Efficient Family Indices

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Introduction

Creation of mankind was divinely commenced by matrimony between a woman and a man. Adam and Eve started a family and all their offspring were divinely called to the bond of matrimony and human perfection was reflected in building mutual understanding between wife and husband. Divine wisdom is manifest through attraction between male and female and this has made all mankind down the centuries live together in families and thus mankind has survived.

The bond between female and male is accorded such significance that it has been termed "solemn covenant": *And they have taken from you a solemn covenant?* (4:21). The Prophet of Islam is narrated as saying about the sacred bond of matrimony, "In Islam no foundation is dearer to God Almighty than matrimony" (Majlisī, 1983, 100: 222). He also says that homes prosper by marriage: "Marry and marry off… and in Islam there is nothing dearer to God Almighty than a house prospering by matrimony" (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 4: 5). Deprived of such great blessing, a male and a female have been depicted as lonely: "Miserable, miserable, miserable is the man who does not have a wife even though he might have immense wealth; miserable, miserable, miserable is the woman who does not have a husband even though she might have immense wealth" (al-Ḥaythamī, 1987, 4: 252).

One is, in fact, born in a family, lives in the institution of family, turns to one's family in need, and finds peace of mind in the light of living in a family:

And of His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort in them, and He ordained affection and mercy between you. There are indeed signs in that [blessing] for a people who reflect (30:21).

Goal-oriented marriage is common in an Islamic ideal society where the tendency toward marriage and starting a marriage are cherished as a value and a matter of significance. It goes without saying that the institution of family provides members with peace of mind when its efficiency, similar to its foundation, is accorded significance by its founders and members; otherwise, it will create tensions and its members wish for its ruin or make attempts to ruin it.

It is more complicated, compared to recent decades, to maintain appropriate relations with one's spouse and raise children. Family efficiency or inefficiency is affected by numerous and complicated factors to the extent that it is required to safeguard family efficiency and deal with harmful factors according to Islamic teachings. Characteristics of efficient family commensurate with legal, ethical, and religious indices are based on the descriptive analytical approach and provide detailed attestations derived from verses of the Holy Qur'an and hadiths.

Terminology

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The term denotes general characteristics that include subcharacteristics and are of further significance. Terming more general characteristics as

indices and explication and classification of such characteristics by that title will lead to a more facile understanding of subcharacteristics and subcategories (Gould & Kolb 1997).

Efficient Family

Members of an efficient family have religious beliefs and respect the principles of Islamic ethics and rights and thus pave the path to discovering and fostering their abilities and aptitudes in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions.

Authentic Islamic Sources

Islamic teachings derive from two sources: the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. The former is unanimously recognized by all Muslims. The latter includes the entire body of the Sunnah narrated from the Fourteen Infallibles, from the Shi'a perspective, and it is restricted to the words and acts of the Prophet of Islam, from the Sunni viewpoint.

Family Efficiency Indices

Islamic teachings (authentic moral qualities attested in Islamic teachings) fall into three classes: 1. Views on the world, mankind, and existence; 2. Qualities and attributes with which Muslims are supposed to adorn themselves in attaining perfection and are supposed to avoid their opposites. The moral qualities, reflected in Islamic teachings, include: honesty, patience, having good intentions, tolerance, mutual respect, benevolence, and affection; 3. Islamic laws and precepts, i.e. the instructions and injunctions dealing with objective activities including material, spiritual, this worldly, other worldly, individual, and social activities (Muṭahharī, 2003).

1. The Attitude Index

Taking positions in life is based on beliefs that profoundly affect human individual and social life. Improving views, above all, is accorded significance in Islam. This is reflected in the hadith: "The best of you in terms of faith is the best of you in terms of knowledge" (Muḥammadī Riyshahrī, 2000).

In discussing the view index, mention is made of the most significant religious beliefs that affect relations and behaviors of family members and turn family into an efficient one. Want of such beliefs will likewise lead to family inefficiency and forming inappropriate relations.

A. Faith in God

Faith in God is the most fundamental religious belief. It is the soul's particular recognition of some accepted principle, an acceptance that leads the soul to submit to expedient perception and effects. Tokens of submission and acceptance, similar to those of the soul, include accepting by all faculties and organs. When submission happens to be toward God, it is termed "faith in God", that is, the same heartfelt belief and carrying out meritorious deeds will produce other qualities in the believer's soul and the same qualities determine human behaviors in individual, social, material, and spiritual dimensions (Ṭabāṭabā'ī , 1995).

Human behaviors and family members are affected by faith in God and each of them has its particular effect on family efficiency. An individual believing that God at all times sees the deeds of man and is "nearer to him than his jugular vein" (the Holy Qur'an, 50:16) strives to attain divine satisfaction by acting on his obligations and respecting the rights of other members of the family and improve their attitudes and conducts in family life aiming at attaining growth and perfection.

