

FAMILY LIFE AS THE FOUNDATION OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

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Abstract

The main aim of this research manuscript is to explore the importance of family life in Islam in general and in Pakistan in particular and how significant the legitimate relationship between man and woman is. One of the basic advantages of family life is that it makes every individual aware of his/her responsibilities in this life. The responsibility of every individual, whether Muslim or Non-Muslim, is to take necessary steps for the betterment of society. He/she is supposed to ensure peace, security, goodness, human dignity, equality and tolerance. Another responsibility is to contribute to society positively, by implementing good human values which are common to all religions of the present world. Today's world needs these good moral values more than ever to make it a place suitable for living of all humans and that is why this article focuses on these values in an explorative way. The family life in Islam is a beauty and purity at the same time, emphasizing upon the believers and others to adopt it for the success of here and hereafter.

Keywords: *Family Life, Foundation, Islamic Civilization, Moral Impact, Human History, Conjugal Life.*

Introduction

Family life holds importance in Islam due to its social and moral impact in elevating human beings to the highest status as a masterpiece of Allah Almighty. It plays a fundamental role in achieving a prosperous and balanced society. Allah Almighty has created man and woman in such a way that both fascinate each other. Through this fascination, they form a unit called family which fulfills the purpose of carrying forward the streak of human generation. They both are integral parts of this unit while they complement each other as a source of serene life.

Islam as a religion tends to strengthen the institution of family leading to formation of a healthy and prosperous society. Thus, it gives birth to a great civilization in human history.

This objective can be achieved by defining basic principles for conjugal life and ensuring growth through a legitimate relationship between man and woman. This would also provide social protection and cohesion and also set rules for relationship through this life.

Islamic civilization is one of the premier civilizations in human history. It has its own salient features such as it promotes unity and purity.

It is also divine, based on high moral values, focusing on genuine knowledge and very open with an inclusive approach. These salient features are achieved with a strong conjugal life and take Islamic civilization to its zenith.

Islam gives a central position to women in a family life declaring her as an equally important part of the unit with full rights which were denied to her before. She enjoys full rights provided to her as well as protection through family life. It enables her to lay the foundation of a civilization. In this way, she is actually given the freedom of being the architect of Islamic civilization and the greatness of this civilization is indebted to her focus on the moral upbringing of the next generations.

All religions emphasize on the significance of family life because human society cannot be constructed on a solid footing unless the relationship between man and woman is established strongly.

According to a Hanley foundation report three years ago, family life is significant because it helps people to get through the

most disastrous times and the best times. It offers support and security coupled with unconditional love. It brings out the best in people even if they cannot see it. It brings people back to peace because they are best understood while life is crucial. It also guides them down the path of morality when the external influences have a dangerous impact on them like drugs, peer pressure and bullying etc. It helps them to diffuse or avoid tension in life. It directs people to achieve their goals in life. In the last six years, single parent families have held a steady rate of 35 % of the total households in the United States. In 2016, that percentage totaled to approximately 24 million kids living with single parents in the United States and it is more than the population of Florida. According to the Kids Data Center, in 2016, 32% of single parents were living in poverty compared to 7% of two parent family homes.

In 2022, there were about 15.78 million children living with a single mother in the United States, and about 3.44 million children living with a single father.¹

So, it is a clear understanding that growing up in a separate or broken family setups can lead to poverty and frustration, creating academic obstacles, reduced access to safe communities and quality enrichment activities. In the end, it can cause a heightened risk of physical, behavioural and emotional issues. That is why, family life is the foundation of happy and successful life in Islam.

