



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Observance of Family Members' Rights on Strengthening Family Bonds from a Religious Perspective

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT	
<p>Article History: Received: 29 October 2022 Revised: 28 December 2022 Accepted: 16 January 2023</p>	<p>SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES: The present study aims at identifying the rights of family members based on religious sources and the impact of their observance on strengthening family bonds.</p>	
<p>Key Words: Family Members' Rights Strengthening Family Bonds Religious Perspective</p>	<p>METHOD AND FINDING: Using a descriptive-analytic methodology, this paper deduces the rights of family members and the impact of their observance on strengthening family bonds from family-related verses and traditions. The study shows that One of the factors responsible for stability, peacefulness and efficiency of a family is the respect its members show for each other's rights. Most inconsistencies that jeopardize the familial efficiency are rooted in spouses not respecting each other's rights and not giving honest appreciation to each other. Religious sources have considered rights for each one of family members including husband, wife, child, father and mother. Parallel to these rights, they have placed duties on each one of family members. Based on religious sources, it is the observance of rights together with performing duties that strengthen family bonds.</p>	
<p>DOI: 10.22034/imjpl.2023.14975.1074</p>	<p>CONCLUSION: One of the things that prevents family atmosphere from becoming cold saves family bonds from shattering is the couples' knowledge of their spousal rights, duties and obligations as well as the transparency of the mandatory and non-mandatory limits and expectations. That is, if, from the outset, the husband and wife are well aware of each other's rights and those of their children and set their expectations based on this knowledge, the family will be efficient.</p>	
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Introduction

Family, which is the root of line of human descent, will not be firm and stable unless it is strong, peaceful, dynamic and efficient. One of the factors responsible for stability, peacefulness and efficiency of a family is the respect its members show for each other's rights. Paying attention to the question of rights paves the ground for a better understanding of rights and removing their deficiencies.

One of the things that prevents family atmosphere from becoming cold saves family bonds from shattering is the couples' knowledge of their spousal rights, duties and obligations as well as the transparency of the mandatory and non-mandatory limits and expectations. That is, if from

the outset, the husband and wife are well aware of each other's rights and those of their children and set their expectations based on this knowledge, the family will be more efficient because, most inconsistencies that jeopardize the familial efficiency are rooted in spouses not respecting each other's rights and not giving honest appreciation to each other.

For example, it is one of the rights of a wife not to be forced to carry out household chores. That is to say, the husband cannot make her do housework. It does not mean that a husband is obliged to shoulder all the burdens of life covering unnecessary expenses or devoting part of his time to doing household chores; rather it

is to draw the attention of those men, who because of working outside the home keep taunting their wives describing their work as worthless, to the fact that the housework their wives are carrying out is not out of responsibility but out of virtue and compassion.

If a man is cognizant of the fact that housework is not a duty of his wife, he will appreciate her hard work, overlook any shortcoming and make efforts to make amends. [If this is the case the], love, compassion, and cooperation will prevail the family atmosphere and each family member will work peacefully and keenly bringing about an efficient family. When everyone in the family is aware of his rights and responsibilities, it will lead to better

attitudes. Speaking from the viewpoint of social psychology, the attitudes are so important that some experts believe that social psychology is the study of attitudes only. (*Baqiriyani, 2000: 2*)

The perfect religion of Islam has paid due attention to the reciprocal rights of people especially family members legislating rules that address all the stages and rights of all members of the family including the husband, wife, and children.

When it comes to respecting the rights of believers, it has been reported in religious sources that:

“In no way is Allah worshipped better than by fulfilling the right of a believer”. (*Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 71: 243*)

That is to say, fulfilling the rights is not only a factor consolidating the family and making it efficient, but it is also considered to be an act of worship rewarded by God.

The findings of researches conducted in academic centers show that most of the research activities have been carried out to determine the correlation between fulfilling the rights and marital or family satisfaction. Most of the relevant researches do not rely on religious sources, and many of the research activities done on the basis of religious sources lack psychological analysis on this issue.

Therefore, the main question of this research is, how does the effect of reciprocity and fulfilling

mutual rights on family efficiency and effectiveness based on religious sources and psychological analysis?

At the end of the introduction, it is important to state an issue and that is the difference between law and morality. Although at times there is an overlap between law and morality (i.e. the law upholds moral values); but there are basic differences between these domains:

- Legal rules deal only with man's social behavior whereas moral rules include man's individual and social behaviors. In other words, morality addresses man's relationship with God, himself and others but law supervises man's relationship with others only.