An individual enjoying peace of mind is able to attain perfection and happiness. Such peace is fostered in a peaceful family and the efficiency of that family will be thus secured. The most significant factor, according to religious teachings, leading to fostering peacefulness and maintaining it is having faith in God. It is reflected in a short and wise saying narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʻAlī, "Have faith and live in protection" (Āmidī, 1987: 88). He also says that faith in God is equal to peace of mind and security. Some instances of the effects of faith and the manner of its fostering peace of mind will be treated below.

1. Optimism

Adopting an optimistic view on creation and existence is one of the outcomes of religious belief, one that shapes believers' worldview and helps them understand that creation is goal-oriented and life is meaningful. Family life, from such perspective, aims at attaining perfection and happiness. It also leads man to adopt a pessimistic view on the universal order in existence and the laws governing it.

Believers maintain that their existence in the world of existence is similar to living in a country governed by just laws and a just state and have faith in government authorities' good intentions, notice that the path has been naturally paved for the spiritual growth of themselves and their family members, and hold that their backwardness solely arises from their inactivity and indolence. Such attitude provides them with optimism and aspiration to move forward and spare no effort to surmount potential impediments.

The hearts of the members of faithless families, on the contrary, are imbued with hatred and perturbation. The head of the family is not concerned with improving their state or that of the members of the family.

The members of this small society do not enjoy life and let out a cry of protest when the most trivial obstacle is in sight. God Almighty says: *But whoever disregards My remembrance, his shall be a wretched life* (20:124). The blessed verse is saying that family life is enjoyable to believing family members and they can tolerate hardships. The children raised in such family learn the strategies required in dealing with the factors leading to inefficiency (Ṣafūrā'ī, 2003).

2. Hopefulness

A believing optimist hopes to reap the rewards of their efforts and maintains that God Almighty is not indifferent toward their efforts, but the Creator support those who strive toward the cause of truth, uprightness, justice, and benevolence, those who believe in *If you help Allah He will help you* (47:7). The same theme is reflected in this verse: *Allah does not waste the Reward of the virtuous* (9:120).

The faithful set their hopes on divine support and seek assistance from Him in vicissitudes of life and in achieving their goals. It is by virtue such hope that they will attain their goals one of which is to be efficient family members. Shortcomings in life are painful to some people and lead to inefficiency, but such hurdles will be removed in the light of setting one's hopes on divine help (ibid).

3. Spiritual Delight

Human delights fall into two types: 1. Material delights, i.e. those perceived through visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and somatosensory senses; 2. Spiritual delights, i.e. those perceived by the heart and soul, those that are unrelated to bodily organs and their being affected by external phenomena. Instances of the latter include the delight derived from doing

good to the members of one's family and that produced by the kindness shown by one's spouse and children. Further rewards of spiritual delights serve as other tokens of faith in God. Such delights result in family liveliness and efficiency.

Delights of this nature multiply when benevolence and doing good to family members derive from religious beliefs and attainment of divine satisfaction and fall into the category of acts of devotion. The most sublime effect of spiritual delight lies in decrease and elimination of the anxiety arising from internal and external factors. The peacefulness of family members resulting from spiritual delight leads to family efficiency and further efforts made by the members on the path to growth and perfection.

4. Trust in God

By trust in God as a religious belief it is intended that a believer relies on divine omnipotence in all the affairs. A believer maintains that the order of the world and all its changes are within the domain of divine will and providence. Such trust results in strengthening the believer's will, lessening the adverse effects of interfering factors, eliminating impediments to his leading a peaceful life, and further enables them to attain equilibrium and the path is thus paved for the realization of efficient family.

Family members face an array of problems in life. Problems like bankruptcy, loss of possessions due to theft, job loss, physical and psychological illnesses, loss of loved ones constitute some of the factors causing problems and at times disagreement in families and may as well lead them to deadlocks.

Facing such issues requires two sets of factors: material and external causes; psychological and internal circumstances. It is trust in God that

eliminates both types of circumstances. Having a weak will, timidity, anxiety, and inexperience in dealing with different situations may make individuals fail to adopt appropriate methods in finding solutions to problems. In such circumstances where material causes and tokens are indicative of insolvability, trust in God Almighty will strengthen the will and courage of family members and open up new horizons to them. It is having trust in God that may help people find solutions to their problems. This is reflected in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

And whoever is wary of Allah, He shall make a way out for him and provide for him from whence he does not reckon (65:2-3).

5. Accepting Divine Decrees

Family members should submit to divine decrees and be content with them and thus facilitate dealing with issues and problems. Such contentment helps them to have a positive attitude in dealing with issues and problems and thus accomplish growth and perfection. Accepting the reality of vicissitudes in life and tackling with hardships will safeguard family efficiency.

B. Believing in Divine Prophetic Mission and Imamate

Believing in the divine mission of the prophets, as reflected in the history of Islam and other divinely revealed religions, constitutes the second pillar of faith. The divine succession of the Imams to the Prophet of Islam, the Seal of the Prophets, is considered in Shia traditions in line with completion of the Prophetic mission. Imamate is vested in the twelve infallible Imams (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995).

