Redefining the Family based on the Glorious Quran and Prophetic Traditions (Ḥādith)

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Abstract

Conceptology (i.e. understanding the concept) is one of the preliminary topics in every discipline; therefore, defining the concept of family, considering its position and interdisciplinary nature, is essential and of the utmost importance. Based on different approaches, scholars have presented several definitions for the term "family". This research attempts to define the family based on Islamic sources, including the Glorious Quran and hadith. It examines and analyzes Islamic sources using a descriptive-analytical method.

For this purpose, eighteen elements, namely structure, marriage contract, permanent marriage contract, a man and a woman, being Muslim, sexual desire, children, stepchildren, adopted children, parents-in-law, tranquility, affection, sense of responsibility, living under one roof, male management, sustenance, protection and nurturing, were identified as effective elements in defining a family. The content validity of the mentioned elements from the sources was examined by nine experts specializing in Islamic sciences such as psychology, theology, Quranic sciences, law, religions, history and prophetic conduct (*sīrah*). As a result, sixteen of the above elements were confirmed by the experts to have referenced instances, while the remaining two, i.e., permanent marriage contract and stepchildren, could not be confirmed as having sufficient referenced instances. Based on the

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components obtained from Islamic sources, the definition of family is as follows: "A family is a structure that is established through an agreement between a Muslim man and woman to live together. This usually corresponds with the husband and wife living together with children, or at times stepchildren, parents and/or parents-in-law, under one roof. Their living environment is one of tranquility and affection, while their affairs and sustenance are managed and taken care of by the husband. The couple are responsible for satisfying the needs, especially sexual, of each other and are responsible for the protection and nurturing of the other family members."

Keywords: Family, definition of family, religious sources

Introduction

One of the preliminary discussions of any discipline is Conceptology. This is because a concept can evoke many ideas. The meaning of water, for example, that is understood in common usage is very different to that of a chemist, or to that which appears in mystical literature. So, in order to facilitate scientific exchanges and prevent misunderstandings and confusion among researchers, it is necessary to define concepts precisely.

The family, which has, in terms of its functions, a special place in Islam at the individual[1] and social[2] levels, has, as an interdisciplinary topic, attracted the attention of academics from different fields of science. The interdisciplinary nature of this issue, while expressing its importance, also indicates the intense necessity of its conceptology.

In the English language, family, which means a group that includes one or both parents and children (Wehmeier, 2005, 552), is derived from the Greek word "*famulus*" or "*familia*", meaning servants and slaves.

The equivalent of family in Arabic is the compound word "*Ahl al-Bayt*" lit., the people of the house (Musṭafawi, 1368 SH, 1/170); "*bayt*" being a synonym for residence (Qrashi, 1381 SH, 1/248) and means a place to stay overnight (Musṭafawi, 1368 SH,

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1. 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 for a people who reflect. (Quran 30: 21); It is He who created you from a single soul, and made from it its mate, that he might find comfort with her. So, when he had covered1 her, she bore a light burden and passed [some time] with it. When she had grown heavy, they both invoked Allah, their Lord: 'If You give us a healthy [child], we will be surely grateful.' (Quran 7:189); O you who have faith! Do not prohibit the good things that Allah has made lawful to you, and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like the transgressors. (Quran 5: 87); You are permitted, on the night of the fast, to go into your wives: they are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them. Allah knew that you used to betray yourselves, so He pardoned you and excused you. So now consort with them, and seek what Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white streak becomes manifest to you from the dark streak at the crack of dawn. Then complete the fast until nightfall, and do not consort with them while you dwell in confinement in the mosques. These are Allah's bounds, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for mankind so that they may be Godwary. (Quran 2: 187).

2. Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents. Should they reach old age at your side —one of them or both— do not say to them, 'Uff!' And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words. (Quran 17: 23-24).

1/359). It has also been used to mean a place of return, residence, and gathering place. The term "*al-Bayt*" means a man's family and those who stay the night with them (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, 325).

"*Ahl*" is normally used when there is a collective bond and intimacy among a group of individuals around a particular thing, such as a city, book, science, etc. So, it is prefixed to say things to form a compound word, such as "*ahl al-kitāb*" lit., the people of the book (Qureshi, 1371 SH, 1/135). So, according to the meanings mentioned above for "family" and "house", the Arabic "*Ahl al-Bayt*" therefore refers to a group of people who live in one house, especially at night (Musṭafawi, 1368 SH, 1/170).

Even though the term "family" is a common word with a concrete concept, providing a scientific and single definition for it is not an easy task; because family is a conventional concept and thus is subject to coinage. Therefore, every person can have a convention and thereafter give a definition based on it. The fact is that not only is it impossible to provide a single definition for the family, but it is also difficult to provide a relatively universal definition. As, on the one hand, the institution of the family has been realized in various forms throughout history and different cultures, while, on the other hand, a defined family can experience events, such as the death of a spouse or divorce, hence changing its status to sole guardianship, or for sexual intercourse to cease for reasons such as organ failure or illness. These events result in it exiting from the usual definitions presented by scholars and academics. This is a result of these definitions not being logically sound, i.e., they lack the logical requirements of being thoroughly comprehensive and exclusive (Bustān Najafi et al., 1388 SH, 46). This situation becomes even more difficult in today's conditions when the term is used to refer to matters such as marital relations outside of the official framework, cohabitation of homosexuals, and single-parent households. Therefore, contemporary sociologists avoid providing a general definition for family (Stephen Moore, 1376 SH, 32).

Martine Segalen warns that contemporary sociology is bound to be somewhat cautious in defining the family because it is a term with multiple meanings. It is deprived of a conceptual framework capable of defining a wide range of family phenomena. It states that instead of always talking about the family in precise terms, it

is better to use terms that seem to define this institution most clearly in the particular aspect that is being investigated. For this purpose, terms such as stem family, domestic group and kinship relations are employed (Segalen, 1370 SH, 19). Despite all the cautions and problems that have prevented this word from being defined, scholars, considering the important position of the family and the necessity of clarifying its topics and terms concerning research and the exchange of its results, have attempted to define and examine the concept of family from various disciplines. Subsequently, Muslim researchers and scholars, based on Islamic teachings and sources, have also presented definitions of family. However, despite the numerous definitions presented from the Islamic perspective, no independent research solely dedicated to the definition of the family was found in which the sources, references and logical validity of these definitions were discussed. Therefore, the present research aims to present a definition of the family based on the examination and analysis of the Islamic sources, i.e., the verses of the Glorious Qur'an and the *ahadith.*

In continuation, definitions for family as presented by sociologists and psychologists are first discussed. Thereafter, the elements involved in the definition of the family are examined regarding the verses and prophetic traditions. Finally, to achieve the goal of this research, the discussions were concluded and a definition of the family was presented.

Sociological Definitions of Family

Sociologists, who have studied the family to explain its social functions, have provided various definitions for the family, some of which are as follows.

- MacIver: Family refers to a group of individuals with stable and clear sexual relationships that lead to the reproduction and upbringing of children (Farbad, 1383 SH, 140).
- Davis: A family consists of a group of individuals whose relationships with each other are based on blood kinship (Bustān, 1383 SH, 47).
- Lowie: Family is a bond that is related to the institution of marriage. Marriage is a form of sexual relationship that has been approved by society (Sārukhāni, 1379 SH, 135).
- Burgess and Locke: Family refers to a group of individuals who are united with each other either through blood, marriage or

adoption and who form a family unit. They interact and cooperate with one another in the form of specific social roles, such as husband and wife, parents, brothers and sisters, etc. By doing so, they create a common culture (Bustān, 1383 SH, 47).

