



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS THE MOST MERCIFUL

HOW TO BUILD A FAMILY OF “SAKINAH, MAWADDAH WA RAHMAH”

INTRODUCTION

Building a family with Islam as the important foundation is essential and that has been abandoned by many families which leads to the erosion of society especially in Muslim countries. Many families are emphasising on material wealth as the key to success. Some families are falling apart, with the parents getting worried that their children are heading in the wrong direction. But all have one thing in common - They ignore all the basic principles that can be found in the Qur'an and authentic hadeeths, and by ignoring these important principles, many families are struggling to keep the family members united, and may even face problems socially, emotionally and spiritually. Many families are becoming very fragile on the ties of kinship because they have absolutely no knowledge on how to mend the pieces together. Only by applying the correct teachings of Islam would we inshaAllah be able to establish the understanding of the basic principle of how to build a successful family which will inshaAllah lead the whole family to Jannah.

Allah Reminded us on several verses of the Qur'an:

“O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.” 66: 6

Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas Allah! With Him is a great reward (Paradise). 64: 15

Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds (five compulsory prayers, deeds of Allah's obedience, good and nice talk, remembrance of Allah with glorification, praises and thanks, etc.), that last, are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope. 18: 46

All the above verses clearly indicated to us to take care of our families, and do beware that wealth and children can both of a blessing and a trial from Allah.

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This important topic is commonly discussed in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. It is a very important topic because through building a family on the basis of *“sakinah, mawaddah wa rahmah”*, society will be peaceful and harmonious, based on the Blessings the society will be Granted from Allah inshaAllah. Meaning of *“sakinah”* family – A very peaceful family which is constantly submitting to Allah in order to achieve this peace, and each member of the family has a lot of love, compassion and forgiveness to one another which is working hard to achieve success in the Hereafter – which is to attain entry into Paradise inshaAllah. The source of peace and tranquillity comes purely from Allah and by being obedient to Him. Sakinah does NOT come from having a big house, a nice car or a successful career. It purely comes from our sincere efforts to achieve taqwa and iman so that constantly, no matter how difficult the trials are which we face in this life, Allah will still Grant us a sense of peace and tranquillity.

“He it is Who sent down As-Sakinah (calmness and tranquillity) into the hearts of the believers, that they may grow more in Faith along with their (present) Faith. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Ever All-Knower, All-Wise.” 48: 4

“Mawaddah” is a love, affection between husband and wife. Mawaddah, which is a pure love that grows between husband and wife, is a gift from Allah.

“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. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.” 30: 21

“Rahmah” comes from Allah, which is forgiveness, grace, gifts, compassion and sustenance. So, rahmah is a kind of love, tender affection, ready to sacrifice to provide, serve and be ready to protect to the beloved. Rahmah is more likely to the nature of qalbiah or mood that is implemented with the form of affection, belonging, willing to sacrifice that emanated from the light of faith.

Therefore the family of *“sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah”* is the building block of an ideal family in Islam. It requires a lot of preparations and hard work, but the end product will definitely be one which we all should aim at – A family which shares a common value of worshipping Allah as the purpose of life, where Allah will be Pleased with them and eventually this family will be Reunited by Allah in Paradise inshaAllah.

How do we achieve this ideal state of a family?

A. PRE MARRIAGE

1. Choosing the right spouse

"And marry those among you who are single (i.e. a man who has no wife and the woman who has no husband) and (also marry) the Salihun (pious, fit and capable ones) of your (male) slaves and maid-servants (female slaves). If they be poor, Allah will enrich them out of His Bounty. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing (about the state of the people)." 24: 32

Firstly, there is no such a thing as boyfriends and girlfriends in Islam. It is completely haram, as Allah Reminded us:

"And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a Fahishah [i.e. anything that transgresses its limits (a great sin)], and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him)." 17: 32

Secondly always look out for the Deen as the first criteria. The word "deen" is not just religion, but it is a way of life". It's not about spending 24 hours in the mosque or travelling for 40 days to do da'wah. It is a balanced way life where each spouse would understand that the purpose of life must be to worship Allah:

"And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)." 51: 56

Abu Hurayrah (RA) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

"A woman may be married for four things: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty and her religious commitment. Seek the one who is religiously-committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper)." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said, "A marriageable woman should have these two merits; I mean the woman who is characterized by both physical and spiritual beauty."

