

WOMAN AND ISLAM

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PREFACE

Many motivated misconceptions about Islam have been created and given currency in modern times. One of these relates to the position of women in Islam. It is declared from the rooftops that Islam does not admit equality of sexes and consequently the woman is denied her due in matters of human rights and role in society. And her claim to actively participate in the affairs of life on an equal footing with man is not entertained in Islam. The result is that her capabilities are stifled and she is condemned to play a secondary role. But in point of fact nothing can be farther from the truth. Islam was the first to raise its voice against the oppression and exploitation of woman and accorded her a place of dignity and honour in the society. Man and woman are equal before Allah and their actions are to be judged by the same yardstick. It, however, does not countenance the modern concept of equality which does not make any distinction in respective fields of their activity. According to the teachings of Islam, the proper sphere of woman's activity is home while outside world is the domain of the man. This division is not arbitrary but strictly in keeping with the demands of nature to ensure maximum utilisation of their respective capabilities. It seeks to protect the interest of woman and not to discriminate against her, and place her at a disadvantage. The woman, therefore, can play her legitimate role in the task of society-building only by abiding by this natural division of work. History bears testimony to it. By respecting these limits woman in the earlier periods of the Islamic history had risen to great heights and made enormous contributions. This book seeks to elucidate this point.

I have been engaged in writing on various aspects concerning rights and obligations of women for quite some time and published a number of books on the subject. It has been my endeavour to present fresh material in this book. The examples have been naturally taken from the early history of

Islam. Some juridical points have also been touched but difference of opinion among the jurists has not been discussed. For further details on the subject books of *fiqh* may be consulted.

The book is based on authentic evidence gleaned from the *Quran*, *Hadith* and *Seerah*. Every statement made herein has been fully substantiated. However, suggestions for improvement and correction of mistakes, which might have inadvertently crept in, would be appreciated.

The book, during its several editions, has been on the syllabi of some academic institutions. Its renditions into the Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati languages have been already published. Now Sister Zeenath Kausar has taken the responsibility of translating the book into English and she has eminently succeeded in her task. Here it may be pointed out that instead of quoting passages from the Quran and Hadith in original, as in the Urdu version, only English translation of relevant passages has been given.

The English version of the book was first brought out by Idara-e-Tahqeeq-o-Tasneef-e-Islami, Aligarh. Now Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, New Delhi is publishing its revised edition with better get-up and printing.

May Allah bless this effort with His favour and make it an instrument of better introduction of Islam and a source of inspiration for our womenfolk.

25 February 1979

S. Jalaluddin

WOMAN AND ISLAM

In the 6th century the greatest event of the history of mankind which shook the very basic ideals and concepts of man and brought about a complete revolution in his thoughts and views and a total change in his character, was the high-spirited and high-hearted proclamation of the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The result of this revolution was that it not only took a different turn in man's thought, but also gave a new direction to his life. One significant aspect of this new trend of thinking was the 'concept of woman' which underwent a complete change and thereby established the relationship between man and woman on entirely new grounds.

VOICE OF ISLAM PROTESTING AGAINST THE SUBJUGATION OF WOMAN

Before the advent of Islam and the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his proclamation of Prophethood, the history of woman was no doubt the history of subjugation and oppression. She was underestimated and condemned as a low and mean creature and was regarded as the root cause of all evils and disasters. Instructions were given to be careful about her and to avoid her like snakes and scorpions. She was bought and sold like animals. She did not enjoy any absolute or independent position in the society and was made subservient to man. She was denied all rights and had to live on the pity and mercy of man. In such a dark period of the history of woman, Islam raised its voice so vehemently that the whole world reverberated with it. Today no one dares say that her previous position was correct and real. It was loudly proclaimed:

*O mankind! Reverence
Your Guardian Lord,
Who created you*

*From a single soul
 Created, of like nature
 His mate, and from them twain
 Scattered (like seeds)
 Countless men and women:
 Reverence God, through Whom
 Ye demand your mutual (rights).
 And (reverence) the wombs
 (that bore) for God
 Ever watches over you.*

(4:1)

It was the announcement that the discrimination which the world has made between one man and the other is false, absurd and baseless. The whole mankind is the offspring of the single human soul. Originally all have the same descent. No one is noble or mean, or low or high by birth. All are equal and enjoy equal position. Any kind of distinction between them on the grounds of family status, race, colour, tribe, region, language, occupation or nationality is null and void.

ISLAM - THE FIRST STANDARD-BEARER OF THE EQUALITY OF MAN AND WOMAN

It was thus a repudiation of the age-old differences and discrimination between man and woman. It brought into light the fact that the very companion of the first man was not of some other kind but belonged to the same species. No different kind of creature was taken for his companionship, rather she was taken from him alone. This first pair gave birth to numerous men and women and among them some or the other kind of relationship existed and thus the whole human generation got spread far and wide. Hence to differentiate and discriminate between man and woman is in fact to differentiate and discriminate between one side of mankind and the other and is the division of the two parts of a single whole. There can be no better elucidation than this for the expression of the equality of man and woman and their equal status.

It is also stated that all human beings are the servants of one God and the children of one and the same father and mother. Therefore on the one side they should worship and obey God and lead their life in fear of Him and on the other, give due respect to the relationships which exist between them. Here, with the honour of man, the honour of woman is also emphasised.

THE SUCCESS OF MAN AND WOMAN DEPENDS ONLY ON THEIR FAITH AND PRACTICE

Islam totally repudiated the notion that man is dignified and honoured merely because he is a man and woman is low and mean simply because she is a woman. Both man and woman are equal in the eyes of Islam. Neither the inferiority of anyone nor superiority of anybody is written down for eternity. Whoever is adorned with faith and fair practice emerged successful here and in the hereafter and whoever is devoid of such qualities fails in this as well as in the eternal world:

*Whoever works righteousness,
Man or woman, and has faith,
Verily, to him will We give
A new life, a life
That is good and pure, and We
Will bestow on such their reward
According to the best
Of their actions.*

(16:97)

THE FIELD OF WOMAN IS HER HOUSE

Islam assigns different spheres of activity for man and woman. The field of work of woman is her own house and of men is the world outside. What the Qur'an instructs the honourable wives of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) holds true for all such women as believe in Allah and His Messenger.

Generally, two objections are raised against the position of woman in Islam. First, that the great responsibility of household affairs which is imposed upon her, would debar her from participating in the economic and social development. For this reason it is assumed that her position in the society would not be definite, but would be weak and unstable.

Regarding this, it needs to be clarified, that Islam has not barred woman from economic activities, rather it has given permission while imposing on her a few appropriate limitations. Although it is doubtless that her involvement in family affairs affects her economic struggle, Islam offers its own solution to it. Islam has held man legally responsible for the maintenance of his wife and children.

The second objection is that since the great responsibility of the house is vested in woman, she is confined to the four walls of the house. It is conceived that since she is completely engrossed in the home affairs, neither the society would be benefited from her abilities nor would she get any opportunity to contribute her potentialities to society.

This objection is also incorrect and without any substance. Islam has not forbidden woman from other activities which stand beyond the household activities. What Islam virtually intends and emphasises in this regard is that a woman is mainly a queen and fore-runner of her house. Hence, she should not bear the outward burden of the work at the risk of her indoor work. She is allowed to participate in the economic struggle with man while performing her role in the family affairs. Furthermore, she can take interest and contribute her abilities in different fields of life while keeping into consideration her condition, social environment and her own interest. History bears witness to the fact that the Muslim women have manifested their abilities, skill and talent in different fields of life and have left a tremendous impact on the age.

The most important thing is, Islam has assigned woman a prominent position at social level. Hence, she can lead an

honoured and dignified life without becoming a victim of any inferiority complex. She can, in fact, offer her fullest co-operation to man in building up a chaste and virtuous society while contributing her potentialities and abilities which she possesses.

FIRST REASON

There are two important reasons for which Islam assigns different spheres of activity to man and woman.

First, it helps them guard their chastity. When both of them perform their work in the same sphere, it will become difficult for them to lead a life of chastity and modesty. If man and woman mix with each other in educational institutions to pursue education and participate in sports and games and other recreations in parks and picnic spots and engage themselves openly in markets and in business centres without any checks and balances and meet each other without any restriction and this process of intermingling continues not for a day or two but for years together and in this way all the stages from childhood to youth and from youth to old age will be crossed, it is certain that their physical urges will get excited and flared up and will become uncontrolled and unchecked and ultimately they will become victims of indecent sexual anarchy.

In the present age, wherever free mixing of man and woman has been granted, it has resulted in a disaster. Chastity and honour are ravaged and modesty and decency are crippled. It gives rise to vulgar and ignoble sexual lapses which like an epidemic disease goes to such an extent that it becomes difficult to cure and correct it. And now it is taken as an inescapable social evil. Also all the evil results of it are willingly or unwillingly tolerated.

Chastity and modesty are apparently moral values, and it is on this basis that the direction of the whole society is determined. In a society where no importance is given to these values, man from every direction is taken to debased and evil

acts and adultery. It gives rise to a particular kind of culture, civilisation, association, manners and literature, each element of which ignites fire in the sexual emotions of man. Contrary to it, the society which realises the importance and value of chastity and purity is erected entirely on a different standard. Each act of such a society reflects the purity of character, modesty and decency, and piety and purity fills the whole environment.

Islam is very sensitive to the chastity and purity of a man. It forbids free mixing and unrestricted meeting between man and woman. Islam considers it wrong to let man and woman mix with each other in their fields of work and let themselves involve in a severe test from where it is difficult to return. Islam not only forbids the acts of adultery but also prohibits man and woman to go near it.

The Qur'an says:

*Nor come nigh to adultery:
For it is a shameful (deed)
And an evil, opening the road,
(to other evils).*

(17:32)

SECOND REASON

The second reason to assign different fields of work for man and woman is that their abilities and potentialities differ with each other. It is a fact that a woman is physically weaker than a man. She cannot bear hardship and strains.

Woman passes through such stages of life which restrict her from performing heavy work constantly. Her menstrual period begins from her youth and continues until she steps into the old age. Moreover, she passes through the most difficult and arduous stages like pregnancy and delivery. All these conditions and stages affect her health, strength and manner and stand as obstacles on the way of constant and laborious work. Now, it is the question of justice that she should not be given any tedious and wearisome works. Islam, therefore, assigns the work which requires more strength and valour to man and the work which is not hard and tedious to woman. Islam solves the problem thus that woman should look after the house while man should perform outside duties.

The very nature, interest and the psychology of woman demands the same sort of work. Woman in herself possesses the qualities of grace, love, patience, devotion and sacrifice more than a man. She fills the whole atmosphere of the family with happiness and order, peace and tranquility and love and affection. But to face the hardships and difficulties of life and to march forward firmly on all ups and downs, strong determination, bravery and intrepidity are the qualities which are required. Man possesses all these qualities far more than woman. The home and the family, however, provide a peaceful environment. The abilities of woman distinctively appear more sharply in the house from which full advantage can be derived. Man can face the complications and problems of life. For this reason man should be given such responsibilities as require more courage and valour.

THE LOSS OF WOMAN IN LEAVING THE HOUSE

It is no fairness to woman that she should be taken out from her natural field of work and be pushed into an unnatural field of work. It is not advantageous for her, rather a great loss.

The pains of menstrual period, pregnancy and delivery are unavoidable. Man can hardly assist her in all these difficulties and complications. It is, therefore, not a fair play if she is also given the responsibilities of man.

The woman is the queen of the house. She gets all the love and affection from her father, brother and husband and all the members of her family and all her rights are protected in the house. If woman does not bear the responsibility of the house, she cannot claim her rights. Thereafter she will have to work in such a field to pass her life which will not be in fact her own field and where she will have to face such a partner at every step who will be stronger than her. Then, it can be hardly expected that she will surpass man.

THE BASIC IMPORTANCE OF THE HOUSE

The place of honour and dignity of a woman is her own house, not the market. But in the present age, the importance of house and family is not fully recognised. It is the reason that the important role of woman in the house is interpreted as an injustice to her or that it gives her a low and mean position in the society or to deny her rights which she possesses or to condemn her constantly to the lowest position though a family is the basic unit of every society. The importance and significance of the house stands far ahead than of an office or a bazar. The service which a woman renders in building the inner environment of her house is more important than the service which she can render outside. Here some aspects of her work are mentioned.

THE SERVICES OF WOMAN IN THE HOUSE

1. Today, man is engrossed in innumerable political, social, cultural and other problems. Other factors like health, diseases, poverty, difficulties also coincide with these problems. Sometimes for earning and living, man struggles too severely, bears all kinds of pains and faces innumerable difficulties. For maintaining and uplifting his family, he overcomes insurmountable hardships. In such a state of affairs, he deserves mental peace and content. It is the home which can provide him with all this peace and rest. If he does not get peace even at his own home, it becomes too hard for him to live. Islam teaches that a woman should make her home a 'peaceful dwelling' so that man should forget all his tensions and complications after reaching his home and prepare himself for a fresh struggle after breathing an air of gratification.
2. It has become an established fact that there is no better nourishment for a child than the milk of his mother. If a mother does not stay at home and engages herself in outside activities, she cannot set herself for breast-feeding. In this way the proper nourishment of the child for a considerable period even after the age of breast-feeding depends on mother. For the proper bringing up of the child, it is not just enough to give him proper nourishment but the child abundantly needs the love and affection, sympathy and an earnest devotion of his mother. If he is devoid of love and emotions from his nearest environment, his whole personality gets affected and even if his personality blossoms it will develop in a very wrong direction. It is the heart of mother which is the source of inspiration for the child. Nobody else can take the place of woman for playing a decisive role. If the mother remains outside the home, the child would yearn for the love of his mother and he will not get it.
3. For the basic education and training of the child, mother is most suitable. For the purpose of education of the child, it

is necessary that his teachers should be very loving and devoted to him, and should be acquainted with the nature and psychology of the child, and tolerate all his mischiefs and check him with love and patience. The most important thing is that the child should also love the teacher and consider even the bitterest scolding of the teacher to be good and beneficial for his well-being and tolerate even the harshness of the teacher. These sorts of feelings do not prevail between any two persons other than between mother and child. Let us look at another aspect. From educational point of view, it is extremely important that there should prevail an intimate and cordial relationship between the teacher and the child. The stronger this relationship, the better and beneficial it would be for the child. Perhaps, because of this reason, classes of higher standards are not much liked in schools because there the relationship between the teacher and the child is weaker in most of the cases. Comparatively, the classes of the lower standards are liked much because here this relationship is found to be stronger. In this manner the mother can provide basic education for her children which they cannot possibly acquire even at school.

Most of the children do not obtain proper education because they do not get better tutors at home or their parents are not able to afford tutors for them. Furthermore, most of the parents do not get proper tutors for their daughters. If the mother is capable enough to educate her children and even feel that it is her responsibility to give proper education to her children, the expenditure which is incurred on education will also get curtailed and help solve many other problems.

Here, one important point from the Muslim outlook on education is that today little attention is being paid to religious education. Very few children obtain religious education. Consequently, the child is sent to school when he has reached the age of school going. He does not get any opportunity even the preliminary religious instructions. Therefore, even the

children of some good and God-fearing people remain ignorant of the basic religious tenets. The reason behind all this is that the father does not get time to give them religious instructions and the mother either herself lacks such education or does not take interest in education. If the mother is thoughtful enough and also capable of giving education to her children, they will not be ignorant of their religion, even after obtaining education in schools.

