

Lesson 3: Woman's Learning

Importance of Learning

We might not come across such a consecration of learning and such a call for it among all the religions and sects and creeds as they are spot in Islam. Even more, the first verse addressed to The Greatest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) when the revelation came down on him was:

"Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created. Has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught by the pen. Has taught man that which he knew not."

(The Qur'an, Al-'Alaq, 96: 1-5)

The Most High God joined the reading with the mentioning of Him in order to indicate the relationship between learning and the belief in The Most Glorious and Reverent God.

Then, He made learning one of the standards of preference among the people; The Most High God says,

"...Say: 'Are those who know equal to those who know not?'" (The Qur'an, Az-Zumar, 39:9)

Then, He praised the learners and raised them to special ranks:

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge" (The Qur'an, Al-Mujadilah, 58:11)

to the extent that losing them turned to be a gap which can be closed by nothing.

It is ascribed to The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali Al-Murtadha (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "The learning believer is more rewarded than the one fasting and praying and fighting for God's sake is. When he [the learning believer] dies, a gap opens in Islam which is to be closed by nothing till the Day of Resurrection."¹

Why did The Most High God attach such an importance to learning? And why did He endow the learner with all this spiritual essence, ranks, and honor?

Its Necessity for the Human Being

This interest in learning did not originate from nothing. This interest has specific significations to which the narratives referred. Learning is intricately associated to the true divine religion that came down from The Most High God. The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) referred to this association in his saying, "Learning is the life of Islam and the prop of religion"².

The Most High God is The Truth. As the human being acquires more knowledge and insight, he/she draws nearer to The Truth. The Most High God says,

"And those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the truth, and guides to the Path of the Exalted in Might, Owner of all praise." (The Qur'an, Saba, 34:6)

Also, The Most High God says,

"And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Path." (The Qur'an, Al-Hajj, 22:54)

Learning is not restricted to a certain topic rather than another topic or to a certain level of knowledge rather than another level; it is, therefore, good wherever it takes place. It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Learning is the source of every good; on the other hand, ignorance is the source of every evil."³

Here, we are going to reflect upon some roles of learning.

1 – Acquisition of Knowledge

Knowledge is demanded for itself; thus it needs nothing else to justify it, especially as regards the basic lores which are related to the creation and the hereafter. Henceforth, The Noble Qur'an teaches us never to get quenched from knowledge but to ask always for more. The Most High God says,

"And say: 'My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.'" (The Qur'an, Taha, 20:114)

2- Prerequisite for the Work

Any deed, whether insignificant or great, needs scientific premises which as the human being gets more acquainted with them and works being guided by them, his/her work becomes more masterfully and

subtle. It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "...God likes that when a human being performs a work to master it."⁴

3- Rationality for the Society

If ignorance were the characteristic of the societies, it is doubtless that the rule would be for none but for the law of the jungle. The ignorant person, in his nature, is not deterred by reason but is deterred when he senses a power greater than his.

We refer here to the narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) in which he said, "The ignorant is not deterred even by the sharpness of the swords."⁵

4- A Solution for All the Problems

Wherever ignorance penetrates, corruption accompanies it. As a result, we may find out a lot of the social problems originating from ignorance and lack of learning. It is ascribed to The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Ignorance is the corruption of every matter."⁶

Learning Is Not Exclusive to the Man

Is it possible, after having realized the association of learning to religion and knowing The Most High God and to the masterfulness of deeds and the guidance of the society and after having realized that ignorance is the origin of corruption, to make learning exclusive to the man and to deprive the woman of it?

If learning were exclusive to the man, this would mean that religion, knowing God, masterfulness of deeds, and guidance would be exclusive to the man, which is an idea stated by no one. In this course, we refer to the narrative ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) in which he said, "Asking for learning is a duty imposed on every male and female Muslim. God likes them who ask for learning."⁷

Learning, therefore, is not exclusive to the man because its excuses are not exclusive to him. Woman's learning is not only not prevented, but also it is required and preferable.