Physical beauty means the perfection of features, for the more the woman appears beautiful and articulate, the more the eye is comforted by looking at her, and the ear pays attention to her speech, causing the heart to open to her, the breast to expand for her, and the soul to find tranquility in her, in realization of the statement of Allah, The Almighty,

(which means): *{And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy.}* [30:21]

On the other hand, spiritual beauty means the perfection of religion and moral character. The more the woman is religious and perfect in moral character, the lovelier she becomes, and the safer the expected outcome is (in case of marriage). A religious woman always complies with the commands of Allah The Almighty, guards her husband's rights, honor, children and wealth, and helps him obey Allah, The Almighty, whenever she reminds him; and whenever he slackens (in worship), she motivates him, and whenever he grows angry, she pleases him.

So, with religious knowledge as a priority the husband and wife, and the future family will achieve the "sakinah" which everyone will crave for within a family. Allah will continue to Bless the family and Grant His Mercy and Help whenever problems occur within the family. The future husband must have a reasonably sound Islamic knowledge and practice as he would be the shepherd of the family. The future wife must also have a reasonably sound Islamic knowledge and practice because usually the children will spend a lot of time with the mothers, and in many cases where the mother has completely lack of Islamic principles, the children will have no Deen in their hearts.

Thirdly, with religious knowledge and commitment, it is also important to check the Aqeedah and Minhaj of the future spouse. A person who is either a Shia or Sufi or Ahmadiyyah sect will ruin the belief and practice of the married couple and their children in the future, as there will be constant arguments in the future, especially when in-laws may intervene. So, check properly the methodology of the practice of the Deen at the very beginning.

2. Cultural influence

Some cultural practices may ruin a marriage and remove the "sakinah" within a family. Some would resort to spending a lot of wasteful money on events such as "engagements" before the marriage, bridal showers, etc.

Some cultural practices are completely unislamic, such as a Bangladeshi man would never marry a Pakistani woman, or even the differences of the

status or family lineage within the same culture would prevent a lawful marriage between a couple.

Anything that is not based on the Qur'an and sunnah will lead to future problems within the future family. Therefore unlawful cultural practices must be eliminated in order to form a "sakinah" family.

3. Family's interference

Some family members with a shallow understanding of Islam may interfere with the selection of a spouse. Mothers especially may affect the man or woman on choosing a spouse based on the Deen. Some commented for example, the girl is too old, or the man does not have a good job.

Some families demand a lot of "dowries" which in general is not Islamic. In Islam, one of the most important element of the marriage is the "mahr" or what the bride wants, NOT what the family wants. Some grooms end up borrowing a lot of money and are in heavy debt even before the marriage, and again this destroys the "sakinah" within the future family.

4. Choosing one from the UK or one from back home in your country

Many men may find it difficult to find a wife in the UK, OR they have an opinion that they should be the dominant force in the marriage and the women in the UK are so domineering. Some men decided to find a wife in their home town in Morocco, Algeria, Bangladesh, etc.

Do remember that in some cases this marriage may work, but in many cases, the lack of communication will lead to the breakdown of the marriage. Communication is one of the key elements for a successful marriage. A man or woman who grows up in the UK usually have a very different mentality from someone back home.

5. Istikharah prayer

Quite a lot of couple ignored making this important prayer before they embark on an important decision in their lives. This is more so when the couple had already fallen in love before marriage. Do remember that the marriage is only successful if it is Blessed by Allah and that only Allah Knows the future.

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Istikharah prayer is done before a decision is made to marry (or in any other major events in life such as career pathway, migration overseas, etc).

The description of Salaat al-Istikhaarah was reported by Jaabir ibn Abd-Allaah al-Salami (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said:

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to teach his companions to make istikhaarah in all things, just as he used to teach them soorahs from the Quraan. He said: If any one of you is concerned about a decision he has to make, then let him pray two rakahs of non-obligatory prayer, then say: Allaahumma inni astakheeruka bi ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa asaluka min fadlika, fa innaka taqdiru wa laa aqdir, wa talamu wa laa alam, wa anta allaam al-ghuyooob. Allaahumma fa in kunta talamu haadhal-amra (then the matter should be mentioned by name) khayran li fi aajil amri wa aajilihi (or: fi deeni wa maaashi wa aaqibati amri) faqdurhu li wa yassirhu li thumma baarik li fihi. Allaahumma wa in kunta talamu annahu sharrun li fi deeni wa maaashi wa aaqibati amri (or: fi aajili amri wa aajilihi) fassrifni anhu [wasrafhu anni] waqdur li al-khayr haythu kaana thumma radini bihi (O Allaah, I seek Your guidance [in making a choice] by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. You have power, I have none. And You know, I know not. You are the Knower of hidden things. O Allaah, if in Your knowledge, this matter (then it should be mentioned by name) is good for me both in this world and in the Hereafter (or: in my religion, my livelihood and my affairs), then ordain it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if in Your knowledge it is bad for me and for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs (or: for me both in this world and the next), then turn me away from it, [and turn it away from me], and ordain for me the good wherever it may be and make me pleased with it.

