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- PROGRAM KOREKSI BERASASKAN ISLAM MELALUI PROGRAM HALAQAH SEBAGAI MEDIUM DAKWAH KEPADA BANDUAN DI PENJARA KAJANG ...03-22
Khairul Hamimah Mohammad Jodi, Syaidatun Nazirah Abu Zahrin, Hadenan Towpek & Nurul Husna Mansor
- USLŪB DAKWAH DALAM DĪWĀN IMAM SHĀFI'Ī ...23-39
Khazri Osman, Badlihisam Mohd Nasir, Siti Rugayah Tibek & Ahmad Irdha Mokhtar
- ANALISIS HADIS MAWDU' DALAM NOVEL PEREMPUAN NAN BERCINTA KARYA FAISAL TEHRANI ...40-54
Muhamad Nur Adzim Amran, Ahamad Asmadi Sakat & Latifah Abdul Majid
- FAKTOR GANGGUAN PSIKOLOGI DALAM KALANGAN MAHASISWA UNIVERSITI... 55-71
Zainab Ismail
- PEMBANGUNAN AKHLAK DAN MORAL KE ARAH MASYARAKAT LESTARI ...72-87
Zaharah Hussin, Saedah Siraj, Zai Hazreen Ab Malik, Mohd Ridhuan Mohd Jamil, Ahmad Arifin Sapar, Nurulrabihah Mat Noh
- THE ROLE OF THE EXEMPLARY FAMILY IN THE FORMATION OF A HAPPY FAMILY ACCORDING TO ISLAM .88-97
A'dawiyah Ismail, Rosma Aisyah Abd. Malek, Jawiah Dakir, Siti Rugayah Tibek, Noor Aziah Mohd.Awal, Fariza Md. Sham, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah & Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit

• الآثار الإيجابية للرسالة والرؤية والتخطيط ودورها في تطوير الرعاية والتربية بالنسبة للأُم المسلمة الريادية

113-98...

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The Role of the Exemplary Family in the Formation of a Happy Family According to Islam

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ABSTRACT

The rise in family breakups are caused by the lack of knowledge about the role of the members in the family institution and about the guidance on family life through the exemplary family according to Islam. Hence, this study aims to identify the role of the exemplary family members in the formation of a happy family. The main method used in obtaining data in this paperwork is content analysis. The study has found that the understanding about the role of the mother, father as well as their children is very crucial nowadays due to the different challenges compared to the previous years. Exemplary family members who carry out their roles are able to form a happy family. Therefore, each family member should be knowledgeable about the exemplary family and the ways in forming a happy family based on the Quran and Sunnah. The implication is that an exemplary family which succeeds in creating a happy family is capable of enjoying life well and peacefully, setting the example to the general public and reducing unhealthy and undesirable activities in the society.

Keywords: *family, exemplary, happy, role, Quran and Sunnah*

ABSTRAK

Meningkatnya keruntuhan rumah tangga adalah disebabkan kurangnya pengetahuan tentang peranan anggota dalam institusi kekeluargaan dan panduan hidup berkeluarga menerusi keluarga contoh menurut Islam. Justeru itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengenalpasti peranan anggota keluarga mithali dalam pembentukan keluarga bahagia. Kaedah utama yang digunakan untuk mendapatkan data di dalam kertas kerja ini adalah analisis kandungan. Kajian mendapati kefahaman berkaitan peranan ibu, bapa dan anak amat penting pada masa kini kerana cabaran dari zaman

sebelumnya. Anggota keluarga mithali yang berperanan mampu membentuk keluarga bahagia. Oleh itu, setiap anggota perlu mempunyai pengetahuan keluarga mithali dan cara membentuk keluarga bahagia berpandukan al-Quran dan al-Sunnah. Implikasinya, keluarga mithali yang berjaya membentuk keluarga bahagia berupaya menikmati kehidupan dengan baik dan sejahtera, menjadi contoh kepada masyarakat umum dan mengurangkan aktiviti tidak sihat di dalam masyarakat.

