5 Beautiful Lessons from Surah Maryam

"The best woman in her time was Maryam"

Ali Ibn Abi Talib

Over Ramadan and recently I have been intrigued by the beautiful lessons found in Surah Maryam, the only Quranic Chapter named after one of the most noble women to have trodden this earth (may Allah be pleased with her) after the Chapter dedicated to 'The Women'. When I started listening to the series by Abdul Nasir Jangda in Ramadan here I found ample opportunities for reflection on how Allah has made the family and our bond with parents a gift in the world, I remember feeling such a deep relevance in the lessons from her story and how it inspired me to think about the strength women and men have to bear in order to raise righteous children. In a bid to collate these wonderful lessons, I have listed some of them below though many more are unwritten from the 24 hour plus worth of insightful wisdom of this particular story from the Quran:

1. The Strength of a Woman

It is so eloquently put by Allah that women are made so strong emotionally and physically have been given the ability to bear the strength of carrying and giving birth to children. This lies at the center of the story surrounding Maryam (as) and is poignantly a reminder of the miracle of birth and life itself. That Allah Alone has the Power to create us. Not only do we see the strength of Maryam (as) in her devotion and servitude to Allah before she is given the glad tidings of Isa (as), even during child birth (one of the most difficult periods of a woman's life) when she is alone and relies on Allah do we see the strength of her faith. This lesson for me is so profound in today's day and age where women are portrayed deceptively as being weak yet Allah tells us through all the righteous women who have led in Islam that the strength of a woman to bear and raise the next generation is an immense gift endowed upon the woman alone.

2. Always Under Allah's Providential Care

Maryam (as) was raised as a righteous child herself, devoted to His Service by her mother from birth which not only demonstrates the strong faith of her mother in Allah but also her own willingness to live a life of piety. Most women today can find that no one is to be relied on except Allah, because it is He who gives them the strength to carry what they do and He is the One Who always cares for you and Helps you in hardship. Particularly at that time when Maryam (as) was going through labor, Allah did not just leave her rather, He Provides for her through the fruits of dates and water to give her body the energy she needed to endure such a trial.

Allah does everything to protect her from being slandered by her people after giving her the gift of Isa (as). When Maryam (as) comes back to the people in Bethlehem, the people are the first to slander her and accuse her of being unchaste wrongfully. This taught me how strong she must
have had to be to deal with this test. Allah had given her the solution to her problem, making Isa (as) the person to speak to them and demonstrated His Power to do all things.

3. Have Few Worldly Expectations

One of the modern parenting challenges we face not only in certain cultures but across generations is the high expectations of parents of their children, from educational attainment to success in wealth. The pressure of how children turn out seems to suffocate some families and is one of the biggest problems in building a peaceful home today. Yet in the story of Maryam (as) and many other Prophetic traditions, we see the parents ask Allah only for their children to be raised with one expectation in sight: that they will be good Muslims and devoted servants to Allah. This is because they understood the true gift of children who will do actions, which will outlast them as the parents get old and pass on, so the generation of children can be righteous leaders. From this, we can learn not to pressurize our children to pursue careers or goals simply for worldly gains but for a far more noble pursuit in serving the Ummah.

4. Children are Allah's Gifts

One of the many hidden gifts from Allah to us is that of answering our supplications. We are all tested and trailed in life through different things, in some people's instances it is with the ability to have children. Perhaps one of the hardest experiences a woman will go through is to want children and not be able to bear them. Yet Allah reminds us in this chapter of His Power and that if you supplicate, Allah will not return you empty handed or deprive you of what you so earnestly want the gift of children.

Sometimes Allah deprives us of something, and when it's something we want so deeply like having children He is certainly not doing it out of punishment but rather He gives in others ways. Maryam (as) was the daughter given to her parents and she was devoted in the service of Allah, as such we are reminded to turn to Allah to ask Him for the best of gifts. Also in several places in the Quran Allah mentions that children are a 'gift' given from His Mercy, this is something parents need to be reminded of as they struggle with the modern day challenges faced in raising their children. To look after and care for them just as they would of any precious gift.

5. Righteousness is the Best of Provision

Righteousness and devotion is enough as provision Allah tells us through the examples of Maryam (as) who isn't raised to chase after some worldly goals, but rather for that of eternal success. It is due to her piety, consciousness of Allah that she is endowed with the good news of raising a Prophet and leader in the Ummah: (The angel) said: "I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son." [Quran 19:19] This also reflects that parents themselves need to practice the deen to the best of their ability to lead by example in action rather than by words. We see from the story of Maryam (as) the need to always maintain respect and adab with parents as ultimately Allah blesses those who take care of the people who raise them with love, mercy and care whilst He provides for us infinitely.
These are a summary of some of the insights I've gained, reflecting upon the story of Maryam (as) I can see how wonderfully comprehensive it is in nature when considering modern day parenting issues and the beautiful lessons Allah has given in it to allow us to seek righteous children and exemplary leadership in our own families.