● Murdock: A family is a social group characterized by shared living space, economic cooperation and reproduction (Asadi, Layla al-Saadat and Mirza-zadeh, Zahra, 1393 SH, 88).

● Cohen: A family is a group of individuals who are related to each other either through blood, marriage or adoption and who live together for an unspecified period (Cohen, 1378 SH, 127).

● Giddens: A family is a group of individuals who are directly connected to one another through ties of kinship and whose older members are responsible for taking care of children (Giddens, 1383 SH, 424).

Psychological Definitions of Family

The family has been the focus of psychologists since its very formation, as the psychoanalytical method is founded on the parent-child relationship, especially between the mother and the child. Nevertheless, the subject matter of psychological study is the individual. The serious attention of psychologists to the family began when psychotherapists realized that many individual disorders are directly related to the family. Consequently, a field called family therapy was formed. What follows are some of the definitions that psychologists, especially family therapists, have given for family:

● Rogers: The family is a semi-closed system that plays the role of internal communication. It has members who have achieved different statuses and positions within the family and society. More so, its members play an active role, according to the content of their statuses and positions, in the beliefs and relations of relatives that are approved by the society, to which the family is an integral part (Furqāni Raisi, 1373 SH, 141).

According to family therapists: A family is a small society that is created with the coupling of a man and a woman. It is a group consisting of two or more individuals who are related to each other either through birth, marriage or adoption and who live together under the same roof (Gladding, 1382 SH, 22).

● Minuchin: A family is a system whose functions occur through association patterns (Minuchin, 1395 SH, 67).

• Goldenberg and Goldenberg: A family is a complex emotional system that includes several generations. It differs from other social systems concerning loyalty, affection and permanence of its membership (Ṣādiqi, 1394 SH, 143).

The definitions presented from a psychological point of view are not as numerous as those presented by sociologists. However, common elements between the two sets of definitions are apparent, which may indicate the influence of the sociological definitions on the psychological. Further, there are some elements, such as loyalty, emotion, the systemic view of the family, consideration of relationship patterns and so on, which are completely psychological.

Defining the Family from an Islamic Perspective

Muslim academics, like other academics who have looked at the family from a specific angle, have also provided definitions for the family based on reliable religious sources. Some of these definitions shall be presented below:

• Bint al-Huda Sadr-Ṭabāṭabāī: A family is a social unit whose purpose, according to the Glorious Qur'an, is to cater for the spiritual health of three groups, namely, spouses, parents and children. It is also responsible for creating their readiness to face and deal with social phenomena (Sadr Ṭabāṭabāī, 1419 AH, 205-212).

• Martyr Mutahhari: From the perspective of Islam, a family is a social, moral and legal institution that is formed via the marriage of opposite sexes. The members of a family are governed by either a relationship of blood kinship or affinity. In addition, they each have reciprocal rights to each other. Compared to other social institutions, the family possesses principality and has an altogether different essence. Ethics and affection (giving and receiving) are the most important ruling principles within the family (Muḥammadi, 1394 SH, 15).

• Zuḥayli: In Shariʿa terms, family refers to a group of people who, as a result of a relationship between a man and a woman, were formed. The term is also used to refer to grandparents, siblings, grandchildren, uncles and aunts and their children (cousins). It is also categorized into three types: small, medium and large (Zuḥayli, 1420 AH, 1/28).

• Qureshi: A family is a group of individuals that has come into existence through a strong sexual bond. This bond is so

strong that it provides an avenue for the birth and upbringing of children (Qureshi, 1382 SH, 2).

● Salarifar: A family is a group of individuals bound by a relationship of affinity (marriage) or blood kinship (parent and child, siblings). They have reciprocal social, legal, pedagogical, behavioral, economic and religious responsibilities. These conform to the kind of relationship between the members (Salarifar, 1385 SH, 12).

● Panāhi: The family is the smallest, simplest and most general social unit. It is established via a formal marriage between a man and at least one woman. It then expands with the birth of children (Panāhi, 1387 SH, 13).

The fundamental issue or problem with these definitions is that the supporting evidence and the logic behind the definitions are not presented, thus not allowing for review and criticism. These definitions are usually presented within the definitions section of research papers.

The Elements of Family

To answer the primary research question of "How is the family defined according to Islamic sources?", it is necessary to first identify the effective elements of the definition. This was done by analyzing the available materials found within Islamic sources. Once obtained, these elements, along with their references and proofs, will be presented.

This section of the research, while attempting to present a definition of family based on Islamic sources, will also aim to critique those elements used within the other definitions. As analysis and comparison of the definitions will be made in the final part of this research, so, to avoid repetition, only the element, along with its reference, will be mentioned in this section.

A Structure

This is the first term that is used in the definition of family. It has special importance because it is a description of all adjectives that follow it. Other terms that are used in this regard to describe the family are a social unit, a group or a collection of individuals, a small society, an organization and a social group. The present research recommends the use of this term within the definition, because firstly, it has instances within prophetic narration, for

example, the Noble Prophet said, ″No structure is built in Islam that is more beloved and dearer to Allah than marriage″ (Majlisi, 1406 AH, 8/82). Secondly, contrary to other terms such as "a social unit", which is the result of a sociological view of the family or "an organization", which is the result of a psychological view of the family, there is no special angle in this term. In addition, and more important than the two previous points, is that the aspect of family formation is embedded within the term "structure" (Musṭafawi, 1368 SH, 6/344) that goes beyond just putting a few people together. Apart from the aforementioned points, this term in Arabic (Ibn Athīr Jazri, 1367 SH, 1/157) and Persian (Dehkhoda, under the term *bina'*) means a place of residence, which is also one of the elements of the definition and shows the closeness of this word to the meaning of family.

Marriage Contract

In Shariʿa terminology, an agreement is synonymous with a contract (Rāghib Iṣfahāni, 1412 AH, 1/341). This agreement, which has a jurisprudential and legal aspect, is one of the essential elements of the definition, because, according to the consensus of Islamic scholars (Khoei, ND, 2/159), no family - even if desired and consented by the parties - can be formed without the enactment of this contract between the two parties. (Yazdi, 1409 AH, 2/851). Essentially, the difference between marriage and fornication is the enactment and validity of the marriage contract (Khoei, ND, 2/159).

A marriage contract, on which the formation of a family depends, consists of a verbal proposal and its verbal acceptance (Ṭāhiri, Muḥammad-Ali & Ansari Khoshabar, Masʿud, 1384 SH, 3/1507). This proposal and acceptance must be performed, even though, it is through an executor (Bani Hāshimi Khomeini, 1379 SH, 2/380).

