

THE QURAN ON SPIDER WEBS (PART 2 OF 2)

Rating: 3.5

Description: Another example of social chaos in a spider web – matiphagy. The living “hell” of a spider’s home is a reminder of the consequences of polytheism.

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Matriphagy

Yet the most bizarre part of a spider household is what happens when the female spider has reached unprecedented levels of desperation and anxiety and can no longer keep her young alive. Having lost perhaps hundreds of her young and still stuck with several more hundred spiderlings; the mother, astonishingly, sacrifices her own body as food for her young by unleashing their killer instinct that makes them attack and eat her alive! This cruel process is known as matriphagy or "mother eating".^[1]



Female *Stegodyphus lineatus* Spider being eaten alive by her own young– Credit: Jorge Almeida

What is known, so far, is that matriphagy is a process initiated by the female spider and that its methods vary from one species to another. Venomous spiderlings even poison their own mother to death; but in all cases matriphagy is a slow and painful process that takes weeks before the mother spider actually dies as her body fluids are eventually consumed by her own young.^[2]

Such a process has been observed and documented in ground spiders, the *Stegodyphus lineatus* spider^[3] and crab spiders and only through further research can it be determined just how widespread matriphagy is in the miserable world of spiders.

In retrospect, mating in the world of spiders, most often leads to the death of the male spider and the widowing of the female; the mother is left all alone with, on average, a

few hundred young to feed and protect from predators, is forced to feed unhatched eggs to her spiderlings to keep them alive, and commonly eats her young to keep herself alive. Spiderlings also turn to cannibalism and kill and eat each other; and ultimately and most astonishingly, in dire situations mother spiders sacrifice themselves to their own young to be eaten. The final result, at best, only a few of the hundreds of spiderlings actually survive to leave the torment of the web.

Now, knowing the cruel nature of a spider's household, Praise be to God Almighty, Who mentioned that the worst household is that of a spider, long before naturalists and scientists started to study spider behavior in detail. It can now be stated, as a fact, that life in a spider web is totally bizarre and after comparison with households of other creatures, is truly the worst, most cruel and miserable of all households!!!

The Message in the Verse of the Quran

There is a clear warning in the concerned verse of the Quran. God has compared those who take associates or gods, with Him in worship, to those who take a spider's web as a home. The Quran and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, are both extremely clear that only God, The Creator of all, deserves to be worshiped, directly, not through any intermediaries or associates. This is known as Monotheism.

"Worship God and associate nothing with Him" (Quran 4:36)

"And when Abraham said to his father and his people, 'Indeed, I am disassociated from that what you worship (statues). Except for He Who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.'" (Quran 43:26,27)

The message of Islam and of all the Prophets and Messengers is to worship God alone and that worshipping God through intermediaries or associates such as prophets, angels, pious people, animals, creatures, objects or anything is polytheism; the gravest of all sins. All acts of worship, including supplication, prayers, and slaughter of animals should be directed only to God.

The Quran mentions that such associates cannot even respond to (and in some cases, not even see or hear) the prayers of the person who is supplicating to them. Such is the case when someone wrongly goes to the grave of a Prophet, or a deceased pious person, or a statue and supplicates and asks them to forgive his/her sins or cure him/her from an illness. The previous-mentioned have zero ability to do the required. Furthermore, God mentions that He never ordered any of His creation to take associates with Him; in fact all of mankind was created with the pure instinct that God Almighty is One and that He Alone has the right to be worshipped.

The Unforgivable Sin

The largest of all sins, polytheism, is to associate anything with God Almighty in worship. This is one sin that God has stated that He will not forgive in the Hereafter; while all other sins can be forgiven.

Imagine the injustice of a person who was created by God (gently and mercifully in his mother's womb) after once being nothing, who was gifted with a soul, was blessed with a brain, a heart, sight, hearing, feelings, a habitable, beautiful and scenic earth full of plants and animals to eat from, and raw materials which mankind has utilized to build cities and infrastructures; then this person does not give his praise, thanks and worship to God Almighty, instead gives so to a creation of God (that did nothing of the above-mentioned). **"And, when Luqman said to his son while he was advising him, 'O my son, do not associate [anything] with God [in worship]. Indeed, association [with Him] is a great injustice.'"** (Quran 31:13)

Those who die, not having repented from worshipping other than God, will lose in the Hereafter. As for the human associates that used to be worshiped in this life they will dissociate themselves from the people who used to invoke them. While, the non-human associates will turn against and betray the people who used to worship them; and will state (God will give them the ability to speak) that in reality no one was truly worshipping them. As a result, both the invokers and non-human associates in worship will be placed in Hell. **"And [Abraham] said, 'You have taken [for worship] idols instead of God, and the love between you is only in the life of this world. Then on the Day of Resurrection you will deny one another and curse one another, and your refuge will be the Fire, and you will not have any helpers.'"** (Quran 29:25)

Hence the spider web can be compared to Hell, a confined and miserable place of suffering. The mother spider that gave her life, so that her young may live, can be compared to a person who used to worship many different associates (her many spiderlings) with God. Since the non-human associates that used to be worshipped will also be in Hell and will betray the person who used to worship them, the result will be unbearable pain and suffering of that person, similar to how the spiderlings betray and turn on their own mother and are the cause of her torture and suffering in the web. Only in the next life there will be no death; Hell and Heaven will be eternal.

Footnotes:

[1] Englehaupt, Erika. February 2014. Some Animals eat their moms, and other cannibalism facts. *Science News*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/gory-details/some-animals-eat-their-moms-and-other-cannibalism-facts>

[2] Please watch: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/wild/worlds-weirdest/videos/mother-eating-spiders/>

[3] Zielinski, Sarah. May 2015. Animal moms sacrifice a lot – sometimes even themselves. *Science News*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/wild-things/animal-moms-sacrifice-lot-%E2%80%94-sometimes-even-themselves>

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