

A Couple's Duties to their Relatives

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Say: Whatever ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred... [Holy
Quran: Baqara: 2:215]

Relatives

Each husband and wife has some relatives. Neither one is allowed to force the other to stop seeing them. Each one has parents, brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews, grandparents, etc. Visiting them is considered worship, and associating with them is an excellent deed and can help resolve many difficulties.

A wife should not be so unreasonable not to let her husband's relatives come to visit them, or be rude with them when they come for a visit. She should not stop her husband from associating with his relatives. The house is the husband's property, and God has granted him authority over the wealth and property. A woman is religiously required to obey her husband. Bothering him is also religiously forbidden. Preventing him from associating with his parents, brothers and sisters, or other relatives is totally immoral, inhumane and against man's nature. A man should not prevent his wife from associating with her parents and relatives either. This too is against human passion and love. The wife and children who prevent one from performing good deeds, worshipping, and associating with relatives are considered man's enemies by the Quran. They are not enemies whose hearts are filled with hatred. Rather they are enemies who want to prevent us from attaining prosperity in this world and the Hereafter.

A man should not give in to his wife or children in his attempts to do good deeds, solving the problems of the people, associating with relatives, aiding his parents, brothers or sisters. Of course, believing women who accept the Hereafter; feel responsible; want to prosper in the Hereafter; recognize that they must respect their husband's rights; adhere to divine etiquette and are in total agreement with their husbands.

They even encourage their husbands to associate with and help his relatives, whenever they feel that their husbands are not serious enough in this regard. But women who oppose God, or children who demand things opposed to God's religion, are considered to be man's enemy by the Quran. Man is instructed to do the following in these situations:

O ye who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them! But if ye forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily

God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.[Holy Quran: Tagabun: 64:14, p.1558.]

You should not fight, separate, or get angry in this case. Just let them insist on their views, and you yourself stay steadfast in obeying God and spending in his way. Some women are really unreasonable. They are deprived of God's Mercy, and wish to deprive others of God's Mercy too. Some men are also too strict, and do this unreasonably and without any gain but deprivation from God's Mercy and favor.

Why do some women refuse to let their husband's relatives come to their house, and not let their husband assist his relatives financially, while all their own relatives can come to their house and use the husband's property to serve them as they please. In these cases, many months or years go by and the husband aspires to see his relatives and visit him, but the wife's relatives are continually coming and going. Is this not a form of oppression against the husband and his relatives?

Is this not the same dangerous mental state which is damned by God and deprived of His Mercy. Such a woman will not have a good Hereafter. And why do some men prevent their wives from visiting their relatives.

This is not liked by God, is a Satanic act and is certainly going to cause one to be deprived of God's Mercy. In addition to the verses on visiting the next of kin, the Holy Quran has mentioned relatives twenty-three times, and has issued some very important decrees in this regard. A believing man is supposed to use the Prophet (Pbuh) as his model and abide by his decrees in all issues. One duty is to guide his relatives, since man always needs guidance.

And admonish thy nearest kinsmen, [Holy Quran: Shu'araa: 26:214]

How good is it for a man to gather his relatives and those of his wife in his house every once in a while; and advise them about the religiously forbidden and allowed things; and admonish them about the consequences of evil acts and bad behavior; and introduce jurisprudence and religious issues to them.

Guiding the people towards divine issues is similar to the act of the Prophets of God and the Imams, and has an astonishing reward. It is said that Allameh Majlesi carried out this program for his wife, child and relatives every Thursday night; and he considered it a duty since scientific charity is similar to financial charity, and is liked by God. The Quran considers being kind to one's relatives similar to being kind to one's parents, thus showing the importance of having good family ties.

And remember We took a covenant from the Children of Israel (to this effect): Worship none but God; treat with kindness your parents and kindred; and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practise regular charity. Then did ye turn back,

except a few among you, and ye backslide (even now). [Holy Quran: Baqara 2:83]
Love for wealth and property is a part of human nature. Was it not for this love, no one would be motivated to go to work in industry, arts, business or agriculture. Man loves what he earns by hard work. The Glorious Quran asks man to use what he loves so much for solving the problems of his relatives. Doing so is one of the signs of the believers.
To spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans [Holy Quran: Baqara: 2:177]

Relatives are so important in relation to one that they inherit one's property after his/her death.

Note the following verse in this regard.

But if at the time of division other relatives...[Holy Quran: Nisaa: 4:8]

The respect for relatives is very important. They are so honorable that God's book orders us to be just even when we talk to our relatives.

Whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; [Holy Quran: An'am: 6:152]

Belittling, making fun of or vain talk about relatives are all against the religion and are immoral acts. God has ordered everyone to be kind and just, and has specifically mentioned relatives in this regard.

