

Practice of Medicine and my Faith

I have been a physician for more than 30 years. Many times I have come across patients who ask me questions about how could I become a doctor being Muslim woman, or how do I feel being a Muslim doctor taking care of Jewish and Christian patients?

The answer is simple.

There is no religion or gender in medicine, 9 out of 10 commandments are compassion. Doctor and patients relationship is extremely scared relationship. It is defined by empathy, sympathy, trust and confidentiality, service and compassion to one who is in need. This gives one the opportunity to serve fellow human beings in a dignified manner. It does not matter who you are serving, where and when!

I am one of five sisters and three brothers; my father was a very humble but very intellectual and educated man. He made sure that all of his children get good education. He emphasized especially on the education of his daughters. He mentored us and helped us. He woke us up early in the morning and made special breakfast for us so that we could study early in the morning (he emphasized that if you study early in the morning you can understand better as your brain is very fresh). This is due to his encouragement and efforts that we are three doctors and one nurse amongst five sisters.

Education is ordained upon all Muslims men and women.

Any word of wisdom is the lost property of a Muslim. (Sunan At tirmidhi 2687)

Malala and Bokoharam are two confusing examples. All those young girls in East Africa and Malala have been targets of extremism.

One must think if women's education is not allowed in Islam, then how are there so many women doctors who are Muslims. Quran has commanded in multiple places to acquire knowledge and wisdom without any discrimination of gender. There are many other fathers like my father who have emphasized on education of their daughters following Islamic teachings.

(Quran 62:2)

He is the one who sent a glorious messenger (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) among the illiterate people from amongst themselves who recites to them His revelations and cleanses and purifies them and teaches them the book and wisdom.

(Quran 2:151)

-----He teaches you the book and inculcates in you logic and wisdom and enlightens you.

(Quran 39:9)

Can those who have knowledge and those who do not be alike?

It is clear from these verses and many other verses that acquisition of knowledge is as important for a woman as for a man.

Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) advised us multiple times to acquire knowledge:

Acquisition of knowledge is binding on all Muslims (both men and women)(Ibn MAJA 1:81)

Acquire knowledge even if you have to go to China. (Al Masnad 1:175)

Whoever seeks a way to acquire knowledge God will make easy his way to paradise (Sahi Muslim 2699)

Islam gives equal rights for women; good deeds of either women or men will be rewarded equally depending on the deeds. Its not that men will get more rewards than women unlike in the world, where women are still struggling to get equal wages. It is sad that most Islamic Governments are not following these golden rules of equality. They don't let women drive or acquire education or work outside of the house. In some countries a woman cannot even go out alone. They are not following the footsteps of the Prophet, who made a special efforts and made special arrangements for education and training of women.

Hadhrat Ayesha the beloved wife of the prophet was a narrator of his sayings (Ahadith), a scholar, and intellectual person, she narrated more than 2000(Ahadith) sayings of the prophet, and she took active role in education of women and even men after the demise of the prophet. Even during life of the prophet she was actively involved in the education of women.

That's the reason I became a doctor, to get education to the best of my capacity, and to serve humanity. My grand father was my role model, a physician who served day and night in the jungles of Indonesia, his life history is full of stories when he walked for miles to see patients and came back without any reimbursements, as he noted that the family he went to see, had very poor household condition. My goal is to follow his footsteps and serve the humanity until I have physical and mental capacity. When I hug a patient in distress, wipe her tears or listen to her difficulties, that are the least I can do to minimize their distress, this gives me a feeling of accomplishment, but cannot provide the high level of service provided by my grand father in 1950's.

In Summary my faith and practice of medicine go hands in hand, may God accept my humble efforts to serve humanity, and may my two daughters and my son who are also doctors continue this noble task when I am not here.