Even for training the children, the role of the mother is most important and significant. It is the mother who stands as an ideal for a child. The child observes the morals and etiquette of his mother day and night and moulds his behaviour noting the behaviour of his mother. The child maintains the same sort of relationship between himself and others on the mode of the relationship which his mother maintains between herself and others. Mother is his virtual model in this aspect and plays a decisive role in moulding the character of her child.

The fact is that the construction of a society depends upon the construction of a house. This is the reason that Islam has completely relied upon woman to construct her house. Islam does not wish to thrust on her other burdens along with this responsibility. The woman is freed even from the financial responsibilities. In the light of Islam, the construction of their house is no less important than Jihad. Hazrat Anas related that once a group of women asked Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that men perform some acts and attain the reward of Jihad, what we should do to get such reward which men get through Jihad in the way of God? Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) replied that woman who sits at home receives the reward of Jihad in the way of God.¹

1. Tafseer Ibn-e-Katheer, 3: 482.

THE STATUS AND ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMAN AT HOME

The legal, moral and social status of woman is not affected in any way if she engages herself in the maintenance and upliftment of the home. Islam, on the one hand, safeguards all her rights by law and on the other, instructs society to render her a kind and fair treatment. Islam creates such an environment that whatever position woman assumes, she holds it with all her dignity and honour. As long as such an encouragement prevails, no change can ever occur in her honour and dignity. There are three prominent positions of woman at home – a daughter, a wife and a mother. Islam bestows great rank and position on her in all her three roles. No one can pull her back from this high position while she remains in the fold of Islam.

MOTHER:

Islam assigns the highest rank, after Almighty Allah and His Prophet, to mother. Islam instructs man to give just and fair treatment to both father and mother and commands him for their obedience because both of them confer benevolence on him. But, in the Qur'an and Hadith, reference to the great benevolence of mother occurs more evidently and prominently. The Qur'an says:

And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents:
in travail upon travail.

*Did his mother bear him,
And in years twain
Was his weaning (hear the command)
'Show gratitude to Me and to your parents:
To Me is (your final) goal.*

(31:14)

At another place Allah Almighty says:

*We have enjoined on man
Kindness to his parents:
In pain did his mother
Bear him, and in pain
Did she give him birth
The carrying of the (child)
To his weaning is
(a period of) thirty months.*

(46:15)

In all the works of child upbringing like feeding, nursing, education and training, the father participates with mother. But it is only the mother who bears all the pains and troubles of pregnancy and delivery individually. To bear the burden of pregnancy for nine long months, to give birth to a child after a great struggle of life and death and to feed her child out of her own blood and to lead a life of full care and strict precaution in all these stages is not at all an easy task. Father does not undertake all these hardships and does not bear all this pain. Therefore the benevolence and favours of mother on man are more than those of the father.

There are several Hadith which draw our attention towards rendering great service and obedience to mother and to behave politely with her. Some of its precepts are being discussed here.

1. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructed man to give fair and just treatment to both father and mother. But the Prophet stressed the fair treatment more to mother. The Prophet said:

‘I enjoin man about his mother, I enjoin man about his mother, I enjoin man about his mother, I enjoin man about his mother.’¹

1. Ibn-e-Maja, Sunan, The Book of Al-Adab, Chapter, Obedience to Parents, Hakim, Mustadrak, Vol.4, p. 150.

Hazrat Aisha reported that she enquired: 'O Messenger of God, who has the greatest right on woman?' The Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, replied, 'Her husband (has the greatest right on her)'. She then asked, 'Who has the greatest right on man?' The Prophet replied, 'His mother (has the greatest right on him).'²

Some of the people are of the opinion that since mother is weaker than father, hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed man to serve and obey the mother much more than the father. Probably it is also true. However the fact is, mother confers more benevolence on man than father and therefore she deserves more attention and obedience.

2. In Traditions, disobedience to parents is included in Kaba'ir, i.e., great sins.³

A separate instruction is also given forbidding disobedience to mother which is condemned as an unlawful act. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

Allah has forbidden you to be undutiful to your mothers, to withhold (what you should give) or demand (what you do not deserve), and to bury your daughters alive.⁴ Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned sins and said that when his Ummah perpetrates these sins, great difficulties and torment will fall upon them. One of such sins is:

'Man would accept the words of his wife and would disobey his mother; would adopt a pleasant behaviour with his friend and the behaviour with his father would be severe.'

In one of the Hadith, disobedience to parents is regarded as one of the signs of the approaching Dooms Day.⁵

2. Hakim, Mustadrak, op. cit.

3. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, Vol. VIII, The Book of Al-Adab, Chapter 6:6.

4. Ibid

5. Tirmizi, Sunan, Abwabul Fitn, Conditions of the Doomsday.

3. The just and fair treatment to mother is regarded as a means of atonement for one's sins and the attainment of Paradise.

Hazrat Aisha states that Hazrat Harsa bin Noman behaved with his mother in a most respectable, pleasant and polite manner. Once Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

I saw heaven in my dream where I heard somebody reciting the Qur'an. I asked whose voice was that. I was told that it was the voice of Hazrat Harsa bin Noman. Then the Prophet said that it was the reward of fair treatment to mother.⁶

Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr says that someone confessed to the Prophet that he had committed a great sin. Is there any way of repentance for it? The Prophet asked: Do you have your aunt (maternal)?' The man replied, 'Yes'. The Prophet said: 'Render her just and fair treatment.'⁷

It evidently shows that it is not the service to mother alone but the service to her relatives too, can be one of the means of the expiation for sins.

4. Service to mother is superior to the service to father. It is next only to the mother that the position of any other person can be determined. Hazrat Abu Hurairah relates that a person questioned Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace): Who deserves my polite behaviour most? The Prophet replied: 'Your mother'. The man asked: Who (deserves) the next? The Prophet replied: 'Your mother'. The man enquired for the third time that who deserves the next? The Prophet made the same answer: 'Your mother'. When the man repeated the same question for the fourth time, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Your father.'⁸

6. Mishkatul Masabeeh, The Book of Al-Adab, Vol. 4, P. 151.

7. Tirmizi, Abwabul Birwa Sila, Vol. 4, P.155.

8. Al-Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Adab.

There is one more Hadith according to which a companion of the Prophet asked him who deserved the greatest right for his decent and just treatment. The Prophet replied: 'Your mother'. The man asked who stands next to her? The Prophet replied: 'Your mother'. The man asked the same question for the third time. The Prophet gave him the same answer again. When he put the same question for the fourth time, the Prophet replied: 'Your father', then whoever stands as much nearer to you in relations deserves as much decent treatment.⁹

Qazi Ayaz states that some people say that both mother and father deserve just and fair treatment. But mother deserves more rights for service. Imam Nawawi says that this opinion is the correct one since most authentic Hadith support it. Haris Muhasbi says that consensus seems to be that in matters of service from children mother has more rights than father.¹⁰

There are different Traditions on the question whether the polite behaviour with mother should be double or triple? Imam Tahawi says that in this connection those Traditions are more authentic in which it is said that a man should offer kind and mild treatment to mother three times more than what he should offer to his father.¹¹

Imam Ahmad says that father should be obeyed, but as far as the fair treatment is concerned, out of the four parts, three belong to mother.¹²

Islam does not stress the legal rights of mother and father alone but also prescribes a kind and decent treatment to them. Islam holds that the legal rights of parents should be observed heartily and with love and devotion and should not be regarded as burden. It also unfolds the fact that apart from the legal rights, one should give as noble and humble treatment to

9. Abu Dawood, Sunan, the Book of Al-Adab

10. Nawawi, Sharh S'ahih Al-Muslim, Vol.2, pp. 312-313.

11. For details see, Tahawi, Mushkilul Aasar, Vol.2, pp. 270-273.

12. Alamul-Mao-Qeen, 4:359.

parents as possible and in this treatment again, mother deserves more affectionate treatment. Mother should be offered better behaviour than what is offered to father.

WIFE:

In Islam woman possesses an independent entity of her own. Because of Nikah, neither her personality gets dissolved in the personality of her husband nor does she become his subject or servant. When she holds some new responsibilities after marriage, she becomes the owner of some new rights at the same time. As she cannot refuse these responsibilities, in the same manner her rights cannot be taken away from her.

Now let us see how Islam views the relationship between wife and husband and what legal and moral basis Islam provides for this relationship.

1. The relation of husband and wife is, in fact, the relation of love, affection and intimacy. The natural love and attraction which God has placed between husband and wife is described in the Holy Qur'an thus:

*And among His Signs
Is this, that He created
For you mates from among
Yourselves, that ye may
Dwell in tranquility with them
And He has put love
And mercy between your (hearts),
Verily in that are Signs
For those who reflect.*

(30:21)

What is suggested is that there should be a relation of love, sympathy and affection between husband and wife. It is all their natural urge indeed. If hostility and animosity take the place of love and affection, it is against nature on which Allah Almighty has created them.

2. There is always a head of any minor or major institution. The structure of the family and the relationship among its members and its problems are more complicated and varied than all the other institutions and their problems. Order and discipline cannot be there in a family in the absence of its head. If there is no head of a family or no one is responsible for a family, it would definitely get disorganised. In Islam, man obtains the position of a head of the family for several reasons as some of them have already been mentioned in the first chapter. It does not mean that man has acquired unlimited and whole and sole authority on his wife and that she is merely his subject. It actually means that while it is the responsibility of woman to accept her husband as a leader and obey and follow all his 'lawful demands', she also enjoys her rights. It is compulsory and obligatory for a man to perform these rights rather to pay all her dues. Hence the Qur'an says:

*Men are the protectors
And maintainers of women, because God
Has given the one more (strength)
Than the other, and because
They support them
From their means
Therefore the righteous women
Are devoutly obedient and guard
In (the husband's) absence
What God would have them guard.*

(4:34)

Again in another place, says the Qur'an:

*And women shall have rights
Similar to the rights against them, according
To what is equitable;
But men have a degree
(of advantage) over them
And God is Exalted in Power, Wise.*

(2:228)

Woman, while accepting the superiority of man in domestic life, gains and enjoys all rights of maintenance allowance, residence, alimony, and education and training and several other rights. If man falls short of performing all these rights of woman, she can secure them through law.

3. Islam exhorts man not only to discharge the legal rights of his wife but to behave with her decently and justly. Nice treatment with wife is required in every condition. Sometimes man dislikes the face, temperament and habits of his wife, which affects their relationship. In such cases man is instructed to consider the better aspects of his wife because if he dislikes one aspect of hers, there can be then praiseworthy qualities in her. Therefore it is the demand not only of morality and nobility but also of wisdom and sagacity that man should keep far-reaching interests before him and should not spoil the cordial relationship with his wife. Sometimes a certain thing appears unpleasant to man, but in it are hidden unaccountable aspects of goodness. In this connection, Islam lays down such a noble and ideal rule that cannot be found anywhere else. Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an.

On the contrary live with them.

On a footing of kindness and equity

If ye take a dislike to them.

It may be that ye dislike

A thing, and God brings about

Through it a great deal of good.

(4:19)

A lucid elucidation of such a polite behaviour with wife can be found in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Hazrat Muawiya Qushairi once enquired about the rights of wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In reply the Prophet said:

That you should give her food when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, not strike her on the face, and not revile her or turn her out of the house (if separation becomes necessary) but live separately within the house itself (temporarily).¹³

The same Tradition is expressed again in some other words:

Feed her what you feed yourself with, her clothing should be of the same standard as yours, do not beat or abuse and rebuke her.¹⁴

First, husband should follow the same standard of eating and drinking, clothing and dressing for his wife which he keeps for himself. It is unjustified if he keeps a high standard of life and compels his wife to subsist on a lower standard. Secondly, in association and relationship with her, his performance should be honourable. He should not treat her harshly or cruelly.

If any action of woman looks unpleasant or disagreeable, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised man to endure and to have patience because this unpleasantness may prove temporary. Where some act of hers is unpleasant, some other acts may be pleasing to heart. To express lament and to show hatred and to be enraged at the slightest provocation will spoil mutual affectionate relationships for ever. Hazrat Abu Hurairah relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

A believer must not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her traits, he will be pleased with another.¹⁵

Sometimes man demonstrates high morals and displays good conduct with others but his behaviour with his wife is

13. Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Sunan, The Rights of Wife, The Book of Marriage.

14. Ahmad Abu Dawood, Sunan, op. cit.

15. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Razaa, Chapter, Instructions Concerning Women.

reproachable even though his wife who is his life-partner is most deserving of polite and decent behaviour. Hence the man whose behaviour with his wife is just and fair is regarded as the best man. In a Tradition Hazrat Abu Hurairah relates that the Prophet said:

The believers with perfect faith are those who have the best disposition and the best of you are those who are best to their wives.¹⁶

In a Tradition, showing courtesy and love to wife and children is regarded as an attribute which completed faith (Iman). Hazrat Aisha related that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

Among the believers, the man whose moral is best, has the perfect faith and who behave with his wife and children with more love and affection.¹⁷

In another Tradition Hazrat Aisha relates that Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, said:

The best of you is he who is the best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family.¹⁸

4. Islam regards the standard of relationship between husband and wife free from contention and strife as commendable. Wife should try to keep her husband delighted and contented, to obey him in rightful works and to safeguard his honour and dignity and wealth and property. On the other hand, husband should consider such a chaste and virtuous wife to be an excellent asset of life and should offer more decent and polite behaviour to her.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah says that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was asked about the attributes of a virtuous and righteous woman. The Prophet said:

16. Tirmizi, Sunan, The Book of Al-Razaa, Chapter, Rights of Wife.

17. Ibid., The Book of Iman.

18. Ibid., The Book of Manaqib.

‘The one who pleases (her husband) when he looks at her, obeys him when he gives a command, and does not go against his wishes regarding her person, or property by doing anything of which he disapproves.’¹⁹

Hazrat Abu Amama relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘After fear of God, a believer gains nothing better for him than a good wife who obeys him if he gives her a command, pleases him if he looks at her, is true to him if he adjures her to do something, and is sincere towards him regarding her person and his property if he is absent.’²⁰

Hazrat Abdullah b. Umar b. Aas says that the Prophet said:

‘The whole world is to be enjoyed, but the best thing in the world is a good wife.’²¹

Hazrat Omar asked Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that Allah Almighty forbids to store gold and silver, what type of wealth, then, we should keep with us? Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Each one of you must possess with you, a thankful heart, a God-remembering tongue, a (*Muslim*) believing wife who assists him in the works for *Akhirah* (eternal life).’²²

It is quite evident from the above Traditions what type of relationship Islam wants to promote between husband and wife. If such a type of relationship exists between them, both of them will be assistant and well-wisher of each other, their life will be pleasant and ideal and all the unpleasant problems of rights and demands which cause disturbance and destroy the domestic life would never occur in their life.

19. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol.2, p. 251.

20. Ibn-e-Maja, Sunan, The Book of Marriage.

21. Muslim, op.cit. Kitab Al-Razaa.

22. Ibn-e-Maja, op.cit.

DAUGHTER:

Before the proclamation of the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), parents were much proud of their sons and they were supposed to be their great asset, because they gave more strength to their tribe and they were assistant in their great exertion in the field of finance. But daughters were considered to be burden on them and they were supposed to be the cause of ignominy or disgrace and on their very mention their heads dropped in shame. The Qur'an portrays a very graphic picture of the feelings of a parent on the birth of his daughter at that time.

