

## Contemporary educational need for a reformed society in perspective of the practical role of Muslim women

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### **Abstract**

Along with other fields of life, Muslim women have played a more prominent and distinguished role in the field of knowledge and of course, their understanding and insight in Shariah sciences is also more prominent than many other men as well as women. Its main reason is that this field was considered respectable for women and they had very little contact with men. A woman named Umm Al-Hassan used to preach regularly. Umme Sa'ad was a woman of great knowledge and grace. Muslim women had played a very important role in the field of education and learning. Hence the Muslim women lit the candles of enlightenment, spiritual guidance, material and worldly progress in the darkness and ignorance of the world. If all this could have happened in this era, then there is no reason why it would not have been possible in today's life. There is an urgent need to present it to the new generation so that today's society can become a peaceful, reformed and exemplary society. This article will highlight to utilize educational work of Muslim women more effectively for the establishment of a reformed society.

**Keywords:** Prominent, distinguished, preach, spiritual and reformed.

The literal meaning of knowledge:

"The literal meaning of knowledge is to know."<sup>1</sup>

But the nature of the knowledge of each art and the status of the information is different. The importance of every literature and art depend upon the demands and needs of the time. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) felt the dire need in his blessed era and encouraged the Muslims to learn eagerly. Then it is included in the category of education. The source of the education system that was formed at that time was the beauty of the Qur'an and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

### **Terminological concept of knowledge:**

Knowledge is the perception of a thing, that is, knowledge is the name of protecting the human soul from harmful habits, bad traits and guiding it to the right path by creating good morals in it.

### **The importance of knowledge in the light of the Qur'an:**

In the Qur'an, knowledge has been used in many senses, such as argument, truth and certainty. The basic premise of the concept of knowledge that Islam has given is that the

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source of knowledge is the Allah Almighty. Hence, the knowledge of the guidance of humanity is also from Him. Senses, intellect and experiences are the great sources of knowledge but revelation is the highest source of knowledge. The necessities of life should be subject to the purpose of life. The purpose of education and training is to make the individual a benefactor of Allah so that a peaceful welfare and corrective society can be formed. The correct concept of knowledge is given by the Qur'an al-Hakeem, as:

﴿اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق، خلق الإنسان من علق، اقرأ وربك الأكرم، الذي علم بالقلم، علم الإنسان ما لم يعلم﴾<sup>2</sup>

"Read in the name of thy Lord Who created you from a clot of congealed blood. Read that your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught with the pen, blessed man knowledge of things which he did not know."

It is the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that is the first commandment about to read, that is, recitation.

There is another place in the Qur'an al-Hakim:

﴿ومن يؤت الحكمة فقد أوتي خيراً كثيراً﴾<sup>3</sup>

"And to whom wisdom is given, certainly he has bestowed much good."

In the same way, Allah Almighty addressed the Holy Prophet and said: "O Messenger, pray that my Lord increase my knowledge." From the above verses of the Qur'an it is clear that knowledge is another name of light in which any person can easily determine his destination and can easily reach the destination.

### **The importance of knowledge in Hadith:**

There is a strong emphasis on achieving knowledge in Hadith as the word of wisdom is the lost heritage of a believer. Wherever it is found, he is the first to inherit it. The best concept of knowledge is explained by the Prophet (PBUH) as:

[طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم]<sup>4</sup>

"It is the duty of every Muslim to acquire knowledge."

At another place the Prophet (PBUH) said:

[عن ابن عباس، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: فقيه أشد على الشيطان من ألف عابد]<sup>5</sup>

"It is narrated from Hazrat Ibn Abbas that a jurist is more heavier on Satan over thousand devotees."

The study of the above mentioned hadiths make it clear that knowledge is a rare wealth and success in both worlds on the conditional on knowledge and action.

### **Academic activities of Muslim women in the first century AH**

In this regard, the study of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) era and the Pious Caliphs clearly shows that the Prophet (PBUH) exhorted people to pay full attention to the education and training of women. It is the main aims of the education and training of Muslim women was that if women play an important role in reforming the society and women are self-educated then they will be able to play their significance role in this field in more effective way. As Ibn Sa'ad writes in Tabqatul-Kubra about Umm al-Hasan:

"One of the captives of Umme Salma (R.A) was named Umm Al-Hassan (R.A). It is her peculiar quality that she taught the other Muslim women about Islam and its teachings in a very

convincing way."<sup>6</sup>

In the light of the all above discussion, we can clearly see that during the Prophet's time and later, women also participated in the tradition of knowledge of Hadith and never felt ashamed to get information about various matters and acts. It was due to their knowledge and deeds that had made it very easy to solve the problems.

"It is remembered that changing rules for changing needs and unchanging rules for unchanging needs" and whoever memorizes this principle awakens the spirit of becoming a leader, getting the honor of the conqueror of the time and becoming a true scholar.

Opinion of Imam IbneHabban:

This English saying is derived from a hadith of our Holy Prophet's (PBUH) which was narrated by IbneHabban in this way:

[وعلى العاقل أن يكون بصيرًا بزمانه]<sup>7</sup>

"And it is necessary for the wise to be aware of the current situation."

