

Woman in Islam: Role as Mother

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Apart from her role as a wife, the Muslim woman has a very important role as mother. The status and value attached to parents in the Muslim world is very high. A woman becomes complete when she becomes a mother. Enjoying her power of creativity and grade of superiority over man, she experiences those precious feelings and senses, which nature gives only to woman. There is no doubt that as a mother, she is superior to man and is the nucleus of her family!

Noble Qur'an says:

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little." Noble Qur'an (17:23-24)

Again Noble Qur'an says:

And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents - his mother bears him with faintings upon faintings and his weaning takes two years - saying: Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual coming. And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to Me, then to Me is your return, then will I inform you of what you did. Noble Qur'an (31:14-15)

In Islam every day is Mother's Day

One day a man came to see the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. It seemed that he was trying to solve something but couldn't quite work it out. So he asked the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. "Tell me, O Prophet of Allah! I have many relatives and many friends whom I love, and whom I wish to care for and help. But I often find it difficult to decide which of them has the greatest claim upon me? Which of them should come first?" The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny replied immediately, "Your mother should come first and before all others."

The man was very pleased to have this clear guidance from the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. But of course there were all his other relatives and

his friends, so he asked again: "And after my mother, who has the greatest claim upon me?" The Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny reply this second time surprised him. "Your mother!" he said again.

The man wondered why the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny was repeating himself. Perhaps he had not spoken clearly, the man thought, so he asked the question again, "What I want to know is, after my mother, who has the greatest claim upon me? Again the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny said "your mother!"

Your mother, your mother, your mother!

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny had now said it three times. Slowly, the man realized why he had done so. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny means that my mother is extremely important, so much so that my duty to her must be stressed over and over again. Even so, the man's thoughts ran on, "what about all the others I love and wish to care for?" Still uncertain and wanting to know more, he once again turned to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny and said, "and after my mother, who comes after her? Is there anyone besides her?" The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny then replied "after your mother, your father." And then? asked the man. "Then people who are nearest to you," said the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. In universal religion Islam, mother has three times more rights over her off springs than their father because of her significant and crucial role in their birth, brought-up and home education. In another hadith the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny has said: *"Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."* In other words Paradise awaits those who cherish and respect their mothers.

The Muslim mother has consequently a great feeling of security about the type of care and consideration she can expect from her children when she reaches old age. As the verse of Noble Qur'an quoted above indicates, thankfulness to parents is linked with thankfulness to Allah, and a failure in either of these respects is indeed a major failure in one's religious duties. The principles of Islam made explicit in Noble Qur'an and hadith are belief and good conduct, and good conduct begins at home with one's closest relatives. A Westerner who has had close contact with a Muslim society cannot fail to be struck by the love and respect given to parents and the honour shown to old people in general, both men and women, as a direct application of these principles of Islam.

Muslim Relation with Non-Muslim Parents: Mother's Rights in Islam

It was for some time that Zakariyya, son of Ibrahim, felt attracted towards Islam although his father, mother and all the family members were Christians and he too was the believer of Christianity. Both his conscience and heart were inviting him towards Islam. At last, against the liking of his father, mother and family-members, he accepted Islam and surrendered himself to the commandments of Islam.

The Hajj pilgrimage season commenced. Young Zakariyya left Kufa, Iraq with the objective of performing Hajj pilgrimage and had the honour of meeting Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) in Madina. Zakariyya narrated to Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) the incident of his acceptance of Islam. Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) enquired:

"What virtue of Islam attracted your attention?" Zakariyya replied: "I can only say that it was Allah's words in Noble Qur'an which impressed me and holds true in my case. Allah says to his Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny in Noble Qur'an: "O Prophet! Earlier you didn't know what the Book is and didn't know what the faith is, but We revealed to you this Qur'an and made it a light by which We guide whomsoever We wish."

Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) said: *"I confirm Allah has guided you."*

Then Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) said thrice:

"O Allah! You Yourself be a guide to him."

Afterwards Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) said:

"My son, now whatever questions you have, asks me".

