

Importance of Family Life in Islam

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Family is the nucleus of society and the first society in which we learn social etiquette principles and cooperation. Family is the center of protection of national and moral traditions and in one word, for the protection of individuals. Hence, those who are deprived of family blessings will be exposed to doom. The absence of moral values will be the loss of cooperation and co-existence and finally the decadence of nations and human societies. Today, with a casual glance at the quality of life and disintegration of families and increasing rates of divorce and parents making great efforts to provide for the material needs of their children and disregarding moral and human values, we see that family life is on the decline. Effective and social relations are waning and the relations of elders and the young generations are strained and there is little sign of respect. The approaches concerning marriage and the objectives of married life and family patterns have changed because of the industrial age. Boys and girls who are under very serious sexual pressures try to solve their problems within the legal and moral precincts of Islam but are faced with the unreasonable unfounded excuses of their parents. In order to free towards illegal and immoral methods. It is obvious that for a girl and a boy, who marries without love but only for satisfaction of their own sexual desires, this tie won't last a long time and it may not bring about peace. Today's family pays little attention to co-existence and divine cordiality between husbands and wives, parents and children and also old people's rights. The great role of affection and understanding in marital life is forgotten. Not being aware of the effects of affectionate smiles and words, the young husband and wife lead the center of family towards a dark prison. Happiness and hope will change to stress and despair. Thus, despite recent advances in technology, industry and improvement of cultural communications and relations, the cultural and moral situation of families has become worse and it has made man's future ambiguous. To deal with this matter, one should try to make the family a peaceful environment and parents should spend more time with one another and their children. In this way, parents can provide children with a safe and peaceful environment under their own supervision, and the children will become kind and healthy parents of the future. Some parents due to their cultural, emotional financial inability are unable to perform their rightful duties. The instability of the Western families, the popularity of the families in which men and women

live with each other for sometime without any obligations towards each other, and without any marriage contract, the popularity of homosexuality, and the popularity of solidarity lives—all are .warning signs for man's future

But Islam:

In the rich culture of Islam, marriage is considered as the best and greatest structure, which is made of cordiality, devotion, and self-satisfaction whose architecture places these in the nature and fate of the workers. (I.e. husband and wife) of this structure and insistently encourages Muslims to adopt these characteristics.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has said: "A man who has no wife is poor and helpless even if he is rich. And a woman who has no husband is poor and helpless even if she is rich".

In the culture of Islam in comparison to many other old and new cultures, men cannot rule over women. And man's supervision and guardianship doesn't show his superiority and authority. A woman is a companion in times of his loneliness and she gives him comfort. A Muslim woman who is familiar with Islam and is of a pure nature tries to obey her husband who is of her own choice. She tries to satisfy her own mental-spiritual needs as well as her husband's. In this way, they can create a pleasant family environment.

Thus, the contract of marriage is not only a legal way for satisfaction of the sexual instinct, but also is a contract that covers all aspects between the couples which gives beauty and harmony to their lives, and saves them from solitude.

Disintegration of families, increase in divorce rates, moral decadence, negligence of the needs of the young generation, lack of respect and good understanding can be rooted out only with improving relations. Today families are formed with the sole objective of gratifying the sexual desires of man and woman.

The Holy Quran says: "And of His sign is this: He created for you helpmates from yourselves that you might find rest in them and created between your love and mercy". (Holy Qur'an 30:21)

The above verse gives orientation to the life of married couples that must always give comfort to each other and their relations should not be summed up only in sexual pleasure. But should bring an abiding love, sympathy so that they may live in marital bliss.

Because the family is the foundation for forming individuals and social personalities and the very morality of parents is a very influential factor which begins way before marriage. The level of development and spirituality of a nation is directly related to its morality and culture, and the .roots for the formation of culture and morality can be found in the family

Formation of a Family

Like other inherent instincts, the sexual strength of a man is something natural which has been deposited in him by Almighty Allah since the very first day. It is evident that if this instinct is not satisfied by marriage, which is the only legal method, men will be compelled to satisfy it by unlawful means or this strength with which Allah has blessed man will be completely wasted.

In either case, there follows a chain of religious, moral, social and hygienic evils. For this reason, Islam has attached great importance to this vital matter. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said: "The worst among your dead are those who are unmarried".

"Whoever marries ensures half of his faith".

