



MSA

Muslim Students
Association
@Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701

Link

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MSA Held an Open House

The Muslim Students Association of Ohio University invited the community to an open house on April 29, 2004 to learn more about Islam and Muslims. Ohio University President Robert Glidden was the keynote speaker of the event. The open house featured talks and presentations about the history of the MSA at Ohio University, Islamic arts and culture, and building bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims. The guests were also treated a delicious dinner that represented the various Muslim cultures. The MSA would like to thank all members of the Ohio University and Athens communities who attended this activity, and would also like to thank all the brothers and sisters who made such a successful event a possibility.



Status of Woman in Islam: *The Spiritual Aspect*

In the midst of the darkness that engulfed the world, the divine revelation echoed in the wide desert of Arabia with a fresh, noble, and universal message to humanity: **"O Mankind, keep your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate (of same kind) and from them twain has spread a multitude of men and women"** (Qur'an 4: 1).

A scholar who pondered about this verse states: "It is believed that there is no text, old or new, that deals with the humanity of the woman from all aspects with such amazing brevity, eloquence, depth, and originality as this divine decree."

Stressing this noble and natural conception, them Qur'an states: **"He (God) it is who did create you from a single soul and ther from did create his mate, that he might dwell with her (in love)..."** (Qur'an 7:189)



"The Creator of heavens and earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves..." (Qur'an 42:11)

"And Allah has given you mates of your own nature, and has given you from your mates, children and grandchildren, and has made provision of good things for you. Is it then in

vanity that they believe and in the grace of God that they disbelieve?" (Qur'an 16:72)

The Qur'an provides clear-cut evidence that woman is completely equated with man in the sight of God in terms of her rights and responsibilities. The Qur'an states:

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"Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds" (Qur'an 74:38). It also states: "So their Lord accepted their prayers, (saying): I will not suffer to be lost the work of any of you whether male or female. You proceed one from another ..." (Qur'an 3: 195).

"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him will We give a new life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the their actions" (Qur'an 16:97, see also 4:124).

Woman according to the Qur'an is not blamed for Adam's first mistake. Both were jointly wrong in their disobedience to God, both repented, and both were forgiven. (Qur'an 2:36, 7:20 - 24). In one verse in fact (20:121), Adam specifically, was blamed. In terms of religious obligations, such as the Daily Prayers, Fasting, Poor-due, and Pilgrimage, woman is no different from man. In some cases indeed, woman has certain advantages over man. For example, the woman is exempted from the daily prayers and from fasting during her menstrual periods and forty days after childbirth. She is also exempted from fasting during her pregnancy and when she is nursing her baby if there is any threat to her health or her baby's. If the missed fasting is obligatory (during the month of Ramadan), she can make up for the missed days whenever she can. She does not have to make up for the prayers missed for any of the above reasons. Although women can and did go into the mosque during the days of the prophet and thereafter, attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is optional for them while it is mandatory for men (on Friday).

This is clearly a tender touch of the Islamic teachings for they are considerate of the fact that a woman may be nursing her baby or caring for him, and thus may be unable to go out to the mosque at the time of the prayers. They also take into account the physiological and psychological changes associated with her natural female functions.

By: Dr. Jamal Badawi
Next Time: *The Social Aspect*

Mahatma Gandhi, speaking on the character of Muhammad (peace be upon him)

"I wanted to know the best of one who holds today's undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind....I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the



scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to this friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the 2nd volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life."

Young India: 1924

Hadith¹ of this Month

Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) said: *The most worthy condition which must be fulfilled is that stipulated in the contract of marriage.*

1. Hadith: is anything Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said.

The Muslim Students Association of Ohio University participated in the 2003/2004 International Street Fair that was held on May 15 in conjunction with the International Week at Ohio University. It was a memorable event and by the testimony of many who were around, Muslims and non-Muslims, our "tent/booth" was one of the main attractions in the fair. Members of the Muslim community served all kinds of foods ranging from

Arabic shawirma, stuffed grape leaves, fatyer, Indonesian bakwan, Turkish & Mid-east baklava, Turkish tabouleh, fresh lemonade, and Arabic coffee. All foods and drinks were prepared, cooked, and served in a strictly and hygienic environment which allowed us to easily pass the City of Athens Health Department requirements.

