

JUSTICE & EQUALITY

A family consisting of a few members is like a small society and the parents manage the affairs of this small habitation. As running a country is not possible without justice and equality, so is the management of a household not possible without these concomitant factors; namely Justice and equality for all. Selflessness, love, affection and unity is possible only in an environment of justice and equality. The children will get proper upbringing in this atmosphere. The inherent traits of the children will find expression and they will learn to be just and fair from the example set to them by their parents. If the parents are ignorant of the need for justice and fair play, so will be their children.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“As pure and cool water is craved for by a thirsty person, so do people desire to have justice and equality and their taste is sweeter and better for them. There is nothing better than justice.”[۱]

“Three types of persons will be closer to Allah on the

[۱] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, Page ۱۴۷.

Day of Reckoning:

First: Those who are not cruel to their subordinates in times of anger.

Second: Those who go to mediate between two litigants, but don't do anything against the requirement of justice.

Third: Those who always uphold the truth, even if they come to personal harm by doing so.”[1]

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“Allah orders for Justice and Fairness. ١٦:٩٠”

Just and equitable parents treat all their children equally. They don't show particular preference for any particular child. Be it a son or a daughter, pretty or not so pretty, capable or mediocre; the parents have the same feelings of love and affection for all of them. They give equitable treatment to all their children

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Keep justice for all your children in your mind even when some of them are away. If you desire treatment of love, kindness and justice from your children, then give them similar treatment.”[2]

The Prophet noticed that a person was more attached to one son than to the other. He told him:

“Who don't you keep the need for justice and equality

[1] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٧٥, Page ٣٣.



of treatment in mind?”[۱]

One person was sitting in the company of the Prophet when his son arrived. The person kissed the boy and made him sit on his lap. After a while the person’s daughter came there and the person made her sit in front of him. Then the Prophet told the person:

“Why didn’t you keep in your consideration the need for justice and equality between your children?”[۲]

Hazrat Ali says:

“Delivering justice and equality to people is the best of politics.”[۳]

One woman came to the presence of the Prophet’s wife, Ayesha, with her two little children. Hazrat Ayesha gave her three dates. The mother gave one each to the two children and then equally divided the third date and gave one to each of them. When the Prophet returned home, Hazrat Ayesha narrated the incident to him.

The Prophet said:

“Why are you surprised at the action of that woman?! For keeping justice and equality in view Allah will give her a place in the Heaven!”[۴]

If the parents treat their children unjustly in a partial manner they will create a very harmful impression on them.

[١] Makaanim al-Akhlaaq,, Vol. ١١, Page ٢٥٢.

[٢] Majma al-Zawaa'id, Vol. ٨, Page ١٥٦.

[٣] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٦٤.

[٤] Sunan Ibn Maajah, Vol. ٧٢, Page ١٢١٠.



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The children will take after the unjust attitude of the parents and behave the same way with others. With time this attitude will become a part of their natures.

The children who had been the victims of injustice from their parents will carry rancor for them in their minds It is possible they turn rebellious and disobedient.

With treatment of injustice and partiality there is chance of jealousy and enmity springing up between brothers and sisters and it might go to the limit of sometimes harming each other.

The children who have received unjust treatment at the hands of their parents will have feelings of dejection and oppression that will get engraved in their minds... It is quite possible that later on they develop psychic disorders...

The parents will be responsible for all the consequences of their partial and

unjust treatment meted out to their children.

But the parents, in all fairness, give equitable treatment to all their children. At different ages the children will have differing requirements. Because they are born at different times and are of different sexes, they may not have similar requirements all the time. The law of justice and equality too is not rigid about equal treatment in such differing circumstances. Will it be right to lift the elder child in your lap like you do to a babe in the cradle? Similarly, will it be right to give the same amount of pocket money to a child of three years as is given to his sibling who is eighteen years old. Can a daughter be given the same freedom of movement that is given to a grown up son? Fair play and justice don't approve of any such



concessions and we too don't recommend them.

The parents must thoughtfully adopt such fair and just standards of treatment for their children that they don't give rise to the feelings of partiality in some of them. This matter has been dealt at some length in the chapter on Jealousy which you may refer.

One person writes in his memoirs:

“The memory of my childhood is very bitter and I am unable to forget it. Dad used to discriminate between us brothers.. He used to comply with all his wishes and never for once considered my wants. He used to treat my brother with respect and treated me insultingly. Father loved him more and always had

kind words for him. As a result of this treatment I started thinking that Dad and my brother are not good. I used to think of taking revenge on my Dad for the unjust behavior with me. In my worried state I preferred to be alone by myself. I started spitting on the walls and tarnishing them. I used to break the glass window- panes to take out my spleen. What was the alternative for me? But Dad was totally unconcerned about this. He didn't know that my actions were solely to harm his interest.”

One lady writes in her diary:

“...One of our closest relatives had two daughters One was a good student and very bright while the other was mediocre. Both used to go to the school. The elder daughter, who was not bright, used to secure lower grades in her examinations. The younger girl always used to perform very well in her studies. Their mother always used to brag about the brilliance of her



younger daughter and run down the elder one. She used to be full of praise for the younger daughter and always criticized the elder one that she was wasting all the expense incurred on her schooling. She even used to say that all the good dresses and food given to her is a waste.

The same elder daughter is now married. She has several children. She is an ordinary housewife. She gives an unhealthy look and seems a victim of inferiority complex. She looks tired and lost in her thoughts. At parties she takes a quiet corner and doesn't converse with others. When I egg her on to talk, she only takes a sigh and says, 'about what can I talk?' I remember, prior to her

marriage, I took her to a psychiatrist. The doctor, after a long session of discussion with her, said that there was nothing wrong with her. In fact, her parents are sick that they have not treated her properly and reduced her to the present plight.

Once the doctor asked her, 'Can you cook?' She started crying and said, 'I can cook. But whenever I prepare anything my parents say that my younger sister cooks better food.'"

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RESPECT FOR THE CHILDREN

The child too is a human being and every human being instinctively loves oneself. He wishes that others recognize his worth and respect him. When others show respect to him he feels proud and thinks that he has been praised. The parents who love their children should show them due consideration and respect. In the training of a child, showing respect to him is considered as a very important element. The child who receives respect and estimation will grow into a sober and respectable person. He always tries to maintain his reputation and refrains from doing anything wrong. He tries to keep doing good things to rise in the estimation of others. The child who is not treated by his parents with due respect, he tries to emulate them while dealing with others. The child is a man in miniature and like all men he loves himself. He will be displeased if he is not treated properly and with respect. The parents who treat children badly without giving any thought to their hurt feelings, create rancor in their young minds. Sooner or later such children turn hostile and become stubbornly difficult. Ignorant parents, whose number unfortunately is not small, consider that treating the children with respect spoils them. They take cool,

condescending, and vain attitude towards the

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children. This way they crush the personality of the children and give birth to the inferiority complex in their impressionable minds. From the point of view of good breeding this attitude of the parents proves a major impediment. If the parents treat their children with respect, then the child will try to reciprocate. The child will get the understanding from that very tender age that the parents treat him humanely and give him importance. He will therefore abstain from doing anything that is not considered good in the society. .

He will try to do good things to maintain the respectable treatment he has been receiving from the parents. It is a matter of concern that in our societies the children are not treated with respect. They are not treated as members of the family till they are grown up. In parties and celebrations they are generally not invited and go with the parents as appendages. In parties they are seated at an insignificant corner. When they arrive at the party and leave it, they are not given any attention. In the car they will not have any space for themselves. They either go standing or sit on the lap of the father. They are not allowed to speak in the party. And even if they take courage in their hands to speak, they don't get any attention from the elders. They are summoned, if ever, with indecorum.

Islam gives all attention to the need for showing respect to the children. The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Respect your children and give them good training so that Allah rewards you.”

Hazrat Ali says:

“The meanest person is one who shows disrespect to



others.”[۱]

The Prophet always, and everywhere, used to treat children with affection and respect. Whenever he returned from his travels, the children used to run out and receive him. He used to hug and kiss them. Some of the children used to mount with him on the steed. He used to ask his other companions to take the other children on their horses. This way he used to enter the ramparts of the city.

Insulting behavior with children, even with babes in arms, is forbidden. Umm al-Fazl says:

“The Prophet, when Imam Hussain was a babe in the arms, one day took him from me and hugged him, the child wet his clothes. I snatched Hussain away from the Prophet at that moment, when the child started crying. The Prophet told me, ‘Umm al-Fazl, Keep your cool.! Water can clean my clothes. But who will remove the displeasure and hurt of the child Hussain’”[۲]

One gentleman writes:

“I had no significance in the consideration of my parents. Not only that they did not have any respect for me, they used to insult and admonish me time and

again. They never allowed me to do any work. If ever I took initiative to do some work, they used to find fault. They used to insult me in the presence of their friends and mine. They never allowed me to say

[١] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ١٠٤, Page ٤٥.

[٢] Hadiyat al-Ahbab, Page ١٢٦.

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anything while others were around. All these things made me carry the feelings of inferiority and shame for myself. I started considering myself a useless person. Now that I am a grown up man, I continue to labor under the same feelings of dejection. If I am confronted with difficult tasks, I feel myself helpless and incapable of doing it. I feel that because I am unable to have my own opinion about my capability, others should volunteer their opinion about me. I consider myself insignificant and absolutely incapable. I have no confidence on myself. Even I find myself at a loss to speak in the presence of others. When I utter something in such situations, I ponder for hours whether what I said was right for the occasion or not”

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SELF-ASSESSMENT & MEANINGFUL EXISTENCE

The entire lives of the animals are spent in eating, sleeping, and breeding. The

intelligence and knowledge of animals is imperfect. They are unable to discriminate between good and bad. Therefore they don't have any responsibility imposed on them. They will not be required to account for their deeds. There is no preordained responsibility for them. But man, who is the best of the creations of Allah, is not like the animals. Man has wisdom and capability. He can discriminate between good and bad, pretty and ugly. Man has been created for a perpetual and eternal existence and not for extinction. Therefore he carries a great responsibility and duty ordained for him. Man is the vicegerent and trustee of Allah in this world. The purpose of the life of the man is not just eating, sleeping, satisfying desires and procreation. But the man has to tread such a path that he proves himself even more superior than the angels. He is human and must strive to promote his humanity. Man should have a goal in life. The goal has to be idealistic. Man strives in Allah's cause and to serve His creations and not only for achieving the worldly benefits. Man has to search the Truth and to follow the Truth.



Yes! The human existence is such a precious jewel which is far superior than all the animals. It is a shame that lot of men have squandered their invaluable worth. They spend their lives literally like animals. In their view eating, drinking, sleeping, fulfilling carnal desires alone are the purpose of their lives. It is possible that a person might live for a hundred years without understanding himself and die in utter ignorance, He comes into the world like an animal and will die an animal! He will remain aimless and itinerant all his life. The result of

all his striving will be naught.

Man should know himself. Who is he? From where he has come? Where he has to go? What is the purpose of his birth? What path he must take? What is the real goal and what is auspicious for him?.

Hazrat Ali says:

“The best enlightenment is that the man recognizes himself, and the greatest ignorance is when a person doesn’t know his own self.”[¹]

“One who did not recognize himself, he strayed from the path of salvation, and took the road to ignorance and aimlessness.”[²]

“For Allah the most abhorrent person is one who has made eating and satisfaction of carnal desires the sole purpose of life.”[³]

“One who has made achievement of Salvation on the

[¹] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ١٧٩.

[²] Ibid., Page ٧٧.

[³] Ibid., Page ٢٠٥.

Day of Judgement his purpose in life will get fulfillment.”[¹]

The parents should give the lesson of self- assessment and purposeful existence

to their children. They can progressively give a purposeful character to the lives of the children. The child, with the help of the parents, should be helped to know himself. From where he has come? What is the purpose of his existence? Where he will go ultimately? What are his duties and responsibilities in this world? With what program and aim he should live his life? If the parents know themselves and have definite aims in life, then they will be successfully able to guide their children on the desired path.

[¹] Ghurar al-Hikam,, Page ٦٩٢.

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THE INCOME OF THE HOUSEHOLD AND EXPENSES

In the management of a house, the most vital aspect is the control of the purse strings. Any sensible household would keep track of their regular income and expenditure. As it is said, they cut the coat according to the length of the cloth available. They make efforts to keep their expenses within the amount of inflow of cash into the family's account. Every family should know their priorities and allocate money to different items of expense on that basis. Careful families always try that they don't fall into debt trap. They will thus avoid unnecessary worries coming their way. Even if their economic condition is bad for a time, they plan and overcome these difficulties in some time. They avoid reducing themselves to the status of penury through proper management of their limited resources.