Significance of belief in prophethood and imamate in life is included in religious teachings the knowledge of which, besides the Word of God

(the Holy Qur'an), is restricted to the words of the Prophet of Islam and his successors. Understand the divine revelation accurately is possible through appreciating the explications of *awliyā'* (luminaries, eminent personages of Islam). The role played by believing in divine mission and imamate in family efficiency and following the Prophet and the Imams as role models will be discussed below.

It is a requirement to adopt models and follow them and it is by their nature that human beings search for models. By 'model' an objective instance of some idea and practice in different spheres is intended, a model followed aiming at accomplishing perfection. Terms such as *imām* (leader), *uswah* (model), *qudwah* (example), *hādī* (one showing the way), *dalīl* (guide), *ḥujjah* (proof, argument), and *mithāl* (exemplar), attested in Islamic texts as well as educational and psychological literature, are semantically analogous to the meaning of 'model' (Mahdīzādah, 2006).

Appropriate and normative models create order in the mind and show us how to fulfill our potentials. On the contrary, following unsound models entails irreparable damages and breaks the family. Unsounds models, serving as impediments to attain this worldly and otherworldly aims and objectives and those entailing family inefficiency, may not and should not be followed.

There are two reasons why efficient models are required for the assessment of family efficiency: striving for having an efficient family; making sure whether family members proceed on the path to efficiency based on comparing one's family with efficient ones.

One may thus judge about one's behavior by comparing it to an efficient and perfect family model. Prophets, imams, and 'friends of God' have served as human models a comparison of one's human qualities

with theirs will lead to treading the path to having an efficient family.

Aiming at having an efficient family and adjustment of relations and the nature of behaviors, we inevitably need to follow the models set by human beings in which religious teachings have been made perfectly manifest. It is recommended in the Holy Qur'an to follow the Prophet of Islam as the model for better efficiency of individual and family behaviors and attainment of spiritual growth and perfection:

In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly (33:21).

It is recommended in the Holy Qur'an that one should not ignore such perfect and efficient model in different stages of life, since it says: *and indeed you possess a great character* (68:4), since the Prophet of Islam and his family possess truly commendable qualities and are free from behavioral, character, and moral defects and flaws and their followers will never be led astray:

Your companion has neither gone astray, nor gone amiss, nor does he speak out of [his own] desire (54:2-3).

The moral qualities and the exalted degrees of perfection attained by the Prophet and his household are widely attested in Shia and Sunni sources (Muḥammadī Riyshahrī, 2000).

C. Belief in the Hereafter

Belief in the hereafter may be investigated in individual and social dimensions. Individual effects of such belief are manifest in personal life, but the social effects are inevitably caused by assembly and getting together. Family is a small society formed by getting together of its members. Belief

in the hereafter affects all dimensions of human life, but the present study mainly focuses on family dimensions that are affected by such belief.

1. Meaning of Life

Let us imagine that there are two ships with passengers on board sailing in an ocean. The voyagers of one of the ships hope that they will, sooner or later, be anchored in a harbor. In contrast, the voyagers of the other ship, owing to some circumstances, have lost their hope to arrive on dry land and believe that, sooner or later, they will drown into the waves of colossal proportions lashing into foam. Will the voyagers on board those two ships have the same beliefs, deeds, and reactions?

It goes without saying that they will have quite different views. The former group takes the ocean, the ship, the laws governing it, and the voyagers' relations with their surroundings, as a whole, into account, and in contrast to the views held by the other group they see the whole admiringly as they consider them valuable and are glad to be aboard, or at least, they do not regret their voyage on the ship.

In the course of their lives family members are like those voyagers traveling in the ocean of this material world. Those who believe that man only lives in this world and nothing awaits them after death but inexistence, similar to the voyagers on board the first ship, will not achieve anything but death will be in store for them. Regretting their birth and marriage and ignoring the exalted goals of family, they exclusively believe that family life has a limited number of functions. From such perspective family bonds will be dissolved by separation. On the contrary, family members will be reminded by their belief in the hereafter of the significance of further strengthening of the bond.

2. Assuming Responsibility

Assuming responsibility is a significant means of checking individual and social behaviors. The fruitful results of belief in the hereafter include a feeling of responsibility deep in the heart and mind so that it affects all physical, psychological, and spiritual behaviors and renders an obligation on the individual to stand accountable for one's behaviors.

Laying emphasis on accountability for one's deeds the Holy Qur'an says:

Does man suppose that he would be abandoned to futility? (75:36).

In providing a negative response to this question, man is reminded of their accountability for their deeds and words on the Day of Resurrection:

By your Lord, We will question them all concerning what they used to do (65:92-93).