Muslim sisters staged a wonderful display of eye catching Islamic posters, Islamic literature, prayer



rugs, and Islamic artifacts admired by many people. The sisters also held a Henna hand painting for the women patrons, and received many interested customers (Fig 3). Another hit was writing names in Arabic on a pamphlet with an English translation of the prophet's last sermon. Around 80 copies of such pamphlets were distributed with a cover that displayed the MSA's name, address, phone, e-mail, and web site. We believe that was a great publicity for the MSA and the Islamic Center.

The MSA would like to thank all members of the Muslim community who prepared for or cooked the

food, those who served and sold it, and also the collaboration by all in moving all items from the Islamic Center to Court Street, setting up the tent and dismantling it at the end. The event was another success for the MSA this year.



Parents in Islam

By: *Nadim Ayche*

"Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor (23) And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.(24)'" (Qur'an 17:23-24).

From the verses above, one can infer that Islam places a heavy emphasis on the importance of the mother and father in society. In today's society, however, it is easy to notice that parents are not considered an integral part of the family structure. Many cultures, sadly, have lost its respect and deep admiration for those that head and help run the family.

From an Islamic standpoint, Muslims believe that God has made "being kind to parents" one of the most important acts a Muslim can perform, He even joined it in (17:23) with the most important fact in Islam:

worshipping God alone. Furthermore, in the Qur'an (31:14), God instructs Muslims to **"Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal."**

Muslims are aware of the incredible sacrifices their parents make. From the pains of childbirth to the striving of the father to provide for his family, Islam looks favorably upon the work that parents do in terms of raising their children.

That said, the very least that parents deserve is to address them in terms of honor, and not to say to them a word of contempt nor repel them.

It is a duty for every Muslim to take care of his/her parents when they have reached old age and have a difficult time managing their affairs. Muslims are expected to take care of their parents in old age as their parents took care of them when they were young.

It is not enough to just address them in terms of honor. It's way beyond that; what's urged by God is that Muslims should show mercy and kindness that should come from the heart, as described in that beautiful image in Chapter 17, verse 24, **"My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood"**, reminding us of our childhood, our very weak and dependent stage.

God has enjoined on us to be good to our parents in many other places in the Qur'an such as chapter 31, verses 14-15.

"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 thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal" (Ch. 31, verse 14).

"But if they strive to make thee join in worship with Me things of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration), and follow the way of those who turn to me (in love): in the end the return of you all is to Me, and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that ye did" (Ch. 31, verse 15).

This verse is important because it instructs a Muslim to be kind to his/her parents even if the parents believe in teachings that are opposed to Islamic virtues.

Verse 14 above, allows humanity to ponder why God mentioned both parents in the beginning and the end of the verse, but specifically addresses the mother in body of the verse. The fact is simply because the favors that

our fathers bestow on us come at a time we are cogent enough to realize the amazing sacrifices the male figure makes. Our mothers are partners in that too of course, but during those stages of our lives where the father is helpless and the mother is our only help. We didn't experience bearing a child for nine months as she did, we're not aware of the pain and suffering of labor she had to go through, and as small children, we do not understand the challenge of breast-feeding and hours of love and affection our mothers give us. These things just mentioned are invaluable and are much more important than the father's duties. This gives the mother three quarters of our attention and kindness towards our parents, leaving a quarter to the father.

A man came to God's Messenger (Mohammad) and said, "O God's Messenger! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man further said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your father."

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MSA Link is published by the Muslim Students Association of Ohio University.

<http://www.ohiou.edu/~muslimst>

For further questions or feedback, please write to us at:

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