Stories and Lessons from the Lives of Women In Islam: Part II

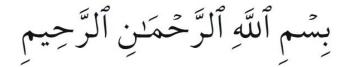
A Review of the Book
"The Illustrious Women of Islam From the First Generation"



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All Glory is due to the Creator, Sustainer, Allah (subana wa ta'alah). **There is none worthy of worship except Allah**. We believe in Him (The most High), glorify Him, and we give thanks for His provisions, His bestowed knowledge, and His Grace.

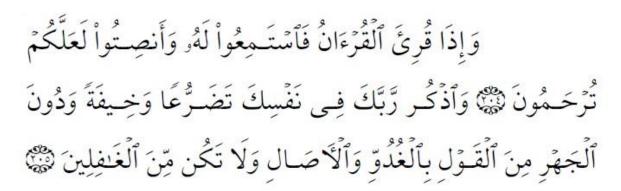
We believe in his books, his angels, and his Prophets from Adam (peace be upon him) to Muhammed (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We believe that Allah is sovereign over all of creation, the part seen and unseen. **We seek His refuge, His forgiveness, His protection, and we seek His guidance**. We bear witness that there is no deity, but Allah, and we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

The Purpose of Prayer - Part 2:

The obligation of the five daily prayers was revealed between the tenth and eleventh year of the mission of Prophet Muhammed (saw). As one studies the life of Prophet Muhammad (saw), it becomes evident there were stages of development that Allah (swt) took the Prophet (saw) through before he received revelation and before he was given the command for salah. We previously discussed the Isra (miraculous journey) and Miraj (ascension) and how prayer was commanded or obligated on the believers.

In the November class we discussed two purposes of prayer: 1) **Fulfill our obligation of Allah's command** and 2) **Expiate our sins.** In this December segment of the Quran Study I want to focus on two other purposes of prayer; 3) **Opening to receive mercy from Allah** and 4) **Exercise in Obedience and Control**.

3) Opening to receive mercy from Allah (swt).

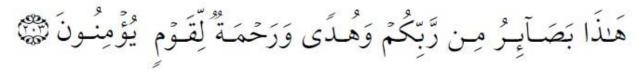


Updated on: December 12, 2019

<u>Translation of Surah-al-A'raf, Surah 7, Ayaat 204-205 (from quran.com Sahih International)</u> "So when the Quran is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy. And remember they Lord within thy soul, humbly and in awe, being not loud of voice, in the morning and the evening, and be not among those who are heedless."

Commentary in <u>The Study Quran</u>: "....one should listen to the sacred sound of the recited Quran, paying full attention in order to understand its meaning as well as reflecting upon its teachings and acting according to its prescriptions....Listening silently and with pure receptivity to the recited Quran is...a means of developing the quality of pure servitude to God...."

In ayah 103 of Surah Al-Araf part of what Allah instructs the Prophet (saw) to say is:



Quran 7:203 (part)

Translation of Surah 7-203 (from quran.com Sahih International)

"...This [Quran] is enlightenment from your Lord and guidance and mercy for a people who believe."

The recitation of the Quran, 17 times every day (*in five obligatory prayers*), allows human beings to receive mercy and guidance from Allah (swt).

4) Exercise in Obedience and Control

Soldiers are admired for their order and discipline. The purpose of their training is to establish in them the habit of carrying out orders. The salaat is training for the believer to establish discipline of a similar fashion. The salaat is a practice that teaches the believer a discipline of respect for authority. In congregation prayers one is practicing respect for authority and leadership as one follows behind an Imam. However, there is a certain amount of flexibility in the obligation of prayer for those who are sick and/or have mobility limitations to perform the prayer.

Control and discipline are required from the limbs and faculties of one who performs the prayers. The eyes are on a fixed place of sujood, the tongue and lips are trained to recite the Quran and to praise Allah, the hands are to perform controlled motions, and the feet are placed in particular positions in order to properly perform the prayers. All these parts of the body are trained to be in obedience to Allah. The discipline that develops from performing salaat is what keeps one from prohibited acts (haraam).

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Allah states in Surah Ankabut, Surah 29, Ayah 45



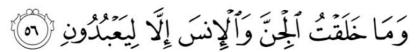
Quran 29:45

"Surely salaat prevents immorality and wrongdoing..."