It is ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He who has a daughter whom he educates and masters her education, teaches and masters her teaching, and gives generously from the bounties God bestowed upon him will have her as a protection from fire."⁸

The Circumstances of Learning

The circumstances of the schools, institutes, universities, and all the areas of learning must be healthy and helpful in accomplishing the aims of learning. Learning must continue in elevating the human being and in emphasizing the human values. In other words, it must be the prop of religion and must call [the human being] to know The Creator and to be committed to the lofty human morals. This can be accomplished by means of two issues:

1- The woman must not be inattentive to the aim of learning which is the complementarity of the human being as an individual and as a society, for inattention is the cause of forfeiture.

2- The woman must stick to chastity, abide to the religious rules, and follow after the path which noble Islam delineated for us in the character of Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa)God's peace bestowed upon her) who is the model of the learned women and who "The Scholar" was one of her titles. Every scholar or learning woman, therefore, should have Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa)God's peace bestowed upon her) always before her eyes, in order that she will follow after her in any movement she performs or any stillness she is in.

Priorities of Learning

What are the priorities of learning with respect to the woman? There are a lot of basic and indispensable issues, among which we are going to reflect upon the following:

1- The Basic Lores, such as: the Creeds, Jurisprudence, and Morals

It is related in a narrative ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Learning is of three types: a fixed verse, a just duty, or a followed convention. Anything else is considered to be an excess."⁹

These lores are highly indispensable for each woman whatever position she is in because she is ordered to, before anything else, reform herself on the learning, religious, heart, moral, conduct, and jurisprudential levels which the woman cannot do without whatever position she is in.

2- Methods of the Family Behavior

The first role which the woman faces is her role inside her family as a daughter, sister, wife, or mother. All of these roles are of a special importance and a crucial influence on the family, especially the role of the mother who sends out to the society righteous sons: scholars, fighters for God's sake, martyrs, and pious sons.

From here, the woman must learn the means of education and must get acquainted with the characteristics and variables of the children with respect to their age and nature. This will help her a lot

in her mission as a mother, and so is the case with the wife in her life with her husband.

A lot of problems and gaps result from ignorance, so it is natural that getting acquainted with these roles and their means and their methods improves the woman's performance and activates her role.

3- The Services which Help in establishing the True Islamic Environments

Since the woman represents half the society, at the least evaluation, she needs social and psychological and medical service. If the society does not have women specialized in this field and thus able to satisfy the woman's needs, the women would be obliged to consult the men, which is an improper issue if it is not necessary. As a result, the women should specialize in the fields which the women are in need of.

4- The Needs of the Society

The society, in general, has special needs which differ from one place to another with respect to the conditions and the requirements. It is required and preferable to consider these needs seriously and to turn towards specialization in order to satisfy them.

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From the roles of learning are:

- 1- Acquisition of knowledge
- 2- Premise for the work
- 3- Rationality of the society
- 4- A solution for all the problems

If the duty of learning were exclusive to the man, this would mean that religion, knowing God, masterfulness of deeds, and guidance would be exclusive to the man, which is a matter that no one says!!

The circumstances of the schools, institutes, universities, and all the areas of learning must be healthy and helpful in accomplishing the aims of learning. Learning must continue in elevating the human being and in emphasizing the human values. This can be accomplished by means of two issues:

- 1- The woman must not be inattentive to the aim of learning
- 2- The woman must stick to chastity, abide to the religious rules, and follow after the path which Islam delineated

There are several basic issues which the woman should know:

- 1- The basic lores, such as: the creeds, jurisprudence, and morals
- 2- The methods of the family behavior
- 3- The services which help in establishing the true Islamic environments
- 4- The needs of the society

Comprehension Questions

- 1- What is the influential role which Islam aims at accomplishing by means of learning?
- 2- What is the attitude of Islam as regards the woman's learning?
- 3- What are the issues which help in the accomplishment of the aims of learning?
- 4- What are the most important issues which the woman must learn?
- 5- What is meant by that the woman must learn the special needs of the society?

For Reading: The Martyr Amina As-Sadr (Bint Al-Huda)

Amina As-Sadr was born in Al-Ka'themiyya in 1927 A. D./1357 of immigration. She is the daughter of Sayyid Haydar As-Sadr, one of the prominent scholars and researchers; and she is the sister of the Martyr Muhammad Baker As-Sadr (May The Most High God be pleased with him).

