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Rights of the Relatives

Merits of the Relatives

Relatives are the family to whom one belongs. Man's relatives are the most similar, affectionate, and helpful. Describing the relatives, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said:

"Man, though wealthy, cannot dispense with his clan. He is in need for their defending him with hands and tongues. They are one's greatest backers, best reuniters, and most affectionate when a misfortune befalls1."

The best relatives are those who love, sympathize, and cooperate with one another for achieving their goals and interests. For its elevated social rank and great influence on reforming the Islamic society, the Islamic Sharia has paid the greatest attention to the family affairs.

Regard of Relatives

The leading moral principles on which the Islamic Sharia has imposed and confirmed is the regard of relatives by means of showing kindness, rendering material aid, protecting against misfortunes, and participating in sorrow and joy:

The Prophet (S) said: "I advise every present and absent individual of my umma, including those who are in their fathers' spines and mothers' wombs up to the Day of Resurrection I advise all these to regard their relatives, even if the way to them takes one hundred year walking. Regard of the relatives is part of the religion2."

"He who is pleased if Allah adds to his age and increases his sustenance must regard his relatives.

On the Day of Resurrection, the family relation will say with glib accent: O Lord, regard him who regarded his relatives and disregard him who disregarded his relatives3."

“Warrant for me one and I warrant for you four: warrant for me that you regard your relatives and I warrant for you that Allah will love you, increase your sustenance, add to your age, and take you to the promised Paradise4.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Regard of the relatives purifies the deeds, increases the wealth, repels misfortunes, makes the Judgment easier, and postpones the deadline of life5.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “We do not know anything that adds to the age like regard of the relatives. It happens that a man whose age is decided to be three years may add to it thirty years if he regards his relatives. Hence, his age become thirty-three. A man whose age is decided to be thirty-three years may decrease to three years if he disregards his relatives6.”

“Regard your relatives even by serving them a drink of water. The best way of regarding the relatives is to save them from harm. Regard of relatives surely postpones the deadline of life and endears to the family members7.”

“Regard of the relatives and charity make the Judgment on the Day of Resurrection- easier and protect against committing sins. Hence, you are advised of regarding your relatives and doing charity even by saying nice salaams and responding others’ salutations8.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated that, once, a man said to the Prophet (S): “God’s Messenger, my relatives have rallied against me, disregarded me, and reviled at me. Should I disavow them?” The Prophet (S) answered: “If you do, Allah will disavow all of you.” He wondered: “How should I do, then?” The Prophet (S) instructed: “You should regard those who disregarded you, give those who deprived you (of their endowments), and pardon those who wronged you. If you do it, Allah will support you against them9.”

A family contains individuals of various standings. There is the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, and the celebrity and the ignoble. Except by means of solidarity and mutual sympathy, a family cannot achieve might and luxury and cannot face the life problems with steadfastness.

In his last hours, Aktham Ibn Saifi; the famous wise man, summoned his sons, collected a group of sticks, and asked each of them to break it. None could break that group. He then gave a single stick to each of them to break. They could break easily. Commenting on this situation, he said to them: “Like these sticks, always be together so that you cannot be broken.”

Disregard of the Relatives

Disregard of the relatives stands for any word or deed that oppresses the relatives, such as revilement, backbiting, alienation, and deprivation of feelings of sympathy. According to the Islamic Sharia, it is a grand sin threatened with punishment:

“If you ignore the commands of Allah would you then also spread evil in the land and sever the

ties of kinship?* (*47:22*).*"

"Those who break their established covenant with Him and the relations He has commanded to be kept and spread evil in the land are the ones who lose a great deal.* (*2:27*)*"

The Prophet (S) said: "Four matters are the quickest in punishment: to recompense the favor with mistreatment, to trespass him who does not show hostility, to break the faith of the party who keeps up his faith, and to rupture the relations with the relatives who regard you properly10."

Imam al-Baqir (a) said that the following statements are recorded in Ali's book: "The bearers of three ill manners will not die before they suffer the consequence of them: oppression, disregard of the relatives, and perjury against Allah. The reward of regard of the relatives is the most hastened. Even the sinful people will be enriched and wealthy when they regard each other (by means of good mutual relations). Perjury and disregard of the relatives change countries into deserted wastelands and cut off the progeny11."

One of the companions narrated that he, once, told Imam as-Sadiq (a) that his brothers and cousins had dismissed him from his house and that they would beat him if he disputed with them.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said to him: "Be patient. Allah will surely relieve you."

The man was sufficed with these words; hence, he left.

In the year 131, people were affected by plague, and the man's brothers and cousins were within its victims. When the man visited Imam as-Sadiq (a), he asked him about their manners. He told of their death. The Imam (a) said: "That was certainly the punishment for what they had done to you when they disregarded their relative. Do you wish were they alive even if they would mistreat you?" The man answered: "Yes, I do12."

Shuaib al-Aqarqoufi narrated that Ya'qoub al- Maghzili, once, visited Imam al-Kadhim (a) who said to him: "Ya'qoub, you and your friend were engaged in disagreement in a place yesterday, and you reviled at each other. My fathers' and my religion does not accept such deeds. We, likewise, do not order any of such ethics. Hence, you should fear Allah alone. Death will separate you from your friend who will die during his journey before he arrives in his town. You will be sorry for your revilement at him. Because you have disregarded each other, Allah will cut off your ages."

The man asked: "What about my time of death?"

The Imam answered: "Because you regarded your aunt, twenty years were added to your age."

(Shuaib commented) After some time, the man told me that his friend had died during his journey13.

1. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
2. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 93 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

3. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara page 27 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha and Sahifat ur-Ridha).
4. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
5. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
6. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
7. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
8. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
9. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
10. Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/63 (quoted from the Prophet's commandment for Imam Ali).
11. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 156 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
12. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 2 page 414 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
13. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 page 5166 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

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