*When news is brought to one of them of the
Birth of a female (child), his face
Darkens, and he is filled
With inward grief!
With shame does he hide
Himself from his people, because of the bad news
He has had. Shall he retain it
On (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it
In the dust.*

(16:58-59)

One of the results of these obnoxious feelings for daughter was that some tribes used to bury their daughters alive. The Qur'an vehemently criticised the murdering of children and regarded it a capital offence and put an end to this abhorrent practice once and for all. The Qur'an says that on the Last Day, one would have to answer for the hard-heartedness to God. The Qur'an says:

*When the female (infant)
Buried alive, is
Questioned-
For what crime
She was killed.*

(81:8-9)

Islam inculcated totally different feelings for girls in place of their barbarous and brutal feelings.

1. The first and foremost that Islam says is that it is the will and wish of God that favoured some with children and to some He debarred and to some He gave only sons and to some He favoured with daughters alone and to some He blessed with both sons and daughters. None of this case is a cause of honour or disgrace or cause of dishonour or ignominy. All this is a natural phenomenon representing as it does the boundless knowledge and wisdom of God. Those who consider it a standard of dignity or ignominy are cavilling at His wisdom. The Qur'an says:

*To God belongs the dominion of the heavens
And the earth. He creates what He wills
(And plans). He bestows (children) male or
Female according to His will (and plan)
Or He bestows both males
And females and He leaves
Barren whom He will
For He is full of knowledge and power.*

(42:49-50)

2. There is exhortation in Islam for the proper nourishment and sustenance of daughters. It is regarded as a good deed and a means for the attainment of Heaven. Hazrat Aisha relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Whoever is in charge of (put to test by)
three daughters and treats them generously,
then they will act as a shield for him
from the (Hell) Fire.’²³

In Traditions, the upbringing and nourishment of two or three daughters or sisters or even one daughter or sister is referred to as a means for entering Heaven. From this the

23. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, Vol.III. The Book of Al-Adab, Chapter 18:24.

reward or requital to the person who brings up more than three daughters or sisters can be well realised. Hazrat Itba bin Aamir relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Whoever has three daughters, and bears with the miseries in their connection, feeds and clothes them with the earnings of his labour, they will become a curtain on the fire of hell, for him.’²⁴

Hazrat Abu Sayeed Khudri relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Whoever amongst you has three daughters, or three sisters, and he treats them gently, he will surely enter heaven.’²⁵

Hazrat Abu Sayeed relates one more Hadith that Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, said:

‘Whoever has three daughters or three sisters or two daughters or two sisters and he adopts a good company with them and fears Allah about them, He has (place for him in) Heaven.’²⁶

Hazrat Anas relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘If anyone cares for two girls till they grow up, he and I will come on the day of resurrection thus’, and he joined his fingers.’²⁷

Hazrat Abu Hurairah relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Whoever has three daughters and he bears with the difficulties and financial problems, in connection with them, Allah will make him enter Heaven, for courtesy

24. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol.4, p.154, Ibn-e-Maja, The Book of Al-Adab.

25. Tirmidhi, Al-Sahih.

26. Ibid.

27. Muslim Al-Sahih, op.cit.

towards them.’ Abu Hurairah reports that a man enquired if he has two daughters (and bears with the difficulties in connection with them). The Prophet replied, ‘Even if he has two daughters (Allah will bless him with Heaven)’. A man asked, if he has one? The Prophet said (He will) even if he has one.’²⁸

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas relates a similar Hadith that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘If anyone takes care of three girls or the like number of sisters, training them and showing kindness to them till God enriches them, God will guarantee him paradise.’²⁹

Hearing such a great reward, a man humbly enquired Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that if anyone renders the same service to two daughters or sisters in the same way does he get the same reward? The Prophet replied, ‘Yes, he would get the same reward’. The one who relates the above Hadith says that if the man would have enquired for one daughter or sister, the Prophet would have given the same reply.

It shows that for providing nourishment and giving proper training to one daughter or sister a man deserves a seat in paradise. If he nourishes and brings up more than one daughter or sister, his rank may be raised accordingly.

3. It is stated in the Hadith that with the good nourishment of daughters, they should also be given good education and training and should also select a good match for the marriage and should continue fair and just treatment with them. Hazrat Abu Sayeed Khudri relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

28. Hakim, Mustadrak, Vol.4, p.176.

29. Mishkat-al-Masabih, The Book of Al-Adab.

‘Whoever nourishes three daughters, educates and trains them, gets them married (and afterwards) offers a gentle behaviour to them, for him there is heaven.’³⁰

4. Generally more love and affection is showered on sons in feeding, clothing, education, training and in every respect more preference is accorded to them. This is total injustice and oppression. In Hadith such a treatment is forbidden and condemned.

Hazrat Adullah bin Abbas relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Whoever has a girl, who has neither buried her alive nor gives a mean treatment to her and not even gives preference to his son over his daughter, God will make him enter Heaven.’³¹

In all these Hadith on the proper nourishment, education training, arrangement of marriage and equal treatment to daughters or sisters, glad tidings is given for liberation from Hell and the attainment of Heaven. One who does not have faith in God and the eternal day and one who gives all importance to the present world alone does not realise the significance of these Traditions. But the very goal of the believer (Momin) is success on the Judgement Day. There is all what he wishes in this goodness for a believer.

With the inducement of the proper care for girls, this conception is also laid down that she is not worthless or valueless as the world considers her, but she is the most valuable boon of nature. The love and affection which she possesses in herself, a boy does not have it.

Hazrat Aqba bin Amir relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

30. Hakim, Mustadrak, Vol.4, p.177.

31. Ibid.

Do not hate girls. They are comforter and much precious.³²

Such a teaching for a fair and just treatment of girls is an example which is found nowhere. According to Islamic law, if the child does not own any position and does not have any proper means for living, his maintenance is obligatory on his father. In accordance with this rule, the maintenance or allowances for daughters is obligatory on his father till her marriage and in the absence of his father, it is necessary for her nearest relative to ensure her maintenance. After marriage, the responsibility of her maintenance shifts to her husband and on the death of her husband or in case of divorce and if the woman is not self-sufficient in financial matters, the responsibility goes to her children or in case she has no children, the responsibility for her maintenance falls on her nearest relative. This is a legal right and in the Tradition its importance is well emphasised.

Hazrat Suraqua bin Malik relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked him:

‘Shall I not show you what is the greatest charity., He said: Messenger of God, certainly show (it). The Prophet said, ‘To be grateful to your daughters who (after becoming widow or being divorced) is sent back to you and there is no one save you, her earning man.’³³

The Companions of the Prophet were so thoughtful about their widows and daughters that it can be well understood from this example that Hazrat Zubair endowed some of his houses. In the details of this endowment the following statement was also included.

Whosoever of his daughters (being divorced or by becoming a widow) would come back to her house, she would stay in it.

32. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol.4, p.151.

33. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol.4, p.175.

Neither she would put it in loss nor would she be put in loss. If she is self-sufficient in respect of finance without depending on her husband, she would not have any right in it.³⁴

In this way, in the family system of Islam, the legal right of woman are secured; and on the moral ground also she enjoys a place of honour and dignity.

34. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Wasaya.

MUSLIM WOMAN IN VARIOUS FIELDS

The modern world is resounding with the propaganda of the 'emancipation of woman'. Yes, woman is seen excelling in almost all the fields – social, cultural, political, educational and many other fields. In fact, she not only shows her abilities in all the activities or realms of the present day life but also owns for herself a place of honour and merit. But, what has she done for herself and for her home? No need to ponder over the question. The answer is at hand. She has destroyed her womanliness, her sweet feminine grace and what not? She has destroyed her home and her family. Thus, she has paid the valuables, once she possessed herself to achieve this seeming progress. She burnt her own home, but she did give splendour to the bazars. On the ruins of her home, the place of her so-called 'progress' is built. It is ironical that the queen of this place speaks of her progress when she does not preserve her place of grace, chastity and beauty herself.

Contrary to it, there were women who, while holding all the domestic responsibilities and while retaining their womanliness, left splendid marks on history and displayed their wonderful abilities in different fields.

Let us have a glance over their astonishing activities in various fields in the following pages.

PRECEDENCE IN ACCEPTING ISLAM

The Islamic history is constituted by both men and women together. If the role of women is removed from history, it would be useless and dull. When Prophet Muhammad (peace

be upon him) presented the dawah of Islam, woman also came forward with man to accept it. For this, they bore all kinds of hardships, abandoned their house and family, separated from their relatives, stood firmly like mountains in the flood of severe tests and strife, offered sacrifices of wealth and life and marched forward with the prayer to Allah for acceptance of their deeds. Allah Almighty accepted their prayers, gave the glad tidings of heaven to woman with man, and made both of them worthy of His favours and the rewards.

The Qur'an says:

*And their Lord had accepted of them,
And answered them:
'Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you,
Be he male or female:
Ye are members, one of another:
Those who have left their homes
Or been driven out therefrom,
Or suffered harm in My Cause or fought or been slain,
Verily,
I will blot out from them their iniquities
And admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath,
A reward from the presence of God,
And His presence is the best of rewards'.*

(3:195)

Soon after the proclamation of the prophethood of Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Hazrat Khadeeja accepted Islam. In this way, a woman holds the pride of place in being the first to embrace Islam.

Allama Ibne Atheer says: 'She was the first woman in accepting Islam in the creatures of God. On it, there is a

consensus of the whole Ummah. In this respect, neither any man nor any woman surpassed her.’³⁵

Imam Zahbi counted the people who accepted Islam even before Hazrat Omar and Hazrat Hamza in (as *sabequoonal awwaloon*), i.e., the very first people who accepted Islam. They were fifty-one in number. Of these people of courage, the following women were also included:

Hazrat Khadeeja, Hazrat Asma binte Abi Bakr, Asma binte Salaama, Asma binte Umees, Fatima binte Al-Mujala, Fakiha binte Yasaar, Ramala binte Abi Auf, Amina binte Khalf.³⁶

ENDURANCE AND STABILITY

In Makkah, people who declared their faith in one God and pledged loyalty to the Prophet (peace be upon him) underwent great hardships and severe tests. Since there were no guardians or protectors of male and female slaves, they were all the more harassed and persecuted. Just at the very thought of how they were tortured and crippled, the soul trembles and shivers. But, in spite of all this, the world had ever witnessed the surprising sights of their determination, endurance, firmness and stability. Whoever accepted Islam among them, their feet trembled not a little.

In the earlier period of Makkah, among those fortunate and courageous people who accepted Islam, was the family of Ammaar bin Yasir. Right in the afternoon, the members of this family were made to lie down on the palpitating sand. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), when passed by them, pacified them saying ‘O, the members of Yasir family, be patient. We will meet in heaven.’ The name of the mother of Ammaar bin Yasir was Hazrat Sumayya. She was the slave of Abu Hazeefa bin Mogheerah. She was quite an old and weak woman. This poor old woman was subjected to all kinds of torture. But none of the torture could turn her away from her

35. Ibn-Atheer, *Asad Al-Ghabah*, Vol.5, p.434.

36. Zahbi, *Sairu Ia’lam Al-Nubala*, Vol.10, pp.99-101.

Deen. One day, Abu Jahal on this crime of Truth recompensed her with martyrdom, dragging a spear in the private parts of her body. It was the first martyrdom which was attained as a result of reposing faith in the message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Hazrat Mujahid says, ‘The mother of Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir, Hazrat Sumayya, was the first one to receive martyrdom in the way of Islam.’³⁷

Hazrat Zunera was a Roman woman slave. She was given severe punishments when she declared her faith in Islam. At last, Hazrat Abu Bakr bought and freed her. Accidentally, it so happened that she lost her sight. Pagans (*mushrekeen*) teased her, saying that (Laat or Uzza) their (gods) made her blind. But the strong faith of this true servant of God did not waver at all. She told that they had been telling lies. Laat or Uzza could neither provide any benefit nor could give any harm. This dialogue of hers was so much liked by Allah Almighty that she regained sight again.³⁸

A female slave of Bani Momal accepted Islam at the time when Hazrat Omar was still outside the fold of Islam. Hazrat Omar gave her severe punishments to turn her away from the faith. When he got tired, he used to tell her not to think that she was relieved. Just after taking a little rest, he would start beating her again. Even such extreme harshness and hardness of Hazrat Omar could not move her from the way of Islam. The only thing she used to say was that may God also do the same with you. It was only when Hazrat Abu Bakr bought and freed her, that she got relief from this hard punishment and torture.³⁹

37. Ibne-Saad, Tabaqaat, Vol.8, pp.264-265.

38. Ibne-Hisham, Seerat-Rasul Allah, Vol.1, pp.340-341.

39. Ibne-Hisham, Seerat-Rasul Allah, Vol.1, p.341.

Allama Ibne Abdul Barr says that Hazrat Bilal's mother was Hamama. She was also given rough punishment for her faith in Islam. She was also among those whom Hazrat Abu Bakr bought and freed.⁴⁰

Umme Abees was the female slave of Banu Taim bin Marra or Banu Zohra. She also faced many difficulties for her faith in Islam. Hazrat Abu Bakr bought and freed her.⁴¹

Hawwa bint-e-Zaid bin Sakin became a Muslim in Makkah long before the Hijrat. But her husband Qais bin Hateem did not accept Islam. He treated her very badly but she remained firm. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) got this information about her in Makkah. When Qais bin Hateem came to the fair of Zulmajaz, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) met him and presented Islam before him. But he did not accept it. The Prophet then told him, 'I have got the news that from the time your wife left your religion you are treating her very badly. Fear Allah. Be careful about what I say in this regard and do not neglect it'. He promised that he would not trouble his wife. Then he told about the meeting of the Prophet to his wife and said 'you can practise your faith. I will not harass you.'⁴²

Hazrat Umme Habeeba bint-e-Abi Sufyan and her husband Obaidullah bin Jah'sh embraced Islam during the early period of Makkah and both of them migrated to Abyssinia. But, after reaching there, Obaidullah bin Jah'sh accepted Christianity. It was a very tough time for Hazrat Umme Habeeba in an alien place, but she remained determined in her faith. The Prophet sent the message of Nikah to her and she came under the marriage bond of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).⁴³

40. Ibne-Abdul Barr, Al-Isteeab Vol. 4, p.278.

41. Ibne-Hisham, op.cit., Vol.1, p.341.

42. Ibne-Saad, op.cit. pp.323-324.

43. Ibid., pp.96-97.

WORSHIP

Worship is the soul of 'Deen'. It is an expression of the relation of the servant with his God. Worshipping strengthens one's relationship with God. The negligence and carelessness in the worship of God weakens the relation with God gradually. If one does not overcome this sort of negligence, it may even break his relation with God. Like the men of early period of Islam, there was much desire for worship among women. Ummehatul Momineen (Mothers of Muslims) stood out among them.

