My Family



My Family In the Name of Allah

My Family

I was born in the heart of my mother and love surrounds me. I was born in my family, in the heart of my life. I remember my childhood days. I was a small child and, I used to play with my small brothers and sisters. I don’t know what life and what responsibility is except that I used to find everything arranged for me. Life to me is but play and jovial.

Rather, how often I found myself happy whenever my father gave me a piece of candy, which he used to carry whenever he was coming back from work, or when my mother or grandmother bought a new suit for me, or a ball so I could play with it.

How often I used to remember those words of love and sympathy, and the good relationship that existed between my grand-father and me.

All that I need in my life, is provided for me. My father or mother provides it for me without the least harm or grievance. Rather it is their pleasure to provide me with all my needs.

Indeed, I remember the love and concern shown to me by my father and mother, and also to my little brothers and sisters.

I was brought up under the care of my family guidance, then I grew up and, likewise, my brothers and sisters.

This is my family: my mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, and my junior and senior brothers and sisters.

This is Allah's wisdom, that He created man as a social being, who cooperates with others, as well as, develops a life full of love and compassion, based on love, respecting others and cooperating with them. And the parents have to live with their children in such a good and happy oasis, the family environ-ment, the environment of love and comp-assion.

How often I sit down thinking about my future.

Indeed, I have passed that infancy stage, and now I am about to start a new stage: A stage of responsibility towards my Lord, Who blessed me with His favor and grace. And likewise towards my self, family and society, or rather toward the whole mankind.

Now, I am a man who has a responsibility toward his family. My personality has reached a stage of perfection and likewise my thoughts, but I am still in need of my parents' advices. I am in need of their experiences, I am in need of others' experiences, because life is a wide sea full of waves, thus, I must choose a right and secured path.

My existence as a member in my family, makes me have rights in this human and social unity, and also imposes on me to have some obligations, because the nature of life in the family's world is that it produces relations between its members. Relations between mother and father, between parents and children, and between the children themselves, are connected with each other through brotherhood, ideology, houses, foods, discus-sions and a common family destination,…etc.

The Family Environment

The family's environment is the natural relationship, which exist in it. It is comprised of love, respect, help, understanding, sacrifice, feeding, system, guidance, time preservation and hard work. And or crimes, selfishness, laziness, spending of time unnecessarily, chaos, and likewise, unnecessary discussions and arguments.

It is possible that all these situations, both the good and the bad ones, will be found in a family. Indeed, every behaviour and moral has its own effect in a family's formation and the nature of its members. As children often inherit certain physical features from their parents, it is also possible for them to inherit certain psychological features. As they acquire certain behaviours from the family which become their habit, likewise, they can

acquire good or bad morals from their family.

Indeed, the only way of cleaning the family from bad habits and other problems is to give an active contribution toward creating good habits and blocking the way of a bad ones. Because the existence of bad atmosphere in the family pollutes the whole members of the family, and likewise it may turns happiness into misery and misfortune.

The family is an oasis, which we rest in after a hard work, and other problems which may face our life.

The existence of love and respect, which is experienced by one of us from his family, made him to forget all difficulties of life, as well as, decrease the effect of weariness and anxiety.

While the complicated environments not only cause weariness, anxiety and disorder, but also, take away man’s comfort and his psycho-logical happiness, thereby blocking his prog-ress in his work and studies, as well as, affecting his health and the security of his thought.

How Can I Deal with My Father?

All of what is in this world, atoms, stars, plants and natural beings, moves in accordance with the law and system. For example, a human’s life cannot possibly move naturally and freely without the law and system. Thus, everything in our society needs a system, and, likewise, foundations, companies and other governmental institutions.

The family is an important social institut-ion; it is in need of laws and systems for arranging its life and the relationship between its members. This is what Islamic Shari’a did through enacting laws and obligations. As we know, in any organization or company, there must be a director who governs it.

The nature of family life is that it makes the father a director to the family and responsible for it. The Almighty Allah, gave the father an absolute guardianship over his small children, and He made it obligatory on him to feed and educate them, as He made it a responsibility to feed his wife and take care of the family.

Thus, the father’s responsibilities are more heavier than other members of the family. It is in view of this, that the Almighty Allah commands the children to respect their parents, as much as, the parents guide them toward their good.

