

Lesson 6

3–3–10 The Open School Class: Explanation of Forty *Ahadith* Text: Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. Sharh al–Arba’in al–Nabawwiyah. Arabic edition 1987, pages 427–428.

Summary

Tahdhib in the context of the wise Qur’an and the *ahadith* (traditions) means upbringing or raising children. Islam has guidelines for raising children. The wise **Qur’an (18:46)** states,

“Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of the world, but lasting righteous deeds are better with your Lord in reward and better in hope.”

Wealth in itself is not a bad thing, and Allah (all praise is due to Him) states that wealth is an adornment of this world. For example, wealth is used to feed people, to house people, to take care of oneself and family, etc.

Accordingly, wealth can be considered a good thing. However, if one cheats or steals to acquire wealth, then that, of course, is not good and is not the way of the straight path. The deeds of a person have great importance, and if one uses righteous deeds to acquire wealth, then those righteous deeds are actually better for that person than the wealth itself.

The same concept applies to children. Children are adornments of this world, but one must raise them in a good manner (*e.g.*, do not raise them through lying or bad conduct) because the good or righteous deeds in raising children are better for oneself. Children are considered adornments because they represent an extension of the parents.

Parents can vicariously live through their children. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *when a person dies hope goes away or his good deeds cease except if i) good charity work done by that person has a continuing effect, ii) some knowledge was left behind by that person, or iii) a child prays for him.* (Jalali, page 427). These exceptions show that an extension of that person is still in this world and, in a sense, that person is really not dead.

Now, in terms of how to raise children, Islam places the responsibility on the parent to raise their children

according to the respective nature of a male or a female. For example, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said to *teach girls surat al-Nur* (the twenty-fourth chapter of the Qur'an, titled the Light) *instead of surat Yusuf* (the twelfth chapter of the Qur'an, titled Joseph (peace be upon him)). Why? Well, *surat al-Nur* discusses the concept of chastity, which suits the nature of a female, while *surat Yusuf* mentions a sexually driven situation Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) was placed in, which does not befit the nature of young girls.

However, one should not misconstrue this saying to prohibit women from learning all parts of the glorious Qur'an. The saying emphasizes that one should take into consideration the nature of a child when teaching him or her lessons during upbringing. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) also said that *the best of children are girls*.

This should not be used in the attempt to prove the inferiority or superiority of one sex over the other. The beautiful saying highlights girls because there is something special about girls. You see, girls give birth and actually raise children. A mother will naturally spend more time with a child than the father. Women have a heavy responsibility, and they are the brains of the household.

Unfortunately, too many cultures and nations treat women badly. *Insha'Allah* (if God wills), may we all learn from the sayings of the blessed Prophet Muhammad and his family (peace upon them all) who were sent by the Lord, the Master of all the worlds. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *whoever kisses his child gets a reward*. Love and affection is important, and by kissing your child, you are worshipping God the All-Merciful.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) also said to *teach your child how to swim and how to shoot arrows* (archery). At first glance, this saying seems somewhat odd, but with further investigation, truth shines. For example, if one does not know how to swim and falls into water, that person will die. Swimming is a form of self rescue. Also, at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), shooting arrows was a main self-defense technique.

Accordingly, teaching your child self-defense techniques (such as maybe karate or kung fu) may be useful in saving his or her life one day. Therefore, parents should teach their children how to rescue themselves. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *a child has rights that a father should fulfill, such as i) to pick a good name for the child, ii) to teach him good manners, and iii) paving a way for his success*. One example of paving the way for a child's success is providing a good education for the child.

Additionally, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said to *teach your child how to write* (again a reference to education), *and when the child becomes of age, find a wife (or spouse) for your child*. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said *when a child is born, recite adhan* (call for prayer) *in his right ear and iqamah* (second call for prayer) *in his left ear*. This will protect the child from *Shaytan* (Satan). Also, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that

one should be adil (just) among his children. (Jalali, page 428). Meaning, one should treat them fairly. For example, if you kiss one child, kiss the other child as well. Children will remember how you treated them.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said *when a child makes a mess, it is just a mess*. Remember that you are dealing with a child, not an adult. We were all children once, and we made messes and mistakes. Treat your child as a child, do not dictate. Of course, however, as the child grows, one must instill values and discipline based on the age of the child. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) also said to *love your children, forgive your children, and when you promise something to your children, fulfill the promise*. This way, you will give self-esteem to your children.

Also, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (the Commander of the faithful, may peace be upon him and his family) said to *be careful when deciding who to hire to breastfeed your child*. In the past, when a mother did not properly lactate, a wet nurse would be hired to breastfeed the child. The lesson of the saying is that such milk has an effect on a child, and the source of the milk should be analyzed to avoid any bad effects on the child. Nowadays, however, formulas and powdered milk may be used making the position of a wet nurse obsolete.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/human-cycle-18-lessons-sayyid-muhammad-husayn-jalali/lesson-6#comment-0>