"Allah has not sent me with a law of prescribing monastic or secluded life. On the other hand, He has appointed me as a prophet with a moderate and easy religion. I fast and offer prayers.

"Whoever loves me should follow my tradition. Matrimony is my tradition".

Also Imam as-Sadiq (A.S) said: "Two rakaats of prayers offered by a married person are better than seventy-two rakats offered by one without a spouse".

The thing, which deserves attention, is the in-tense friendship and kindness which is generated by matrimonial alliance and makes life sweet. The Holy Qur'an says: "By another sign, We created for you mates from among yourselves, that you might live in joy with them, and planted love and kindness in your hearts". (Holy Qur'an 30:21)

It should, however, be remembered that matrimony should not be established for satisfaction of sexual appetite only. Its primary objective should be to give birth to useful and pious progeny so that the number of the followers of truth and reality can in-crease.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said: "Marry and produce offspring so that you may multiply, because on the Day of Judgment I shall pride myself on the abundance of my miscarried children".

There are many who refuse to perform this vital act on account of some superstition and do not marry especially on account of fear that it may later involve them in financial difficulties. Such persons should be told that adverse financial conditions should not prevent matrimonial alliance.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has said: "One who does not marry on account of poverty and indigence has entertained a bad idea about the Almighty, because He says: "If those who marry have been needy and poor Allah will make them independent by His blessing: He (Allah) also said: "Marry to acquire your sustenance; because blessing has been placed among women.

Islam also considers it a great service to make efforts for the matrimony of two persons and to

.arrange for the preliminaries thereof

Choice of the Spouse

Islam considers marriage to be a sacred and religious matter and, therefore, considers purity of faith to be a prerequisite for a spouse.

The Holy prophet (S.A.W) has said: "One who selects a woman for her beauty only does not find in her what he desires. And Allah leaves him to himself (i.e. ignores) a person who marries a woman for her wealth."

It is, therefore, necessary that you should select a faithful and religious-minded spouse. Imam Ali (A.S) said: "Avoid matrimonial alliance with foolish and ignorant women, because association with them is a calamity and the child to whom they give birth would be good for nothing and worthless".

Notwithstanding what has been mentioned above, Islam has left the selection of a spouse to the will of a husband and considers the interference and imposition by the parents to be .inopportune

The Problem of Marriage

It should be admitted that the greatest difficulty which has cropped up these days for young men and makes them desist from marrying is the dowry, the burdensome ceremonies, and the undue expectations of many women.

No doubt Islam considers the dowry of a woman legal right and it is payable by the man, how so ever enormous it may be. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an says: "If you wish to divorce a woman in order to wed another, do not take from her the dowry you have given her even if it be a talent of gold". (Holy Qur'an 4:24)

However, from an ethical point of view, Islam rejects the woman with a heavy dowry and excessive expectation and prefers a woman whose dowry is light and whose expenses are moderate, and considers her more fit for multiplication of offspring.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said: "Inauspiciousness lies in the three things: a woman, an animal for riding, and a spouse. The inauspiciousness and unluckiness of a woman consists of this .that her dowry should be heavy and she may not be fertile

Choosing a Life Partner with Good Morals

In the pursuit of perfection of personality and distinction in social and family interactions is the result of honorable and amiable characteristics, which is called 'Good morals'.

Good morals have two meanings:-

1. Good-natured interactions with people.

2. Possession of honorable characteristics.

Amiable characteristics and agreeable personality, that arise from correct upbringing and earnest will to improve and safeguard society and family are: religious faith, truthfulness, regard of justice, loyalty, generosity, co-operation, commitment, convictions, judiciousness, eloquences, chastity, moderation, etc.

In marriage emphasis is on both dimensions of good moral. A man or woman, who is not courteous towards his or her partner, would lack any attraction and glamour. In case of inner mishap of morality and ethics and disregard of religious and social norms, she or he is deprived of his/her role as a wise, sensible and conscious spouse and a hazardous life awaits .him/her

Continence And Chastity

Chastity illustrates moral and religious restrains and is a sign of correct religious conduct. Men and women of chastity put more value on their family life and safeguard it from any possible harm.

The firm family bond is one of the factors that influence modesty and chastity of women, because if a woman truly believes that she belongs to her husband and children. Hence, if she feels content and secure along her husband, then she refrain from exposing and exhibiting herself to other men, and apply due moral restraint in presence of strangers. Also if a man puts himself at the service of his wife and children and loves them, his affection and devotion will grow increasingly.

