

# The Impact Of Covid-19 On The Dynamics Of The Family System In Pakistan From Islamic Perspectives

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## Abstract

Allah Almighty has revealed a complete code of life in the form of Islam for the guidance of humanity. The religion of Islam gives different rules and principles for living a better life in individual and collective contexts and normal situations as well as in emergencies. In Islam, the family is an important institution that is the foundation and root of society. Society is built on this foundation and principle. The family system of Islam is a wonderful system with many characteristics which are unique and more inclusive than the family systems of other religions. In contemporary times, the Corona epidemic (Code 19) has not only affected various systems, departments, and institutions in the world, rather it has also affected the Islamic family system in multiple ways, both positive and negative. Maintaining social distance became of considerable importance in preventing this epidemic, which led to a ban on all social, economic, recreational, political, and religious activities, forcing family members to spend most of their time at home. On one hand, it has appeared as an opportunity to have positive effects such as mutual love and affection, mutual consultation for problem-solving, and closeness in relationships. On the other hand, being confined to one's home or room has led to problems such as detachment from other family members, ignorance of their situation, and lack of communication. Adopting an analytical method of research, this article examines the effects of the Corona epidemic on the Islamic family system with the same positive and negative references.

**Keywords:** Corona Epidemic, Muslim Pakistani family system, Interrelationships, Effects, Islamic teachings

## I:- Corona epidemic (Covid 19) Facts and figures :

The Coronavirus, which broke out in China in December 2019, has affected people all over the world. Its effects were recorded much more in developed countries than in

other countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the epidemic, which has been spreading for more than two and a half years, has so far affected approximately 609 848 852 people worldwide and about 6 507 002 people died due to this epidemic.<sup>1</sup> The devastation of this

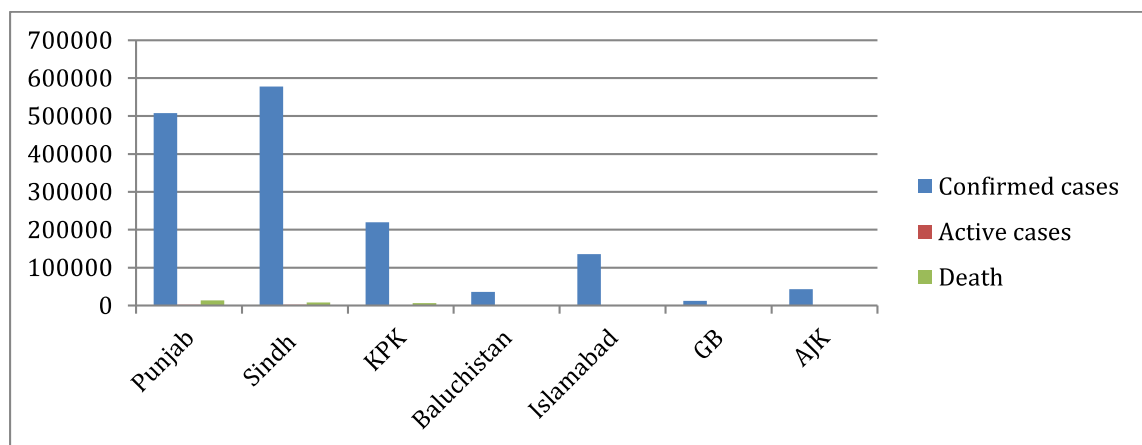
epidemic in Pakistan has been much less than in other countries of the world. According to the National Command and Operations Center (NCOC), the number of people

affected by the epidemic in Pakistan thus far is 1571894. Around 30,607 people died in the outbreak.<sup>2</sup> The table below shows the number of victims in different provinces of Pakistan.

Confirmed cases	Recover	Death	Active cases	Provence
507469	491786	13565	2118	<b>Punjab</b>
577864	567237	8107	2520	<b>Sindh</b>
219738	212886	6324	528	<b>KPK</b>
35506	35108	378	20	<b>Baluchistan</b>
135593	134140	1024	429	<b>Islamabad</b>
11752	11546	191	15	<b>GB</b>
43352	42517	792	43	<b>AJK</b>

**Table 1: Number of Corona cases at the provincial level**

The information in the table above is illustrated with the help of the chart below.