Contrary to this the families that are careless about proper management of their

expenses, who are extravagant and continue living beyond their means, fall into the habit of compulsive



borrowing. To meet the bills for their expenses, they are forced even to borrow money at high rates of interest. Since they are compulsive borrowers, they don't mind buying expensive things on credit. Such families are never free of worries. They come to such a pass that sometimes they are not able to buy the basic necessities of day-to-day living. Such things happen even to families whose incomes are reasonably sound. They will be in their straitened circumstances because of not having a proper plan for expenditure. These people are the victims of false pomp and show. The welfare of the family depends not only on earning and bringing some money home, but it also requires proper budgeting and control of the expenses.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“When Allah wants a family to prosper, then he gives them the capability of wisdom and order in life.”[۱]

“All excellence is assembled in three things: One of them is making use of understanding and prudence in managing their finances.”[۲]

“Extravagance becomes the cause of poverty and penury, and moderation in life provides contentment and comfort.”[۳]

Hazrat Ali says:

“With thrift, half the requirements can be met.”[٤]

“There are three signs of an extravagant person: (١) He wants to eat what he has not; (٢) He buys the

[١] Kaafi, Vol. ٥, Page ٨٨.

[٢] Ibid., Page ٨٧.

[٣] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ١٢, Page ٤١.

[٤] Mustadrak, Vol. ٢, Page ٤٢٤.



thing for which he has no money, and (٣) he wears the dress which he doesn't afford to buy.”[١]

To streamline the financial affairs of the family it is essential that the husband and wife should have similarity of views. If the husband or the wife spends without keeping in mind the priorities, then the management of the house will go haywire.

Secondly, even the children should have some understanding of the needs and priorities. If the children become thoughtlessly extravagant and the parents, out of their love, humor them and permit their spending sprees, the family can come into financial problems at some stage.

The parents should inform the children the financial status of the family and discuss the budget in their presence. This will give them an understanding of the

importance of thrift in spending. They should also know that the management of a house is not all bed of roses.

It is essential that the children should, in stages, be made acquainted with the household chores and also the income of the family. They should know that the house runs on the income of the parents and they have no other means besides that. They should understand that all the needs of the house have to be met from that money only. They should also be told that expenditure on certain matters have to be given priority over others. For example the household expenses, the house-rent , the bill for amenities like power/water etc. In the first instance the expenses on necessities have to be met. Then the other

[¹] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ۲۱, Page ۴۱.



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requirements can follow. The children need to understand and extend their co-operation to the parents in this matter.

From the very childhood the children should be trained to match their needs and demands to the means of the family. They must be stopped from wasteful expense and thoughtless purchasing. They must be introduced to the habit of thrift and they should consider themselves as members of the family who have to spend within the means of the family. They should not get a false notion that they are from a rich family and they can spend as they wish. They must be trained to control their wishes in the interest of the essential expenses of the

family that cannot be avoided or postponed.

These children, when they grow up, will have the reins of the society in their hands. Therefore they must be groomed into the habit of thrift from the very childhood. However comfortable the financial status of the parents the children must be taught to spend money carefully and judiciously. They should explain to the children that all men belong to one family of human beings. Therefore the fortunate ones who are rich should give help to the poor. If the income of the family is insufficient, they must prune their daily expenses and try to make the ends meet within their meager resources. The parents should not complain to their children about the financial straits they are in. They should instead of this give the lesson of patience and trust on Allah. Prepare them to face the odds in their future life with courage and equanimity. When a child is capable of working, initiate him into work and give him the moral support. They must tell to the child that if he starts working, his wages will supplement the family's



income and they will thus be more comfortable. The child must be encouraged to give a portion of his earnings for the household expenses. This way he will appreciate his responsibility for the family. A young earning member of the family should draw his pocket money from his wages keeping in mind the requirements of the household expenses.



RESPECT FOR THE LAW

People in a civilized society cannot live without law. Where the law of the jungle prevails, that is not a civilized society. To run the administration of a society very well defined laws are absolutely essential. These laws are for upholding order and providing protection to the aggrieved and dispensing punishment to the guilty. For the comfort and safety of the populace, laws are absolutely necessary. In the countries where there is good understanding between the people and the lawmakers, the laws are made for the benefit of the people and they therefore respect the laws. There can be general well being if the people in a country are law abiding.

In countries where the lawmakers work with ulterior selfish motives, and while framing the statute they don't have the welfare of the people in mind, the people stop honoring the law and there can be unrest in such societies. Unfortunately, earlier our country faced a similar situation (Here the author means Iran of the Shah's period).. Most of the laws were neither Islamic nor good for the people. The laws were formulated keeping in mind the ruling clique and the wishes of the Imperialists and their stooges. No attention was given to the plight of the worker, the toiler and the deprived populace. The



lawmakers tried to hoodwink the people with oppressive and repressive laws to subjugate the masses. But since the people of Iran felt that those un-Islamic statutes were against their interests, they had no respect for them. However there were some laws in that statute that were good for the people. But since the

legal system was anti-people in totality, they rejected the complete system.

Respect for legitimate and people-friendly laws is essential and the parents have to explain about them to the children. When a child finds the parents crossing the road from the zebra crossing only, he feels that he must do likewise. He gets into the habit of following this rule of safety and may never transgress it.

The parents must tell the children that the cars and other fast moving vehicles have the right of way on the roads and the pedestrians can only use the zebra crossings when they require to cross to the other side of the road. Pedestrians trespassing on the roads commit an offence and also are exposed to the risk of accidents. When the child understands the advantage of abiding by the law, he becomes a good citizen.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Habits are second nature!”[1]

[1] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۲۶.

RESPECT

It is always the wish of the parents that their children are well behaved. Good and polite children are a source of pride for every parent. The well behaved children politely greet the person they visit, shake hands with him, enquire about his health, converse softly, limit the conversation to what is asked of them and say proper adieus when departing from the hosts place. Such children give

due respect to the elders, when elders arrive they politely stand up, show deference to the scholars, religious figures and generally respect pious and good persons. In a gathering they remain cool and collected, don't talk loudly, thank the person who gives them something, don't interrupt others, particularly the elders during conversations. They say Bismillah (In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful), the Islamic Grace, before starting to eat, they take small morsels of food, don't eat excessively, don't throw food on the table or the floor and follow all the required table manners. They take care of their dresses that they don't get stained and try to remain clean and tidy. They will be considerate to the others and never hurt others feelings. They walk with a decent gait and give the impression of being obedient and decent children. They don't ridicule



others with practical jokes and when someone speaks to them, they listen with rapt attention.

It is not only the parents who like polite children, but they are popular with all who happen to interact with them. Impertinent and impolite children are abhorred by all.

Ameer al-Momineen says:

“Respectability is the zenith of humanity.”[١]

“Respect (politeness) in a man is like pretty raiment.”[٢]

“Good behavior (politeness) is required by people more than silver or gold.”[٣]

“There is no better embellishment than politeness in a man.”[٤]

“The best inheritance a father can give to his son is to train him to be of polite.”[٥]

“An impolite person will have more failings”[٦]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq says:

“Allow your child to play till the seven years of age, then teach him good manners and politeness.”[٧]

[١] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٣٤.

[٢] Ibid., Page ٢١.

[٣] Ibid., Page ٢٤٢.

[٤] Ibid., Page ٨٣٠.

[٥] Ibid., Page ٢٩٣.

[٦] Ibid., Page ٦٣٤.

[٧] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ١٠٤, Page ٩٠.



The Holy Prophet of Islam said:

“The child has three rights over its parents:

They select a good name for him/her.

Make him/her respectful (polite).

Arrange a good spouse for him/her”[١]

The fondest hope of every parent will be that their children grow into polite and respectable persons. But this hope cannot be fulfilled without sincere and continued efforts. It will not be possible to infuse this trait in the children with sermonizing. The best route to this end is setting ideal example before the children by the parents with their exemplary behavior in their daily lives.

Hazrat Ali has said:

“Best behavior is that which you yourself start to practice.”[٢]

“Start instruction with oneself and then teach others. First make your character perfect and then sermon and advise others.”[٣]

Children are natural mimics. The capability to copy is very strong in their nature. The children imitate the ways of their parents and others around them. He will talk like them and he would try to walk like them. Instruction, off course, is a very important aspect of training, but it is not

[١] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ١٥, Page ١٢٣.

[٢] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ١٩١.

[٣] Nahj al-Balagha, Vol. ٣, Page ١٦٦.

as strong as the capacity to mimic and learn, particularly in the early stages of childhood. The parents, who are particular that their children should be polite and well behaved, must take special care to see that they are training them by personal examples. If the parents are polite to one another, naturally the children will follow suit.

The parents who themselves are devoid of politeness and good manners, should not expect good manners from their children. They might lecture the children hundreds of times on the norms of good behavior and politeness, but the children would be behaving under the experience of the attitude of the parents and others in the household. If the parents are impolite and abusive to each other, they will be setting a negative example to their growing children.

Children from such homes will be as bad mannered as the parents or, perhaps, more so. Any attempt at correcting them will fall on deaf ears. They will naturally think that the parents are asking them to do what they themselves don't practice.

Example is always better than precept. But it is not right to think that lecturing will be totally ineffective. Good parents, who also set good example for their children, can always talk to them about the norms of good conduct and they will definitely accept their advice. This advice too has to be given with politeness. There are parents who express their anger rather harshly when they notice the children doing something wrong. Sometimes they might say, "You naughty fellow! Why didn't you wish the visitor? Why didn't you say 'Bi' to him? Are you dumb? Stupid

and manner less child, why did you spread your legs impolitely in front of elderly visitors? Why were you noisy while visiting our friend's home! You beast! Why do you impolitely interrupt the conversation?"

These ignorant parents think that they are correcting their children with such talk. They don't know that good manners are not taught with bad manners. If the child is guilty of any indiscretion, he must be politely cautioned. There should not be others present at such sessions that should be conducted in a cool and friendly manner.

The Prophet of Islam used to greet the children and say, "I greet the children so that greeting becomes their habit."

THEFT AND KLEPTOMANIA

Several times it happens that a child spreads its hand to take something that is not his. He forcibly tries to take the eatables, fruits or toys of some other child. Stealthily takes away something from the pocket of the father or from the mother's purse. He takes sweets and other goodies from the pantry without the knowledge of his mother. Picks up things stealthily from the shops visited by the family. Takes pencils, rubber etc of his siblings and school-mates without informing them. Several children do this sort of things in their childhood. Seldom a person can be found who has never done such things in his childhood. Some parents are very upset finding their children doing such things and start imagining of a bleak future for the child. They feel that their child might turn into a thief or burglar when he grows up. With these pangs of remorse they keep

worrying themselves.

First of all such parents should give their attention to the fact that they need not worry too much and feel sorry for the small aberration in the child. Lifting insignificantly small things by the child is not the sign that the child will turn into a thief in the future. They should know the child has not yet reached the stage to appreciate the rights of ownership of others, or to differentiate between what belongs to others and what is his own. The child has subtly strong feelings and jumps to grab whatever attracts his attention. The child will not be naughty by nature but this attitude comes to him from outside influences.



These are all passing phenomena in his early life. When he grows up, he might not do such things. There must be many pious, upright persons who might have done some unintentional stealing in their childhood. But the purpose of telling all this is not that the parents totally ignore reacting to the acts of theft of their children. I only wish to dispel their fears that the children might turn into thieves. Instead of lamenting over such incidents, they should discreetly try to correct the child.

A child of two to three years in particular is not able to distinguish between what belongs to him and what is not his. Whatever comes in his reach, he tries to take. Whatever is attractive to him, he wants to have. At this stage shouting at the child and beating him will not be of any use. The best attitude for the parents will be to practically stop the child from doing such a thing if it happens in their presence. If the child tries to snatch something from another child, they

should softly intervene. And despite all this, if the child takes the thing from the other child, the parents should restore it to the real owner as soon as they can. The things that they don't want the child to handle, they should take care to keep them out of his reach. When the children reach a certain level of intelligence, they will start understanding about ownership of things. Now they will not try to grab others things. However, some children do continue the habit of stealing even after attaining the idea about ownership of things. In such a situation the parents should not remain silent spectators. They should not be complacent now, thinking that the child will automatically give up the habit. He might turn into a thief, or at least a kleptomaniac, who picks up things of



others just for the heck of it, not knowing what he is doing. It is not right to ignore even if the child steals something belonging to his own parents. Some parents are so protective of their children that if someone reports that the child has stolen their things, they start wrongly defending their child and blaming the other person of false accusation.

Such ignorant parents, with their negative attitude, unknowingly encourage the child to blatantly continue his stealing activity. The child will learn to steal and deny having done it.

Therefore the parents should not be unconcerned when they face such a situation. They should make efforts to stop the child from stealing and lying about it. There will be the risk of the bad habit taking root in his nature and

making reform very difficult.