Continence and chastity provide a woman the opportunity of searching for a suitable and worthy partner among her suitors, who deserves honor of being the father of her children. Or incite her suitors to refrain themselves. The obstacles of chastity and veil against lust and passion of men have become established factors in making women more sacred in the eyes of men.

Continence of men also is deciding factor in safeguarding family life and children training spiritually. Disregard of moral and religious restrains result in break-up of family and even precious puberty of children.

Thus it is suggested to choose a suitor who is morally correct and has a healthy sexual

The Limit of a Father's Permission in Marriage

Adequate understanding of future partner is considered to be the most important consideration in a marriage. Implications of absence of very basic understanding of either partner's moral conduct would become an obstacle in finding mutual ground for growth of love and affection necessary for a healthy and warm union.

Sometimes parents without consent or even knowledge of their daughter, chooses a partner for her. Hence, put her in position that she has to adjust with whom she hasn't even the basic understanding. Or at times parents put their son under pressure to choose a wife they desire; unaware that consequence of such a marriage would be unpleasing.

The Islamic approach concerning marriage comprises careful and delicate guidelines that lead to a harmonious and correct family life. Therefore the full understanding of the ultimate outcome of an action incites stronger motivation for seeking scientific approaches to it and finds the best ways of exploiting it. So in considering marriage, due attention should be paid to fundamental principles. Thus encouraging young people to apply due principles to their marriages and make best use of their abilities to strengthen the family bond.

Islam as the religion of temperament has paid due attention to this matter and has particularly emphasized the importance of either couples' consent in promoting the principles of marriage and establishing the marital responsibilities. Thus keeping in mind excitements and unstable feelings that present obstacles in choosing the proper partner in marriage, the consent of a girl is not enough.

An experienced father, familiar with hazards of life is less likely to make mistake than his young daughter. So in marriage of a girl, the consent of two people is needed. The main party of the contract which is she and her father who is the waver of correctness of the contract, therefore, if parents impose a person to a girl, the contract would not be applicable without her consent.

Imam Ali (A.S) said: "Never trust anyone unless you have tested them yourself". Evidently, to know someone, we must be aware of his/her past and also inquire about their close friends, since they are the mirror of one's moralities. We should not heed to complements and claims of truthfulness, loyalty and good morals, but to take more care in our inquiries.

One way of knowing people is socializing with them. So upon decision of marriage is made, inter-actions in order to get to know if the person has an idea of their own about life and how

this outlook has come about and their aim in life is permitted within the limitations of the shari'a (Islamic laws and regulations). But, we should keep in mind the possibility of unforeseen situations and reservations in the course of life and its ups and downs. Therefore, the couple should be ready and willing to face the implications of life wisely and sensibly, .other-wise, they wouldn't have a warm, tranquil and happy life

The Relationship between Hope and Success in the Family

Everyone looks towards his/her future life either by planning or by daydreaming about what can happen. Human beings live with hope and struggle. A mother feeds her baby with hope. A farmer plants his seeds with hope. A young man marries with hope of a family and prosperous future and independence from his family.

A patient who places himself in the hands of surgeon and takes bitter medicine lives with hope. In short, success and joy in material and intellectual matters is due to hope for the future, because human nature is based on hope. This nature changes when the human deviates from his original path and becomes hopeless and disappointed.

Family is the smallest social unit and is the first center for shaping and training the individuals and social personalities under the light of success and hope. It is such that with hope one can have happy and active children and educate them based on true and proven scientific methods and prepare them for a shining future.

Without doubt a baby learns family's methods of deciphering aims and goals, struggling, and these are all accompanied by hope. On the other hand, impeding education, delinquency, narcissism, emptiness and not being purposeful are the results of wrong methods of training and destroy a child's hope.

It is necessary to mention that hope is a motivation and a key to success when it is accompanied by will-power and careful planning. Otherwise, life becomes nothing more than a mirage.

Negative and weak willed human beings not only cannot benefit from fruitful positions but also always disturb others and use their inner power to prevent work progress. They always use words such as "impossible" and "cannot" and sit silent and motionless in a corner and disappoint others.

