

Exploring the Ideal Role of Women for Peace and Harmony: A Study in the Context of Women's Lives in Early Islam

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ABSTRACT

This essay carefully examines how women find peace, tranquillity and calm in Islam, focusing on patience and family values. It looks closely at how important it is for women to have peace in their lives and how Islamic beliefs emphasise patience and family values. This study digs deep into the Islamic perspective, exploring the significance of *sabr* (patience) within the Islamic framework. The paper compares Islamic teachings with how cultures and societies interpret these ideas, showing the different ways women use these principles in their lives. It also explores how following these values can affect women's happiness and strength, showing why it's important to understand and accept these principles in today's world. Furthermore, the essay explores the potential implications of these values on women's well-being and empowerment, shedding light on the significance of understanding and embracing these principles within the broader context of modern society. Through this exploration, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of Islam's role in shaping women's lives and fostering a sense of tranquillity and contentment in the face of life's difficulties.

Key Words: Women in Islam, Peace and tranquillity in Islam, Patience in Islamic beliefs, Family values in Islam, Women's happiness and strength in Islam, Empowerment of women in Islam

1. Introduction:

The quest for peace and tranquillity is a fundamental aspect of the human experience, common across cultural and geographical boundaries. Religions, in their varied expressions, often serve as beacons guiding individuals on this spiritual journey. "Patience, or patient perseverance, is obligatory, according to the consensus of the scholars, and it is half of faith (*iman*), the other half of which is gratitude (*shukr*). Patience is mentioned in the Qurân around ninety times. The relation of patience to

iman is like the relation of the head to the body, and the one who is without forbearance has no *iman*.”¹

The ideal role of women for peace and harmony is a profound subject that finds its roots in the early teachings of Islam. Throughout history, numerous women have exemplified these values, contributing significantly to their communities and societies. From Khadijah, the first wife of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), known for her business acumen and unwavering support for her husband, to Aisha bint Abi Bakr, a scholar and a teacher renowned for her wisdom and leadership, early Islamic history is adorned with stories of women who played pivotal roles in fostering peace and harmony. This essay embarks on an exploration of how women, a vital segment of society, traverse this path towards peace and tranquillity by embracing patience and upholding family values within the framework of Islam. As it says in the Quran, “And it is among His signs that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquillity in them, and He has formed love and compassion between you. Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect.”²

Identifying the various approaches to inner peace that exist across various belief systems, this research endeavour seeks to shed light on the extreme importance of patience and family values in augmenting the overall well-being of women. In Islam, women symbolise resilience, compassion, and spiritual strength. Their roles and responsibilities, as envisioned by Islamic doctrine, provide unique pathways to attain inner peace. This study analyses the Islamic viewpoint, emphasising the virtue of patience (*sabr*) and the central significance of family values in the lives of Muslim women. “Many view the term ‘*sabr*’ as a submissive noun but in Islam it is a verb, a doing word, an action. The root meaning of the verb ‘*sa-ba-ra*’ can mean to restrain, confine or restrict ourselves. To suppress something, in a religious framework, it could be in order to avoid satisfying our ego. However, as a positive concept in Islam, having *sabr* does not mean to be passive in this restraint. While having *sabr*, we have a responsibility to put in our best efforts and exhaust the resources available to us. To be in a state of active *sabr*, is to be like water. It is

¹ Al-Jawziyya, Ibn Qayyim. 2004. *Patience & Gratitude*. India: Adam Publishers & Distributors.

² Al-Quran: Ar-Rum 30: 21

being able to exercise and possess the quality of striving and surging forward – like water does.”³

Understanding the intricate connections between religious teachings, patience, family values, and the well-being of women is vital for fostering an environment conducive to women's empowerment and societal harmony. By examining how patience (an attribute celebrated in various religious traditions especially Islam) is cultivated and practised by women, this research aims to uncover the manifestations of inner strength and resilience.

Furthermore, by superimposing the influence of family values in the Islamic context, this analysis seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between culture, religion, and women's peace-seeking endeavours. “In any family, there are those persons without whom a family cannot be regarded as complete. A human being is born of a father and a mother; the parents look after the child and bring it up. This child in turn attains maturity and is joined to a spouse in the golden link of matrimony. Then this couple start their own family. Thus we may say that the persons who form pillars of the family are father, mother, child, husband and wife.”⁴

2. Literature Review

Peace and tranquillity are universal desires that transcend all cultural and religious boundaries. In Islam, this quest is fundamentally tied to the roles and values attributed to women. This research delves into how women in Islam navigate this journey through patience and family values. The literature review will provide essential context and insights into how these principles are interpreted in Islamic teachings, shaping the lives and well-being of Muslim women. Understanding this complex interplay between faith, gender, and inner peace can offer valuable insights applicable to broader societal contexts.