Hazrat Ali has said:

“Giving up habits is very difficult.”[¹]

At the first instance the parents should try to remove the causes of the child wanting to steal. If the child needs pencil, paper or eraser; the parents should fulfill this need. If they neglect this need of the child, it is likely that he will pick the things from his class-mates. He may even take money from the father’s pocket to buy the things. If the child wants a ball to play and the parents refuse to buy one for him, he might forcibly take the ball of a friend forcibly. Or even he might steal a ball from the neighborhood grocer. The parents must take care to

[¹] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ١٨١.



fulfill the child’s needs to the extent possible .If certain things he wants are beyond their means, they should make the child understand by telling him the facts affectionately. For example, they can tell him that they don’t have so much money that they immediately buy for him the color pencil box required urgently. He may borrow the box today from his friend to do his immediate task and they shall get him one later. Tough attitude with the child might encourage him to steal. If the parents are keeping eatables locked in the pantry, the child

will plan somehow to search the key and take out the goodies for eating. This thing can happen in the near impossible situation when the parents want to eat the things themselves and deny to the child.

When the parents hide away their money the child might get inclined to search for it. It is better the parents don't hide their cash from the children very much. They must take the children into their confidence and should not give them a feeling that things are being hidden from them. They should teach the child that life is spent with some discipline. There are times for eating and they should not always keep munching things. Money is for buying necessities and should not be squandered carelessly.

Films of crime, theft and robbery should not be shown to the children. Storybooks and radio programs on such subjects should also be avoided. There are many instances that youth caught for crimes have confessed that they got the inspiration from movies for such acts.

The most important thing is that the parents and other members of the family try that the environment of their



house is one of honesty and probity where others' ownership of things is respected. No one takes money from the parents' pockets and the things are not appropriated without the knowledge of the owner. Even the husband should not rummage the wardrobe of the wife without her knowledge. The parents also should respect the right of ownership of the children and should not handle their

things without their consent.

The parents should not insult the child over his minor misdemeanors. They should not shout at him calling him names like cheat and thief. They should not threaten him that he would go to jail for his act of stealing. With such insults they cannot reform the child. He might, to the contrary, become stubborn and continue with his stealing. Or, perhaps in a revengeful mood he might commit bigger thefts.

The best method to save the situation for the parents would be to treat the child with discretion, love and softness. They should explain the grave consequences of stealing. They should convince him to return the stolen things to the owner and never repeat the act again.

But even after these attempts of reforming the child fail, then the only alternative will be to talk to him with a strong and forthright manner. Finally if the child proves totally incorrigible, they can reluctantly have recourse to physical punishment.



JEALOUSY

Jealousy or envy is a negative trait in human beings. A jealous person always envies others who are happy and comfortable. When he finds something good and attractive with others, he wishes that they lost the thing. Generally such a jealous person is neither capable of snatching away the good thing from the other person nor harm him in any way. He continues to sulk and brood. He will be burning in the flames of jealousy day and night. An envious person is devoid of the pleasures and comforts of the world and the feelings of deprivation and

the thought of the amenities enjoyed by others makes his own life miserable.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“A jealous person is the unhappiest of his compatriots.”[¹]

Hazrat Ali says:

“Envy makes the life of a jealous person bleak.”[²]

“An envious person never gets contentment and happiness.”[³]

Jealousy has deleterious effects on the nerves and heart

[¹] Mustadrak, Vol. 2, Page 327.

[²] Ibid., Page 328.

[³] Ibid., Page 327.



of a person and makes him sick and weak.

Hazrat Ali says:

“An envious person is always feeble and debilitated.”[¹]

Jealousy weakens the roots of the person’s faith and turns him towards sin and disbelief. Lots of murders, fights and other crimes are the result of envy and jealousy. Sometimes the envious person does backbiting of the person he is

jealous of and spreads rumors and inappropriate designations about him. He sometimes causes damage to the properties of the other person.

Imam Mohammed Baqir said:

“Envy destroys faith in the way fire destroys the fuel.”[١]

Jealousy is a part of the human nature. There will hardly be any persons who don't have this instinct.

The Prophet of Islam says:

“There are three things no person is devoid of: (١) Base thoughts, (٢) Bad actions, and (٣) Jealousy”[٢]

Therefore, this undesirable instinct must be curbed with all the force at the disposal of a person. It should not be allowed to flourish and grow. If the instinct of envy is allowed to persist, since it is a part of the person's nature, it would grow at leaps and bounds. It will reach such proportions that fighting it out will not be possible.

[١] Mustadrak, Vol. ٢, Page ٣٢٨.

[٢] Shaafi, Vol. ١, Page ١٧٢.

[٣] Al-Mahajjah al-Baydhaa, Vol. ٣, Page ١٨٩.

The best time when good manners are cultivated and the bad ones are eliminated is the childhood of a person. The element of jealousy too will be present in a child. The parents, with their own behavior, and proper attention to the child, can definitely cure the child of the rudiments of the malady of jealousy that manifest in his behavior now and then. If the parents treat all their children equitably, without any favoritism, the problem of one envying the other doesn't arise. The raiment, the food and other things in the use of the children should be of the same quality and standard. They should keep in mind equity in the matter of pocket money and general treatment of the children. They should not overtly compare the capabilities of the children in their presence, and even with others, if there is likelihood of the children learning about the comparison being made. Such attitude can curb whatever degree of capability the weaker child has and might render him totally incompetent. These well meaning but ignorant parents think that they are training the child. To the contrary they aren't able to fulfill their purpose and are adding fuel to the fire. The innocent child's heart gets the ideas of jealousy and hate. He may get motivated to commit acts of enmity. There can always be the risk of his taking out spleen on his own siblings.

The parents should never compare their children with others'. They should never praise other children very much particularly in comparison with their own. It is not proper if the parents tell to their children, "How well behaved, polite and studious is our neighbor's son. How obedient he is and also he helps his mother with her work. His parents are really lucky to have a son like him."

Such parents must understand that this type of comparison might hurt the ego of the child and have harmful implications. The child, instead of mending his ways, may become adamant and revengeful.

The parents must strictly avoid comparing children. Some children are always more proficient, better looking or smarter than others. It is possible that the parents may be more attached to one child than the others. There is no harm in this attitude. This is a normal human instinct. But in talk and actions they should not show any discrimination between the children. They must ensure equitable treatment for all the children. If they desire to give any special treatment to a particular child, they should do it while other children are not around. Even if the parents are taking full care to give equitable treatment to all the children, the element of jealousy, which is instinctive in human nature, will still be present in the children to some extent. Every child wishes to be the darling of the parents and none other should have this privilege. When he notices the parents expressing affection to the other siblings, he will feel momentary pang of jealousy. The child will slowly understand that he has to share the affection of the parents with the other brothers and sisters. The others too have a right over the parents. The parents, with discreet handling of the situation, can make the child accept the other brothers and sisters and thus prevent him from continuing with his feeling of envy.

If you find that your son is envious of his brother or sister for some reason: he bullies them, pinches them, and uses harsh words with them, tries to deprive them of their shares of fruits and sweets, then he needs more of your

attention. You should not close your eyes to these activities of the child. You must impress on him that he is growing big and his little brother needs more attention than him. You must tell him that when he was a small kid like his little brother now, he too required and received more attention. Instead of trying to mend his ways strictly, impress on him that the little children are his own brothers and sisters. They too love him. If he didn't love them, who would? He must protect them if someone else tries to hurt them. Allah has given to him such lovely brothers and sisters, for which he must be thankful.

In conclusion it is necessary to mention that maintaining totally equitable treatment to all the children might be Utopian. How can the parents treat the son, the daughter, the elder and the younger the same way? The elder children can generally be given more freedom. But the younger ones have to be given more care. The elder ones will get more pocket money. The younger ones require more protection. The sons are generally given more freedom of movement than the daughters. Therefore, keeping in mind the need for equity and freedom, the parents have to adopt different approach for the sons and the daughters. This treatment might give to the children some hard feelings. But if the parents properly explain to them that they have the same affection for all the children, but the norms of behavior for people differ according to the gender and age...

Although envy and jealousy are very undesirable traits in the eyes of Islam, and are in fact considered sins, the spirit of competition and rivalry are the components of efforts and struggle for human advancement. The difference between envy and rivalry is that a person

becomes a rival of another person to match his achievements and to go ahead of him; but an envious person only feels jealous and is unable to compete and come forward. Rivalry in every field of activity is a healthy phenomenon. The human civilization could have become stagnant without rivalry and competition.

One person writes:

“I had a sister two years elder to me. My parents used to love me more than her. Whatever I desired for, they used to give me. At every opportunity they used to praise me and totally neglected mention of my sister. My sister always used to nag me. Whenever she had a chance, she would beat and pinch me, call me names and break my favorite toys. She never wanted me to be happy for a moment. I used to think why my sister is troubling me so much? What wrong I have done to her? She was very jealous of me and perhaps the partial behavior of the parents was reason for this rancor in her mind. The parents never realized that because of their partiality. My sister would try to take revenge on me. Now that my parents are no more, my sister is very kind with me. She feels very much if I have the slightest discomfort”

ANGER

Anger and angst are a part of the human nature. They are present in the basic instinct of every person. This phenomenon rises from the heart and the mind of an individual. Then it assumes the shape of a flame and pervades the entire body. The eye and the visage become red, the limbs start shaking and froth

comes forth from the mouth. The senses escape out of the control of the person. The intelligence of the angry person disappears momentarily and in that condition there would be hardly any difference between him and a mad person. In this inebriated condition he might commit acts for which he would have to repent his entire life.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Keep away from anger because it starts with rage and ends in remorse.”[¹]

Imam Sadiq says:

“Anger is the key to all ills.”[²]

[¹] Mustadrak, Vol. ۱۲, Page ۳۲۶.

[²] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, Page ۳۰۳.



Anger is also harmful to the piety and faith of the person. It can nullify his good acts and make him a sinner.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Angst destroys the piety of a person as vinegar does destroy good honey.”[¹]

In a condition of frenzy a person utters unintelligent words and his actions are

such that he becomes unpopular in the eyes of others.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Anger is a bad companion which exposes the failings of a person. It brings him closer to evil and takes him away from good.”[۲]

Perpetual anger affects the heart and the nerves of a person. And makes them debilitated and weak. Therefore, a person who is concerned about his reputation, health and piety he must fight the bad instinct of anger with full force at his command, lest it destroy his nerves, repute and faith.

It must also be borne in mind that anger is not unnecessary and harmful under all circumstances. At certain times its use is legitimate and advantageous. It must be used judiciously when the situation demands. This instinct only helps one protect his life and property from vandals and undesirable elements. When the person has to protect his faith, his country or to defend the humanity in general, the instinct of anger will be a part of

[۱] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, Page ۳۰۲.

[۲] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۳۲۶.

his chivalry. Without the presence of this instinct a person will be in the ranks of cowards who bow down their heads to any insults or ill treatment from others, If the instinct of anger remains in the control of the instinct of wisdom, it

can be an asset for a person.

Fighting in the defense of one's country, the cause of one's faith (Amr bil Maroof nahi an-il Munkar), to protect one's family is legitimate. The instinct of angst makes one capable of taking part in such difficult tasks.

A pious and responsible Muslim will not remain a silent spectator to tyranny, injustice, dictatorship, perpetuation of sins, the forces of imperialism and colonialism etc. Islam permits its people to stand firmly and confront these forces with courage and equanimity, In such situation, however, the angst of the people, should not prevail over wise counsel.

Hazrat Ali says:

“If you become a follower of anger, it will take you towards destruction.”[¹]

This is not right to totally suppress the instinct of anger and make the human being insensitive, unconcerned and shameless. What is required is the need to avoid excessive and unnecessary expression of anger. This is possible with proper upbringing and grooming of the young persons. Like the other instincts in a person, anger too is in its rudimentary form since the very childhood. The quantum of anger in a person is the reflection of the upbringing he has received, and the environment he has

[¹] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۲۲۶.

been living in.. If the parents maintain the instinct of anger at a moderate level in their affairs, the child too will learn to follow suit. The children of excitable and wrathful parents too will learn to be similar in their future lives.

The child sometimes shouts and rants in anger, his body shivers, the color of his face changes, he hits the ground with his feet, starts rolling on the floor, utters angry word and tries to go to a corner and hides himself. But all these antics of the child may not be all pranks. It can be in anger and the parents have to investigate the cause of the anger and try to remove it.

Anger definitely arises because of some worry or discomfort. Excessive pain, tiredness, sleeplessness, hunger, excessive thirst, cold and heat make the child restless and give rise to anger. Doing things against the wish of the child, suppressing his freedom of movement, the feeling of undue attention to other children, feeding him forcibly can make the child restless and angry. Some parents teach the children in a subtle way to be angry. They shout at them and become unduly strict. If the child gets angry, they reciprocate with anger instead of trying to calm him down. The child thus gets trained to be a compulsively angry person.