Literature Review

Various attempts have been made in this direction and scholars have written many books and articles. However, there is still the need to focus on it because of the tendency of the modern generation to avoid being entangled into the bond of matrimony and it needs to be explained in this article. A few works in this regard are mentioned below:

1. *Islam ka Ā'ili Nizām* (Family system of Islam) written by Syed Jalaluddin Umri: This book was published in 2006 by Markazi-Maktab-e-Islami Publishers, New Delhi. It discusses the Muslim family but not in modern perspective while this article will focus on relating family life to the modern world.
2. *Islam ka-Ā'ili Qanūn* (Islamic Family Law) written by Salahuddin Haider. This book was published by Haris Publications, Darul-Ablagh, Lahore. It discusses the laws of Muslim family only and is, therefore, while this article will discuss the significance of Islamic family life in the modern world.
3. *Muslim Personal Law Aur Islam ka Ā'ili Nizam* written by Shams Tabraiz Khan. It was published by Majlis-e-Tahqeeqat Wa-

- Nashriat-e- Islam, Laknau, in 2011. This book discusses the personal laws and family system in Islam but does not take into account the modern considerations and this article will also stress on the Islamic family life.
4. *Ā'ili- Zindagi ke Bunyadi Usūl* written by Dr Israr Ahmad. This book was published by Markaz-e- Anjuman Khuddam-Ul-Quran, Lahore. This book beautifully discusses the fundamentals of family life in Islam and this article will further elaborate these fundamentals of family life.
 5. *Ā'ili Zindagi ke Bunyadi Qawānīn* written by Syed Ahmad Urooj, This book was published by Markaz-i- Maktab-e- Islami Publishers, New Delhi, in 2017. This book discusses the basic rules for a Muslim family in a good way while this article will explain them more.

Research Methodology

Qualitative and exploratory methods will prevail throughout this research article to assess how family life is significant in Islam and Pakistan and how it plays its role in the establishment of a great Islamic society in Pakistan. Focus will be kept on how the bond of marriage is important for the success of a family life contributing to Islamic civilization. The Holy Qur'ān, various hadiths books and different books of the scholars of Islam will be referred to in this article primarily.

Family Life as the Foundation of Islamic Civilization

In Arabic language, the word, *Ā'lā*, is used for wife and family members. So, family life refers to the life of all those comprising parents and children as well. The word *Ayāl* means those whose expenses a person is responsible to bear with.

Ibn Manzoor al-Afrika explains it literally,

"عول العول : الميل في الحكمة الى الجور ، عال: يعول ، عولا: جار و مال عن الحق وفي التنزيل العزيز الحكيم ذلك ادنى الاتعولوا، وقول الرسول وعالوا في الموازين²

In al-Manjad, the meaning of family life is described as *Āl*, *ya'ūl 'awla 'ayāla 'awla al-Rijāl 'ayāla*" to provide for the livelihood of children. *Ayāla* means "sufficient for the sustenance of family members." *'Ayāla al-Rijāl'* means those male and female of the house whose living is obligatory.

Allama Raghīb Isfahani writes that *Alaa* and *Ghaala* have almost the same meaning, while the word *al-Ghul* is used for something that kills a person and the word *al-'Awl* is used for everything burdening a person crushingly.³

Al-'Ayāl means those people whose expenses a person is responsible for and its singular form is *'Aila* which means to bear the burden of his family expenses.⁴

'Al-'Ayāl means those people whose expenses a person is responsible for, whose burden is pressed down, and its singular form being *'Ala* which means to shoulder the expenses of someone.

The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said:

”ابد بنفسك ثم بمن تعول“⁵

“Spend on yourself firstly and then on those who depend on you.”

At another place in the Holy Qur'ān, the word *'A'ilā* is used in the meaning of “bankrupt or poor”.