Hazrat Umme Salma says about Hazrat Zainab bint-e-Jah'sh (Ummul Momineen) that she was a pious woman who used to keep many fasts and used to stay awake in the nights.⁴⁴

Hazrat Aisha says: 'I have never seen any woman better than her in piety, straightforward talking, kindness and in giving alms.'⁴⁵

On one occasion, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself gave testimony about her piety and her fear of God. The Prophet told Hazrat Omar that Zainab bint-e-Jah'sh was a woman of devotion and had love towards Allah and was one who feared God.⁴⁶

PUNCTUALITY IN PRAYERS

In the worship of God, prayer (namaz) has much importance. There are certain rules and conditions of prayers without the fulfilment of which neither the duty of praying can be performed nor can all the benefits of prayers be achieved. One of the conditions is to pray at the scheduled times. Mother of Hazrat Anas once told the Prophet that before offering the prayer of Isha, she became overwhelmed with drowsiness

44. Ibne-Saad, op.cit. p.108.

45. Ibne Abdul Barr, op.cit.,p.316.

46. Ibid.,p.317.

(hence there was a fear of leaving the prayer). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised her to offer the prayer early. When the darkness of night stretched everywhere, the time of Isha prayer would begin. At that time if she offered prayer, she would not be a transgressor.⁴⁷

It proves how punctual she was for prayers. She was so much thoughtful about the prayer that she would not like to pray Qaza and so she wanted to avoid it.

Maimoon bin Mahran says, ‘Whenever I went to meet Umme Darda during the time of prayers, I saw her in the state of offering prayers.’⁴⁸

JOINING THE PRAYER IN CONGREGATION

It is not necessary for a woman to offer prayer in the mosque in congregation. It is preferable for them that they should offer prayer at home. But there are many benefits of congregation. If the conditions and circumstances allow and there is no fear of their moral deterioration, they can go to the mosque. This is the reason that the Shari’ah, on one side, instructed them to offer prayer at home and on the other side asked men not to forbid women, if they wanted to go to mosque, Hazrat Abdullah bin Omar narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

Do not forbid your woman if she asks permission to go to mosque from any of you men.⁴⁹

The same Hadith occurs in these words:

The part which the women have in the mosque do not forbid them for it.⁵⁰

47. Ibne-Atheer, op.cit., p.466.

48. Nawavi, Tahzeeb, Vol.2, p.361.

49. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Azan.

50. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Salat.

Another Hadith also says:

Do not forbid women from going to the mosques, but their houses are better for them.⁵¹

This permission is mostly connected with Isha and Fajr prayers since the Hadith contains these words also:

When your women ask permission for going to mosques in the night, give them permission.⁵²

So it can be understood that during the period of our Prophet, there was permission for women to participate in the congregation in Isha and Fajr prayers. It is also proved from some narration that they actually joined the congregation. Following are some of the narrations:

Hazrat Aisha says:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to say his Fajr prayer in such darkness that women covering themselves up with the (chadar) sheets of cloth, used to return their homes and were not recognised due to the darkness.⁵³

Hazrat Umme Salma states:

During the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), women used to stand as soon as they (finished their *farz* prayer) and the Prophet and the men who said their prayers with him used to sit at their places, until Allah wished for it (so that the women should go out first from the mosque) and when he (the Prophet) would get up, they (other men) also got up.⁵⁴

51. Abu Dawood, Sunan, The Book of Al-Salat.

52. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Azan.

53. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Azan.

54. Bukhari, op.cit.

Hazrat Abu Qattadah Ansari narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

I stand up for prayer (*namaz*) and desire to recite the Qur'an longer. Just when I hear the voice of a cry of some child, I make prayer (*namaz*) shorter. This I do not like, that I should put his mother in worry.⁵⁵

Once there was an unusual delay for the Isha prayer, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not come out of the apartments to lead the prayer. Hazrat Omar told in a loud voice to inform the Prophet that women and children had fallen asleep. Hearing it, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came out for prayer.⁵⁶

Hazrat Zainab Saquafia narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

When any of you women would participate in the Isha prayer, you should not use perfume in that night.⁵⁷

The same narration is reported from Hazrat Abu Hurairah that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

The woman who has used perfume should not participate with us in the prayer of Isha.⁵⁸

From these narrations, it can be assumed that women used to go to mosques in Isha and Fajr so that they could offer their prayers in congregation. It might be possible that both young and old women would have reached the mosques in these prayers but in other prayers mostly old women would have joined the congregation. Hazrat Umme Salma binte Abu Hakeem says that she had seen that old women offered their prayers with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).⁵⁹

55. Ibid.

56. Bukhari, op.cit.

57. Muslim, op.cit.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibne-Abdul Barr, op.cit., p.317.

GLORIFYING THE PRAISES OF GOD

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructed women for praying and saying the praises of God. Yaseera binte Yasir says that the Prophet said:

O women! You make *tasbih* (Subhanallah), *tahleel* (Lailaha illal lah) and *taqdees* (Subbooh Quddous) as compulsory. You count it on the tips of your fingers, because the finger will also be asked and all will be made answered. Do not neglect (*Zikr*) otherwise you will be devoid of the blessings of Allah.⁶⁰

Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, instructed women for uttering some “Praises of God, at some particular time.” Hazrat Ali says that there was no servant in the house of Hazrat Fatima. All the works of the house she herself had to perform. She got pustules on her hands for grinding flour. On one occasion, there came a few slaves. Hazrat Fatima went to the Prophet to express her difficulties and to request him for one slave. Since the Prophet was not there, she said about it to Hazrat Aisha and returned home. Hazrat Aisha told the Prophet about the arrival of Hazrat Fatima in his absence and mentioned her need. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) visited us in the night when we had gone to bed. Seeing him, we stood up. The Prophet said, “No! lie down” and (he) sat between us in such a way that his leg touched my stomach and I felt its coldness. The Prophet said: ‘May I point out some better thing to you than what you requested for? It is this – that when you lie down on your bed say ‘Subhanallah’ thirty three times, ‘Alhamdulillah’ thirty three times and ‘Allahu Akbar’ thirty four times. This is better than a servant for you.’⁶¹

It is stated in one more narration that the Prophet asked to utter the same praises of God after every prayer and at the time of sleep.⁶² Hazrat Fatima requested for a servant and the

60. Al-Umri Al-Khatib, The Book of Da' waat, op.cit.

61. Al-Umri Al-Khatib, The Book of Dawaat, op.cit.

62. Ibid

Prophet instructed her to say the praises of God. In it there is clue to the fact that a man derives more energy and get more strength when he praises the Lord, God.

A daughter of the Prophet says that the Prophet used to teach her the following prayer:

‘Glory be to God, and I begin with praise of Him; there is no power but in God; what God wills comes to pass, and what He does not will does not come to pass; I know that God is Omnipotent and that God has comprehended everything in knowledge’; for whoever says it in the morning will be guarded till the evening and whoever says it in the evening will be guarded till the morning.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that whoever says the above prayer in the morning, God would safeguard him till the evening and who says this prayer in the evening, God would safeguard him till the morning.⁶³

In these words, the reliance on, submission to and faith in God are to be expressed in such a way that if it actually flourishes in the heart and then if it is also uttered through the tongue of a man, then God would safeguard him day and night.

The way in which the Ummehatul Momineen and some other women conducted the saying of the praise of God can be well understood from the following episodes.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) went out of Hazrat Juveriya’s house after the prayer of *Fajr* when Hazrat Juveriya was on the prayer mat. When the Prophet returned after the (*Chasht* prayer) she was sitting on the same place. Seeing her, the Prophet said: ‘Are you in the same state (saying the praise of God) in which I left you?’ She gave the answer in positive. The Prophet said, ‘When I went from you, I uttered four words (*Kalimat*), but (according to their meaning) they must be equal to what you have uttered till now.’ The words are these:

63. Abu Dawood, Sunan, op.cit.

Glory be to God, and I begin with praise of Him to the number of His creatures, in accordance with His good pleasure, to the weight of His throne and the extent of His words.⁶⁴

Hazrat Saad bin Abi Waquas states that he went to a woman (probably one of the Ummehatul Momineen) with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet saw that some seeds and stones were lying down before her and she was counting the 'praises of God' with them. The Prophet said 'May I show you an easier or excellent way of praising God than this? That is, you say like this:

'Glory be to God as many times as the number of what He has created in the earth, Glory be to God as many times as the number of what is between them; Glory be to God as many times as the number of what He is creating, God is most great (a similar number of times); Praise be to God (a similar number of times); there is no god but God (a similar number of times); there is no might and no power except in God (a similar number of times).'⁶⁵

In whatever number a man repeats the praises of God, it is very few indeed. Even if he gives his days and nights in it, he cannot pay his due. In the above Hadith, such things are chosen which are unlimited and unaccounted so that man can express his unbounded devotion to God.

DEVOTION TO WORSHIP

There was found a great desire for worship even in some Companions who were not much famous. The name of one slave of Hazrat Omar was Zaidah. It is said about her that she was one among those women who bore great hardship in connection with worship. It was for this good quality of hers that the Prophet used to keep her nearer to him.⁶⁶ Some

64. Al-Umari, Al-Khatib, op.cit.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibne-Atheer, op.cit., Vol.5, p.461.

Companions exceeded in prayers to such an extent that Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, asked them to follow a moderate way. Hazrat Aisha says that Howala binte Toyate was sitting with her when the Prophet came. I said 'It is Howla binte Toyate. There is a great talk about her prayers everywhere. It is said that she does not sleep in the night and keeps on praying. The Prophet did not like it and said:

'Do not do like this. Worship God as much as you have strength inside you. By God; Allah would not get fatigued, you would yourself get fatigued. Before Allah, that act of 'Din' is only liked which is done consistently and regularly.⁶⁷

Hazrat Anas says that once Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) saw that a robe was tied up between the two pillars of the mosque. The Prophet enquired about it. People said that it was of Hazrat Zainab (probably Ummul Momineen Hazrat Zainab binte Jah'sh). She kept on praying the whole night and when she became tired, she took the support of her robe. The Prophet said:

No! This is not correct. Open it. As long as freshness and sprightliness remains in anyone of you, he should offer prayer. When (he) gets tired, he should sit.⁶⁸

In the period of the successors of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Rabiya Basariya was famous for her prayers and abstinence and religious exercises. Allama Ibne Khalkan writes: 'She was one among the great people of her times. Her virtuosity, piety and worship are very famous.'

A servant of hers says that she offered prayers all the night. On the eve of the *Fajr* prayer, she lies down on the prayer mat for some time. At the dawn of the day, fearfully gets up from her bed saying, O! Myself, till what time you would sleep and how long you would sleep? The time is fast approaching when

67. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Iman.

68. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, the Book of Tahajjud.

you would sleep in such a way that you would get up only on the Eternal Day. She says in her prayer; Oh God! would you put down this heart in the fire which loves you? It is said, that once a voice came, that 'it would not happen. You should keep good opinion about Us'. Hazrat Sufyan Suri burst into saying: Ah! What a grief and lamentation! While remembering the Eternal Day. She said: 'Do not speak a wrong thing. Say like this, O! How much less the grief is! Because if the lament about it (eternal day) really sticks to you, it would be very hard even to breathe.'⁶⁹

Ibn Habban included Umme Sahba Maaza binte Abdullah in the worshippers. It is said that after the death of her husband Abu Assahba till her death she did not lie down on bed. She stayed awake all through the night. She used to say that it is much surprising about those eyes which keep sleeping when they knew that they would get a long sleep in the grave. She relates one incident of hers that she had some complaint in her stomach. Hence *nabeez* (which is a bit intoxicated) which was kept in a pot was suggested for her treatment. When a cup of it was presented to her she simply kept it and prayed O! God, you know that Hazrat Aisha recited a Hadith to me that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade the use of it (*nabeez*). You save me from this and bless me with health through your kindness. Just with this prayer, the cup fell down and her pain disappeared.⁷⁰

DESIRE FOR FASTING

Fasting is one of the basic tenets of Islam. For being pure and pious and to keep relation with God, like prayer, there is much importance of fasting. For this reason, apart from the compulsory (*farz*) fasting, the importance of voluntary (*nafl*) fasting is also laid down. It is evident from several Traditions and books on the life of the woman Companions that they used to keep *nafl* fasts in an exceedingly great number.

69. Ibn Khalikan, Waffiyat Al-Aayan.

70. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol.12, p.452.

Saad bin Ibraheem says about Ummul Momineen Hazrat Aisha that she used to keep continual fasting.⁷¹

Her nephew (brother's son) Qasim bin Muhammad speaks about her that she used to keep fast continuously.⁷²

Ummul Momineen Hazrat Hafsa also used to keep *nafl* fasts very often. Hazrat Nafe says: 'Hazrat Hafsa died at the time while she was keeping fasts continuously.'⁷³

It is reported that once Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) wanted to divorce her. Hence it was revealed to him and Hazrat Gabriel said: 'Turn to Hazrat Hafsa because she is a great fast keeper and a (woman) who stayed over in the nights and she would be your wife in heaven also.'⁷⁴

There are different incidents which occur in the books of Hadith regarding the *nafl* fasts of the Companions (*Sahabiyat*) of the Holy Prophet through which we can understand their inclination towards fasting.

Hazrat Aisha states that Hazrat Hafsa and she were on fast. After a while, some food came before them and she ate it. Hazrat Hafsa told the Prophet about it and the Prophet asked her to keep fast (*Qaza*) the next day.⁷⁵

Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, visited Ummul Momineen Hazrat Juveria on Friday when she was fasting. The Prophet asked her, 'Did you keep fast yesterday?' She replied, 'No'. The Prophet then asked, 'Do you intend to keep fast tomorrow?' She replied, 'No'. The Prophet said, 'Break the fast'. One of the reports states that she broke the fast.⁷⁶

71. Ibne Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.68.

72. Ibid, p.75.

73. Ibid., p.86.

74. Ibne Saad, op.cit., Vol.4, p.269.

75. Ibne Abdul Barr., op.cit.,

76. Al-Umri, Al-Khatib, op.cit.

Hazrat Umme Hani states some incident which occurred on the day of the Conquest of Makkah that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was seated with them and that Hazrat Fatima sat to his left and she sat on his right. A servant brought some drink to them. After the Prophet drank it, he offered it to Hazrat Umme Hani. She simply drank it (thinking it to be a benediction) and said: O Prophet, I was on fast, but I drank your remaining (drink). The Prophet enquired whether it was any fast of *Qaza*. She said that it was not the fast of *Qaza*, but was only a *nafl* fast. The Prophet then said that it is the right of the person who keeps a *nafl* fast whether to complete the fast or to break it in the middle.⁷⁷

Umme Amara says that one day the Prophet visited her house. She presented food before him. The Prophet said: 'You also eat.' She replied, 'I am fasting.' The Prophet said that when anybody eats food in the house of one who is fasting, the angels keep on praying for him until he finishes his food.⁷⁸

Rabi binte Maouz says that the Prophet on (A'shura) the tenth of Muharram made an announcement in the localities of Ansar that whoever had eaten and drunk should not eat till the evening and whoever had kept the fast should complete it. After this, we used to keep fast and made our children keep fasts too. When they cried due to hunger, we made playthings out of wool and consoled them till the evening.⁷⁹

There are also some statements regarding the keeping of fasts on behalf of other people.

A woman enquired the Prophet that her mother died and there were fifteen compulsory (*farz*) fasts due to her. In one of the narrations, it is said that she had the whole one month compulsory fasts due to her. And in some other narrations, it is

77. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Saum.

78. Ibid.

79. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Saum.

stated that there were two months fasts due to her. Can I keep fasts on behalf of her? Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked: Had she any debt against her, would you not pay? She replied, 'Yes'. The Prophet said that 'the debt of God is the most deserving; then it is to be paid'.

One of the narrations states that the questioner was a man.⁸⁰ It is also possible that there might be various incidents because the questions were of different kinds.