**Chart 1: Number of Corona cases at the provincial level**

The facts, details, and statistics described above make it clear that the coronavirus (code 19) is a contagious and infectious disease whose severity and spread are extremely dangerous.

## 2: Family: Meaning and Introduction

The Arabic word for family is "الاسرة" and the Persian word is "خانواده" which is commonly used in the sense of family, tribe, and community.

الأسر: "الشد والعصب وشدة"  
"الخلق"<sup>3</sup>

("Al-Asr": the intensity, power, and the solidarity of creation)

This maturity of creation is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

"نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ"<sup>4</sup>

(We have created them and strengthened their forms)

In Arabic, the word "عائلة" is used in addition to "الأسرة" for the family. According to Islamic teachings, the man is the head of the family, and in Arabic, the term "عيال الرجل" represents the family members who are depending for their living on family head:

"وعيال الرجل وعيله الذين يتكفل بهم"<sup>5</sup>

)Man's family refers to those whom he supports(

It implies that the family refers to those who are affiliated with each other in kinship and live together under one roof as husband, wife, mother, father, and siblings. The technical definition of family in the "Encyclopedia of fiqh Kuwaitiyya" is given in the following words:

"أسرة الإنسان: عشيرته ورهطه الأذنون، مأخوذ من الأسر، وهو القوة، سموا بذلك لأنه يتقوى بهم، والأسرة: عشيرة الرجل وأهل بيته"<sup>6</sup>

The paternal relatives and offsprings of a person are called his family. أسرة is derived from الأسر which means strength, as a person feels strengthened from his progeny, thus the system of providing a living for his family is called أسرة.

Muhammad bin Abdul Razzaq writes in Definition of الأسرة:

"أقارب الرجل من قبيل أبيه"<sup>7</sup>

(The paternal relatives of a person are called الأسرة)

According to the Qur'an, the word "family" applies to wives, children, and grandchildren. Allah Almighty says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً﴾

(And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates and has made for you from your mates sons and grandchildren)

In the light of the above lexical and technical definitions and Qur'anic verses, it can be established that the word "family" refers to a group of people who have blood relations among them and are connected in different social roles. The family usually consists of a grandparent, mother, father, children, siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. The paternal relatives are usually considered as a family.

### 3:- The Effects of the Corona Epidemic on the Family System:

In recent times, this global pandemic, the coronavirus, has undoubtedly affected all countries and nations of the world. The virus has had a devastating effect on the economies, sciences, arts, tourism, and education of all countries. At the same time, the individual and collective lives of the people of the society were also severely affected by it. The family system also fell prey to the effects of this pandemic. However, this pandemic has left both positive and negative effects on the family system which are being discussed as follows.

### 3.1.-Positive Effects

In this transient world, man is confronted with many exceptional situations which seem harmful to him however, these have some benefits for him in disguise. Allah mentions this situation in the Qur'an in the following words:

﴿وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُهَا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ﴾<sup>9</sup>

(perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you)

Studying the biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) shows that suffering is a source of mercy and reward for the believer. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ"<sup>10</sup>

(The case of the believer is strange. It is good for him in everything he does. If he finds himself in a state of well-being and he is thankful for it, then it is good for him to be thankful, and if he is in trouble and he is patient, then it is good for him to be patient.)

"مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا أَذًى وَلَا

غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشُّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا، إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ"<sup>11</sup>

(Whatever fatigue, sickness, anxiety, trauma, distress, or grief befalls a Muslim, even if a thorn bites him, Allah forgives his sins in return).

From the above verses and ahadith, it is clear that even many bad and undesirable things carry some aspects of goodness. Due to the Corona epidemic, all walks of life around the world have faced many problems and bad effects, at the same time it carries some positive aspects. Such positive impacts can be seen in the family system of Pakistan, which are mentioned below:

#### 3.1.1- Increased Mutual interaction:

To prevent this dangerous virus, expert physicians around the world have suggested that social distance is the first and most important precautionary measure. From the first day of the epidemic, all nations and individuals around the world have accepted social distance, which has largely hindered the spread of the epidemic. Educational institutions, political and social activities, and public and private offices around the world were closed for social distance, allowing members of society to spend more time at home with their loved ones. After a long time, the young generation, who has been previously engaged in various social activities, got the opportunity to spend time with all the members of the family.

