The Importance of Family Formation from the Perspective of Quran and Hadith

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ABSTRACT: A family consists of a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. Family in most human societies is the principal institution for the socialization of children. Family is the main building block of human communities and therefore plays a major role in preventing major corruptions and deviancies in the society. Family is an ideal place for providing physical and spiritual members and ensures the tranquility of parents as well as the children. During the present study, the researcher shows the importance and the role that family plays in the continuation of human communities from the view points of Quran and Hadith.

Keywords: Family, society, Islam, marriage, Quran, Hadith

INTRODUCTION

What is a Family?
Webster Dictionary of English Language defines “Family” as follows:
A group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head or household.
The basic unit of society traditionally consisting of two parents raising their children.

Functions of Family
One of the primary functions of the family is providing the reproduction and care of persons, biologically and/or socially through sharing of material substances (such as food); the giving and receiving of care and nurture (nurture kinship); jural rights and obligations; and moral and sentimental ties. Therefore, people have various ideas as the nature of families differ. For children, family is a "family of orientation": the family serves to locate children socially and plays a major role in their enculturation and socialization. From the point of view of the parent(s), family is defined as "family of procreation," the goal of which is the reproduction, socialization and enculturation of children. However, reproduction is not the main function of the family; in societies with a sexual division of labor, marriage, and the resulting relationship between two people, it is necessary for the formation of an economically productive household.

Types Of Families
The obtained data show that the human family is an institution and not a biological fact found on the natural relationship of consanguinity. The different types of families occur in a wide variety of settings, and their specific functions and meanings depend largely on their relationship to other social institutions. Although the concept of consanguinity originally referred to relations by "blood," cultural anthropologists have argued that one must understand the idea of "blood" metaphorically and that many societies understand family through other concepts rather than through genetic distance. Sociologists have a special interest in the function and status of these forms in stratified (especially capitalist) societies. According to the work of scholars Max Weber, Alan Macfarlane, Steven Ozment, Jack Goody and Peter Laslett, the huge transformation that led to modern marriage in Western democracies was “fueled by the religio-cultural value system provided by elements of Judaism, early Christianity, Roman Catholic canon law and the Protestant Reformation”.

Much sociological, historical and anthropological research dedicates itself to the understanding of this variation, and of changes in the family that form over time. “Times have changed; it is more acceptable and
encouraged for mothers to work and fathers to spend more time at home with the children. The way roles are balanced between the parents will help children grow and learn valuable life lessons. There is great importance of communication and equality in families, in order to avoid role strain."

**The structure of a Muslim Family**

A Muslim family consists of a legally married couple (husband and wife) and their children. It also includes their parents, siblings and other relatives. A Muslim family comes into existence through two means: blood relationship and marriage.

Allah (SWT) says, "And it is He Who has made man from water: Then He has set up relationships of family and marriage: And your Lord is ever All Powerful (over all things)." [Surah Al Furqaan: 54]

**The First Family**

The first family came into existence with the creation of first man and woman, Adam and Hawa (Eve). Allah (SWT) says, "And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels; "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: “Will You place in there, one who will make mischief and shed blood in there? While we (indeed) celebrate Your Praises and glorify Your Holy (Name)? He said: “I do know what you do not know." [Surah Al Baqarah: 30]

Then Allah (SWT) created for the first man his pair (zawj) in the form of the first woman. That's how the first family of husband and wife came into being. The Qur'an says, "O Humankind! Fear (and respect) your (Guardian) Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam) and from him, He (Allah) created his mate of similar nature, and from both (the two of them) spread (like seeds) countless men and women -And fear Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and revere (and respect) the wombs (that bore you): For Allah always watches over you." [Surah An-Nisa: 1]

Allah (SWT) emphatically mentions that He created the first human for His vicegerency of the earth, but initially He placed the first human couple in paradise under one condition.

" And We said: “O Adam! You and your wife live in the Garden; and eat of the plentiful things in there (wherever and whenever) you want; But do not approach this tree, or you will run into harm and transgression.” [Surah Al Baqarah: 35]

When that condition was broken, the first couple was sent to the earth. Again, with another condition: “We said: “Get you all down from here; And if, surely, there comes Guidance to you from Me; Those who follow My guidance, for them there shall be no fear, and they shall not suffer.” [Surah Al Baqarah: 38]

Imma Sadegh (S) maintains that everyone who marries preserves half of the his/her religion and should strive to obtain the other half .

**Family values in the west**

Muslims living in the west are faced with a tough challenge of preserving Islamic family values in a society that is not conducive towards preserving them. In spite of all the materialistic advancements, the widespread decadence of family values is open for all to see in the west. Divorce is widely prevalent and increasing day by day. Couples end up in divorce over trivial matters and simple disagreements. Lack of trust among family members is high due to prevalence of abuse, extra-marital affairs and incest. Another point to note is, the same couples that can stay together as boy-friend/girl-friend for a long time—cannot stay together as husband and wife and ends up in divorce after a while. It proves that the general western mentality is hesitant to accept the responsibilities of married life and subsequently Allah (SWT) is lifting the blessings of marriage and family up from their lives. Promiscuity and shamelessness are widespread in the form of dresses of both the genders—especially women, free mixing between the two sexes and engaging in behaviors of sexual nature in public. There are established institutions in this society that work under legal protection to promote and provide opportunities for such promiscuity. The whole entertainment industry and popular culture are making billions by selling cheap sex to the public. Just to give an example, Internet porn is a billion dollar industry and so is alcohol. Thus, the very foundations of family are being terribly shaken and shattered in the society where we are living. On the one hand, it is a humongous challenge and on the other hand, it is a great opportunity. The challenge is to preserve our Islamic values and identity and the opportunity is to set role models of successful families before the western world.