﴿وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى﴾

"And He found you in need, then made you need-free."⁶

For family life, the word “Family” is used in English, *Khāndān* in Urdu, and *Khānwāda* in Persian. In the Holy Qur'ān and hadīths of the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*), the words *Al-'Usra*, *Al-'Ashīrah* and *Al-'Ashīr* are used as synonyms for the family. In the Holy Qur'ān: it is said,

﴿وَأَزْوَاجَكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتَكُمْ﴾

“And your spouses and your clan”⁷

For the survival of the human race, Allah Almighty has made the cycle of birth and reproduction male and female. In each gender, the feeling of attraction for the other gender is natural, enabling man and woman to become life partners and to support each other at every step of life. The fact is that each person's life is incomplete without the other. This is the reason why a man, even if he is perfect, cannot be complete without his partner. Similarly, a woman cannot live a satisfactory life without her partner. Therefore, the existence of both men and women is essential for the continuation of life and the survival of human civilization.

Muhammad Qutb writes that emotional stability is a psychological need of human beings and this need cannot be compensated by physical comforts and economic freedom. Of course, home and family are needed for this stability. In response to this

natural desire of the human soul, the desire to build a family arises within a human being, and this is the spirit under which men and women live together with love, affection, peace and contentment. There is a natural happiness and contentment for each of them which can't be found anywhere other than family life. In fact, the family relationship between man and woman is the cornerstone of human society.⁸

Maulana Maududi is of the opinion that the family system is formed by a permanent relationship between woman and man via *Nikāh* (marriage contract). Due to this relationship, peace and stability are brought about in the life of individuals. Then this individuality is transformed to collectivity based on a pure atmosphere of love, peace and sacrifice. And the new generations grow up in congenial atmosphere, consequently passing on the appropriate upbringing and morals.⁹

Maulana Sadruddin Islahi writes: "The foundation of human civilization comes from the mutual association of man and woman. A small family is formed by these two people and is the first step to a civilized human life." The rules for this family life are called the family system.

According to the New Encyclopaedia of Britannica,

"A group of persons formed by marriage and blood relations, each of whom is related to another by social rank. And this social rank, husband, wife, mother and father, son, daughter and brother and sister, goes on."

According to the World Book Encyclopedia,

"Family is the oldest human institution. It is very important for many reasons. Many people think that family consists of parents and children, but in reality, family, not only in ancient times but even today in many countries, also includes relatives besides parents and children."

Richard Dyer also writes in this way:

"Woman and man, wife and husband, then mother and father, and then birth, development and upbringing of children are all complementary stages of a family. These stages of life are very important if children have the courage to move forward. And if children don't live a life of good traditions, they may lose pleasant and good habits in their adulthood, although all

these traditions are necessary for human survival and progress in a society.”

Confucius, the famous Chinese philosopher, said. “Let families protect families and let society protect itself.”¹⁰

Importance of family life in the light of Islamic Teachings

In the light of Islam, the purpose of creating man and woman is to enhance the splendour of social life. It aims at making the family life of man strong and stable because the stability of life depends on the stability of the family system. A family includes men, women, spouses and children. The deep and strong relationship between all these people leads to satisfaction and peace in the entire Muslim society. Conjugal life is emphasized in Islam to the extent that even two surahs in the Holy Qur’ān are named after women and divorce.

Allah Almighty created His most beautiful creatures and provided them with means for satisfaction and comfort. The greatest reward from Allah Almighty was to create an opposite sex for the satisfaction of man and woman. As Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur’ān:

﴿وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ﴾

"And we said! O Adam! dwell ,You and your wife , in paradise."¹¹

For man, the creation of women is a source of satisfaction and a cause of peace. Islam is the religion of nature, so it fulfills human being’s natural needs on this earth and gives them a beautiful companionship so that they can enjoy the moments of life and share their sorrows.

This is an acknowledged fact that when there is no pleasure in human life on earth, then life becomes miserable, that is why, Allah Almighty has placed pleasure in everything of this life.

A woman (wife) is the sign of the power of Allah Almighty, as He created her from the souls of men and not from anything else, and Allah Almighty created woman not as a slave, but as a companion and wife in a man’s life. So he gets peace being the natural need and hidden secret for a successful life. Man gets the happiness of joining society and that is why, man needs to be in the company of women and vice versa.

