



guard their (own) chastity and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember — Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.” (33:35)

الذَّكِرِينَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَالذَّكِرَاتِ اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ  
لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّ اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

This verse declares that every good quality which Islam requires a Muslim to attain can be attained equally by men and women. And the reward bestowed for that attainment is the same for men and women for the same level of attainment. Thus men and women benefit equally from fasting. This verse is like those covering statements we see in some modern documents which say that the use of the masculine forms ‘he’, ‘him’ etc. in the document includes women as well. This verse tells us, once and for all, that wherever in the Quran we come across descriptions in the masculine gender such as “those who submit”, “those who believe”, “the truthful”, etc., they apply also to females.

This verse also mentions “the men who guard their chastity (i.e., their own chastity) and the women who guard”. In Muslim societies, and in fact in some non-Muslim societies also, men regard themselves as being in-charge of guarding women’s morality and purity of character, while devoting little thought to guarding their own chastity. They keep a close watch to see if a woman has done something improper, but they are not concerned about their own improper behaviour. But the Quran here lays the duty on men, as well as women, to be concerned about *their own character* in the first place.

- The verse quoted above includes the following quality: “the obeying men (*qānitīn*) and the obeying women (*qānitāt*)”. It clearly means obedience to Allah in case of both men and women. Elsewhere in the Quran, it says:

“...So the good women are obedient (*qānitāt*), guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded. ...” (4:34)

فَالصّٰلِحٰتُ قٰنِتٰتٌ حٰفِظٰتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا  
حَفِظَ اللّٰهُ

Here again, by comparison with 33:35, it must mean obedient *to Allah*. But it is wrongly considered to mean obedient *to the husband*. The “guarding the unseen”, similar to the guarding of chastity mentioned in 33:35, refers to guarding those private matters in the marital relationship which Allah requires us to guard.