Permanent Marriage Contract

Can the term family be attached to one formed through a temporary marriage, i.e., a marriage that has a fixed time? In response to this, the researchers have different opinions. Some consider a family as being formed only through a permanent marriage, while some do not see any difference between a permanent

and a temporary marriage when it comes to family formation. Those who believe that the term "family" can be applied to both forms of marriage have explained, in contrast to those who exclude this form of marriage by questioning the validity of attaching the term family to a short-term marriage (e.g., a few months), that even though a temporary marriage is time-based, it does not necessitate that it be short-term. It can be long-term, and even last the entire lifespan of an average individual. This contract also allows them to become parents and live together.

Those who opine that the coupling resulting from a temporary marriage contract cannot be considered a family, do so based on the majority of cases, i.e., this type of marriage is usually short-term and without a child. However, the insistence made by those who opine that the term family is inclusive of both types of marriage is based on the possibility that family formation can occur via both types of marriage, i.e., it is possible to establish a long-term relationship under one roof, with children, in a temporary marriage. It appears that both views while expressing some truth, are characterized by a lack of consideration and attention to the other components and the underlying philosophy of each of these two types of marriage.

So, what is the reason and philosophy behind temporary marriage? While it is possible for such a marriage to be enacted long-term or to even bear children, its primary philosophy must not be ignored.

A temporary marriage is essentially for specific and necessary circumstances (Mutahhari, ND, 27/225). It is primarily aimed at combatting corruption and sexual deviations (Kāshif al-Ghita, 1370 SH, 387). Whereas the agreement through which a family is formed is a permanent marriage contract. This is the reason why several Quranic verses[1] and *ahadith*[2] have greatly encouraged permanent marriage, while some *ahadith* have even discouraged temporary marriage (Kulayni, 1407 AH, 5/452; ibid: 453)[3].

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[1] . Marry off those who are single among you, and the upright among your male and female slaves. (Quran 24: 32)

[2] . The Noble Prophet said: "Whoever likes to meet Allah pure and purified should endeavor to meet Him in the state of married."

[3] . I asked Abul-Hasan about temporary marriage. He replied: "It is absolutely permissible and lawful for someone who Allah has not blessed with marriage. →

However, it seems that it was only because of special circumstances that general encouragement to engage in temporary marriage was given by the Imams, which, in this case, was to prevent this Islamic practice from being abandoned and forgotten. (Mutahhari, ND, 19/82)

Furthermore, certain parental roles cannot be fulfilled unless the parents are together permanently. If this is the case, then why are the names being swapped? If fatherhood and motherhood require the enactment of a permanent marriage contract between the parents, then why should a marriage (a long-term temporary marriage), which only in practice is similar to a permanent marriage, be mentioned in the same vein?

Based on the *ahadith*, the impact of the parents on their children lasts until the child is twenty-one years old. If this issue is considered, along with the strong advice found in the *ahadith* to increase children, and the fact that parenting covers practically the entirety of the parents' life, a question could be raised as to why we should assign a function to temporary marriage based solely on its permission and possibility, but one that is not compatible with its philosophy?

A Man and a Woman

In numerous definitions of family, family members are deemed an essential component of the definition, as it is imperative to establish a clear distinction between members and non-members of the family. There will be a discussion about which categories of people should be included in a family, but the minimum number of people necessary to form a family is one woman and one man. Family members, especially a man and a woman, can be considered an essential component of the definition for two reasons. The first reason is that the stability of the family depends on its members, and without them, there will be no family (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH, 7/516). The second reason is that, as previously explained, the formation of a family is dependent on the marriage contract, which consists of a verbal proposal and acceptance, whose minimum requirement for its enactment is the presence of a man and a woman (Bani Hāshimi, Khomeini, 1379 SH, 2/38).

←Such a person should therefore protect themself by means of temporary marriage. However, if he has been blessed with a wife, then temporary marriage is only permissible for him if he is away from her.

In some definitions, the clause "at least one woman" is mentioned (Panāhi, 1387 SH, 13). It seems that the evidence for this clause is the Quranic verse: *"If you fear that you may not deal justly with the orphans, then marry [other] women that you like, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you may not treat them fairly, then [marry only] one, or [marry from among] your slave-women. That makes it likelier that you will not be unfair."* (Quran 4: 3). However, this verse does not imply anything except the permissibility of polygyny, which is a matter outside the membership of one woman in a family. More so, since the legitimacy and formation of a family is based on the marriage contract, i.e., the proposal of a woman and the acceptance of it by a man, the establishment of a family unit is one woman and one man (Bani Hāshimi Khomeini, 1379 SH, 2/381). In reality, a second marriage forms a second family.

A Muslim Man and Woman

The permanent marriage of a Muslim, man or woman, with a non-Muslim, is forbidden and invalid (Ibid: 397). Therefore, one of the elements that must be considered in the definition of the family from the Islamic viewpoint is "Islam". Several verses of the Glorious Quran, such as verse 221 of *Surah al-Baqarah* (Quran 2), clearly state this component and the wisdom behind it: *"Do not marry idolatresses until they embrace faith. A faithful slave girl is better than an idolatress, though she should impress you. And do not marry [your daughters] to idolaters until they embrace faith. A faithful slave is better than an idolater, though he should impress you. Those invite [others] to the Fire, but Allah invites to paradise and pardon, by His will, and He clarifies His signs for the people so that they may take admonition."*

It is important to keep in mind that Islam does not only recognize Muslim marriages but also those that were enacted by other religions and cultures, as long as they adhere to their authentic customs and traditions, be they Jewish, Christian or even someone who does not believe in God (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH). Several verses of the Glorious Qur'an[1] indicate the

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1 . And his wife [too], the firewood carrier (Quran 111: 4); Allah cites an example of the faithless: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of →

recognition of such marriages. In *Surah al-Tahrīm* (Quran 66), there are discussions about couples whose partners were definitely disbelievers, however, expressions such as *"The wife of Noah and the wife of Pharaoh"* are used to indicate the endorsement of their marriages. Therefore, the marriage of other nations within the framework of the legal system and social relationships is considered valid by Muslims. However, a reputable family in Islam is one in which both the husband and wife are Muslims.

Sexual Desires

According to some definitions of the family, sexual relationships are the core and main component of the family.[1] In Islamic sources, sexual desire has also been discussed extensively, however, the difference is that it is considered a stimulus for family formation and reproduction (Majlisi, 58/255)[2] and a means to attain higher goals.

Islamic sources do not only discuss the necessity of paying attention to sexual desires within the framework of marriage and family formation[3], but they also discuss every detail about it. For instance, in Islamic sources, the distinction between the sexual desires of men and women, which has a biological basis, has been taken into account.

Based on this and on the fact that men get aroused faster than women (Hurr al-Amili, 20/118) specific tasks have been defined

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← our righteous servants, yet they betrayed them. So they did not avail them in any way against Allah, and it was said [to them], 'Enter the Fire, along with those who enter [it].' Allah cites an example of the faithful: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, 'My Lord! Build me a home near You in paradise, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his conduct, and deliver me from the wrongdoing lot.' (Quran 66: 10-11). What! Of all people do you come to males, abandoning your wives your Lord has created for you? Indeed, you are a transgressing lot.' (Quran 26: 165-166)

1 . McIver: Family refers to a group of individuals with stable and clear sexual relationships that lead to the reproduction and upbringing of children (Farbad, 1383 SH, 140)

2 . O Mufaddal! Think about the actions that were made in man such as eating, sleeping, and sexual intercourse, and what He planned for them, because He made for each one of them in the same nature a motive that necessitates and motivates him. And lust prompts sexual intercourse in which the continuity of generations is guaranteed ….

