

A Glance at Imam Khomeini's Familial Lifestyle

By: Mahnaz Bahrami

As we know, the various aspects of Imam Khomeini's (ra) lifestyle are full of invaluable lessons, for all who desire to lead an Islamic way of life. Here, we present some accounts of his manners and conduct at home and in his marital life for the benefit of couples, in particular young couples who need to learn how to live according to Islamic teachings. As narrated by his family members, Imam Khomeini (ra) was most modest towards his wife in all conditions (as well as towards the others), based on religious teachings, including this Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "The most virtuous of people are those who are modest while they are in a superior position to the others." This Hadith teaches us that when in power and position, one should regard modest conduct as most needed and obligatory. As we know, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was always himself the perfect symbol of modesty. His Holiness would sit and eat on the ground, would milk the sheep with his own hands and would accept the invitation to food offered him by bondsmen and acted most kindly toward his family members.

And as we see, Imam Khomeini (ra) as an offspring and perfect pupil of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has been very modest, compassionate, forgiving and respectful towards his family, in particular towards his wife. It has been narrated that Imam Khomeini (ra) would never order anyone at home to even bring him a glass of water and rather, he would do that himself even when he was in the position of the leader of the Islamic Revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic system of Iran. His respectful conduct towards his wife throughout their marital life has been very remarkable, as his wife has said about that: “Imam would invariably hold me in great respect. He would invariably offer me the best seat in the room, and would never start eating unless I came and started eating first. Also he wouldn't let me do the housework in his presence and rather would either do that himself, or tell our daughters to do that. And Imam never spoke the least unkind, disrespectful word at home. He ate simple food (often bread and cheese or an egg or a little soup) and would even make the tea himself when the family members were asleep or busy. And Imam also helped me in taking care of the children greatly; when our children were infants and needed care at nights, he would take turns with me in sitting up and looking after them, himself sitting up for two hours looking after the children while I slept, and then me sitting up for two hours while he slept.”

Besides being contented with simple food, Imam was also careful about living a luxury-free life, advising his wife to be the same too, for example, to mend the rugs and clothings as much as possible instead of buying new ones in order to avoid even the least bit of wasting. Also, there had been great mutual trust between Imam Khomeini (ra) and his wife, so much so that as quoted by one of their close family members, when Imam Khomeini (ra) was exiled by the treacherous Pahlavi Shah to Turkey, his special seal which was a very significant item for such a religious leader and authority had been entrusted by him to his wife who faithfully kept it a secret. Later, when Imam Khomeini (ra) moved to the holy city of Najaf from Turkey, he sent a letter by someone to his wife (who was then in Iran and later joined Imam in Najaf) to deliver the seal to a person (named by him in the letter). She did as Imam had said and the seal was carried by that person to Najaf and delivered to Imam Khomeini (ra). It was then that the people around knew how much Imam Khomeini (ra) trusted his wife. Certainly, mutual trust in marital life is of the utmost significance and indeed the basis of success, love and happiness.

Regarding the proper upbringing of children, Imam Khomeini (ra) has been a symbol of Islamic knowledge and practice since he really believed in Divine teaching, including the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who

said: “A pious offspring is a flower from the flowers of Paradise, so parents should try to raise their children properly....” Accordingly, Imam Khomeini (ra) was very careful about training and educating children and advised all “to be honest to children so they will grow up to be honest persons. Parents are children’s role-models. If we behave properly to them and in their presence, they will learn proper behavior. Act upon what you tell the children and fulfill any promise you give them.”

And Imam would tolerate playfulness of children with a jovial smile, and showed much love and affection towards them, both his own children (and grandchildren) and those of the others. He believed that children should be allowed to play and have fun and that restrictions and limits should be defined for them upon growing up enough to understand the same. In fact, as per Islamic teachings, he knew that being patient and forgiving in the face of the playfulness of children (which may seem annoying sometimes) brings great reward from Allah as he had said to one of his own family members who complained about her child’s playfulness: “I am ready to change the Divine reward you will get in return for tolerating your child’s playfulness for the Divine reward of my own acts of worship....” This shows how Imam believed in what he preached. May Allah bless Imam Khomeini (ra) and guide us to follow in

his footsteps and act upon his Divinely – inspired teachings. Amen.