A father feels the responsibility of direct-ing his children toward good, as well as, taking care of them. He tries with all his might in order to attain their needs and interests. He wants to see them successful in their lessons. He wants to see them respected by others. He wants to see them working hard in their working place. He wants to see them going away from acts that may spoil their dignity in the face of the society.

A father feels and wants his children to copy his personality and existence. He has spent all his might, wealth and guidance in order to guide them, thus, he feels very sad and unhappy whenever he sees his children unsuccessful in their life. Or whenever they turn into bad people in the society, causing distress and disrespect to their parents and family.

Whereby he will feel happy and successful in his life, whenever he sees his children, both boys and girls, succeed, and become something in the society. They bring natural dignity to him because of their good habits in their studies, in their relations with friends and mates, and in their good relations between themselves.

Therefore, we see him (the father) unhap-py whenever he sees them committing bad habits, or when they create problems inside the house, or fail in their studies, or interact with bad friends, and commit bad habits; like extravagancy, smoking, and saying bad words, which affect others.

Bad habits destroy man’s personality, and give others the notion that this bad person comes from a bad family, thereby, its negative effects will be reflected on the parents.

This is the father’s feeling toward his children, which may be hidden from the children, thereby causing problems, which often result in quarrels between the children and their parents. Thus, children’s understand-ing toward their parent’s feelings can solve many problems that arise in this case and will grow from the sense of love and affection. It will make the children understand the sadness of their parents toward their bad habits, which in turn, can make them refrain from it, in respect to their parent’s feelings.

The growth of a successful family, is a moral, as well as, material growth, and that happiness and success can be achieved morally before being achieved materially.

There are bases of sound relationships between children and their parent, which guarantees happiness and Allah’s pleasure for both parties.

Indeed, the need of the members of the family, children and parents, toward mutual love and respect, is like the need of a plant toward sunshine. It is because of love and respect that Islam came and built life based on it.

Man’s personality grows and attains perfection under the shadow of love and respect, and likewise, man’s personality dies through hatred and treason, and thus go away man’s values and his moral feelings.

It is in view of this, that we see the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) explain that the reality of Islam is love. He (s.a.w.) is reported to have said:

“There is nothing in religion (Islam) except love.”

It is in this vein, that parents were instructed to love and guide their children, and the children were also instructed to love and respect their parents.

Outlining the value of a human being, and his right in respecting his personality, the Holy Qur'an states:

“And surely We have honored the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We provide them with good things, and We have made them to excel highly most of those whom We have created.” Holy Qur’an (17: 70)

“Say not `Fie’ to them, not chide them.”

Holy Qur’an (17: 23)

“And say: My Lord, have mercy on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.”

Holy Qur’an (17: 24)

“And keep kindly company with them in this world.” Holy Qur’an (31: 15)

Another hadith, regards children’s love toward their parents as an act of worship (ibadah). In this regard, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) says: “An affectionate look by a son towards his parent is servitude to Allah.)

He (s.a.w.) is also reported to have said: “The Almighty Allah will have mercy on the man who passionately loves his child”1[1]

Children will be able to deal with their parents in a good and sound manner if they understand their value with regard to their education and growth, and, likewise, their love and sincerity.

The Holy Qur'an, explaining this reality, says:

“Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me is the eventual coming.” Holy Qur’an (31: 14)

“Is the reward of goodness aught but go[2]odness.” Holy Qur’an (55: 60)

When children’s feelings stir and respond based on this principle the reward of good with good, children will feel that their parents deserve respect from them, even on the matter that offends them when they are guided them toward their goodness. The purpose of all these is nothing, but parental care and love, and what is meant is not that they do not respect the personality of their children or that they want to take away their freedom, rather the father fulfills his obligation towards his children with pleasure.

Thus, the children are also indebted to fulfil their obligation toward their parents.

The relationship between children and their parents can be based on love and respect, as it can also be based on material foundations. Because the children depend on their parents in their material life, until they complete their studies…etc. During this period, children feel a sense of psychological, as well as, material relationship with their parents.

Many times tension and strain may occur between children and their parents due to material proble[3]ms. It is either due to the stinginess of the parent or due to extravagancy and lack of consideration of the children or the continuation of children's dependence on their parents materially, even if they have the power to work.

The solution to such problems depends on both sides. The child will be responsible to know his parents' material situation, and likewise, the parents are responsible for dealing with their children with kindness. They should not hurt them with bad words.