In her house, the house of learning, the Martyr Bint Al-Huda learnt, in addition to the traditional lores which were taught in the governmental schools, linguistics, logic, jurisprudence, and Al-Osoul [a book titled 'The Rules of Deduction' by The Sign of God Al-Burojardi] to the extent that many scholars testified her genius.

In 1967, she turned towards teaching and became responsible for Al-Zahraa Schools. She was characterized by her magnificent presence in the public womanish court and in the literary court. Her writings were distinguished by a special glamour. In spite of the fact that most of her writings are narrative, she carried within her writings a message addressed to the youth.

From the poems in which she addressed the Muslim woman is:

If it is said old fashioned you are
Care not and steadfast continue to be
Say, I am the daughter of the message
From its light I get guidance

My shyness has not prevented me from the highs
It has not shackled my hands, No!!
And this veil hinders me not from my aim!
O sister, the morrow is ours!
Go on your path and upwards
O sister, the truth rises above
The cunning of the aggressor!

From her writings are: Al-Fadeela Tan'taser [The Virtue Triumphs], Kaleema wa Daa'wa [A Word and An Invitation], Al-Mar'aa Maa Al-Nabee [The Woman with The Prophet], Imraatan wa Rajol [Two Women and a Man], Zikrayat ala Tilal Makka [Memories over the Hills of Makka], Al-Ba'hitha aan Al-Hakika [The Woman Searching for the Truth], Siraa [A Struggle], Al-Khala Al-Da'ee'aa [The Lost Aunt], Boutoulat Al-Mar'aa Al-Muslima [The Heroisms of the Muslim Woman], etc.

The Martyr Bint Al-Huda exceeded the educational and social work to reach the political struggle. She played an effective and strong role in transmitting the ideas of the Martyr Sayyid As-Sadr to the women and in illustrating for everybody working with her the requisite political attitude at that time. In addition, she worked towards mobilizing the women in order to resist the ideas and plans of the tyrant regime, and she participated in establishing the striving spirit against the enemies of Islam.

In 1977 A.D, The Sayyid, The Martyr, was arrested. As a result, The Martyr Bint Al-Huda, her steps being inspired by the steps of Sayyida Zeinab Al-Hawraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) with no fear and with a Zeinabian courage, got out to the sanctuary of her grandfather The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him), thus appealing the people for help and motivating them to rebel. She called most loudly, "O my grandfather, O The prince of the Believers! I complain to God and to you about the oppression and persecution we are exposed to." And then, she addressed the people saying, "O noble ones! Are you going to remain silent even though your reference is arrested? Are you going to remain silent while your reference is being jailed and tortured? Then, what would you say to my grandfather The Prince of the Believers if he asked you about your betrayal? Get out! Demonstrate! Protest!"

The tyrant Saddam noticed that The Martyr Bint Al-Huda and her father were exposing his tyrant regime to danger; so he ordered to arrest them and he exposed them to a severe torture which ended in the martyrdom of Sayyid As-Sadr and his pure sister Bint Al-Huda (May God be pleased with them both).

From her poems are the following:

Even if the road is filled
With what prevents to move on
Even if life strives
to despoil me

Even if the tyrant time tries
To shoot spears at me
Even if circumstances interplay
To cause me pains and distress
And the clouds of worries heap
To gloom the horizon of my thought
Even if my feet bleed
I swear not to give up my aim
Not to stop striving, No!
For my aim is higher and loftier!
I already know that
The path of truth is throne filled
The resistant has always been
Alone among the legions
And God has always helped
His soldiers even being the few
The truth is immortalized in existence
With everything else evanescent
I will continue to chant my Islam
And to disclaim every falsehood

- [1.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Two, p. 17
- [2.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part One, p.463
- [3.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part Three, p.2064
- [4.](#) Amali, Sheikh Al-Tusi, p.428
- [5.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part One. p.462
- [6.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part One, p.462
- [7.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part One, p.30
- [8.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part One, p.65
- [9.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part One, p.32

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