3 . Marry off those who are single among you, and the upright among your male and female slaves. (Quran 24: 32); If you fear that you may not deal justly with the orphans, then marry [other] women that you like, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you may not treat them fairly, then [marry only] one, or [marry from among] your slave-women. That makes it likelier that you will not be unfair. (Quran 4: 3)

for women: *"She must not deny him access to her, even if she is on the back of a camel"* (Hilāli, 1405 AH: 5/507). Similarly, men are given instructions based on the requirements of women[1]; however, there is a difference in the type and number of tasks prescribed for each of them. Nevertheless, both the husband and wife have the shared obligation of paying attention to the sexual needs of the other.

Children

Very few definitions of the family have mentioned children as being a component of it, for although the family begins with marriage, the continuity of it is dependent on the spouses and children (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH, 7/516). Having children is the general approach of Islam towards marriage. This can be understood from Islam's encouragement to have children[2], the supplications for getting a child[3], the discouragement of coitus interruptus (Ibn Babawayh, 1362 AH, 328)[4], the creating of a positive view towards procreating (Majlisi, 73/154)[5], doing away with worries regarding the problems that are associated with having a child (Quran 17: 31)[6] and considering a child as a

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1 . And do not have sexual intercourse with a woman until you have sufficient foreplay with her, playing with her breasts. If you do this, she will become aroused and ready. Do so until desire appears on her face and in her eyes, and she desires from you what you desire from her.

2 . Get married, reproduce and increase your number. I will boast about you to other nations on the Day of Resurrection, even regarding your miscarried children. (Jāmia' al-Akbar, 101)

3 . Thereat Zechariah supplicated his Lord. He said, 'My Lord! Grant me a good offspring from You! (Quran 3: 38)

4 . A man can perform coitus interruptus in six cases: with a woman who he is certain will not conceive, an elderly woman, an ill-mannered or sharp-tongued woman, a woman who will not nurse her baby and a slave.

5 . Among the prosperity of a person is having a good wife, a spacious house, a beautiful ride and a righteous child.

6 . Indeed, your Lord expands the provision for whomever He wishes, and tightens it. Indeed, He is well aware of His servants and a keen observer. Do not kill your children for the fear of penury: We will provide for them and for you. Killing them is indeed a great iniquity. (Quran 17: 30-31) Say, 'Come, I will recount what your Lord has forbidden you. That you shall not ascribe any partners to Him, and you shall be good to the parents, you shall not kill your children due to penury—We will provide for you and for them—you shall not approach indecencies, the outward among them and the inward ones, and you shall not kill a soul [whose life] Allah has made inviolable, except with due cause. This is what He has enjoined upon you so that you may exercise your reason. (Quran 6: 151)

blessing and foundation of human perfection (Ṭabāṭabāī, 8/23)[1].

In addition to encouraging having children, the Islamic sources have also mentioned the obligation of sustaining the child, which includes taking care of their nutritional, clothing and housing needs (Musavi Khomeini, 2/313). They also encourage the nurturing and love for the child (Hurr al-Amili, 1409 AH, 21/485)[2] and recommend that the child must be fed directly from their mother's breast (Quran 2: 23)[3]. All of this indicates the necessity of living together and side by side. Therefore, children are a part of the family, and families and parents cannot be defined and imagined without them.

Stepchildren

The term *'rabibah'* (pl. *'raba'ib'*) refers to a daughter of one's wife from a previous husband (Najafi Jawahiri, 29/349). She is referred to as *'rabibah'* (a nurtured girl) because the management of her mother – who is now the wife of another man - and the responsibility of anyone who comes along with her to that house has fallen upon the man. So, as the husband usually takes care of the daughter's upbringing, she is termed in this way, even though the applied meaning of this term may not be permanent (Ṭabāṭabāī, 1374 SH, 4/42). The membership of a stepdaughter in a family setup is clearly mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an: *"...And your stepdaughters who are under your care [born] of the wives whom you have gone into…"* (Quran 4: 23)

Adopted Children

Child adoption has a relatively long precedent within the history of diverse societies and civilizations. It was a popular practice before Islam and continued to be so, along with its effects, until the 5th year of Hijri (Alimi Tameh, 1387 SH, 41). Furthermore, the reforms that were implemented during the Islamic era, via the Glorious Qur'an, included the removal of the lineage, *mahramiyyat*

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1 . Remember when you were few, and He multiplied you (Quran 7: 86)
2 . Increase the kissing of your children, because for every kiss, you will have a station in Paradise, and between every station there is a distance of five hundred years.
3 . Mothers shall suckle their children for two full years—that for such as desire to complete the suckling… (Quran 2: 233)

and inheritance from it (Quran 33: 5, 4 and 37) [1].

Some[2] verses, especially the verse, "Allah has not made your adopted sons your [actual] sons. These are mere utterances of your mouth. But Allah speaks the truth and He guides to the [right] way," (Quran 33: 4), have raised evidence-based objections and negate the possibility of including the adopted child into the membership of the family; as, in this verse, the adopted child is clearly stated as not being like a biological child, it has considered this idea as the mere words of the people, which is not something valid or binding in the sight of Allah.

Concerning this matter, it is important to remember that this research is only considering whether or not it is possible to include the adopted child as part of the family. What this verse has rejected is the consideration of an adopted child as a biological child, especially regarding the issues of lineage, *mahramiyyat* and inheritance.

In addition to the conduct of the Noble Prophet concerning the adoption of Zayd, the Glorious Qur'an has discussed several other cases of child adoption, without any indication of its rejection and this, therefore, indicates its approval. The Glorious Qur'an referred to Azar as the father of Prophet Ibrahim in Quran 6 [Surah ʿAnʿām]: *"When Abraham said to Azar, his father, 'Do you take idols for gods? Indeed, I see you and your people in manifest error.'"* (Quran 6: 74). Further, in Surah al-Qaṣaṣ, the story of Prophet Musa being taken from the river is narrated: *"Pharaoh's wife said [to him], '[This infant will be] a [source of] comfort to me and you. Do not kill him. Maybe he will benefit us, or we will*

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1 . Allah has not put two hearts within any man, nor has He made your wives whom you repudiate by zihar your mothers, nor has he made your adopted sons your [actual] sons. These are mere utterances of your mouths. But Allah speaks the truth and He guides to the [right] way. (Quran 33: 4); Call them after their fathers. That is more just with Allah. If you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in the faith and your kinsmen. Excepting what your hearts may intend deliberately, there will be no sin upon you for any mistake that you may make therein. And Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful. (Quran 33: 5); When you said to him whom Allah had blessed, and whom you [too] had blessed, 'Retain your wife for yourself, and be wary of Allah,' and you had hidden in your heart what Allah was to divulge, and you feared the people though Allah is worthier that you should fear Him, so when Zayd had got through with her, We wedded her to you, so that there may be no blame on the faithful in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have got through with them, and Allah's command is bound to be fulfilled. (Quran 33: 37)

2 . No written evidence was found but by oral conversation with the experts and examination of the aḥādīth, the content of this discussion was presented.

adopt him as a son.' But they were not aware." (Quran 28: 9). In this verse the issue of his adoption was discussed without any rejection. In Surah Yusuf, the verse, *"The man from Egypt who had bought him said to his wife, 'Give him an honorable place [in the household]. Maybe he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son.'"* (Quran 12: 21) not only mentions the issue of child adoption but also specifically indicates the living with them in the same house: *"The woman in whose house he was, solicited him."* (Quran 12:23)

Parents-in-Law

In normal circumstances, the spouses' parents are not considered members of the family, because, with the marriage of their children, a new family has been formed. However, at the same time, human beings go through different stages of development, with special features and requirements for each stage, among which is old age. This is the stage in life when an individual will face the most challenging conditions in their life[1]. Just as children once upon a time needed the protection and care of their parents, it is the responsibility of the children to protect and care for their parents in their later years, when old age has incapacitated and prevented them from independently taking care of their own needs. Taking care of the parents is an issue that is supported by reason because the stability of the community is determined by the family and the stability of the family is based on love between its members, i.e., parents and children (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH, 7/515) and the Glorious Qur'an, where it stresses the obligation of kindness to the parents[2].

