

Subject: The Role of Family in Constructing the Society

Dr. Cemil Gül / Turkey

Human beings are born into arms of their parents and for their survival they are in need of a society where their parents are in. That's why the smallest unit that forms and represents the society is not an individual but a family. Family is the core of the society that makes the society and is the soil of it. If it gets spoiled, it does not bear the tree that is expected from it.

In many countries, one in two children is born out of wedlock and statistics show that 50% of newly married couples are divorced within first five years of their marriage. That simply shows us that the institution of marriage is under danger. According to statistics, increase of education level and women's inclusion in modern business life lessen the rate of marriage and disperse the institution of family. Today, law, medicine and social institutions that study family state that the fundamental of family is love, respect and trust between spouses. The modern life on the other hand which imposes personal benefits, individualism and egocentricity does take people away from marriage and not allow them to be in wedlock let alone establishing love, respect and trust within a family.

Unfortunately this social fire has burned Islamic lands and countries like Turkey which has been distanced from Islamic education for 100 years. And most of this fire is rooted from European Philosophy and Science. As we look for our lost property – knowledge – we have been got away from our homes and got trapped in Satan's ambush and lost.

While the world looks for a solution not only does Risale-i Nur eliminate the attack from science and philosophy but also establishes the issues related to family. Now we will attempt to project the Fundamentals of family life, duties and rights of spouses and evaluate how happiness in family could be reached.

Most probably our greatest gain out of this would be to understand once again the value and general acceptance of the Qur'an and the praised Sunnah of Prophet (PBUH).

In the Qur'an, Allah subhanahu wa taala says: **وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ**

*Marry those among you who are single (whether men or women) and those of your male and female slaves that are righteous (and fit for marriage)... (Nur 32)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

* And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. (Rum 21)

تَتَأَخَّرُوا تَكَاثَرُوا فَاتَىٰ آبَاهُمْ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّةَ

“Get married so you multiply. I shall indeed be proud of your multitude on the Day of Resurrection.”

Verses and ahadith like these always guided Imam Bediuzzaman and he wrote on family in his books such as Guide for Women, Guide for Youth, Short Words and the like.

“Love and have affection for your spouse as she is the obedient and beautiful present from Divine mercy. Be aware; do not bind your love to the apparent beauty. Most alluring, sweetest beauty is the inner beauty within subtly and kindness that is specific to womanhood. And the most valuable and cutest beauty is the elevated, sincere and enlightened shafqah of her... And the rights of this zaifa and latifa creation could only be preserved through love”. This sentence in the Risale and those alike take this verse as a basis and teach people the foundation, survival and guidance for family focusing on love and compassion. It is stated there as the most important fundamental: “know your friend of life as mercy of Allah (subhanahu wa taala). That is, the most important basic for family life is the faith in Allah.

In the meantime, it is proved in the Epistle of Resurrection (Risalat ul-Tabi’a) that the true family life could only be gained through eternal friendship and perpetual togetherness. The most significant feature of future spouses is that they sincerely seek to gain the true faith. In this regard, with its strong lessons of iman, the Risale-i Nur should be a most efficient teacher and counsellor.

In our culture it is said in a meaningful and beautiful proverb that “Female bird makes the nest.” Risale-i Nur confirms the priority of women in society and family life. As compassion is an important principle of Risale-i Nur and women are the heroes of compassion, they are accepted as natural students of Noor. That is why Imam Bediuzzaman wrote the epistle called “The Guide for Women”.

In this guide, Imam Nursi says: “Rather than religious education within the circle of Islam, there is not a single solution, for saving the worldly and eternal happiness and their elevated morality from being spoilt.” He points to three reasons for marriage. The first of all, the continuity of generation. Divine wisdom grants an innate inclination and enthusiasm for this service as a reward. The second is that “woman due to her weakness in terms of livelihood needs support. The third is that “woman has an inclination in her innate nature to caress and love children.”

While these three are given as main reasons, women are especially advised to get married with pious men. It is also stated that if they take the heavy life burden on them, they would lose their worldly life and afterlife.

On The Twenty Fourth Flash, it is nicely explained and proven that tasattur (covering of women) in social life is obligatory and natural, and that it is an indispensable reality.

“Yes, a woman is not only a spouse for this worldly life. She is furthermore a spouse in the eternal life. It is necessary that she should not attract attention of men to her beauty other than her husband, and by way of doing this, she should not offend him and make him jealous.”