If the child is hungry and thirsty, give him something to eat and drink. If he is tired, help him to sleep. If the child is angry because of your actions, try to amend them. If the anger of the child is because of some rambling thought, calm him down with sweet talk and lullabies. If the child is angry because he needs something, try to find out his need and fulfill it. When the child becomes

normal, tell him that he need not cry and become angry to get something. Assure him that he has only to ask for the thing, and if the thing is good for him it will be given to him. Also warn him that if he cries and misbehaves in the future, his wishes may not be granted.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Beware of anger lest it dominates you and becomes a habit.”[۱]

Excitable children become angry at the slightest pretext because their nature is not strong. They are notable to tolerate any undesirable thing and get affected with the slightest disturbance and become angry.

[۱] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۸۰۹.

TONGUE LASHING & IMPERTINENCE

Using bad words and talking impertinently is a very bad habit. The persons who do tongue lashing at whatever passes their mind, seldom stick to their word. They are very fickle of mind. They use bad words., keep finding fault with others for no rhyme or reason. They keep causing hurt to others with their irresponsible talk.

Using bad words is Haram (taboo) and is considered a major sin. .

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Allah has forbidden Heaven to the users of foul language. There is also curse on those who abuse, are shameless and impertinent and they will all be denied entry to Paradise. .Whatever a foul mouthed person says about others, he does it thoughtlessly and never bothers about what opinion others have of him.”[¹]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq says:

“Swearing, bad-mouthing and impertinence are the

[¹] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, Page ۳۲۳.



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signs of hypocrisy (nifaaq) and faithlessness.”[¹]

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“Shame on all such persons who talk about the failings of others and indulge in ridiculing them.”[^۲]

Foul-mouthed persons are generally inferior and petty minded. They make others enemies with indiscreet talk. People abhor them. They try to keep away from them and avoid their company.

The Prophet of Islam has said.:

“Among people the worst is one whose talk is not liked by others and they try to avoid meeting him.”[٣]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq says:

“When people don’t like to even listen to the talk of a person, his destiny will be Hell!”[٤]

The Prophet has said:

“A Momin (pious person) will not be taunting, doesn’t criticizing, blaming and talking ill of others.”[٥]

The child by nature is not capable of bad mouthing. He may learn this from his parents, brothers, sisters and friends at school or play. But the maximum effect will be of the attitude of the parents. The parents can be the most effective example for the children. The parents not only are responsible for their own behavior but have the

[١] Usool al-Kafi,, Page ٣٢٥.

[٢] Hamzath-١.

[٣] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, Page ٣٢٥.

[٤] Ibid., Page ٣٢٧.

[٥] Al-Mahajjah al-Baydhaa, Vol. ٢, Page ١٢٧.

very important responsibility of training their children properly. These are the parents alone who either make the children polite and gentle or impertinently loud mouthed. Some parents, either in jest or in anger call bad words with their children. This way they inadvertently give a wrong training to the children. There are some homes where the use of the bad words is a common practice.

‘Son of a dog’, ‘mother of a dog’, ‘fool’, ‘idiot’, ‘senseless donkey’, ‘animal’, ‘shameless’ and several others are the appellations thrown at one another in such households either in jest or right earnest anger.

The parents, whose duty it is to prevent the foibles of their children, themselves are perpetrating such wrong acts and encouraging the children to follow their example. They thoughtlessly abuse each other and call names in front of the children.

The parents taunt the children and use unethical language with them. How can such parents expect that their child will grow into a gentle and respectable adult. They should realize that the child might prove even worst than themselves.. They should remember that sooner or later they will find the child trading the same idiom that he has been hearing again and again from his parents. Then any amount of sermonizing and beatings cannot reform the child. The best remedy is that the parents reform themselves in good time before it gets too late.

Many a time the children learn this bad habit from their companions. The parents should keep their eyes and ears open to such behavior in their children and nip the defect in the bud. They should ask their children to try to avoid

meeting such children very much.

If you ever find your child uttering any abusive word, then don't just smile and keep quiet. With shouting and threats too such situations cannot be handled. This method might backfire. The best way to correct the child is to talk softly with the child and explain to him about the ill effects of using bad words.

BACKBITING OR CARRYING WORDS

Backbiting is a very bad habit, and unfortunately it is very much prevalent in the society. If someone speaks something against someone, the backbiter carries the word to the other person saying that so-and-so was saying such-and-such a thing about you. Carrying words are signs of meanness and evil. This creates chasms between good friends. Many crimes, skirmishes, enmities, murders and feuds are the result of misunderstandings between people due to backbiting. The peace of many households gets shattered due to this nasty practice. Husbands and wives are separated, friends become enemies, parents turn against their children mainly because of the backbiting by some nasty, thoughtless persons. When a backbiter gets exposed, he will be thrown out from everywhere and people hate to see his face. The people curse the backbiter and wish him destruction. The worst of backbiting is the act of sleuthing for the evil tyrants. If someone does eves dropping for a tyrant and a pious person unnecessarily comes into trouble because of this, and suffers bodily damage or death due to torture, then the backbiter will be equally answerable as that evil person who engaged him to do the nefarious job. They will both be punished on the Day of Judgement. Although, in this case, the backbiter was not directly involved with

the physical act of torturing the innocent person.



The Prophet of Islam says:

“The worst person is one who does backbiting against his Muslim brother to the King and do sleuthing against him. This sleuthing is bad for him, for the friend against whom he had reported and also for the King.”[۱]

Islam has pronounced the act of sleuthing and backbiting taboo (haram) and there are many traditions of the Prophet and others in this regard.

Imam Mohammed Baqir says:

“The backbiter will be denied entry to the Heaven.”[۲]

Hazrat Ali says:

“The foul and evil amongst you are those who do backbiting and create differences between friends and expose the defects of good people”[۳]

There can be many reasons for backbiting. Sometimes enmity becomes the cause of the act. The backbiter may be inimical to one of the parties and be jealous of their good relations. He keeps giving false and malicious reports about one to the other till they fall into his trap. Sometimes the backbiter, as a force of habit, transmits a false and damaging information about one person to the other creating serious differences between them. In this instance the backbiter doesn't have any ulterior motive except to satisfy his urge to carry a

tail. The Religion of

[١] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٧٥, Page ٢٦٦.

[٢] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, Page ٣٦٩.

[٣] Ibid., Page ٣٧٥.



Islam has forbidden even to give ear to backbiting.

The Prophet says:

“Neither should you do backbiting, nor listen to a backbiter.”[١]

Hazrat Ali says:

“Refute the talk of the backbiter and the one who is unduly inquisitive.”[٢]

It is evident that if no one takes cognizance of the talk of the backbiter, then he will stop doing it. Whoever carries words to you about others, you must be sure that he is not your friend. If he was really your friend he would have defended you while others talked against your interest. If someone tells something in confidence, a good Muslim never speaks about it to others.. He will keep control over his tongue and never try to sleuth around. Many persons pick up the offending habit of backbiting from their childhood. It is a reflection of what they see and hear happening around them. Therefore the parents shoulder a big responsibility that they protect their children from getting the nefarious habit of

backbiting. First, the parents themselves should refrain from talking ill of others. The mother should not report of some acts of her neighbor and other relations to the father. The father too should not speak to the mother against his friends and acquaintances. Because, if the parents have the habit of speaking ill of others behind their backs, the children too will indulge in such talk. Sometimes a child

[١] Majma' al-Zawaaid, Vol. ٨, Page ٩١.

[٢] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ١٤٥.



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speaks to his father against her mother and the elder sister. In such instances the duty of the father is to correct the child and tell him that it is not good to backbite. He should tell him that if want to say something about your mother or sister, tell directly to them. What you are doing is backbiting, which is very bad. If the children try to backbite, totally ignore them at the moment and try to talk on some other interesting subject.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Don’t give your ears to the backbiter!”[١]

[١] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ١٢٥.

FAULT-FINDING

Criticizing others and finding faults in them for no reason is one of the worst habits of human beings...People hate the persons who habitually keep on finding fault with others. They try to avoid such troublesome persons. Sometimes this faultfinding becomes the cause of enmity and conflict. If someone's faults are mentioned when he is not around, it is termed as backbiting (Ghaibat).and even if this is done in the presence of the person, it is an affront and not desirable. The Religion of Islam has termed Ghaibat as a major sin. There are many traditions on the subject. For example:

The Prophet of Islam, delivering a sermon, has said in a pronounced tone:

“O! Those people! Who profess to be believers with their tongues; but the faith has not entered their hearts! Don't ever do backbiting and criticism of the Muslims and don't keep searching their faults. Because one who tries to find his brother's faults Allah will bare his own faults and render him the laughing stock for others.”^[۱]

[۱] Jami' al-Sa'adaat, Vol. ۲, Page ۲۰۳.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“Whoever says something injurious to the reputation of a Momin, Allah shall remove him from the group of His friends and send to the band of Satan who too will refuse to accept him as a friend.”[¹]

The Prophet of Islam said:

“Whoever does Ghaibat of any believer man or woman, Allah will not accept his prayer (Namaz) and Fasting (Roza) for forty days, unless he obtains the pardon of those whose backbiting he has done.”[²]

Imam Ja'far Sadiq said:

“Ghaibat and faultfinding are taboo. And they destroy the virtues of a person as the fire destroys the fuel.”[³]

Unfortunately such a major sin has become an everyday routine for our people. It has reached such grave proportions that the people don't consider that they are sinning backbiting and finding faults in others. The mother criticizes the father and the father finds fault with her. Neighbors and relatives don't tire counting each other's faults. The innocent children pick up this loathsome habit from their home and parents. Children do backbiting of other children. When they grow up doing this, it becomes difficult to shun the bad habit.

Some parents pamper and praise their children to the sky. While, in fact, they need to gloss over their shortcomings.

[¹] Jami' al-Sa'aadaat, Vol. 2, Page 300.

[²] Ibid., Page 304.

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Sometimes the parents falsely praise the child for the things he has not achieved to put him to ridicule for his failures.

In such situations the children might turn hostile to the parents. Or even they may get the habit of uttering blatant falsehoods. They can also become the victims of inferiority complex. It is better, therefore, for the parents not to unnecessarily talk of the failures of the children derisively.

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CHILDREN'S QUARRELS

One matter of some concern is the differences and fights between children at homes. When a family has more than one child, there is likelihood of fights. One thinks that the other is usurping his privileges and has unnecessarily come to share things with him. They push each other around and grab toys from each other. When they start going to school they dirty each other's note- books and other things. They make fun of each other. When one tries to concentrate on his school assignment, the other makes noises to disturb him. Every child knows the pranks that he can play on his brothers and sisters. In this situation the parents are the helpless spectators. The complaints about the fights reach them. The difficulty comes for them when sometimes the parents get involved to arbitrate in the quarrels of the children.. The mother tells the father that he

doesn't give attention to the upbringing of the children. They don't fear you. It is your careless attitude that the house is literally an arena for fights.

The father complains to the mother that if she were a careful person, the children wouldn't have turned so naughty as they are. It is her support that encourages the children to misbehave.



Here the parents should remember that the children are, after all, children! They cannot be expected to sit quietly in a corner like old persons. You must accept the fact that children's fights are a natural phenomenon. Even the elders sometimes do fight. How can the children be expected to sit quietly all the while. Children are generally mischievous. Playing pranks at one another they might fight. But soon they get together and forget the differences. They cannot remain away from each other carrying long faces. One psychologist says:

“This is an important matter that we should never think that in a house where there are many children there prevails perpetual peace amongst them; the children live amicably, never fight for once! Whichever child we have talked to, said that Mom and Dad expect them to live amicably without fighting with one another. But if you give a serious thought to the matter, the trend of the children fighting with one another is not such a big problem.”[۱]

We should also know that the habit of the children fighting with one another would disappear as they grow in age. If the parents accept the fights between children as a temporary and natural phase, then they would not worry about it so

much.

Another psychologist says:

“Lots of activities of the children like playing pranks on one another, fighting and wrestling with one

[¹] Ruwan Shinasi Kudak, Page ၃၈၆.



another will taper off with passage of time.”[¹]

Yes, it is right that most parents cannot completely eliminate the fights between their children. But with tact and clever handling they can reduce their frequency and intensity. The careful parents never remain spectators when the children fight. They intervene tactfully and ensure that the children don't cause bodily harm to each other during fights. They have first to investigate the cause of the fight and try to eliminate it. One main cause of the differences between the children is the feeling of jealousy. It is necessary that the reason for the jealousy springing up in the child is detected and a remedy found.