GIVING OF ALMS AND SPENDING IN THE WAY OF GOD

After prayer, much importance has been placed on the spending of money in the way of God. Zakat is its one legal form. Through prayer, a man expresses his emotion that his mind and heart and his body and soul and everything prostrate before Allah Almighty and *infaq* (spending) is a sign which shows that a man does not consider his wealth to be his own property and is ready to spend it at any place where Allah has ordained him to spend. This proposal for *infaq* pertains to both men and women. In the Qur'an, there is a promise for a great reward to those men and women who spend in the way of Allah. According to the Qur'an.

*For those who give in charity,
Men and women and loan to God
A beautiful loan
It shall be increased manifold
(To their credit)
And they shall have (besides)
A liberal reward.*

(57:18)

In Traditions, women have been encouraged to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, keeping in consideration their nature, psychology and environment.

80. Ibid.

Hazrat Jabir and Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas state that on the occasion of Eid, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) addressed women separately in which the Prophet instructed them to give alms. On hearing this, women presented their jewellery and other things. Hazrat Bilal put them in his sheet.⁸¹

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructed Hazrat Asma, daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr, to:

‘Spend (money). Do not count (what you should give for and what should not) lest Allah would also give you in a measured quantity. Do not keep in safe and for saving the (thing). Allah also would give in the same way.’⁸²

Hazrat Aisha says that once they sacrificed a goat and distributed its meat. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) enquired whether anything is left of it? They replied that only its shoulder was left. The Prophet said, ‘Say except (its) shoulder all the things have remained.’⁸³

In this way, the Prophet instilled the idea in the mind that whatever alms one gives, it does not go waste rather those things which he eats and finishes them, go waste. In fact, only alms which are given in the cause of Allah remain with us because its reward is safe with God.

Sometimes, man is not in a position to extend a great help to somebody and hesitates to provide a little help. This state of affair is mostly found in women. The Prophet instructed them that alms can be of very little things too, and it may or may not satisfy the needy but it may give a temporary support or help to him.

81. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Eidain, Chapter Imamul Nisa Yamul Eid.

82. Ibid., The Book of Al-Hiba.

83. Tirmizi, Sunan, The Book of Al-Zakah, Chapter Fi Fazlul Sadaqah.

Hazrat Aisha says that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that if you have a piece of date, give it as it would save you from Hell. It is as useful to a hungry man as to a fully satisfied stomach.⁸⁴

Umme Bajeed says that:

She asked Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, that the beggar comes to her house. But usually there was nothing in the house to give to the beggar. Therefore she felt ashamed (at such a situation). The Prophet told her, 'Do not return a beggar with empty hands. If you do not have anything, at least give him a burnt hoof.'⁸⁵

A burnt hoof is not of any use or beneficial to anybody. In it lies an instruction that a beggar should be given at least something and should never be excused for nothing.

It is often seen that women have close ties with their relatives and neighbours and they possess more rights than others. In traditions, it is instructed that their rights should be duly protected. The wife of Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood and a woman from Ansar enquired through Hazrat Bilal from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) whether they can give alms to their husbands and children also? The Prophet replied that they can give alms to them.⁸⁶

Hazrat Umme Salma asked the Prophet whether she would get reward if she would spend on the children of Abu Salma who are her own children and whom she cannot leave? The Prophet replied:

Spend on them. Whatever you would spend on them, you would get the reward for it.⁸⁷

84. Targheeb wa Tarheeb, p.178.

85. Tirmizi, op.cit.,Chapter Fi Haadqussail.

86. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Zakah, Chapter Fazlul Sadaqah.

87. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Zakah, Chapter Fazlul Sadaqah.

Hazrat Maimuna freed a servant. She said about it to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet said: had you given it to your uncles, you would have received more reward.⁸⁸ (probably her uncles were more deserving).

Hazrat Abu Hurairah narrates that Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, said:

‘O Muslim women! None of you should think of your neighbour to be mean. Even if it is not (anything) but a hoof of a goat (you should give)’.⁸⁹

It unfolds two meanings. First, every Muslim woman should send some gift or present to her neighbour according to her status. If she cannot give any valuable thing, she should not hesitate to offer any smaller things to others and should never think why such a smaller thing should be presented to anybody. Secondly, it means that one who is given the gift or present should not see what thing is given to him and what it costs. But he should see and realise the love and affection and warm feelings which lay behind it and should not reject even the smallest thing.

Hazrat Aisha says that she said to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ‘I have two neighbours. To whom of them should I send my gift?’ The Prophet replied: ‘The one whose door is nearer to yours, (you) should send it there.’⁹⁰

It shows that Hazrat Aisha was well aware of the rights of neighbours. But she only wanted to know who deserves the most, in case, if there are more than one neighbours.

After outlining the basic teachings in connection with the giving of alms and sending of presents, etc., a word about the women of the first period is said below:

88. Ibid. Chapter, Fazlul Nafqata wa Sadaqata.

89. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Hiba.

90. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Hiba.

Hazrat Zainab had unlimited enthusiasm for *infaque* and she used to give much alms. Imam Zahbi speaks about her, that in piety, in giving of alms and in virtues and in doing good to others, she enjoyed an eminent position amongst the dignified women. May Allah be pleased with her.⁹¹

Her condition was such that she used to earn with great hardship and distributed it among the poor and houseless people.

Hazrat Aisha says that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told his wives: ‘Among you, whose hands are longer than others would meet me soon.’

Hazrat Aisha says that we used to measure our hands as to know who would die first. Even though Hazrat Zainab was of smaller height, she died first. From this we learnt that the intention of the Prophet was that whoever preceded others in giving alms would die first. She used to work with her own hands and give alms of what she gained.⁹²

Berzah bint Rafe says that Hazrat Omar sent her twelve thousand dirhams from the Baitul Mal. When she got such a great amount, she asked, ‘What should I do with it? My other sisters (Holy wives of the Prophet) are more capable of distributing it.’ It was conveyed to her that the whole amount belonged to her. She said, *Subhanallah* keep it here and cover it with some cloth. Then I was asked to put my hand (in the amount) and give a handful of amount to such and such a person and one handful (of amount) to some other. In this way she distributed it among her relatives and orphans. When a little amount was left, I said: ‘We too have some right in it.’

91. Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, p.149.

92. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Fazail Chapter, Ummul Momineen Hazrat Zainab.

She replied 'Yes, whatever remains behind the cloth belongs to you.' There were thirty-five dirhams. In one narration it is stated that when Hazrat Omar learnt that she had distributed all the amount in such a way, he said, 'Good was expected from her.' Then he himself visited her house and extended his Salam while standing at the door. He even sent one hundred dirhams more and requested her to spend it on her necessities. But she distributed that amount also among the poor.

Her state of modesty was such that after she received this pension, she lifted her hands towards the sky and prayed: 'Oh! God, do not keep me alive to take the pension of Hazrat Omar.' She died the same year.⁹³

She herself had prepared her coffin. Hazrat Omar also sent five selected cloths at the time of her death and in those cloths only she was given coffin. Her sister Hamna binte Jah'sh gave the alm of the coffin which she herself prepared and kept for her.⁹⁴

Hazrat Aisha spoke on the death of Hazrat Zainab: 'She passed away who was worthy of praise, unique and solace for orphans and widows.'⁹⁵

Osman bin Abdullah Jah'shi says: 'Zainab binte Jah'sh did not leave any (dirham) or (dinar). Whatever she got at hand, she gave in alms. She was the shelter for miserable people.

It is said that her house, in which she lived, was bought by Waleed bin Abdul Malik, for fifty thousand dirhams in order to extend Masjid-e-Nabvi.⁹⁶

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had more love for Hazrat Aisha than others. For this reason, Hazrat Omar had kept her pension more. He fixed a pension of ten thousand

93. Ibne-Saad, op.cit.,Vol.8, pp.109-110.

94. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol. 8, p.110.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., p.114.

dirhams for each holy wife of the Prophet and set twelve thousand dirhams as the pension for Hazrat Aisha.⁹⁷

But Hazrat Aisha was very generous and bountiful. Whatever she got, she used to spend it. The following incidents show her generosity and her readiness in almsgiving.

Umme Zahra says that Hazrat Abdullah bin Zubair sent two bags of money which might have contained one lakh dirhams for Hazrat Aisha. She asked for a tray and distributed all the amount among the people. On that day she had kept a fast. In the evening, she asked me: 'O! Girl, just bring *Iftar*'. I said: 'Today you have distributed such a large amount. Would it not have been possible that you would have managed to purchase meat for *Iftar*?' She said 'Leave it. Do not speak ill of it. Had you told me about it before, I would have asked to buy meat for *Iftar*.'⁹⁸

Ataa bin Abi Rabah says that once Hazrat Muawiya sent one lakh dirhams to Hazrat Aisha. She distributed it among the Ummehatul Momineen.⁹⁹

Urwah binte Zubair says that I saw Hazrat Aisha giving alms of seventy thousand dirhams and she herself was in such a condition that she was mending her own clothes.¹⁰⁰

Hazrat Zainab binte Khazeema used to help the needy and indigent people very much. It was for this reason that she was called 'mother of miserable people' (*Ummul Masakeen*).¹⁰¹

Hazrat Omar sent a knapsack full of dirhams to Hazrat Saudah binte Zamaa. When she got the knapsack, she asked what it contained. It was said that 'It has dirhams.' She asked whether it had been filled with dirhams like dates? Then she

97. Ibid., p.67.

98. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.67.

99. Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, p.141.

100. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.66.

101. Ibid., p.115.

asked a girl; ‘Bring a tray.’ She arranged for the distribution of all the amount.¹⁰²

Hazrat Asma was the daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr and was the only sister of Hazrat Aisha. Muhammad bin Manakdaran says about her: ‘She was generous by nature.’¹⁰³

She used to instruct her family members and her daughters: ‘Give alms, do not keep thinking that if anything is left after our expenditure, (we) would spend on the good deeds. If (you) wait for the saving, nothing would be saved. If you spend, you would not find its scantiness.’¹⁰⁴ Hazrat Omar had fixed a pension of one thousand dirhams for her.¹⁰⁵

But the state of her *infaq* was quite unique. Abul Zubair says, “I have never seen a more generous person than Hazrat Aisha and Hazrat Asma. But their ways of spending were different. Hazrat Aisha would sum up each and everything and would use it where it was needed. But Hazrat Asma would never keep anything for tomorrow. Whatever she would get at hand, she would spend it at the same time.”¹⁰⁶

Fatima binte Munzir says that if she fell sick at any time, she used to free her servants.¹⁰⁷

PILGRIMAGE AND UMRA

One of the basic pillars of Islam is Hajj. Reaching Kaaba-tullah on some particular days and performing some particular rites is termed as Hajj. In Umra almost the same rites of Hajj are performed but it is conducted in all the days other than the period of Hajj.

102.Ibne-Saad, op.cit.,Vol.8, p.56.

103.Ibid., p.252

104.Ibid., p.252.

105.Ibid., p.253

106.Al-Adab Al-Mufrard, Vol.1, p.377.

107.Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.252.

There is much importance of Hajj and Umra. In Traditions it is called the 'Jihad of women'. Hazrat Aisha enquired the Prophet: 'Can we also accompany you in Jihad?' The Prophet said:

'For you (women) the best and beautiful jihad is Haj-e-Mabroor.'¹⁰⁸

According to one more narration, Hazrat Aisha told the Prophet:

I do not see any excellent deed in the Qur'an other than Jihad. Then, why should we not accompany you in Jihad? The Prophet replied: 'No'. For you (women), excellent and beautiful Jihad is Haj-e-Mabroor (which is performed for the pleasure of Allah).¹⁰⁹

Hazrat Abu Hurairah narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

'The jihad of the old (man or woman), the child, the weak (man or woman) and woman is Hajj and Umra.'¹¹⁰

Hazrat Abu Hurairah says that all the holy wives of the Prophet also performed Hajj with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Hazrat Saudah did not perform Hajj after the death of the Prophet while other wives of the Prophet continued to go for Hajj.¹¹¹

In the last Hajj of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ten thousand companions performed Hajj in the company of the Prophet. A very large number of the women companions were also among them. They had such a desire and enthusiasm for Hajj that even sick, pregnant and mothers of infants also joined it.

108. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Haj, Chapter Haj Al-Nisa.

109. Nasai, The Book of Al-Haj, Chapter Fazlul Haj.

110. Nasai, The Book of Al-Haj, Chapter Fazlul Haj.

111. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.55.

Zaba-a'a binte Zubair says that she enquired the Prophet that she intended to perform Hajj, but she had fallen ill. The Prophet said: 'Perform Hajj. Tie *ihram* with an intention that where God would stop me. I would open the *ihram*.'¹¹²

Hazrat Jabir states that when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) announced about the Hajj in the 10th Hijra, we all started for Hajj. When we reached Zul Haleefa, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, son of Asma binte Umais, was born.¹¹³

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas says:

That the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, met some riders in Rooha. A woman from them brought out her child and showed to the Prophet and asked the Prophet whether his Hajj would also be performed. The Prophet replied: 'Yes, his Hajj would also be performed and you would get the reward.'¹¹⁴

One woman from Ansar, Umme Sanan could not accompany Prophet Muhammad in his last Hajj (*Hajjatul Wida*). After returning from the Hajj, the Prophet enquired her about the reason. She said that they had only two she-camels. On one, her husband and the child went for Hajj and with the other the cultivation of the field was going on. The Prophet said: "Alright, you perform Umra in Ramazan. Allah would give you the reward equivalent to the Hajj."¹¹⁵

One more woman whose name was Umme Maaqul could not go for Hajj. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked her also to perform Umra in Ramazan.¹¹⁶

112. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Nikah, Chapter, Al-Kifa fiddeen.

113. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Haj, Ihram-un-Nafsa.

114. Ibid.

115. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Umrah, Umrah Fil Ramzan.

116. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Manasik, Chapter Al-Umrah

In this way, to those women who could not perform Hajj even though they intended to perform, the Prophet instructed them to perform Umra. To provide more facilities for women for Hajj and to remove the hurdles from their way are also instructed. Women cannot perform their Hajj without (*mehram*) a spouse. Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas says:

A man told the Prophet that his wife wanted to go on Hajj whereas he had given his name for participating in Jihad. The Prophet said: ‘You should go on Hajj with your wife.’¹¹⁷

Women used to perform Hajj for themselves and sometimes on behalf of others whenever it was needed.

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas says:

A woman from the tribe of Jheena asked the Prophet that her mother had intended to perform Hajj, but she died before performing Hajj, whether she could perform Hajj on behalf of her mother? The Prophet replied, ‘Perform Hajj on her behalf. Say if there would have been some debt on your mother, would you not have paid it? Pay also the debt of Allah. Allah is more rightful, that His debt should be paid.’¹¹⁸

Hazrat Fazl bin Abbas says:

A woman asked the Prophet that Allah has ordained Hajj obligatory for His servants. This obligation was applicable to her father too. But her father was very old and could not even sit on a vehicle. Hence, if she would perform Hajj on behalf of her father, would that be accepted? The Prophet replied in the affirmative.¹¹⁹

117. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Umrah.

118. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Umrah.

119. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Haj.

Islam does not have any room for hardness or harshness. A woman wanted to overburden herself in connection with Hajj, but the Prophet forbade her to do so.