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 6841; similar reports are also recorded by al-Tirmidhi, al-Nisaai, Abu Dawood, Ibn Maajah and Ahmad).

Ibn Hijr (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, commenting on this hadeeth:

Istikhaarah is a word which means asking Allaah to help one make a choice, meaning choosing the best of two things where one needs to choose one of them.

6. Role of wali

Do remember that a “wali” is important to choose the husband for the spouse. The wali must be the father of the bride if the father is still alive. If the father is not alive, then the wali must be the grandfather, or uncle of brother of the bride, in that order. It is best for the wali to be a practising Muslim inshaAllah, and the wali MUST meet the groom in order to ensure that the man is of sound religious knowledge, practice and commitment. Of course the future groom should be able to have some form of employment or means to support both the bride and himself. We know that Rizq comes from Allah and we learn from the Qur’anic verse above, in surah 24 verse 32 that Allah will Increase the provisions of the married couple.

7. Marriage counsel

Many couple did not attend marriage classes or counsel before marriage and end up having a lot of disputes and misunderstandings during the marriage. It is important to understand the roles of the husband and wife in Islam so that you do not get confused or stuck to the ways of your culture and traditions which may be wrong islamically.

8. Get to know one another

Within the boundaries of Islam, a couple should get to know one another and find out about each other’s personality and characters to see if they are compatible. Meetings in the presence of the wali or even communications through emails or social media is permissible as long as there is no one-to-one personal meeting face to face without the presence of wali. The couple should not be forced to marry because both parents approve, but if the personality or character is bad, then they should re consider the marriage proposal. Remember that the couple is marrying each other and NOT the in-laws. So, it is vital to check the compatibility by communicating before marriage.

9. Getting engaged

The only reason why a couple may want to get engaged is due to the fact that marriage cannot be immediate perhaps due to education, financial matters or even illnesses. Engagement simply means that the woman is booked and no other marriage proposals must be entertained from the woman’s family.

However, some practices in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia use this as an opportunity for couples to go out together and even hold hands. This is haram and completely goes beyond the teachings of Islam.

B. POST MARRIAGE

1. Continuously seeking knowledge on the Deen – especially the wife

Seeking Islamic knowledge is very important because the more knowledge on Islam a couple has, the more they are able to impart this religious knowledge to the children.

Children must be constantly shown good examples at home, for example praying together in congregation at home, sending them for weekend madrasah lessons, constantly going through the prayers in English and also short verses of the Qur'an for example on respecting parents, and also watching Islamic videos together, for example on stories of the prophets.

2. Continue to keep the romance of the marriage

It is vital for husband and wife to continuously spend time together on short holidays, go out for dinners, etc. This would preserve the "mawaddah" in the family.

Spending most of the time in the mosque (brothers) may lead to a fracture in the relationship. Furthermore the father may not be involved in the spiritual, educational and emotional development of the children because he is spending too much time away from home.

Having dinners together in the family and discussing current Islamic topics at the dinner table help create the "sakinah and mawaddah" of the family.

3. Children – make sure Islam is practised at home

It is not sufficient to send children to the madrasah but the practice of Islam is lacking at home.

A child must be made to pray by 7 and discipline at 10 if the child is not praying. But instead of disciplining physically, it is better to talk to them calmly and make them understand the Deen. Any disciplinary measures could include taking away luxury items such as mobile phones or TV.

4. Akhlaq

This is one of the most important aspect of this topic, because through good manners the 3 aspects of this topic will be resolved inshaAllah.

Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam has been sent to us to perfect good manners and we understand the numerous virtues of having good manners in many hadeeths:

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Holy Prophet (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said about good manners in one of His hadith in these words: *"Nothing is weightier on the Scale of Deeds than one's good manners"* (Bukhari). Allah Almighty made him (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) the best and perfect example for the people and sent him only for the purpose of perfecting good morals. The virtues of good manners are seen in various other hadiths which points to the good character that is pleasing to Allah Almighty and His Messenger Prophet Muhammad (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam). Prophet Muhammad (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) reminded in other hadith that: *"The most beloved of Allah's servants to Allah are those with the best manners."* (Al-Bukhari)

Good manners or Adab/akhlaq consists of spreading words of peace, reviving broken relationships between people, involves praying for other Muslim brothers and sisters, advising and calling each other to do good and to stop which is evil. Good manners are about respecting parents, elders, neighbors and showing love and compassion to the young ones. Visiting the sick and abstaining from evils such as backbiting and slandering also includes in good manners. Allah loves those who possess these great qualities.