He is the real reformer who is familiar with the psychology of the people and treats them accordingly. When a person becomes pious, then the confusion is solved in the true sense of the word and becomes adorned with the ornaments of good morals. He brings love to the willows and brings them closer together, removes their misunderstandings and gives the gift of peace and order to the society.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has also emphasized on the acquisition of knowledge in various hadiths and has also emphasized on the education of women. He has even emphasized on the education of slaves. History proves that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) fulfilled this blessed duty with beauty and goodness. He not only narrated the verses but also interpreted them practically. Imam Muhammad Bin Ismaeel narrated the saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as:

[قال: النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، أما رجل كانت له جارية، فأدبها فأحسن تأديبها، وأعتقها، وتزوجها فله أجران، وأما عبد أدى حق الله وحق مواليه فله

أجران]<sup>8</sup>

"The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Whoever has a slave girl and teaches her good manners and frees her and marries her, he will get double reward and the slave who pays the right of Allah and the right of his masters. Will he also get a double reward?"

This shows that when a Muslim is being urged to give good education to his captive daughter and to teach her good literature, then the importance of giving good education is cleared. And the best thing that can be given to girls is good morals and beneficial knowledge.

Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) was superior to all other spouses in the tradition of Hadith. The reason for this was her young age, intelligence, witty mind and closeness to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The total number of narrations of Hazrat Ayesha is two thousand, two hundred and ten. Of these, two hundred and eighty-six ahaadith are included in sahih. One hundred and seventy four of these hadiths are common to both SahihBukhari and Sahih Muslim. There are four hadiths which are only in Bukhari and fifty eight are only in Muslim Sharief.

In addition to the above mentioned corrective role, women have also performed their duties as scribes along with men in a good manner. HazratShifaa |Binte Abdullah had learned to read and write in the days of ignorance. Although Hazrat Ayesha and Umme Salma could read only but they could not write.

In this perspective, Abdul QayyumNudvi writes:

"HazratShifaBinte Abdullah knew very well how to read and write. He taught HazratHafsa(R.A) who was wife of the Holt Prophet(PBUH),how to heal from the cut the cochineal ant but he also told her to teach Hafsa (R.A) how to write."<sup>9</sup>

It seems that on the one hand, these quotations give an idea of the scholarly status of the Muslim women of that period and also the spirit of religious services for the purpose of reformation and correctness also comes to the forefront. Therefore, according to the above researches, it is clear that during the era of Prophethood, many Companions knew how to read, but HazratShifabinte Abdullah knew how to read as well as write, on the basis of which, HazratUmer (R.A) assigned her to oversee the market, as she was an intelligent woman.

History shows that women are also highly trusted in the hadith tradition. Its importance can be gauged clearly from this incident:

فريعة بنت مالك أخت أبي سعيد الخدري. وكانت بنت كعب بن عجرة تحت أبي سعيد الخدري. فأخبرتها فريعة أنها كانت تحت رجل من بني الحارث بن الخزرج. قالت فريعة: فخرج في طلب أعلاج له أباق فأدركهم بطرف القدوم فعدوا عليه فقتلوه. فأتت رسول الله فذكرت له أن زوجها قتل ولم يتركها في نفقة ولا مسكن للولد. وسألت رسول الله أن يأذن لها فتلحق بإخوتها ودارها فأذن لها رسول الله. قالت فريعة: فلما خرجت من الحجرة أو كنت فيها دعاها رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فأمرها أن تكرر عليه حديثها ففعلت قالت: فأمرني أن لا أبرح من مسكني الذي أتاني فيه وفاة زوجي حتى يبلغ الكتاب أجله. قالت: فاعتدت فيه أربعة أشهر وعشرًا. قالت فريعة: إن عثمان سئل عن مثل ذلك. قالت: فذكرت له فأرسل إلي فدخلت عليه وهو في جماعة من الناس فسألني عن شأني وماذا أمرني به رسول الله فأخبرته. فأرسل إلى المرأة التي توفي عنها زوجها فأمرها أن لا تبرح بيتها حتى يبلغ الكتاب أجله<sup>10</sup>

"A few camels belonging to the husband of Fariyah's (R.A) sister of the famous Companion Hazrat Abu Saeed Al-Khudri(R.A) had escaped. But they have left me no food and no place to live for my children. That's why I want to live with my brothers. What is your order? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: You will have to spend the day of 'iddah in that house in which you have received the news of your husband's death. HazratUsman (d. 35 AH / 656 AD) faced such a problem during his reign. The people told him that this matter had come up with Fariyah and that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) had commanded them to find out.HazratUsman (R.A) called me and when I arrived, he was sitting with some other people. I told him the decision of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) about me."

In this way, HazratUsman (R.A) gave legal status to the tradition of Fariyah.Hence,the Muslim women played their vital role in promoting peace and reform through education.

Undoubtedly, Hazrat Ayesha (R.A), one of the mothers of the believers, was a shining beacon of knowledge, grace and wisdom, and she was well versed in Seerah and Sunnah as well as in history, jurisprudence and knowledge of duties. She was an evergreen flower of Siddiqui's family which blossomed at Prophet,s palace and perfumed the Ummah with the fragrance of knowledge and teachings of the heart of Prophet Muhammad(PBUH).

In the light of the all above mentioned instructions of Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) other Muslim women and companions given against her, it is clear that she also used to give fatwas. But it is not without interest that other companions also knew jurisprudential issues. Therefore, the knowledge base of women of the first century AH was so high that even educated and intelligent people like Hazrat Umar (R.A) was also appreciate their knowledge and services for social pace and reform. Hence, it is dire need of the hour to utilize their great educational pieces of works in reformation of society.

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## References

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