

The Muslim family in Muslim societies: challenges of preserving values and absorbing change in light of globalization and cultural openness

First of all, I would like to thank Doha International Family Institute and Hamad bin Khalifa University for organizing such an important program and inviting us.

It is a reality that values and traditions are weakening in Muslim families today. The weakening of religious values first manifests itself in the family, which is the smallest foundation stone of society, and then in the whole society. That's why we can say, "Religion needs the family to live, and the family needs religion to live/survive." When we talk about family, we have to talk about religion, and when we talk about religion, we have to talk about family. Not only in Islam, but also in the Torah and the Bible, family was given importance, and similar things were said about the meanings attached to marriage and the relationships between spouses.

In fact, Islam can be called "family civilization". However, today this civilization has been manipulated and invaded with its concepts. Just as all institutions are shaped, the family institution has also been shaped by Western civilization today. The family is the last castle, it is more difficult to intervene because it is a private area. So we must protect this castle. I will have some solution offers :)

How can religious education and guidance contribute to strengthening values and traditions in the Muslim family?

Religious education and guidance can of course be a solution. We must get up from where we fell. I mean: Because the real reason why we lose our family values is that we move away from religion. So first, as individuals, we must protect our religious life. Then we must experience these in the family and include them in the education system in schools. After all, society is built on religious values. At the individual and family level, the most important question today is "Are we living a life in which Allah's sake is respected?" We need to ask this question to ourselves. The main purpose of all religions is divine sake, a life centered on God's sake. But today we live under a materialist and secular worldview: a life that derives its values from Western civilization. To find solutions to family problems, we need to get to the root of the problems. The basis of the problems we experience is the civilization we feed on, and that is Western civilization. At this point, I would like to remind you of a beautiful quote by Moroccan scholar Taha Abdurrahman: **"Civilizations that cannot respond to the problems of the age with their own values cannot survive. Those who give answers produced by other civilizations will be in a worse situation."** Therefore, as Muslims living in the 21st century, we must first be aware of the problems we face, from family to social life, and then regain our own worldview and understanding of morality.

Values such as **"justice, mercy, love, respect, sacrifice, altruism, tolerance, consultation"** that we want to have in the family actually derive their origin from religion and are present in all religions. But today, the secular worldview places nice-sounding concepts such as "individualism, self-centeredness, self-determination, autonomy" for both individuals and family members. We see that these concepts affect our lives without realizing it. The consequences of these were seen both in our individual lives and in the family. The West has been making plans and programs for 40-50 years to destroy the family and values. It manages

perceptions and manipulates people. Then, step by step, play their games on young people and women, and then they establish eye-catching concepts, and finally completely new concepts through education and law.

1. The Kinsey report is an example of this. Kinsey's report on sexuality in 1948 started the "sexual revolution" and gave its results today. It is the most important report on LGBT issues that they are scientifically based on today. Sponsored by Rockefeller. It happens in a way that does not comply with the ethics of science. For example, they measure sexuality in babies, but no one asks how you did these experiments. Even though it was later revealed that he deliberately provided scientifically false information, LGBT defense is still being made through this report. It's no longer needed.
2. The second example is that in Turkey, which is a Muslim country, the word "adultery, zina" has now disappeared; instead, the expression "consensual union" is used legally, and the negative meaning of adultery is eliminated and a positive meaning is placed in the minds. "Both parties are having sex with their own consent, what could be wrong with that?" The message is being given and this message is showing its effects in society right now.
3. We saw in the Palestine case that the values imposed by the West are empty. "Human rights, children's rights, environmental rights, respect for others, human dignity, democracy." Turkish thinker İsmet Özel "Human rights are Jewish rights. In other words, the conditions necessary for a Jew to live comfortably anywhere in the world are called **human rights**," he says. That's why we should boycott the secular values imposed on us, just as we boycott Jewish goods. Just as we aim to protect the family, we should also aim to protect the unity of our ummah. As Prophet Muhammad said, "You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness and "fever with it."

2. On the other hand, religion and moral values are experienced primarily in the family. That is why classical morality books (Nâsiruddun Tusi, Celaleddin Devvani, Kinalizade) are primarily based on self-management, that is, individual morality. Then they deal with family morality and management (ilmi tedbiril-menzi), and then state morality and management (ilmi tedbiril-medina). In fact, this categorization shows us that the construction of a moral civilization takes place through the individual, family and state/society. We can say that family is the bridge of transition from individual to society.

