**Friday Khutbah (Sermons) : THE FAMILY IN ISLAM**

The Transcript:

The God-fearing Muslim family is the heart of a healthy community. The piety of a family is dependant on the piety of individual members of the family, and the piety of a community is likewise dependant on the piety of the families who make up the community.

Islam attaches great importance to the family, how it is established and how to keep it together. For the Muslim family to keep up its high position it maintains a state of love and harmony, and you find in it feelings of amicability and Kindness.

Allah says, **“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy.”** He also says, **“They are Libaas [i.e. body cover, or screen, or Sakan, (i.e. you enjoy the pleasure of living with her)] for you and you are the same for them.”** (Al-Baqarah: 187).

The Quran made it clear to married couples that each of them is essential to the other.

Allah says, **“It is He Who has created you from a single person (Adam), and (then) He has created from him his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her.”** It cannot be imagined that one could lead a normal, steadfast human life if there was a complete destruction of the normal family structure.

Those people who call for the abolishment of the family structure do not do so for the good of humankind. Their call was and still is – a discordant sound in the passing of history. The family is established on mutual understanding, the exchanging of views and cooperation.

Allah says in relation to nursing and weaning babies, **“The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years, (that is) for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of suckling, but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother’s food and clothing on a reasonable basis. No person shall have a burden laid on him greater than he can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child, nor father on account of his child. And on the (father’s) heir is incumbent the like of that (which was incumbent on the father). If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no sin on them.”**

A happy family which seeks stability and continuity builds its life on firm principles, the most important of which are: the raising of children, mutual respect of each others rights, courteousness in dealing with one another and widening one’s family’s and one’s own horizons. Here, couples can find the pure quietude that the Quran spoke about, and if a difference occurs between them then true love will melt it away.

The Wise (Allah) know that a person can sometimes be affected by an atmosphere of disagreement and feelings of hate, and then Satan finds what he is looking for sought after for destruction of the existence of the family. The Quranic viewpoint was to purify the emotions and to return to life its clarity and to the family its beauty.

Allah says,**“And live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.”** (An-Nisaa: 19).

And for this reason Imam Ibn Katheer said about this verse, **“It means:** **and perhaps your patience in holding onto them despite your mutual dislike is much better for you in this world and in the hereafter.”**

If the members of a family exchange love for stubbornness; and this is a bad sign and a defeated beginning; nothing can destroy a family as stubbornness and argument. Small disagreements can be blown out of all proportions and become huge points of stubbornness, and major disagreement. How often do we hear tell of or witness marriages failing though they are but newly wed?

Many researchers have decided that family breakdown is the main cause of juvenile delinquency; therefore the family is responsible for protecting itself from disunity before it experiences breakdown and ceases to function as a family unit. Also one cannot pretend that life is or should always be trouble-free; quite the opposite in fact; a normal healthy life will always have its ups and downs.

Everything in this world no matter how insignificant has wisdom behind it and serves a purpose, so what is the role of the Muslim family?

In a Muslim community, the family plays several important roles, the most important being:

Increasing the progeny of the Muslim nation. The Prophet said, “Marriage is one of my traditions, and whoever does not follow my traditions is not one of us. So get married, for that way you will increase the nation (in strength and number).”(Ibn Maajah).

Having many children increases the strength of the community, in addition to increasing ones personal status and being well-remembered after death. Advocates of birth control do not wish the Muslim community any good, and their weak arguments show that they have been afflicted with pessimism, uncertainty (in the truth of Islam and the Last Day) and mistrust (in Allah’s Will).

Teaching and raising Muslim youth is a job for the whole family. In fact, the home is the first school in which the child is introduced to the basic tenets of his religion, and this important job should not be left to maids and nurses. The child that nurses from his mother’s milk also receives her compassion and affection. Conversely, a child which is cared for and raised by maids will never receive the same love, warmth and affection and nor will they have a correct Islamic upbringing.

The Muslim family is held responsible before Allah for the correct Islamic upbringing of it’s children, instilling in them the concept of worship of Allah and following His prescribed way in their lives.

Do our families today fulfil their child-rearing and educational responsibilities? Does our method of raising children give them the power to resist westernisation and secularisation? Do members of the family gather together to learn the Quran? Or do they gather to watch acts of disobedience to Allah (i.e. on the television etc.)? Do our children find in our homes useful lessons, good examples and good manners?

Any shortcomings or omissions in the family’s job of raising its children will have negative effects on the behaviour of the children, and in turn this will have a negative effect on the thoughts, structure and security of the community.