- Legal rules entail external sanctions for noncompliance while moral rules, if violated, do not entail external sanction. The sanction is rather internal.

- The moral rules are general, immutable and perpetual unlike legal rules which are relatively subject to change and variation. (*Mesbah Yazdi, 2005: 64*)

Theoretical Foundations of Research

1. Right

“Haqq” (right) is a mentally posited thing legislated for someone against someone else. This right may or may not have an actual source.

In other words, the concept of right is such that it does not presuppose the

existence or non-existence of an actual source. Haqq has many requirements one of which is the realization of a certain benefit by the individual who is entitled to it. To have exclusive power over something or a privilege is a necessary requisite of right because he who benefits from the right is entitled to prevent others from benefiting from it. It can be said that the aforementioned right belongs to the one who is entitled to it.

Since others are not allowed to benefit from it and the right is addressed to them in favor of the one entitled to it, therefore, the right creates a kind of privilege for its holder. (*Ibid: 29-31*)

2. Family

Experts have presented different definitions of family. Each definition refers to a dimension of the family. However, family can be defined with a view to its basic features.

Family is among of the most common social institutions that emerges as a result of marriage between a male and a female ending up in blood ties. Usually characterized by shared residence, it has personal, physical, economic and educational functions. *(Salarifar, 2022: 13)*

3. Efficient Family

An efficient family is a family whose members, by adhering to religious beliefs and observing Islamic morality and fulfilling rights, pave the way for exploring

and developing their capabilities and competence in various cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. *(Safouraei Parizi, 2010: 11)*

4. Right and Obligation

Right and obligation are reciprocal and they are two sides of the same coin. When a husband has the right to forbid his wife from going out to work, the wife is, then, under the obligation to avoid working outside the home.

Thus, we see that the rights and obligations which manifest themselves in mans' social behavior are concomitant and closely connected to each other; that is, wherever there is a right, there is a corresponding obligation, and wherever there is an obligation upon someone, it

must be for fulfilling a right.
(*Mesbah Yazdi, 2005: 55*)

Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Rights and Obligations

Some of the rights and obligations considered for the members of a family or a community from the point of view of religious sources is mandatory and unfringeable.

Whoever possesses an unfringeable right can enforce such right against whom such right is enforceable.

That means, a person against whom the right is enforceable has a legal duty to honor the right of the person (protected under law), not to mention the fact that a punishment has been assigned in case his right is not honored. However, there are some rights which are

non-mandatory, and they do not entail any punishment and he whose right is violated has no right to petition either.

Certainly, both sets of rights and obligations are meant to help attain an efficient family. Speaking from a religious point of view, the first category of rights has been introduced as obligatory rights and the second category has been considered recommended or mubah (permissible) rights.

He who fulfills and honors both rights will be rewarded by God in the afterlife. In case the mandatory rights are dishonored and one of the family members fails to fulfill his duty, not only will he be punished under Shari'a and civil law, but he will also be punished by God.

As for the second category of rights which are non-mandatory, there is no punishment assigned for violating them. It goes without saying that each non-mandatory right is backed up by moral obligation because the efficiency of a family cannot be guaranteed only on the basis of law; otherwise this institution will turn into a weak, lifeless, pathetic, unsustainable and unstable institution.

The family is not only a legal institution characterized by a coherent system of laws designed to govern and constrain all aspects of its operation but it is also an institution requiring a combination of legal and moral codes. Morality is predominant in this combination because not

only most of the rules relating to the family are without effective sanctions but they also originate in religious and social morality and influence the law.

In all societies, the family is the expression of public morality, and what must characterize a family are love, compassion, good intention and mutual trust. No force other morality and faith can rule over these emotions. The fact that man is duty-bound to maintain his family and educate his children and the wife is obliged to behave well with her children and husband as well as to submit herself to him derives from moral rules which the law has borrowed.

In cases where the law gives general instructions and prescribes universal and

inconspicuous obligations, the manifestations of such instructions are somehow moral obligations. For instance, according to *articles 1103* (Husband and wife are bound to establish friendly relations) and *articles 1104* (Husband and wife must cooperate with each other for the welfare of their family and the education of their children) of *The Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2002)*, the couple must maintain good relations with each other and cooperate for the welfare of their family and the education of their children.

As per *article 1177* (A child must obey its parents and must respect them whatever its age), a child must obey its parents and must respect them whatever its age; but the question is:

Is it only a legal duty of the wife to take good care of her ailing husband? Is it only a legal duty of the husband to take his children to school?