A child wants all the attention for himself. He doesn't like to share the affections of the parents with other children. The first-born is generally pampered by the parents. But when the second arrives, the conditions are changed. Naturally the parents have to divide their attention and have to give the major share to the smaller child. Now the elder child starts getting the

feeling of insecurity. He starts feeling neglected. He feels the new arrival is an uninvited guest who is holding the attention and care of his beloved parents. He becomes envious of the baby, but knows that he has to tolerate him because the parents are showering love on him. In such situations the elder child sometimes malingers, pretending illness, to keep the attention of the parents concentrated on him. Sometimes he may fall on the floor, refuse to eat food, cry and try other pretences to attract the parents' attention. Such a child considers himself

[^] Ruwan Shinasi Kudak,, Page ၃၈၆.



sort of hatred for his other siblings. He awaits an opportunity to wreak revenge on them. The parents have to discreetly avoid such situations arising. They should prepare the children to receive the new arrival before he is born. They must tell the children that their little sibling is expected soon. When it will grow up, it will play with them and love them. When they prepare something for the newborn, they should give some gifts to the elder children too, so that they don't feel neglected. When the mother gets admitted to a maternity home for delivery, the father should give some gifts to the children at home so that their minds are diverted and they don't miss the mother. The father should tell them on the occasion that the gifts are given to them to celebrate the arrival of the little one! He should ask them that when the little one came home, they should not make much noise. The parents should not praise the baby too much in the

presence of the other children. They should give a little more attention to the older children to give them the feeling of assurance that the new one is not come to deprive them of their parents attention.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Justice removes differences and promotes friendship.”[¹]

“Just treatment is always the best strategy.”[²]

It is always possible that some of the children might have special qualities that become the darlings of the parents. Some children may be more intelligent, some more pretty

[¹] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٦٤.

[²] Ibid., Page ٦٤.



and some other more polite to deserve special attention of the parents. One child might perform excellently at school and attract lot of praise from the parents.

These extraordinary expressions of love because of some special quality in a child will not be anything out of the ordinary. But excessive repetition of such praises is not advisable.

Some parents, as a strategy to promote competition between their children, talk about the good qualities of one to the other(s). For example, they may say,

‘Hassan! Work hard at studies that you get high grades in your examinations as did Abbas!’ They say, ‘Zainab! You must help your mother for his household chores as Zahra is so nicely doing!’ ‘Reza! Observe good table manners like your brother, Ali! What a polite and courteous boy he is!’

This attitude of the parents is not right. It might not bring about positive and desirable results. To the contrary, it might create hard feelings and jealousy between brothers and sisters. They may become revengeful and might themselves indulge in unnecessary comparisons between each other.

Another very important reason for the fights between the children is the high expectations of the parents from them. The child wants to play with the toys of his sibling; the parents prohibit him from doing it. This gives rise to the fight between the two. At this juncture the parents intervene. First they quietly try to convince the children to become quiet. If the quarrel still persists, they ask the other child to give its toy to the one who wants to borrow it for playing. They tell him that it is they who have brought the toy for him. The toy is not his property. If he



still refused to give the toy to his brother, they would not love him nor bring any more toys for him.

The child becomes helpless and parts with his toy. But he starts thinking that the parents are tyrannical and the brother is bad. He develops hatred in his heart for both. He will express this hatred whenever there is an opportunity. This is quite natural that the child was thinking that the toys were his own and that none

other had a right to play with them. Without his consent. He thinks that he is the victim of the tyranny of his parents and the other brother. In the circumstance, the child is right. Because, in the first instance they don't permit the other siblings to play with the toys they had given to him. The thoughtful parents try to create a spirit of co-operation between their children. They must have an amicable atmosphere that they share all their toys and games with each other.

Sometimes the reason for differences cropping up between the children is that the parents entrust one task to a particular child and leave the others with nothing to do. This situation can give rise to fights. To avoid such situations the parents should try to make the children busy with something or other. Then they will not have a feeling of neglect.

Sometimes even fights between the parents encourage the children to follow suit. When the innocent children see that the parents are compulsive fighters, they start thinking that fights are a way of life. In emulation of the parents they start looking for reasons to commence fighting.

Therefore, the parents who are fed up of the constant



fights between their children, should do introspection and reform themselves. Then they must turn their attention to set the children right. There will hardly be any family that has no difference of opinion amongst its members. But if the parents take care not to air their differences in the presence of the children, the children will not be encouraged to argue and fight. But, even then if there are some minor fights between the children, the parents must discreetly intervene

and sort out the matter to the satisfaction of all.

In the end we would like to caution you that in spite of observing all the cautions, your family may not be totally free of fights between the children. After all children are human, and the instinct to fight is there in every individual. In fact the children are generally hyperactive and fighting can be a way of dissipating some of their energy. The parents must exercise care that when the children fight, they don't cause bodily harm to one another and the property around them. They should not worry too much if some children have more inclination to fight. This is a transient habit and it tapers off with time.



FRIENDS & FRIENDSHIP

A good friend and companion is the greatest gift of God. In adversity, a friend only is the refuge for a person and solace for his heart and soul. In this world, that is full of hardships and hurdles, presence of a true friend is absolutely necessary for every individual. One who doesn't have any friend, will be like a person, all alone, away from home. He will not have anyone to commiserate with him in the times of need.

Imam Moosa bin Ja'far was asked what is the ideal source for comfort in this world. The Imam replied:

“An airy house and plenty of friends!”[١]

Hazrat Ali says

“The weakest person is one who cannot make anyone his friend and brother.”[٢]

“Not having friends is like being a stranger in ones own land and being a loner.”[۳]

As the grown ups need friends, the children too want friends and companions. A child who doesn't have friends, will always be lonely and forlorn. The child, by nature, needs a friend and companion. He cannot be

[۱] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۴, Page ۱۷۷.

[۲] Nahj al-Balagha, Vol. ۷۴, Page ۱۰۴.

[۳] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۴, Page ۱۷۹.



denied this natural need. There is also a subtle difference between a friend and acquaintance. Perhaps, a child may have acquaintances but no friends. Sometimes a child selects a friend from his class fellows and the children in his neighborhood. The cause for picking up a particular person as a friend may not be evident. Perhaps the spiritual similarity between the two has brought them together.

Ameer al-Momineen says:

“The hearts of people are like migrant nomads, whosoever loves them, they are attached to him.”[۱]

A friend cannot be thrust on anyone. The parents cannot very much restrict the child to accept particular persons as friends. The child must be free to make his

own choice of friends. But this freedom will be with some conditions and restrictions. The character and conduct of the friends will have to be observed by the parents before they permit the child to pick a friend. If a child selects a courteous and polite friend, he will definitely benefit by picking up his good habits. To the contrary, if the friend has undesirable habits then, naturally, the child will take to some of his bad habits. There are plenty of children and youths fallen into the morass of sin because of indiscreetly selecting bad friends.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“A man follows the faith, ways and habits of his friend.”[۲]

[۱] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۲۴, Page ۱۷۸.

[۲] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ۲۲, Page ۳۷۶.



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Hazrat Ali says:

“The most fortunate are those who have connections with good people.”[۱]

This is the reason the Religion of Islam exhorts its peoples to abstain from bad company.

Hazrat Ali said:

“Avoid making friendship with transgressors and sinning persons because evil creates evil.”[۲]

Imam Zain al-Abideen told his son, Imam Mohammed Baqir:

“O My son! Avoid acquaintance of five type of persons:

Don't be friends with a liar. He will be like a mirage. He will trick you. When a thing is far, he will say it is near; and when it is at hand, he will say that it is very far.

Don't make a transgressor and sinner your friend because he might sell you for as low a price.

Don't make a parsimonious and stingy person your friend who may not help you in times of need.

Don't make a stupid person your friend, lest he bring harm to you with his stupidity. It is possible that with all good intentions, he might bring harm to you with his foolish actions.

Don't be friend with those who deprive their kin of

[۱] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۱۸۹.

[۲] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۴, Page ۱۹۹.

their rights. Such persons are shorn of Allah's Blessings and are accursed people.”[¹]

Responsible and thoughtful parents will not be totally unconcerned with the type of friends their children cultivate. While the parents must know the type of friends a child has, they should not appear to be interfering in their personal matters.

If the parents can provide a good friend to their child, they have made a great contribution to his virtuous future. But this is not such an easy task. The best way is to acquaint the child with what is good, and what is not, when he comes to the age of understanding. They should explain to the child the defects that might be there in undesirable friends.

The parents must keep a subtle watch over the activities of the child and his friends from a distance. If they find that the friends are good, they must appreciate them. They should create opportunities for the child to meet such friends. But if they notice that the child has picked up an undesirable acquaintance, then they should discreetly try to cut this friendship short. If the child persists in such friendship, deal with the matter strictly.

The parents can help the child in making good friends by another method. They should pick children in their neighborhood with good behavior, character and background. Create opportunities for the children to meet and react with one another. If they become friends, encourage them to cement the friendship. This way, even if there are some minor defects in their own child, they

[¹] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ٧٢, Page ٣٧٦.

can be warded off in the company of good children. For example, if a child is timid, he might overcome his timidity by being friends with a bold and courageous child.

The parents should not be totally oblivious of the type of friends their child has. Particularly when the child is on the threshold of youth. This will be the period in his life when habits take root. Any negligence on the part of the parents might result in irreparable harm to the character and conduct of the child, if he persists to be in bad company. They should remember the dictum: Prevention is better than cure!

Hazrat Ali says:

“For everything there is a calamity, and for virtue the calamity is a bad friend.”

One gentleman writes:

“My parents never permitted me to meet my friends. If sometimes friends visited me, I tried to send them away quickly after talking with them for a while. One friend of mine used to live very near our home. My parents knew him well but never allowed us to visit each other. I used to wish to have friends, meet them, chat and play with them. But my parents were the impediment. I was very sad about this. One day I had decided to visit my friend, whatever came! I told my Mom that I had to go for my exams. I took permission for going to attend the examination but, in fact, I made a beeline to my friends house. This friend’s house was at a little distance from our home. I boarded an

omnibus and reached his place. There were other children too at my friend's place. We had



lots of fun together, When I returned home in the evening, Mom asked me why I was so late. To hide one lie, I had to utter another.

Now I wonder if Mom was not aware that the children too need friends and companions. Why did they restrict me so much?"

One girl writes:

"Once I invited some friends home. I had some savings from my pocket money. With this money I ran to the neighborhood grocery and brought a pack of ice cream. My mother was away visiting some people. While my friends were eating the ice cream, Mom returned home. I was very scared that she might scold me. She didn't bother a bit about my feelings and said angrily to my friends, 'You girls are making Saima waste her money!' My friends abruptly went away...My Mom didn't stop at this. She visited my school the next day and complained to our class teacher that my friends visit our home and encourage me to waste my money. She told the teacher that the girls visited a day earlier and asked me to buy ice cream for them. My friends, who were also my class fellows, said, 'Aunty! We shall pay you the price of the ice cream we ate at your home yesterday! 'I felt so ashamed and belittled that I wished the earth went asunder and I fell into the abyss. Ever since that day, I had never gone to the school. All my friends progressed in their studies. Today I am a

forlorn and lonely person, lagging behind in all walks of life.”



THE CHILD & THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The human beings are instinctively attracted towards God and religion. The fountainhead of this instinct is the human nature.

Allah says in the Holy Book:

“Then set thou thy face uprightly for (the right) religion, in natural devotion to the truth(following) the nature caused by God in which He hath made the people. ۳۰:۳۰”

Every child, by nature, is a worshipper of God, but the influence of the external environment might bring about change in this condition; as the Prophet of Islam has said:

“Every child is born with Islamic Nature, but later on the parents might make him a Jew, a Christian or a Geubre (Zoroastrian)”[۱]

It is the responsibility of the parents to give birth to their child in such an environment that the naturally endowed instinct of Religion in him is properly

[۱] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۳, page ۲۸۱.

nourished.. The day a child comes into this world, he is attracted towards the Power that will provide him his needs. But the child will not have his understanding developed to an extent to express anything about the Focus of its attention. But, in stages, the understanding dawns on the child. A child, who gets his upbringing in a religious family, starts recognizing Allah from around the age of four years. This is the age when different questions start cropping up in the mind of a child. Sometimes he utters the name of Allah. His questions indicate that his nature is awake and is keen to gather more and more information:

The child thinks about:

Who made the sun?

Who has created the moon and the stars?

Does Allah love me?

Does Allah like sweet things?

Who brings the rain?

Who gave birth to Dad?

Is Allah listening to our talk?

Can we talk with Allah over the 'phone?

Where does Allah live?

How is His face?

Does Allah live in the skies?

From the age of four years the child starts to think of thousands of such questions. It is evident from these questions that the instinct of Godliness is awakening in



the child. By asking these questions he tries to quench his thirst for knowledge. It is not known, at that tender age, what opinion the child has of Allah. He perhaps thinks that Allah is like his Dad, but is definitely bigger and more powerful. As the child grows, his understanding of Allah too grows. The parents shoulder a big responsibility at this stage. They have to play a very critical role in shaping the beliefs of their child. If the parents are a little negligent at this stage, then they will be subject to heavy retribution on the Day of Judgement. They must try to carefully answer all the questions their little child asks. If they avoid answering the questions for some reason, they might cause the extinction of the child's urge for discovery. But it may not be easy to answer all the questions of the child. The answers shall have to be correct, short and narrated in simple words. As the child grows, he will become capable of understanding more difficult information. The parents will have to prepare themselves to reply to the probable questions that the child might ask them. They should not give to the child any information that might be beyond his comprehension. Such answers might confuse the child instead of quenching his thirst for knowledge. The Theological education of the child should be such that he is able to grasp with ease.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“When the child is three years old, teach him to say ‘La ilaha il Allah (There is no god, but Allah). Then leave him alone. When he is three years, seven months and twenty days; teach him to say Mohammed ar Rasool Allah (Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah). Leave him alone till he completes four years of age.