Again, in fiqh books, marriage topics come right after worship topics, which shows that it means worship rather than a contract and the importance given to marriage in religion. In fact, scholars such as Ibn Abidin saw marriage as a part of faith.

Solution offers:

1. We must reconsider our vision of the world shaped under the influence of the West. We must create our family laws within the framework of our own values. (Our family laws were

taken from the West. For example, in Turkey, a Muslim country, civil law was taken from Switzerland in 1926.)

2. While explaining the family law of fiqh, we should not only give technical and dry information. "How is the marriage contract established" and "with what words is the divorce carried out"? We must also give the hikma and maqasid, wisdom and purposes behind these. We must rationalize the information. And also, we should not forget the fact that fiqh is not independent of morality and should not make the distinction between qadah and diyanet (religion) too sharply. This will ensure awareness of family-related values.

3. We must make strong use of social media, the media sector in general, and educational area. For this, we must make projects and, if necessary, manage people's perceptions.

4. Finally, and perhaps most importantly: We must emphasize our constants and values. The postmodern world has eliminated our understanding of truth. However, if there are no constants and truth, we have no values to build on. That's why the books of belief begin with "The truth of stuff in existence". In the relativist or postmodern world, "you cannot impose values on anyone". Even in religious matters, we have the courage to say "in my opinion" and we can say "it is not true in my opinion" for any religious value. Therefore, constants are our basis, we must reject the postmodern understanding and re-embed our values in individuals, family structure and society, using all kinds of tools.

• **Can changes in women's roles be a source of improvement for the Muslim family life?**

1. The roles of men and women in the family are essentially mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. الرَّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ.

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ The concepts that stand out at this point are "kivam, itaa: obedience, shura, salihat, kanitat".

It means the man's financial responsibilities in the family, such as alimony and dowry, and his spiritual responsibilities, such as ensuring the religious education of the children and protecting the integrity of the family. These concepts began to be questioned with the entry of women into working life (more accurately, women were always working, only home and workplaces were separated), women's financial stability, and the influence of feminism movements. In other words, these concepts have been genetically modified and negative meanings have been attributed to the concepts. We must reconsider some concepts based on the Quran and the Sunnah regarding the family, which have negative meanings today. Shura, kavvam, taa: obedience. We must be critical of concepts such as "autonomy, equality, individuality" that have replaced them.

2. Spouses' efforts to stand out as "individuals" instead of respecting each other's responsibilities increases the number of divorces. This is a reality. As a solution to this and in order to protect the family, family mediation and arbitration should be practiced in all Muslim societies before divorce processes. The Quran recommends this, and in Maliki law it is seen as an obligation rather than a recommendation: In quran: "If you anticipate a split between them, appoint a mediator from his family and another from hers. If they desire reconciliation, Allah will restore harmony between them.. أَهْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا يُؤْفِقَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا
- Today, family mediation practice has started in many countries.

3. Another solution is to provide religious guidance to the family through the state or non-governmental organizations. Family and Religious Guidance Offices, are a good example of this. They have been put into practice in Türkiye since 2013, It is affiliated with the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye and there are currently 447 centers. In their own words, "it strives to create a healthy family and social structure consisting of conscious and strong individuals who have correct religious and moral knowledge, who bear the responsibility of being a family." They inform the society about the family from a religious perspective. They answer the questions about the family. These centers provide religious services and spiritual consultancy inside and outside mosques, from prisons to hospitals, from children's homes to women's shelters, from dormitories to youth centers.

4. Another example is mosques becoming centers of non-formal religious education for women and children. If we take the example of Turkey, there are Quran courses but they are insufficient. Mosques need to be turned into places that provide religious education to the public 24/7. I personally saw good examples of this in Damascus, and the religious life there was very impressive and left a mark in my personal experience.

I talked about the negative aspects. However, some changes in women's roles in society also produce positive results. Increasing the education level of women allows them to serve Islam in vital fields such as academia and education. Of course, it also gives positive results in terms of their children's education and so on.