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1. O people! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, [consider that] We created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid, then from a clinging mass, then from a fleshy tissue, partly formed and partly unformed, so that We may manifest [Our power] to you. We lodge in the wombs whatever [fetus] We wish for a specified term, then We bring you forth as infants, then [We rear you] so that you may come of age. [Then] there are some of you who are taken away, and there are some of you who are relegated to the nethermost age, such that he knows nothing after [having possessed] some knowledge. And you see the earth torpid, yet when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells, and grows every delightful kind [of plant]. (Quran 22: 5)

2 . Worship no one but Allah, do good to your parents (Quran: 83); Worship Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him, and be good to parents (Quran 4: 36); That you shall not ascribe any partners to Him, and you shall be good to the parents→

A point that can be mentioned on the membership of others, apart from the husband, the wife, and children, within a family is that their presence is not constant, nor are they part of the usual form. This implies that in a typical family unit, the presence of either a parent-in-law or a stepchild is uncommon. In addition, the presence of these people in a family is often based on a need for protection or care, and this need is highly dependent on the circumstances. It is possible for a parent to not have any livelihood needs or, on the contrary, it is possible that the family cannot meet all the needs of the additional member.

Tranquility

In order to create this psychological atmosphere, Islamic sources have introduced two factors: marriage and residence. With regards to marriage, the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Rum says: *"And of His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort in them…."* (Quran 30: 21). Also, in Surah al-Araf, it states: *"It is He who created you from a single soul and made from it its mate, that he might find comfort with her. So, when he had covered her, she bore a light burden and passed [some time] with it. When she had grown heavy, they both invoked Allah, their Lord: 'If You give us a healthy [child], we will be surely grateful.'"* (Quran 7: 149).

Meanwhile, with regards to the residence, the Glorious Qur'an has described it as a home, which can have different forms: "It is Allah who has made your homes as a place of rest for you and He made for you homes out of the skins of the cattle which you find portable on the day of your shifting and on the day of your halt, and out of their wool, fur, and hair [He has appointed] furniture and wares [enduring] for a while." (Quran 16: 80). This verse was interpreted by some to mean tranquility (Qarā'ti, 4/559), some interpreted it to mean the grave (Husseini Shah Abdul Azimi, 1363 SH, 4/559), while others have interpreted it to mean a home (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH, 12/449; Ṭayyib, 1387 SH, 12/164). It seems that this kind of disparity in the interpretations is due to

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←(Quran 6: 151); Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents (Quran 17: 23); O my son! Do not ascribe any partners to Allah. Polytheism is indeed a great injustice. We have enjoined man concerning his parents (Quran 31- 13-14).

the relationship between having a place of residence and tranquility. In this regard, it is worth noting that a 'home' is named so because it is a place of rest and overnight sleep. Additionally, the Glorious Qur'an has also introduced sleep as a source of attaining tranquility: "and We make your sleep for rest." (Quran 78: 9) In other words, the place of attaining this peace is the home.

Affection

Another element that is found in the definitions of the family, particularly those presented from a psychological point of view, is affection. It is also given special attention to within the Glorious Qur'an and *ahādīth*. Allamah Ṭabāṭabāī in the interpretation of verse 151 of Surah A'nām[1] (Quran 6) proclaims that the life of a human being and his religion is connected to society, society in its formation and continuity is reliant on the existence of the family, whose stability and continuity is dependent on the love and affection between its members (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH, 7 516).

In Islamic sources, love between all family members is given special attention. Allah has introduced love between the spouses as one of His signs: *"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 for a people who reflect."* (Quran 30: 21)

Affection refers to a love whose effects are visible in actions. Thus, the relationship between affection and love is like the relationship between submission and humility, because submission is referred to as a kind of humility whose effect is visible in action, while humility, which is a form of spiritual reaction, occurs in the heart by means of witnessing His grandeur (Ṭabāṭabāī: 16/250).

Khawaja Nasiruddin Ṭūsi considers the parents' affection for their children as a natural thing that does not require willpower (Ismaili, 15-28). At the same time, the Qur'anic verses and

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1 . Say, 'Come, I will recount what your Lord has forbidden you. That you shall not ascribe any partners to Him, and you shall be good to the parents, you shall not kill your children due to penury—We will provide for you and for them—you shall not approach indecencies, the outward among them and the inward ones, and you shall not kill a soul [whose life] Allah has made inviolable, except with due cause. This is what He has enjoined upon you so that you may exercise your reason. (Quran 6: 151)

ahādīth enjoin the expression of the parent's love for their children. The Noble Prophet said: *"Kiss your children"* (Ṭabarsi, 1370, 220), while children, concerning their parents, have been commanded: *"Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents. Should any of them or both reach old age at your side, do not say to them, 'Fie!' And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words. Lower the wing of humility to them, mercifully, and say, 'My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was [a] small [child]!'"* (Quran 17: 23-24)

A Sense of Responsibility

This element is one of the important and necessary elements within the definition of the family and separates it from other relationships, such as cohabitation. It is implicitly mentioned in some definitions, such as the definition of Burgess and Locke, which mentions the roles of the family members. However, the demand of the Shariʿa and Islamic sources requires that this element be explicitly mentioned within the definition of a family.

As mentioned previously, the formation of a family, from an Islamic perspective, is actualized through a verbal contract or agreement between a man and a woman, which not only contains preordained conditions but also specific conditions that can be added to it. All of these matters require the acceptance of responsibility. Adhering to any contract or agreement, including that of marriage, is one of the core principles of Islam: *"O you who have faith! Keep your agreements."* (Quran 5: 1)

Taking responsibility is not only an affair between a husband and a wife, it is also necessary for children to be raised upon it. In research conducted by Mahdavinik (1392 SH), components such as supervision, control, learning, and discipline are, along with affection and respect, also seen as important components of the Islamic educational system. This shows the necessity of children taking responsibility because it is not sufficient to rely solely on the commitment and supervision of parents to achieve the goals of education.

There are many references to the need to be responsible, for example, the Glorious Qur'an has clearly enjoined the believers to protect their family members from the Hellfire: *"O you who*

have faith! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel will be people and stones, over which are [assigned] severe and mighty angels, who do not disobey whatever Allah commands them and carry out what they are commanded" (Quran 66: 6).