When family members believe in the hereafter and feeling accountable for their interrelations they will stand accountable for fulfilling their obligations and avoid unwarranted behaviors. The 'friends of God' are quoted as saying that fulfilling family obligations will be divinely rewarded and according significance to such rewards and blessings to be divinely bestowed in the hereafter encourages people to strive toward gaining further blessings and rewards. Members of such blessed family read the following verses:

Enter paradise, you and your spouses, rejoicing. They will be served around with golden dishes and goblets, and therein will be whatever the souls desire and eyes delight in and you will remain in it [forever]. That is the paradise you have been given to inherit for what you used to do (43:70-72).

Family members will be further encouraged to follow the standards in their behaviors and family efficiency will be thus safeguarded.

3. Checking and Preventing

Belief in the hereafter also checks committing numerous instances of misbehavior that lead family members to violate each other's rights, impose their opinions on each other, and behave aggressively toward each other. Believing in reckoning of deeds on the Day of Resurrection and punishing and rewarding on the basis of deeds and misdeeds will impede people from violation of the rights of others and evading responsibilities and many other misdeeds. It is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that mistreatment of family members will lead to torment and agony in purgatory in that even though an individual mistreating other family members fulfills their other obligations they will still be entangled with severe anguish and pressure in purgatory, the transitional period between this world and the Day of Judgment (Sālārīfar, 2006).

Adverse consequences of mistreating family members are attested in hadith literature. The Messenger of God is quoted as saying, "The good deeds of a woman who verbally abuses her husband will not be divinely accepted unless she gains his satisfaction. … [If she fails to do so] she will be cast into the Fire before others. This will be applicable to a man who harasses his wife" (Majlisī, 1983, 100: 244).

2. The Ethical Index

Moral teachings and human values constitute the second part of Islamic teachings. Family is the first learning environment for children. It is in this environment that moral virtues grow and foundations of moral qualities are established. Children learn the majority of moral qualities and behaviors from their parents, siblings, and other people with whom they

live in the family. Family members learn honesty, trustworthiness, mutual respect, gratitude, kindness, affection, generosity, courage, chastity, and the majority of such moral behaviors from each other.

Children learn the first lessons about moral qualities in family and the formation of such moral qualities are affected by their long-lasting and constant association with grownups. The family environment must be adorned with moral qualities and thus pave the path toward growth of family members and family efficiency.

A. Affection in the Family

Human beings need affection and friendship and prefer to be liked by others. This human instinct is further felt in the conjugal bond made by a man and a woman who left the stage of 'I' and reached that of 'we'. Each of them experienced the feeling of being loved by their parents and upon entering the matrimonial bond they expect to be loved by their spouse and experience a fresh bond of affection and love.

Mutual love binds the couple, strengthens family foundation, and makes the family efficient. The Prophet of Islam is quoted as saying, "The best of women are those who have love and affection" (ibid, 103: 235) With regard to men he says, "Our friends further love their spouses and the more perfect faith one possesses the more they love their spouses (ibid, 103: 223, 228).

Parents who love each other are more successful in raising their children who grow up in a family brimming over with love and affection. They have more peace of mind and better emotional development and will be able to follow their parents in being a loving and efficient spouse and will have an efficient family. Such efficiency is handed down to the coming generation and the society will be imbued with passion, liveliness,

and efficiency.

B. Mutual Respect and Family Efficiency

Any individual essentially expects others, in particular their family members, to respect their dignity. When the individual finds that his dignity is not respected by some people, a distance grows between them. In other words, respecting the dignity of family members is reflected in their behaviors.

Mutual respect strengthens interrelations. Males and females both expect others to respect their dignity and couples should not neglect such significant principle because of their intimate relationships, but it is for maintaining such intimacy that they should respect the dignity of the other party and preserve their close relationship from turning it into formality.

It is attested in Islamic sources that man is obliged to respect his wife, e.g. “It is the wife’s right to know that God Almighty created her a human being and an intimate friend and she should know that such blessing has been divinely bestowed on her and that she should appreciate it and promote her station through it” (ibid, 71: 4). On the other hand, a woman who disrespects her husband is cursed: “Cursed is… cursed is the woman who wrongs and saddens her husband; blessed is… blessed is the woman who respects her husband, does not wrong him, and is obedient to him in his conditions” (ibid, 100: 253).

Family members who treat each other respectfully will have close relations and such relations protect them from misbehaviors and misconduct. Such family members preserve their liveliness and enthusiasm in managing their affairs and thus pave the path to grow and achieve their potential and efficiency.

C. Greeting and Family Efficiency

People from different cultural backgrounds express their emotions and feelings, e.g. their being pleased to meet others, greet one another and make use of conventional words and movements in particular ways to communicate the same intentions. Greeting, shaking hands, and embracing are different ways of expressing such emotions in the Islamic tradition. Greeting as a divine command is attested in the Holy Qur'an:

So when you enter houses, greet yourselves with a salutation from Allah, blessed and good. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may apply reason (24:61).