Jamal A. Badawi, a prominent Egyptian-Canadian writer, has examined the roles of women in Islamic society, encompassing their various responsibilities and rights as daughters, mothers, and wives in his article titled ‘*The Status of Woman in Islam.*’ He claims, “The Qur'an clearly

³ Rabia. 2023. “What Khadijah (RA) Taught Me About Active Sabr”. Amaliah, February 27, 2023. <https://www.amaliah.com/post/66271/what-khadijah-taught-me-about-active-sabr>

⁴ Rizvi, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar. 1980. *The Family Life of Islam*. World Organization for Islamic Services.

indicates that marriage is sharing between the two halves of the society, and that its objectives, beside perpetuating human life, are emotional well-being and spiritual harmony. Its bases are love and mercy.”⁵

Dr Naseem and Dr Aijaz argue that Islam advocates for principles such as fairness, tranquillity, equity, and acceptance for all creatures, extending beyond humans. “Islam is a religion that teaches equality, harmony, peace, justice, and tolerance which is a religion of peace and order not only for human beings but also for animals, birds, beasts, plants, and all creatures. It does not like any kind of oppression. It is a religion of peace. Therefore, the teachings of Islam teach about ethics, justice and equality, tolerance, etc. In order to preserve peace in society, we must be patient, develop resilience within ourselves, and encourage Islamic teachings in order for peace and order to be restored.”⁶

The book *Women and Peace in the Islamic World* inspects how the day-to-day interactions of women, guided by Islamic personal ethics, can present a fresh perspective on peace. It places a specific focus on women in Islamic societies across regions such as Aceh, Bosnia, Morocco, and Bangladesh, initiating a discourse on their role in peace-making.⁷

In a research paper titled ‘*The Islamic Prayer (Salah/Namaaz) and Yoga Togetherness in Mental Health*’, the authors Shabbir Ahmed Sayeed and Anand Prakash examine the importance of Islamic prayers, commonly known as *Salah* or *Namaaz*, within the realm of healthcare as a whole, with a specific focus on mental well-being. The article provides a thorough exploration of the essence, methods, customs, and advantages associated with *Salah*. Furthermore, it endeavours to integrate yoga principles and practices with *Salah* to offer a swift approach to addressing and preventing mental health issues.⁸

⁵ Badawi, J. A. 1982. *The Status of Woman in Islam*. American Trust Publications.

⁶ Akhter, Naseem and Khoso, Aijaz Ali. 2021. “Peaceful Environment is needed in Current Scenario Under Islamic Context.” *International Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 48–54. Retrieved from <http://irjmss.com/index.php/irjmss/article/view/11>

⁷ Saikia, Yasmin. 2021. *Women and Peace in the Islamic World: Gender, Agency and Influence*. India: Bloomsbury Academic.

⁸ Sayeed, S. A., and Prakash, A. 2013. “The Islamic prayer (Salah/Namaaz) and yoga togetherness in mental health.” *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 55(Suppl 2), S224–S230. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105537>

In his book *Surrendering to God*, Eren Tatari expresses the importance of marriage in maintaining family life, “Solidarity and Peace in Family Life: Family is considered a sacred unit in Islam. A peaceable marriage is vital for many reasons, one of which is the acceptable upbringing of children. Breaking apart of families leads to many crises for the family members as well as the society as a whole.”⁹

The role played by Islam in helping individuals foster positivity and tranquillity in life has also been explored by Walaa M. Sabry and Adarsh Vohra. In their research paper titled *Role of Islam in the Management of Psychiatric Disorders*, they claim that “Islam plays an important role in helping Muslims to cope with negative life events, which helps them in both prevention and treatment of depression. Muslims are not superhuman, however, if one experiences negative feelings, he is encouraged to resist them with positive thoughts and actions if possible or to seek professional help if the case is clinical, exactly like any other form of illness. Islam encourages people to stay hopeful, even if someone has committed the worst sin or faced with the most troublesome life event as there is always God's mercy.”¹⁰

Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi discusses the responsibilities and obligations that individuals bear in relation to their families in his book ‘*Islamic Family Life*’. He writes, “In any family, there are those persons without whom a family cannot be regarded as complete. A human being is born of a father and a mother; the parents look after the child and bring it up. This child in turn attains maturity and is joined to a spouse in the golden link of matrimony. Then this couple start their own family. Thus we may say that the persons who form pillars of the family are father, mother, child, husband and wife.”¹¹

Within the pages of his compelling literary work *Patience and Gratitude*, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah delves deep into the profound Islamic concept of *sabr*, which translates to patience and fortitude, and its counterpart, *shukr*, meaning gratitude. This fascinating book provides readers with a practical and insightful viewpoint on how to seamlessly integrate these

⁹ Tatari, E. 2013. *Surrendering to God: Understanding Islam in the Modern Age*. United States: Tughra Books.

¹⁰ Sabry, W. M., and Vohra, A. 2013. “Role of Islam in the Management of Psychiatric Disorders.” *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(Suppl 2), S205–S214. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105534>

¹¹ Rizvi, A. S. S. A. 2015. *Islamic Family Life*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

vital spiritual ideals into the tapestry of everyday life. Despite the passage of more than six centuries since the words were first penned, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's timeless wisdom resonates with remarkable relevance in the present day, perhaps even more so than ever before.¹²

3. Importance of Peace and Tranquillity in the Lives of Women

Peace and tranquillity hold paramount significance in the lives of women, and they go beyond cultural, social, and economic boundaries. In a world marked by constant challenges and shifting dynamics, attaining inner peace becomes crucial for mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Women, often shouldering diverse roles as nurturers, caregivers, professionals, and community leaders, face unique stressors and responsibilities. "A woman is like a society atom, without which nothing would be there. She maintains culture and customs and brings them out. She's the one who cares about her husband and his family. In other words, she creates everything in society. A woman (mother) is her child, the first teacher; she is the first doctor to treat her children lovingly. She is the first teacher to teach her children, the first partner to play games with her children. Her function is enormous in the development of her child. A woman cannot be thanked enough for her indefinite position and constant responsibility towards her children, family, community and society."¹³