Similarly, the Glorious Qur'an quotes a conversation from the inmates of Paradise where they refer to the compassion that they showed towards their family as being the reason for entering Paradise and enjoying the pleasures and blessings of Allah: *"They will say, 'Indeed, aforetime, we used to be apprehensive about our families"* (Quran 52: 25-27).

The Arabic word *"Ishfaq"*, which appears in this verse and has been translated as apprehensive, means care accompanied by fear. If it is used with the preposition *"min"*, it indicates that fear is manifested more than love, but if it is used with the preposition *"fi"*, then it is vice versa. Thus, the meaning of the verse is as follows: "*We had compassion for our families in this world, we loved them, took care of their happiness and saved them from evil and misguidance, lest they became damned. We were afraid that they would become misguided, and for this purpose, we socialized with them in the best of ways. We always gave them advice and did not hesitate to invite them towards the truth"* (Musavi Hamdani, 1374 SH, 19: 22).

Living Under One Roof

The equivalent of family in Arabic is the compound word *Ahl al-Bayt* (Muṣṭafawi, 1368 SH, 1/170). The term *"Bayt"* indicates a place of residence (Qureshi, 1371 SH, 1/248) i.e., a place to stay at night (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, 1/359).

Al-Maqāyis al-Lughah considers this word as having a root that means the place of return, residence, and a gathering place that encloses all the family members. Similarly, a stanza of poetry in Arabic is also called *'Bayt'*, because it is the place where words, letters, and meanings are gathered under special conditions, i.e., a poetry measurement.

The author of *al-Maqāyis* considers the Arabic term *"Al-Bayt"* to mean a man's family and those with whom he spends the night (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH). This term and its derivatives are mentioned 73 times in 29 chapters and 54 verses of the Glorious Qur'an. Out of these figures, three cases have the above meaning, three cases

come with the term "*bayata*", meaning at night and the remaining cases, such as *Baytullah*, *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, and *Bayt al-'Atiq*, are used to mean house.

According to the Qur'anic usage and the opinions of the lexicographers, the Arabic term *"Ahl"* is used when there is a comprehensive bond of proximity and familiarity between several individuals around a particular thing, such as a father, city, book, knowledge, etc. If this is present, the term *"Ahl"* is then prefixed to said word, e.g., *"Ahl al-Kitab"* (People of the Book). (Qureshi, 1412 AH, 1/ 135). This word is mentioned 153 times in 45 chapters and 143 verses.

So, according to the meanings mentioned for the words *"Ahl"* and *"Bayt"*, the compound word *ahl al-Bayt* could be said to mean a group of individuals who reside in a house, especially at night. In other words, a "house" is the common element between a group of individuals. Nevertheless, there may be many cases where a family member does not live in the same house as the other family members, such as a father who has gone on a long journey, but the typical form of a family is one in which the members live together under the same roof.

This matter, i.e., that the members of one house are called a family, is evidenced within the Glorious Qur'an, for example, in the verse: "*[That is] Allah's mercy and His blessings upon you, members of the household. Indeed, He is all-laudable, all-glorious* (Quran 11: 73), i.e., Abraham and his wife, Hajar. Likewise, the verse: "*Since before We had forbidden him to be suckled by any nurse. So, she said, 'Shall I show you a household that will take care of him for you and they will be his well-wishers?'*" (Quran 28: 12), i.e., Imran, the mother of Prophet Moses, and those who were in their house (Musṭafawi, 1368 SH, 1/170).

Male Management

Every institution and social organization must have a logical and meritocratic structure and system in order to achieve its objectives. Within it, every person has a special place and role, indicative of their power and influence over others. The family is also a small, yet fundamental social unit. It is the source and core of human societies. Therefore, rationally, it requires proper administration, structure, and management, i.e., it needs a

manager to oversee its affairs and an administrator to make the final decisions (Panāhi and Azerbaijani, 1392 SH, 157). Islam has entrusted the management of the family to the man: *"Men are the managers of women, because of the advantage Allah has granted some of them over others, and by virtue of their spending out of their wealth…"* (Quran 4: 34).

The Arabic term *qawamun*, (pl. *qawam*), is an exaggerated form of the root word *qiyām*, which means to stand and stand up. However, depending on context and usage, it can take a particular meaning. The broad definition of which is being in charge and bearing responsibility for affairs.

This management of a man over a woman, although implying a kind of dominance, refers more so to guardianship, support, responsibility in the managing of affairs, protection, and maintaining expediency (Panāhi and Azerbaijani, 1392 SH, 153).

Some ahādīth mention this, such as: "Each of you is a shepherd, and you are responsible for your flock. Men are shepherds over their families and are responsible for them. Women are shepherds over their husband's homes and their children and are responsible for them. A servant is a shepherd over their master's wealth and is responsible for it. Alas! Each of you is a shepherd, and you are responsible for your flock" (Daylami, 1412 AH, 1/184). In another narration from the Noble Prophet, it is stated: "Every soul from among the Children of Adam is a master. A man is the master of his family, and a woman is the master of her house" (Payandeh, 1382 SH, 614).

Sustenance

Among the differences between men and women in Islamic law, which is rooted in biological and psychological differences, are the roles of men and women within the family. Islam has entrusted the sustenance of the family to the man. This matter is discussed in the books of Islamic law under the heading of *nafaqah* (family sustenance and provisions). Since this matter has consensus, it will suffice to only mention a few pieces of evidence.

The obligation of a man to provide a woman with her living expenses is based on Qur'anic verses, such as: *"…and on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, in accordance with honorable norms."* (Quran 2: 233); *"Men are the managers*

of women, because of the advantage Allah has granted some of them over others, and by virtue of their spending out of their wealth…" (Quran 4: 34), and the *ahādīth,* for instance, *"Their (i.e., women) provisions and clothing are upon you (i.e. the husband)"* (Ibn Shuba Harrāni, 1363 AH, 33)[1]. Additionally, the edicts of the Islamic jurists also confirm this obligation (Bani Hāshimi Khomeini, 1379 SH, 406). Similarly, the sustenance of the children and the parents, if required, is also the responsibility of the man (Musavi Khomeini, ND, 2, 323-32).

Protection

Unlike other animal species, the inability of a human infant to protect itself persists for several years after birth, which makes the issue of physical support and care of the child a necessity (Bustān (Najafi,) Ibid., p. 73). The Glorious Quran addressed this weakness in a few verses: *"Allah has brought you forth from the bellies of your mothers while you did not know anything."* (Quran 16: 78); *"It is Allah who created you from [a state of] weakness"* (Quran 30: 54). It also mentions that the living needs of the child: *"...and on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, following honorable norms."* (Quran 2: 233), and their safety: *"Mothers shall suckle their children for two full years—that for such as a desire to complete the suckling—and on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, following honorable norms. No soul is to be tasked except according to its capacity: neither the mother shall be made to suffer harm on her child's account, nor the father on account of his child, and the [father's] heir devolve [duties and rights] similar to that. And if the couple desires to wean with mutual consent and consultation, there will be no sin upon them. And if you want to have your children wet-nursed, there will be no sin upon you so long as you pay what you give following honorable norms, and be wary of Allah and know that Allah watches what you do"* (Ibid), is the responsibility of the parents.