These jobs require friendly relation and cooperation of husband and wife in educating the children and one party cannot launch a lawsuit against the other to make him or her do his duty. The law also does not specify any penalty for each and every minor case. The moral aspect, in such matters, overshadows the legal effects.

Thus, when it comes to family, law and morality cannot be separated from each other, nor a line to distinguish the principles and rules of the two can be drawn. (*Katuziyan, 1998: 145*)

Based on the categorization of the rights into mandatory and non-mandatory ones irrespective of their moral backing, the rights of family members can be sorted out as under:

- Wife's rights and the mandatory duties of husband.
- Husband's rights and the mandatory duties of wife.
- Wife's rights and the non-mandatory duties of husband.
- Husband's rights and the non-mandatory duties of wife.
- Children's rights and the mandatory duties of father.
- Children's rights and the mandatory duties of mother.
- Parents' rights and the mandatory duties of children.
- Parents' rights and the non-mandatory duties of children.

Based on what was just said, if the members of a family do not honor one another's rights, the family cannot be made efficient by making its members to honor the mandatory rights, let alone the non-mandatory rights which have no legal support and can easily be violated. For this reason, when it comes to categorizing the rights, it is better to divide the rights into four categories:

- Wife's Rights
- Husband's Rights
- Children's Rights
- Parents' Rights

In order for a family to be efficient, both mandatory and non-mandatory rights must be honored and fulfilled. The efficiency of the family depends largely on how far these rights are respected and upheld. In the following, these rights are introduced.

Wife's Rights

1. Maintenance and Necessities of Life

It is obligatory on the husband to pay maintenance of his wife and the amount of maintenance is determined according to the wife's needs and status. (*Imam Khomeini, 2000: 299*)

The modified *Article 1107* of *The Civil Code of the*

Islamic Republic of Iran (2002) reads, maintenance includes dwelling, clothing, food, furniture in proportion to the situation of the wife, on a reasonable basis, and provision of a servant if the wife is accustomed to have servants or if she needs one because of illness or defects of limbs. (*A Collection of Rules, 2002, Vol. 2: 1079*)

Therefore, the maintenance, which is considered among wife's rights to be honored by the husband includes the following:

A. Provision of suitable residence: For residence, the wife is entitled to a house suitable for her as usual for her euqal. She should be supplied the facilities required by her. She can demand for her residence a separate house without sharing a co-wife,

etc. or a furnished independent room, by 'Ariyah, lease or ownership. If the woman belongs to the beduins, a cottage or a tent suitable for her position shall be sufficient for her. The same is the case with the carpets and covers, as she must have the carpets to be laid on the floor, and what is required at bed time like quilts, pillows and the beds on which to sleep. For their quantity, quality and kind, consideration is to be made as mentioned in case of other objects.

B. Provision of food and necessary condiments (edibles): As regards food, its quantity is as much as is sufficeint to make her fill.

For its quality reference must be made to the food usually supplied to her equals in her town suitable for her eating habits or what she is habituated to take so that giving it up may be harmful for her. As regards condiments, the amount and quality must be like the food usually used by her equals in her town and as is suitable for her habits, or if what is usual for her including what is usual among her equals or suitable for her habit, suppose, the continuance of meat is necessary, it shall be obligatory. The same is the case with anything special out of condiments to which she is used and giving it up shall be harmful for her. Apparently, consideration

must be made for what her equals are habituated to take besides food, and condiments, like tea, tobacco, coffee, or the like. Even more important is the necessary amount of seasonal fruits that are necessarily eaten in warm climates. Likewise, there are other usual, different types of fruits in other seasons for her equals.

C. Provision of required clothing proportionate to the wife's status: The same is the case with clothes, in whose quantity and quality consideration is to be made for what is usual among her equals, town of residence and the seasons that are required in winter and summer, as there is extreme difference of

opinion as regards the quantity, quality and kind in their respect. If she were from among those who are used to embellishments, it is obligatory to supply to her clothes according to her equal besides the clothes on her body.

D. It is a responsibility of husband to provide for the medical expenses of his wife as well as to protect her health. He is duty-bound to pave ground for her to live in a healthy environment where she may enjoy both physical and mental comfort. Whenever she falls ill, it would be obligatory on him to take action for her treatment and pay for her medical expenses.