Uquba bin Amir Juhni says:

My sister intended to go to Baitullah on foot and asked me to enquire the Prophet about it. When I enquired, the Prophet said that there was no need for it. She could walk as well as could take a vehicle. (One more narration states that the Prophet asked her to do *Kaffara* (atonement) for the intention.¹²⁰

The journey for pilgrimage is interpreted as the journey in the way of Allah. And it is also said that Allah Almighty accepts the prayers of a pilgrim. Therefore, it is instructed to ask a pilgrim for prayers. On one occasion Hazrat Umme Darda asked Hazrat Sufyan, 'Do you intend to go to Hajj?' He replied, 'Yes.' Hazrat Umme Darda requested him to 'Pray for our welfare also, because the Prophet said that a man when prays for his brother behind him, it is accepted. An angel near him says Ameen on his prayers and says that may God enrich you with 'the same goodness.' Hazrat Sufyan says that when he went out, he met Abu Darda in the market. He also related almost the same narration.¹²¹

Such was the intensity of worship by women of the early period. Now let us have a look at their knowledge and wisdom.

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Islam strongly emphasises learning and attaining more and more knowledge. Islam, in fact, exhorts man to gain vast knowledge and stimulates him to extend knowledge to others. Consequently, within a short span of time, education was spread everywhere and very learned people were found everywhere. These learned people comprised both men and women.

120. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Umrah.

121. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Zikr wa Dua.

Hazrat Aisha occupied the highest rank among the women Companions in learning. A very few attained this great rank even among the men Companions. The bearers of knowledge during her period acknowledged her great and wide learning, knowledge and keen insight. Her most devoted student and nephew, Urwah bin Zubair, says: 'I lived in the company of Hazrat Aisha. I have never seen anybody who knows about the background of revelation of the Commandments (*Aayaat*) of God, obligatory duties of Islam (*farz*), Sunnah, poetry and literature, history of Arabs and family lineage of the tribes, etc. and the decisions of the cases or suits, even the knowledge of medicine, more than her.'

Asked he, 'Dear aunt! How did you learn medicine?' She replied, 'Whenever I or anybody else fall ill, its treatment is prescribed. In this way people teach the treatment to one another and I remember it.'¹²²

Imam Zuhri says: 'If the learning of all the people is compiled and the learning of all the holy wives of the Holy Prophet is also added to it, the learning of Hazrat Aisha would be greater than all this.'¹²³

Ataa bin Abi Rabah says: 'Hazrat Aisha was the greatest *faquiha*, i.e., Islamic jurist, a woman of greatest learning and one who had better opinion about people than others.'¹²⁴

Imam Zahbi says: 'I am not acquainted with any woman who had more knowledge than her (Hazrat Aisha) in the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) rather among all women.'¹²⁵

122.Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, pp.128-129.

123.Hakim, op.cit., Vol.4, p.11.

124.Ibid, p.14.

125.Zahbi, op.cit.,Vol.2. p.101.

Among those Companions who have narrated many traditions of the Prophet, she is also counted among them. These Traditions she narrated right through the Prophet. Some Traditions she narrated after listening to Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Fatima, Hazrat Saad bin Abi Wiqas, Hazrat Hamza bin Umrul Arma and Jazama binte Dahab. The total number of her narrations is 2,210. In these, 174 traditions are held as unanimous and they are present both in *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. Apart from this, 54 traditions are present in *Bukhari* and 69 in *Muslim*.¹²⁶ The remaining Traditions occur in six other collections of Hadith.

Ummul Momineen Hazrat Umme Salma also narrated many Traditions directly from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and some Traditions through Hazrat Abu Salma and Hazrat Fatima. Moreover, 35 Companions and the successors of the Companions among whom both men and women are included) narrated Traditions through her.¹²⁷

The total number of her narrations is 378. Out of these, 13 narrations are present in both *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. Besides, 3 Traditions are found in *Bukhari* and 13 in *Muslim*.¹²⁸

Hazrat Umme Salma had an important place in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) also. Imam Zahbi says: 'In those Companions who were *faquiha* (Islamic jurists), she was also included among it.'¹²⁹

Hazrat Hafsa was the daughter of Hazrat Omar. She narrated Hadith through the Prophet and Hazrat Umar. Among those who narrated Traditions through her were her brother Hazrat Abdullah bin Omar, her son Hamza, his wife Safia, Umme Basharul Ansaria, Mutallib bin Wadaa, Haarsa bin Wahab, etc. More than 12 people are included.¹³⁰

126. Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, p.101.

127. Thzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol.12, p.456.

128. Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, p.143.

129. Ibid.

130. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol. 12, p.411.

Hazrat Hafsa narrated 60 Traditions. In these, four Traditions occur in both *Bukhari* and *Muslim* and six are present in *Muslim*.¹³¹

Ummul Momineen Umme Habeeba was the daughter of Hazrat Abu Sufyan. She narrated 65 Traditions from the Prophet. From these, two Traditions occur in both *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. One Traditions is present in *Muslim*. Through her, her daughter Habeeba, her brother Hazrat Muawiya, her nephew Abdullah bin Utba, Urwa bin Zubair, Safia binte Sheeba and Zainab binte Abu Salma etc. narrated Traditions.¹³²

Hazrat Asma was the daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr and wife of Hazrat Zubair. She narrated many Traditions from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). There were many Companions and the successors of the Companions who conveyed several Traditions to others from her. They were his son Abdullah bin Zubair, his grandson Abdullah bin Urwah, Ubaid bin Abdullah, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas, Safia binte Sheeba, Fatima binte Manzar, his freed servant Abdullah bin Kesan, her grandson Ubaid bin Hamza, etc.¹³³

The total number of her collection of Hadith is 58. Thirteen Traditions from these find place in both *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. Apart from these, five Traditions are present in *Bukhari* and four occur in *Muslim*.¹³⁴

Allama Ibne Abdul Bar says about Khoula binte Hakeem, 'She was a virtuous and learned woman.'¹³⁵

It shows that her virtuosity, knowledge and education are unanimously accepted.

131.Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, p.164.

132.Ibid., p.155.

133.Zahbi, op.cit. Vol.2, p.208

134.Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2,p.214.

135.Al-Isteeyab, Vol.4, p.290.

Hazrat Osman during his Caliphate gave a decision on some problem on the basis of a narration of a woman Companion.

Zainab binte Kaab bin Ujrah says that Hazrat Abu Sayeed Khudri's sister Fareeya binte Malik states that after the death of her husband, she went to the Holy Prophet and asked whether she could pass her days of *iddat* (waiting period of a widow) with her family members, since there is no house of her husband? The Prophet replied that she should pass her *iddat* on the very place where she got the news of the death of her husband. During the Caliphate of Hazrat Osman the same problem was raised before him. Hazrat Osman, then called her. Hence people produced her case before him. When she reached there, she saw that Hazrat Osman was seated with some people. He enquired about her case. When she told about it, the woman whose husband had died was also asked to pass her *iddat* on the place where she got the news of his death.¹³⁶

To know about the educational and intellectual condition of any period, it is necessary to study both the distinguished personages of the time and those people who were less known. It is only through this study that the real image of the period comes to us. In this connection, two more incidents are described below:

It is said about Hazrat Umme Warqua that she had compiled the Qur'an. In one more narration, it is stated that she had learnt the Qur'an by heart. The Prophet had asked her to lead her family members in prayers. A *moazzin* (a man who calls for prayers) was also kept for her.¹³⁷

136. Abu Dawood, The Book of Divorce

137. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.457.

The Prophet told an old woman that ‘no old woman would go to Heaven’. She questioned the Prophet as to why she (an old woman) would not go? Hazrat Anas says that the old woman already read the Holy Qur’an. Hence the Prophet said: ‘Don’t you read the Holy Qur’an? Allah has said: We have created those old women again and have made them young.’¹³⁸

It means that old women would be turned into young ladies and then they would enter Heaven.

The Prophet gave Hazrat Ali, a servant, Raita. It is stated in different narrations that Hazrat Ali gave her a little teaching of the Qur’an.¹³⁹

Now let us move to the period of the successors of the Companions of the Prophet and know about the learning and wisdom of the women of this period who held a great place.

Umme Darda Al-Hajeema,¹⁴⁰ Osman bin Abul Aatika and Umme Jabir state that Abu Darda nurtured and looked after Umme Darda. When she was very small, she used to wear ‘Barnas’ (a long frock through which head is also covered) and used to accompany Hazrat Abu Darda. She also used to stand in the rows of men to offer prayer and used to sit in the circles of *Qarees* (Reciters of the Quran).

When she grew up, Hazrat Abu Darda asked her to join the rows of women.¹⁴¹

Her deep interest in learning can be well understood from the statements of Auf bin Abdullah. He said that they were seated with Hazrat Umme Darda. When much time was passed, they said, ‘We gave you much trouble; you might be getting tired.’ She replied to them: ‘My intention in every work is to obey God. But I feel no satisfaction and peace in anything other than and sitting in the company of Ulema (scholars in Islam) and in discussing with them.’

138. Mishkat Al-Masabih, the Book of Al-Adab.

139. Asad Al-Ghaba, Vol.5.

140. Tahzeeb Al-Sama Wa Lillughaat, Vol. 2, pp.359-360.

141. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb Vol. 12, p.466.

Then she went behind the curtain and asked a man to recite the Qur'an. The man recited. She said, 'The greatest knowledge is to know God.' And Raba studied under her. He said that one day it was written on the slate, 'Learn wisdom and shrewdness from childhood. (You) would teach others when you grow up.' 'Every farmer, whatever good or bad he has sown, would reap it.'¹⁴² She narrated Hadith from Hazrat Abu Darda, Hazrat Salman Farsi, Fazeela bin Ubaid, Hazrat Abu Hurairah, Kaab bin Asim and Hazrat Aisha. Hafiz Ibne Hujur, after stating that 19 persons had heard and narrated Hadith from her, wrote that apart from it, other people also narrated Hadith from her.¹⁴³ Imam Nawawi says: 'A great number of the leaders of the successors of the Companions had narrated from her.'¹⁴⁴ Iman Zahbi speaks about her: 'She was a *faqiha* (Islamic Jurist), a learned woman, a worshipper, a beautiful and pleasing (woman), a woman of great learning and an intellectual.'¹⁴⁵

Umrah binte Abdul Rahman: She was nurtured in the lap of Hazrat Aisha and she was her close disciple. She died in 98 Hijri. Apart from Hazrat Aisha, she narrated Hadith through Umme Hasham binte Harsa, Habeeba binte Sahl and Hazrat Umme Habeeba Hamna binte Ja'hsh. The scholars of her time narrated Hadith through her and Imam Zahri, Abdullah bin Abu Bakr Hazam, Yahya bin Sayeed Ansari, Urooh bin Zuhair, Suleman bin Yasara and Amr bin Dinar are included among them.

The great honour of her learning can be well appreciated from the comments of great *muhaddeseen* (narrators) which they made about her. Ibne Moin says: *Saquta Hujjata*, i.e. she is trustworthy and a final authority. Ahmed bin Muhammad says: I have heard Ibn Moin talking of her highly. He says that

142. Tahzeeb Al-Sama wa Lillughaat, Vol.12, pp.365-66.

143. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol.12, pp.365-366.

144. Tahzeeb Al-Sama wa Lillughaat, Vol.2, p.360.

145. Tazkiratul Huffaz, Vol.1, p.50.

she is also included among the trusted and reliable people who narrated Hadith through Hazrat Aisha. Ibne Habban and Ujli also called her a reliable person. Ibne Habban says that it was she who had the greatest knowledge about the narrations of Hazrat Aisha. Hazrat Sufyan Sauri says that among those who narrated Hadith through Hazrat Aisha, she was more reliable even than Umroh binte Abdur Rahman, Qasim bin Muhammad and Urooh bin Zubair. It is said about Abdur Rahman bin Khasim that he used to enquire about the narrations of Hazrat Aisha from her. Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz wrote to Muhammad bin Abdur Rahman that no one knows the narrations of Hazrat Aisha more than her.¹⁴⁶

Ibne Saad says that she was a learned woman. Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz asked Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin Hazam to record her Traditions.¹⁴⁷

Hafsa binte Seeren: She completed her study of the Quran at the age of 12. She narrated Hadith through Yahya bin Seeren, Anas bin Malik, Umme Atya Ansariya, Ummul Raaeh, Abdul Aliya, Abul Zabyan. Rabee bin Ziyad and Kherah, the mother of Hasan Basri. Muhammad bin Seeren, Qatedah, Asimal Ahwal Ayyub Sakhtiyani, Khalid ul Khudaa, Ibne Aun, Hasham bin Hayyan narrated Hadith through her.

Imam Ibne Moin speaks about her: '*Saquoota Hajjatun*', i.e., she is trustworthy and a final authority. Ibne Habban also included her among the reliable persons.

Ayas bin Muawiya says: 'I have never seen any person whom I can hold superior to Hafsa binte Seeren.' She died in 101 Hijra¹⁴⁸

146. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol.12, pp.438-439.

147. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.480.

148. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol. 12, pp.409-410.

AISHA BINTE SAAD BIN ABI WAQUAS

She saw six of the Ummehatul Momineen. She says that when she used to go to them (Ummehatul Momineen), they would take her in their lap and used to pray for her. She was very much respected by the people. Habeeb bin Marzooque says that I saw a woman outside the mosque. There were some women with her and a candle was glowing. When it was found out, it was learnt that she was Aisha, daughter of Hazrat Saad bin Abi Waquas.¹⁴⁹

She narrated Hadith through her father Hazrat Saad bin Abi Waquas and Umme Zar. The great personages like Jayeed bin Abdul Rahman, Ayyub Sakhtiyani, Hukam bin Ateeba, Khazeema, Abul Narnad Mahajir bin Hismar, Ubaida binte Habal and Imam Malik have narrated Hadith through her. Khaled says that Imam Malik has not narrated Traditions from anybody except her. Ibne Habban included her among *Saqaat* (those who are reliable). Ujli also called her a reliable person. She died in 117 A.H.¹⁵⁰

Aisha binte Talha: Her mother, Umme Kulsum, was the daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr. She narrated Hadith through Hazrat Aisha. Her son Talha bin Abdullah, Habeeb bin A'mr, her nephew Talha bin Yahya, one more brother's son Muawiya bin Ishaque, Moosa bin Obaidullah, Fuzail bin A'mr, Munhal bin Umru, Ataa bin Abi Rabah and A'mr bin Sayeed narrated Hadith through her. Ibne Moin speaks about her: "Saquoota Hujjata" i.e. 'She is trustworthy and a final authority.' Ujli and Ibne Habban also included her in *Saqaat*.

Such a great *Muhaddis* (narrater) like Abu Zar Aa Damishqui says: 'People have narrated Hadith through her because of her learning and knowledge and morals and etiquette.'¹⁵¹

149. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, pp.467-468.

150. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol.12, p.436.

151. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol. 12, pp.436-437.