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1 . "O people, your women have a right over you, and you also have a right over women. Your rights over them are that they should not allowed anyone to enter your beds, and that no one whom you dislike should be allowed into your home except with your permission. And they should not commit an immoral act. If they do, then God has permitted you to forsake them and leave them in the beds and beat them not severely, then when they cease and they obey you, then it is upon you their provision and their clothing."

After passing through different periods of growth and power, a human being will again reach a turning point in their life: *"and there are some of you who are relegated to the nethermost age."* (Quran 22: 5), where he will experience this state of weakness again: *"It is Allah who created you from [a state of] weakness, then He gave you power after weakness. Then, after power, He ordained weakness and old age: He creates whatever He wishes, and He is the All-knowing, the All-powerful."* (Quran 30: 54). Furthermore, the religious authorities are unanimous in stating that the duty of protecting and looking after the elderly is the responsibility of their children (see the verdicts of the Shia religious authorities)[1]. A man and a woman, who were previously under the protection of their parents, must take care of them during their old age and time of need (Quran 17: 23).

Nurturing

What is meant by nurturing here is a set of measures that are implemented to foster the growth and development of a child's abilities in various areas (Saraqi, 1393 SH, 47 & 101). Nurturing is synonymous with training (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary), while its undertaking is the responsibility of the parents (Shahid al-Thani, 1410 AH, 3/75).

Nurturing that is concerned with the different areas of a human being has several components (see. Saraqi, 1393 SH and Himmati, 1392 SH), which the Glorious Qur'an and *ahadith* have addressed, such as physical education[2], attention to a child's play[3],

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1 . https://www.welayatnet.com/fa/news/97794
Ayatullah Khamenei: Verdict number: 34431; Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzi: Tracking code: 9505070136; Ayatullah Shubayri Zanjani: Verdict number: 32168; Ayatullah Wahid Khorasani: Verdict number: 22040; Ayatullah Sistani: Verdict number: 518659; Ayatullah Faḍil Lankarani: Tracking code: 950147.
2 . "Mothers shall suckle their children for two full years—that for such as desire to complete the suckling—and on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, in accordance with honorable norms. No soul is to be tasked except according to its capacity: neither the mother shall be made to suffer harm on her child's account, nor the father on account of his child, and on the [father's] heir devolve [duties and rights] similar to that. And if the couple desire to wean with mutual consent and consultation, there will be no sin upon them. And if you want to have your children wet-nursed, there will be no sin upon you so long as you pay what you give in accordance with honorable norms, and be wary of Allah and know that Allah watches what you do." (Quran 2: 233).
3 . A boy must play for seven years, learn to read and write for seven years→

respect[1], attention to growth barriers[2], religious orientation[3] and preparation for entering the community[4].

Content validity

To ensure that the evidence (Quranic verses and *ahādīth*) affirmed the elements used in the definition of family, the content validity method was used. This was done by presenting the set of elements, along with their evidence and indications, to nine experts. All the experts were religious clerics who had undertaken the highest level of seminary (Hawza) studies and who possessed expertise in one of the related fields. Hence, in addition to their expertise in jurisprudence (Fiqh) and its principles (Usul Fiqh), they also had expertise in the following fields: psychology, theology, Qur'anic studies, law, religions and denominations, history and prophetic conduct.

Among the twenty-one elements presented to the experts, two of them did not get the necessary points to be considered as an element within the definition of family. They were: 1. The membership of an adopted child in the family and 2. Permanent marriage contract, in the sense that the experts did not accept the notion that it is only through a permanent contract that a family could be formed, rather the majority believed that a family could be formed based on both "permanent" and "temporary" marriage contracts.

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Redefining the Family based on the Glorious Quran and Prophetic Traditions (Ḥādith)

←and learn about the lawful and unlawful things for seven years (Kulayni, 1429 AH, 6/47).

1 . Respect your children and beautify their character. (Hurr al-Amili, ND, 21/476); Call your children with good titles before bad nicknames overtake them (Laḥji, 1420 AH).

2 . Love children and be merciful to them, and if you make a promise to them, ensure that you fulfill it, for they do not know anything except that you provide for them. (Kulayni, 1407 AH, 6/49); Do not teach them to lie, lest they lie; the children of Jacob did not know that a man could be eaten by a wolf until their father taught them (Fayḍ Kāshāni, 1415 AH, 3/8).

3 . …Of the rights of your child, know that you are responsible for what you have been entrusted over him, such as teachings him good manners and guiding him to his Lord (Ibn Shubah Harrāni, 1404 AH, 263); Teach your children to have three qualities: Love for the Prophet, love for his household and the recitation of the Glorious Quran (al-Dafghani, 1977, 2).

4 . O Ali, the right of a child upon his father is that he should give him a beautiful name, improve his manners and put him in a righteous place (Ibn Bābawayh, 1413 AH, 4/372).

Table 1: Content validity coefficients of the family definition components

Components	Variables			Content validity coefficient
	In Need of a thorough examination	In Need of a review	Completely related	
Structure	0	2	7	1/00
Marriage Contract	0	2	7	1/00
Permanent Marriage Contract	2	1	6	0/78
A man and a woman	1	1	7	0/89
Muslim Man and Woman	1	4	4	0/89
Sexual desires	0	2	7	1/00
Children	0	3	6	1/00
Stepchildren	1	1	7	0/89
Adopted children	2	3	4	0/78
Parents-in-laws	1	1	7	0/89
Tranquility	1	1	7	0/89
Affection	0	0	8	0/89
Sense of Responsibility	1	1	7	0/89
Living Under One Roof	0	3	6	1/00
Male Management	0	0	9	1/00
Sustenance	1	1	7	0/89
Protection	1	1	7	0/89
Nurturing	1	2	6	0/89

Conclusion

There are numerous definitions given for family, but only a few examples were presented in this research. Without focusing on the existing limitations of the definition, in addition to coinage and credibility, the presented definitions failed to be comprehensive. This was because most of them were influenced by the theoretical foundations and societal conditions of the academics who presented them. Furthermore, if the discussion on coinage and

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credibility is raised, it will be impossible to consider these definitions as having a specific problem, as each of these definitions, based on its own credibility, can be considered correct.

All the presented definitions were done so using various components. Some of these components were used in most definitions of the family, while some were only used in a few. In addition, some definitions are based on family functions, some on family structure, whereas others are based on a combination of these two or other criteria. What follows is a summarization of the content, accompanied by comparisons made between the components obtained from Islamic sources and those found in the presented definitions.

As mentioned previously, some of the definitions provided are based on the family's functions, such as child upbringing (McIver), reproduction (McIver and Murdock), child maintenance (Giddens), culture creation (Burgess and Locke) and economic cooperation (Murdock). From these definitions, reproduction, child maintenance and child upbringing were among the common elements that were observed while reviewing the Islamic sources. However, this does not mean that the rejection of economic cooperation or opposition to the creation of a subculture, as every new family and community will create a new subculture. In addition, social life without economic issues is not fathomable; nevertheless, these two components are not recognized as being the main characteristics of the family in its Islamic sense. What can be mentioned regarding Islam and the cultural sphere, is the directing of the will and religious orientation, while concerning the economy, it is generally the man who is in charge of the economy of the family.