Included here again are the references to the purpose salaat, **fulfilling our obligation to Allah** include:

- **1.** Surah Qaf, 50:39-40
- **2.** Surah Tur; 52:48-49
- **3.** Surah Muzzamil, 73:1-8 and 73:2
- 4. Surah Ad dhariyat (The Winnowing Winds), 51:56

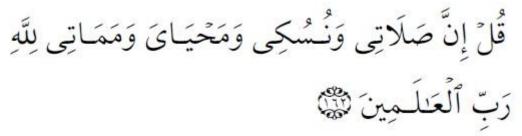
"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."



The salaat is a direct line of communication with The Creator, The Lord of all the Worlds. The salaat is a regular means of seeking forgiveness, seeking guidance, and seeking mercy from Allah. We have discussed these four purposes of salaat:

- 1. To Fulfill our obligation to Allah,
- 2. To Expiate our sins,
- 3. To create an Opening to receive mercy from Allah,
- 4. To Exercise Obedience and Control.

This statement in Surah al An'am is a proper conclusion to the **Purpose of Prayer**.



Quran 6:162

"Say, surely my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the Worlds."

STORIES AND LESSONS FROM THE LIVES OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

The significance and importance of our roles as women in the society does not receive proper emphasis in the world or even more importantly in the Islamic community. We are not told the stories of women leaders of societies, queens who ruled nations' of people, women warriors who fought with as much fierceness and valor as their male counterparts.

Allah (swt) has provided us knowledge on the significance and importance of the roles of women in society within the revelation of the Quran. Allah (swt) has revealed Surah-tul Maryam, concerning the Prophet Maryam (alayha salaam)¹. Allah (swt) has revealed ayaat related directly to the wives of Prophet (saw) and other righteous women in Islam. For example, there are verses in Quran concerning Ayesha (wife of the Prophet)² and Aasiya (wife of Pharaoon)³,

Studying the life of the Prophet (saw) it is noted that he related the righteousness, goodness of the character of the Women in Islam.

Anas bin Mālik said that the Messenger of Allāh a said:

Sufficient for you among the women of mankind are Maryam bint 'Imrān, Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, Fāṭimah bint Muhammad, and Asiyah the wife of Pharaoh.¹⁷

The Messenger of Allah said:

The leaders of the women of Paradise are Maryam, Fāṭimah, Khadījah, and Āsiyah the wife of Pharaoh.¹⁸

^{1.} Surah Maryam, 19 and Surah Al Tahrim, 66:12

^{2.} Surah Al-Nur, 24:11-20

^{3.} Surah Al Tahrim, 66:11

It is related by 'Ali ibn Abu-Talib that the Prophet (saw) said, "The best woman of her era is Khadijah bin Kuwaylid, and the best woman of her era was Maryam bint Imran."

Muslims have been blessed with men and women throughout the history of Islam as righteous examples. This Quran Study is a second installment of a discussion on the righteous women of Islam.

In the November Quran Study we began a review of the book "The Illustrious Women of Islam From the First Generation". We discussed how this book grouped these women into distinctive categories, including:

- 1) The Wives of the Prophet,
- 2) The Caretakers of the Prophet, and
- 3) The Daughters of the Prophet.

The stories of these righteous women had a reoccurring element. That element being the women did not live a life of ease. Each muslimah's life included a test, a trial, a heartache, or hardship that distinguished her in the community in which she lived and her place in the history of Islam.

In this December presentation of the Quran Study, I will briefly present stories of the distinguished women of Islam from the categories of 1) **Leaders of the Women of Paradise** and 2) **Women Warriors**. May Allah (swt) allow me to present their stories in a manner that is stated well, easily understood, and does justice to the significance of their place in Islamic history. –**Ameen-**

Women in Islam:

Leaders of the Women in Paradise and Women Warriors

Maryam bint Imran, Leader of the Women in Paradise

The story of Maryam (alayha salaam) is conveyed in Surah- Ali Imran, Surah Al Nisaa (4:156), Surah Maryam, and in Surah Al Anbiyaa.

The story of Maryam begins in Surah Ali Imran in ayaat 35-37. Her story begins in ayah 35,

"When the wife of 'Imran said, "My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, dedicated [for Your service], so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing."

When Maryam's mother delivered a female child, she stated in ayah 36

"And I have named her Mary and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled/rejected."

Note: Maryam's mother's name is related to be Hannah.

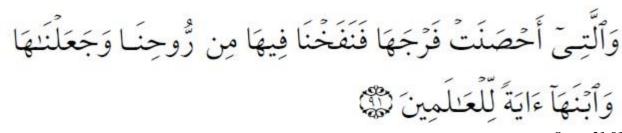
The story of Maryam continues in Surah Maryam ayaat 16-21, where Allah relates that Maryam had taken herself into a place of seclusion from her family. In ayah 17 of Surah Maryam Allah states that he sent an angel as a well-proportioned man to announce the gift of a pure son.

