

The Responsibility of Depriving Children of Deeni Education is the Parent's

Q: Ilm-40: The mindset of people today is to give more importance to worldly education than to Deeni education. Regarding the acquirement of degrees as a great achievement, they deprive their children of Deeni education without a concern for their character or for making them irreligious. Are the parents responsible for depriving their children of Deeni education? Please provide a detailed reply.

Answer: Children are a trust that Allaah has given us and we need to nurture them both spiritually and physically. The reason for the creation of every child is to recognise Allaah and to obey Him, while the purpose of bringing them up is for them to acquire Deen and spirituality.

Teaching children even little acts is better than Sadaqah because Rasulullaah SAW. said. "For a person to educate his child is better than giving a Saa (of food) in Sadaqah. Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "No father can give his child a gift better than a good education" In another Hadith. Rasulullaah SAW. said. "Instruct your children to perform salaah when they are seven years old and when they are ten years old, you should punish them for not performing salaah and should separate their beds." (This instruction is given because after ten, they are nearing maturity and it would be improper for them to be touching each other's bodies.)

The compassionate and thoughtful Rasulullaah SAW. gave importance to the character and upbringing of children even before they are born. For this reason, he instructed men to choose upright and pious wives rather than women who are immoral and ill-mannered. Rasulullaah SAW. also gave the same instruction to parents when getting their daughter married. Rasulullaah SAW. said. "When you receive a proposal (for your daughter) from a man whose religious condition and character pleases you, then get him married because if you do not, there will be chaos in the world and widespread corruption. When the parents are righteous and religious people, the children should also be the same.

The second guideline Rasulullaah SAW. gave was for parents to recite the following du'aa whenever they cohabit: "In the name of Allaah! O Allaah! Keep Shaytaan away from us and keep him away from the children you are to bless us with."

The third guideline Rasulullaah SAW. gave was that when the child is born, the Adhaan is to be called out in the right ear and the Iqaamah in the left ear. Now when the child heard four times "Allaah is the Greatest". the greatness and great status of Allaah is imbued in his heart and mind and he is told that there is none greater and more powerful than Allaah. In the next part of the Adhaan, the child is told, "I testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah". The message is now delivered to the child that nothing should scare him from propagating Towheed. He is then told "I testify that Muhammad SAW. is the Rasul of Allaah." He is now introduced to Rasulullaah SAW. because of whom we were rescued from the darkness of kufr and shirk and brought into the light of Imaan and Towheed.

After the child has been told about the existence of Allaah, the Oneness of Allaah and the

Nabuwaat of Rasulullaah SAW. he is introduced to the most important of all the acts of worship, when he is told "Come to salaah" He is then informed that this is secret to eternal success when it is said, "Come to success." The invitation is then concluded by twice repeating "Allaah is the Greatest" and then "There is none worthy of worship but Allaah". This tells him that the Muslim will truly be successful only when Towheed is entrenched in his heart from the beginning and when he dies with these true beliefs and the deed that prove his conviction in them. The fourth guideline Rasulullaah SAW. gave was that du'aa be made for the? and that the practice of Tahneek should take place. The Tahneek is done with the reformation and success of the child in mind because a date or something sweet is taken to a pious person who makes du'aa for the child and then chews the food so that his saliva is mixed with it. The food is then rubbed on to the child's palate so that the child ma also be blessed with the same piety. The Sahabah RADI. would have the tahneek and du'aa done by Rasulullaah SAW.

The fifth guideline Rasulullaah SAW. gave was when he said, "Whoever has a child should give him a good name and teach him good manners" Good names are given to children so that they may be a source of blessing for the child and assist towards their success. Rasulullaah SAW. mentioned that the names Allaah loves most are Abdullaah and Abdur Rahmaan. Rasulullaah SAW. also advised people to give their children the names of the Ambiyaa ALY.

The sixth guideline Rasulullaah SAW. gave was that children should be taught the Kalimah as soon as they start to speak. They must also be sent to a pious, aged, experienced. pleasant and compassionate teacher for learning. The teacher should impart knowledge with love and be able to caution with wisdom and good character.

After attaining the necessary religious knowledge, the child may also be taught worldly knowledge but never should preference and precedence be given to worldly education. An intelligent parent is he who adorns his children with the knowledge of Deen and practically demonstrates it as well. When children are taught to live and die only for this world and its education, they remain ignorant of Deeni education and their religious lives are ruined. Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Whoever loves his life in this world will damage his life in the Aakhirah and who ever loves his life in the Aakhirah will do damage to his life in this world. You should therefore give preference to that which is everlasting (the Aakhirah) over that which is temporary (this world)."