E. Providing means of living proportionate to the wife's status is a mandatory duty of the husband and it is considered to be among the obligatory rights and maintenances of the wife. (*Imam Khomeini, 2000: 299*)

When it comes to this mandatory duty of the husband and the obligation of woman, there are a few points worthy of notice:

- Maintenance of the wife is the mandatory liability of the husband provided that she is completely obedient to him (i.e. She submits herself to him and is available for him for sexual intercourse). In case the man pays the amount upfront but the woman is

recalcitrant, the maintenance paid for the days of recalcitrance must be returned to the man and the woman owes her husband this amount of maintenance.

- Only a permanent wife is entitled to maintenance.

- It is not a condition for the wife's entitlement for maintenance that she must be poor and needy.

- If the husband, who is responsible for the wife's maintenance, does not provide her the same, she can draw her expenses from his property without his permission.

- If a rich man marries a poor woman, the man must not take her past situation into consideration for maintaining her; rather he must consider her present condition and status

and provide for her present needs and living expenses. (*Imam Khomeini, 2000: 288-299*)

2. Satisfaction of Sexual Needs

A fundamental function of the family is to regulate and gratify sexual needs of the couple. Sexual feeling and the organs associated with it are an important part of the human existence. To maintain the psychological and mental well-being and peace of the family as well as its efficiency, the first point is to explicitly confirm and be cognizant of the sexual aspect of one's spouse.

In regards to sexual satisfaction, Bradford has conducted a research on as many as 351 couples over 15 years of marital life

asking them the reason for continuation of their married lives. The results of this research show that sexual satisfaction is associated with the stability of marital relationships.

Neglecting this need will put the wife into serious health complications. Given the fact that sexual need is a biological feature of human being, Islam considers wife's sexual satisfaction to be part of her right as well as one of man's duties. The Quran considers sexual relationships as a beauty of the married life. (*Ref: Quran, 3: 14*)

Religious teachings emphasize satisfaction of sexual desire through marriage only considering it an important aspect of marriage. Since there is no other way to gratify the

sexual need, it is a duty of the man to fulfill his wife's need and keep honoring this right.

3. Comfortable Life

According to narrations, it is the husband's duty to make efforts to create a satisfactory living condition and provide the living costs to a reasonable level as well as do what he can to fulfill the needs of his family. As reported in religious sources:

“The best man with God, the Exalted, is he who is more kind to his family members and brings ease and comfort to them”.
(Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 78: 136)

A family that has access to all what it needs for its perfection and growth can move on towards achieving its goal with more

tranquility and peace of mind. On the contrary, whenever they face restrictions and limitations created by the husband or father, they cease to have the peace of mind and begin to develop a negative view towards the bread-winner of the family. This view affects heavily the efficiency and performance of the family.

It has been narrated in religious texts that it is appropriate for men to create development and relief in such a way that their families do not wish them dead. (Kulayni, 2003, Vol. 4: 11)

The relief or comfort which is, according to the narrations, considered to be part of woman's rights has been highly underscored by the Infallible Imams, peace

be upon them. The general purport of the traditions indicate that men's activities and efforts to procure the needs of their families and create ease and comfort in their lives is highly stressed by God and He has considered the highest rewards for them. The reward of martyrdom in the way of God is the highest reward in the religious culture and texts, and he who strives to earn money for [the comfort of] his family is like one who fights in the way of Allah and at times, it has been considered higher than that.

Likewise, showing indifference towards this issue has been reproached and he who does not give serious attention to the welfare of himself and his family and does not make

constructive attempt in this way has been reproved and admonished by the Messenger of Allah. (*Hurr Amili, 1991, Vol. 12: .43*)

4. To be Well-Groomed and Tidy

Just as a man would like his wife to be pretty, attractive, clean and tidy, a woman too wants her husband to have the same characteristics, and it is within her right to expect him to be clean and well-dressed. It appeals to her to see her man tidy and smart. The tidiness and attractiveness of the man creates marital satisfaction and increases in wife's modesty and protects her against taking notice of other men.

One of the companions of the seventh Shia Imam, peace be upon him, reports

that he asked him the reason for dying his beard and he replied that adornment of man (for the sake of his wife) helps her maintain her chastity. Women who deviate from the path of chastity do so due to the carelessness and faults of their husbands.