"And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel, and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man." -19:17

Maryam states, "Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of Allah ." -19:18

He said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy." -19:19

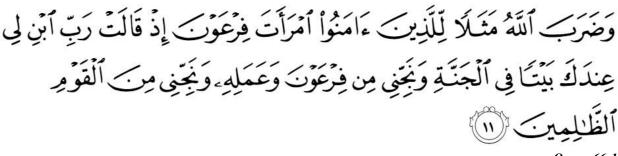
Maryam's story continues in Surah Al Anbiyaa, Surah 21. The significance of the part of the story of Maryam that is related in Surah Al Anbiyaa is that she is mentioned with the remembrance of the stories of other prophets. The remembrance of significant stories or miracles of the Prophets' begins in ayah 76 where Allah begins with the story of Nuh, then relates a portion of the story of David, of Solomon, of Job, Ismail, Idris, Dhul Kifl, Dhun Nun (Jonah or Yunus), of Zakariyyah and the blessing of his son Yahya, and then Allah relates part of the story of Maryam, in ayah 91.



Quran 21:91

"And she who guarded her chastity, so We blew into her from Our spirit, and We made her and her son a sign for all the worlds."

Allah gives the believers more evidence of the righteous women in the Quran. In Surah Al Tahrim, 66:11-12 Allah states,



Quran 66:11

"And Allah presents an example of those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people."

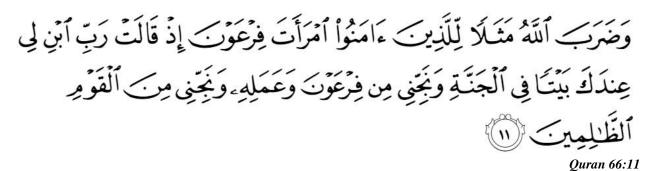
Quran 66:12

"And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into her Our spirit, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient."

When one pieces together the story of Maryam it is evident that Maryam was a Prophet. A portion of her story is included with the stories of prophets in Surah Anbiyaa. It is important to note and emphasize the Quran states that Aasiya and Mary and examples for the believers.

Assiya the wife of Pharoah, Leader of the Women in Paradise

Part of the story of Aasiya has been provided in Surah 66:11.



"And Allah presents an example of those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people."

The commentary of this ayah provided by Abdullah Yusuf Ali is "Traditionally, she is known as Asiyah one of the four perfect women... Pharoah is the type of arrogance, godlessness, and wickedness. For his wife to have preserved her faith, her humility, and her righteousness was indeed a great spiritual triumph.

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Wife of the Prophet, Leader of the Women in Paradise

Khadijah is the daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn Abdul Uzza and Fatimah bint Za'idah Al-Aamiriyah. Khadijah was known in the time of ignorance as at-Tahirah (the Pure One). She was married twice before she married the Prophet and children from the previous marriages.

Khadijah was the first wife of the Prophet and the Prophet did not take another wife during his 25 years of marriage to her. Khadijah's traits were that she was a woman who achieved excellence and distinction. She was a woman of intelligence, modesty, and faith. Aishah said, "When the Messenger of Allah would mention Khadijah, he would not grow tired of praising her and seeking forgiveness for her." Aishah also states, "Never did I feel jealous of any woman as I felt in the case of Khadijah. This was due to the Prophet mentioning her often." Sahih Muslim 2435.

It is agreed upon that Khadijah was the first to accept Islam during the time of Prophet. It is related, "The first people to believe in Allah and his Messenger were Khadijah, Abu Bakr, and Ali, (may Allah be pleased with them all)." Her righteous status is related by Abu Hurayah in the following hadith.

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Abu Hurayah said, "Gabriel came to the Prophet and said, O Messenger of Allah, Khadijah is bringing you a dish...When she arrives, convey to her the salaam from her Lord and from me. And give her glad tidings of a palace in Paradise made from jewels in which there is no noise and not toil." - Related by Sahih Al Bukhari 3820

Fatimah, Daughter of the Prophet, Leader of the Women in Paradise

Fatimah bint Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib ibn Hashim, was the youngest daughter of the Prophet. She was born shortly before the first revelation. She was married to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib and had four children with him. Fatimah was known to be patient, benevolent, content, persevering, and grateful to Allah. She followed the teaching and advice of her father as she progressed through life. When she wanted assistance of a servant with the work needed to survive the life of family and home, the Prophet advised her to recite the dhikr of Alhamdulillah, subana allah, and Allahu akbar as this was better than having a servant.

