in independent discussions about it. Occasionally, we come across some observations that are referenced in this writing. My approach here has been descriptive-interpretative, utilizing a critical analysis style to examine this statement.

2. Sources of the Hadith

This hadith, in addition to being found in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, appears in four ancient sources with slight variations in some phrases, and the compilers of the documents of *Nahj al-Balāghah* have not introduced more sources than these (cf. Al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 4, 186; Dashti, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 356; Dashti, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 540). These four sources are:

1) *Rabī‘ al-Abrār* (Rabī‘ al-Abrār wa Nuṣūṣ al-Akhhbār, Abul Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar Zamakhsharī, Vol. 5, p. 252);

2) *Rawḍatul Wā‘izīn* (Rawḍatul Wā‘izīn, Muḥammad ibn al-Fattāl al-Nīsābūrī, edited by Shaykh Ḥusayn al-A‘lamī, Qom: al-Razi Publications, p. 372. This hadith is identical in both versions);

3) *Ghurar al-Ḥikam wa Durar al-Kalim* (A Collection of Words and Sayings of Imam Ali (AS), ‘Abdul Wāḥid al-Āmidī al-Tamīmī, Vol. 1, p. 351);

4) *Qūt al-Qulūb* (Qūt al-Qulūb fī Mu‘āmalatil Maḥbūb wa Waṣfi Ṭarīqil Murīd ilā Maqāmīl Tawḥīd, Abū Ṭālib Makkī, Vol. 2, p. 487; and Qūt al-Qulūb, Cairo, Vol. 2, p. 298).

This hadith appears in various versions of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the short sayings section, but Mousavi considers it part of the Amir's will to his son and has included it there. He also rearranged the well-known order of the statements from this hadith and presented it differently in the book "*Tamām Nahj al-Balāghah*." (Tamām Nahj al-Balāghah, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī from the Works of Imam Amīr al-Mu‘minīn Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, p. 986) A slightly different narration of this hadith is also found in more recent sources, such as *Al-Maḥajjat al-Bayḍā’* (Al-Maḥajjat al-Bayḍā’ fī Tahdhīb al-Iḥyā’, Muḥammad ibn Murtaḍā, known as Mullā Muḥsin Kāshānī, Vol. 3, p. 86).

3. Translations and Exegesis

This hadith places the main virtues of men and women in relation to each other. Imam Ali (AS) has spoken in detail about these three qualities in various places, introducing them as deadly vices (see, for

example, Wisdom 378, Sermon 104, and Sermon 53). Ancient commentators, translators, and explicators of *Nahj al-Balāghah* considered this distinction to be definitive and maintained that feminine virtues are inherently different from masculine virtues. Therefore, in their commentaries and translations, they either explicitly mentioned this point or did not find it necessary to restate or emphasize it. For instance, *Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd* cites a statement from Plato in support of this hadith (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 19-20, 41). *Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamzah Ḥusaynī*, from the Zaydi Imams, considers the decisive difference between female and male ethics to be a certainty (al-Ḥusaynī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 6, 2897). *Ibn Maytham Baḥrānī* finds this statement self-explanatory (Baḥrānī, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 633). *Rāwandī* also refers to Arabic equivalents of terms such as "Ba'ī" and "Fariqat." (Rāwandī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 3, 350)

Jahḥāf, a Zaydi scholar from the 11th century AH, contested *Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd*, quoting this hadith without any explanation, not even a word, and then moved on (al-Jahḥāf, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 3, 439). The result is that the meaning of this hadith was clear to our predecessors, and its claim—that there is a decisive difference between female and male ethics—was also accepted. As a result, they predominantly limited themselves to explaining the meanings of the words in the hadith.

Nonetheless, in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there are expressions concerning women that have preoccupied many recent commentators, explicators, translators, and defenders of the faith. Concepts and expressions that seemed very natural to ancient commentators are now burdensome and cannot be easily accepted. Of course, some more

recent translators have had no issue with this hadith and have provided translations faithful to the text in this regard. Among these individuals is Shahidi (Translation of *Nahj al-Balāghah*: 400). Ja'fari (2002 AD/1381 SH: 5, 293) and *Nwwāb Lāhījānī* (2000 AD/1379 SH: 2, 1281) are mentioned. Another group of translators has realized that a straightforward and simple translation of this hadith is not very appropriate. Therefore, they have modified some words and added terms to the translation to make it more acceptable. These individuals, in the act of translation, have undertaken interpretations and have, knowingly or unknowingly, imposed assumptions on the text, such as Kashani (1999 AD/1378 SH: 2, 708), Makarem Shirazi (Ashtiyani and Emami, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 789; 3, 295), Dashti (2000 AD/1379 SH: 679), and Ja'fari (2000 AD/1379 SH: 1121). These individuals have primarily engaged in a form of cultural editing, trying to update the text and mitigate its severity (for further explanation on this, see Eslami, 2005 AD/1384 SH: Nos. 35-36).