In modern times man has become so busy that he could barely spend some hours in the whole day with his family. In such a situation, it is a positive effect of the Corona epidemic that there has been an increase in

family interaction. Social distance changed detachments into closeness, which led to a significant rise in feelings of mutual love and fulfillment of family responsibilities in a family unit. The severity of the Corona epidemic created fear of death as well as fear of losing one's loved ones forever, which stimulated people to diminish their mutual malice and learn the value and importance of relationships.

### 3.1.2- Strengthening family relationships:

Allah Almighty has naturally placed mutual love, affection, and a special attraction in blood relations. The religion of Islam has commanded us to maintain and develop this natural attraction and emotion. Islam, reserves special rights for relatives. Allah says in the Qur'an,

﴿وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ﴾<sup>12</sup>

(And give the relative his right,)

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ﴾<sup>13</sup>

(Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives)

In addition to the above verses, various other verses are present in the Qur'an, which command to treat one's close relatives with kindness and to give them out of one's wealth. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has mentioned the preclusion from the paradise of the one who cuts off ties with one's relatives.

﴿لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَاطِعٌ رَجِمٌ﴾<sup>14</sup>

(The one who breaks up will not enter Paradise)

Today, man has become practically detached from most of his close relationships due to his involvement in social, educational, and political activities. One of the positive aspects of the Corona epidemic in such a situation was that it provided an opportunity for those who have been away from their relatives for ages, to strengthen and consolidate their relationships once again. Most of the people living in other countries, cities, and regions for employment returned home at the time of the epidemic and got a chance to spend ample time with their loved ones. Given the severity of the Corona epidemic, many grievances, animosities, and hatreds were dispelled and people forgave each other's sins. An atmosphere of mutual understanding and sympathy was established.

### 3.1.3- Opportunity to serve parents:

Allah Almighty has made it obligatory to fulfill not only His rights but the rights of His people too, which is called human rights. The rights of parents come first in human rights. Allah Almighty commands obedience and submission to parents immediately after His worship in the Holy Quran, which shows the importance of parental rights. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ  
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا﴾<sup>15</sup>

(And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment.)

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا﴾<sup>16</sup>

((And We have enjoined upon man, to be good to his parents

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا﴾<sup>17</sup>

(And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents.)

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man came to Prophet (P.B.U.H) and asked his permission for jihad. He (P.B.U.H) said: Are your parents alive? The person replied yes. He (P.B.U.H) said, "Then do jihad by serving them."<sup>18</sup>

In the above verses and hadith, Allah has commanded not only to treat the parents well but also to treat them in the best possible way. Unfortunately, in today's world children are so preoccupied with social, educational, political, and economic activities that they are unable to make time for their parents even if they want to. These other engagements of the children have taken them away from the primary duty of serving the parents. In such a situation, it was a positive aspect of the Corona epidemic that it provided an opportunity for children who have been away from their parents for years to serve their parents. Most of the working people in other countries, cities, and regions returned home during the outbreak, became close to their parents, and, above all, succeeded in fulfilling the duty of serving parents and elders. Therefore, thanks to the Corona epidemic, the importance of time and relationships fostered a sense of parental value and service.

### 3.1.4- Opportunity for mutual consultation

It is a natural impulse and requirement to consider the negative and positive aspects of any important task before doing it. It is a matter of common observation and experience that in matters done by mutual

consultation, man avoids many evils and harms and achieves better results by gaining maximum benefits. That is why Islam, being a religion of nature, commands its followers to consult with each other before taking any important decision. Allah Almighty, while describing the attributes of the believers in the Holy Qur'an, says that their affairs are decided by mutual consultation. It is mentioned as:

﴿وَأْمُرْهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾<sup>19</sup>

(And whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves)

﴿فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا﴾<sup>20</sup>  
﴿وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا﴾

(And if they both desire to wean through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them.)

The above Qur'anic texts oblige the believers to seek meaningful advice in all their important matters. When it comes to family matters and issues, family counseling is very important and necessary in matters of engagement, marriage, education, and so on. Man's needs have kept him so busy that he has moved away from mutual consultation in all these important matters. Wherever there is consultation, it is only nominal due to a lack of time and engagement, which causes a lot of confusion among family members and different relationships. In such a situation when all social activities were suspended for a long time, the family had a long and rare opportunity to consult on important issues and provide solutions to family problems. Fathers and older siblings previously used to be out of the house for long hours for earning their capital, therefore either ordered the

family affairs to be decided without their consultation or they independently took decisions and informed the family. The Corona epidemic allowed them to spend more time with family members, which led to counseling on important family matters. This consultation led to practical efforts to resolve many family issues and confusion.