Kata kunci: *Keluarga, mithali, bahagia, peranan, Quran dan Sunnah*

INTRODUCTION

The family is an important institution in the lives of mankind. The start of family creation in Islam is through a legitimate marriage according to Islam, accompanied by the understanding of the roles to be performed by the married couple. A good family will produce a fine and righteous society. A family that is ratified by Islam is a family that would observe all of the commandments and teachings of Allah and His messenger. An exemplary family is a family which sets the example to the society in the establishment of a happy family. Thus, each couple needs to seek for the skills and knowledge in order to succeed in becoming exemplary mother and father (Saat Sulaiman 2011). The formation of a happy family needs to be noted earlier on before the marriage itself, through the selection of the potential life partner, and by following the roles properly according to Islam so as to attain peacefulness and tranquility. An exemplary family is a family that becomes the model or sets the example to the society in all aspects of life, among others are being a family that obeys the commands of Allah, is successful in educating the individual members and the whole family, as well as contributing goodness or kindness to the public. Allah the Almighty says in surah al-Ahzab, verse 21:

Meaning: "Indeed in the Messenger of Allah is a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah".

Each individual is also required to emulate the character of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a husband and father to his family since he is the best example for all mankind. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH said:

Which means: "Believers who have more perfect faith are those who are good and gentle towards their family members."

(Hadith al-Tirmidzi)

The aspect that needs to be emulated by the family members as done by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is that each couple should emulate the way that the Prophet PBUH mingles with his family members. His actions could be witnessed while he helps his wife to prepare food for the family. In addition, he also provides food for his family members and mends his own torn clothes, provides sufficient alimony, and treats his family members based on rights that are acceptable.

A happy family is an institution which experiences sweetness, tranquility, spaciousness as well as comfort and relaxation when with the family members. This happiness is felt whenever each of the exemplary family member practices the methods as outlined by Allah SWT. The underlying factor behind the establishment of this happy family is when the husband, wife as well as the children perform their responsibilities well. These responsibilities include parental responsibilities towards their children and the children's filial responsibilities towards their parents (Mohd. Nor Manuty 2003).

According to (Ibnu Manzur 1997), family comes from the Arabic word 'al-usrah' which is a noun derived from the word 'Asru', which means strong and enduring. In terms of terminology, family means a group which is considered as the filling of the society, created through the ties of marriage between a man and a woman, and is later blessed with children who each has strong ties with the husband and wife's origin from both the paternal and maternal grandparents (Wahbah Zuhayli 2000). The word exemplary means example, being followed.

Meanwhile, an exemplary family consists of family members that can set an example to the society on their good and superior personal character. A happy family is a social group consisting of the husband, wife, parents, children, grandchildren as well as the relatives who feel good about each other and towards life itself. They are able to live happily, have clear objectives about the goals to be attained in life, be it individually or jointly, are optimistic and having faith in each other, are comfortable with what they have and so on (Mahmood Zuhdi 2008).

The exemplary family to be discussed in this paperwork is based on the characteristics of the family receiving the award for Exemplary Family Figure on the success of the family as proposed by the Islamic Dakwah Foundation Malaysia or Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia (YADIM). In Malaysia, this organization is experienced in organizing the Awards Day for the Exemplary Mother Figure, Exemplary Father Figure and Exemplary Heir based on the following criteria:

1. A devoted, devout family with commendable and admirable character, personality and identity.

This refers to a family that adheres closely to the teachings of Islam, as outlined by the Quran and Sunnah. The role played by exemplary parents is to perfectly educate and teach their children with Islamic education since childhood, especially in the study of the Quran and the fundamental aspects of the religion. Apart from that, these parents have also been found to have set good examples to their children and have commendable self-identity in their family and also the society.

2. A family who excels in education or is successful in its respective field and contribute its service to the society, religion, race and country.

This refers to family members who are successful in their lives, be it the mother, father or their offspring. The parents' success in their lives, especially in their jobs, gives the impression to their children that employment helps them to have a more assured life. Exemplary families are also concerned with the welfare of the neighbours who live close by their house. They participate in charitable activities together with the community, are referred to by the community, seek advice and also provide assistance to the community. Although exemplary parents are always busy, yet they still have time to carry out charity work voluntarily without expecting any rewards. Next, the offspring of exemplary families would also excel in their education and later secure good posts, both in the government or private sectors and would later utilize their expertise with the society. They are well-liked by the society for their commendable attitude, such as their dedication to the public.

3. A harmonious family that would mutually maintain good family relations.

This refers to a family whose members emphasize on the togetherness and solidarity of family interaction. The parents would always control the relationship with their children and relatives. The family members would also tolerate each other when in disagreement and resolve it wisely. The role of the parents is to exemplify effective communication, such as using well-chosen words when communicating with their children and also in practicing what they preach.