Now teach him to say the Salawat (the praises) of the Prophet (and his holy progeny).”[١]

Make the children learn to recite simple couplets about religious matters. This will be an interesting exercise for them. Then teach them about the Nubuwwat (the Prophethood) and Imamate (the Vicegerency). First the child must be told about the Prophet that he has been sent by Allah for the guidance of mankind. Then they must be told about the Prophet’s superior qualities and his exemplary way of life. Narrate to the child some interesting events of the Prophet’s life. Then the child must be told about the Vicegerents of the Prophet for the continuity of the correct guidance of his people after him. All this information should be conveyed to the child in the form of short narrations to retain his continued interest.

About Qiyamat (the Doomsday) a child does not give early attention. He thinks that he and his parents will live happily forever. Talking to a child about death at that tender age may not be desirable. The child thinks that the people who died have gone on a long journey. Sometimes tragedies do take place in the families while the children are still small. In these circumstances the parents

have to discreetly broach the subject of death with them. If, unfortunately, the child's Grandpa is dead, he might ask, 'Mom! Where did Grandpa go?'

In such situations the facts must be explained to the child. The child can be told that his grand parent is no more. He has gone to the Other World. Every one who

[١] Makaanim al-Akhlaaq, Vol. ١, Page ٢٠٤.

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dies, goes to that World. If he were a good person in this life, he would rest in the Heaven where there are beautiful gardens. If the person who has died was a bad person in this life, he would go to the Hell which is full of fire. The child should be informed about the inevitability of death slowly. He must be told that this life is transient and everyone has to go to the Other World.

This informal instruction of the religious knowledge should continue till the child completes his primary, middle and higher levels of schooling.

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THE CHILD & THE RELIGIOUS DUTIES

It is true that the boys attain the age of responsibility (Baligh) at fifteen and the girls at age nine. This is the age when the juridical norms become mandatory for them. But the performance of religious duties may not be postponed till the

child reaches the age of responsibility. They must be encouraged to perform the religious duties from early childhood so that when they become compulsory, they would already be in the habit of fulfilling them. Fortunately, in families of religious people, a child starts to emulate its parents performing the religious rites. Sometimes he spreads the prayer carpet for the parents, sometimes he puts down his head to the ground in supplication with the parent. He repeats Allah Akber (God is Great) and La ilaha il Allah with his parents. He will recite small religious couplets with his mother. The thoughtful parents make good use of this natural instinct of the child to emulate. If a child does these things, the parents give him a smile of appreciation. There should not be an element of force in making the child learn the religious rites. The parents should not start formal teaching of the religious rites in early childhood. At the age of five the child can learn to



recite the Surat al-Fateha (The Opening) of the Holy Quran. This has to be done slowly in several days to keep the interest of the child in learning to do the recitation. At the age of seven the child should be asked to offer regular prayers. The parents should themselves set an example to the child by offering all the five prayers, regularly and punctually, at their appointed times. At the age of nine years make it binding on the children to offer regular prayers. They should explain to the children that the prayers are mandatory when they are home and also when they travel. If the child abstains from praying, the parents should deal with him strictly. If the parents are themselves regular at offering their prayers, they can easily make the children habituated of following suit. When the

children reach the age of responsibility, they will already be regular at offering the mandatory prayers. If the parents take the excuse that the child is still too small, and they would teach him to pray when he comes of age, then it would be very difficult to initiate the child into regular prayers. It is a common belief that old habits are difficult to change. This is the reason that the Prophet of Islam and the Holy Imams have asked the parents to initiate the children to offer prayers from the six or seven years of age.

Imam Mohammed Baqir says:

“We encourage our children start praying from the age of five years and at seven years we order them to pray five times a day regularly.”[¹]

The Prophet of Islam has said:

[¹] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ۲, Page ۱۲.



“When your children are six years old, order them to offer the prayers. When they are seven, ask them more strictly to be regular at prayers. If necessary, they must be punished if they don’t become regular in their prayers.”[¹]

Imam Mohammed Baqir or Imam Ja’far Sadiq has said:

“When the child is seven years old, then ask him to wash his face, the feet and the hands before offering prayers. But when he is nine years old, teach him the

correct method of doing the Wadu (the mandatory ablutions prior to offering prayers). This is the time when the child is strictly instructed to offer regular prayers.”[٢]

Imam Sadiq says:

“When a child is six years old, then it is necessary he learns to offer prayers and if he is physically capable he must also be encouraged to fast during the month of Ramadan.”[٣]

The child should be initiated slowly to fasting during Ramadan. A child who is physically fit for fasting should be woken up at the time of Sahar (the meal before sunrise), so that he eats at this time instead of the breakfast at the regular morning times. If the child is keen to fast the whole day, encourage him to complete it. But, if during the day, the child feels uneasy, he may be permitted to break his fast before time. The number of

[١] Mustadrak, Vol. ١, Page ١٧١.

[٢] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ٣, Page ١٣.

[٣] Ibid., Page ١٢.

fasts by the child may be increased gradually.. When the child reaches the age of understanding, he must be instructed that offering regular prayers five times a day and fasting on all days during the month of Ramadan is mandatory. If he is

irregular in his compliance of these, he would be a sinner and liable to punishment by God. The parents must explain to the child the advantages and the rewards of fasting during Ramadan. This will give more courage to the child to do the fasting. During the last days of Ramadan, make other duties lighter for the child. He must be allowed more hours of rest during the day. At the end of the fasting period, the child must be given some gift as an encouragement for his efforts. During the fasting period the parents should take care that the children don't try to eat something hidden from others' view.

It is necessary for the parents to instruct the children at the proper time about the wet dreams they get at puberty. They must be instructed about doing the Ghusl (the mandatory cleansing bath after having an emission) and Istinja (the washing of the genitals with water after urinating).

It is necessary to remind here that if they wish their children to be regular visitors to the mosques and religious symposia, then they must put them into the habit from their childhood. They should take them to the mosque and the places of religious discourses. These visits will create interest in the children for going to the congregations.

In the end, it will not be out of place to remind that before reaching the age of understanding it is not



mandatory on the child to observe the compulsory religious rites. If he is unable to perform certain rites at certain times, he is not committing any transgression.

But it will not be proper for the parents to leave the children totally independent to do whatever they wish to. The child must be told that if in his innocence he causes any physical or bodily harm to others, he shall have to pay the Diyyah (the fine for harming others) when he reaches the age of understanding.

On the other hand if the child is left free without any checks whatsoever, he might get into the habit of committing sins and wrong acts. The dictum is: 'Old habits die hard' The habits cultivated during the childhood remain with the person, however much one tries to banish them. Therefore it is necessary for the parents to instruct the children about the dos and don'ts from their very early days. They must stop them from doing taboo acts and encourage them to do good deeds.

POLITICAL & SOCIAL TRAINING

Today's children are the youth of tomorrow. They will run the affairs of the society in the future. Their awareness and understanding of the political compulsions of the country will be of great importance. They will be the keepers of the cultural and economic wealth of the nations. They will have to strive maintaining and advancing the greatness of their homeland. They will have to face the imperialist aggressors and fight against their machinations. The children should therefore be groomed from their early days to be ready to serve their country. The greatest responsibility will rest on the shoulders of the parents to groom their children properly.

The foundation for the political and sociological training has also to be laid in the childhood of a person. By the time a child reaches the stage of youth, he should be aware of the social and political problems of the community in which

he lives. He should be made aware of the poverty and backwardness rampant in his country. The good qualities and failings of the rulers of the day have to be informed to the child who is on the threshold of youth. They should be told about the lacunae in the running of the society. He should know the general conditions prevailing in the towns and the countryside.



The child may still not have the adult franchise and he cannot cast his vote. But the parents must explain to him the purpose of the election and the conduct thereof. They should also explain to him as to how to select the best candidate from the list of persons contesting in that area. The parents must give the child their own example that they voted for a particular candidate because of certain qualities he has. The child can attend the election meetings and processions. He can join in raising slogans. He may distribute leaflets of the candidate he thinks is deserving of being elected. This work will give boost to his awareness. The Iranian Revolution has proved that the children and youth can contribute meaningfully in the political process of a country. They were the youth who, with their slogans, meetings, protests and active participation made the oppressive regime surrender. They relieved the oppressed people of Iran from the clutches of the agents of the tyrannical Shah's minions. The world knows that the Iranian Revolution succeeded because of the supreme sacrifices made by the youth of the nation.

It is necessary that the children study the political situation of their country, in particular, and of the world, in general. They can do this by cultivating the habit of reading a good newspaper everyday. They can also watch and listen to the

news bulletins on the television and the radio. They can also have group discussions with their parents and friends. This way they can develop interest in the welfare of their countrymen and themselves. This process will help the child develop good political and social awareness. The future of the country, no doubt, will be in their hands and the hands of myriad other

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youths of the land. The children should know that the worldly life cannot be separated from the Hereafter, and, similarly, the Faith from the political process also could never be separated. The youth of the country should be actively associated with the political and social happenings of the country. The youth must be given more freedom of choice to participate in the political process of the nation.

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THE CHILD & THE RADIO AND TELEVISION

The radio, television and cinema are very useful inventions. They can be very good tools for training and education. The tenets of faith and moral values can be propagated through these media. The thoughts of the people can be sharpened by means of these mediums. Information on agricultural and industrial developments could be disseminated through them. Awareness on the aspects of health and sanitation can be popularized through these media.

Man can derive innumerable benefits from the electronic media. But while they

have advantages, they have many disadvantages for the society too. When these media fall into the hands of irresponsible profiteers, they can put them to wrong use and create tremendous problems for the society. For their personal benefit they present programs which are harmful to the health, morals, faith and the general economy of the society. Radio and television are very widely and intensively used these days. Most people consider them only as a source of entertainment and recreation. The children and youth are literally addicted to the idiot box.



Knowledgeable people are of opinion that the Iranian children are much more addicted to the television than the children in the developed countries like America, France, Great Britain and Japan. In Iran ۴۰% television viewers are children, ۲۰% youth and the rest adults. It must be remembered that the childhood and youth are the prime time for education and learning. Whether the radio and television programs are good or bad, they will have impact on the impressionable minds of the children. Watching these programs should not be considered as harmless pastime. The child should not be given freedom to watch or listen to all the programs of his choice. Many programs will definitely be harmful to the psyche of the child. The producers of the television and radio programs should do introspection about the damage they are causing to the delicate minds of the children by presenting shows that are very harmful for the children and youth. For them it may be the freedom of expression that drives them to their irresponsible act, but for the children and the youth, viewing these shows with keen interest, it will be sheer damnation! The parents too are

responsible that they must keep a careful watch over their children's viewing of the television shows and stop them from watching bad programs.

A major part of the television programming will consist of movies and serials dealing with stories of crime, horror, murder, fights, cheating, robbery etc. The children watch such programs with great interest. These stories can be harmful to the children in many ways. For example, the impressionable and delicate minds of the children are very proactive to outside influences. Watching such shows the children may develop restlessness, fear and



horror in their minds. They may have disturbed sleep in the nights and get up shouting after seeing bad dreams. They may start getting chronic headaches. In extreme cases, on watching the horror movies they may swoon and fall unconscious.

There can be very damaging effects of such movies on the morals of the children who watch them. These movies can motivate the children to commitment of crime and sins. Sometimes the children are so much impressed with the bravado of the hero of the movie that they try to emulate him in real life and land into trouble.

UNESCO has recorded in one of its reports that ۲۷% of youth convicted for crimes were motivated for the act after watching similar acts in the movies. In the United States of America, amongst the juvenile criminals convicted by the courts, ۱۰% of the boys and ۲۵% of the girls have confessed to have drawn

their motivation for the crimes from the movies they had watched.[١]

According to another survey, ٤٩% of criminals caught carrying illegal firearms, commit ٢٨% of those who commit burglaries and ٢١% of acts of running away from the law-derived inspiration from what they have watched in the movies. It is also reported that ٢٥% of women who take to street walking have taken inspiration from the movies showing such stories. ٥٤% of women have gone into houses of ill repute in emulation of famous cinema actresses.[٢]

Professor Walksman of the University of Los Angeles

[١] Majalla Maktab Islam, Vol. ١٥, Issue No. ١.

[٢] Ibid., Issue ١١.