Living in our world is accompanied by stress and anxiety. The best way to communicate with others is, therefore, to provide with the other party with security and peace of mind, to assure them that no harm will be done to them. The significance of greeting is best manifested in one of the divine Names, *Salām* (literally 'Peace'). Paradise, as the abode of peace, is termed *dār al-salām*. It is evident that such mode of communication and peace of mind will pave the path to family efficiency and the spiritual growth of family members.

D. Sympathy and Kindness

Affectionate treatment protects human soul from impurities and safeguards its purity and health. It is in the light of such purity and health that an individual may strive toward realizing their potential and firmly encounter moral and psychological disorders and impede alien factors from affecting their mind.

The messenger of God is narrated by Imam al-Ṣādiq as saying, "One who respects believers by his kind words and eliminates their sadness will be, as long as they maintain such attitude, forever in the shad of divine

mercy" (Ḥūrr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 11: 591). Kind and sympathetic treatment of grownups and one's spouse who are able to analyze other people's attitudes and behaviors will have more valuable results. When couples treat each other kindly strive to make their families more efficient.

E. Patience

It is attested in Islamic sources that patience is accompanied by achievement. This moral virtue is reflected in the Holy Qur'an as the essence of all virtues and means of attaining happiness. Human beings and family members may not achieve happiness and efficiency without possessing such quality. Patience is likened by Imam 'Alī to the head for the body: "Patience in affairs is like the head to the body, when the head is severed from the body the latter decomposes and when patience is removed from affairs they will fall into ruin" (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1998).

Family members face disappointments and fulfillment of wishes requires passage of time. They also may at times suffer from physical damages. As a consequence of such incidents their relations may be adversely affected and differences and misbehaviors may arise. When family members happen to be incapable of checking their desires and endure vicissitudes the family will suffer and besides being deprived from fulfilling their wishes they will cause problems for others.

Stress is the first consequence of impatience in the face of tensions and pressures. Patience enables people to stand up in the face of incidents and safeguard family efficiency and achievement. In contrast, inconsideration and overreaction against other people's misbehaviors will end in regret. It is patience that enables us to adopt timely and proper reactions with respect to misdeeds. Children raised in impatient families will suffer entanglements in the society, since an individual is

not always able to fulfil their wishes in all circumstances. An impatient child imagines that all their wishes will be before long fulfilled in society and when their wish is not granted they will make a display of unpleasant reactions in society and such reactions will often entail entanglements for them and their family.

F. Honesty

It is attested in the Holy Qur'an and hadiths that honesty is the fountainhead of all virtues and moral qualities (Majlisī, 2004, 86: 9) and the key to all good qualities; in contrast, lying is the key to vices (Muḥammadī Riyshahrī, 2000, 439). Honesty, in psychological analysis, is applied to words and behaviors by which an individual is not intending to display their opposites by what they say or carry out; in other words, the individual demonstrates their honesty by their words and actions. When an individual is dishonest in verbal and/or body communication a contradictory or two layered communication will be established in that the contexts of their words and conduct communicate different things or the incentive and intention behind their words and behavior are different (Sālārīfar, 1385).

The addressee responds, in such circumstances, according to their words or behaviors, but when they learn that there was another cause, they will be perplexed in responding to their other words and behaviors. The addressee will consider their words and behaviors, fails to notice the incentive(s) behind those words and behaviors and may at times, owing to further concentration on possible incentives, react inappropriately. Members of inefficient families display such words and behaviors.

To achieve and maintain healthy family relations, growth, efficiency, and verbal and physical communicative means - e.g. tone, eye contact,

postures, and movements - should be transparent rather than leading others to perplexity. Not only the words should be in harmony with tone, posture, and facial expressions but also they should demonstrate the incentives and unconscious postures and represent that all psychological dimensions of the individual, e.g. emotional, excitement, behavioral, and cognitive spheres are in harmony.

Such honest, efficient, and normal interrelation provides family members with the opportunity to show their honesty, commitment, qualification, and creativity and attain perfection and by surmounting impediments pave the path to further family efficiency.

G. **Positive Attitude**

A couple seeking rewarding lives maintain their positive attitude toward their spouse, consider their positive qualifications, ignore their defects and flaws, constantly see their life and conduct elegantly and at times even consider some of their flaws as good qualities.

Bradford (1983) studied couples' satisfaction with their lives in a study which he conducted on 351 couples who had lived together for at least fifteen years and inquired about the reasons for living together. The results demonstrated that having a positive attitude about one's spouse is one of the significant factors in living together.

Misunderstanding the words and behaviors of other people directly affects having a positive attitude. Such misinterpretations ruin the good relations of family members and end in distress and anxiety. Misunderstanding is one of the main factors causing domestic problems and the best strategy to confront the issue is to adopt a positive attitude. Besides resulting in family efficiency the good quality of having a positive attitude also directly affects efficiency and having the same attitude in

society, since children learn, commit to memory, and make use of any attitude adopted by parents in dealing with different phenomena.

