

The Cohesive Nature of the Family (part 4 of 4): Children and Relatives

Description: The rights of children upon their parents, and the emphasis Islam gives in maintaining good relations with other relatives.

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Published on 12 Feb 2007 - Last modified on 01 Apr 2008

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The Children

It is clear from many verses in the Quran that having children is considered a blessing from God. Hence, God says while recounting some of his blessings upon humankind:

"God has made for you wives of your own kind, and has made for you, from your wives, sons and grandsons, and has bestowed on you good provision. Do they then believe in false deities and deny the Favor of God (by not worshipping God Alone)." (Quran 16:72)

Thus, one finds the prophet Zachariah praying to God that He bestow upon him children (Quran 3:38). In addition, having children is something known to be beloved to parents. Thus, God says:

"Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world..." (Quran 18:46)

At the same time, though, every parent must realize that having children is a great responsibility and trial from God. God has said:

"Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas God with Him is a great reward (Paradise)." (Quran 64:15)

God also says,

"O you who believe, guard yourselves and your families from the Hell-fire whose fuel is men and stones..." (Quran 66:6)

The meaning of this verse was reiterated by the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, when he said:

"All of you are shepherds and all of you will be asked about your wards... The man is responsible for his household and will be asked about his responsibilities. The wife will be asked about the house of her husband and her responsibilities." [\[1\]](#)

Islam, therefore, fills the human with appreciation for being blessed with a child while at the same time realizing that this child is a heavy responsibility. The parents must care for the child and bring the child up in the best possible manner, trying to protect the child

from the Hellfire.

Muslim scholars consider that the rights of children appear long before they are even conceived, via the selection of a pious and righteous spouse. This is the first step in providing a good household and environment for the child. Around the time of the child's birth, there are other important obligations, such as giving the child a good name and offering an animal sacrifice on the child's behalf.^[2] Beyond that, the most important rights of the child include:

- (1) being maintained and provided for in a healthy manner;
- (2) being taught the tenets of the religion;
- (3) being treated with compassion and mercy;
- (4) being just among multiple siblings; and
- (5) having a good example set for them by their parents.

Other Relatives

A family also includes siblings and other kinfolk. Islam has certainly not ignored any of the relatives of an individual. In numerous places in the Quran, God emphasizes the importance of treating one's relatives in a good and kindly fashion. God says, for example:

"Worship God and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk..." (Quran 4:36)

God also speaks about spending on one's relatives:

"They ask you (O Muhammad) what they should spend. Say: Whatever you spend of good must be for parents and kindred..." (Quran 2:215)

God also says:

"It is not piety that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-piety is (the quality of) the one who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk..." (Quran 2:177)

The Prophet Muhammad was requested:

"Inform me of a deed that will take me closer to Paradise and distance me from the Hell-fire." He replied, "Worship God and do not ascribe any partner to Him, establish the prayer, give the zakat and keep the ties of kinship."^[3]

Keeping the ties of kinship refers to doing good towards them with one's speech, actions and wealth. It includes kind words, visits, charity and generosity. It also includes keeping any harm from coming to them and doing one's best to bring happiness to them.

The Muslim must understand that keeping the ties of kinship is an obligation and not simply a meritorious act. In the Quran, God praises those...

"...who join that which God has commanded to be joined (i.e. they are good to their relatives and do not sever the bond of kinship), fear their Lord, and dread the terrible reckoning" (Quran 13:21)

The Prophet said:

"The one who cuts off the ties of kinship will not enter Paradise." [\[4\]](#)

Islam has emphasized every type of familial tie possible. It has provided guidance showing the importance of the ties with parents, children, spouses and other relatives. It exhorts every Muslim to fulfill these ties to receive God's pleasure in return. In addition (although not completely stressed in this short paper), it has provided laws and strict regulations that allow the individual to realize how best to keep the proper ties with all of his or her kith and kin.

Endnotes:

[\[1\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim.*

[\[2\]](#) In this sacrifice, called the *aqeeqah*, meat is distributed to the poor, one's family, and friends and neighbors (IslamReligion).

[\[3\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim.*

[\[4\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim.*

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