

The Respect for Woman in Islam

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In the Islamic society the woman has an honored position and, beside her legal and civil rights, enjoys special respect, love, affection and the gentle feelings which she deserves most. Is she not the compassionate mother, the beloved wife and the affectionate daughter? The best expression of this reality is provided by the following verses from the Glorious Qur'an. "And We have enjoined man concerning his parents - His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years - Be grateful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the eventual coming. And they strive with you to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. Keep company with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who repents to Me. Then to Me is your return, and I shall inform you of what you did."

The Holy Qur'an (31: 14&15)

"And We have commanded man to be kind towards his parents. With trouble did his mother bear him, with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months; until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years, he says: My Lord! Arouse me that I may give thanks for your favour which you have bestowed upon me and my parents, and that I may do good which pleases you. And be gracious to me in the matter of my offspring. Surely I turn to you and surely I am of those who submit (Muslims)".

The Holy Qur'an (46:15)

"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none save Him, and (you show) kindness to parents. If one them or both of them reach old age with you, say not 'Fie' to them nor repulse them, but speak to them a generous word, And make yourself submissively gentle with compassion and say: Oh, Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me (when I was) little."

The Holy Qur'an (17: 23&24)

"And of His signs is this: He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."

Holy Qur'an (30: 21)

"...And treat them (women) kindly..."

Holy Qur'an (4: 19)

"...And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in a just manner..."

Holy Qur'an (2: 228)

"When you have divorced women, and they have reached their prescribed term, then either retain them in honour or release them in kindness..."

Holy Qur'an (2: 231)

The Traditions of the Prophet, like the Qur'an, also lay emphasis on the honor and status of the woman and grants her a respectable place in society. When a Tradition speaks of a woman and her social position, it surrounds her with a frame of love, endearment and affection, especially when it speaks of the mother, the wife and the daughter.

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), addressing the Muslims on the occasion of the farewell Pilgrimage warned them against the values which he feared would be neglected after him, and referred to woman as one of the important issues about whom he said:

"Observe your duty to Allah in respect to the women, and recommend them to be well treated."

According to the Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq (a.s.), the Prophet stressed his proximity to woman and her position in his life, by saying:

"It is of the manner of the Prophets to love women."

He is also quoted to have said:

"I do not think that a man gets better in faith without loving women better."

A man once sought the Imam Al-Sadiq's (a.s.) advice concerning women, saying that as his wife, who was agreeable to him, had died, he wanted to marry again.

The Imam told him, "See where you put yourself, whom you take as a partner in your life, and to whom you disclose your religion and secrets. So, if you have to, then marry a virgin known to be righteous and of good behavior".

A man came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Whom should I be more dutiful to?"

The Prophet (s.a.w.) replied, "To your mother." He asked, "Then to whom?" He replied, "To your mother." The man again asked, "Then to whom?" The prophet said, "To your father."

It is narrated that a foster-sister of the Prophet (s.a.w.) visited him one day. He was very pleased with her, spread out his cloak for her to sit on, and conversed with her merrily. After she went away, her brother arrived, but the Prophet did not receive him as warmly as he had received his sister, Later on when some one asked him the reason

for receiving the sister more courteously than her brother, although a man, the Prophet replied, "Because she was more dutiful to her parents than he."

Abu Khadijah quotes the Imam Al- Sadiq (a.s.) as follows:

"A man came to the Prophet and told him," "A girl was born to me. I brought her up till she reached puberty, I then dressed her, adorned her, brought her to a well and pushed her into it.

The last thing I heard was her pitiful cry: 'O father!' So, what atonement may I offer?"

The Prophet asked him, "Is your mother alive?" He replied, "No." He asked, "Do you have an

aunt? He said, "Yes," The Prophet instructed him, "Then be dutiful to her, as she is like a

mother, this will be your atonement for what you have done."

Abu Khadijah asked the Imam; "When the incident took place?" He replied, "During the period of Ignorance. As they used to kill the girls for fear that they would be taken captive and give birth

to

their children among other people".

The Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s.) is also quoted to have said:

"Whoever provides sustenance for three girls or three sisters, Paradise will surely be his." He

was asked. "What if two? He said," Even if two. "He was also asked." What if one? "He said,

'Even if one.'

The Imam Abu Al-Hasan Al-Rida (a.s.) is quoted to have said:

"The Prophet (S.A.) said "Allah the Exalted is more kind to females than males. Whoever brings pleasure to a woman of his close relatives, Allah will please him on the Judgement Day".

The Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Sons are a favor and daughters are good deeds, Allah questions about the favors, but rewards the good deeds."

The above were some of the examples from Islamic texts concerning woman. It is clear that Islam has called her to be honored, affectionately treated and cared for in an unprecedented way, which no

other civilization, culture and society has ever done.

What we have just related is a proof of the spirit of Islam, which came to honor mankind,

protect their rights and to spread the wings

of mercy all over the world.

We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds."

The Holy Qur'an (21: 107)

Therefore, Islam, through the above-mentioned text, speaks respectfully of woman- the mother, the wife, the daughter, the sister, endears her and takes care of her, stressing her being worthy of affection, mercy and generosity. It recommends woman before recommending man.

It regards the love of woman as a sign of faith.

*Nay, it even raises this love of woman to the level of being a `prophetic conduct', and it looks at
.her as a trustee who looks after a person's wealth, religion and secrets*