Mu’addat means that man loves his wife and wife loves her husband. It is commonly observed that such love exists between

husband and wife. And this is the sign of Allah Almighty's mercy that man loves his wife. He provides every kind of comfort and Allah Almighty has made him responsible for it too, and same is the case with woman within her power. Humanity and mutual love spring from family life established through *Nikāh* according to Islamic *Shari'ah*. And Islam calls it a couple. Illegitimate couples are not recognized by the couples themselves, but they are intelligent and evil doers and Islam has prescribed severe punishments for them.

The relation between husband and wife provides natural comfort, so Islam has described this relationship through a beautiful analogy,

﴿ هُنَّ لِبَاسٍ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ﴾

"They are apparel for you and you are apparel for them."¹²

Husbands and wives are called a garment. The garment is something which is primarily attached to the human body because it covers and protects it from the harmful effects of the external environment. It means that the relationship between them should be like the relationship between body and clothes. Spouses should be connected to each other in such a way that they may cover and protect each other from the attacks of evil forces.

That is why, the Holy Qur'an says that women and men are clothing for each other. It is not said that only women are the clothing for men, nor it is said that only men are clothing for women, but both are described as clothing for one another. Therefore, family life in Islam is a natural arrangement for the fulfillment of sexual, emotional and physical urges.

Islam acknowledges this need and its importance in life and emphasizes upon the fact that man/women cannot be left free to fulfill their needs in an unnatural and illegal way. Rather, Islam draws a tight fence of marriage around people. Men and women can fulfill this need only through the wife and husband who have entered into the sacred bond of marriage in a legitimate manner. Adopting any other means will be considered as the most serious crime according to Islam for which it has prescribed severe chastisement.¹³

Family life is the reason for the survival and growth of the human race: "Instead, it was Allah Almighty Who created from a drop of water, a wonderful creature like a human being, but the best of creatures."

But it is interesting to note that Allah Almighty created women and men, different from each other but similar as well. They are not contradictory, but an excellent combination of each other.

Then, by combining these couples, He created men and women in the world with an amazing balance, with whom a chain of relations follows in the form of sons and grandsons bringing wives from other houses and another chain of relations with daughters and grandchildren. In this way, the whole community is connected with one race and one culture.

Forming a family is the natural and basic need of a human being in this vast universe. A human being considers him /herself the most secure and peaceful in their homes, i.e. where the family stays. Due to the peace and comfort in family, Allah Almighty has declared it as a special blessing for man,

For the development of a balanced personality in a person, a calm atmosphere is required. Without which, even with physical comforts, they would be a victim of permanent psychological instability.

Family life not only provides livelihood but also social security. Mutual cooperation and empathy are promoted. A mother's bosom becomes a shelter for young children and family plays the role of shelter for the aged, weak and needy.

Ms. Ayesha Lemo, a new-Muslim, writes that women in the world have always wanted to live with their husbands and children in peace and security.

Family life guarantees social and economic security
"Whatever you spend with the intention of attaining the consent of Allah Almighty, you will be rewarded for it, even the morsel etc. that you put into the mouth of your wife will also be rewarded."¹⁴

The goal of family life is to bring about peace, unity and brotherhood in a society, therefore, Islam sets a criteria even for a small family. It is love that unifies the servants to God into a bond of love.

In short, the institution of conjugal life based on *Nikāh* in Islam provides an answer to the question of how to provide a solution to the spiritual, sexual and physical needs of man so that one would follow the path of chastity.

Islamic Civilization and its Characteristics

Islamic civilization is a link in the long chain of human civilizations. Our aim is only to mention the role of Islamic civilization in the history of human evolution and its unforgettable

impact on various nations of the world in terms of sciences, arts, beliefs, ethics, philosophy, wisdom and literature.

Characteristics of Islamic Civilization

This article highlights the key features of Islamic civilization demonstrating its upper hand over other civilizations.