A child's freedom is his natural right on his parent, because he is growing, reaching a stage of puberty and thereby being responsible[4] for his actions. When reaching this stage he is free from his parents, but with all these he is still in need of their guidance and advice till his experience and knowledge reaches a stage of perfection. As he is also in need of his parents' support, materially, till he is no more in need of such assistance.

Indeed, good uses of wealth by the child-ren indicates the maturity of their personality, as well as, sound feelings and respect for their parent's hard work.

It is not the father's obligation and responsibility to feed his children after they attain maturity, but the love, kindness and goodness of the parent toward his children will not allow him to leave them alone.

Therefore, dealing with the parent is a ritual, moral and sentimental essence and an obligatory relationship, which will be asked of by the Almighty Allah, conscience, and the society.

Children have rights over their parents, as the parents also have rights over their children. And the parents' right increases when they become old or they can no more work or take on their responsibilities themselves. In such a case the importance of virtue and goodness to the parents increases.

A calm voice, words of respect, smiling while talking to the parents, will earn respect from your parents, as well as, Allah's pleasure. It is not virtue and goodness for a person to raise his voice against his parents.

"Say not `Fie' to them, not chide them."

Holy Qur'an (17: 23)

"And speak to them a generous word."

Holy Qur'an (17:23)

We should know that, no matter how much love and respect is shown to the parents by their children, the heart of the parents is wider in terms of love than that of the children.

Solutions to the Family’s Problems

As the family is a depot of love and assistance, likewise, it is a foundation of education and teachings. Indeed, the sense of understanding between children and their parents is an obligatory phenomenon of their relationships and solving the problems that arise between them or for studying and discussing the opinions made by the children.

Because a child has his own thoughts and opinions based on his studies, knowledge, travelling, or his relations with friends and relatives, etc, he has feelings and thoughts, thus, it is his right upon his parents and brothers to open their minds and listen to his opinions.

It is the right of a child to present these to his parents, or some of his brothers, so as to listen to his views in order to find a solution to his problems or the family’s problems. Or maybe he will present this problem to one of the parent or his brothers, in order to find a way out.

It is for the goodness of the family that its members should discuss the problems faced by its members, especially the children. This attitude will not only strengthen the children’s personality but also uphold their moral feelings, because it will serve as a respect for their views and problems, as well as, their future.

As the parents stress the need for their children to respect them, they also open the way for guidance and considering them in their views, or helping them with money in order to produce a beneficial project or help them solve their problems.

Discussion and debate has its own morals, and respecting it shows the soundness of that particular personality. While respecting such morals, all the parties concerned will be able to understand each other so as to reach an acceptable result.

It is hardly to achieve understanding, when one of the parties concerned in a debate presents his view and insists on it, even if it is wrong, or he shows his sadness in the debate.

Understanding needs a thorough explana-tion and listening to others views, as well as, accepting it when it is right or renouncing one’s view in order to achieve a required result. Whenever a sound situation is achieved, the problem is solved.

Relationship through Brotherhood

The relationship of brotherhood between children is based on the basis of relativity, ideology and living under the umbrella of one parent and compound. It is in view of this

that it becomes more powerful. And these show the understanding of the meaning of brotherhood on the side of the children.

Children in a family live in different age and groups (male and female), as well as, different cultural and ideological situations; in different psychological and physical beings.

Living in a family obliges them to live as one single being. And this can be achieved through love and sacrifice, greetings, gifts, mutual respect, assistance, eating food at one table, understanding each other through discussions, forgiveness when offended, as well as, working hard to solve any problems which arise.

The first step in achieving love and intimacy in day to day relations is greetings, because greetings are the key to the heart. They express love, respect and good relationship. They expel the ambiguity and hatred in the heart.

Surely, spreading greetings between mem-bers of the family creates love and respect among them. Due to the importance of greet-ings in human's relations, we see that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) encourages towards spreading greetings, because it is a way toward the heart (love) and a word which implants love in one's self.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) says: "You will not enter Paradise unless you love each other, and you will not love each other unless you believe. Can I show you something which if you did it; you will love each other? Spread greetings between yourselves".

In another Hadith, he (s.a.w.) teaches us the morals of greetings, in his saying: "The best of you is the one who starts the greeting to his fellow companion".

A banquet of food where all the children and brothers surround it, expresses a true participation in life and has its own effect in their life. Because they are eating while at the same time discussing in a brotherly way, this will make them happy and comfortable.

It is not only associating in eating, rather it is associating in feelings and thoughts.