And he also highlights that "... Her weak nature requires and warns fiercely that she should not encourage other men's desire and should not let others to behave immorally.... And her covering is her guard."

By pointing to the command of The Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that is "Get married so you multiply" it is stated that:

"The removal of covering of women (tasattur) does not increase marriage but it does decrease. Even the most naughty and modern young man wants his wife to be modest. As he does not want his spouse to be like him, that is, she is obscene and uncovered, he remains single, maybe goes to a way of fornication. Women are not like men, and they cannot control over her husband. Being as an internal manager in family life and a guardian of all properties, children and things of her husband, the most basic virtue of wife is loyalty and trustworthiness. Obscenity destroys the trust and she loses her trustworthiness in the eyes of her husband. And husband's duty is not to guard the property of woman and being restricted to one marriage but his is to protect her in terms of livelihood, have compassion on her and respect her."

In these lines, apart from the necessity of covering of women, we see the roles of husband and wife in family life.

Amongst the lessons for women are important shares for men as well. For example, Risale-i Nur advises men, who are innately beauty-lover, to choose a spouse primarily according to moral beauty not physical beauty. It is again told that a man should marry a woman with the aim of gaining an eternal life friend and preserve himself from sins. Pleasures within legal and acceptable circle are enough; and without the light of iman, humankind would suffer in merciless perpetual torture even in this world. It turns man's face from transient love to the eternal and true love.

The second duty of men's towards their wives is shown in the Risale as respect and reverence. Women's due respect can only be satisfied through men's love enlightened by Islam.

Imam Nursi also mentions in his book "Words" that women's heroic services are of compassion in them and men's of honour and dignity in their innate nature. This nature of women is pure and sincere heroism shown as helping out and protecting their babies and poor parents in exchange of nothing and with no expense but in this age the mentioned situation has changed to a certain extent. He encourages men to do their own share by being protector, merciful and supporter in return for ladies' true heroism.

Now, let's briefly look into children, fruits and light of family and their education.

Risale-i Nur tells the necessity of Islamic education in child education and extends it with examples. It warns parents who encourage their children to receive vocational education but not help them get religious education. Their compassion to protect their children's future can turn out to be exactly opposite of what they expect in the first place and they could be used for bad movements. Otherwise, if they don't get Islamic education in early stages of their

childhood and if minds of children are spoiled by harmful philosophy and science, their spirits would hardly accept the tenets of iman and Islam. Even more, he explains the benefit out of helping children to get used to daily prayers from the age of seven.

In this regard, Wonder of the Age highlights the importance of mothers by giving specific examples from his own life: “Although I received lectures from eighty thousands people in my eighty years of life, my late mother’s advices and spiritual lessons in my fitrah and become seeds in my physical body. I see that the rest of the lessons are built upon them.”

It is interesting that Risale-i Nur accepts children as its natural students before women. It takes their education in some sense to itself, that is, it becomes a beautiful guide for families. Along with the epistles and books like Words and Guide for Youth, also is an epistle for parents who lost their children. Its name is Child Condolence and it does consolidate and comforts those parents and gives good news for them.

We need to remember some members of family regarding their role in educating children and being basics of community life: Grandmas and grandpas. Risale-i Nur, by explaining the verses like, إِنَّمَا يَلْتَمِسُ بِنُورِكَ الْعَبْرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقْرُلْ لَهُمَا أَمْرًا “... and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them” (Isra, 17:23), has become a competent instructor and tutor regarding this issue. We see samples of this in many treatises, especially and ‘Treatise for the Old’.

For example, ‘every child who has not lost his humanity and been transformed into a monster honours those respected, loyal, self-sacrificing friends, serves them sincerely, and tries to please them and make them happy. Uncles and aunts, maternal and paternal, are like parents.’ And with statement like, ‘O you who struggle to secure his livelihood! The means of plenty and mercy in your house, and the repeller of disaster, is that elderly or blind relative of yours, whom you belittle’ Risale-i Nur calls the adult children into being merciful and heals the blindness of the soul by giving the light into the heart.

Now, we have shown how the main principles of family which constitutes the society and the responsibilities and rights of spouses and how a family attains the happiness briefly by excerpting the truths from Risale-i Nur. What befalls us for now is to embrace Risale-i Nur heartily which is a great guide and master of iman and Islam.

While ending my speech, I hope our homes become a small madrasa-i nuriya so that the marriages become appropriate to the sunnah completely and pray to Allah that our homes become illuminated with the light of Allah like the houses praised in the surah an-Nur.