3. Legal Index

Preventive measures to avoid problematic and unsupportive familial interactions and disintegration of family structure and adopting actions to increase family efficiency include acquaintance with obligations and transparency of mandatory and non-mandatory spousal expectations, since many disorders that jeopardize family efficiency and undermine its family foundation stem from violating the rights of others and showing ingratitude to each other. More optimal attitudes arise from family members' familiarity with their rights and obligations (Thomas & Znaniecki, apud Bāghiryān 2000).

Great significance is accorded in Islamic teachings to mutual rights and obligations, in particular those of family members and laws have been legislated for all family members in all stages and degrees. It is attested in Islamic sources that God Almighty is above all worshipped by respecting believers' rights, (Majlisī, 1983, 71: 243) in that honoring the rights of others does not only safeguard family efficiency and foundation but also it serves as a devotional act that will be divinely rewarded.

It is worthy of note that right (*ḥaqq*, pl. *ḥuqūq*) is some relative entitlement for someone by someone else. It may or may not have its roots in reality, in that existence or inexistence of real roots is not considered in its concept.

Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Rights and Obligations

Some rights and obligations, stipulated in Islamic sources,

addressing family members are mandatory and inviolable and failure to respect them will be punishable. There are some other rights that are non-mandatory in that failure to honor them will not entail any punishment. The former rights are termed, in Islamic sources, obligatory (*wājib*) rights, and the latter rights are termed recommendable (*mustaḥab*) and at times permissible (*mubāḥ*).

It is to be noted that each of the non-mandatory rights is substantiated by a moral obligation and family efficiency may not be exclusively based on obligation and law, since legal obligation will turn the institution of family into a rigid and impassive group devoid of support, moral principles, and susceptible to breakdown and disintegration.

Family members' rights will fall into four categories: wife's rights; husband's rights; children's rights; parents' rights.

A. Wife's Rights

Wife's rights, attested in Islamic sources, should be respected by her husband and thus the family will proceed on the path to efficiency.

1. Providing Means of Family Life and Payment of Expenses

It is an obligation that a husband pays for his wife's expenses and the amount of such payment is determined on the basis of the wife's need and social dignity (Khomeini, 2000: 299). According to the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Maintenance (*nafaqah*) is applied to all the needs of a wife appropriate to her social dignity, e.g. accommodation, clothes, food, furniture, medical and health expenses, hiring a servant (in case of need, habit, or some ailment) (*Official Gazette*, *Ruznāmah-yi Rasmī* [of the Islamic Republic of Iran], 2002, 2: 1079).

A husband is obliged to pay for his wife's maintenance, considered

as one of the wife's rights, (Khomeini, 2000: 299-300) instances of which include: accommodation, food, clothes, medical expenses, and furniture all commensurate with her social status and dignity.

2. Attending to Sexual Needs

Attending to the couple's sexual needs is one of the main incentives behind building a family. Sexual feelings and organs form significant parts of human existence. Understanding spousal sexual feelings and attending to them may preserve family's psychological health, peace, and efficiency. It was mentioned above that Bradford (1983) conducted a study on 351 couples to investigate their satisfaction with life. One of the factors that significantly affects spousal life, according to his findings, is satisfaction with marital sexual relationship.

Sexual need is commensurate with human nature and that is why attending to the wife's sexual needs, according to Islamic sharia, is an obligation incumbent upon her husband. It is attested in the Holy Qur'an that liking sexual relationships is an adornment of life:

To mankind has been made to seem decorous the love of [worldly] desires (3:14).

According to Islamic teachings, there is no other means of attending to sexual needs and it is incumbent upon the husband to attend to his wife's need and respect her right.

3. Financial Support

It is an obligation rendered on man to strive toward maintaining his family reasonably. God Almighty above all grants those men blessings that favorably attend to providing for their families: "God is above all satisfied with those of you who provide maintenance for their families"

(Majlisī, 1983, 78: 136).

Well-provided for family members proceed with more peace of mind toward their growth and perfection. Those who face restrictions by the father and or the spouse will have less peace of mind and will develop a negative attitude toward the breadwinner and such attitude will adversely affect family efficiency. It is attested in Islamic sources that "Men are supposed to provide their families with such maintenance that the members of their families do not long for their death" (Kulaynī, n.d., 4: 11)

It is attested in Islamic sources and culture that martyrs will be above all rewarded and those who strive toward supporting their families will be rewarded similar to and even more than martyrs and those struggling in the cause of God (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 12). In contrast, those who neglect to provide for themselves and their families have been censured by the Prophet of Islam: "He is not one of us who has the financial means but neglects to support his family" (ibid).

4. Being Well-Groomed

A Man expects his wife to be well-groomed and a woman also prefers her husband to be as such and it is in fact a woman's right to have a neat and well-groomed husband. Such attribute creates satisfaction in a woman's life and further strengthens her virtue of chastity. It is attested in hadiths that the chastity of the Israelites' women faded only because their husbands were not well-groomed. The Prophet then says that a woman expects the same from her husband (Majlisī, 1983, 73: 102).