The mutual assistance between brothers in a family is a major factor which brings harm-ony and cooperation in the family; and distributes Allah's blessing among them all.

It is possible that a brother will be above his fellow brother or sister in term of knowledge, thus, it is the right of that brother to assist his other brothers and sisters in teaching them what he knows, like drawing, tailoring, or how to use the computer and, etc. Or he should guide them on how to solve their problems and overcome their difficulties.

This will help the brother draw a line of action for his life, so as to help himself and the other members of the family.

It is also possible that one of the brothers will be blessed with a work and a suitable position, while his brother or sister is in need of financial assistance. Thus, it is the right of brotherhood, and it is part of the good behaviour, which Allah loves, that he should help his brothers and sisters, so as to reduce the responsibilities of the parents

towards them. With these, his fellow brothers will feel the feelings of love and respect toward him, and at the same time, they will be thinking on how to do good to him.

Family life is a life of love, assistance and sacrifice, and these can be achieved through good words and feelings, wealth and assist-ance.

Among the means of solving of the problems, is going away from stimulating others or disturbing them especially if they are in tension due to some problems they are facing.

It is likely that some members of the family may be nervous and can be stimulated easily; this can cause problems in the family. It is possible that this kind of person may utter harmful words against his fellow brothers, and when his brother replies him the whole will be on fire and, thus, the problems grow.

When this kind of situation occurs, it is better to consider his situation, thereby, this kind of situation should be treated with calmness and simplicity. Then after an hour or a day, we should confront him with the matter and discuss it with him, or we can come through the parents or one of his friends.

Forgiveness, as well as, controlling one self at the time of sadness, is a moral stand which discovers the power of the person's concerned personality, and the purity of his heart from jealousy and hatred. The Holy Qur'an has praised restrainers of anger and forgivers of others. The Almighty Allah says:

"Those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men. And Allah loves the doers of good (to others)." Holy Qur'an ((3: 134)

Exchanging presents and gifts among the members of a family increases love and relations. Because presenting gifts shows your feelings toward others, as it portrays concern and respect. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) says: "Exchanging gifts increases love".

Thus, the book, album or watch, etc which you present to your sister or brother, stimulates his feelings towards you.

Man was created and endowed with the faculty of speaking, and through utterance he -expresses his feelings. Family discussions have their great psychological effect. There fore, when members of a family sit down to discuss a matter related to them, or something to -do with culture and knowledge, or political analysis, or news on a discovery of scientifica lly related matter, or something to do with their relatives and neighbours, all these increase their culture and understanding and may help them in dealing with other social matters, as well as, taking them away from tension and anxiety. This kind of discussion also helps in uniting their culture, opinions and understanding.

Try to introduce a topic of discussion while sitting with the members of your family, or try to ask questions concerning a particular matter of those you are sitting with; your father or mother, so as to pave the way for family discussions.

Indeed, discussion has its own morals and laws; you should not cut into someone's conversation until he finishes. Do not hoard news between yourself, and be sure of the

authenticity of the news before you relate it to others. This shows your respect to your self, your words and your personality.

Organization in the Family

-The family is among the important social institutions, and life in it requires an organization and a system so as to organize its work and the relations among its members. It is an institution with different activities, education-al, economical, cultural, social, administrative and etc…

Organization in a given family has its own great effects in systematizing the life of the members of a family. It represents the will of life in it and it has its own effect in the behaviours of its members, both positively and negatively, supervision and guidance, and this is the mission of the parents.

Whenever there is good administration and sound supervision in the family, for instance, good spending, education and guidance of the children, good use of time, solving the problems and others, it is easy to form a nice organization for the family. And the effect of these can be reflected on the life and behaviours of each and every member of the family.

Organizing a good budgetary system for the family will surely organize the spendings of the family in accordance with their incomes, without extravagancy or constriction. The budgetary system is a major factor in a family, which requires the cooperation of all members of the family. The budget should be arranged in accordance with the family's needs, for food, cloths, studies, precautionary items and etc.

But it should be noted that, constraining the members of the family and preventing them from using the necessary items, in the presence of enough money, is a great mistake. It is an infringement of their rights. As extra-vagancy and an unnecessary spending harms the family, it may reach a state of prohibition (haram).

Indeed, we will regret and know the value of our money when we lack it and at the same time we are in need of it. This may force us to look for credit or going for begging, which may force us into shame and putting others above us. Many a time we may be unable to gain the money we need. This will put us into the state of regret and tension.