Khairah: She was the mother of Hazrat Hasan and a servant of Hazrat Umme Salma. She has narrated Hadith through Hazrat Umme Salma and Hazrat Aisha. Her sons Hasan Basri and Sayeed Basri and Ali bin Zaid bin Jadaan, Muawiya bin Qarah Mazni and Hafsa binte Seeren have narrated Hadith through her. Ibne Habban spoke of her as *Saqaat*.¹⁵²

Now we will pass on to the women of great knowledge and wisdom, who came after the period of the successors of the companions and illumined the world with their bright and high intellect:

Sayyada binte Nafeesa: She was from 'Ahle Bait.' Her family lineage is as follows: Nafeesa binte Hasan bin Zaid bin Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib. She reached Egypt with her husband, Ishaque bin Jafar Al-Sadique. It is also said that she went to Egypt with her father, Hasan. Allama Ibne Khalkan writes that Nafeesa was a very virtuous and God-loving woman. The state of her high knowledge and wisdom was so that, it is stated, when Imam Shafae reached Egypt, he visited her and heard a Hadith from her. When Imam Shafae died, his coffin was brought to her house and she offered the prayer of the funeral from inside her house. Ibne Khalkan says that the Egyptians had great regard for her. She died in 208 Hijri.¹⁵³

Daughter of Sayeed bin Al-Musayyab: Hazrat Sayeed bin Al-Musayyab is called Sayyadut Tabayeen. His student, Abu Wada Aa, states: I used to attend his lessons. Once it so happened that he could not see me for a few days. When I reached there again, he asked me where I was. I said that my wife had expired so I could not come. He said: 'You did not inform us, otherwise we would also have joined the funeral procession.' When I was getting up, he asked: 'Have you not performed the second marriage?' I said: May God shower

152. Tahzeeb Al-Tahzeeb, Vol.12, p.416.

153. Wafiyatul Aayeeyan, Vol.5, pp.56-57.

mercy on you! Who would give a girl to this poor? I do not have more than two or three dirhams. He said: 'Shall I arrange your Nikah? Say, are you ready?' I told him, 'yes'. Hazrat Sayeed, after saying the prayer and praises of God, performed my Nikah with his daughter and settled two or three dirhams for *mehr* (alimony). When I got up from the meeting, I was in a strange state of happiness. I did not know what to do. After reaching home, I thought of taking debt from somebody. I offered the *maghrib* prayer. I was fasting on that day. I sat to eat and there was only bread and oil to eat, then (I) heard somebody knocking at the door. I asked the name and got the reply: 'Sayeed'. I thought for a second who might be this Sayeed? Every man named Sayeed came to my mind and whom I knew. But my mind did not turn to Hazrat Sayeed bin Musayyab. Because for forty years, his only movement was between his house and the mosque. He never visited anybody. But when I went outside, I saw Hazrat Sayeed bin Musayyab was standing. Just when I saw him, I thought that Hazrat Sayeed might have changed his intention. I said: 'Abu Muhammad, why did you take this trouble? If you would have sent for me, I would have come to you. He said 'No. At this time you are more deserving that I should come to you.' When I asked the reason of his arrival, her replied: 'You are a young man. You got married. It does not look nice that you should stay here without wife. This is your wife. Take her.' I saw that she was standing behind him. Then he made her enter the house and closed the door and went off. The girl fell down out of shyness. Now I climbed up the roof and called my neighbours. All enquired as to what the matter was. I said: 'Sayeed bin Musayyab has performed my Nikah with his daughter and he also left her all of a sudden and went off. See, she is present in my house.' Hence, people came. When the news reached my mother, she also arrived and said while giving a promise that she would adorn her for three days and it is only after that I can touch her. When I saw her after three days I found her most beautiful, a very great Hafiz of Qur'an, most learned about the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace

be upon him) and aware of the rights of her husband. For one month, neither Sayeed bin Musayyab came to my house nor I went to him. After a month, I went to the 'study circle', wished him, he wished me back and said nothing further. When all the people went off and nobody was left except he, he asked how is the girl? I replied: 'Such that friends would like and the enemies would dislike.' He said, 'If you do not like anything of her, you can as well correct her.' It was this daughter of Hazrat Sayeed bin Musayyab for whom the Caliph of the time Abdul Malik bin Marwan had sent a proposal for his son, Waleed when he was made the Regent. But Hazrat Sayeed had rejected the proposal. Abdul Malik used even unfair means. Hazrat Sayeed was beaten in the winter and cold water was poured on him. But he still did not approve of the proposal.¹⁵⁴

In connection with this incident, it is also stated that when Abu Wada, Aa was getting himself ready to attend the lesson of Hazrat Sayeed, the girl told him, 'Be seated, the teaching which Hazrat Sayeed gives, I would give (you) here.'¹⁵⁵

From this incident, many lessons on different aspects can be derived. But there are two aspects which are more striking and important. First, it focuses the light on the character of Hazrat Sayeed bin Musayyab that he gave preference to a student as compared to a Regent. Secondly, a girl can as well take the vicegerency of such a great learned Imam of her period like Hazrat Sayeed bin Musayyab.

Ummul Mawyed Zainab binte Abul Qasim: She was born in 524 Hijra in Neshapur and died in 615 Hijra there. Ibne Khalkan writes about her:

'She was a learned woman, remained in the company of a circle of the great Ulema (scholars of Islam), studied Hadith from them and got the permission for giving lessons of Hadith and certificates to others. Among her teachers are Abul Qasim Neshapuri, Abul Qasim Zahir, Abu Bakr Wajya,

154. Wafiyaatul Aa'een, Vol.2, 117-119.

155. Al-Makhul Ibnul Hajj, Vol.1, p.215.

Abul Muzaffar, Abul Fatooh Abdul Wahab, etc. She got the permission of the narration of Hadith from such great teachers like Hafiz Abul Hasan Abdul Ghafir Al-Farsi and Allama Abul Qasim Muhammad Umrul Zamakhshri. Ibne Khalkan says that they too had the permission of Hadith with her.¹⁵⁶

Shahda binte Nasr: She was a learned woman and a good composer (*Katiba*) also. Ibne Khalkan says: 'A great number of people studied Hadith from her.'

Ibne Khalkan says that she attained *Samaa A'ali*. It means that she had a certificate through which the continuation of the narrators is cut down while narrating a Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is a great distinction for Muhaddeseen. She obtained the knowledge of Hadith from great scholars of her time. Ibne Khalkan writes further: 'She became very famous and her popularity was spread very far and wide.' She died in 574 (A.H.).¹⁵⁷ It is stated in accounts of the daughter of the Caliph Mansoor and the wife of Harun Al-Rashid that she had hundred maid servants in her palace and they all were Hafiz-e-Qur'an. It was made necessary for each one of them to recite three (parts) of the Qur'an daily. From her palace, the voice of the recitation of the Holy Qur'an used to come out in such a way as though the murmur of the bees comes out from the honey comb.¹⁵⁸

The knowledge and wisdom of other women can be well estimated when the servants of the period were Hafiz-e-Qur'an.

DAWAH AND PROPAGATION OF ISLAM

To come into the fold of Islam or to remain outside it is not at all an insignificant matter which does not influence the life

156. Wafiyatul Aaeeyan, Vol.2, p.92.

157. Ibid., p.172.

158. Ibid., Vol.2, p.70.

of man. Rather it is such a great event that the success of man both here and in the hereafter is contingent on it. It is the responsibility of those people who embrace Islam not only to follow the tenets of Islam but also to present the dawah of Islam before others wisely and with all sincerity. This responsibility lies not only on the shoulders of men, but it equally falls on women also. It was the realisation of this great responsibility which both men and women of the early period and of the period of Companions and of the period of the successors of the Companions felt so much that they gave their time, abilities, energy, wealth and even their lives in the field of Dawah and that is how Islam spread far and wide. The following incidents show how greatly they felt this responsibility and in so doing, how they faced great hardships and difficulties:

1. Hazrat Umme Saleem binte Mulhan, mother of Hazrat Anas, was famous for her intelligence and understanding. Allama Ibne Abdul Bar writes about her: ‘She was one of the intellectual and intelligent women.’¹⁵⁹

Imam Nawawi says: ‘She was included among the Companions of learning and great knowledge.’¹⁶⁰

She had also obtained a high place in virtuosity and piety. Once Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: ‘I have seen the Heaven. There, I heard the voice of somebody. I enquired as to whose voice was this. It was said that it was the voice of Ghameesa (mother of Hazrat Anas).’¹⁶¹

When Islam reached Madina, she accepted Islam. At that time, her husband Malik bin Nazar was outside Madina. When he returned, he learnt about her conversion to Islam. He asked, ‘Have you become irreligious?’ She replied ‘No’, I have

159. Al Istee'yab, Vol.4, p.456.

160. Tahzeeb wl-Asma, op.cit., Vol.2, p.363.

161. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of the companions.

faith in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Hazrat Anas was in her lap. She was teaching her the Kalima (*La Ilaha Illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah*, i.e., There is no God save Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet). Seeing this, her husband told her, ‘Do not spoil the ‘deen’ of my son also.’ She gave the reply: ‘I am not spoiling his ‘deen’ I am (rather giving him the teachings of the correct deen’).

She kept on inviting her husband to Islam but he did not accept it. He was displeased and went off to Syria and there he died.¹⁶²

After the death of her husband, Abu Talha desired to marry her, but till that time, he had no faith in Islam. Umme Saleem told him: ‘You are a pagan whereas I profess Islam. Unless you accept Islam, our Nikah would not be arranged.’ The way in which Umme Saleem had refuted polytheism and proved the Oneness of God (*Tauheed*) is mentioned in many narrations. She made him understand: ‘Think, what is the reality of these idols which are made of stones and wood? Some sculptor of some tribe takes up a stone, makes it an idol and makes it stand. Some carpenter takes out some wood and makes it an idol — this neither benefits you nor does it harm you. If you want, you can burn this idol of wood to ashes. You should feel ashamed of prostrating before it.’ It is obvious that such a type of talk might have taken place at different times. Gradually all his doubts and confusion were over and the brightness of the Faith (*Iman*) dawned on him and his heart and mind were opened to embrace Islam. One day, he told her, ‘I have comprehended your statements. Now I accept Islam.’ Then Umme Saleem told him, ‘Now that you have accepted Islam, our Nikah can also be arranged.’ Hence their Nikah took place and Umme Saleem (out of happiness) did not even take *mehar* (alimony) from him.¹⁶³

162. Al-Istee'yab, Vol.4, p.455.

163. See for details, Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, pp.426-427.

Speech is not the only way of propagation, but the character of man and his strong behaviour are the great means of propagation. To remain determined in faith, to give sacrifices for it and to keep an earnest desire to see its superiority and dominance all over, sometimes, proves to be more beneficial than giving sermons and lectures and many people are much influenced by it. The stability, straightforwardness and the strong determination of Muslim women had shaken the bitterest enemies of Islam and compelled them to think about Islam and to accept it.

³ In the very early days of Islam, Hazrat Omar was the greatest opponent of Islam. It is stated that there were some incidents which influenced very largely the heart and mind of Hazrat Omar and consequently he embraced Islam. A couple of such incidents are described below:

1. Amir bin Rabeea and his wife Umme Abdullah had accepted Islam in the earlier period of Makkah. When the conditions in Makkah became unbearable, Muslims started migrating from Makkah to Abyssinia. Among them, Amir bin Rabeea and Umme Abdullah were also included. Umme Abdullah says: we were ready for our journey. For some necessity: (Amir) went out. Meanwhile Omar bin Khattab came in. When he saw us ready for the journey, he said, 'Umme Abdullah! Now are you departing?' I said 'Yes, By God! We will go anywhere from here. Let us see what form of relief God would provide us? You have much harassed us.' On hearing this he said, 'God be with you' and went off. At that time I saw such softness and ecstasy in him which I had never seen before. I think that he had much grief on our leaving of Makkah. When Amir reached home, I said, 'If you had seen the softness and grief and affliction of Omar, you would have got surprised.' He said: perhaps you get a hope that he would accept Islam? I said 'Yes!'. But he was completely nervous because of the harshness of Hazrat Omar and said unless Khattab accepted Islam, Omar would also not embrace the faith.¹⁶⁴

164. Ibne-Hisham, op.cit., Vol.1, p.365.

Perhaps, their miserable state of suppression and oppression at that time and their strong determination to remain on 'deen' despite persecution which resulted in migration abandoning their near and dear relatives and friends and home, all these things might have touched Hazrat Omar deeply, which made him reflect on why all these things were happening at all. What is the crime for which they were harassed?

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2. Before Hazrat Omar, his sister Fatima binte Khattab and his brother-in-law Sayeed bin Zaid had embraced Islam. But, because of the fear of Hazrat Omar, it was kept secret. Hazrat Omar was greatly enraged that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) condemned the 'deen' of his forefathers, proved them wrong and ignorant and for this reason, a division had occurred in Quraish. One day he went out with the intention that (God forbid) he would kill Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions so that all the troubles would be over. On the way, he met Naeem bin Abdullah. When he learnt about the intention of Hazrat Omar, he said, 'Change your intention. If you raise your hand on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Banu Abd Manaf would not leave you. You would not be saved, if you kill him. If the Prophet and his 'deen' are bad, go and see your sister and brother-in-law. Both of them profess Islam and are following Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). "As he heard it, all the anger and hatred turned towards his sister and brother-in-law. He reached straight to their house. Hazrat Khabab used to visit them to teach the Qur'an to Hazrat Fatima. At that time, he was teaching Surah Taha to the husband and wife. Hence Hazrat Omar listened to the recitation of the Qur'an from outside. He asked, 'What murmuring was that?' They replied that it was not any significant thing. He became enraged and said, 'I have got the news that you have also joined Muhammad (peace be upon him).' Saying this, he started beating Sayeed bin Zaid. When his sister rushed to save him, she was also injured. The injuries neither deterred them nor made them

nervous, but their spiritual strength got more strengthened. They said, “Yes, we have faith in God and His Prophet. Now you can do whatever you like.” This uprightness of Hazrat Fatima shook the very being of Hazrat Omar. Seeing his sister who was bleeding profusely, his heart softened. He said, ‘Bring that Book which you were reading. Let me see, what Muhammad (peace be upon him) says?’ His sister said, ‘I am afraid you would show disrespect to it.’ Then he gave the promise of his gods and said that it would not happen. His sister said: ‘You are not pure now since you commit *shirk* with Allah. Only pure people can touch this book.’ Hazrat Omar took a bath and started reading Surah Taha. While reading the Surah, the truth and reality dawned on him and he went to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and announced to him that he had become Muslim.¹⁶⁵

In this way, the uprightness and stability of a woman turned the heart of the bitterest opponent of Islam into the strongest supporter of the Faith.

Such incidents have also occurred that the husband remained outside the fold of Islam or came under it after a long time while the wife had faith in Islam. Even though the husband would persecute her, she remained firm in faith.

Hazrat Abul Aas was the nephew of Hazrat Khadeeja. Hazrat Khadeeja nurtured him as her own child. Before the proclamation of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), he was married to her eldest daughter Hazrat Zainab. Though he was quite famous for his politeness and honesty, he accepted Islam just before the Conquest of Makkah. After the Battle of Badr, Hazrat Zainab migrated from Makkah to Madina. This is how, after he accepted Islam, she stayed with him for 15 years in Makkah.¹⁶⁶ It can be well understood how much Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Hazrat Zainab and Hazrat

165. Ibne-Hisham, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.366-368.

166. Ibne-Hisham, op.cit., Vol.2, p.296.

Khadeeja tried to make him understand in this period of time with what all topics that the reality or the truthfulness of Islam would not have been clarified. Hazrat Abul Aas accepted Islam very late. But who can say that it was not owing to her endeavour?

