

Chapter 23: Daughter or Son

No sooner a woman becomes pregnant the speculation commences whether she will have a male or a female issue. She offers prayers for having a son. When her relatives come visiting her they say that the glow on her face indicates that she would get a son. Her adversaries say that her eyes indicate she is carrying a girl. The husband too wishes for a son. He occasionally expresses this desire to her. Prior to delivery the mind of every relative around in the maternity home wonders whether she will give birth to a boy or a girl.

When they come to know that the new arrival is a girl, sudden quiet descends on the gathering. But if it is a boy there will be instant shouts of joy. When the father hears of the birth of a boy, he becomes overjoyed. He will run to fetch sweets and fruits for the visitors. He issues instructions for taking good care of the child lest he caught cold. He starts pampering his wife and distributes gifts to the midwife and the attendants.

But, if the new arrival were a girl, his mien would drop. He would go and sit in a corner. He starts cursing his ill luck He thus makes his existence bitter. He neglects his convalescent wife and sometimes even talks of divorcing her. This is the state of affairs of our degenerate society. But there are always exceptions. There are parents who receive a daughter with open arms and affection as they do the son. But such families are in a minority.

Dear father and respected mother:

What difference it makes if you have a son or a daughter? Is a daughter less human than a son? Doesn't a daughter have the capacity to grow and progress? Can't she become a useful and valuable person? Is the daughter not your offspring? What special advantage the parents draw from a son that the daughter cannot provide them? If the daughter was not important in the eyes of Allah, then the progeny of the Holy Prophet would not have come through his daughter Fatima Zahra.

If you bring up the daughter properly she will not be any less than a son for you. If you see the pages of history you will find references of women who were more capable than thousands of men.

Why this ignoble thinking in our society which has reduced the status of our women. There is need to carry on jihad against this evil. There is need to remove the thought of any difference between a son and a daughter. A daughter can be as useful and efficient a person as a son. You must receive the news of the birth of a healthy child, be it a son or a daughter, with equal happiness. You must thank God that it is a gift from Him that has come to you. It is a part of your existence that has come to the world.

The Prophet and his Holy Descendants always took this attitude towards the life.

Whenever the Imam Sajjad received the news of the birth of a child he never enquired if it was a son or a daughter. But he used to offer a prayer to Allah when he used to be informed that the new-born was hale and hearty. [1](#)

One day the Holy Prophet was busy talking to his companions when a person reached his presence and informed that Allah has given to him a daughter. He was joyful and offered his thanks to Allah. But when he saw the faces of his companions he found them crestfallen. He was upset with them and said, "What has happened to you? Allah has given to me a flower whose fragrance I smell. Allah has ensured sustenance for her too as He would for a son!" [2](#)

Allah has deplored the discrimination between the sons and daughters thus:

"When they get tidings of a daughter their faces turn dark with shame; anger pervades them and they hide their faces from others." (Qur'an, 16:58-59)

[1.](#) Wasail al-shiah, v15, p. 143

[2.](#) Wasail al-shiah

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