4. A family that can become the role model for other families.

This refers to the members of a happy family who become the role models to the community, in terms of their success in education, are happy and are free from domestic crisis. There is no divorce except

death. The role of the mother, father and their children towards their own family, the society and country in all aspects become the model to the public.

5. A Malaysian Muslim citizen and is devoted to Allah the Almighty.

This refers to the members of a muslim family who receive the award, consisting of the mother, father and child(ren) of Malaysian citizenship. The family members would always obey the commands of Allah s.w.t and stay away from what He has prohibited, as well as making the Quran and Sunnah as their principles in life.

THE PRIORITY IN BUILDING AN EXEMPLARY FAMILY

Each exemplary family consists of the mother, father and the child (children), who are the primary source that plays an important role in the formation of a happy family. The main role of the exemplary family members is to provide quality and excellent education to the children (Zakaria Stapa et al. 2012). Therefore, parents must arm themselves with parenting knowledge before entering the realm of marriage to enable them to perform their roles and responsibilities well towards the family members. In this instance, for example, is the role of an exemplary mother in providing adequate love or affection in raising her children. The relationship between the mother and her children is always good and close, since the mother is the main source of reference for the children, based on the amount of time and energy spent together. Exemplary parents are found to have always educated their children with religious education as outlined in the Quran and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The parents themselves would teach their children the Quran and Jawi, as well as worldly knowledge such as science, mathematics, history and also knowledge of the afterworld. Thus, exemplary parents place great emphasis on the provision of a comprehensive religious education for their children so that their children's lives would be spared from all abominations and evil deeds. The study has found that exemplary parents are always very strict in terms of providing religious education for their children, from childhood until they reach adulthood, for instance in reciting the Quran and in understanding its meaning to be applied in their lives.

In addition, an exemplary mother strives to wisely create joy and happiness in the family. An exemplary mother needs to communicate and interact with the children through the latest technology to strengthen family ties. Communicating with the husband will help to establish cooperation and

understanding between them in fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities in educating their children properly. In order to achieve a harmonious household, an exemplary mother would always make the household of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as her role model, by emphasizing on the aspect of interaction among the family members and on household management (Noor Azilawati 2007). Socializing with the family takes place among family members without involving any physical pain or establishing hate among them.

The father as the head of the family is also involved in the family institution. An exemplary father must set good examples to his children and wife. This model encompasses attitude, behaviour, speech and actions by making the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the best source of role model (Sidek Baba 2010). Among the exemplary deeds shown by the Prophet are good behaviour or character, and treating his wives and children well. An exemplary father is very concerned about the welfare of his family. He does so by providing the children with their rights, that is by fulfilling their rights and needs, such as the provision of alimony, shelter, clothing, and food and drink to his wife and the children in any situation. Hence, an exemplary father is required to work more tenaciously and industriously to support his family. Other than that, an exemplary father provides alimony to the children in fulfilling his responsibility without expecting help from other people.

An exemplary father who wishes to perform his roles well should do so based on knowledge since it enables the wife and children to be properly and excellently educated. The main matter in the upbringing of the children is to continuously provide them with religious education. Education also includes guiding the wife and the children towards the attainment of Allah's pleasure. A father also needs to understand the physical and psychological growth of his children in ensuring that they are spared from evil deeds and vices, which is achieved by shaping their growth according to the correct mold (Sidek Baba 2010). An exemplary father is exemplified through his fair and unbiased conduct towards the children by giving equal affection to the sons and daughters. In addition, an exemplary father would always pray for his children's wellbeing, for them to be spared from bad things, help his children to obey Allah and His Messenger and to be dutiful to their parents, religion and country, and also in giving them encouragement and motivation.

Next is the emphasis on the role of exemplary children in performing their filial responsibilities and good deeds to their parents. For example, a child fulfills the needs and desires of both parents by repaying their good deeds and treating them kindly. An exemplary child is obligated to obey Allah and His Messenger, to honour the parents, to obey the

commands of the parents that are in line with the religion, and to respect them in all aspects that do not conflict with the rules of Islam. The priority of the children is in honoring their mother due to her much bigger merit compared to the father, such as for being pregnant with them, giving birth and raising them (Syahrin Jasah 2000). In fact, children who honour their parents will receive blessings and success in their lives. Conclusively, every member of the exemplary family have their own respective roles which would ultimately result in a happy family.