Achieving a state of peace allows women to navigate these multifaceted roles with resilience and grace, enhancing their capacity to manage stress and contribute positively to both their families and society. "The smart Muslim woman is one who strikes a balance between her external appearance and internal nature. She understands that she is composed of a body, a mind and a soul, and gives each the attention it deserves, without exaggerating in one aspect to the detriment of others. In seeking to strike the right balance, she is following the wise guidance of Islam which encourages her to do so."¹⁴

¹² Al-Jawziyya, Ibn Qayyim. 2004. *Patience & Gratitude*. India: Adam Publishers & Distributors.

¹³ Mojumder, M. 2020. The Role of Women in The Development of Society. *Journal of Critical Reviews*.

¹⁴ Ibn Kathir, Muhammad Al-Hashimi. 2018. *The Ideal Muslimah: The True Islamic Personality of the Muslim Woman as Defined in the Qur'an and Sunnah*. Chapter 2. South Africa: International Islamic Publishing House.

For women, peace and tranquillity are deeply connected with empowerment and self-actualisation. A sense of harmony fosters a nurturing environment where women can focus on their personal growth, education, and career pursuits. When women experience inner peace, they are better equipped to make informed decisions, advocate for their rights, and engage in social and political activities that propel positive change.

Moreover, peace allows women to establish meaningful relationships, cultivate empathy, and foster unity within their communities. It encourages collaboration and mutual support, paving the way for a society that thrives on empathy and understanding.

In the hunt of peace and tranquillity, women often draw upon their spiritual beliefs and practices. Various religions and spiritual philosophies provide guidance and solace, offering women a sense of purpose and a framework to cope with life's challenges. By incorporating spirituality into their lives, women can find comfort in times of uncertainty, strengthen their resilience, and develop a positive outlook. This spiritual foundation enables them to navigate life's journey with grace and equanimity, ultimately contributing to a more peaceful and harmonious world.

As explained by Ibn Kathir in *The Ideal Muslimah*, "One of the distinctive characteristics of Muslim women is their strong faith in Allah (SWT) and their unwavering belief that everything in the universe, as well as the destiny of human beings, is solely determined by Allah's will and decree. They understand that whatever transpires in a person's life was inevitable, and what does not occur could not have been made to happen. Consequently, individuals have no option but to strive for the right path and engage in acts of worship and goodness to the best of their abilities, while placing their complete trust in Allah (SWT). They willingly submit to His will, acknowledging their constant reliance on His assistance and support."¹⁵

3.1 Islam and Patience

In Islam, patience (*sabr*) is a fundamental virtue and a cornerstone of a Muslim's life. For women, patience manifests in various forms - from enduring personal challenges to persevering in their roles as daughters,

¹⁵ Ibn Kathir, Muhammad Al-Hashimi. 2018. *The Ideal Muslimah: The True Islamic Personality of the Muslim Woman as Defined in the Qur'an and Sunnah*. Chapter 1. South Africa: International Islamic Publishing House.

wives, mothers, and community members. Quranic teachings emphasise the importance of patience in facing adversities and tribulations. A verse from the Surah Al-Baqarah encourages believers to remain patient in times of distress, promising a great reward for those who endure patiently. "O believers! Search for comfort in patience and prayer. Allah is truly with those who are patient."¹⁶ In another verse in Surah Yusuf, Allah says, "Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good."¹⁷

For women, this patience extends to their familial roles. They often find peace and tranquillity by embracing their responsibilities, nurturing their families, and maintaining a harmonious household. Islam promotes the idea that patience during difficult times in family life can bring about inner peace and strengthen familial bonds. The Prophet Muhammad's saying, "Paradise lies at the feet of your mother,"¹⁸ underscores the high status accorded to mothers and the patience they exhibit in raising their children.

Muhammad Ali Qutb discusses the patience of women in Prophet's (PBUH) life in his book *Women Around The Messenger*, "Umm Kulthoom's role became manifest here, for she took care of her mother with all the experience, love and compassion that she possessed. In addition to this onerous and time-consuming task, she was also responsible for taking care of her younger sister, Fatimah. Umm Kulthoom spent three years of her youthful life in struggle, patience and perseverance. Moreover, had Khadeejah recovered from her illness, the matter would have been easier for Umm Kulthoom and her patience would have been adequately compensated for. But the loving and affectionate mother could no longer bear the illness. She died soon after the end of the boycott."¹⁹

In the book '*Women in Islam*' Terence Lovat gives the example of the patience shown by Prophet Ibrahim's wife Hagar. "Hagar, Abraham's Arabic wife and mother of his first-born child, Ishmael, is matriarch of the Arabic peoples and, in that sense, of Islam itself. She it is who obeys

¹⁶ Al-Quran: Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 153

¹⁷ Al-Quran: Surah Yusuf 12: 90

¹⁸ Sunan an-Nasa'i 3104.

