

When Electronic Communication Destroy Established Homes and Separates People!

(Translated)

While electronic communication media have shortened distances, they became the shortest way leading to divorce and marital disputes. And while they used to unite the loved ones and the absentees after long waiting, they separate members of the family and help to break them up; it is indeed an extraordinary paradox!!

How did the websites of electronic communication turn into a curse after being a blessing?!

The media have changed the behavior and the interaction patterns between people, and under the technology revolution, many people began suffering from loneliness, social isolation and depression. Houses once alive with their family conversations became silent as if they are empty of them, and visits to relatives and neighbors on occasions and holidays have been replaced by some with a message or image. And while noises used to fill grandparents' homes at children and grandchildren's gatherings, the vitality, activity and affability have gone. Each one of them comes carrying his own device and after greeting each other, everyone takes a corner of the house; his body is living with the family, but his soul and mind are absent!

With the remarkable widespread of social media sites, homes have become unfenced and privacy has been eliminated from the lives of individuals and families. The secrets of many homes have become open to all, and the details of their private lives have been published, causing many problems at the family level, such as divorce and marital disputes, as well as jealousy, envy and conflicts between people at the community level.

According to studies and reports, electronic media sites, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, are primarily responsible for the high global divorce rates. We cannot present all the statistics here, but let us take some figures that show the magnitude of the problem and sound the alarm bells. In Palestine, Sharia courts pointed out that half of divorce cases take place before the wedding party, and specialists refer several reasons for this; most notably the online communication. According to statistics published in 2016, the last three years witnessed a significant increase in the number of divorces in Jordan, which increases each year by over 1000 cases from its previous year, noting that the modern means of communication, Facebook, WhatsApp, are the most prominent reasons for the rise in divorce cases. Studies indicate that communication sites caused 50% of the divorce cases in the UAE. The Family Guidance Section in the UAE estimates that marital disputes increased by more than 5000 cases in 2015, of which 50 to 60% are related to electronic websites, and 1,000 of them ended in divorce.

These frightening statistics and figures show how these sites and applications on smartphones have portended family disputes for those who allow them to possess their lives; on one hand by taking the person away from his family and making him fall short of his duties towards them especially when he is addicted to using them and spends a long time with them equal to or exceeding the time parents spend with their children, or spouses spend with each other, which is devastating on both levels. This addiction makes parents fail in the

performance of their duties towards their children in education, guidance, giving them the necessary compassion and affection and in listening to them and their problems which may lead children to dangerous turns and make them behave wrongly, apart from the extraneous culture and misconceptions children learn as a result of spending long hours on these sites and their parents are unaware about them.

In terms of spouses, this addiction will lead to neglect and poor communication between spouses and their failure to perform their duties towards the other side, and sometimes one of the spouses finds in those media an escape from spending the time with the other party because of some problems between them which widens the gap and increases the scale of the problem.

On the other hand, these sites and applications have facilitated communication and the establishment of relationships and the exchange of messages and images between men and women which led – in the absence of piety and fearing Allah (swt) - to high rates of infidelity, which is one of the main reasons for high rates of divorce as confirmed by the Courts' records that are rife with divorce proceedings due to infidelity..

This ease of communication has caused some spouses to lose mutual trust between them, which is one of the most important foundations of successful marital relations, causing some of them to live in a state of suspicion and mistrust towards the other party. It may even push one of the spouses to track and monitor all that it reaches his or her spouse across these sites and applications, and track the senders.

The talk on this subject is long and sorrowful, but we conclude by saying that electronic communication created duplicity and a wide gap in family relations between two worlds: one that is real, while the other is virtual, negatively affecting the family relations widening the gap between the family members. So, the warmth and closeness of its members became absent despite their physical presence, where they all hold their phones in an inattention of who they sit with; thus, people circulated phrases such as: “The means of communication canceled communication”. The results of this duality were that real relations shrunk in favor of virtual relations so that friendships and relationships have expanded virtually but they shrunk on the ground, and hypocritical and false feelings have emerged among members of the same family, and even among members of society at large.

Among its results is the absence of tranquility and serenity from homes, and the dissolution of the covenant, which Allah (swt) described in His Book as solemn, He Almighty said: ﴿وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا﴾ **“And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?”** [An-Nisa: 21]

Let us, brothers and sisters, make electronic communication a blessing that gathers us and brings us closer, not a curse that destroys established homes and separates its people.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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