### 3.1.5- Opportunity for Educating the Family:

Education and training have a very important and fundamental place in the religion of Islam because it is this education and training that gives the common man knowledge of Allah on the one hand and makes him a useful member of society on the other hand. According to Qur'anic teachings, training is considered an essential part of knowledge and education.

The main purpose of the chain of prophets sent by Allah Almighty in the world was also to present a practical model for a training process. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also came to this world as a teacher and mentor. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty has explained the duties of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَيُرَكِّبُهُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

(Certainly, did Allah confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom)

In this verse, along with the recitation of the Qur'an teaching of the Book and Wisdom, self-purification, i.e. training, has also been mentioned as a fundamental duty of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah Almighty has mentioned these duties of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Surah Al-Baqarah verses 129 and 151, and Surah Al-Jumu'ah verse 2 in a different order. In this second order, human self-purification, i.e. training, is mentioned in the second number after the recitation of verses. From which it is clear that in the duties of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) along with the teaching of the book, self-purification and training have a distinct and significant place. The job of the prophets is not only to teach and convey the message but also to provide practical training to the believers according to this message. This training is one of the important responsibilities of the head of the family which is also mentioned in Surah At-Tahrim. Imam Tabari writes while explaining this verse: Education and training of one's family, encouraging them to do good deeds and preventing them from doing bad deeds, and saving them from the torment of the Hereafter and the fire of Hell are also among the important responsibilities of the head of the family.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the utmost significance of training, in modern times the head of the family or

parents, due to their financial, social, and other innumerable commitments, have completely neglected the training of their children and family. Due to the Corona epidemic, a Muslim who neglected the basic duty of training his children, to meet his economic needs was given a rare and valuable opportunity to stay with his family at home and train them. Regarding the training of children and other members of the family, the positive aspect of Code 19 is that it gave parents and heads of the family another opportunity to have ample time to work on their families and train them in the best possible way.

### 3.1.6- Save money on extravagant weddings:

Islam is a religion of moderation and balance. This moderation and balance are maintained in all the commands and matters of Islam. The rules of this moderation are explained in detail in the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet(P.B.H.H).

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَبْخُسُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

(And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate)

From the social point of view too, the religion of Islam commands its followers to be moderate and balanced. The Qur'an commands us to maintain this balance and it also discourages unbalancing the social system. Islam also condemns wasteful spending of wealth. According to Qur'anic

teachings, extravagant people are called brothers of the devil. Similarly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also directed toward this aspect and condemned lavish spending. Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

(إِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النِّكَاحِ بَرَكَهٌ أَيْسَرُهُ مُؤْنَةً)<sup>23</sup>

(The most blessed marriage is the one with the minimum expenses)

Pakistani society is caught up in many religious, political, and social rituals, which are a source of many social problems, despite all this, most people fall prey to these rituals against their will. One of such extravagant and unnecessary rituals is to spend extravagantly at weddings just for pop and show. It is a common observation that in Pakistani society, money is spent recklessly on marriage rituals. In such a situation, when all social activities were restricted for a long time due to the Corona epidemic, the number of wedding ceremonies and the number of participants had to be limited. One of the positive aspects of this experience was that the extra rituals of marriage were discouraged, the wasteful expenditure on these rituals was eliminated and the Islamic rule and obligation of marriage and nikah(نكاح) became easier.

### 3.1.7- Attention to domestic responsibilities:

In the present era, women also work alongside men. Both men and women would leave the house early in the morning and return at night. In such a situation, it is natural to ignore many domestic responsibilities. Besides, not getting proper time for the children and neglecting all their affairs was an important concern of the family. Due to the Corona epidemic, both men and women spent a lot of time at home, which helped to



alleviate these problems. There had been a positive change, with the cleaning, tidying up, and renovation of the house, which was postponed for a long time. During the Corona epidemic, the family members became accustomed to doing their work by themselves due to the absence of domestic helpers. There also appeared an atmosphere of working together and helping and cooperating.