¹⁹ Qutb, Muhammad 'Ali. 2008. *Women Around The Messenger*. International Islamic Publishing House.

the will of Allah, even in difficulty and apparent rejection by her husband and his Israelite wife, in taking Ishmael back to his own people where he can learn the Arabic ways in order to fulfil his own destiny to be the father of the Arabic people and patron of Islam, represented in definitive fashion when, together with his father, he builds the Ka'aba to mark the Covenant with Allah.”²⁰

3.2 Family Values in Islam:

Family values are central to Islam and many other religions. Islam places immense importance on the family unit as the cornerstone of a healthy society. The family is seen as a source of stability, support, and love. Women are viewed as caretakers of the family, responsible for nurturing the emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of their household members.

In Islam, maintaining family ties and fostering a peaceful and loving home environment are highly encouraged. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasised the significance of maintaining strong family bonds and treating family members with respect and kindness. The Quran places an obligation on believers to be kind and just to their spouses, underscoring the need for mutual understanding and tranquillity within the family.

“There is no sin more deserving that Allah hasten the punishment in this world, in addition to what is stored up for him in the Hereafter – than injustice and severing the ties of kinship.”²¹

3.3 Patience as a Source of Inner Peace:

Patience, often referred to as ‘*sabr*’ in Islamic teachings, stands as a profound source of inner peace for women in the context of Islam. It is a virtue celebrated in the Quran and the Hadith literature, emphasising the ability to endure hardships, setbacks, and trials with composure. “One is ordered to be patient and not lose hope regardless of what may befall them. Patience is a requirement in our daily lives. In general, nothing can be acquired except with patience. This life is a test from Allah. He tests us to see who of us is most righteous.”²²

²⁰ Terence Lovat. 2012. *Women in Islam: Reflections on Historical and Contemporary Research*. Netherlands: Springer Netherlands.

²¹ Sunan Ibn Majah, 4211

²² Ash-Sheha, Abd Ar-Rahman bin Abd Al-Kareem. 2021. *The Path to Happiness*. Osul Center.

The practice of patience is rooted in the belief that Allah's wisdom underlies every circumstance, and it encourages women to maintain a calm and tranquil spirit even in the face of adversity. By embracing patience, women find solace in the knowledge that their trials are temporary and that their faith remains unwavering. This inner peace derived from patience not only strengthens their relationship with Allah but also enables them to navigate the complexities of life with grace, resilience, and a profound sense of tranquillity. . “How wonderful the affair of the believer is! Indeed, all of his affairs are good for him. This is for no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is grateful to Allah, which is good for him. And if something bad happens to him, he has patience, which is good for him.”²³

Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya has explained how patience and gratitude lead to success in life in his book ‘*The Way to Patience & Gratitude*.’ He has explained that “When the impediments of the heart are removed, Allah's Grace and Bounty rushes to man from every side. It is like a great river that irrigates every land through which it passes. Likewise, one who neglects the heart may be compared to a landowner who complains of drought while the river is near form him.”²⁴

As a fundamental aspect of Islamic spirituality, patience plays a pivotal role in shaping women's well-being and resilience, ultimately leading them along the way to true peace.

3.4 *Salah* and Patience:

Salah, the Islamic act of ritual prayer, is intrinsically intertwined with the concept of patience and serves as a powerful mechanism to cultivate inner peace. “Notice how hearts are calmed by remembering Allah.”²⁵ Through its meticulous process, which includes recitation, standing, bowing, and prostration (*sajood*), it encourages a state of focused mindfulness. The Quran, in Surah Al-Baqarah, states, “Seek help in patience and in Prayer; Allah is with those that are patient,”²⁶ underscoring the close relationship between patience and *Salah*. During *sajood*, the moment of closest proximity to Allah, believers express their utter submission, humility, and patience. “If He wills, He can calm the

²³ Sahih Muslim, 2999.

²⁴ Al-Jawziyya, I. I. Q. 2018. *The Way to Patience & Gratitude*. School of Hope.

²⁵ Al-Quran: Surah ar-Ra`d 13:28

²⁶ Al-Quran: Surah Al-Baqarah 2:153

wind, leaving the ships motionless on the water. Surely in this are signs for whoever is steadfast, grateful?”²⁷

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) emphasised in a hadith: “The key to Paradise is the prayer and the key to the prayer is ablution (*wudu*) with perfection and patience in Salah.”²⁸ The act of prostration not only symbolises submission but also serves to expel negativity, stress, and worldly concerns. The rhythmic cycle of Salah enables individuals, particularly women, to release emotional burdens, find solace in the tranquillity of worship, and instil a profound sense of patience, ultimately paving their path towards inner peace. “During Sajdah dissipation of the electromagnetic energy accumulated from the atmosphere takes place by the grounding effect at regular intervals resulting in a calming feeling. A recent study investigating the alpha brain activity during Muslim prayers has reported increased amplitude in the parietal and occipital regions suggestive of parasympathetic elevation, thus indicating a state of relaxation.”²⁹

3.5 Examples of Patience in the Lives of Muslim Women:

Patience, known as ‘*sabr*’ in Islamic teachings, is a virtue that holds immense significance in the lives of Muslim women. It is a quality that not only sustains them through life's trials and tribulations but also empowers them to navigate challenging circumstances with grace and resilience. The lives of Muslim women throughout history and in contemporary times have provided striking examples of this virtue in action. Here are some compelling examples of patience in the lives of Muslim women:

