212059 - She feels rejected by her family

the question

My mother left my dad since I was born. She left him while pregnant because she didn't want to raise me in a violent household. I grew up in a foreign country and found it very hard to feel I fitted in and have been a very lost girl and have grown up to be very sensitive and isolated. I rebelled in my 20s and tried to fit into the cool crowd but grew tired and felt rejected no matter what I did. I studied many degrees and was unable to find work. My step father was very resentful towards me and I felt rejected by him as well. He was critical to my mother and I and I saw my mother's confidence deteriorate over the years. There were many violent fights in the household and she left my step dad many times, only but he kept coming back to her and she eventually gave up. They have grown mellow in their old age but the damage is done. My mother had a boy and I loved my little brother so much but both parents didn't encourage us to grow a bond. I found my real father to get to know him but his family and him were sceptical of my motivations. He is well off in his country. My mother recently encouraged me to add my real father's name in my birth certificate, so I bonded again with my father only to end in a terrible fight. I am now a woman and feel so wounded from my life; I am emotional and very sensitive and suffer from anxiety and stay at home most days. Should I keep my father's name? My dad mocks my feelings and experiences. Why does my family reject me? WHY

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We all have to understand that the remedy should always come from within and stem from one's own self. The self is able to achieve tranquillity or a sense of peace in life even in the midst of trials and tribulations. It is also the self that causes sickness and anxiety, even if it has all kinds of comfort and luxuries. So long as there are some circumstances that we may find ourselves in that

are imposed on the individual, and in most cases he does not have any power to change or alter those circumstances, the least he can do is to change his way of thinking and the way he perceives things.

That begins with understanding that problems faced in life and day-to-day troubles vary in type and degree. The worst – in our experience – is when we go through severe illness, imprisonment or detention, or we are subjected to wrongdoing, suppression and aggression. The least of those troubles is distress that is connected to our psychological make-up more than the painful reality in which we live, such as a young man who feels frustrated because he is unemployed, or a young woman who cannot get married, or one who is unable to fit in with his environment and society. In fact these are among the easiest problems that a person may be faced with in life, if he finds a way to deal with them in a proper manner and persists in applying the remedy, especially when compared with the psychological suffering and pain resulting from the major calamities that we see today in some Muslim countries.

Once you understand what we have stated above, you will realise that there is nothing more beneficial or better in this case than occupying yourself – and indeed immersing yourself – in useful activities and productive righteous deeds that will bring good to you and to society in this world and in the Hereafter. So do your utmost to invest your effort in looking for some activity to commit yourself to, even if it takes days and days of looking and researching. Look for activities in nearby Islamic centres, then make a commitment to attend and be active in it, especially those activities that have to do with memorising and learning the Quran. Also get involved in charitable organisations that give help to the needy or that do local social activities. Moreover, you have a good opportunity to join some training courses in order to upgrade more of your skills and abilities. And there are many more ideas which, even if I were to spend many days trying to list them all, you would see a huge amount of such activities. All of them are activities that it may take a lifetime to achieve, so how about if you work out a special programme (of various activities), whereby you may upgrade your worship and relationship with Allah, such as voluntary fasting – even if it is only three days of every month – and praying qiyam, even if it is only two rak‘ahs, and glorifying and remembering Allah, may He be glorified.

It is a beautiful life, to devote one's time to all of these things so that one has no need of people (to make one feel better), and to continue succeeding and progressing until one finds the opportunity to prove one's qualifications and offer one's skills, even if it takes many years. How much knowledge a person may acquire today, but he may not have the opportunity to act upon it until near the end of his life. Even if the opportunity does not come, then we have fulfilled our own duty with regard to the use of our time and our life. It is sufficient for us that we have spent our journey to our Lord, may He be glorified, living a righteous life and doing beneficial deeds. All of that will weigh in the balance of good deeds, by Allah's leave, whether it has to do with special acts of worship or other righteous deeds, provided that one's intention is sincere.

'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi said: If it was said to Hammad ibn Salamah: You are going to die tomorrow, he would not be able to add anything to the habitual deeds that he has been doing.

End quote from Tahdheeb al-Kamaal (7/265)

If we all try to be that man, or close to that, do you think we would suffer from any anxiety or depression? Or do you think that we would care too much whether people will be friendly towards us or will turn away from us?

We believe that paying attention to this remedy is one of the most important means of attaining happiness.

So how about if we read some of that which scholars said about the negative consequences of mixing with people a great deal, and what many relationships lead to of harm to our psychological, spiritual and emotional well-being.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

As for the negative consequences of too much mixing with people: the heart will be filled with the bad ideas and thoughts of the sons of Adam until it becomes overwhelmed, which will result in confusion and lack of concentration, worry and distress, weakness, and being weighed down with a burden that one is unable to bear, as a result of keeping bad company, neglecting one's own

interests, being distracted from focusing on one's own interests by people and their affairs; furthermore, the individual will find himself wasting his time in pursuit of their demands and going in the direction in which they push him. What then would be left of his time to focus on Allah and the Hereafter?

How often mixing with people brings about calamity, erases blessings, brings about disaster, wards off some blessing that was coming, and has brought about calamities and problems and so on!

Are people's troubles caused by anyone other than people?

Was there anyone more harmful to Abu Talib on his deathbed than those bad companions? They kept on at him until they prevented him from uttering a single word that would have brought him eternal happiness.

The useful guideline with regard to mixing with people is that one should mix with them on good occasions, such as Jumu'ah, prayer in congregation, 'Eid, Hajj, acquiring knowledge, jihad, and offering sincere advice.

And one should keep away from them on occasions when sin is committed or when there is an excess of permissible things.

End quote from Madarij as-Salikeen bayna Manazil Iyyaka Na'budu wa Iyyaka Nasta'een (1/452-453)

With regard to your lineage, you should not hesitate to continue attributing yourself to your real father, and being keen to do so. This is what is required of you according to sharee'ah. It is not something optional in your life; rather your true lineage is a part of you, to which both spiritual and worldly matters are connected.

We hope that if you try to focus on beneficial matters, along the lines mentioned above, and you avoid mixing with those whose company does not bring you closer to your Lord, then we hope that you will find a real change in your life. Remember that changing oneself is a means of benefiting

the environment and the people around you.

We also advise you to check out more advice and suggestions that we have previously mentioned on our website, in the following questions: 47026, and 100267

And Allah knows best.