May Allah grant us the ability to bear righteous children and be leaders of them - Ameen.

Lessons from Surat Taha:

Life lessons from the Qur'an are infinite. The more you look into the Qur'an and approach it with a sincere heart, give it your attention while assuming its magnificence, the more your heart connects with the Al-

Mighty.

9Has the story of Moses come to you [Prophet]? 10He saw a fire and said to his people, 'Stay here—I can see a fire. Maybe I can bring you a flaming brand from it or find some guidance there.'

Verses 9 and 10 contain many important lessons that I think we can all benefit from. In particular we can focus on TEN important lessons that impact our family life. This does not limit, of course, business and management applications, educational considerations, and other professional dimensions.

Life Lessons:

1- Family comes first

Mūsa seeks to ensure his family's safety and comfort by asking them to wait for him in the cold darkness of the night while he departs to investigate the source of fire at a distance from them. Never compromise your family and lead them into the unknown.

2- Present Danger is better than Hidden Danger

Mūsa knows it is dangerous to leave his family in the dark expanse of the desert that they lost their way in. Yet, that is less a danger than walking into a campfire of what could possibly be a group of brigands who would harm him and his family. The known danger is clear and evident, but at least it is predictable.
3- **Danger to one is better than exposing many**

Mūsa Instinctively decides that the danger faced by him, alone, is worth the risk of warmth and guidance to safety. Judgment is imperative when a preponderance of danger exists. The less exposure, whether financially, psychologically, spiritually and physically, the better.

4- **One person takes the Final Decision**

In trying circumstances, defined, clear and unambiguous directions can be the difference between life and death, health and sickness, safety and tragedy. In all decisions, especially within the household, a unified singular voice needs to provide leadership and direction.

5- **Leaders consult & explain their decision making process**

Mūsa Explains, in detail, WHY he has made the decision to investigate the fire and to leave his family behind. It is reasoned, rationale and explicit. Often, complaints arise about a decision being made without consultation and explanation. That contradicts the established Prophetic model. Decisions are not demands and the authority to make them is not inherent to one party over another except by virtue of trust. Trust is lost not by poor decisions but by poor consultation.

6- **Speak to all whom your decision impacts**

Mūsa Spoke to Ahlihi (all his family/people), not just his wife. Taking counsel with your sons and daughters in important decisions is a way of ensuring reciprocation when they reach an age of decision making ability for themselves. If you ignore their voices, then expect them not to share it with you.

7- **Don’t promise what is not assured**

Mūsa Says, “Maybe/perhaps I can bring you” and does not speak in definite. Nothing undermines credibility of a parent with their children more than unfulfilled promises. The greatest wedge between a husband and wife are vows that are not maintained and assurances not met. Speak the truth and do not embellish.

8- **Maximize your benefit from assumed danger**

Mūsa Calculates what he stands to gain – warmth, light, guidance out of the desert, return with a flaming brand and more. Always seek maximum benefit, even from precarious situations that others may view as a complete loss.

9- **Prioritize**

Mūsa Speaks about warmth and a flaming brand to return with and provide comfort and light for his family, before he speaks about finding their way. He understands the greatest need and seeks to fulfill it before other essentials.
10- Take responsibility

Mūsa says “Inni (I can)” to legitimize his decision. He assumes responsibility for the decision and intends a positive outcome, even though he does not guarantee it. Families disintegrate due to a lack of responsibility. Standing up and assuming leadership equally necessitates being responsible when things go bad.

The Qur'an alludes to all human experience and seeks to enrich the finite time we spend on earth before our return to our Maker the Most High.

The Prophet was commanded to follow his predecessors and take heed from their trials while finding inspiration in their eventual Divinely ordained triumph.

Allah, the Most High, encourages us to look into the final Word and take heed of its lessons and parable:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ إِلَى النَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مِثَالٍ مِّثْلِ وَكَانَ الْإِنسَانُ أَكْثَرُ شَيْءٍ جَدْلًا

“And We have certainly diversified in this Qur'an for the people from every [kind of] example; but man has ever been, most of anything, [prone to] dispute.” Al-Kahf 18:54

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