Fatimah narrated hadith and the companions narrated hadith from her. There are 18 hadith narrated by Fatimah that are collected in the Musnad. The Prophet was content with the manners and character Fatimah. He loved her and honored her. Fatimah was known to be the most like her father. Aishah relates "I have not seen anyone who resembled the Prophet in speech more than Fatimah. When she entered, the Prophet would stand and greet her and kiss her and welcome her..." (Related by Sunan Abu Dawud 5217.)

The Prophet said "The best women of Paradise are Khadijah and Fatimah." It is also related that the Prophet said "Indeed this is an angel that had never descended to the earth before tonight. He sought permission from his Lord to greet me with salaam and to give me the glad tidings that Fatimah is the best of the women of Paradise, and the al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the best of the youth of the people of Paradise."

Fatimah was born just before the first revelation and died within six months of the passing of her father Muhammad (saw). She lived to be about twenty-four years of age.

Nusaybah bint Ka'b, Warrior of Islam

Umm 'Imarah Nusaybah bin Ka'b, also known as Nusaybah bint Ka'b. Nusaybah is known as the Warrior from the Ansar of Madinah. She had two brothers Abdullah, who fought in the Battle of Badr, and Abdur Rahman. Nusaybah was one of two women who were present at the Pledge of Aqabah (This is the pledge to listen to, obey, support, and defend the Prophet (saw) in good times and difficult times.)

Nusaybah participated in Battle of Uhud, the Battle of Hunayn, and the Battle of Yamamah. She was a witness to the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah.

The Battle of Yamamah was fought after the death of the Prophet against some Arab tribes who were apostates from Islam. This battle was fought during the khalifah of Abu Bakr.

In the Battle of Uhud, Nusaybah fought alongside her husband Ghaziyyah and her two sons from her first marriage Habib ibn Zayd and Abdullah ibn Zayd. She would retrieve water

for the other soldiers and would then engage in fighting. Nusaybah was known to be a capable swordsman.

Nusaybah said "I saw the people dispersing from the Messenger of Allah, so there only remained 10 fighters to protect him. I was there with my two sons and my husband standing in front of the Prophet defending him. I was fighting without a shield. As the people were fleeing, I saw a man fleeing the battlefield with a shield. I said to him, 'Throw your shield to someone who will fight'. He threw his shield and I caught it and began shielding the Prophet (saw) with it. It was only the horsemen that gained the upper hand on us. If they had been on foot like us, we would have defeated them, insha'Allah. I engaged a horseman and he attempted to strike me, but I blocked him with the shield... As he turned to ride away, I struck his horse on its hamstring, causing it to fall back. The Prophet began yelling, 'O ibn Imarah – your mother, your mother'. So my sons helped me finish the soldier."

Her grandson related a story that Nusaybah had told him. She heard the Prophet say "Surely the stance of Nusaybah bint Ka'b today was better than the stance of so-and-so."

Nusaybah was seen fighting fiercely in the Battle of Uhud. She fought an enemy who stabbed her in the shoulder, causing a sever injury. The Prophet said, "I did not look to my right or to my left except that I saw Umm 'Imarah fighting beside me."

Saffiyah bint 'Abdul-Muttalib, Paternal Aunt of Prophet (saw), Warrior of Islam,

Saffiyah was the daughter of Abdul Muttalib. Her mother was from the Banu Zuhrah tribe. Her second marriage was to the brother of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid. His name was al-Awam. She had two sons with al-Awam. Saffiyah was of those who were part of the first migration to Abyssinia.

Saffiyah became a warrior during the Battle of the Trench. Saffiyah was with a group of women and children in the protective fortress of Hasan ibn Thabit. Saffiyah related this story "Hasan was with us when a spy sent by the Jews passed by the fortress and began to circle the fortress while the Muslims were engaging their enemy....I said to Hasan, 'I don't trust him; he is going to inform the enemy of our location, so stand up and go and kill him.' Hasan replied, 'May Allah forgive you. You know I am not able to do this.'" (This is likely due to his age.) Saffiyah continues, "So I fortified myself, grabbed a pole, and went down and struck him until I killed him." She is known as the first woman to kill a man in the battles fought during the time of the prophet.

Saffiyah died in 20 AH and was believed to be in her 70s at the time of her death.