The first characteristic of Islamic civilization is that its goals have the quality of universality. The Holy *Qur'ān* declares the whole of mankind as a family based on truth, goodness and human dignity. Islam envisions a civilization in which all tribes and nations are deemed as precious jewels. Those who accepted Islam and worked hard for it, consequently, became an integral component of this civilization. Thus, though Imam Abu Hanifah, Shafi'ī, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Khalil, Wasibay, Kundi, Ghazali, Farabi and Ibn Rushd belonged to different places and times, yet they belonged to one civilization.

The second feature of Islamic civilization is that it gives priority to high moral values as a code of conduct. It has always stressed upon these values like knowledge, wisdom, laws of *Shari'ah*, war, reconciliation, economics, family system and politics etc. Islamic civilization seems to have an impact over other civilizations whether modern or ancient because Islam has left behind an unparalleled mark on individual and communal life of man.

The third characteristic is that Islam has always welcomed knowledge based on principles and rectified dogmas according to its basic principles. Therefore, both the intellect and heart are addressed. Through this feature, the Islamic civilization has established a system of government based on justice as Islam does not bifurcate religion from government and politics. Rather, religion is an important source for all kinds of development. Therefore, the rays of knowledge spread from the minarets and mosques of Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Cordoba and Granada and thus enlightened the corners of the world consequently. No distinction was made between the commander of the Faithful and masses. Rather, decisions were always taken in accordance with the *Shari'ah* and consensus of the people who were equipped with the knowledge of jurisprudence and fatwas. Everyone was equal in the eyes of law. There was no discrimination against anyone except on the basis of piety and common benefit of the people.

The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥadhrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said:

”وَاللَّهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا“¹⁵

“If Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut her hand.”

So, Islamic civilization is based on justice and neither a ruler has any superiority over the common man, nor a man of riches or a man of high lineage over the poor.

Another important feature of this civilization is its magnanimity and extreme tolerance. A believer has the opportunity to become *Shamshir-Ba-Kaf* (Sword in the hand) to conquer nooks and corners of the world, rule over them and decide the destiny of his subjects, yet, he is to be tolerant as well. His religion never provokes him to be unjust in his judgments, actions, or deviate from the ways of mercy or force people to embrace his religion. He is to be tolerant to all religions, their followers and respectful to the places of worship of all world religions.

It is an undeniable truth that Islamic civilization is the torch bearer of tolerance, justice, mercy and humanity. It is a matter of distinction that it has absorbed the civilizations and religions of the world.

The need for marriage and family life in the construction of social life is a matter of great significance. And the role of a woman is outstanding while her social dignity in family life structuring Islamic civilization is very essential.

Islam confers on women an excellent position in a Muslim family and civilization. Though there is a natural feeling of love and compassion for women in a man’s heart, yet Islam instructs its followers not only to give women their legal rights, but also adopts an attitude of compassion and respect towards her.

The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) added it to his favourite likes and gave her a higher status. As he has said:

”حُبِّبَ إِلَيَّ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا النِّسَاءُ وَالطِّيبُ وَجُعِلَ قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ“¹⁶

“In this world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my comfort has been provided in prayer.”

Islam respects women and awards her the status of a mother, sister, wife and daughter. It instructs its followers not to hand over women to a man as an object. It is obligatory to respect her, she must be consulted when she is to get married to a man and to live with him as a spouse and partner for life.

Before the advent of Islam, women were disgraced, their respectability and femininity had been lost. Islam not only restored their status of great respect but also ensured their rights. Hazrat Umar (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) says that in the age of *Jāhiliyyah* (Ignorance), people did not give rights to women till Allah Almighty revealed His word about them and sent down orders to set their share in property and assets.