It has been narrated from Imam Reza that the Israelite women gave up on their modesty due, mainly, to the fact that their husbands did not adorn themselves. Then he added that a woman has the same expectation for him that a man has for her. (*Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 73: 102*)

Maintaining chastity and modesty is one of the factors responsible for family stability and efficiency. Where there is no modesty and chastity, one cannot expect the husband and

wife to be faithful and loyal to each other. The couple's faithfulness to each other consolidates marital union and make the husband and wife to be attached to each other, thus, it impacts the family efficiency.

Chastity is also one of the most important factors affecting children's education and, by extension, the society. Family is the best environment for teaching virtue and chastity to children. Assimilating their parents, the children end up becoming modest human beings.

5. Good Relations

A woman is a divine trust and gift for man. Imam Sajjad said:

“You should know that she is God's favour toward you, so you should honour her and treat her

gently". (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 74: 5)

She deserves to be treated in a befitting and worthy manner. Imam Sadiq said:

"A man needs three characteristics in order to be able to run his home and family, even though they may be against his innate disposition, one is to treat his family members well...". (Ibid, Vol. 78: 236)

To treat someone with respect and dignity as well as to avoid insulting and degrading him or her is a human and moral duty of every man and woman. A man must not try to focus too much on his wife's flaws and faults; rather, he should, based on religious instructions, try to conceal them.

Among the important instances of good and amicable relationship is to ignore wife's mistakes and forgive her. Those who overlook others' mistakes and forgo their personal rights, attract other people's attention to themselves keeping them optimistic, loyal and caring.

Behaving with others well and maintaining good relationships can occur both through speech and conduct. When a man speaks with his wife gently and in a pleasing manner with a jovial and smiling countenance, he is, giving her the key of love and an amicable and efficient relationship. He makes his relationship strong and stable through an enjoyable and pleasant conversation. Serenity and respect in the words, good manners and

beauty of speech are the characteristics of pure-hearted people and among the moral traits of noble religious leaders.

On the contrary, a frowning and scowling face and annoying words seal the window to relationships and intimacy increasing emotional gap and resulting in family inefficiency.

Husband's Rights

The solidity of family relationships and family efficiency depend, largely, on the fulfillment of the husband's rights by the wife. When a woman honors her husband's rights, the husband also has the necessary and sufficient motivation to carry out his duties. The fulfillment of reciprocal rights by both parties to the marriage

paves the way for normal behavior and improves family efficiency.

Some of the most important rights of the husband which are part of the wife's mandatory obligations are as under:

1. Satisfying the Sexual Need

It is a duty of the wife to submit herself to her husband to satisfy his sexual need except on those days in which sexual intercourse is forbidden due to restrictions imposed by the religious law. It is even recommended that she offer herself and express her readiness beforehand.

The Messenger of God says:

“That it is necessary for a woman to make use of the best perfume, to put on the most beautiful dress, adorn herself in

the best possible manner and make herself available for her husband like an elegantly walking peacock. Then he says, if she does so, she has only honored her husband's rights while her husband's rights are more than this. She must wear the best of her perfumes and clothes and adorn herself in the best manner and submit herself to her husband during the day and night and her husband's rights is more than that. (Hurr Amili, 1991, Vol. 14: 8)

When it comes to man's desire for woman and the latter's obedience to him, the Prophet of God has a very amazing order. Replying to a question asked by a woman who wished to

know her husband's rights, the Prophet said:

“She must not deny him her body, even if she is on the back of a camel”.
(Ibid)

This injunction signifies the importance of fulfilling man's sexual needs.

2. The Right to Control Woman's going out and coming back Home

The mandatory rule that a woman can leave her home on the condition that she gets her husband's permission is based on incontestable traditions and reports. There are many traditions in the Shia sources making reference to the same point. Similar traditions have been narrated in Sunni sources. (Ref: Haythami, 1991, Vol. 4: 313)

This ruling has also been considered indisputable among jurists because no one has doubted it. There are few scholars who are of the view that the necessity of obtaining permission relates to the time when her walking out of the house leads to violation of her husband's sexual rights. However, given the fact that the narrations are absolute and unrestricted, it is unreasonable to consider it as applicable to such cases where the husband's sexual right is violated. (*Bustan, 2009: 60*)

3. The Right to Choose where to Live

Among the requirements of sexual obedience is the husband's right to choose where to live. A woman can fulfill her obligation of

satisfying her husband's needs when she agrees to live at a place chosen by her husband.