Parents will be asked about the fulfilment of their parental duties. Ibn Umar related that Prophet said, “All of you are guardians and all of you are responsible for your wards. An imam is a guardian, and he is responsible for his wards (among the local community); a man is a guardian in his family and he is responsible for his dependants, a lady is a guardian in her husband’s house and she is responsible for her charges (children, property under her control etc.)” (Bukhari & Muslim).

One responsibility of a parent is to cleanse the house from all vice, to ensure that all members of the family perform all of their religious duties, and to encourage them to perform good and loved deeds.

One of the main goals of the family is to teach its children to love and respect the mosque, and build strong ties between its children and the mosque, for the mosque is an essential part of the life of a Muslim. Instilling love of the mosque is a great and important part of upbringing; deep in effect, and implants in a child respect, good values and manners.

A Muslim family which is based on faith in Allah will be able to hold on to Islamic morals and manners, and feel a great attachment to the mosque. It is able, by the light of the Quran, to bring into the world children who will become brave heroes, scholars, ascetic slaves (of Allah), sincere leaders, pious men, and worshipful women. Such families fill a glorious page in the books of history.

Today the Muslim family faces a grim offensive aimed at shaking its very foundations, by undoing the family ties, spoiling the women’s characters, discarding family values, and calling towards nudity, mixing of the sexes and disinhibition. And if the family is destroyed, will there then remain any Muslim nation? And if it does remain it will be marginalized.

In some Muslim countries, the families’ hearts have been disunited as a result of the slavish adherence to Western values, drifting blindly behind any vogue that comes out of it; divorce cases have risen, and many youths have turned away from marriage followed by a frantic rush after brutish desires.

The following much-followed trend is a sensitive subject that touches many of us closely; it has a share in social change in decreasing the role of the family. Satellite dishes have taken over the family’s time, had an effect on its progress, and loosened its values; and the family loses “in some cases” some of its influence over the children. These devices (satellite, TV. etc.) compete with the family in controlling the children inside the safety of their own homes by their carefully researched attractiveness, and attack directly and indirectly to destroy their relation with their community, weaken their religion, and diminish their enthusiasm. However, one thing that is very painful to consider, is that some families completely abandon their role in the task of religious and intellectual upbringing, and surrender their children to satellite dishes and such like, that distort young minds and destroy faith unchecked.

Brothers in Islam! Building a family on a sound, rational basis is not an easy task, conversely it is a momentous duty that requires preparation and preparedness. Married life is not all fun and games; rather it is a series of responsibilities and duties, whoever proposes marriage without ability or suitability is ignorant, unaware of the wisdom of Allah’s Divine Law, and whomsoever uses marriage for evil purposes, or denies its rights deserves the anger of Allah and His punishment; so one must always behave righteously in this life.

Allah says, **“you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones.”** (At-Tahreem: 6)

Family life is a life of work. And life has its costs and burdens; so it needs someone to be in charge to direct it’s actions, and supervise its safety this leadership is called Qiwaamah in the Quran and it is the lot of the man. Leadership is not for the purpose of reverence and domination but it is a post of supervision and upbringing. It does not mean denying the wife her own personality and wishes, or preventing her from expressing her opinions or having any say of what goes on in the family.

Allah has prepared the woman for certain jobs, and has prepared the man for certain jobs. They are each suited to their own jobs by reason of the physical and mental differences between them. If women were made to be the protectors and maintainers in place of men the woman would be charged with more than she could handle, and the family would be deviated from its normal course and would face trials and difficulties. There are essential differences between men and women that enable them to perform the gender-specific tasks which have naturally and traditionally been theirs to perform. If the roles of men and women were reversed, it would harm the family, and ultimately the community at large. Those people who call for the removal of man’s natural assertiveness and leadership are fools because that goes against the natural Law of Allah.

Al-Qiwaamah means that the head of the household is responsible for the physical safety of his family, and for their safety from a religious standpoint. He protects them from evil fashions and deviation, and provides the perfect example in the way he abides by the Limits set by Allah, and his exaltation of his religious rites and ceremonies, unashamedly and with the best of character and moral standard. He is like a shepherd that protects his flock.

The head of a household is required to strike a balance between his work, his acts of worship and being free for his family; to give each one it’s due, e.g. the rights of the wife, bringing up the children etc. If the head of the household is unable to make time to sit by himself or with members of the family to talk to them and listen to them, later on, when it is too late to do so, or is no longer possible, he will regret not having made the time.

Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-Aas said, “The Messenger of Allah said to me, “I have been told that you fast all day and then stay up all night (in worship) Don’t do so; For your body has it’s rights on you, and likewise your wife has rights upon you: fast and break your fast; fast three days in each month for that is (as if you were) fasting your whole life.”" (Bukhari & Muslim).