

The Muslim Woman: Her Status in the Ummah

- Shaykh 'Abdul 'Azeez Ibn Baaz (d.1420H) (rahimahullaah)

(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 building a righteous society, providing she follows the guidance from the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of the Messenger (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, and their being deviated does not come about except by being far away from the path of Allaah - the Most Perfect, the Most High - and from what His Prophets and Messngers - may Allaah's Peace and Prayers be upon them all - came with. The Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"I am leaving behind you 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 rights that are due from her - have been explained in the noble Qur`aan, and further detailed 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 she has to shoulder - responsibilities and diffiulties some of which not even a man bears. 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 Exalted says:

"And We have enjoined upon man to be good and dutiful to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness upon weakness and hardship upon hardship, and his weaning is in two years. Show gratitude and thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination." [Soorah Luqmaan 31:14]

Allaah the Exalted 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 weaning of him is thirty months." [Sooratul Ahqaaf 41:15]

A man came to the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said: "O Messenger of Allaah! Who from amongst mankind warrents the best companionship from me?" He replied:

"Your mother."

The man asked, "Then who?" So he replied:

"Your mother."

The man then asked, "Then who?" So the Prophet replied again:

"Your mother."

Then the man asked, "Then who?" So he replied:

"Your father." [3]

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 status and her effect in making the soul tranquil and serene has been clearly shown in the noble aayah (statement of Allaah), in His - the Exalted - saying:

"And from His signs is this: That He created for you wives amongst yourselves, so that you may find serenity and tranquility in them. And He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in this are signs for those who reflect." [Sooratur Room 30:21]

Al-Haafidh Ibn Katheer (d.774H) - rahimahullaah - said whilst explaining the terms muwaddah and rahmah which occur in the above aayah:

"Al-muwaddah means love and affection and ar-rahmah means compassion and pity - since a man takes 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..." [4]

And the unique stance that the Prophet's (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) wife Khadeejah - radiyallaahu 'anhaa - took, had a huge effect in calming and reassuring the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), when the angel Jibreel ('alayhis salaam) first came to the cave of Hiraah. So the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) returned to Khadeejah (radiyallaahu 'anhaa) with the first Revelation and with his heart beating and trembling severely, and he said to her:

"Cover me! Cover me!"

So she covered him until his fear was over, after which he told Khadeejah (radiyallaahu 'anhaa) everything that happened and said:

"I fear that something may happen to me."

So she said to him:

"Never! By Allaah! Allaah will never disgrace you. You keep good ties with the relations, you help the poor and the destitute, you serve your guests generously and assist those who have been afflicted with calamities." [5]

And do not forget about 'Aa`ishah (radiyallaahu 'anhaa) and her great effect. Since even the great Companions used to take the knowledge of Hadeeth from her, and many of the Sahaabiyaat (female Companions) learned 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, 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, along with the correct Islaamic tarbiyah (education and cultivation) will greatly effect 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, or other than this. So it is Allaah alone that I ask to grant 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.

Footnotes:

[1] He is the exemplary Scholar: Abu 'Abdullaah, 'Abdul 'Azeez Ibn 'Abdullaah Ibn Baaz. He was born in the city of Riyaadh (Saudi Arabia) on the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah in the year 1330H. He began seeking knowledge by first memorizing the Qur`aan before reaching the age of puberty. After this, He began to study noble sciences such as 'Aqeedah (beliefs), Fiqh (Islaamic Jurisprudence), Hadeeth (Prophetic Narrations), Usoolul-Fiqh (fundamentals of jurisprudence), Faraa`id (Laws of inheritance), Nahw (Grammar) and Sarf (morphology) - even though the Shaykh became permanently blind at the age of nineteen. He studied these sciences under some of the most prominent scholars of Riyaadh and Makkah of his time, including Shaykh Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Lateef Ibn 'Abdur Rahmaan Ibn Hasan and also the former Grand Muftee and noble scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Ibraaheem - whom he studied under for ten years. He lived to be eighty-nine years old, he was mild, generous and forbearing in nature, yet firm, whilst wise while speaking the truth. He was a zaahid (one who abstains) with respect to this world and he was one of the foremost scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah in his age. The noble Shaykh - by Allaah's grace - devoted his whole life to Islaam and it's people, authoring many books and booklets, teaching and serving the masses, along with being very active in the field of Da'wah. May Allaah forgive our noble father and Shaykh.

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

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

[3] Related by al-Bukhaaree (no. 5971) and Muslim (7/2), from Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu 'anhu).

[4] Tafseer Qur`aanil A'dtheem (3/439) of al-Haafidh Ibn Katheer.

[5] Related by al-Bukhaaree (1/22) and Muslim (1/139), from the lengthy narration of 'Aa`ishah (radiyallaahu 'anhaa).

<http://www.angelfire.com/me/anneesa/statuswomen.html>