Khadijah, the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), exemplified unwavering patience. She endured the hardships of life, including economic struggles and social ostracism when she and the Prophet began spreading the message of Islam. Her steadfast support and patience during these trying times were a source of strength for both her husband and the nascent Muslim community. In their research paper ‘*The*

²⁷ Al-Quran: Ash-Shura 13:28

²⁸ Sunan al-Tirmidhi

²⁹ Sayeed, S. A., & Prakash, A. 2013. The Islamic prayer (Salah/Namaaz) and yoga togetherness in mental health. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 55(Suppl 2), S224–S230. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105537>

Position and Participation of Khadijah in Developing Da'wah in Islam at the First Period, academics Saiful Bahri and Maria Ulfa Batoebara dwell on the significant role of women, particularly exemplified by Hazrat Khadijah. It highlights her exceptional qualities, such as integrity, faith, and unwavering support for the Prophet's (PBUH) mission. The paper underscores the need to recognise her often-overlooked contributions in the early development of Islam, emphasising her enduring relevance as a role model for women today. "In the success of the da'wah, Prophet Muhammad played a huge role in understanding Khadijah to foster a happy home. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad could avoid the failure of da'wah, as some of the earlier Prophet, such as Prophet David, Noah, and Ayyub."³⁰

According to Syeda A. A. Razway, "Khadija was the ideal woman, the ideal wife for Muhammed Mustafa, the ideal mother for her children, and the ideal Mother of the Believers. Faith in Allah's mercy was the spring from which Khadija took her life's responses."³¹

The daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), Fatimah al-Zahra, showed great patience in her life. She endured hardships, including the loss of her mother, Khadijah, and her young children's struggles. Her dedication to her faith and her role as a mother and wife in challenging circumstances serves as an inspiring model of patience. "Fatima spent her life in struggle, resisting poverty and difficulties. Her father was forced to spend three years in a valley with his family when his tribe imposed economic and social sanctions against his message of Islam. After the migration to Medina, her new life as a married woman begins but she continues to face the same hardships and difficulties that she has encountered since childhood."³²

Aasiyah bint Muzahim (RA), the wife of Pharaoh, is celebrated in Islamic tradition for her exceptional patience and faith. She resisted the oppression of her tyrannical husband and his people, refusing to renounce her belief in the one true God. Her unwavering patience and eventual

³⁰ Bahri, S., & Batoebara, M. U. 2020. The Position and Participation of Khadijah in Developing Da'wah in Islam at the First Period. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal* (BIRCI-Journal), 3(1), 287-295.

³¹ Razway, A. A. *Khadija-Tul-Kubra*. 2015. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

³² Shariati, Ali. *Fatima is Fatima*. 1978. The Shariati Foundation.

martyrdom serve as a powerful example of faith in the face of extreme adversity.

Sumayyah bint Khayyat holds a revered place in Islamic history as a woman of immense fortitude and unwavering faith. As one of the earliest converts to Islam in Mecca, Sumayyah faced unimaginable persecution and hardship. Her resilience was unparalleled, standing as a testament to her unyielding commitment to her beliefs. Sumayyah, along with her husband Yasir and their son Ammar, bore the brunt of severe torture inflicted by the opponents of Islam. Despite enduring unimaginable suffering, Sumayyah remained steadfast, refusing to renounce her faith. Her remarkable patience in the face of immense adversity became an emblem of unwavering dedication, inspiring others within the fledgling Muslim community.

Sumayyah's role transcended her personal trials; she became a symbol of resistance and perseverance. Her steadfastness under torture exemplified the strength of character that fortified the early Muslim community. Sumayyah's unwavering commitment to Islam, even in the face of extreme persecution, became a beacon of hope and resilience for other believers.

Hajar, respected within Islamic tradition for her exceptional resilience and unwavering faith, stands as a symbol of endurance and trust in Allah's divine plan. As the wife of Prophet Ibrahim, her story predates Islam but holds significant prominence within Islamic teachings. Cast into the barren desert of Mecca with her infant son Ismail, Hajar symbolises unwavering faith and reliance on divine foresight. Amidst the harsh and desolate landscape, she demonstrated unparalleled strength as she searched for nourishment, her trust firmly placed in God's guidance. In a remarkable display of resilience, Hajar's unwavering determination and absolute faith in God's wisdom led to the discovery of the sacred Zamzam well, a symbol of God's mercy and provision.

Zainab bint Ali, the granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad and daughter of Imam Ali and Fatimah Zahra, stands as an emblem of patience and fortitude in the annals of Islamic history. Following the tragedy of Karbala in 680 AD, where her brother Imam Hussain and many of their companions were brutally killed, Zainab found herself amid a harrowing ordeal. Captured alongside the surviving members of her family, she endured the heart-wrenching journey to the court of Yazid, the caliph of the time, in Damascus.

Throughout this tumultuous period, Zainab exhibited unparalleled patience in the face of immense adversity. Despite witnessing the martyrdom of her loved ones, including her brothers, nephews, and companions, she remained resolute and composed. Zainab's patience was not merely passive endurance; it was an active display of strength and resilience. She fearlessly confronted the tyrannical forces of Yazid's court, delivering impassioned speeches that exposed the cruelty and injustice inflicted upon her family.