Once Umar (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*), the caliph of Islam, asked the opinion of his wife on a matter, but was later angry when she opined. At this, his wife said that Hafsa (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhā*), the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) replies to the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*), but the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) never gets displeased with her, so after hearing this, Umar (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) went to her daughter Hafsa (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhā*) and asked her, “Daughter! Do you reply to the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*)?” She said, “Yes, by Allah! I reply to the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*).”¹⁷

It signifies that there were no rights of women during the age of Ignorance but the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) brought a change in the mindset of the people and gave a respectable status to women.

Family Life as Motivation and Islamic Practice

Home is a peaceful and safe place for people. It is where infants grow, childhood is experienced, and civilization takes root. It is like a body without a soul or a tree without roots. It is essential for survival and development. But all this cannot thrive without the legal agreement in a conjugal life. Due to this relationship, peace and prosperity are brought about in the life of individuals and communities.

Family life makes the family system strong and stable and inculcates the feeling of modesty in man. It develops a sense of chastity in society. In the Holy Qur’ān and Sunnah, many incentives have been mentioned regarding marriage.

Family life also establishes a bond between man and woman and brings comfort in human life. In fact, marriage is also a means of satisfying the legitimate sexual urges of man and woman.

That is why Allah Almighty says:

The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) emphasized upon marriage so that strength and stability are brought to the fortress of domestic life.

Abu Huraira (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) reports from the Messenger of Allah Almighty (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*), “There are three types of people whom Allah Almighty would certainly help: Firstly, the slave who struggles to purchase his freedom, (Secondly) the person who marries to lead a life of chastity, thirdly, the one who strives in the way of Allah Almighty.”

The question is why conjugal life is commanded by *Shari‘ah*? It is because it perfects one’s faith and leads to the survival of human civilization. It is definitely the basic building block of civilization and society. Therefore, it is quite natural for Islam to attach great importance to it and make it an integral part of its legal system.

That is why, the Messenger of Allah Almighty (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*) excluded that person avoiding conjugal life from the Muslim Ummah.

Once there was a discussion among the Prophet’s companions (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhum*), And one of them said, "I will not marry women." Another person said, "I will not eat meat." The third one said, "I will not sleep in bed at night." The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) did not like their acts, rather instructed them to live according to his Sunnah as he lives a balanced life. The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said:

”فمن رغب عن سنتي فليس مني“¹⁸

"Whoever deviates from my Sunnah (marriage and family life) is not one from amongst us."

Marriage is the means of survival for the human race, so the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa*

Ṣallam) stressed on it. It is narrated by Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) that the Messenger of Allah Almighty (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa ṣallam*) once said:

“Whenever you see a woman and she fascinates you, then you should resort to your wife as your wife possesses what the other woman possesses.”¹⁹

Through marriage, Islam wants to protect the morals and integrity of its followers, as family relationships, particularly marriage, serve as a spring of love, grace, and mercy. It is within this bond that children find their identity, parents happily shoulder their responsibility to look after their kids and humanity is protected. It is intended to reform the morals of individuals and purify society. It develops in a person the ability to fulfill his /her obligations and removes the fear of being involved in adultery. Family life takes place because of following reasons:

1. If a man cannot pay a woman’s alimony and rights, and is sure that if he does not marry, he will be involved in immorality, then it is obligatory for him to marry in such a situation.
2. If he can pay a woman’s alimony and rights but is not sure about his self-restraint, rather there is a probability of falling into adultery if he does not marry, then *nikāḥ* is obligatory for him as well.
3. *Nikāḥ* is *Sunnah Mu’kkidah* (obligatory sunnah) under normal circumstances.
4. If a person can pay dowry and other conjugal rights or because of his temperament, he believes that his future wife will be a victim due to his brutal temper and abuse, then it is forbidden to marry.
5. If a person does not strongly believe that he will wrong his future wife, but there is a strong possibility, then marrying in such a case is prohibited as well.²⁰