THE JOINT ROLE OF THE EXEMPLARY FAMILY MEMBERS IN CREATING A HAPPY FAMILY ACCORDING TO ISLAM

The primary role of parents in educating their children is to emphasize on religious education. The most important foundation is the teaching of the syahadah (Mohd. Nor Manuty 2003). They educate their children according to the appropriateness of the children's age. Apart from that, parents need to be concerned with their children's growth and development and to guide them properly and effectively. During childhood, children need to be showered with the utmost affection and attention. The important aspect at this stage is the use of good language while speaking to the children. Thus, parents should give the best of examples to their children and to avoid any vile deeds or conduct in front of their children. For example, parents need to teach their children to pray at the age of seven for them to be accustomed to praying in their lives later.

When they reach the adolescent stage, parents need to establish understanding with their children since at this age adolescents would experience personal physical and emotional growth. Parents need to be wise in dealing with the behaviour of adolescents or teenagers by understanding their children's needs and requirements. Parents need to learn to become their children's friends, as the place for the children to express their feelings, and to support beneficial activities of their choice. For example, for teenagers who are keen on playing football, the parents could show their interest in the children's activity by buying soccer necessities and by attending and giving moral support during their children's soccer games. As for female teenagers who are interested in cooking or baking, the parents could show their interest by buying books and cooking ingredients for their daughters.

At the adult stage, parents should advise their children so that they could make the right and intelligent choices, especially concerning their employment and life partners. Nevertheless, children who have been well educated since young are able to make good decisions, as well as succeeding in managing their lives brilliantly. For example, parents provide their

children with guidance in selecting suitable, good and beneficial jobs that are in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

Parents should also distinguish between the education for their sons and daughters. Among the differences in education is in terms of understanding the children's feelings. The daughters are more emotionally sensitive compared to the sons. Hence, parents must be wise in using psychological methods in understanding and giving advice to their children. For example, when reprimanding or scolding the children, parents must use well-chosen words so as not to turn them into stubborn lots. Next, parents must understand the biological changes that take place to their children, especially their daughters, who may feel depressed, moody and sensitive during their menstrual cycle. Nonetheless, the education for aspects such as faith, worship and prayer remain the same for both sons and daughters (Saat Sulaiman 2011).

The role of children towards their parents is by providing them with the utmost love and affection for all their good deeds and sacrifices. Among them is by pleasing the parents, especially when they reach their old age (Mohd. Nor Manuty 2003). Apart from that, the children need to always respect their parents by refraining themselves from uttering vile and offensive words when talking to their parents. Children who are devoted to their parents will reap the rewards in this life and the hereafter, whereby their sins will be abolished and their prayers answered, as well as having a blessed life (Syahrin Jasah 2000).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXEMPLARY FAMILY IN SHAPING A HAPPY FAMILY

An exemplary family plays an important role in the creation of happy and harmonious individuals, families and society. The happiness of the family institution can develop a sense of belonging in the family members. The criteria of the exemplary family must also be scrutinized in creating a happy family based on love and affection, which would eventually establish a cheerful and peaceful environment (Noor Azilawati 2007). All family members feel that they are loved and appreciated. Smart parents will manage their time well and spend quality time with their children, thus strengthening bilateral relations with their children (Sidek Baba 2010). They are able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony in the family through healthy interaction, by practicing the virtue of helping and respecting each other. This will indirectly strengthen the bond between all family members. Exemplary parents who play their roles by understanding and investigating the problems faced by their children and by becoming good listeners will

produce family members who have positive thinking or minds at the onset of problems (Noor Azilawati 2007).

CONCLUSION

A happy family is the result of an exemplary family that is blessed by Allah. It is something that every married couple wish to achieve. The understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the mother, father and children in an exemplary family leads to the formation of a happy family. The focus on the roles of the family members needs to be optimized for all Muslim families. Although the establishment of this happy family takes a long time, yet each family member especially the father and mother needs to play their roles by practicing discipline in the family and instilling noble values in the family members in order to face the current challenges. The exemplary family that forms the happy family based on the characteristics of the exemplary family in this paperwork deserves to receive the “Exemplary Family Award”.

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