Asma bint Abu Bakr, known for her unwavering loyalty and remarkable courage, demonstrated exceptional *sabr* in the face of adversity, contributing significantly to the early Muslim community. When her father, Abu Bakr, was forced to migrate to Medina due to severe persecution in Mecca, Asma, then a young woman, played a pivotal role in supporting his departure and ensuring his safety. Despite facing immense pressure and hardship, Asma remained steadfast and patient, handling critical responsibilities with grace and determination. Her ability to endure difficult circumstances and maintain a steadfast commitment to her family and the nascent Muslim community showcased her exemplary patience. Asma's unwavering support, coupled with her enduring resilience during times of tribulation, exemplifies the essence of patience as a virtue, underscoring her integral role in fortifying the foundation of the early Muslim society.

Beyond these well-known examples, countless Muslim women exhibit patience in their daily lives. Whether it's a mother raising her children with love and discipline, a caregiver tending to the elderly or the sick, or a woman persevering through personal challenges, these everyday acts of patience are a testament to the resilience and fortitude that are deeply ingrained in the fabric of Muslim women's lives.

4. Role of Women in Maintaining Family Values

The role of women in maintaining family values is paramount and multifaceted. Women serve as the cornerstone of the family unit, nurturing and shaping the character of its members. They often take on the responsibilities of homemaking, child-rearing, and providing emotional support, fostering an environment of love, care, and stability. Women's guidance and nurturing instincts play a pivotal role in instilling essential values such as respect, empathy, compassion, and cooperation within the family. They also act as the emotional anchors, mediating conflicts, and fostering open communication. "The basic foundation of

the society is the family, and the husband and the wife are co-partners in that family upon which a Muslim home is established. For the success of the family and the tranquillity of the home, Islam grants each spouse certain rights and duties”³³

Through their dedication to upholding moral and ethical standards, women contribute significantly to the moral and ethical development of the family. In this role, they ensure the transmission of core values from one generation to the next, preserving the cultural and social heritage of their communities. Thus, women are instrumental in preserving family values, making their influence in this regard both vital and enduring. In his book ‘Family Life in Islam’ Khurshid Ahmad explains, “The relationship in the family, between all its members, and most important of all, between the husband and wife, is not merely a utilitarian relationship. It is a spiritual relationship and sustains and generates love, kindness, mercy, compassion, mutual confidence, self-sacrifice, solace and succour. The best in the human nature expresses itself in the flowering of these relationships. It is only in the context of the family that what is spiritually potential in men and women becomes real and sets the pace for the blossoming of goodness and virtue within the family and outside it.”³⁴

4.1 Family Values and their Link to Women's Tranquillity

Family values, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, hold a profound connection to women's tranquillity within the framework of the faith. In Islam, family is considered the cornerstone of society, and women play a central role in maintaining the sanctity of the family unit. Upholding values such as compassion, love, respect, and empathy within the family not only aligns with the teachings of the Quran and Hadith but also fosters an atmosphere of serenity and harmony. When women actively contribute to the cultivation of these values, they not only ensure the well-being of their families but also find their own tranquillity in fulfilling their God-given responsibilities. “Strong family ties built on the teachings of Qur’an and Sunnah provide the necessary foundation for a

³³ Ash-Sheha, Abd Ar-Rahman bin Abd Al-Kareem. 2018. *Women In Islam*. Osoul Center.

³⁴ Ahmad, K. 1981. *Family Life in Islam*. United Kingdom: Islamic Foundation.

happy and joyous household and in turn contribute to the overall health of a society.”³⁵

The family, as a safe haven and a source of emotional support, allows women to experience a deep sense of peace, knowing that they are living in accordance with the moral and ethical principles of their faith. By nurturing family values, women not only preserve the integrity of the family unit but also find a path to their own inner peace through their role as caretakers, peacemakers, and nurturers within the family, in alignment with Islamic principles.

According to Khurshid Ahmed, “The key role in the proper development of the family is played by the woman. In an Islamic society, she is freed from the rigours of running about in search of a living and attending to the demands of employment and work. Instead she more or less exclusively devotes herself to the family, not merely to her own children, but to all the dependant relations in the family. She is responsible for running it in the best possible manner. She looks after its physical, emotional, educational, administrative and other needs. It is a world itself and involves a network of activities, intellectual, physical and organisational. She runs and rules this world with responsibility and authority.”³⁶

4.2 Rediscovering Inner Peace through Manual Work

Women can find a profound sense of inner peace by engaging in manual work as opposed to relying solely on machines. This connection between manual labour and inner tranquillity has been recognised through various sources. First, it aligns with the concept of mindfulness, which encourages individuals to be fully present in the moment. When women engage in working by hand, they become deeply immersed in the process, fostering a state of mindfulness that can be spiritually and emotionally enriching. Furthermore, there is a growing body of research suggesting that creative and tactile activities, such as crafting or gardening, can have a therapeutic effect on mental well-being, reducing stress and anxiety. According to research by Elizabeth Gorny-Wegrzyn Beth Perry “engaging in creative arts brings about psychosocial, physiological, and behavioural responses that may help to decrease loneliness, depression,

³⁵ Arab News. 2015. <https://www.arabnews.com/islam-perspective/news/787451>

³⁶ Ahmad, K. 1981. *Family Life in Islam*. United Kingdom: Islamic Foundation.

pain, and many other health-related issues. This aligns with Islamic teachings that encourage acts of self-care and personal fulfilment.”³⁷

In finding inner peace through manual work, women not only rekindle a connection with tradition but also rediscover a source of spiritual and emotional contentment. In Islam, the significance of *niyat*, or intention, holds a profound place before engaging in any endeavour. This principle is particularly pertinent when considering the relationship between manual labour and inner peace for women. By setting a pure and sincere intention, women can infuse their manual work with spiritual purpose and dedication.