Respecting chastity is one of the pillars of family efficiency. A couple may not be expected to be faithful to each other when they lack such moral quality. Families are bound together in love and solidarity and family efficiency are thus safeguarded. Chastity is one of the most

significant factors in raising well-rounded children and thus improving the society. Family is the best environment where children may learn chastity and it is through following their parents as role models that children will grow into chaste adults.

5. Good Relationship

To a man, his wife is a divine blessing, gift, and trust ("Know that this is a divine blessing bestowed on you. Respect her and treat her courteously"; ibid, 74: 5). It is incumbent on a man to treat his wife considerately and gallantly. Respecting one's spouse and avoiding abusing them verbally and humiliating them is an obligation rendered on any man or woman. A man is not supposed to focus on his wife's flaws but he should, as attested in Islamic injunctions, conceal them: "The wife's right, if you know, is that God Almighty made her a means of peace of mind and intimacy for you… and if she did not know forgive her" (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 15: 175).

Forgiving one's spouse's mistakes is one of the significant elements of maintaining a good relationship. Those who forgive other people's flaws and mistakes and ignore their own rights will gain others' affection and make them faithful, optimistic, and affectionate.

Good relationship needs to be manifest in words and deeds. When a man looks at his wife with a smile on his face and talks to her with kind words he gives to her the key to love and efficient and intimate relationship and strengthens the relationship happily and by pleasant words. Courtesy and elegance in speech are among the good qualities of sincere people and friends of God. In contrast, looking upset and worried and using abusive words close the window to intimacy and good relationship, adds in time to the psychological and emotional distance,

and cause inefficiency in family.

B. The Husband's Rights

Strengthening the pillars of marital life and family efficiency mainly lie in the wife's respecting the rights of her husband. When the wife respects her husband's rights, the husband will be motivated enough to carry out his obligations. Such mutual respect paves the path to good behaviors and accomplishing family efficiency.

1. Attending to Sexual Needs

A wife, except for the days when she has religious restrictions, should attend to her husband's sexual needs. It is recommended that she takes the first steps in this regard and show her interest. The Messenger of God says, "It is incumbent upon her to wear the most fragrant perfume, wear the most elegant of her clothes, wear the best of her adornments, and show that she loves him every morning and evening and spare no effort to respect his rights" (ibid, 14: 8).

With regard to the husband's desire for his wife and the wife's obedience to him the Messenger of God is quoted as saying a seemingly surprising injunction. In responding to a woman inquiring about her husband's rights, the Messenger of God said, "She is not supposed to reject him even though she happens to be on the back of a camel" (ibid). This injunction implies the significance of attending to the husband's sexual need.

2. The Right to Supervise Visits

It is undeniably attested in hadith that a woman may only leave her home by her husband's permission. Such injunction is frequently attested in Shia hadiths (ibid, 14: 125, 154-156) and similar hadiths are attested in

Sunni sources as well (al-Haythamī, 1987, 4: 313). Jurisprudents have been unanimous on the authenticity of this injunction, though some of them maintain that a wife is only obliged to gain her husband's permission to leave her home when it is contrary to his sexual rights, but considering the universal application of hadiths it would be unwarranted to restrict them to instances of violating the husband's sexual rights (Bustān, 2009).

3. The Right to Choose One's Place of Residence

A husband's right to determine the place of residence is one of the requirements of the wife's submission in attending to her husband's sexual needs, in that a woman may only act upon her obligation to attend to her husband's sexual needs that she obeys him in terms of place of residence. Such right is specified for the husband in Islamic sources where the wife is obliged to submit to her husband's choice of place of residence (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 14: 435, 494).

The wife may make use of 'the condition to be stipulated in the marriage contract' by suggesting the condition that the husband may not take her out of her town or city of her domicile and settle her in another place. In case the husband accepts that condition he will be obliged to act upon it (ibid, 15: 49) and violating it will be considered as failure to stand on one's promise (Bustan 2007). It is also stipulated in the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran: "A wife should reside at a home determined by the husband unless the choice of place of residence has been accorded to her."

C. Children's Rights

Children are the sweetest fruits of a couple who live together by love, affection, and divine and sharia bonds. Not only children add to love, affection, and sense of responsibility and fulfilling obligations in matrimonial life and hope in future but parents see their 'common self's

in their children's mirror.

Children are divine blessings that make parents bearers of divine trust. They provide parents with the opportunity to achieve immortality by raising their children according to Islamic teachings and fulfilling the obligations of such divine trust and safeguarding their survival by raising well-rounded children. Such wish may not be fulfilled without respecting divinely specified rights.