The religious sources give such a right to the husband and consider it as one of his established rights and a mandatory duty of the wife. Nonetheless, the wife can stipulate as part of the marriage contract that her husband should not take her out of her own city and place of residence or allow her to live in a specific city and if the husband accepts the condition, he must comply with it, (*Hurr Amili, 1991, Vol. 14: 435*) and violating it is a breach of the covenant. (*Bustan, 2009: 68*)

The Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran makes reference to this right:

The wife must stay in the dwelling that the husband allots for her unless such a right is reserved to the wife. (The Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2002: Article 1114)

Children's Rights

A child is the sweetest fruit of love between a man and a woman who are lawfully married to each other. The presence of a child in a marital life not only increases love and affection; commitment and a sense of responsibility; hope and optimism in marital relationships but it also causes the couple to witness their child as a reflection of their 'common self'. The crying and laughing of a baby are like a plectrum striking the lyre of their existence causing the music

of love, compassion, sacrifice, devotion and kindness to reverberate.

A child is like a newly blossomed bud decorating the grassland of the marriage life with tenderness and freshness. A child is a gift from God and a sign of divine grace that brings with it abundant good making the parents trustees of the divine trust and enabling them to perpetuate themselves over time through their offspring by honoring the divine trust. This aspiration will not be materialized except through fulfilling the rights which the owner of trust has determined and prescribed.

1. The Right to have a Good Name

To choose a good name for a baby is among the rights

of the child. (*Imam Khomeini, 2000: 308*)

Imam Reza describes a good name given to a baby as an act of kindness and beneficence by the parents:

“The first beneficence of a parent towards his child is to give him a good name; therefore, you should name your child with a good name”. (*Kulayni, Vol. 6: 18*)

A good name is the best gift a child receives in its life from its parents. A child hears his name day and night; and it is reasonable to believe that the meaning of that name subconsciously strengthens those characteristics which are implied in that name. What is emphasized here is the fact that a name has a psychological effect on the

child's individual and social personality.

According to Islam, a child's right is not fulfilled only by giving it a name; rather, based on religious teachings, it is a duty of the parents to choose a good name for their child. It has been enjoined in religious sources that:

“Give your child a name before it is born and if you do not know that it is male or female, give it a name that is appropriate for both male and female child because if you lose an unnamed child due to miscarriage, the child will meet his father on the Judgment Day and will ask: Why didn't you give me a name? Didn't the Prophet name (his grandson) Mohsen before

he was born?" (Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 101: 128)

Furthermore, the parents have been forbidden from giving a bad and ugly name to their child. If they choose a bad name for their child, it will become a cause of embarrassment and the name will become a source of constant irritation affecting his character and prestige in society. a child can change his name once he attains the legal age. He has, however, been deprived of having a good name by his parents within a period of time.

2. A Child's Right to be Breastfed

Based on divine injunctions and the law of nature, a child should be viewed as having the right to be breastfed because the best

milk for a suckling child is its own mother's milk in the first place. Depriving a child of its mother's milk is a great injustice to the child. For this reason, according to Islam, there are ample rewards for breastfeeding.

The Prophet says:

"And when she is giving milk to her child, for every suck of the child, Allah gives her a lot of rewards, and when the period of breastfeeding the child is finished, one of the great angels of Allah taps her side and says: 'Start your deeds afresh, for Allah has forgiven all your minor sins". (Hurr Amili, 1991, Vol. 15: 175)

Perhaps, many would wonder why Islam considers breastfeeding as a right of

the child upon its parents. Are there not any alternatives to breastfeeding?

To answer this question, we would point out that God is Wise and that everything in its place is best according to His perfect wisdom which requires conscious orderliness of creation and a comprehensive vision in legislating rules.

A child's birth and its nutritional needs and the fact that the milk glands in the mother's breasts simultaneously begin the work of producing breast milk and the ingredients of the breast milk are signs of divine wisdom and also a sign of the oneness of God for those who ponder and contemplate.

Experts believe that breast milk is the most perfect food for infants and babies.

Just as breastfeeding has been emphasized in the Quran and jurisprudence, they too believe that the mother should give her own nutritious food to the baby because human breast milk is a perfect food and the richest and most nutritious of all foods since it contains all what an infant's body needs.

Breast milk has lots of benefits and advantages for the child some of which are stated below. These benefits motivate the mothers not to deprive their children of their rights and to believe that breast milk is their infants' right.

- Breast milk provides optimal nutrition for babies and it best suits their physiological structure; because it has all the nutrients for growth.