God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin [Holy Quran: Nahl: 16:90]

God does not like one who is rich to ignore those who need his charity. This is also unacceptable from the viewpoint of the intellect, logic, man's nature, ethics and the religion.

Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen [Holy Quran: Nur: 24:22]

We are strictly ordered to be just when we witness in a court, and also avoid hiding what we know and can witness to even if it is against our interest and that of our parents and relatives.

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin [Holy Quran: Nisaa: 4:135]

Also we are instructed not to seek forgiveness for our relatives as long as they are polytheists. It is not fitting, for the Prophet and those who believe, that they should pray for forgiveness for Pagans, even though they be of kin [Holy Quran: Tauba: 9:113]

We are also instructed not to be friends with our parents, children or relatives if they are enemies of God and his Prophet.

Thou wilt not find any people who believe in God and the Last Day, loving those who resist God and His Apostle, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their

kindred. For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever).

God will be well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of God. Truly it is the Party of God that will achieve Felicity.[Holy Quran Mujadila 58:22]

Except for these especial cases, relatives are considered as a unit. The husband or the wife do not have the right to forbid the other one from associating with his/her relatives. Women, especially, are not allowed to forbid their husbands from such highly rewarding acts. I recommend to couples to honor the twenty-three verses of the Quran about relatives, and respect their relatives, invite them over, and help them financially if they need so

As can be understood from the traditions, the woman should be careful not to make her husband angry, since his anger and unhappiness is similar to God's anger and unhappiness. None of the deeds of a woman whose husband is not pleased with her is accepted by God.

[Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.244].

Imam Sadiq said:

Damned is a woman who bothers her husband and makes him sad. [Ibid, p.253].

This can be partly related to the husband's relatives. She may be unreasonable without any logical or religious reasons, and in this way she deprives herself of God's Mercy.

Observing the Relations of the Womb

Those who join together those things which God hath commanded to be joined.[Holy Quran: Ra'd: 13:21]

The Quran and Visiting Relatives

Visiting relatives is one of the very good deeds that the Prophet, and the Imams have much insisted on. Mulla Husayn Fayz, who was a great philosopher, mystic and scholar spent his life with the Glorious Quran and Prophetic traditions. He considered visiting the relatives to include going to see them, and helping the relatives with their finances or business, or helping young couples to marry. This meaning can be understood from the Quranic verses and traditions, too. The Prophet and the Imams did exactly these things when they visited their relatives, too. This act is greatly stressed in the Quran. It is done by the wise, and cutting off relations with the relatives is considered to be an act of corruption. The Quran has instructed us to fear God when interacting with our relatives, and God has mentioned relatives just after Himself Reverence God, through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs

(that bore you): [Holy Quran: Nisaa: 4:1]

The wise are considered to have some traits as mentioned in the Holy Chapter Ra'd. The benefits gained in the Hereafter are being greeted and welcomed by angels. Those who join together those things which God hath commanded to be joined.[Holy Quran: Ra'd: 13:21]

We read in the Chapter Baqara the following regarding cutting off of relations: And who sunder what God has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves.[Holy Quran: Baqara: 2:27] Yes, cutting off relations is a cause for a great loss. There is another alarming verse in the chapter Ra'd regarding this issue: And cut asunder those things which God has commanded to be joined, and work mischief in the land;-- on them is the Curse; for them is the terrible Home! [Holy Quran: Ra'd: 13:25]

We read in chapter Muhammad: Then, is it to be expected of you, if ye were put in authority, that ye will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin? [Holy Quran: Muhammad: 47:22] So we see that visiting relatives is so important that it yields prosperity and the greeting and welcoming of man by angels in the Hereafter. And the cutting off of relations with relatives will result in damnation, a bad ending and not being saved. Respectfully helping the relatives with their financial problems is highly rewarding. And the likeness of those who spend their substance, seeking to please God and to strengthen their souls, is as a garden, high and fertile: heavy rain falls on it but makes it yield a double increase of harvest, and if it receives not heavy rain, light moisture sufficeth it. God seeth well whatever ye do. [Holy Quran: Baqara: 2:265]

If ye disclose (acts of) charity, even so it is well, but if ye conceal them, and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you: It will remove from you some of your (stains of) evil. And God is well acquainted with what ye do. [Holy Quran: Baqara: 2:271]

Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, in secret and in public, have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.[Holy Quran: Baqara: 2:274]

A Good Plan

Let's invite all our relatives, and recite to the rich ones the verses and traditions on visiting and helping relatives and ask each one of them to donate some money regularly. Then we can open an account or give the money to a trustworthy member of the family. If a problem arises for a

poor relative, we can respectfully give him a loan or a donation. Then he can use the money to buy a house, some needed furniture, a trousseau for his daughter or pay for marrying off his son.