It is stated in Majaalisul Abraar "A friend is he who strives to rectify one's Aakhirah even at the expense of one's worldly comfort. On the other hand, an enemy is one who strived to destroy one's Aakhirah, even though there may be worldly benefits."

If parents are truly concerned about their children, they will give preference to Deeni education because this is the directive of the Qur'aan when Allaah says: "Save yourselves and your families from the Fire of Jahannam." How strange is it that while parents claim that they love their children, they are actually pushing them into Jahannam.

It is the parents who shall bear full responsibility for the corruption of their children's behaviour because a Hadith states, "Every child is born on Fitrah (the natural inclination to follow and practise Islaam). It is the parents who make the child into either a Jew, a Christian or a fire-worshipper." This Hadith makes it clear that children are influenced by their parents in as far

as habits, living styles, character and religion are concerned. The children will grow up in exactly the same manner as their parents had brought them up.

On the Day of Qiyaamah, every father will be asked, "What did you teach your child and what education did you give him/her? Therefore, together with tending to the physical growth of the child, the parent is obliged to prepare the child in such a manner that the child will be honourable in the court of Allaah and will be saved from Jahannam. The education of the child should habituate him to lead his life according to the Sunnah, to be particular about salaah and the other obligations of Deen and to be concerned about the Aakhirah.

The trend today is however an extremely dangerous one. As soon as a child becomes capable of learning, parents throw them headlong into worldly education and marginalise Deeni education. The result of this is that the children themselves have no regard for Deeni education and are left ignorant of their Deen. It is very wrong of people to think that their responsibility is fulfilled by merely teaching the child a bit of Ta'leemul Islaam and having them complete a hasty and shabby recitation of the Qur'aan. The necessary education is not at all attained in this manner because it does not fulfil the requirement that Rasulullaah SAW. specified when he said, "seeking knowledge is obligatory on every male and female Muslim."

Children will therefore complain before Allaah on the Day of Qiyaamah if their parents kept them ignorant of the Deen, if they did not habituate them into following the Sunnah of Rasulullaah SAW. and did not show them the path leading to Jannah and away from Jahannam.

The only way to save oneself from this humiliation on the Day of Qiyaamah is to teach them (and oneself) the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and to then ensure that these teachings are implemented. The Sahabah RADI. and our pious predecessors taught every little etiquette and every Sunnah with great importance. They even emphasised the Sunnah of oiling the hair even though one will not be punished for not doing it. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Thaabit Ansaari RADI. once gave his son a bottle of olive oil to rub into his hair. However, when the boy refused to use it, Hadhrat Abdullaah RADI. took a stick and started to hit him saying, "Are you turning away from the Sunnah of oiling the hair?"

The responsibility of bringing up the children rests more with the mother than the father because the father is more occupied with providing for the family and requires to leave the house. The mother must therefore keep an eye on the actions of the children and lead by example. If she is pious, does not swear and lie, gets up early and is particular about salaah and reciting the Qur'aan, the children will also develop these excellent qualities. On the other hand, if the mother lies, swears, behaves immorally and does not care about her salaah or the other requisites of Deen, the children will grow up doing the same and will continue to do so until they die, with devastating consequences in this world as well as in the Aakhirah. And Arabic poem says:

"When the master of the house plays the drum Do not blame the children for dancing"

When the environment at home is not conducive to a sound Islaamic foundation, the children can hardly be blamed. The input of the parents is therefore fundamental. A vital part of sound and proper upbringing and nurturing is to emphasise the importance of good company and

staying away from bad company. A Persian poet says (the meaning of which is):

"My hand touched some and one day When I smelt a fragrance from it, I asked 'Are you made of musk or of Ambergris?' 'I am just lowly sand,' it replied 'What happened sand that I stayed with a flower for a long time' This is the effect of my excellent company"

Just as good company develops good habits, evil company develops evil habits. Another poet says (the meaning of which is):

"Dear friend! Stay away from bad company (and keep your children away as well) Bad company is worse than a snake Because while a snake attacks only the life Bad company attacks both the life and Imaan"

The Qur'aan and Ahadeeth are replete with instructions to adopt good company. It is for this reason that items that have been with saints are regarded as being blessed and people with insight can actually feel the radiance and blessings emanate from it. Take note that just as this is sensed, items used and handled by sinners and Kuffaar emanate darkness and evil. It is therefore of utmost importance to stay with good company, to stay away from bad company and to ensure that your children also do the same. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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