As narrated by Hazrat Umar bin Al-Khattab (a close companion of Prophet Muhammad PBUH), “I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended.”³⁸ Through *niyat*, they align their efforts with the teachings of Islam, ensuring that their actions are carried out in accordance with the faith's values and principles. The act of making a conscious *niyat* before embarking on manual tasks not only deepens the connection between their actions and spirituality but also reinforces the idea that even the most seemingly ordinary and dull activities can be transformed into acts of worship and devotion.

“If there is a religious intention attached to an activity (as a form of devotion) this activity automatically becomes *ibadat*. In other words, *niyat* changes the status of an activity from non-*ibadat* into *ibadat*... a *niyat* brings the “profane” into the “sacred” because *niyat* ensures a flow of the divine fragrance. So important is the position of intention in this ideology that although it is sufficient to utter an intention by heart, a verbal utterance of the intention by tongue, such as by saying the *Bismillah* (in the name of God) or other forms of similar flavour, is credited to contain special merit.”³⁹

This spiritual dimension, combined with the intrinsic satisfaction derived from manual labour, creates a harmonious balance, offering women a unique pathway to both inner peace and spiritual fulfilment. “It is a fact

³⁷ Gorny-Wegrzyn, E. and Perry, B. 2022. Creative Art: Connection to Health and Well-Being. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10, 290-303.

³⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari Book 1, Hadith 1

³⁹ Muhaimin, A. 2006. *The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon: Ibadat and Adat Among Javanese Muslims*. Indonesia: Australian National University E Press.

that many domestic chores very much try the patience. It is for this reason that the Law-giver of Islam has promised eternal blessings in reward of such drudgery. The Holy Prophet said: If, while cooking her food, tears come out from the eyes of the woman because of smoke, Allah will write for her the reward of those warriors (in the way of Allah) whose eyes shed tears from the fear of Allah. If she has got someone to help her in domestic duties, and, thus, gets some free time, she should not waste that time; instead, that precious time should be spent in useful activities within the boundary of her home. The best activity of women is spinning; because for every thread she is forgiven one sin and awarded one good deed.”⁴⁰

4.3 Advocacy for Women in Islam:

Islam, as a religion, fundamentally espouses principles of equity, dignity, and respect for women. The Quran explicitly emphasizes the equality of men and women in the sight of God, affirming their inherent worth and rights. Islamic teachings promote the concept of justice and fair treatment, emphasizing the need to honour women and safeguard their rights within society. The Prophet Muhammad himself upheld the dignity of women, advocating for their education, participation in societal affairs, and fair treatment in all spheres of life. However, despite these teachings, cultural practices and entrenched societal attitudes in regions like Pakistan have resulted in disparities and injustices against women, particularly within familial settings.

Within the context of Pakistan, cultural interpretations and practices sometimes diverge from the core teachings of Islam. Patriarchal norms and deeply entrenched traditions often overshadow the Islamic principles that advocate for women's rights. These cultural practices, influenced by historical and regional contexts, may perpetuate inequalities and contribute to the mistreatment of women within families. For instance, interpretations of certain cultural practices that prioritise male authority within households may conflict with the Islamic notion of mutual respect and consultation between spouses. This can lead to situations where women's voices are marginalised, and their rights are disregarded.

In some cases, misinterpretation or selective adherence to cultural norms might lead to discriminatory practices against women that contradict Islamic teachings. These practices, such as denying women their

⁴⁰ Rizvi, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar. 1980. *The Family Life of Islam*. Pp 98-99. World Organization for Islamic Services.

inheritance rights or imposing restrictions on their freedom of movement, contradict the Quranic emphasis on justice, equality, and the dignity of all individuals. Therefore, the disparities and ill-treatment of women within familial settings in certain regions like Pakistan often stem from the misalignment of cultural practices with the core principles of Islam, rather than the religion itself advocating for such disparities. Efforts to bridge this gap involve education, promoting a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings that uphold women's rights, and challenging cultural practices that perpetuate inequalities.

4.4 Impact of Depression on Women in Family Context:

The effects of depression on women in the context of family life can have far-reaching implications, impacting various facets of their well-being and familial dynamics. Firstly, depression arising from societal expectations can create immense pressure on women to fulfil predefined roles and expectations. Cultural or societal norms often dictate specific behaviours or responsibilities for women within the family, such as caretaking, managing household chores, or maintaining harmonious relationships. Failing to meet these expectations due to depression can amplify feelings of inadequacy and guilt, further exacerbating the condition.

Domestic conflicts within the family environment can also significantly contribute to the onset or exacerbation of depression in women. Constant disagreements, emotional abuse, or an unsupportive environment can worsen mental health. In such situations, women might feel isolated, unsupported, or invalidated, leading to heightened stress levels and a deepening sense of hopelessness.

