

Save your marriages and families to be broken

How many of us can say that we truly live our lives in emulation of the Prophet? How many of us can honestly say that our nicest smile is saved for our children? That our sweetest voice is saved for our spouse? That our kindest compliments are given to our parents? Unfortunately, in the concern about how we present ourselves to the world, caring so much about our reputations, trying to be honest, respectful, cheerful. But our conduct and behaviour change while we are at home, with family, children and wife. While our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) reminds us that "The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family.

Many of us wonder sometimes, how did it happen? How did I lose that connection with my family? The breakdown doesn't happen overnight. And Satan is able to break into the bonds of family life in small steps when we feel more secure and feel most confident and comfortable in our connections. Sowing the seeds of personal discord in family life is among that which gives Satan the most pleasure. Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Iblis (Satan) places his throne upon water; he then sends detachments [for creating dissension between people]; the nearer to him in rank are those who are most notorious in creating dissension. One of them comes and says: I did so and so. And he [Iblis] says: You have done nothing. Then one amongst them comes and says: I did not spare so-and-so, until I sowed the seed of discord between a husband and a wife. Satan goes near him and says: You have done well. He then embraces him."

We should know that Satan does not approach a family all at once but slowly and when the family members feel most comfortable, content, and secure in their own surroundings. It might begin with an increased attachment to the cell phone, like a mother who checks her phone for texts, emails, and Facebook posts repeatedly, at dinner, at family gatherings. Then, the family dissolution might move to the father spending late nights in seclusion on the laptop, the children constantly connected to the iPad, the teenagers glued to the Internet, video games, and the TV. The entire family is connected only to gadgets and technology and not to one another.

How we can save our relation?

1. disconnect from devices

Force yourself to disconnect from the technology that pervades our lives. We cannot have meaningful connections with our families if we are always turning to our devices and gadgets to connect with others. Make an agreement not to use any device while being together.

2. communication

Schedule regular "talking time." This is very important for the well-being of the parents' relationship and for the children to know that they always have a parent to talk to. Enter each child's room before bedtime and appropriate five minutes of dedicated time where your child can tell you anything that is on his/her mind. Or you and your child can just have a simple, pleasant conversation. Your spouse can do the same. Then do the same with your spouse and spend 10-15 minutes (or longer if needed or wanted). The kids will love their "five-minute" dedicated parent time, and you and your spouse will find yourselves looking forward to your together-time as well.

3. Respect

Build respect in the companionship and camaraderie between you and your spouse, you and your parents, and you and your children. Spouses should commit to being on the same page, always displaying a united, cooperative, mutually respectful front in dealing with and/or disciplining the children. Don't let your children see you divided. Your marriage should be a place of trust, rest, tranquillity, care, and mercy. If you can't find that in your marriage, you won't be able to provide that to your children.

4.Support

As family you must support each other, you must provide emotional as well physical and spiritual support for one another. Avoid frequent criticism of your children or spouse.

5. Be responsible

Foster a sense of responsibility in all family members, including children and both spouses. What are the rights and responsibilities in a family? How can everyone be a part of fulfilling those? The Quran mandates the importance of being good to our parents. Be an example to your own children by not neglecting your responsibilities to your own parents.

6. Mend What's Broken

Acknowledge and fix whatever has gone wrong in your family. Have a serious heart-to-heart with your spouse and with your children about why you feel that your family is not living up to its potential. Don't approach it as a time for blame but as a time for honesty and recommitment. The family must work together to improve the dynamic and to strengthen the bonds between family members. Make sure that each member realizes the importance of family ties and that Islam warns us of the consequences of breaking family relations. Jaabir ibn Muntam (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet (pbuh) said, **"The person who breaks family ties will not enter Jannah"**

7. smile_ and have fun with your family

The smile is a charity to a stranger according to Islam's teachings; so imagine what it is to your family who you are commanded to be the best to. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Do not regard any act of virtue to be insignificant even if it is meeting your brother with a smiling face." Recognize that there should be joy in your family life. Your children should want to come home and be with you. Your spouse should be excited to see you. Be the best "you" possible for your spouse and your kids. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would play around, joke, and race with his wives. He would tell stories to the children to make them laugh.

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