The Holy Qur'an has arranged economic principles for us which may guarantee our safety. It says:

"And make not your hand to be shackled to your neck, nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth, lest you sit down blamed, stripped off." Holy Qur'an (17: 29)

It is possible that one of us may not know the value and importance of money at this stage, but no doubt we will understand our mistakes after we have lost it. Some parents tie their hands from giving their families the essential money for their general needs, indeed this is

a bad conduct toward their children, as well as, infringing on their rights. In this case, it is the duty of the children to explain the matter to their parents in good manners. Whenever it becomes difficult for the children to get money from their parent in order to solve their problems, it makes it incumbent upon them to look for a job to do so as to cover the gap.

Looking for a job is a sound stand which shows the self confidence of the person concerned, as well as, his power of directing his own affairs. Whatever the case may be, it is not right to make poverty a cause of conflict between parents and their children.

One of the basic issues in family system is the issue of time control, because most families don't give much importance to the use of time.

Thus, we see laziness and dullness in some of its members. For example they will continue to sleep till midday, or wasting their time in unnecessary discussions or watching television. These will affect children's studies, or their spirit of hard working, and is not a good manner, which must be wiped out.

A successful system in a family mainly depends on time organization. Like sleeping early and waking up early, utilizing the time in studies, handwork and other useful work, such as: Drawing, knitting, embroidery, or training how to use certain scientific equipments, and others.

Habituating oneself to working hard and seriousness, will no doubt teach the children to such good habits and they will be able to access that good feature.

Family's Relationship with Others

Family in its social form is part of a society, and a society in its nature consists of families and individuals. Thus, social relations represent a main issue in family's life. Therefore, a family should have relations with the rest of the family, especially between relatives and neighbours.

A successful and sound family in its social habits, is a family, which has a sound relation with other families. Paternal uncle and maternal uncle, paternal aunt and maternal aunt, a married sister and brother etc…are families. Therefore, it is incumbent on our families to have nice relations and sincere ties with such families.

Mutual visit and participating in ceremonies, like, Eid festival, Ramadhan nights, marriage or at the time of sorrow, like taking place of problems, calamities and sickness, is a moral obligation. This stand shows the sound nature of the family and Allah the Most High loves such an act and He rewards its doers.

Bonds of relationships i.e. visiting relatives is an important act encouraged by the Holy Qur'an, and therefore, Islamic Shari'a considers the act of abandoning it as a great sin.

Visiting relations prevents man from falling into calamity, and increases one's wealth and sustenance, too. It, also, causes love and cooperation. And it will make the other side to reply in a positive manner, as well as, being with the family at the time of problems and adversity.

This is a social life, which is based on love and assistance, sympathy, true participation at the time of sorrow and happiness.

A family which isolates itself from others is an unsuccessful family socially, whether this isolation is due to financial and social arrogance or feeling superior to others or because of introverted and unsocial nature and isolationism.

All these bad features harm the reputation of the family, as well as, and brings up unsuccessful and unfruitful individuals to a society. Such kind of people even lose others' respect and assistance. There is no human being that is free from others…

Therefore, when a certain problem occurs between families, like the family of a brother or sister or uncles or aunts, it is not right to face the matter hatred and bad words. Rather, it must be treated with good understanding, reconciliation, or through some friends and relatives accepted by both parties.

And indeed, among other solutions to this kind of problem is paying visit, forgiveness, forgetting the causes of the problem, calling for a dinner, or family's journey, or exchanging greetings and greeting cards or telephone calls in case of being far away from others. We should know that social life is love, acquaintance, and cooperation. The Holy Qur'an portraying that, says:

"O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware."

Holy Qur'an (49:13)

"And help one another in righteousness and piety, and help not one another in sin and aggression." Holy Qur'an (5:2)

"And the relatives are nearer one to another in the ordinance of Allah." Holy Qur'an (8:75)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) also explains that the message of religion (Islam) is a sound, true and pure love. He said: "There is nothing in religion (Islam) except love.." "and the best among people is the one who is kind to his own family", and it is also reported from him (s.a.w.) saying: "The best of you is he who is kind to his family, and I am the best of you in kindness to my family".

Thus, we understand that it is the family, which creates the personality of its members, and that its members represent its personality. There is no harmony for a person who lives in a bad family, and that a nice family creates a nice personality.

Compilation Committee

Al-Balagh Foundation

[1]- Kulaini, Usol-Kafi, p. 50