Navigating familial relationships while battling depression becomes an immense challenge. The emotional toll of depression can affect communication and interpersonal dynamics within the family. Women may find it challenging to express their emotions or participate actively in family interactions, leading to misunderstandings or strained relationships. Additionally, the stigma surrounding mental health issues might hinder open discussions or seeking help, further isolating the woman experiencing depression.

As depression impacts a woman's emotional, cognitive, and physical functioning, her ability to contribute positively to family harmony diminishes. Reduced energy levels, persistent feelings of sadness, and lack of interest in activities can affect her involvement in family routines and interactions. This can lead to misunderstandings or misconceptions

within the household, as the family members may struggle to understand the complexities of depression and its effects on the individual's behaviour. "Women need mental support, especially after marriage. They need help from their family, particularly their husbands. Moreover, the psychological distress, marital dissatisfaction, and general unhappiness of married women were all adversely correlated with husbands' engagement in housework. So, we strongly recommend that the husband always be by his wife's side, give her more time, and take care of her. We suggest that more studies on mental health care for married women should be done in the future."⁴¹

4.5 Challenges Within Pakistani Households:

Within Pakistani households, the challenges faced by daughters-in-law are multifaceted and deeply ingrained in societal norms. Verbal and emotional abuse can manifest in various forms, from derogatory remarks about their appearance or capabilities to constant belittling regarding their roles within the family. For instance, women may endure criticism for not conforming to traditional gender roles or face constant comparison with other family members, leading to a persistent sense of inadequacy and self-doubt. In extreme cases, this abuse can escalate to threats of abandonment or divorce, leaving women in a constant state of fear and anxiety.

Financial exploitation is another prevalent issue. Some women may face restrictions on accessing financial resources or employment opportunities, leaving them financially dependent on their spouses or in-laws. This dependence can be leveraged as a tool for control and manipulation, further trapping these women in abusive environments. Moreover, denying women autonomy over financial decisions amplifies their vulnerability and limits their ability to seek help or escape abusive situations.

The lack of supportive networks exacerbates these challenges. When women face abuse, the societal expectation to maintain family harmony often discourages them from speaking out or seeking assistance. There's a prevailing notion that airing familial issues in public brings shame to the family, leading many women to suffer silently. This silence is reinforced

⁴¹ Sultana, Sharmin; Muhammad, Faisal and Chowdhury, Alauddin. 2023. Women's Depression: Before Or After Marriage, When Women Are More Depressed? *Department of Public Health, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Daffodil International University (DIU)*.

by cultural stigmas surrounding divorce or separation, making it extremely challenging for women to break free from abusive relationships, even when the abuse is severe.

These complex challenges create a cyclical pattern where women often find themselves trapped in environments where their mental health deteriorates, yet they struggle to find avenues for support or escape due to societal pressures and limited resources available to them. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that encompasses legal reforms, community education to challenge harmful cultural norms, and the establishment of robust support systems to empower women to seek help and reclaim their autonomy.

4.6 Empowering Women for Societal Harmony:

Efforts geared towards empowering women and nurturing their mental well-being stand as pivotal pillars for cultivating peace and societal harmony. These initiatives encompass championing education, ensuring accessible mental health resources, and challenging harmful cultural norms. Moreover, upholding women's rights, as highlighted in the core tenets of Islam, assumes paramount importance, recognizing their irreplaceable role in fostering serene and cohesive communities.

By prioritising the empowerment of women, promoting mental health initiatives, and reinforcing the principles of gender equality inherent in Islam, societies can pave a path towards greater peace and harmony, acknowledging the invaluable contribution of women in building resilient and unified communities.

5. Conclusion

This comparative analysis has delved into the intricate interplay between patience, family values, and their profound connection to women's pursuit of peace and tranquillity, particularly within the Islamic context. Through this exploration, it becomes evident that Islamic teachings, inspired by the Quran and the Hadith, underscore the pivotal roles of patience (*sabr*) and family values in the lives of Muslim women. These virtues not only guide them through life's tribulations but also shape their identities as nurturers, caregivers, and contributors to the overall well-being of society.

The importance of inner peace for women cannot be emphasised enough. In an increasingly complex world, inner serenity empowers women to fulfil their multifaceted roles with grace and strength, whether as mothers, daughters, wives, or community leaders. It is through patience and family values that women are equipped to navigate life's challenges

and empower themselves, fostering unity and understanding in their communities. Islam, as a faith, provides a framework that encourages patience in times of adversity, and women find profound tranquillity by embracing their responsibilities, nurturing their families, and fostering harmonious households. The Islamic practice of *salah* further deepens this connection by providing a structured path to mindfulness, patience, and inner peace. In the act of prostration, women expel negativity and find solace, aligning their hearts with the Divine.

The examples of patience in the lives of Muslim women further illustrate the central role this virtue plays in their personal and collective journeys. Whether in moments of historical significance or in the quiet strength displayed in their everyday lives, Muslim women continue to embody *sabr* as a source of inspiration, empowerment, and inner peace. Through their dedication to upholding moral and ethical standards, women ensure the transmission of core family values from one generation to the next. This preservation of values within the family not only strengthens familial bonds but also nurtures women's own tranquillity, as they find purpose and contentment in their roles as caretakers, peacemakers, and nurturers within the family unit.