In this context, some have attempted to change the meanings or scope of these words. For example, Motahhari discusses this hadith when critiquing moral relativism and ultimately limits it without an unambiguous shape or reference. First, he excludes fear and jealousy from their original meanings, then emphasizes that feminine arrogance is not always good, and subsequently points out that fear and arrogance are detrimental to both women and men. Finally, he states that integrity is good for both men and women. Moreover, he speaks of the courage of *Fāṭimah* and *Zaynab* (Motahhari, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 161-172). *Mughnīyah* also provides an ambiguous interpretation

of feminine jealousy using poetic expressions (Mughnīyah, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 293-294). Mousavi considers jealousy a vice for both men and women, interpreting feminine jealousy as a means of protecting a husband's wealth (Al-Mousavi, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 5, 387).

Another group has limited the semantic range of the hadith, such as *Khu'ī* (1982 AD/1403 AH: 21, 303-304), *Khānsārī* (Tamīmī Āmidī, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 3, 430), *Molla Ṣāliḥ Qazwīnī* (2001 AD/1380 SH: 4, 207), *Shīrāzī* (2002 AD/1423 AH: 4, 376), and Qayeni (2004 AD/1383 SH: 17, 250).

Some commentators have attempted to analyze this hadith within a broader context, considering other hadiths narrated from Amir al-Mu'minin regarding women and viewing it in light of the social conditions of that period rather than as a general ruling about women (Javadi Amoli, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 342). If this interpretation is correct, then 'Why did Amir al-Mu'minin not issue general commandments regarding his opponents, like *Talḥa* and *Zubayr*, based on the behavior of opposing men?' (Mughnīyah provides five detailed responses to this justification in *fi Zilāl Nahj al-Balāghah*, under Sermon 78) Mehrizi, by examining this hadith and others, attempts to provide criteria to resolve this issue, concluding that some hadiths of this nature are vague (Mehrizi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 19).

'Is this hadith, with all the restrictions added to it, acceptable for contemporary thinking?' And 'Can we speak of two moral systems for women and men?' To answer questions of this nature, three approaches can be adopted. The first is to use scientific and biological findings to demonstrate that women are essentially different from men

and for this reason are subject to specific moral values. The second way is to show that new studies and reflections on ethics express specific characteristics of feminine moral criteria. The third is to view this hadith with faith and demonstrate through religious arguments that this is the saying of the Imam, aligned with the Quran, and his judgment on this matter is valid and acceptable. Here, I will attempt to evaluate these three approaches.

4. Science and Gender-Based Ethics

Perhaps the most well-known way to prove the difference between feminine and masculine ethics is to emphasize their sexual differences. The foundation of this perspective is biology. For example, Roads argues that an evolutionary perspective shows that genders differences are not merely a social construct but have biological roots (Roads, 2004). Emphasis on the biological differences between men and women and vague and imprecise references to scientific research in this area is quite common. Some commentators of *Nahj al-Balāghah* have sought to justify the words of Amir al-Mu'minin on this matter by referring to such biological realities, such as *Muṣṭafawī* (2000 AD/1379 SH: 30-31), 'Abduh (1991 AD/1412 AH: 122), *Qarashī* (1998 AD/1377 SH: 1, 1305-1036), *Dashti* (p. 522), and *Baydūn* (1983 AD/1362 SH: 199).

This approach, overall, does not lead to productive conclusions. This is because there is typically no precise documentation for these differences, and the work is often selective, with alternative research going unaddressed. In reality, the history of biology has been profoundly influenced by extrinsic assumptions that have dominated

the research and theories presented in this area. For example, from ancient Greece to the eighteenth century, the prevailing perspective in this field was based on the one-sex model, which posited that only one gender existed in existence, namely male. Women were considered as incomplete men. The most coherent formulation of this ancient perspective can be found in the works of Aristotle. He bases his work on a certain type of biology and psychology and concludes that men are superior to women, thus the morality fitting for women is not compatible with masculine ethics. In fact, he recognizes women and men as of one gender, but introduces men as more complete than women and goes so far as to believe that the female fetus develops more slowly than the male fetus.