Conclusion

These women of Islam were a combination of noble, pious, righteous, intellectual, generous women who were steadfast, fought to protect Islam and Muslims, and persevered in their belief as they progressed through various adversities. I hope my attempt to convey the essence of their characters and the significance of their existence in Islamic history has been received. This second part of this presentation was a bit more difficult than the first as there were many stories that I wanted to include but time and space would not allow. These stories present righteous examples for both men and women. Allah says **Aasiya and Maryam** are examples for those who believe. The commitment of these Women, through their pious and generous acts, should benefit the believers as they reflect on their intentions and acts of ibadaat (worship of Allah).

The beauty of the comprehensive Quranic text is that what one reads today and understands may be illuminated with another level of understanding when one reads the same text tomorrow. I encourage you to read, review, and reflect on the ayaat of the Quran and allow Allah, the Most Merciful and Generous to be your guide to mercy.

Dua'

Salaat (prayer) is a significant part of our well-being in this life and the hereafter. The importance of prayer in our lives cannot be over emphasized. Each prayer that we say benefits our own souls. Allah sent many Prophets. The Prophets were instructed to deliver the message that 1) Allah is **One**, 2) to worship Allah only, 3) to be steadfast in one's belief, 4) to be grateful to Allah for His provisions, 4) and to avoid sin. This same message is conveyed in the stories of the **Women in Islam**.

I conclude with two dua. The first was provided in the November Quran Study. This dua' is related in the **story of the believers**, referenced in Surah Ali Imran ayaat 144-148. In ayaat 147 of Ali Imran, Allah reminds us of the prayer of those who stood steadfast with the Prophet (saw), through physical and spiritual battles.

".... 'Our Lord, Forgive us our sins and anything we may have done that transgressed our duty: Establish our feet firmly and help us against those that resist faith'."

-Ameen-

The second dua' is also in Surah Ali Imran 3:8;

"Our Lord, let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, You are the Bestower." – **Ameen**-

Various Categories and Names of Distinguished Women in Islam

Wives of the Prophet (saw):

- 1. Khadijah bint-Khuwaylid
- 2. Sawdah bint-Zam'ah
- 3. A'isha bint-Abu Bakr as-Saadiq
- 4. Hafsa bint-'Umar bin al-Khattib
- 5. Zaynab bint-Khuzaymah
- 6. Umm Salaamah Hind bint-Abi Umayyah bin al-Mughirah
- 7. Zaynab bint Jahsh bin Riyab
- 8. Juwayriyah bint-Al-Harith bin Abi Dirar al-Mustaliqiyyah
- 9. Umm Habibah Ramlan bint Abi-Sufyan
- 10. Safiyyah bint-Huyayy
- 11. Maymunah bint-al-Harith al-Hilaliyyah
- 12. Umm Ibrahim, Mariyyah the Coptic (mother of the son of Prophet Muhammad, **Ibrahim**)

Muhajirun from the Female Companions:

- 1. Fatima bint Asad bin Hashim bin 'Abd Manaf bin Qusayy Al Haashimi
- 2. Asmaa bint 'Umays bin Ma'bad bin al-Harith al-Kath'amiyyah
- 3. Asmaa bint Abu Bakr
- 4. Umm Kulthum bint 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ayt
- 5. Fatima bint Qays
- 6. Zaynab bint Abi Salamah (step daughter of the Prophet (saw)
- 7. Umm Khalid bint Khalid (the last female companion to die)
- 8. Umm al-Fadl (the mother of six noble companions)

Daughters of the Prophet (saw):

- 1. Zaynab (her daughter is Umaamah bint Abil-As bin ar-Rabi)
- 2. Ruqayyah
- 3. Umm Kulthum
- 4. Fatima

Granddaughters of the Prophet (saw):

- 1. Umaamah bint Abil-As bin ar-Rabi
- 2. Zaynab bint Ali bin Abi Talib (she was born in 5AH and died in 62AH, the full sister of al-Hasan and al-Husayn)
- 3. Umm Kulthum bint Ali bin Abi Talib (born in 6 AH she is the full sister of al-Hasan and al-Husayn)

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<u>Siyar A'lam an-Nubala</u>a' by Imam adh-Dhahabi is described as an encyclopedia of biographies of the noble companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and the scholars from the generations that followed them, up until the era of the author who died in 748 AH. The book provided memoirs of noble women closest to the Prophet (saw).

<u>Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz as-Sahaabah</u>, by Ibn Hajar-al-'Asqalaani, is a comprehensive book on the companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw). It is arranged in alphabetical order illustrating the noble women from mankind and jinn. The book includes biographies that are extensive and some that are brief; 'all of them are extraordinary'.

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