
The Muslim Woman & Her Status in the Ummah

Article taken and slightly adapted from: abdurrahman.org

[From Al-Istiqamah Magazine, Issue No. 1, Dhul-Hijjah 1416H / May 1996CE.]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

[This small article was a response to a particular question concerning the position and status of Muslim women, and has been taken from his Majmoo' Fataawaa wa Maqaalaat Mutanawwi'ah (3/348-350).]

Shaykh Abdul-Azeez ibn Baaz (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹: The status of the Muslim woman in Islaam is a very noble and lofty one, and her effect is very great in the life of every Muslim. Indeed, the Muslim woman is the initial teacher in the building of a righteous society, providing she follows the guidance from the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. Since adherence to the Qur'aan and the Sunnah distances every Muslim male or female from being misguided in any matter. The misguidance that the various nations suffer from, the path of Allaah the Most Perfect, the Most High, and from what His Prophets and Messengers, may Allaah's peace and prayers be upon them all, came with. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: **"I am leaving behind two matters, you will not go astray as long as you cling to them both, the Book of Allaah and my Sunnah."**²

The great importance of the Muslim woman's role – whether as wife, sister or daughter, and the rights that are due to her and the obligations due from her have been explained in the noble Qur'aan, and further details of this have been explained in the purified Sunnah.

The secret of her importance lies in the tremendous burden and responsibility that is placed upon her, and the difficulties that she has to shoulder. In terms of responsibilities, some of which not even a man can bear. This is why from the most important obligations upon a person is to show gratitude to the mother, and kindness and good companionship with her. And in this matter, she is to be given precedence over and above the father. Allaah the Most High, says:

"And We have enjoined upon man to be dutiful and good to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness upon weakness and hardship upon hardship, and his weaning is in two

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

² Hasan: Related by Maalik in al-Muwatta (2/899) and al-Haakim (1/93), from Ibn 'Abbaas radiiallaahu 'anhu. It was authenticated by al-Albaanee in as-Saheehah (no.1871).

The Muslim Woman & Her Status in the Ummah

years. Show gratitude and thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination.”³

Allah the Most High, said: **“And We have enjoined upon man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship, and she brings him forth with hardship. And the bearing and the weaning of him is thirty months.”**⁴

A man came to Allaah’s Messenger sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam and said: **O Messenger of Allaah! Who from amongst mankind warrants the best companionship from me. He replied: “Your mother.” The man asked: Then who? So he replied: “Your mother.” The man asked: Then who? So the Prophet replied again: “Your mother.” The man then asked: Then who? So he replied: “Then your father.”**⁵ So this necessitates that the mother is given three times the likes of kindness and good treatment than the father.

As regards the wife, then her effect in making the soul tranquil and serene, has been clearly shown in the noble aayah (verse), in His – the Most High’s – saying:

“And from amongst His Signs is this: That He created for you wives from amongst yourselves, so that you may find serenity and tranquillity in them, And He has put between you love and compassion. Indeed, in this are signs for those who reflect.”⁶

Al-Haafidh Ibn Katheer (d.774H) – rahimahullaah – said, whilst explaining the terms mawaddah and rahmah which occur in the above verse. “Al-mawaddah means love and affection, and ar-rahmah means compassion and pity, since a man takes the hand of a woman either due to his love for her, or because of compassion and pity for her; by giving to her a child from himself...”

And the unique stance that the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam’s wife Khadeejah – radiallaahu ‘anhaa – took, had a huge effect in calming and reassuring Allaah’s Messenger sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, when the angel Jibreel – ‘alayhis-salaam – first came to him in the cave of Hira. The Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam returned to Khadeejah with the first Revelation and with his heart trembling and beating severely, saying to her, **“Cover me! Cover me!”** So she covered him until his fear was over, after which he told Khadeejah – radiallaahu ‘anhaa – everything that had happened, and said: **“I fear that something may happen to me.”** She said to him: **“Never! By Allaah! Allaah will never disgrace you. You keep good ties with relations, you help the poor and the destitute, you serve your guests generously and assist those who have been affected with calamities.”**⁷

³ Soorah Luqmaan 31:14

⁴ Soorah al-Ahqaaf 46:15

⁵ Related by al-Bukhaaree (no. 5971) and Muslim (7/2), from Aboo Hurayrah radiallaahu ‘anhu.

⁶ Soorah ar-Room 30:21

⁷ Related by al-Bukhaaree (1/22) and Muslim (1/139), from the lengthy narration of ‘A’ishah radiallaahu ‘anhaa.

The Muslim Woman & Her Status in the Ummah

And do not forget about 'Aishah – radiiallaahu 'anhaa – and her immense contribution. Even the eminent Sahaabah (Companions) used to take knowledge of Hadeeth from her, and many of the Sahaabiyaat (female Companions) learnt the various rulings pertaining to women's issues from her.

And I have no doubt that my mother (may Allaah shower His mercy upon her) had a tremendous effect upon me, and has a great excellence over me, in encouraging me to study, and she assisted me in it. May Allaah greatly increase her reward and reward her with the best of rewards for what she did for me. And there is no doubt also, that the house in which there is kindness, gentleness, love and care, with the correct Islaamic tarbiyah (education and cultivation) will greatly affect the man. So he will become, if Allaah wills, successful in his affairs and in any matter whether it be seeking knowledge, trading, earning a living, etc. So it is Allaah alone that I ask to grant us all success and to guide us all to that which He loves and is pleased with. And may the prayers and peace of Allaah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his Family, his Companions and his followers.