1. Bearing a Good Name

It is a child's right to bear a good name (Khomeini 2000, 2: 308). Imam al-Riḍā is quoted as saying that a good name is beneficence to a child: "The first beneficence done by a father to his child is to choose a good name for them. It is thus an obligation rendered upon any of you to choose a good name for your child" (*Maḥajah al-Bayḍā'*, n.d., 2: 66).

A good name is the best gift received by any child from their parents, a name that they always bear, a name that ceaselessly affects their individual and social character. Parents are prohibited to choose unpleasant names for their children. By selecting unpleasant or reprehensible names for their children parents adversely affect their character and dignity and deprive them of having good names.

2. The Right to Be Breastfed

It is required by divine commands and laws of nature that children should be breastfed by their mothers, since "the best milk for children is above all that of their mothers" (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 15: 175) and unwarranted depriving of a child from being breastfed by their mother is a sinister wrong done to them. It is attested in Islamic sources that divine blessings are abundantly bestowed upon mothers breastfeeding their children. The

Prophet of Islam is quoted as saying, “When a mother breastfeeds her child and each time the child is suckled God Almighty grants her rewards in abundance and when she completes suckling her child an angel will place a hand on her side, saying, ‘Start a new life that all your sins have been forgiven by God’” (ibid).

3. The Right to Socialization

Human social nature is one of their existential dimensions that must be accorded significance in education. Parents’ and educators’ duties in raising and educating the new and coming generations include paying attention to their social growth and thus provide them with opportunities to develop their talents and aptitudes in the sphere of social life and help them participate actively and successfully in groups. In other words, it is a right of children to receive social education.

The human experience in social life indicates that social organization and its stability and sustainability are founded on the capabilities, preparedness, and soundness of the members of a society. Having a comprehensive outlook and according significance to all different aspects of human life, Islam pays attention to education in society and provides instructions to help people develop and maintain discipline, mental health, moderation, and wisdom and also participate realistically in the sphere of collective life. Islam enjoins people to respect certain principles - e.g. moderation, sustainable relations, mutual affection, and social supervision - following which will be of great use to social organizations.

4. The Right to Marry

The right to marry is one of the indubitable rights of children incumbent

upon their parents, particularly on the father. Young people may deviate from the norms or procrastinate over matrimonial bonds owing to their limited experience, insufficient financial means, and idealism, but it is the fathers' duty to help them make the right choice and support them in their taking the first step toward such holy commitment.

Children's rights incumbent on the father, as indicated in Islamic teachings, include being given a good name, having access to literacy, and receiving support in taking steps toward marriage upon majority (Muḥammadī Riyshahrī 2000, 10: 720). Parents were inattentive in pre-Islamic times to their children's marriage and Muslims were commanded to take the requirement into account and it became their obligation to render assistance to their children in that respect (Baḥrānī, n.d., 3: 132).

D. The Rights of Parents

Reference has been made in Islamic sources to respecting the rights of parents and their different instances which may be classified under "doing good" (*iḥsān*). *Doing good to parents* stands only second, in some verses of the Holy Qur'an, to worshipping God, in that respecting parents and doing good to them is the second Qur'anic injunction (2:83; 4:22; 17:23). Instances of doing good, as attested in hadiths, include obedience to parents (31:14-15), talking to them gently, (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 15: 205) not interrupting them, showing humbleness to them (Majlisī, 1983, 71: 76), meeting their demands, praying for them, sharing their joy and sadness, treating one's mother even kindlier, expressing one's gratitude in words and deeds for their troubles, avoiding giving them orders (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991, 15: 205-277) and hurting them even by saying 'Fie!' [17:23] (al-Ṭabrisī, 1981, 6: 409), taking care of them in their advanced years (17-23-24), and not to call them by their names (Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, 1991). Injunctions about respecting

the rights of parents are also attested in Shia jurisprudential sources.

Conclusion

Attitudinal, ethical, and legal indices of family efficiency are attested in Islamic sources. Family is one of the main institutions of human life and its efficiency and perfection lie in having the characteristics of those indices. When attitudes toward life, and family in particular, are commensurate with the commands of the Creator, human life will proceed on the right path to efficiency. In contrast, when human life is oriented on the basis of unwarranted attitudes, life will deviate from the right path proceeds toward inefficiency.

Family is the first educational environment for children where moral qualities grow and the corner stone of moral principles is laid. Children learn the majority of moral qualities and ethical behavior from their parents, siblings, and others when they live with them. Family members learn many good qualities from each other, instances of which include honesty, trustworthiness, mutual respect, expressing gratitude, affection, kindness, generosity, courage, and chastity. The first lessons about moral qualities and virtues are learned in the family and grownups impact the development of moral qualities in children.

One of the measures to avoid problematic and unsupportive familial interactions and disintegration of family structure but rather adopting actions to increase family efficiency is gaining acquaintance with obligations and transparency of mandatory and non-mandatory spousal expectations, since many disorders that jeopardize family efficiency and undermine its foundation stem from spousal violation of the rights of each other.

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