

Lesson 5

2-16-10 The Open School Class: Explanation of Forty *Ahadith* Text: Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. Sharh al-Arba'in al-Nabawwiyah. Arabic edition 1987, pages 425-426.

Summary

What is the role towards children? In Islam, marriage entails responsibility, and one of the main responsibilities is raising children. This is not necessarily just an Islamic principle, it is a human principle. For example, every society emphasizes the importance of raising children. It is important because the children of today will be the leaders or adults of the future. Each adult member of a family was once a child that grew up, and the cyclical responsibility of raising a child falls on the shoulders of the respective parents. Now, what is the actual responsibility?

For example, a family may hold certain values. To maintain these values for the future, the family needs to instill them into the children, who are the future. Accordingly, the responsibility is protecting values through raising the children. Values of societies or families may differ.

For example, one family may value money, and another family may value a specific cultural way of life. However, Muslim families should value religion (Islam), which entails many things, such as staying on the straight path, performing obligations, and education. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said to *seek knowledge until death*. Education is a cornerstone of Islam.

Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the parents (especially the father) to send the children to school. The parent cannot say that I am not responsible! The father is responsible to push the child to go to school and get an education. Why? The child is the future, the future of the family, the future of the society, the future of the nation, and so on. However, a lot of times the parents themselves are not educated.

One must struggle to educate himself or herself and sacrifice (money, time, etc.) to educate their children. Islam emphasizes the importance of raising children in a correct manner. Normally, when a child is born, he or she does not know anything, like a blank slate. Customs, manners, and information

are acquired via parents and society. The child adapts to the climate. At the time of birth, the child needs to be fostered with food/nourishment for her physical health as well as with manners for her spiritual health.

Unlike an animal, a human being needs to pay attention to both the physical and the spiritual. For example, a cat may steal food to survive, but a human should not steal because it is detrimental to his or her spirit. The parents must be there to foster the children properly.

Imam Ali ibn Husayn as-Sajjad (may peace be upon him and his family) said that *the duty of the father towards the child is to know that he is part of me*. (Jalali, page 426). So a father cannot say that here is my son or daughter, and he or she is not my problem. If the child does good or bad, it reflects on the parents.

There are five pillars for raising children that parents should know. Firstly, one should know that the child is a part of himself or herself (you cannot disassociate). Secondly, the parent is the responsible party (you are the adult and even if you are uneducated, you must allow for the education of the child). Thirdly, the parent must teach the child good manners. Fourthly, the parent must teach the child about faith (*iman*) and beliefs. Fifthly, the parent must teach the child how to worship (*shari'ah*).

Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him and his family) said that *every child is born a Muslim*. (Jalali, page 426). That means that if a person is not a Muslim, then at one point he or she changed based on influence (or lack of influence) of the parents or society.

Accordingly, the parent needs to teach their children appropriately (keeping the five pillars in mind) to raise a healthy child (both physically and spiritually). This way, the child may remain a Muslim, *Insha'Allah* (if God wills). However, parents should teach their children from a young age. They cannot wait too long.

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