### **3.2- Negative effects:**

While the Corona epidemic has had some positive effects on the family system in some aspects, it has also caused many hitches and difficulties in the family system. The negative effects of this epidemic on the family system are mentioned below.

#### **3.2.1- Rising unemployment:**

The Corona epidemic had severely damaged economies around the world. Decades later, the stock markets of developed countries saw a sharp decline. In Pakistan, too, many people lost their jobs, leading to a rise in unemployment. The increase in poverty during the Corona epidemic had many negative effects on the family system, which in turn increased the financial difficulties of the family and the members of the family. These economic difficulties created an atmosphere of mental stress. Poverty also created psychological problems.

#### **3.2.2- Difficulties in financial support:**

The Corona epidemic caused many problems for the family system and especially for the head of the family. One of the major difficulties was the issue of the financial support of the family. From the beginning of the epidemic, all kinds of economic activities were completely banned. After some time, these restrictions were relaxed, but in all these circumstances, those responsible for financial support faced severe difficulties in

providing basic needs to their families. According to a report published in May 2020 by the BBC, in a developed country like the United States, nearly six million people had lost their jobs in just two months.

In Pakistan which is a developing and economically weak country, the situation here was even worse. According to a report published in May 2020 by the BBC (Urdu), in the first few months of the Corona outbreak, 10 million people were feared to be unemployed. Many government and private offices had seen a decline in staff numbers, which had created a climate of fear and uncertainty among the people. In many institutions, many months' salary was deducted, which made it impossible for ordinary people to make a living. People were forced to pick up their children from school to save some of their monthly fees. All of this created an atmosphere of anxiety and grief. Tensions began to build in the home environment and relationships.

#### **3.2.3- Mutual animosity increases:**

It is a natural thing that wherever different people live together for a while, there is an increase in mutual love and affection as well as some unpleasant incidents. Due to the Corona epidemic, educational, economic, and all other social activities were banned or restricted, so all family members had to spend most of their time at home. Due to the closure of educational institutes, children staying at home all the time without any engagement caused many problems. Due to the quarrels and mischief between the young children and the siblings, even fights between the adults would happen. Such problems occur daily in the joint family system.

#### **3.2.4- The tendency to distance oneself from relatives:**

In Pakistan, there are present both joint and nuclear family systems. Most people in villages and rural communities live under a joint family system with many other close relatives besides parents and children. In contrast, nuclear family systems are common in urban areas. The Corona epidemic cut off ties with distant relatives. Wedding ceremonies were shortened, which increased the distance between relatives. Not being able to take care of and help relatives was also a very negative effect of the epidemic. In many places in the Qur'an, it is emphasized to give rights and support to relatives, but due to social distance and restrictions, a kind of detachment from relatives had arisen.

#### 4. Research Methodology:

The primary objective of this study was to figure out the positive and negative impacts of Covid-19 on the family system of Pakistan. Therefore the study has employed both descriptive and analytical approaches to delineate the issue. The data were collected according to the nature of the topic which was mainly comprised of verses of the Quran, sayings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Arabic dictionaries, books, authentic websites, and survey reports.

#### 5. Conclusion:

It is established from the above discussion that the Corona epidemic has a grave impact on every walk of life in the world. The impact of this pandemic is comparatively less in Pakistan. In general, the focus was only drawn to its obvious negative impacts, forgetting the fact that it had its positive impacts too. In particular, the family system in Pakistan, which is based on Islamic principles, has also been considerably affected by the epidemic, nonetheless, the effects are both positive and negative. However, the negative impacts of this

epidemic have overshadowed its positive effects on the family system, therefore this study has highlighted the positive impacts that Pakistani families have experienced. In conclusion, it can be said that this epidemic has caused many difficulties to the family system in Pakistan because of unemployment, inflation, deaths, and sickness, but it has also provided an opportunity of spending ample time with family members by sharing their problems and by training them in the best direction. It has increased mutual affection and strengthened the family bonds. Also, it has taught people that functions can be performed without spending extravagantly. This pandemic has also made people realize the importance of relationships and encourage them to fulfill the rights of family members and take care of them, by focusing on the fear lest death can make them apart forever.

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23. AL-Qur'an 25:67
24. Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Abdullah, Mishkat-ul-Masabeeh, Kitaab-un-Nikah, Maktabah Al-Islami Beirut, Hadith 3097.