22706 - Mixing with relatives who backbite

the question

I have recently started to make a conscious effort to become a good practicing muslim. Beyond the basics tenants of faith I have also started to read about and gain knowledge about Islam. Keeping ties with relatives is good practice in Islam. To gain the pleasures of Allah (SWT) I am making a conscious effort to meet them whom previously i used to avoid. It seems though the more I and my family mix with relatives the more they talk behind our backs and spread baseless slanderous remarks. This is very hurtful and it takes a lot of patience to ignore and be indifferent to people with such habits. What would be the correct way to deal with the such relatives? Previously i would have confronted such people with anger, but now i know nothing will be gained only bad feelings and anger. Should I leave such people for Allah to deal with? Please advise on this also which duas can i recite to increase my patience?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The attribute of patience is a high status with which Allah blesses whomsoever He wills among His slaves, to make it easy for them to obey His commands and heed His prohibitions. Your attempts to bring people together and to get closer to your relatives is a praiseworthy effort which points to your success and correct thinking. For many people, if they are faced with even a part of what you have suffered, quickly lose patience and respond to cutting off of ties in like manner, because they think that upholding family ties is only obligatory when relatives respond in the same manner. This is a mistaken notion and the fact that it is mistaken is indicated by the hadeeth which was narrated from Abu Hurayrah, which says that a man said, “O Messenger of Allah, I have relatives with whom I uphold the ties of kinship but they cut me off; I treat them well but they mistreat me; I am patient with them but they treat me in an ignorant manner.” The Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If it is as you say, then it is as if you are stuffing hot ashes [in their mouths], and you will have with you [an angel] from Allah to support you against them so long as you continue to be like that.” (Narrated by Muslim, no. 2285).

In this hadeeth, a man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) complaining of his relatives’ bad treatment of him, and in his complaint he mentioned something similar to what you have mentioned: he upheld the ties of kinship but they cut him off, he treated them well but they treated him badly. Yet despite that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him that if he was telling the truth, then his situation with them would be like one fills their mouths with ashes, so he is the one who is doing the right thing, and he would continue to have support from Allah against them. The general meaning of the hadeeth is to encourage the upholding of family ties even with those who doe not themselves uphold those ties. Praise be to Allah that this is what you have done and have forced yourself to do. I ask Allah to help you to do that which is good.

After that there is nothing more that you can do except to follow one good deed with another, one kind action with another. If they mistreat you then do to them the opposite of that which they have done to you.

You should note that when you do that, you are doing it only to earn the pleasure and mercy of Allah. Do not expect any response to your good deed from them. But try not to tell people what they are doing to you. If you think that one of the causes of this problem is too much contact with them, there is nothing wrong with your reducing your visits with them.

Pray to Allah to guide them; pray to Him when you are certain of a response, for Allah is Able to turn their hatred into love and their neglect into close ties.

With regard to your question about du`as that will help you to be patient when faced with difficulties, there are many such du`as, and we will tell you some of them here:

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It was narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “When faced with difficulties the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would say: ‘Laa ilaaha ill-Allah al-‘Azeem al-Haleem, laa ilaaha ill-Allah Rabb il-‘Arsh il-‘Azeem, laa ilaaha ill-Allah Rabb ul-samawaati wa Rabb ul-‘Arsh il-Kareem (There is no god except Allah, the Almighty, the Forbearing; there is no god except Allah the Lord of the Mighty Throne; there is no god except Allah, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the noble Throne).’” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 7426).

According to a report narrated by Muslim: “When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was concerned about an important matter or when he was worried…” (Muslim, 2130).

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It was narrated that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was distressed by something, he would say, ‘Ya Hayyu, ya Qayyoom, bi rahmatika astagheeth (O Ever-Living, O Eternal One, by Your mercy I seek help).’” (narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3524); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 4777).

We also want to tell you of something important which will help you to be more patient and will give you certain faith in Allah, especially when you are upset and worried. This is something which many people neglect. Do you know what it is?

It is prayer, for prayer has a great effect in bringing peace to the heart and in dispelling worries and distress. It is one of the greatest means of being patient. This is indicated by the Quran and Sunnah. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And seek help in patience and As-Salaah (the prayer) and truly, it is extremely heavy and hard except for Al-Khaashi‘oon [i.e. the true believers in Allah — those who obey Allah with full submission, fear much from His punishment, and believe in His Promise (Paradise) and in His Warnings (Hell)]”

[al-Baqarah 2:45]

Prayer is the greatest thing by means of which help may be sought.

And Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Indeed, We know that your breast is straitened at what they say.

So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him).

And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death)” [al-Hijr 15:97-99]

Imaam Ibn Jareer al-Tabari said in his Tafseer: “ ‘So glorify the praises of your Lord’: with regard to matters which are worrying you, turn to Allah and give thank to Allah and praise Him, and pray, and Allah will take care of that which is troubling you.

This is similar to the hadeeth narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): ‘When something troubled him, he would turn to prayer.’” (7/553)

Finally I ask Allah the Almighty, the Lord of the Mighty Throne, to bless us and you with certain faith, for He is Able to do that.

And Allah knows best.