If someone wants to achieve success it is by good manners that every success can be achieved in this life. Good manners and sense of morality can prevent us from falling into sins. Allah Almighty says in Noble Quran: *"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad PUBH) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much"* (Quran, 33:21). So we all should ask Almighty Allah to make us follow the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) and deal with the people in a way that he (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) dealt with. Allah Almighty made it an essential part of the faith without which our faith cannot be completed. The Messenger of Allah SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam () says: *"The believers most perfect in faith are those best in character."* (Tirmidhi)

5. Understand Islam and not just making it a ritual

We must move away from the way Islam has been taught to us by our forefathers. It must be made interesting, engaging and something which the children love.

Luqman taught us important lessons in the Qur'an:

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"And indeed We bestowed upon Luqman Al-Hikmah (wisdom and religious understanding, etc.) saying: "Give thanks to Allah," and whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for (the good of) his ownself. And whoever is unthankful, then verily, Allah is All-Rich (Free of all wants), Worthy of all praise.

And (remember) when Luqman said to his son when he was advising him: "O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great Zulm (wrong) indeed.

And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination.

But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do.

"O my son! If it be (anything) equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and though it be in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Verily, Allah is Subtle (in bringing out that grain), Well-Aware (of its place).

"O my son! Aqim-is-Salat (perform As-Salat), enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'ruf (Islamic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad), and bear with patience whatever befall you. Verily! These are some of the important commandments ordered by Allah with no exemption.

"And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not each arrogant boaster.

"And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass."

31: 12-19

Prophets Ibrahim (AS) and Ya'qub (AS) also addressed various issues on talking to their children:

And this (submission to Allah, Islam) was enjoined by Ibrahim (Abraham) upon his sons and by Ya'qub (Jacob), (saying), "O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the (true) religion, then die not except in the Faith of Islam (as Muslims - Islamic Monotheism)."

Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub (Jacob)? When he said unto his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We shall worship your Ilah (God - Allah), the Ilah (God) of your fathers, Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaque (Isaac), One Ilah (God), and to Him we submit (in Islam)."

2: 132-133

6. Too much video games and social media can be harmful

Be moderate when giving children access to internet or social media. You need to monitor the children from young. At no time must they be given the ability to have "privacy" because many negative influence can be obtained on social media and the internet in general - including extremism.

Parents must continuously engage in a friendly discussion with the children on current affairs or other important matters.

7. Balance between dunya education and akhirah preparations#

There must be a balance between the matters in this world and the akhirah.

The du'a that we have been taught by Allah informed us on the need of both nudya and akhirah, BUT of course without compromising the akhirah:

"Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!" 2: 201

8. Healthy lifestyle

It is important to keep a healthy lifestyle in order to preserve the longevity of the family. The food prepared, engaging in physical exercises help to maintain a healthy environment in the family.

9. Social interactions

Home schooling versus public schooling

If parents decide to adopt home schooling, they must ensure that they are equipped to handle the schedule of preparing the child at home on the secular education. On my personal view, if the above points are taken

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seriously, there is no need to protect the children from secular education because your children will be Guided by Allah to handle many challenges regarding the Deen:

- Evolution theory
- LGBT
- Mixing between boys and girls
- Hijab for sisters

10. Make plenty of du'a:

"Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders for the Muttaqun" 25: 74

"O my Lord! Make me one who performs As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and (also) from my offspring, our Lord! And accept my invocation. 14: 40

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU MISSED A STEP AND YOUR FAMILY IS NOW IN A MESS ISLAMICALLY? IS IT TOO LATE?

Many families are suffering problems. It is never too late inshaAllah until your final breath. The approach of resolving family issues will be different:

1. Come back to the right path and put in effort
2. Make du'a. (3: 8)
3. Guidance is in Allah's Hands
4. Seek Help of a knowledgeable person for counsel
5. Start to attend Islamic classes to seek knowledge.
6. Understand Islam and learn to love it. Circles of knowledge must be very current but follow strictly Qur'an and sunnah.
7. Request relatives who are practising to talk to your children
8. Meet reverts or new Muslims because generally their journeys to Islam are very inspirational
9. Visit the sick and graves to see the taste of death
10. Plan journey to Umrah once the acts of worship improves
11. Make du'a to Allah again