Have you ever observed how fathers' and mothers' negative or positive dispositions and suggestions have influence on their children's deeds and mentality and what kinds of results they obtain? They weaken a child's will by destroying his/her hope. Then they darken the future of adolescents and young people by speaking ill of society and country leaders. As a result

.young people lose their life's purpose and their Islamic and spiritual values decrease

Difference Between Hoping And Wishing

Hope is a suitable desire that is attainable in the future, and therefore because of its possibility is based on reality. So hope is a mental phenomenon such that the more it is based on reality and truth the more suitable and efficient it is.

A wish on the contrary refers to something, which is unobtainable, and there is no hope or indication that it may happen in the future. A wish is expressed through phrases such as: "I wish it was...", "I wish something like that happens...."

Therefore, human beings with far reaching wishes are forced to waste his mental energy in formulating reasons, reforming what he perceives as reality, and eliminating illogical selections of the truth. In this expression wishing is a kind of want that is unobtainable. So it might become the source of negative effects in the future and shortcomings in duties related to the present.

A far-reaching and unrealistic wish distances the human from Allah, and destroys his education and training. Allah said to Prophet Musa (A.S): "O Musa do not have far reaching wishes in this world because you will become hard-hearted

Constructive Hope

Hope and good opinion towards Allah is the secret of many individual, social, moral and material successes. This world holds an important place in the dictionary of Islamic education, and the verse of the Holy Qur'an encourages hope in Allah and reproach hopelessness in Allah's grace. Allah wants the sinners to return to Him with hope in His grace and to repent. It is the only way to restrain deviation and direct man to the right path.

Allah in the Qur'an says: "O my servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah..."(Holy Qur'an 39:53)

In this verse, Allah speaks to the sinners using the word 'My slaves' and this shows how He is merciful and compassionate to his servants. Some-times you encounter people that say, "Despite being optimist and hopeful I never embrace success in my life". I want to be virtuous and a believer, I want to be unselfish and helpful, I want to study and be good humored but I ?don't know what the obstacle in my way is? And how I can succeed

Success and Lack of Success

Success is attaining which man wills for, both moral and material affairs. Of course success is not due to the mere talent of the person but it is related to her/his efforts and endeavors. In this way a virtuous person with strong will power and control over the things which enters his heart and mind and his selfish needs will succeed. Man uses all his mental, psychological and physical powers in order to succeed. A successful family always controls their child's activities and behavior and supervises him/ her with full efforts and spends their time and money to train their children, so that they are protected from deviation and error at the hands of friends and be-come the manifestation of both human and Islamic values. One, who in addition to familiarity with the rights of spouses, takes them into consideration and .is thankful to his/her spouse, leads a good life

Characteristics of a Hopeless Person

One of the characteristics of a hopeless person is that he always says: "I will come to nothing." "I won't have a shining future," etc. Being pessimistic, by destroying hope in themselves, they be-come a vertical dead body, which sits and looks forward at his/her dark and vague future. They always make pretexts and make statements like: "If I didn't have a spouse and children....." "If I was healthy enough" "If I was lucky"

These are all pretexts. There are many persons who progressed and improved their condition with-out being young or having a spouse and children.

One who calculates everything according to material criteria and neglects Allah's grace will fall into depression and hopelessness. But hope in God's all encompassing power and constant attention to His servants and that Allah wants for life and to reinforce hope is important in their spirit, while using material means one should trust in Allah and empower his/her soul to start and complete his/her duties. The Glorious Qur'an states: "Surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts at rest". (Holy Qur'an 13:28)

Turning away from and forgetting Allah cause mental insecurity. Allah in this regard says: "And whoever turns away from My reminder, he shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the day of resurrection, blind". (Holy Qur'an 20:124).

We can preserve our mental stability by using correct methods, strong belief and relying on Allah at sensitive stages of individual and social problems.

1. If you are able, reveal your worries and problems to reliable and accepted persons and ask for their guidance and advice. Although they may not be able to help you- that is the most urgent remedy to anxiety and worries.

2. Be satisfied and appreciative of what you have such as wealth, vocation, spouse and children. Think about their values and righteousness. Never compare your life with the well-to-do life of another, but compare it with persons who are less fortunate than yourself. Because the latter will make you reassured, content and satisfied with your blessings granted by Allah. Salman al-Farsi, the great follower of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) says: "...The Prophet advised me to consider seven points in any case: The first one is to look at the people who lead a life lower than mine and not to the people who are higher than me. The other is to love the oppressed and accompany them"

.3. Treat your heart by reciting the Holy Qur'an and supplications