**The elements of a Successful Family in Islam**

Allah warns the believers regarding the possibility of disaster in family and then prescribes methods to prevent such disaster. The Qur'an says: “O you who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: So be
aware of them! But if you forgive them and overlook, and cover up (their faults), Surely Allah is Often Forgiving, Most Merciful." [Surah Taghabun: 14]

Allah is warning the believers not to let their own family members be their enemies. In order to prevent that- forgiveness, overlooking each other’s minor faults and asking Allah’s forgiveness for each other have to be made a regular practice within the family. The same surah continues to warn us that our wealth and our children are a trial/test/fitnah for us. Along with warning-comes the Qur’anic prescription of how to succeed in this test. The Qur’an calls upon us to give Allah (SWT) a beautiful loan, that is to use our wealth and prepare our children in a way-that they may become Sadaqa Jariyah (continuous charity) for us so that we continue to receive benefit from them after we leave this world and others continue to benefit from them as well. That is indeed, the true success. But how do we do that? If we’re determined to build our families on Islamic values and can instill the right tarbiyah (education, training, upbringing, role modeling etc) in our children, we can achieve that success Insha-Allah.

**Islamic Family Values**

**Aim of Life:** First of all, a Muslim family must determine its aim and objective. What is the ultimate goal of this family? Our religion teaches us that the ultimate goal of a believer’s life is pleasure and forgiveness of our Lord and salvation in our real life in the hereafter. A Muslim family should consciously accept that, as it’s ultimate goal.

“Say: “Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Lord (and Cherisher) of the Worlds: He has no partners: This am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His will.” [Surah Al-An’am: 162-163]

**Strong Base of Knowledge:** In order to determine our aim in life, we need authentic knowledge. We need knowledge not just for the sake of knowing, but also in order to implement in our lives and enhance our qualifications. Seeking knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunnah has to be a continuous, regular program in the schedule of a Muslim family. By seeking knowledge, we come to know that Allah (SWT) has made His messenger (SAW) as our true role model and that The Messenger (SAW) has encouraged, rather ordered us to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

**Righteous Actions:** A Muslim family obeys the commandments of its Lord. Salat, fasting, zakat, haji, hibaab and other divine injunctions have to be followed with complete sincerity and devotion. A Muslim family makes sure that its earnings and expenditure are all through Halal means. Family members, especially parents keep themselves away from any discrepancy between their speech and their actions because they are the ones who become examples for their children.

**Family Education:** A saying goes in English, “Charity begins at home”. In Arabic it says, “Al Ummu Madrasa” (Mother is the school). If you want to teach truthfulness to your children, but you make them sleep every night by scaring them of policemen, whereas there is no real policemen around-what kind of message are they receiving? If you want to teach respect to your children, but you and your spouse curse at each other in their presence, how will they learn respect?

Learn your role and responsibility in the family: Whether you’re a husband, wife, parent, child, sibling or relative-learn your position, role and responsibility in the family from The Qur’an and Sunnah. Fulfill your responsibilities to the best of your ability. If all family members strive to fulfill their obligations, they all automatically get their rights and the family runs smoothly. Compare this with an automobile, when all different parts of an automobile do what they’re supposed to do and help each other being connected-the automobile runs smoothly and reaches its destination.

**Bec Satisfied with Little:** The Prophet (SAW) who is our true role model, taught us to look towards those who are less advantageous than us in this world and to look up to them who are more advanced than us in Deen. A Muslim family needs to develop the culture of sacrifice and contentment with little (Islamic terminology-Qana’ah). This Qana’ah or contentment with little has been described as one of the characteristics of Taqwa (consciousness of Allah). This will manifest through the attitudes of family members that they will less demand their own rights and strive more to give others their rights. They will sacrifice their own comforts, demands, money, will, opinions and luxuries for each other. The foundation of a happy family is mutual love and sacrifice.

Allah (SWT) says, “And among His Signs (Ayat), is this, that He created (your) mates for you from yourselves, that you may live in joy (and peace) with them, and He has placed love and mercy between your (hearts): Surely, there are signs in this for those who think.” [Surah Ar Rum: 21]

Allah (SWT) also says, “And do not forge to be generous between yourselves because Allah is All Seeing of all that you do.” [Surah Al Baqarah: part of 237]

And “They are your garments and you are their garments.” [Surah Al Baqarah: part of 187]

Our Prophet (SAW) said, “The best among you are those who are best to their families and I am the best of you to my family.”

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He (SAW) said, “it is only the evil one who abuses them (women) and the honored one is he who honors them”.

Once a man came to the Prophet p.b.u.h. and asked: who is the person who is most worthy of my good companionship? The Prophet answered your mother, your mother, your mother then your father. That is why Islam made Paradise under the feet of mothers according to one hadith of the Prophet p.b.u.h.

Mutual Consultation (Shura): Family matters should be decided based on consultation. The Prophet (SAW) himself was asked to consult. If the person who was directly guided by revelation was commanded to consult, what about us? Shura (consultation) is a basic feature of Islamic way of life.

Help Each other: From the spirit of love and sacrifice, members of a Muslim family help each other. Our Beloved Prophet (SAW) used to help His noble wives in household works besides doing his own chores by his own hand.

CONCLUSION

Family plays a major role in human life with its value as the interrelationship between the individual and the government. Family provides certain psychological, social, political, moral and economic functions for a dynamic society. Family is the only social system which is accepted all over the world both in religious and none-religious communities. In Islam, family formation is a great service to the men and women for the reproduction and continuation of human life.

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