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says:

“The radiation coming out of the television screen is very harmful for the human organs. The rays coming out of the television and other household electronic appliances are of the short wave variety and the first ill effect is that they cause headaches to those who are exposed to them for longer spells. The thinking capacity of the person will be curbed, the blood pressure will become abnormal and the white corpuscles in the blood will be affected. These waves will have lot of impact on the nerves and cause several illnesses.[١]

Dr Alexis Carl writes:

“The radio, television and inappropriate computer games destroy the emotions of the children.”[۲]

The Daily Ittelaat in its Issue No. ۱۰۷۴۳ reports about a European student thus:

“A college student aged ۱۸ years was arrested and produced in the court. He is accused of kidnapping the son of a film actor and demanding for a ransom of \$ ۰۰,۰۰۰ and threatened to kill the child if the ransom money was not paid to him. In his statement to the court the accused confessed that the thought of committing the act came to his mind on watching a movie on the televisions depicting a similar act.

The police is of opinion that several such instances have come to their notice that the youths get

[۱] Majalla Maktab Islam, Vol. ۱۸, Issue ۱.

[۲] Maktab Islam, Vol. ۱۰, Issue ۳.

motivated to commit crimes on watching movies on the television. A ten years old boy in Mashad , after watching a Karate show on the television, kicked his friend so hard that boy collapsed instantaneously and died.”[۱]

The Deputy Minister for Education and Training, Mr. Safi Niya says:

“When the television is there to effectively provide evil lessons, the best of teachers cannot do anything!”^[١]

One Cuban boy, Ronny Zamora, murdered a ٨٣ years old woman. He did this crime in Florida and is now serving a life sentence in a gaol there. His parents have sued three American television channels for damages to the tune of \$٢,٥٠٠,٠٠٠. He has produced evidence that the child had learnt about manslaughter from the television programs. Last September there was a hearing of the case in the Court when it was mentioned that when the child was small he was very fond of watching television and used to sit in front of it for eight hours at a stretch. A night before the crime, the youth watched a movie on the television where robbery at a rich woman’s house was depicted.

A pretty girl of fifteen years, whose name was Razaia, watched a horror movie on the television. She was so horrified watching the movie that she fell down dead on the ground. When she saw in the movie that a white person was scalping the skin of the head of a black girl in the movie, she shouted in horror and had sudden cardiac

[١] Maktab Islam, Vol. ١٥, Issue ١١.

[٢] Ibid., Vol. ١٨, Issue ١.

arrest. The doctors said that she had a brain hemorrhage.

Dr Jalal Baremani, an expert in psychiatry says:

“The horror and adventure movies have a negative impact on the minds of the children. It is noticed that a child watching a film depicting violent acts tried to imitate the hero and beats his brother or sister. Such movies can have a very negative effect on the future personality of the child. Watching horror movies the children become timid and cowardly. Violent movies motivate them to become violent themselves. The effects of these exposures will be there in the minds of the persons, and they might themselves get motivated to commit violent acts.”

Another psychiatrist, Dr. Shukrullah Tariqati says:

“The effects of watching bad movies on the minds of children cannot be denied. These movies have such negative effect on the children that when they grow into adults, they might themselves commit wrong acts under the influence of the movies they had seen long ago. I therefore advise the parents not to allow their children to see such bad movies. They should take particular care to see that the children don't watch movies made and certified to be watched by adults only. They should ensure that the children don't watch any movies shown on the television after 10 PM. These are generally adult movies.”

A professor of the Tehran University, and Criminologist, Dr Reza Mazloomi says:

“Most of the movies shown on the television and cinema houses are harmful for our society. Their

effects are so dangerous that watching a movie, a girl lost her life due to cardiac arrest seeing a horrible scene.. I can put it boldly that most of the crimes and acts of terror in this world are directly related to the effects of watching movies.”[۱]

Dr Arnold Fremani, who works in a hospital at New York, has proved with advanced electronic gadgets that the migraine headaches and nervous weaknesses in persons are due to listening to blaring music on the FM Radio stations.[۲]

The Newspaper, The Times, in one of its issues of ۱۹۶۴ writes:

“A paediatric doctor, made observations at two air force bases that the children of the staff in the age group of three to twelve years continuously complained of headaches, sleeplessness, insomnia and tummy troubles like diarrhea. Medically, they were not able to establish any cause for the symptoms.. After a detailed investigation it was established that the children spend long hours in front of the television screens. The doctors recommended that the children should be stopped from watching the television. This regime was effective that the complaints like headaches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea in the children had tapered off.”[۳]

The thoughtful parents who love their children should not allow them to watch television for long hours,

[۱] Daily Ittelaat, ۱۰ Aban, ۱۳۵۲.

[۲] Maktab Islam, Vol. ۱۵, Issue ۳.

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particularly in the nights. They should allow them to watch only such programs that are not harmful to their spirit and mind.

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THE GENDER PROBLEMS

Sexuality is one of the most sensitive instincts of the human nature. This in fact is a highly constructive instinct of the human race. It will have both positive and negative effects on the psychological and physiological life of the human beings. Many acts of the human beings and the causes of several physical and psychological ailments can be attributed to this instinct. If the upbringing of the individual takes place in a proper and thoughtful manner, the instinct of sex can prove a boon for the welfare and contentment of the person. But if the upbringing is in an atmosphere of lechery, lasciviousness and excesses, there is every probability that the instinct of sexuality might become the cause of many physical and psychological aberrations that can become definite cause of ultimate destruction of the person in this life and Hereafter.

It is not proper to think that the instinct of sexuality manifests itself only after puberty. The instinct will be present in every individual since birth; however, it remains dormant for quite some time. Even then, it manifests itself at different times during the childhood in a subtle way. Sometimes small children fondle

their genitals and feel pleasure. This creates in them a sort of emotion. They feel the pleasure when the parents caress and kiss them. They feel attracted towards beautiful persons and things, and sometimes they express these feelings in words too. At the age of two or three years the



children start distinguishing between boys and girls and look at one another's private parts with deep interest. When they grow up a little, they are attracted to beautiful pictures. They look at them with surprise. Sometimes they might utter bad words. They start showing inclination towards the opposite sex. They try to have the attention of the persons of the opposite gender. Sometimes, they even ask the parents questions concerning sex. They try to eavesdrop over the whisperings of the parents. They like to sit with friends in a quiet corner and exchange secrets. All these go to prove that the children have within them the latent instinct of sex that tries to find expression in their actions. Without proper guidance and knowledge, the instinct keeps driving the children. They won't know what they want. Their only attention is to derive pleasure from any source. But they don't know how to get this pleasure. Till the age of ten to twelve years the children continue in this state of suspense. From the age of twelve to fifteen, the instinct of sexuality dawns on them with speed.

Responsible parents will not be oblivious of this instinct of their children. They cannot continue without devising a strategy to properly handle the matter. Sex education is one of the most difficult and delicate aspects of the education of children. Slightest mistake or neglect on the part of the parents might push the

children into the abyss of destruction.

The parents should focus their attention towards the fact that prior to puberty the children won't have the faculty of procreation. Therefore God has kept the instinct of sex latent in them. It is in the best interest of the children



that their instinct of sexuality does not have a premature awakening. If this happens prematurely, the child will suffer many types of social stigmas and physical ailments.

The parents must abstain from everything that might provoke the sex instinct in the children. They must provide to them such healthy environment that their minds don't get diverted towards premature expression of sex instinct. The thoughtful parents can themselves decide what is desirable for the children and what is not. But here we are mentioning a few of the things that the parents would like to keep in their minds. They should discreetly ensure that the children don't touch their private parts, they don't look at pictures of models in the magazines, listen to love ditties and watch romantic movies, praise good looks and beauty of others, stare at beautiful faces and exposed limbs of others, intently listen to bawdy jokes or courtship of the parents or other elders.. . These and many other attractions might cause a flutter in the sex instinct of the child.

The parents should not allow children of five to six years of age to live unattended. They might sometimes play with each other's private parts and emotions might awaken in them. The children should not be allowed to lie in

their beds when they are awake. Have separate beds for children of the age of six years. If the children sleep on the same bed, their bodies might rub against each other and give rise to the sex instinct. The parents should not make children of five to six years of age sleep with them in the same bed. This should be particularly so in the case of a child of the opposite sex. Even the mother should not rub her body with the body of her six –year- old daughter.



The Prophet of Islam has said:

“When the child reaches the age of seven years, arrange a separate bed for him.”[۱]

Imam Sadiq narrates from his ancestors:

“The women and children of ten years must have separate individual beds.”[۲]

“If a mother rubs her body against the body of her own daughter, she is doing a sort of molestation.”[۳]

“A man should not kiss his six year old daughter, and a woman should not kiss her seven year old son.”[۴]

It is a practice in many households that the women move around in partially revealing dresses. Many men too are not far behind in this. They will have loincloth up to their knees and keep moving around in the house with the sons and daughters present. They think that they are all members of the same family,

or close relations, from whom the women don't have to hide.

The parents also think that their exposed limbs will not affect their children and that they are still very young to be conscious of any such thing. They think that their daughters' breasts not covered with a cloth (chador) and exposed limbs will not affect their son in any way. This they think because the children are brother and sister to one another. This is not the right thinking. The instinct

[١] Makaanim al-Akhlaaq, Vol. ١, ٢٥٦.

[٢] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ١٤, Page ٢٦٨.

[٣] Ibid., Page ١٧٠.

[٤] Ibid., Page ١٧٠.



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of sex is one of the strongest instincts and when aroused it may not allow the person to think of any relationship.

Hazrat Ali says:

“It is very much possible that at a glimpse the instinct of love and sex might awaken.”[١]

Such mercurial urges might become the cause of grave consequence to the innocent children. Perhaps in such circumstances the child might commit rape or incest. For any such thing the parents will be squarely responsible for their

careless attitude.

Here it will be in place to quote the writing of an intellectual:

“For the psychic welfare of the children, we should not expose our bodies to them. Sometimes the children might peep through the crevices in the bathroom door while we are bathing. or changing our clothes. We must ensure that the children don’t develop such habits.”[۲]

This is true that the parents are Mahram for their children and can live in the same house together. But the parents should not sacrifice the collective rights of the children for their pleasure and freedom. This way they would be exposing their children to ruination. As a consequence their lives will be condemned to shame and melancholy.

A person’s thigh was exposed from his robe. The Prophet

[۱] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۴۱۶.

[۲] Paiwand hai Kudak wa Khanwada, Page ۱۷۷.



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noticed this and said:

“Hide your thigh, because it is one of the things that shall not be exposed to others.”[۱]

It is not proper that a four years old son takes a shower along with his mother. Similarly a four years old daughter should not bathe with her father. The children and youth should not remain alone doing nothing. Loneliness might create the urge for masturbation. The private parts of a small boy must be kept covered, not exposed, to his other siblings. Never use abusive invectives with the children. The husband and wife should not sleep on one bed in the presence of their children. They should not play pranks on each other while the children are around.

One problem of a couple with children is the sexual relations between the man and wife. It is a right of the couple to sleep together. But when there are a few children in the family, there will be the problem of having some privacy. Any way, they should continue their private relationship without giving a hint about it to the children. Otherwise there will be the danger of the sexual urge rising in the children and, at their age, it would be prone with horrible consequences.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“The husband should not go near his wife while the child is in their bed room. Otherwise it will be like committing a rape.”^[۲]

The Prophet of Islam has said:

[۱] Mustadrak, Hakim, Vol. ۴, Page ۱۸۱.

[۲] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ۱۴, Page ۹۴.

“By Allah! If someone copulates with his wife when his child is in the room, and the child looks at them and hears their sound, then that child will never prosper. Be it a girl or a boy, either will get besmirched in adultery (for the mere observation of the act)”

Whenever Imam Zain al-Abideen wanted to be near his spouse, he used to send out his servants, bolt the door from inside and put down the curtains.[۱]

The Prophet of Islam has prohibited man coming near his wife when the little baby looks at them from the cradle.[۲]

Therefore the husband and wife who have a child, should not be as unrestricted as they used to be before getting the child. To guard the chastity of the children, the couple should keep their conjugal life totally away from their view. This may not be so easy a process. But they have no other alternative. They should not think that the child is innocent and will not comprehend anything at that age. But to the contrary, the children are very sharp. They will deduce their own conclusions from what they observe. They will be inquisitive to know what the parents do in privacy. Sometimes even they pretend to be asleep to know and see what is going on. They also try to peep from behind the doors and curtains. It is better if the parents have a secure, private room for themselves in the house. As far as possible this room should be at some distance from the children's quarters. The children should be trained to announce their arrival when they

[۱] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ۱۴, Page ۹۴.

[۲] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۵۴۶.

enter the parents' room. The parents should avoid their conjugal affairs when the children are around at home, or until they have not soundly gone to sleep.