Umme Hakeem binte Haris joined the Battle of Uhud on the side of '*mushrekeen*' (pagans). After the Conquest of Makkah, she accepted Islam. She went to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and secured amnesty for her husband. Then after taking permission from the Prophet, she went to Taman and searched her husband and brought him with her and presented him before the Prophet. Then he also embraced Islam.¹⁶⁷

The sister of Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed, Fakhta binte Waleed, accepted Islam after the Conquest of Makkah and took *bait*. But her husband Sufwan bin Umayya went away to Yemen. There he wanted to commit suicide. Fakhta got amnesty for her husband from the Prophet. The Prophet granted him the amnesty hence he returned and accepted Islam one month after Fakhta came to the fold of Islam.¹⁶⁸

Umme Hani was the daughter of Hazrat Talib and the sister of Hazrat Ali. She embraced Islam after the Conquest of Makkah, but her husband Hubaira ran to Najran and there he died. He did not agree to abandon the 'deen' of his forefathers till the last moment.¹⁶⁹

It shows that as soon as women realised the truthfulness of Islam, they not only embraced it but also endeavoured to invite their men to this right faith and underwent great hardship if their men did not embrace the truth (Islam) and remained firm in their faith. They displayed all their wisdom and patience in

167.Ibid, Vol.4, pp.30-39.

168.Ibne-Hisham, op.cit., Vol.4, pp.38-39.

169.Ibid., p.41.

dealing with them and in making them accept Islam. This is how they invited even great opponents of Islam to accept the faith. They took great pains to get their husband pardoned and to get amnesty security for their life from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and faced many troubles in this connection. In this manner, they performed the responsibility of the Dawah work more successfully and paved the way for the success of a great number of people both in this and the eternal world.

SOCIAL RELATIONS

The women of the early period did not cut themselves off from their society. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) laid much importance on this social aspect that the relations of women should be very cordial with their neighbours. It is related from Hazrat Abu Hurairah that a man told Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that it is said about some women that she offers prayer exceedingly, keeps fasts and gives alms in a great quantity. But she troubles her neighbours because of her bad tongue or bad talk. The Prophet said, 'She would go to Hell.' The man said that 'Contrary to her, it is said about some woman, that she performed *nafl* prayers and keeps fasts quite less and gives cheese and some things for alms. But she is well-mannered and does not give trouble to her neighbours.' The Prophet said: 'She would go to Heaven.'¹⁷⁰

The women of this period helped one another in pain and misery, assisted each other in the hour of need, expressed love and affection and sympathy and served one another to whatever extent they could.

Hazrat Asma says that she came to the house of Hazrat Zubair after her marriage and there she had to perform all the work herself. In this connection she says: 'I could not prepare bread well. The women of my neighbourhood whose relation was with Ansars used to prepare bread. They were very sincere and honest women.'¹⁷¹

170. Al-Targheeb wa Al-Tarheeb, p.472.

171. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Salam.

It is stated about Hazrat Asma that when a woman who had fever was brought to her, she used to pray for her and used to pour a little cold water in her throat and said, 'Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us that we should cool down the temperature of fever with water.'¹⁷²

Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas says that as they were returning with Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, after burying a dead body, the Prophet saw, as he reached the door of his house, a woman coming out. He further says that probably on seeing her, he must have recognised, because she was Hazrat Fatima. When she came nearer, the Prophet asked: Why did you go away from your house? She replied: I went to the people of the dead person to convey condolence and say blessed words (*Kalmaat-e-Khair*) for the dead. The Prophet said, 'Perhaps you went to the graveyard also.' She replied, 'God forbid, how can I go there? You have forbidden us from it.' The Prophet said, 'If you would have gone there, then it would have been a great sin.'¹⁷³

Such types of relations can be maintained between men and women provided there is no doubt about any moral deterioration. There are many examples which are present in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions.

Asma binte Yazeed says that we, some women, were sitting in a mosque. The Prophet came to us and wished us well.¹⁷⁴

It is stated in one narration that then the Prophet forbade us (Asma binte Yazeed and other women) from being ungrateful to their husbands.¹⁷⁵

172. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Tib.

173. Abu Dawood, The Book of Al-Khabair.

174. Abu Dawood, The Book of Al-Adab.

175. Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Vol.2, p.490.

In the same manner, Hazrat Jareer bin Abdullah states that when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) passed through some women, he wished them well.¹⁷⁶

Hazrat Sahl bin Saad says that we used to feel happy on Friday. There was an old woman. We used to go to her after the Juma prayer and wished her well. She used to prepare some liquid thing, mixing beet and flour and made us eat it.¹⁷⁷

It proves that while men can wish women, women too can offer hospitality. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told Umme Warqua that Allah Almighty would bless her with martyrdom. Hazrat Omar used to tell his comrades: Let us go and meet the martyr (Umme Warqua) and they used to meet her.¹⁷⁸

To visit the sick and to enquire about one's health is a moral duty. Islam exhorts man to perform this moral duty because it leads to a better and cordial social relationship and gives rise to love and affection in the hearts of the people. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) visited not only sick men but also sick women.

Hazrat Jabir says that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) visited a woman named Ummus Saib or Ummul Masaib. She was sick. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked: 'What is the matter? Why are you shivering?' She replied: 'It is fever. May Allah harm it.'; The Prophet said, 'Do not speak ill words about fever, because through it, the sins of the children of Adam are removed in such a way as a furnace removes rust from iron.'¹⁷⁹

Aunt of Hakeem bin Hazaam says that when she became ill, the Prophet, (peace be upon him), visited her to enquire about her health and said, 'O Umme-e-Ula! Bear a Glad

176. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol.4, p.363

177. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Istizad.

178. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.457.

179. Muslim, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Bir wa Al-Sila.

ting, for Allah removes the sins of a Muslim for illness, in such a way, as fire finishes dirt and rust of iron.¹⁸⁰

Fatima Khaza'aya says that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) visited a sick (Ansari) woman. The Prophet asked about her condition. She replied: 'Alright, "um Yalyad", a disease has put me in much trouble.' The Prophet asked her to be patient and said: a man becomes pure from a disease in such a way as the rust of iron goes away and it becomes cleaned when it is put in a furnace.¹⁸¹

Hazrat Hasan Basri says, 'Women used to wish men well.'¹⁸²

Haris bin Obaidullah states that Hazrat Umme Darda visited a sick man from Ansar who lived near Masjid-e-Nabwi.¹⁸³

Ibrahim bin Abi Ablu says: 'My wife was ill. At that time I used to go to Hazrat Umme Darda. She used to ask me the condition of my wife. I used to tell her about her illness. She (Hazrat Umme Darda) used to arrange food for me and I used to eat. Once she asked me her condition and I said: Now, she is nearly all right. She said: your wife was ill and we made you eat your food here. Now that she is all right so we will not make your food here.'¹⁸⁴

SOCIAL SERVICES

Islam has never forbidden women from participating in the 'social services' or to work for the 'social welfare'. They can participate in all these works for the betterment of people. In fact, women had actually participated in these works. Two examples are presented here:

180. Abu Dawood, The Book of Al-Khabair.

181. Targheeb wa Tarheeb p.613.

182. Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Vol.2, p.490.

183. Ibid., Vol.1 p.627.

184. Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Vol.1, p.606.

This is an incident of the period of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). There was no pulpit in the Masjid-e-Nabwi. A woman told the Prophet: 'I have a servant who is a carpenter. If you give permission, I would ask him to make some high thing (high chair) on which you can sit and can address us. The Prophet replied, 'Yes, make a pulpit.'¹⁸⁵

There was a great scarcity of water in Makkah. A bag of water was at the price of one *dinar*. Zubaidah binte Jafar gave an order to build a canal of ten miles length so that the people of Makkah could get water easily. For this, the mountains and hills had to be cut down. The supervisor of its work told Zubaida that it would cost a lot. She said: 'It ought to be done even if for one beat, one *dinar* has to be spent.' In this way, such a great task was performed.¹⁸⁶

IN POLITICAL FIELD

The women of the early Islamic history were not kept aloof from political activities. They not only had the knowledge of the current political conditions of that period, but also had a keen insight into it. For the security of the Islamic state, they struggled hard, offered sacrifices, gave instructions to the Caliphs and the riches, gave them their suggestions and offered political services according to the situation.

It is but a fact that women also joined the battles with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and with his Companions and extended their help in so many ways. A couple of examples are recounted below. Allam Ibn Abdul Bar writes about Laila Al-Ghaffaria:

185. Bukhari, Al-Sahih, The Book of Al-Masjid.

186. Wafiyat Al-Aqeeyan, Vol.2, p.70.

‘She used to come out with the Prophet in his *ghazwaat* (the battles in which the Prophet had participated), used to do the bandages, apply ointments on the injured and looked after the sick.’¹⁸⁷

Ibne Saad writes about Umme Saleet: ‘Umme Saleet accepted Islam, did *bait* (became a disciple) and joined in the battles of Khaibar and Hunain.’¹⁸⁸

Hazrat Omar says: ‘She used to fill the water bags and bring for us water in Uhud (Battle of Uhud).’¹⁸⁹

It is clear from several narrations that on the superiority of the ‘Deen’ and the success of the Muslims each and every woman used to rejoice and feel happy. Once, when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) returned from the battle, a Black servant came to him and said: I vowed that if you came back safely, I would express my happiness by beating the tambourine and singing before you. The Prophet said: ‘If you really vowed then you fulfil it lest you keep it aside.’ She said: ‘I had vowed so.’ Therefore, the Prophet sat and she expressed her happiness by beating the tambourine and singing.¹⁹⁰

The Muslim women even instructed the Caliphs of their time. Hazrat Muawiya wrote to Hazrat Aisha to give him some instructions. Hazrat Aisha wrote the following statement of the Prophet, in which there is guidance for a ruler, and sent it to him:

Those who seek Allah’s pleasure at the cost of the pleasure of fellow beings shall be protected by Allah from their evils and those who seek the pleasure of fellow beings at the cost of Allah’s pleasure shall be handed over by Allah to those people.¹⁹¹

187. Al-Istiyaab, Vol.4, p.404.

188. Ibne-Saad, op.cit., Vol.8, p.419.

189. Al-Istiyaab, Vol.4, p.463.

190. Tirmizi, the Book of Manaquib.

191. Tirmizi, The Book of Zuhd.

Qasim bin Muhammad states that Hazrat Muawiya went to Hazrat Aisha on the occasion of Hajj. At that time, there was only the servant of Hazrat Aisha, Zakwan with them.

Hazrat Aisha told Hazrat Muawiya: ‘You got my brother Muhammad bin Abu Bakr killed’ (he was on the side of Hazrat Ali, in the battle between Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Muawiya and was martyred in Egypt). ‘Did you not think of this, that even I can arrange some man who can kill you?’ Hazrat Muawiya said: ‘You spoke right.’ In one narration, it is stated that he said, ‘I hope that you would not do so.’ Then Hazrat Aisha instructed him and directed him to follow the Shariah.¹⁹²

Burairah was a slave. Hazrat Aisha bought and freed her. Umwi Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan says that he used to sit in the company of Burairah before the Caliphate. She used to tell me: ‘I see some qualities in you. I thought that you would get a government and Caliphate. If you get Caliphate, you should avoid bloodshed. Because I heard from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that man would be removed from the gates of Heaven, even when he saw the Heaven, for the reason of that little unjust blood which he made flow.’¹⁹³

Allama Ibne Abdul Bar writes about Shifaa binte Abdullah:

‘Shifaa embraced Islam before the Hijrat. She was among the earlier migrants. She did *bait* (became a disciple) with the Prophet. She was among the women of great intellect, understanding and learning. Hazrat Omar used to consult her in giving suggestions, keep her pleased and give her superiority (over others). Sometimes he gave her some social responsibilities.¹⁹⁴

It shows that the learning and knowledge and the high intellectual faculty of Shifaa binte Abdullah was acknowledged by people. Hazrat Omar gave much importance to her suggestions and even assigned her some social services.

192.Zahbi, op.cit., Vol.2, p.131.

193.Al-Istiyaab, Vol. 4, p.250.

194.Al-Istiyaab. Vol.4, pp.340-341.

Allama Ibne Abdul Bar writes about Fatima bin Qais, a famous woman Companion of the Prophet:

She was a beautiful young woman of great intellect and high abilities. After the martyrdom of Hazrat Omar, it was in her house that the members of the *Shura* (Council) had gathered and made their speeches which are narrated from her. Zubair (bin Bakr) had said that she was a polite woman.¹⁹⁵

From this, it can be well understood that everybody recognised her as a woman of understanding, thinking and good manners. In connection with the election of a Caliph after the martyrdom of Hazrat Omar, the discussions were held in her house and undoubtedly she might be aware of all the proceedings and discussions in this regard.

In sum, Muslim women are thus seen prominent in all the fields — moral and etiquette, conduct and character, learning and knowledge, political and social and what not. They worked for the cause of Islam, its safety, propagation and for the Islamic Movement as a whole with all their abilities, potentials, enthusiasm and courage and patience and wisdom, to such an extent that no student of history can ignore their vital role in the way of Islam nor can he underestimate it.

Such were the women of the early period and of the period of the Companions and of the successors of the Companions who adorned the pages of history with their high intellectual faculties, great abilities, clear understanding and straightforward thinking. Inside the house, they proved themselves to be devoted wives, affectionate mothers, loving daughters and sincere sisters. Outside the house, they displayed their patience at the time of harshness, they showed their stability and firmness at the hour of suppression and tyranny, laid down their lives at the time of sacrifice, sent instructions and gave suggestions to the Caliphs of their time

195. Al-Istiyaab, Vol. 4, p.383.

and marched to the battlefields at the time of war. History proves all these facts. No one can dare overlook this truth nor hide this reality.

It is said that in this modern age the status of woman is being recognised and woman is attaining its due place now after a lot of struggle and long suffering. What place the woman of this age has owned for herself? Less, quite less than what those Muslim women had attained both inside and outside the doors.

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About the Author

Syed Jalaluddin Umari (born 1935), a great Islamic scholar of global repute, has over twenty-five books on Islamic subjects to his credit. Based on the Qur'an, Sunnah and Islamic Jurisprudence, his writings aim at presenting Islam as the ideal way of life and only source of salvation for mankind. His numerous books, articles and lectures on a wide range of human issues have been translated into various languages. His widely acclaimed book *Ma'arof-o-Munkar* has been rendered into Arabic, Turkish, English, Hindi, Tamil and Bangali.

He writes in chaste Urdu in his own inimitable style marked by felicity and lucidity of expression. His book under study *Woman and Islam* is one of such books as deal with the various aspects of Islamic society especially family law. His other books on the subject are *Aurat Islami Muashrey Mien* (Woman in Islamic Society), *Musalman Aurat ke Huqooq aur unper Aitarazat ka Jaiza* (The Rights of Muslim Woman – An Appraisal) and *Musalman Khawateen ki Zimmedariyan* (Muslim Women: Role and Responsibilities). Among his other books are *Islam ka Shoorayee Nizam* (Shoora System of Islam), *Khuda aur Rasool ka Tasawwur Islami Ta'aleemat mien* (The Concept of God and Prophet in Islamic Teachings), *Insan aur uske Masael* (Man and the Problems He Face), *Islam mein Khidmate Khalq ka Tasawwur* (The Concept of Social Service in Islam) *Ghair Muslimon se Ta'aluqqat aur Unke Huqooq* (Non-Muslims: Their Rights and Relationships with Them) and *Sihhat-o-Marz aur Islami Ta'aleemat* (Health and Disease in Islamic Perspectives).

Presently he is Deputy Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and the moving spirit behind Idara-e-Tahqeeq-o-Tasneef-e-Islami (Institute of Islamic Research), Aligarh. He edited an academic journal, *Zindagi-e-Nau* for five years and has been editing a research journal *Tahqeeqat-e-Islami*.