Based on this biology, a male was considered a living being at forty days, while a female was considered so at ninety days (Kuhse and Singer, 1998: 6). In his view, women are sterile men, and while the woman embodies lack, the man is viewed as the embodiment of possession. If fertilization occurs correctly and completely, the fetus will be male; otherwise, it will be female (Hadassah Kotzin, 1998: 18). This perspective can be seen in various forms among many scholars of the past, including some Muslim scholars like *Mulla Ṣadrā* (2001 AD/1380 SH: 7, 230-231). According to this view, even female sexual organs were described and defined based on the male model; female sexual organs are essentially the same as male sexual organs, but instead of protruding from the body, they are located inside the body; the woman's vagina is considered equivalent to the man's penis, and the uterus is compared to the testicles (Stone, 2007: 37). However,

this contradicts recent scientific findings, which indicate that "Nature creates the female organism unless androgens intervene" and convert the developing fetus into a male (Hilgard et al., 2006 AD/1385 SH: 378).

From the eighteenth century onwards, the two-sex model replaced the previous one, and gradually biologists and scientists shifted from focusing on the anatomical similarities between women and men to seeking differences, leading to the idea that the female body is distinct from the male body. Nonetheless, since the twentieth century, new findings and studies have opened the way for an even newer model, which questions the definitive and clear distinction between the two sexes. We have identified the existence of two distinct sexes, namely female and male, through biology; however, today this claim is no longer fully supported by this science, and the discourse includes the existence of a "Third Sex." Not everyone is necessarily exclusively biologically male or female; rather, some may fall into a third category called intersexed. Today, the idea is proposed that we should "Consider women and men as two opposing ends of a continuum with a significant overlap in the middle." (Garrett, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 18) Some feminists even refer to research showing that "men, like women, undergo monthly cycles and changes in mood." (ibid: 20) Thus, those who refer to science and scientific findings in this area should be aware of which era these findings pertain to and which paradigm or theoretical model they follow.

Moreover, this evidence is often methodologically questionable, as either the correct evidence is not selected, or contradictory evidence is ignored, or there is a misinterpretation of valid evidence. According to

Stone, scientific reports are never infallible; rather, they are always subject to continual revision and alteration (2007: 38). For example, in the nineteenth century, the medical claim arose that there is competition for power between the brain and sexual organs, leading to the conclusion that women who pursue education and learning become sterile (Leontein, 2003: 200).

Even if it is accepted that men and women have biological differences, the question remains how one can draw ethical distinctions from these biological differences. In reality, many of these differences arise from social structures, not from natural distinctions between men and women. In this regard, it is essential to differentiate between "Sex" and "Gender." However, since the 1980s, the distinction between "Sex" and "Gender" has also been challenged (Nicholson, 1998: 291). From the outcome of this issue, we can conclude that selectively introducing science into this realm, without regard for various interpretations, is erroneous.

5. Ethical Studies and Gender-Centered Ethics

The second way to validate the differences between male and female moral virtues is to show, based on ethical reflections and studies conducted in this field, that women's moral perspectives on issues differ from men's. If we believe that men and women are identical and that their sexual differences are not significant enough to warrant different moral judgments, then we cannot accept the aforementioned Hadith. Therefore, one way to defend this Hadith is to clarify that men and women are not equivalent in terms of ethics and approaches to moral issues, and if someone can demonstrate that gender is

intrinsically and indissolubly linked to moral virtues, then this Hadith would be acceptable.

Considering the similarities and differences between men and women biologically, we can identify three dominant paradigms concerning the connection between ethics and gender throughout the history of ethical thought, which have developed consecutively. These three views, in historical order, are:

- 1) The dominant Greek view of female inferiority;
- 2) The egalitarian view from the eighteenth century asserting the equivalence of women and men;
- 3) The separatist view of twentieth-century feminist difference.

The prevailing view in most societies until the eighteenth century was that male virtues differ from female virtues. From this perspective, since men and women are not at the same level of intellectual and emotional development, it is inevitable that different moral judgments should be imposed on them. In some of his works, Plato strongly insists on the equality of men and women, yet in other instances, we see him defending the superiority of men over women. In his dialogue "The Republic," he speaks of the equality between men and women and the necessity of equal education for both sexes (Plato, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 272). He also attributes to "Meno" the assertion that the main virtue of a man lies in the management of the city, while a woman's main virtue is in household management and obedience to her husband. However, Socrates challenges him by stating that since virtue has a single example or form, its manifestations should be the same in everyone (Meno, 2003: 6, 175).

Nevertheless, in his dialogue "Timaeus," Plato considers women to be a degraded and transformed version of men (Plato, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 3, 1918).