The Youngman said: *"My father, mother and family-members, are all Christians. My mother is blind. I am associated to them and I am compelled to eat with them. What am I supposed to do in such circumstances?"*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (as): *"Do they eat pork?"*

Zakariyya: *"No, O son of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny! They don't even touch pork."*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (as): *"Then, there is nothing wrong in your association with them."*

Then Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) said: *"Be careful about your mother's health. Be kind to her till she is alive. When she dies, don't give her body to anyone else. You personally take charge of her corpse."* Here, don't tell anyone that you have met me. I will also come to Makkah. Insha Allah

(Allah willing), we will meet in Mina.

In Mina, the Young Zakariyya went in search of Imam Jafar Sadiq (as). There was a huge crowd around Imam Jafar Sadiq (as).

The people, like the children surrounding their teacher and asking questions one after the other without giving any time, were asking questions one after the other from Imam Jafar Sadiq (as)

.and were listening to his replies

The Hajj pilgrimage season came to an end and the Young Zakariyya returned to Kufa, Iraq. He had kept in mind Imam Jafar Sadiq's (as) advice. With firm determination, he started serving his mother and never failed to be kind and loving to his blind mother. Zakariyya served food to her with his own hands. He even used to check her clothes and head to see that no lice might be present. This change in the behavior of the son, mainly after his return from Makkah, was surprising for his mother. One day she asked her son:

"Dear Son! Earlier, when you followed our religion Christianity, you were not so kind to me. Now what has happened to you that though I and you are not the same in respect of religion, you are more kind to me than before?"

Zakariyya: *"Dear mother! A person from the descendants of our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny has told me to do so."*

Mother: *"Is he himself a Prophet?"*

Zakariyya: *"No, he is not a Prophet. He is the son of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny."*

Mother: *"My son! I think he himself is a Prophet as this type of advices and preaching's not given by anyone except the Prophets."*

Zakariyya: *"No mother! Be sure that he is not a Prophet. He is the son of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. Basically, no Prophet is supposed to come to earth after our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny."*

Mother: *"My son! Your religion Islam is very good. It is better than all the other religions. Teach me your religion Islam to me."*

The Young Zakariyya told his mother the 'Shahaadatayn' (meaning: *"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) is his Messenger"*).

Thus, the mother became a Muslim. Then the Young Zakariyya taught his blind mother the process of reciting salat (prayer). The mother grasped it and recited the Zuhr (noon) and the Asr (afternoon) salats. It became night. She succeeded in reciting both the Maghrib (evening) and the Isha (night) salats. Suddenly, late in the night, the mother's condition (of health) changed; she fell sick and got bed-laid. She called her son and said:

"My son, once more teach all the things you had taught me."

Once again, the son taught his mother the Shahaadatayn and all the principles of Islam, that is, belief in Allah, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), angels, the Divine Books and the Ma'ad (Day of Resurrection). The mother repeated all these as a symbol of her belief and acceptance and

offered her life to the Creator.

In the morning, the Muslims gathered for giving her Ghusl-e-Mayyat (obligatory bath to the dead) and her burial. The person, who recited Salatul Maiyyat (prayer for the dead) and buried her, was none but her young son, Zakariyya.

Woman in Islam: Mother's order

A mother's order is to be respected, even in comparison with Allah's command, on the condition that the action concerned does not fall within the imperative and obligatory injunction. An example of that is Jihad, in the way of Allah, or recommended prayers.

"A man came in the presence of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny and said: I like to perform Jihad in the cause of Allah, but my mother is not at all inclined towards my doing so. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny replied: Go back and remain with your mother. I swear by the Lord that has sent me on a true mission that to remain with one's mother for one night (and serving her and doing good to her) is better than performing Jihad in the cause of Allah for a year."

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny said, *"If you are performing recommended prayers and your father calls for you, do not break your prayers. But if your mother calls you, do break your prayers"*.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny said: *"A creature is not to be obeyed when it involves disobedience to the Creator"*