This is a very good act, it helps a lot of people and is highly rewarding as stated before. Let's try to describe this plan to others and encourage them to implement it. If this is widely implemented in the country, then a heavy burden is lifted off of the government's budget, and the assisting relatives get a great reward. In the Quranic verses on charity, helping the relatives has the highest priority. Then the orphans, the disabled, the poor, and the bankrupt are mentioned.

To spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans. [Holy Quran: Baqara: 2:177]

An Amazing Story

Saduq has narrated Imam Sadiq as having said the following based on an authentic document: Jonah was supplicating and praying inside the stomach of a fish. His voice was delivered to Korah's soul which was undergoing God's Punishment at the time of an eclipse. He asked whose voice it was. The Angel of Punishment said that it was the voice of one of the Israelite Prophets. He requested permission to have a brief talk with him. Permission was granted. He asked about Aaron and Moses. Then Jonah replied that they had both perished and he was living at a different time. Then Korah cried. God said His Punishment should be reduced due to feeling sorry for his relatives.

Traditions About Visiting Relatives

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Help your relatives, even if you give them a drink of water. The best form of helping relatives is not to bother them. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.103].

The relatives' feelings get injured when they are ignored or belittled. That is why the best form of helping relatives is not to injure their feelings. He also said: Visit your relatives in this world even if you just say hello. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.104]

The Prophet (Pbuh) has been narrated as saying: Walk one year to visit your relatives. He also has said the following in an important tradition: To the society at this time and the times to come, and those who are in their father's loin or their mother's womb, I advise you all to visit your relatives even if it takes a whole year. Indeed visiting your relatives is a part of your religion. [Ibid].

There are many important traditions which outline the benefits of visiting relatives. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, pp.111-126]. We will cite a few of these traditions here. Imam Baqir said: Visiting relatives will purify your deeds, increase your wealth, remove any catastrophes, and delay the time of your death.

Imam Sadiq said: Visiting relatives and doing good deeds will ease the accounting for our deeds in the Hereafter, and will protect us from committing sins. Then visit your relatives and be kind with your brethren, even if it is just limited to warm greetings.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Visiting relatives will prolong your life and eliminate poverty. Visiting relatives will expand towns, and prolong the lives, even if those you visit are not good people. God shall grant the reward of one hundred martyrs to the one who visits his relatives and helps them with his life and property. For each step that you take to visit your relatives, God will record four thousand good deeds, and remove four thousand evil deeds, and provide four thousand raises in your status. It is just as if you have sincerely worshipped God for one-hundred years.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: There is a heavenly status that only those who are just leaders, visit their relatives, or patiently take care of their wife and children shall attain. He told Abuzar to go to visit his relatives, even if they go mad when seeing him. He said if they did not accept you, go again. Finally you will succeed. If they do not follow God's orders, don't follow suit.

A man told the Prophet (Pbuh) that he visited his relatives, but some of them bothered him, and he wanted to cut off his relations with them. The Prophet (Pbuh) told him that if he did that, God would abandon all of them. He asked what he should do. The Prophet (Pbuh) told him to visit those who cut off their relations, and forgive those who mistreated him. Then God will raise him higher in status over them.

Traditions About Cutting Off Relations

Abu Basir has narrated that when he asked Imam Sadiq about someone who wished to cut off his relations from those who oppose the Imam, the Imam replied this was not right. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.75, p.185].

Jahm, the son of Hamid said that he told Imam Sadiq the following: I have relatives who follow other religions. Do they have any rights over me? The Imam replied: Nothing can nullify the rights of relatives. If they were Muslim, then they had two rights: First being a relative and the second being a Muslim. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.131].

Imam Baqir said:

I found the following in the Prophet's book (the Quran): When the people cut off their ties from their relatives, the wicked people get a hold of their property. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.73, p.369.]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

Three groups of people will not enter Heaven: alcoholics, those who believe in magic, and those who cut off their ties from their relatives. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.90]

The Commander of the Faithful said:

I seek refuge with God from sins which hasten death.

He was asked whether there existed sins that bring on death faster. He replied: Yes. Woe to you! It is the sin of cutting off relations from your relatives. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.137]

He also said:

The worst of all sins are the cutting off of relations with relatives and being damned by parents. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.4, p.89].

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

God's Mercy shall not be bestowed upon a nation in which there are some who cut off relations with their relatives. [Ibid]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

The angels will not descend upon those people among whom there are ones who cut off relations with their relatives. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.4, p.89].

Mutevakeel's son told Imam Hadi that his father deserved to be killed and asked for permission to do so. He was asked not to do so since he was his son. He was also warned that should he do so, he will not stay alive for more than six months.