Some definitions consider sexual desire (McIver, Louis, Burgess and Locke, Cohen) or the relations that stem from it as being the main characteristics of the family (Davis, Burgess and Locke, Cohen). From the Islamic perspective, one of the characteristics of the family is those responsibilities that the husband and wife have towards each other, based on the enacted contract. One of these responsibilities is the fulfilment of sexual needs. However, this cannot be considered to be the foundation and one of the main characteristics of the family, for a family in Islam does not culminate in the fulfilment of sexual needs. Islam

views it as a stimulus to achieve other goals, and if the issue is only in fulfilling sexual desire, Islam has suggested another way (i.e., temporary marriage).

Some definitions have considered the connection between the family members as being the main characteristic of the family (Louis) or at least one of its elements (Davis, Giddens). It should be kept in mind that, while examining the lexicons, it was observed that the synonym of the term 'family' in the Arabic language is *Ahl al-Bayt*. This word is said to signify a group of people who are close to each other and have one thing in common: they all live in the same place. This latter aspect has been mentioned as being a component of the definition.

The fulfillment of roles based on relationships is the most evident aspect of Rogers and Minuchin's definition. This point, rather than defining the family, is an expression of the personal opinions of these academics regarding the family. Emphasis on the role, which has a specific meaning in sociology, is a matter that shows its results in the functioning of the family. Subsequently, some of these functions are, within the Islamic sources, emphasized and approved.

In the majority of the definitions, family members are considered as one of the components of the definition. This component has been taken into consideration due to the emphasis of Islam on having children and the responsibility that the founders of the family have towards them.

Minuchin considered permanent membership as one of the components in his definition of the family. In the definition of Giddens too, permanent membership of a man and woman has been alluded to under the term of loyalty. Similarly, time has also been discussed within the Islamic sources, but specifically regarding the husband and wife, who are the founders of the family. Other family members cannot have this kind of stipulation. For example, the membership of the children to the core family remains until they form their own independent family.

As was mentioned previously, the majority of experts did not acknowledge a permanent marriage contract as being a component of the definition. However, it should be noted that the main reason for their rejection was the possibility for a family to form through a temporary marriage contract. So, even though a

temporary marriage contract has a fixed period, it can be maintained for a lengthy period, thus allowing for parental roles to be fulfilled.

The shared place of residence is an element that was only mentioned in two of the definitions that were presented in this research, namely, those of Darmangan and Murdock. However, Islamic sources and even Arabic lexicons indicate that the common factor between family members is their place of residence.

Affection is another component that is emphasized within the Islamic sources, whereas it only appears in Goldenberg's definition. This component, as discussed previously, is one of the components that have been discussed in many Qur'anic verses and *ahādīth*.

The marriage contract is a component that can also be observed in non-Islamic denominations, even though their content may differ. Nevertheless, it has not been specified in the presented definitions. In some definitions, such as the definition of Lowie, which refers to family as a form of sexual relationship approved by society, reference is made to this component. However, it is done so in an ambiguous manner and fails to indicate the obligatory nature of it.

Regarding the definitions that were presented from the Islamic point of view, two issues are noteworthy. One is that the credibility of these definitions because they are based on the Islamic perspective of the family, has been established. The second issue is that the evidence on which these definitions were based is not mentioned by the scholars. Thus, it is not feasible to conduct an accurate and thorough review and criticism of these definitions; therefore, we must suffice with these comparisons. Since some of the points of this comparative discussion are similar to what was mentioned earlier, mention will only be made of those distinctive points to avoid repetition.

Martyr Mutahhari defined family as being a social, moral and legal institution. But, is it not possible to introduce a family as a psychological system? A family can be viewed from multiple angles, each of which is correct in its own place, but the reasons for preference for one over the other must be stated.

Another distinguishing feature of Martyr Mutahhari's definition is that he believed that family possessed primacy and

a distinct essence in comparison to other social institutions.

To define and distinguish a thing, it is essential for the parts of its definition to completely separate its nature from everything else that is not it. The definition should not just indicate the differences or provide clarification.

So, regarding the primacy of this social unit, although many have stressed that it is the smallest, its size seems to be irrelevant to its definition and identification of its essence, or at the very least, it can be said that no evidence on this was found in the Islamic sources.

Zuḥayli attaches the term family to all individuals who are related due to the relationship between a man and a woman. He also increases its scope to include uncles and aunts. His definition, although broader, fails to include some of the main family members. Hence, despite his assertion that the core of the family would be the husband and wife, his definition does not explicitly mention their membership; rather, it is defined by referring to those who stem from the relationship between the husband and wife. Similarly, the scope defined in the definition is equivalent to the terms *"Khānuvade"* and *"Ashira"* in Persian and Arabic respectively.

In his definition, Qarashi raised sexual issues more than others. Even though this component has been considered in many definitions, a family cannot be defined by it. The Islamic sources mention reproduction as one of the wisdoms behind the presence of sexual desire; so, family formation and reproduction can be seen as outcomes of this component. However, this component is not the entirety of what family is. It, like the other components that have been mentioned previously, should be considered another element within the definition of family.

Others, such as Salarifar, have made mention of blood kinship and affinity relationships when defining family. These relationships were among the elements obtained in this research, despite not being mentioned explicitly within the definition. In other words, family ties, which are based on one of these two relationships, have been discussed in many definitions. Some researchers, such as Salarifar, have specifically mentioned the type of relationship, however, no evidence was found supporting the necessity of mentioning the relationship. So, due to the clarity of this relationship, being either of blood or affinity, in addition

to brevity being preferred in definitions, mentioning the relationship is unnecessary.

Additionally, it appears that his mentioning of the types of responsibilities within the definition is unnecessary and redundant, as he has failed to mention many of these other elements. Furthermore, other objections can also be raised regarding this definition. For instance, if the responsibilities are supposed to be mentioned within a definition, then what is the position of moral responsibilities within the family? Or what is the relationship between religious responsibilities and other responsibilities?

A noteworthy point in Panāhi's definition is the use of the conditional phrase "at least one woman". This seems to indicate that marriage is aimed at forming a new family, and the predominant form of marriage, especially as the "smallest unit of society" that he has mentioned in his definition, contains one woman and one man. Moreover, the marriage contract, as earlier mentioned, is actualized by the proposal of a woman and the acceptance of a man. So, the basic family unit is one woman and one man. In addition to the aforementioned points, apart from the permissibility of polygyny for men, no evidence was found to establish that a family could be defined by it. Consequently, it is clear that the permissibility of polygyny is different from the definition of a family based on it.

In summary, the elements approved by Islamic sources and whose indication was confirmed by the experts were: structure, marriage contract, permanent marriage contract, a man and a woman, being Muslim, sexual desire, children, stepchildren, adopted children, parents-in-law, tranquility, affection, sense of responsibility, living under one roof, male management, sustenance, protection and nurturing. Therefore, based on these elements, a family can be defined as, "A structure that is established through an agreement between a Muslim man and woman to live together. This usually corresponds with the husband and wife living together with children, or at times stepchildren, parents and/or parents-in-law, under one roof. Their living environment is one of tranquility and affection, while their affairs and sustenance are managed and taken care of by the husband. The couple are responsible for satisfying the needs, especially sexual, of each other and are responsible for the protection and nurturing of the other family members."

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