Aristotle also bases his ethical system on the differences between the two sexes. He rules, based on his natural system, that some humans are complete while others are incomplete; hence, "Some living beings are destined for rule or obedience from the very moment of their birth." (Aristotle, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 10) The first book of "Politics" is largely dedicated to the elaboration of this idea. In this book, he identifies three groups: men, women, and slaves. Slaves are no more than tools in the hands of their masters. Women are also subordinate to men. Therefore, complete virtue is associated with men, while incomplete virtue pertains to women. Consequently, free men dominate over women and slaves (ibid: 37).

But 'Why should a woman be subordinate to a man?' Aristotle answers that it is because the rational power of a man is stronger than that of a woman, and just as the rational part of the soul should govern the non-rational part, men should also govern women. However, 'How does he arrive at this conclusion that the rational power of a man is greater than that of a woman?' Aristotle responds: Because men dominate over women. In fact, Aristotle, knowingly or unknowingly, becomes trapped in a circular reasoning that he cannot escape from, and as Barker remarks, to justify the supremacy of men over women; he refers to the dominant part of the soul in men; but 'How do we know that the soul has a dominant and a non-dominant part?' From the fact that men dominate over women (ibid: 36).

The conclusion is that, from Aristotle's perspective, a slave lacks the power of thought, and a woman has imperfect reasoning. For this reason, their moral virtues should also correspond to their respective conditions. In his treatise "Poetics," he explicitly states that: "A woman may also possess good character, and likewise, a slave may have a commendable character, although a woman may have been created in a lower status than a man and a slave certainly is a lowly and inferior being." (Aristotle, 1989 AD/1369 SH: 139) Aristotle's statement, from which different moral virtues for women and men arise, is now considered "Disgraceful." (Talissee, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 37)

Despite the critiques that occasionally targeted this Aristotelian view, his opinion was largely accepted and reproduced in various forms over the subsequent centuries. For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with the belief that "Women are essentially made for the pleasure of men," (Rousseau, 1970 AD/1349 SH: 433) claimed that "The duties of women and men are not the same," (ibid: 434) citing the differences between the two sexes. He divided virtues into domestic and social virtues and believed that women should possess domestic virtues, stating that "The method of educating women should be the opposite of the method for educating men." (ibid: 439) Kant, Hegel, and Freud each held a similar view to varying extents, to the point where Kant believed that "Laziness is found more in women than in men, and this is certainly compatible with their nature." (Kant, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 248)

124 In contrast to this dominant old view, a second perspective emerged in the 18th century, advocating for the moral equality of

women and men. One of its pioneers was Mary Wollstonecraft, who critiqued Rousseau and defended her position in her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Women." (Grimshaw, 2000: 491)

Furthermore, we witness a third perspective that emphasizes the moral differences between women and men but prioritizes feminine virtues over masculine ones. For instance, Mary Daly considers women's nature to be kind and men's nature to be harsh. Historically, women's emotional nature has been emphasized and seen as a reason for their inferiority. However, today, some advocates of feminine ethics regard this emotional predominance as valuable and argue that conventional rationality has led to the destruction of the Earth (Porter, 1999: 4). Thus, some feminist thinkers claim the existence of a type of ethics based on gender difference and specific moral virtues for women. The most famous formulation of this view can be found in the well-known book by Carol Gilligan.

She based her theory on the findings and theories of Lawrence Kohlberg and critiqued them. Gilligan utilized Kohlberg's findings against him, asserting that his research was influenced by male-centric tendencies. In this way, she established the framework of care ethics, which emphasizes tangible relationships rather than abstract rules. Nell Noddings argues in her book "Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education" (1986) that ethics based on rules and principles is inherently insufficient, while a contextual and objective perspective can address our issues.

In critiquing this new distinction between female and male ethics, some have claimed that it is shaped by the upbringing and roles of

individuals rather than their gender. For instance, Sara Ruddick argues in her article "Maternal Thinking" that women gain experiences from childbirth and parenting that impact their moral lives and determine their moral prioritization. However, once women enter the labor market and engage with economic issues, they tend to adopt male patterns in their work environment (Grimshaw, 2000: 498). Additionally, Nunner-Winkler, in her article 'Is There a Feminine Ethics?' posits that the difference in moral judgment between women and men arises from their roles in society, not from an essential trait (Nunner-Winkler, 2002: 1, 344). These discussions continue in the context of defending or critiquing care ethics. I have independently analyzed care ethics, its interpretations, and the possibility of establishing an ethics based on gender, and overall, I have not found sufficient evidence to support it (Eslami Ardakani, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 42).

