Our Real Family

This Article is about our real family. This topic came to me as we just celebrated Family Day recently last week in Canada. The holiday was initially instituted so that people would take the time and spend it with their families. This got me thinking about the meaning of family, who is our real family and the importance of it.

We are not given a chance to choose our family. Maybe that's why knowing, understanding and learning the meaning of family becomes so essential for us. We are all, including the orphans, born with a family. Family, is essentially, made of those people who look after us, who play a crucial role in our upbringing and who teach us many lessons in life, which can never be learned through any school or text book. We assimilate the basics of discipline and responsibilities from our family relationships. The various members in our family, imbibe in us the true meaning of family.

Let’s see who these people are and how they reveal to us the real meaning of family. God blesses us with mothers, fathers, siblings and relatives on this journey of life. The Quran also talks about the importance of family and the role it plays in our lives:
1. **Our genetic family and the placement of souls:** In Appendix 7 - Why Were We Created? We know that God chooses our genetic family. Every time a human being is born, a human person is assigned to the new baby from the depository of souls. God assigns the souls in accordance with His knowledge (28:68). Every soul deserves to be assigned to a certain body, and live under certain circumstances. God alone knows which souls are good and which souls are evil. Our children are assigned to our homes in accordance with God's plan. So, from this we know that God has specially chosen for us our parents, siblings and relatives according to his perfect plan and according to our soul.

2. **Very difficult for all genetic family members to believe:** I remember when I first came to submission; I automatically assumed that all my siblings and family members would accept submission. I mean, why would they not? The proof was so evident and simple to understand. However, we know from Quran that it is very difficult or even rare for all family members to believe. We also have examples in the Quran where there are disbelieving family members. Noah’s son and Lot’s wife.
[11:45] Noah implored his Lord: "My Lord, my son is a member of my family, and Your promise is the truth. You are the wisest of the wise."

[11:46] He said, "O Noah, he is not of your family. It is unrighteous to ask Me for something you do not know.* I enlighten you, lest you be like the ignorant."

However God says not to be saddened if they do not believe as He is the only one that guides. All we can do is share the message and set the right example.

3. **Our Real Family:**

In the Quran, God talks about Submitters being our ‘Real Family’. The moment a person accepts submission, he/she becomes a member of our family only because we value and devote our lives to worshipping God alone.

[49:10] The believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence GOD, that you may attain mercy.

God advocates loving each other and helping each other to grow strong in our submission by standing side by side like pillars to fight Satan and build a strong submitting family.
4. **Rules of Conduct:**

God knows the importance of both genetic and submitting family members and gives us rules and commandments for both, which I will share with you;

- **Honour our Parents:**

  o **[2:83]** We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship except GOD. You shall honor your parents and regard the relatives, the orphans, and the poor. You shall treat the people amicably. You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat)."

  o **[17:23]** Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship except Him, and your parents shall be honored. As long as one or both of them live, you shall never say to them, "Uff" (the slightest gesture of annoyance), nor shall you shout at them; you shall treat them amicably.

God knows that our natural tendency is to take our loved ones for granted. Hence, He categorically mentions honoring our parents in the Quran so that we are constantly reminded that this is the divine code of conduct for us as submitters and that we have to constantly keep working at getting better at this aspect.
- **Regard for relatives:**

God advocates regarding the relatives as well, as they are also important in our lives. There are many verses in the Quran that advocate this;

[16:90] GOD advocates justice, charity, and regarding the relatives. And He forbids evil, vice, and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed.

[17:26] You shall give the due alms to the relatives, the needy, the poor, and the traveling alien, but do not be excessive, extravagant.

[2:215] They ask you about giving: say, "The charity you give shall go to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien." Any good you do, GOD is fully aware thereof.

5. **Special responsibility for submitting families:**

God also mentions a special responsibility upon submitting families.

[20:132] You shall enjoin your family to observe the contact prayers (Salat), and steadfastly persevere in doing so. We do not ask you for any provisions; we are the ones who provide for you. The ultimate triumph belongs to the righteous.
6. **Our family can also be tests & excuses for us:**

The Quran teaches us with numerous examples that our family can be tests and excuses for us not to accept submission or also stray from the right path:

*[64:14]* O you who believe, your spouses and your children can be your enemies; beware. If you pardon, forget, and forgive, then GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

*[64:15]* Your money and children are a test, and GOD possesses a great recompense.

*[2:170]* When they are told, "Follow what GOD has revealed herein," they say, "We follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their parents did not understand, and were not guided?

However, God also tells us in the Quran that likewise, our spouses and children are joys for us and we can enjoy this blessing as long as we keep God as our number one priority in our lives. Hence, God enjoins us to implore him with this prayer:

*[25:74]* "Our Lord, let our spouses and children be a source of joy for us, and keep us in the forefront of the righteous."
7. **The eternal family:**

God also talks about the differences between believing family members and disbelieving family members in the Hereafter. God willing, the Quran mentions that believers will be joined joyfully with their family members (*righteous genetic and submitter members*) in heaven.

Whereas, the disbelievers will be blaming each other for going astray and will also be willing to give up all their family members as ransom in exchange for a chance to make it to Heaven.

*[70:11]* *When they see them, the guilty will wish he could give his own children as ransom, to spare him the retribution of that day.*

So, much for love.

God has blessed us all with so many submitting brothers and sisters not just within our own community but all across the world. We should regularly implore Him to help us all to use every opportunity to get better at submission and closer to Him.