The breast milk is warm, clean and unpolluted. It digests easily and does not have a negative effect on the child's digestive system. Breast milk provides the right balance of protein, fat and sugar content to provide the energy a baby needs. Minerals in breast milk such as calcium, phosphorus, iron, copper etc. help babies' bones, teeth, nervous system, muscle and hematopoietic system to grow. The amount of minerals in breast milk makes it easy for the child to digest it.

- Breastfed children are 6 times more likely to survive than other children. If all the children are breastfeed for up to six months, child mortality

will decrease and a lot of children will be saved. Medical research shows that breast milk contains antibodies important for immunizing an infant against diseases.

- Breast milk is always easily available for the child in all weather conditions. The child can benefit from the milk every now and then. Since breast milk is used in its natural and crude form, it does not lose of any of its ingredients. It is always fresh and warm to a suitable degree.

- Breast milk not only ensures the child's well-being during infancy but studies show that, even during old age, those who had adequate breast milk in their

infanthood are much healthier than those who were deprived of this God-gifted blessing. Thus, they are less prone to cardiovascular and coronary complications and they are less affected by blood cholesterol and triglyceride as compared with those who have been deprived of their mothers' milk in their childhood. (*Mohammadiyan, 2019: 45*)

3. The Right to Socialization

One of the aspects of human existence is the desire to form interpersonal relationships with other human beings. It is an aspect which must be taken into consideration. For this reason, one of the duties of parents and teachers in educating

children and the future generation is to pay attention to their social growth so that their talents and capacities may grow and blossom in the arena of social life and that they may be able to successfully participate in collective life.

In other words, social education is one of rights of children.

Human experience in social life shows that the well-being, stability and sustainability of a social system depend on the well-being, readiness and ability of the people of that society.

Islam as a comprehensive religion addressing all aspects of the human life gives special attention to social education and it has presented instructions aimed at training disciplined human beings characterized by sagacity,

spiritual balance and moral equilibrium in order to enable them to take part in the collective life in a more realistic manner.

The religion of Islam has placed the pillars of education within the individuals themselves advising them to honor certain principles which, if materialized in them, would lead to sustainable relationships, reciprocal love, balanced life, social care and so forth.

Forgiveness, pity and compassion, respect for the rights of others, courage, sacrifice and dedication, consultation, cooperation, etc are among the principles of social education underscored by Islam. Family is the first institution in which these principles are practiced and upheld. The children and youngsters learn them by

witnessing the behavior of the family members. Thus, according to Islam, only that house is desirable and favorable in which the parents try to create a divine environment, and that by implementing justice and fairness among the children, showing compassion and mercy towards the children, respecting the elders and aged ones, cooperation and collaboration in carrying household chores, forgiveness in terms of overlooking other family members' mistakes, etc. (*Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 23: 113*)

They let their children witness their parents and eventually benefit from their experiences in the arena of social life and interaction with other individuals in the society.

4. The Right to Marriage

The right to marriage is among the indisputable rights of children over their parents, especially the father. Perhaps, due to a lack of experience, poverty, lasting wishes and ideal thinking he may get distracted in marriage or may start hesitating and procrastinating. It is a duty of fathers to help their children make appropriate choices by paving the way and taking the basic essential steps for that purpose.

Based on religious teachings, among the rights of a child over his/her father is to give him/her a good name, teach him/her writing and when he/she attains the age of puberty, he should help him/her get married.

In the era of ignorance, the parents did not care

about their children's marriage. That was why God, the Exalted, ordered Muslims to take action for their children's marriage. He made it an obligatory duty of father to help his children get married. *(Mohammadi Reyshahri, 2000, Vol. 10: 720)*

5. The Right to Physical and Mental Well-being

Physical and mental well-being is the right of a child over his parents. One of the reasons Islam recommends marriage to those who are physically and mentally healthy is because of fulfilling the same right of the child. The children of ailing parents are much likely to be suffering from a disease. Although intellectual disability or mental retardation and mental

disorder are not a barrier to marriage, ignoring such problems is risky. That is why such people have been prohibited from procreating. (*Hurr Amili, 1991, Vol. 14: 75*)

After finding and getting married to a suitable spouse, the couple should make sure they are prepared to take childbearing and parenting responsibility. They have to ensure that they can, after conception or insemination, fulfill their child's rights. This preparation is not restricted to the physical aspect only; rather both parties to the marriage should also be psychologically prepared.

A child's physical and mental well-being has largely to do with the parents' behavior, especially the mother. The presence of another human in the

family will entail caring and educational responsibilities. From a physical point of view, it is a right of the child upon her parent to give it good food, especially *halal* (lawful) food purchased with *halal* earnings.

