

# Lady Fatima al-Zahra (S.A): The Ideal Role Model

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In our era, with the creation of various industrial devices, human civilization has had many astonishing advancements. Today man's mastery over nature is not comparable to what it was anytime before. Today's human being has grasped various efficient methods for the planning of social engineering and the management of political, cultural and economic development. He has created some successful models and has devised some regulations on the field of social relations, the enforcement of which has increased social life's capacity for moving on a pre-planned path.

Unfortunately, despite all this in some areas of social relations including the issue of women in many parts of the world still there is such a situation as to prevent women from developing their individual and social status and this has kept them back in the same position as they were during the previous centuries. Despite all the progress human civilization has made, women are not yet being treated as equals to men and as independent human personalities.

Even more regrettably in the Islamic world despite the magnificent and progressive teachings of Islam, people's perceptions and practices about women are inconsistent with the lofty spirit of Islam. It seems obligatory to always remind the Muslims of the teachings of Islam and the conduct of the Islamic leaders so that with a better understanding of Islam the Muslims amend their behavior towards women. As an example, in this editorial we will briefly deal with the personality of Fatima (SA), the daughter of the Prophet (SAW), who is an exemplary woman and a role model for all of us. We state the Prophet's (SAW) perception of Fatima (SA), hoping that such a historical reminder will lead us all back to the true path of Islam as it was pronounced by the Prophet and also hoping that it will help us correct our ways and practices particularly in regard to women, who compose at least half of the human society.

According to the historical facts narrated by both Shi'a and Sunni sources, Fatima (SA) was an exemplary human being in the worship of God, which is the ultimate human perfection. In performing her family duties as a wife and a mother, Fatima (SA) was impeccable. In performing her social duties she had no shortcomings. She was also prominent for her knowledge and wisdom. In other words all the exalted human virtues which we see in the Prophet's household, had been taught to Fatima (SA).

It is evident that when someone has such exalted virtues like knowledge, worship of God, and personal and social commitment, that person will naturally have an elevated social and spiritual

status. And what would be the status of the people who haven't had such an upbringing? The ignorant people are deprived of any social status. These people whose potentials in the different walks of life, particularly regarding faith in God and personal and social commitment have not been developed, as long as they are in such a condition would be in the words of Qur'an worse than animals: "...they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors..." (Surah Al-A'raf, verse 179.) The way out of such a state is to develop one's potentials and to acquire virtue. The fact that Fatima (SA) was so distinguished in her faith in God, in knowledge, and in her personal and social commitment that it made it natural for the Prophet (SAW) to love her so much as to kiss her every night before sleeping, and to visit her before going on a journey and coming first to see her upon his return. He has said about her: "Fatima is a part of my body" and also: "Fatima is lord over all the women" and "Fatima is the lord of the women in heaven." Such respect and honor shown by the Prophet (SAW) towards his daughter Fatima (SA) certainly has a message for us about women's real position according to Islam. In Islam people's value is dependent on their virtues and whoever has the exalted human virtues he or she will be a valuable member of the society. In applying this rule there is no difference between men and women.

We hope that this historical reminder will awaken our fellow Muslims, so that they put the necessary effort into the upbringing of their daughters and thus elevate the social and spiritual position of women. We also hope that all of us, making use of the lofty teachings of Islam and following the conduct of the distinguished role models which Islam has introduced to us, take action to correct our perceptions, our viewpoints and our practices in line with God's commandments. Insha-Allah