The only remaining pathway is to use religious sources to defend the content of this hadith. In this regard, we must first examine the chain of the hadith to verify its authenticity, and then analyze its content to reveal any existing compatibilities or inconsistencies.

Regarding the chain of the hadith, aside from Sayyid *Raḍī*, four other individuals have narrated this hadith. Among these narrators, the only one predating Sayyid *Raḍī* (who passed away in 406 AH) is *Abū Ṭālib Makkī* (who died in 386 AH); thus, the source of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is likely this *Makkī* narration in "*Qūt al-Qulūb*." He also presented his narration in this book in an unbroken chain. Contemporary collectors of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, who aimed to provide the complete text, have also attributed their narration to this source

(al-Mousavi, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 7, 655; al-Tamīmī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 809). Jafari has also been unable to present the chain for this hadith (1977 AD/1356 SH: 124). Although *Kāshif al-Ghiṭā* believes that *Nahj al-Balāghah* has not undergone any changes since the time of the *Sharīfayn* and that the original manuscript written by the collector exists in such a way that even "One Word" does not added (n.d.: 114), in practice, one must accept the existence of changes in this text, the most significant of which is the absence of certain aphorisms in some manuscripts. Although he has attempted to extract the authentic texts of the sayings of Imam Ali (AS) from historical documents, he has not succeeded in finding a chain for this hadith.

More importantly, this hadith is not found in some of the older versions of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, such as "*Ḥadāiq al-Ḥaqā'iq fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*," which was written in the sixth century (Kīdhrī Bayhaqī, 1996 AD/1375 SH), or "*Ma'ārij Nahj al-Balāghah*," which is considered the first commentary remaining on *Nahj al-Balāghah* (Bayhaqī Anṣārī, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 99), and "*Nahj al-Balāghah*" by *Ibrahim al-Sayyid*, in which he has sought to document in his book only those statements whose authenticity to Imam Ali is certain by reviewing historical sources. He, being a researcher of Ahl al-Sunnah, has not included this hadith in his "Authentic" *Nahj al-Balāghah* (al-Sayyid, 1986: 83). Thus, we are faced with an unbroken hadith that has not been reported in some older versions as well.

The content of this hadith also cannot withstand serious criticism. This hadith has a reasoned structure; it presents a claim and argues in favor of it. Here, we encounter three arguments, none of which are

acceptable. First, a positive connection is established between arrogance and chastity, with the claim that an arrogant woman does not submit herself to others; however, there is no necessary relationship between these two. What prevents a person from deviating is faith or fear of punishment, or the need to conform to society, not arrogance. Even if the above argument were accepted, at most it would mean that an arrogant person does not submit themselves to any "Nobody," yet the possibility of empathy with "Others" and peers remains.

A more significant point regarding arrogance is that this vice is considered one of the most contemptible in religious tradition, and much has been said about its harms, one of which is its deterrent effect on perfection and its destructive nature. From this perspective, this vice applies equally to both women and men.

The argument made in favor of women's stinginess also lacks substantial strength. It is stated that a stingy woman keeps her own wealth as well as her husband's. However, as clearly mentioned in the narrations, stinginess has its roots in distrust of God Almighty; as Imam Ali (AS) said: "Stinginess, fear, and greed are separate traits, and their common source is ill suspicion of God." (Shahidi, Letter 53, p. 328) Additionally, in another instance, Imam Ali (AS) praises the generosity of women (Mahmoudi, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 10, 287. It should be noted that Mahmoudi forgets and does not mention the source of this hadith). In essence, the praise of feminine stinginess reflects the pre-Islamic Arab culture, which was counter to masculine assertiveness.

The argument made in favor of women's fearfulness is also untenable. While courage and risk-taking may lead women into trouble, it is equally true that fearful women have become victims. For this reason, commentators have attempted to limit the scope and sometimes the meaning of these traits, which ultimately proven ineffective.

Conclusion

The hadith that speaks of the duality of masculine and feminine virtues itself cannot withstand external and internal criticism. The chain of this hadith is *Mursal*, and the oldest text in which it appears is a Sufi one. The content of the hadith is also confused and incoherent, and the arguments presented do not support its essence. Moreover, the overall meaning of the hadith contradicts the ethical teachings of the Holy Quran. Scientific findings, moral considerations, and religious teachings do not support its content either. Investigations indicate that this statement reflects an ancient and ignorant belief about the differences in moral virtues between women and men, which gradually, in an effort to gain greater acceptance, has taken on the form of a hadith attributed to Imam Ali (AS). Of course, we have other hadiths with similar content in religious tradition, but analyzing them might lead us to the same conclusion.

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