Parents' Rights

The religious sources provide various manifestations of fulfilling and honoring the rights of parents. These manifestations can be placed under one common title "kindness".

God, the Exalted, consistently enjoins kindness to parents in different verses of the Quran placing it next to worshipping God. That is to say, respect for parents and showing kindness to them has been placed second in importance.

(Ref: *Quran*, 2: 83; 4: 22; 17: 23)

The manifestations of kindness have been pointed out and explicated in the traditions. Some of the most important manifestations mentioned therein are as under:

- ✓ To obey parents.
- ✓ To talk to parents gently and nicely.
- ✓ To avoid interrupting parents.
- ✓ To show humbleness and humility towards parents.
- ✓ To tend to parents and fulfill their needs.
- ✓ To pray for parents.
- ✓ To share their grief and happiness.
- ✓ To be more kind to mother.
- ✓ To appreciate, in words and in practice, their favors and sacrifices.

✓ Not to address parents by calling out their names.

✓ To avoid ordering parents. (*Hurr Amili, 1991, Vol. 15: 205-277*)

✓ To avoid hurting parents even to the extent of saying “Uff” to them.

✓ Taking special care of parents in their old age. (Ref: *Quran*, 17: 23-24)

The basis of relationships and the most important factor that binds parents to their children is the blood relationship between the parents and their children. The parents' names are a sign of that relationship.

If a child addresses his parents by calling out their names, it is as though he has forgotten or ignored

parental relationship causing the emotional and parental relationships to fade gradually with the children not falling obliged to respect their parents' rights.

The Messenger of Allah also wanted his daughter Fatima Zahra to call him "Father" and not to use any titles like "Messenger of Allah". (*Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 43: 32*)

It can be said that the Prophet of Islam wanted to maintain the father-child relationship in their communication and to ensure that his emotional relationship did not turn into a formal one.

Shia fiqh (jurisprudence) contains instructions about respecting parents' rights. Some of the rights of parents and duties of children are as follows:

1. A journey which is not obligatory, and is a cause of displeasure of one's parents, is haram, and while going on such a journey, one should offer full prayers and should also fast because it is a sinful journey.

2. If the time for a prayer sets in and in that time the parents want their child to do something, he must delay his prayer and comply with the his parent's wish except for when the time for prayer is short causing him to miss the prayer.

3. There is a lot of reward in congregational prayer, but if the parents forbid their child from attending the congregational prayer, it would be

obligatory on him to obey them.

4. In case a supreme religious authority (wali al-faqih) has not ordered an individual to take part in jihad and public mobilization is not obligatory either, the child must obey his parents who want him not to take part in the jihad.

5. If parents forbid their child from performing a sufficient obligatory duty (wajib-e kifayi), he should obey them in case there are other people doing it.

6. If parents want a child to do something whilst he is performing a recommended prayer, he must stop praying and comply with their wish.

7. If parents do not allow their child to observe recommended fast, he does not have the right to fast. (*Imam Khomeini, 2012: 264*)

8. It is the right of parents to be obeyed by their children in all matters except for when parents go against religion forbidding him from doing what is obligatory and commanding him to do what is forbidden. (*Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 74: 72*)

Conclusion

The most important results of this research are outlined below:

- In religious sources, every family member including the wife, husband, child, father and mother has a right.

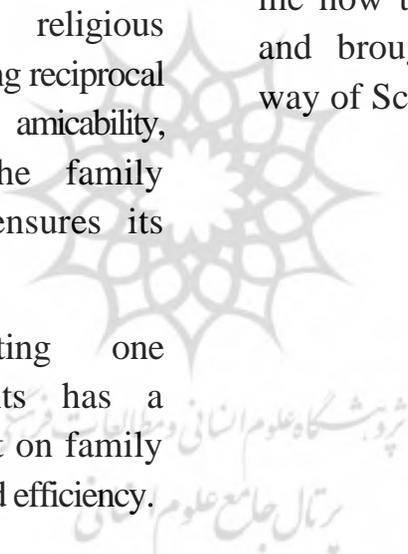
- Right and obligation are closely connected with each other. Against every right, certain duties have been determined and delegated to the other party (the individual who is entitled to a right).

- Based on religious sources, honoring reciprocal rights increases amicability, strengthens the family system and ensures its efficiency.

- Disrespecting one another's rights has a negative effect on family performance and efficiency.

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