Moral Significance of Family Life

Allah Almighty has placed immense fascination in the opposite sex for humans that both of them always remain connected to each other. The sexual urge in animals is subject to time and season. The first reason is that their mating is temporary, while among humans, this need is constant so that they are permanently connected to their opposite sex. Family life is the best means for this constant relationship. The first purpose of married life is to tie a male and female in such a pure relationship that they will not cast looks at anyone else. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said that the purpose of creating a human couple is not only reproduction, but it is much higher than this; that they may

get peace of mind. The second purpose is the establishment of a relationship full of love and mercy between husband and wife. Consequently, a good and healthy society is established by aiming at moral security. The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said,

” يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَعْيَضَ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَخْصَنَ لِلْفَرْجِ “²¹

"O youth! ,those among you who can support a wife should marry, for it restrains eyes (from casting evil glances) and preserves one from immorality."

It is clear from the word “*Ya Ma’shar al-Shabāb*” that sexual urges surge in youth. The devils use them as a weapon against them in order to weaken their faith, then there are only two ways to deal with, either to satisfy these sexual urges in a natural but legal way, or to fight the devil with the shield of fasting, if these two methods are not applied, then they are to succumb to the temptation of devil in illegal ways.

Family life becomes a legitimate and appropriate means for the fulfillment of sexual urges of a person. Thus, it creates moral purity and the spirit of modesty in a person. Hafiz Ibn-e- Hajar Asqalani, while highlighting the moral importance of married life, states,

مَا أَكْثَرَ مَا يُدْخِلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ : " التَّقْوَى وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ " . وَسُئِلَ : مَا أَكْثَرَ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّارَ قَالَ : " الْأَجْوَفَانِ : الْقَمَمُ وَالْفَرْجُ “²²

“The thing that carries most people to paradise is the fear of Allah Almighty, piety and good conduct, and the thing that carries most people to hell is the mouth and private parts”

and conjugal life helps in the development of moral qualities by protecting the private parts.

Significance of Family Life

Islam stresses on an effective social role for its followers and thus family is deemed the most important institution of Islamic society. Islam actually considers family as a sacred and useful institution. It not only wants to create an atmosphere of understanding, mutual cooperation and peace between husband and wife because these are the clear objectives of conjugal life, it also opens a way for man to satisfy his sexual desires on one side and train the new generation culturally on the other side.

It is the family system within which Muslims receive religious training, develop character and establish close social ties.

Moreover, Muslims maintain their loyalties for both family and society at the same time. The truth is that for the sake of peace of mind and security in life, the establishment of mutual support at economic and emotional level in a family is essential.

Therefore, the goal of conjugal family life is not only to fulfill sexual urges, but also for two souls to be bonded as friends and partners of life. Even in a house, the training/education of children takes place in a congenial environment, and this important task cannot be carried out unless man and woman follow the legitimate method for the establishment of a family life. Adultery is to be forbidden and the relationship between man and woman should be limited within the legal scope of matrimony. A person gets numerous following social benefits from conjugal life:

Survival and Protection of Mankind

It is an undeniable fact that the human race had better survive only through family life. Islam considers marriage as a legitimate act, the foremost purpose of which is survival and growth of the human race. *The Holy Qur'ān* also calls this as the main purpose of conjugal life. *The Holy Qur'ān* has shed light on this basic purpose in the following words,

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ ؕ

"Your women are tillage for you to cultivate, so come to your tillage from where you wish and advance something for yourselves."²³

Allah Almighty has also said,

فَالَّذِينَ بَشِرُوا هُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

"So now you can have sexual intimacy with them and seek what Allah Almighty has detained for you"²⁴

These two verses make the first and foremost purpose of conjugal life very clear. By using the word *Abtaghū* (look for), the first aim of getting production (i.e. offspring) from this cultivation is highlighted. And Allah's order is that you should seek this production and strive for it.

