

## Chapter 1: The Parents Responsibility

In the eyes of Islam the status of the father and the mother is very exalted. Allah, the Holy Prophet and the Infallible Imams have exhorted the people in this regard. There are a lot of verses in the Holy Book relevant to the subject. The exemplary behavior of children towards their parents is rated as one of the best invocations.

Allah says:

***"Your God has decreed that thou shalt worship only Him and adopt good behavior with (thy) parents" (Qur'an, 17:23)***

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq observes:

"Three actions are the best: (a) Offer the five mandatory prayers with punctuality. (b) Maintain good behavior with your parents. (c) Struggle in the cause of Allah<sup>1</sup>

Now the question arises why this exalted position has been bestowed on the parents of the Faithfull's Allah giving this status for no specific reason? What big deed the parents perform for their progeny that they are deemed deserving of the august status. The father, in satisfaction of his carnal desire transfers his sperm into the womb of the mother where it compounds with the ovum and a new being starts to develop and after nine months of the incident arrives into the world as a tiny babe.

The mother suckles it and gives it other nutrition. Sometimes she cleans it and sometimes changes its raiment. She cares of its wetness and dryness. During this time the father takes care of the expenses required for the upkeep of the child.

Don't the parents have any other responsibility besides these? Is it because of performing these duties that the parents have been endowed with the exalted status? Do the parents only have a right over their off-spring and the children don't have any rights over them? In my opinion no one will accept any such one sided privilege. The traditions of the Infallibles of the Holy Prophet's Family are quoted in this regard:

The Holy Prophet of Islam has said: "As your father has a right over you, so does your progeny have a

similar right.”<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet also said: “As are the children disinherited for their disobedience so also it is possible that the parents may be disowned by the children for not fulfilling their bonding duties.<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet said: “Allah’s curse on such parents who become the cause of disinheriting their children.”<sup>4</sup>

Imam Sajjad said: “Your children have a right that you consider if they are good or they are bad. You have been the cause of their birth and the world recognizes them as your offspring. It is your responsibility that you teach them good manners and guide them toward the recognition and obedience of Allah. Your behavior towards your children must be of a person who believes that a good deed shall get a suitable reward and ill treatment shall call for retribution.”<sup>5</sup>

The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali says: “Beware, your behavior might render your family and your relatives part of the ill fated people.”<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet said: “Whoever wishes that his children are safe from disinheritance, he should help them performing good deeds.”<sup>7</sup>

The Prophet also said: “To whomsoever a daughter is born should strive to impart norms of good behavior to her and make efforts to educate her. Provide means of comfort to her that she becomes a cause of his deliverance from the Hell Fire.<sup>8</sup>

Above all, Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

***“O, Believers Save yourselves and your dependents from the fire whose fuel are humans and the stones.”(Qur'an, 66:6)***

The time when a child is in the process of adopting a way of life which can make him either virtuous or wicked, he can be metamorphosed into a perfect human being or a degraded wild animal. The virtue or wickedness of a person will be dependent on the upbringing he receives and this responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the parents.

In fact the parents are instruments of shaping a human being, good or bad, from the child. The greatest service which the parents can render to their children is that they train them to be good mannered, kind, friends of humans, well meaning, freedom loving, bold, just, wise, righteous, noble, faithful, dutiful, hard working, educated.

The parents must mould their children in such a way that they are successful both in the world and hereafter. Only such people are those who are endowed with the exalted status of parenthood, and not those who in fulfillment of their carnal desire caused the birth of children and left the children to fend for themselves and rendering them likely to fall into evil ways.

The Holy Prophet said: "The best thing a father provide to his child is good manners and ethical training." [9](#)

The mother has a more important function to perform towards the upbringing of the progeny. Even during the pregnancy the mother's food habits and her behavior affects the future virtuosity or otherwise of the developing child.

The Prophet of Islam said:

"Lucky is the one whose foundation of his virtue has been made in the womb of the mother and unlucky is one whose wickedness had its rudiments in the mother's womb as well"[10](#)

"Heaven (i.e. *janna*) is under the feet of one's mother."[11](#)

The parents, who don't pay attention to the education and training of their children, become guilty of gross negligence. Such parents must be asked whether the innocent child pleaded with him to give him birth in the world to be abandoned like sheep and cattle. Now that you have become the cause of his existence, by virtue of religious tenets and human wisdom his education and training is your bonden duty.

The parents are also answerable to the society. Today's children will be men and women, the citizens of tomorrow. The fabric of the society will be made of these individuals. Whatever lessons they learn today, they shall put them into practice tomorrow. If their upbringing today is perfect, the society of tomorrow shall be flawless. And if today's generation follows a faulty program of training it is imperative that tomorrow's society will be evil and perverted.

The personalities in the field s of politics, education and society shall emerge from these elements. Today's children are tomorrow's parents. Today's children can be tomorrow's reformers. If they have received good training at the hands of their parents, they in turn can carry forward this practice with their children. If the parents have the will, they can be the instruments of the reform of the society for the future and with neglect of the children they can be the cause of the ruination of the society. By giving the right training to their children, the parents can render invaluable service to their society.

Education and training should not be treated as an insignificant subject. The efforts which the parents make to educate their children and the hardships that they undergo in this quest result in the creation of thousands of professors, doctors, and engineers. It is the parents who strive to nurture perfect human beings, capable and pious mentors and other professionals.

The mothers in particular bear more responsibility for the upbringing of the children. The children spend most of their childhood with the mothers. The foundation of the direction their future is bound to take is laid here. So, the key to the vice or virtue of a person and the progress or decline of a society is with the mothers of the society. The woman's place is not in the shop floor, ministerial or administrative positions.

These functions don't measure up to the importance of a woman as a mother. Mothers breed perfect human beings. Virtuous ministers, lawyers, professors owe their positions to the loving care received from their mothers during their formative years.

The parents, who nurture truthful, pious children not only serve their children and the society but also create a niche for themselves in the society. These children will be a support of the parents in their frail old age. If parents strive towards the education and upbringing of their children they reap the harvest of their troubles during their lifetime only.

'Ali, The Commander of the Faithful, says:

"Evil off-spring is among the greatest hardships for the parents." (*Ghurar al hukm*, p. 189)

"Evil off-spring causes loss of respect for the parents and the successors are shamed." (*Ghurar al hukm*, p. 780)

The Prophet of Islam says:

"May Allah bless the parents who trained their children to behave justly with them." (*Makarim al akhlaq*, p. 517)

Therefore those who attain parenthood have great responsibility on their shoulders. This responsibility is to Allah Almighty as also to their fellow human beings and also to their own children. If they discharge the responsibility properly they will be rewarded in this world and hereafter.

But if they falter in the discharge of this responsibility then they themselves will be the losers and they will be tantamount to have cheated their own children and the society at large and they would be perpetrating an unpardonable sin.

- [1.](#) Usul al Kafi, book 2, p. 158
- [2.](#) Majma al zawa'id, v 8, p. 146
- [3.](#) Bihar al-anwar, v 19, p. 93
- [4.](#) Makarim al akhlaq, p 518
- [5.](#) Makarim al akhlaq p. 484
- [6.](#) Ghurar al hukm, p. 802
- [7.](#) Majma al zawa'id, v 8, p. 158
- [8.](#) Majma al zawa'id, v 8, p. 158
- [9.](#) Majma al zawa'id, v 8, p. 159
- [10.](#) Bihar al-anwar, v 77, pp. 115–133
- [11.](#) Mustadrak al-wasail, v 2, p 38

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