Proliferation of Muslim Ummah

Conjugal life is meant not only for the survival and protection of the human race, but also for the expansion of Muslim Ummah. According to Sunnan-e-Abu Dawud and Nasa'i, Mu'qal bin Yasār (*Raḍī Allāh 'anhu*) narrates that a companion came to the

Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) and said, “I am going to get married to a beautiful woman of a noble family, the problem is that her family members do not beget children. So may I marry her?” He said, “no” He came to the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) for consultation for the second and third time, then the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said, “A woman who loves more and bears more children should be married because through you, people, I will feel proud of your abundance (on the Day of Judgment).”²⁵

Transferring Social Values and Training of New Generation

A permanent and stable home life is indispensable for rearing the coming generations on a strong basis. In fact, family life is an outstanding physical breeding forum. Not only the physical bodies are developed, but their minds and hearts can also be trained in a family environment. Nobility can be inculcated if the feelings of love, compassion and filial piety are developed among children and then such children can form a sound society.

Ann Freud wrote a book “The Child without a family” in which she explained that children raised in nurseries suffer from severe psychological defects. And these defects create so much anxiety in their inclinations that they are deprived of a balanced life. A psychologist may succeed in removing this anxiety but through great efforts.

Sense of Responsibility and Fulfillment of Life Goals

Man is created to worship Allah Almighty so that he may become a good human being and consequently contribute to the establishment of a good society. Man is not created just for the fulfillment of desires, rather he is to achieve higher aims. Allah Almighty says,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I did not create the jinns and the human being except for the purpose that they should worship me."²⁶

Furthermore, husband and wife help each other reach a good destination (life goals). Islam does not support uncontrolled sexual life (*Shutr-be-Mahār* i.e. a camel without ropes). It protects man and woman from diving into the ocean of sex with the spirit of

physical pleasure only, but at the same time, it also considers the survival and training of the human race as a fulfillment of higher goals. There are various benefits of family life:

Good relationships are developed, children have an innocent childhood and adults become caring and responsible in their assignments. Islam envisages a home where there are three generations: children, youth and the elderly. Children are not admitted to nurseries and day care centers, the young become more and more responsible in their responsibilities and the aged people are not handed over to the gloomy atmosphere of Old Age Homes as in the West.

Sacrifice and Economic Security

The matrimonial union of man and woman comes into existence through *nikkāh*. A man is responsible for housing, feeding and clothing his wife and children (family). Good behaviour based on sacrifice is also important.

The Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) once divided the responsibilities between ‘Ali (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhū*) and his wife Fatima (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhā*) in such a way that Fatima (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhā*) would be in charge of the internal affairs of the house while ‘Ali (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhū*) would be responsible for the external affairs of the house.

If the husband is poor, then the wife is encouraged to spend money on him as well. Wife can give charity to her husband even if he has to raise an orphan child. So the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said: “When a woman gives in charity from her house meals in Allah’s Cause without spoiling her husband’s property, she will get a reward for it, and her husband will also get the reward for his earnings and the storekeeper will get a reward likewise.”²⁷ Explaining the importance of financial responsibility of the family, the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said,

”خير الصدقة ما كان عن ظهر غنى و ابدأ بن تعول“²⁸

“The best charity is that which is invested in one’s family (the expenses of one’s wife and children). And start charity from those whom you are responsible for.”

Conclusion

This article makes people understand that family life is the foundation of an Islamic civilization and has always played a pivotal role in the establishment of a very strong relationship among all family members particularly between man and woman. It tries to arouse them to have a relationship based on equality, mutual respect and concern. It will lead them and their offsprings to success and prosperity here and hereafter. Illegitimate relationship between man and woman is discouraged in Islam as this article clarifies and *Nikāh* is encouraged among people.

This article also signifies the basic advantages of family life as it makes every individual realize his/her responsibilities in life whether Muslim or Non-Muslim. Then they are to take necessary steps to ensure peace, goodness of society, human dignity, equality and tolerance.

The article, further, motivates and recommends man and woman to contribute to human society positively by establishing a beautiful family in which children are brought up and groomed in such a way that they would become good human beings of this global village and this world of ours may become a good place to live in.

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