A Western intellectual writes thus:

“Most modern dwellings are made in such a way that the planners overlook the privacy for the conjugal relations of the inmates. In fact the homes these days can be termed as the dwellings that are against sexual requirements of the dwellers. Most homes or apartments are such that there is no provision of separate bedroom for the parents. And if they are there, the walls of the rooms are so thin that the children living in the next room can hear even if the children whisper sweet nothings to each other. It is a bitter fact that because of not having a proper place for their conjugal life, the parents will have a suffocated existence.”[۱]

But one disadvantage of the parents sleeping in a separate bedroom is that they will not know what the children are up to. Particularly when there is a slightly grown up boy and there is also a girl in the group of the children. In this situation leaving the children together in one room may not be advisable. In a situation of this type, the parents may have to sacrifice their own convenience. If the parents have to sleep with the children in the same dormitory, they should use separate beds. For their conjugal satisfaction they shall have to find a quiet corner late in the night when all the kids have gone to sleep. When the parents are responsible



persons and they have the will, they can find solution to the problem without much difficulty.

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“O ye who believe! Let those whom your right hands possess and those of you who have not reached puberty seek permission of you three times (a day) (ere they come into your presence) before the morning prayer, and when ye lay aside your garments for the heat (at midday), These are the three times of privacy for you; It is neither for you nor for them a sin (if) after those (three times) ; some of you go round attending upon the others; Thus doth God maketh clear unto you the signs; and God is all-Knowing, All-Wise. 19:58”

Before puberty the children ask direct and indirect questions about sex. Some parents avoid such questions. For example they say:, ‘Keep quiet! Don’t ask such silly questions!’ ‘These things don’t concern you!’ ‘You will understand everything when you grow up!’

They can momentarily quieten the children with these vague replies. . But some parents do give replies to the child’s questions. But these answers too are wrong and contrary to the facts. The child subtly understands that the parents are not telling the truth to him.

Both the above attitudes are wrong. Because the child is asking questions out of

his thirst for knowledge, and if he is not given a proper reply, he might be more inquisitive and might get information from other quarters that may not be in his best interests. Fortunately, the questions asked by the children about sex prior to puberty are not so complicated that answering them could be very



difficult for the parents. The one question that troubles every child is the difference between the private parts of a boy and a girl. A child fully understands that there is difference between his private part and that of his sister. But he wants to know, why this difference?. Sometimes he fears that he has some defect in himself that he is not like his sister. At other times he thinks that the sister is defective. He wants to know the cause for the difference and asks for an explanation from the parents. It is the duty of the parents to give a satisfactory reply to the child. They must tell him that all boys are made like him and all the girls are like his sister. Then the boys grow up to be fathers and the girls grow into mothers. They will have the children of their own and the cycle will thus go on and on.

You need not imagine for a moment that the child wants to know all the facts about sex in one go. He wants to get the answer only for what he has in his mind at that moment. Neither anything more, nor less than it! Before a child reaches the age of understanding, he must be informed about sex to the extent it is absolutely necessary and within his easy comprehension. If you don't reply to his queries, he might pick up harmful details from the elder urchins in the neighborhood or from the other boys at school. If you guide the child properly,

he will be safe from damaging information from other quarters.

When your child attains puberty, and you know that his sexual instinct has awakened to an extent, and there is speedy metamorphosis in him, then at an appropriate moment you must inform him thus:



When children grow up, they will have a desire to have a companion. The girls like boys as companions and the boys like the girls. There is no harm in this. But, if the companion is pious and gentle, then it will be fortunate for both the boy and the girl. Otherwise, a bad companion for a person can be a curse for him or her.

After marriage the responsibilities multiply many times. The expenses on the wife and, when the children arrive, the expenses keep mounting. All these responsibilities have to be borne by the husband. You too must complete your education properly that you settle into a good job. Then we can arrange your marriage. Work hard at your studies. If you are a capable person, people will like you and you can get a good bride for yourself.

Beware of masturbation. It is a sin. It is also harmful for a person's health. A person who does it, may not be suitable marriage later on.

Avoid bad company and don't pick the habits of bad friends. Some of these habits destroy a person."

When children grow, they start getting furze in their armpits and the pubic area.

The children get scared seeing this for the first time. Guide them appropriately. Explain to them the method of removing the unnecessary hairs. The girl starts getting menses. When she sees the blood stains on her clothing, she gets scared. Guide her about the periodic menstruation that a girl gets after puberty. Her breasts start growing, some girls get worried about this development too.

Similarly when the son shows the signs of puberty, he will see disturbing dreams in his sleep. During the dreams his emotions will rise and ejaculation will come. Sometimes,



innocent and ignorant, children think that they have some serious disease. Sometimes they think that they are committing a sin. They worry and keep the matter to themselves as a closely guarded secret. In such times, it is the duty of the parents to prepare the child in advance. The mother should take the daughter into confidence and explain to her that getting hair in certain regions of the body and bleeding periods with the onset of puberty are normal phenomena for girls. She must teach the daughter about the personal hygiene during these periods and the method of cleansing after the period is over. She must also be told that during the periods she should not observe fasts nor should she offer her mandatory prayers. The Ramadan fasts that she has missed during the period, she can observe later on, at her convenience. The father too should tell to his son that he is a grown up person now. He will get hair in his arm-pits and the pubic region. He will experience emotional dreams with ejaculation. This is a normal phenomenon with all boys who have attained puberty. He needn't worry about this. Whenever he ejaculated in his dream, he will have to take the

mandatory cleansing bath. The father should explain to the son the method of taking the cleansing bath. In this way the parents can put the minds of their children, who are at the threshold of adult life now, at rest.



THE HABIT OF READING BOOKS

Books are one of the best tools for training and upbringing. A good book always has a salutary effect on the mind of a reader. It will elevate spirit and thoughts. It will augment his store of knowledge. Books help in correcting moral ineptitude. Particularly in these days of mechanical existence, when people have hardly any time to attend meetings and symposia, the best source of acquiring religious and general knowledge are books that can be browsed whenever a person finds some time to spare. It is possible that the reading of book might have a deeper impact on the minds of the readers than the other sources of acquiring knowledge. Sometimes, reading brings about a revolutionary change in the outlook of a person. The habit of reading is the best pastime. It can keep a person busy when he has nothing else to do. The persons who are in the habit of reading, not only make the best use of their spare time but they will keep their minds away from the worries that might chase them if they sit brooding, doing nothing. A good book, for a reader, is better than visiting the best of gardens and scenic places.

Hazrat Ali says:

“A person who keeps himself occupied with books, will never lose his peace of mind.”[۱]

“Obtaining fresh knowledge remove the tiredness and cloudiness of your hearts; because the hearts, like the bodies, too experience exhaustion.”[١]

The gauge for the progress and civilization of any nation is the quality and the number of books and the number of persons habituated of reading them. Formal education of a person is no criterion of judging a person’s learning. A really learned person is one who is engaged in meaningful reading and research. We unfortunately have lots of persons with school diplomas and university degrees but very few learned scholars and researchers. Most children, when they complete their formal education, keep aside the books and get busy with other activities of life. The growth of knowledge of these persons gets stagnant from that time. Their criterion of acquiring education for finding a job has been achieved. They feel that there is no further use for any more knowledge. In fact, education should be for achieving excellence in the chosen field of knowledge. Education is a continuous process and goes on till the last breath of a person. The Religion of Islam too has exhorted its followers to pursue the path of learning from the cradle to the grave.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Search for knowledge is the duty of every Muslim. Allah likes the seekers of knowledge.”[٢]

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“Even if my companions are motivated to acquire

[١] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ١, Page ٤٨.

[٢] Ibid., Page ٣٠.



knowledge at the threat of a whipping, I would approve of it.”[١]

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Barring two types of persons, there is no reward for anyone else; First the erudite scholar and then he who is busy acquiring knowledge.”[٢]

Imam Ja'far Sadiq said:

“Persons are of three types: (١) The erudite scholar, (٢) The seeker of knowledge, and (٣) The others are mere a heap of garbage.”[٣]

Hazrat Luqman, the Prophet, told his son:

“Spare some time in the day and night for reading and acquiring knowledge. If you stop reading, your knowledge will dissipate.”[٤]

Imam Ja'far Sadiq said:

“Search for knowledge in all conditions is absolutely necessary.”[^٥]

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Search for knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman.”[^٦]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq says:

[^١] Usool al-Kafi, Vol. ١, Page ٣٣.

[^٢] Ibid., ٣٣.

[^٣] Ibid., Page ٣٤.

[^٤] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ١, Page ١٦٩.

[^٥] Ibid., Page ١٧٢.

[^٦] Ibid., Page ١٧٧.



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“If the people knew the uses of knowledge, they would have tried to acquire it even at the cost of their very lives. For this purpose they would have undertaken hazardous sea voyages.”[^١]

The Prophet has said:

“If I spent one day without adding to the store of my knowledge, I would consider that day unlucky for me.”[^٢]

It is the duty of the parents to send their children to schools for acquiring

knowledge of reading and writing. Islam has very clear directions in this regard for the followers of the faith:

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“A child plays for seven years, studies for seven years and for another seven years learns about Right (Halal) and Wrong (Haram).”[۳]

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“A son has three rights over his father: (۱) The father must select a good name for him, (۲) The father should teach him to read and write, and (۳) when he grows up, get him a spouse.”[۴]

“When a child is taken to the school, and the teacher instructs him to say Bism Allah (In the name of Allah Almighty), Allah will spare the child's parents from

[۱] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۱, Page ۱۷۷.

[۲] Majma al-Zawaid, Vol. ۱, Page ۱۲۷.

[۳] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۶۴۰.

[۴] Ibid., Page ۶۲۰.



the fire of the Hell!”[۱]

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Pity on the children of the Last Epoch, for what their forebears have brought to them. Although the parents would themselves be Muslims, they would not acquaint the children with the religious duties.”[¹]

The other responsibility of the parents is that they bring up their children in such a way they cultivate the habits of reading good books and become researchers of knowledge. The atmosphere in their homes should be one of education and learning. They must motivate the children by their words and actions to cultivate the habit of reading. Before the child goes for formal education to the school, he should be introduced to books. In the beginning the parents must read out books to the child. They should read small and interesting stories and fables to make the child interested in books. Give the children books with lots of multicolor pictures and illustrations. Every day, the parents or the elder siblings should read to the child a part of the book to keep his sustained interest in the contents. They should explain to the child about the illustrations in the book. Then the child should be asked to recount the story and tell about the illustration printed with the story. In this informal education, the parents should not make haste in teaching and should not give to him any books that are beyond his comprehension. They must first make the child interested in listening to stories, then bring the process of reading out from the

[¹] Mustadrak, Vol. 2, Page 640.

[²] Ibid., Page 620.

books.

Continue this process till the child learns to read and write himself. Then leave the work of reading the books to the child. Sometimes ask the opinion of the child about a new book that he has read. Discuss the contents of the book with him continue giving attention till the child becomes habituated of reading books.

Here the parents must be reminded of certain points:

(१) The children like stories and fables and understand their contents well. It is therefore useful the material provided to them on any subject should be in the form of stories.

(२) Every child will have his own individual personality. The capability and tastes too will differ from person to person. There will be changes in the tastes of a person with advancements in years. Therefore, the parents must first try to gauge the taste and the capability of their child and then bring the books to suit his requirements. Don't thrust difficult and boring contents on the child. This might have negative impact on the child's reading habit.

(३) Since the child is in the process of developing his personality, and the books can have deep impact on this process, care must be exercised to see that books with appropriate content are chosen for him. The parents should first read the books themselves, then decide about their suitability for the child's reading. The child should not read any undesirable matter that might have negative impact on his impressionable mind. If he gets into the habit of reading such literature, it might be difficult to wean

him out of it.

(۴) Children show more interest in reading about crime and adventure. These books may have deleterious effect on the psyche of the child. Similarly books that give vent to the sexual instincts in the child should be kept out of his reach. One person writes in his memoirs thus: ‘My Granny used to love me very much. I used to sleep with her in the nights. I always used to ask her to tell me bed-time-stories. To make me go to sleep, she used to tell me one story every night. In her repertoire there were stories about the Jinn Baba and other tales of horror. These stories have left their mark on my psyche. I used to sleep in the feeling of horror after hearing the stories. I started seeing horrible bad dreams. Over time, I turned into a timid and cowardly person. I was always afraid to be alone. I became excitable and restless. This condition persists with me. How I wish parents and elders don’t relate horror stories to their impressionable children. I have decided that I will not tell such stories to my own children. I generally tell them stories from the Holy Quran and other stories with good morals.’

(۵) The habit of reading is not just a pastime. The main purpose of reading is to acquire knowledge and understand the contents of the books and deriving advantage from them. It is not very important how many books the child reads, but the important thing is how he has read them. Is he just making a cursory rapid reading? Has he read a book with absorbed interest and understood its contents? The parents should give full attention to this aspect.

Occasionally, they must ask the child to give the gist of a book he has read. They should derive their conclusion if the child has understood the contents correctly or not. They should correct the child, if his understanding of the contents is not correct.

(१) Children generally like books with imaginary stories. Some intellectuals encourage reading of such books. They feel that such book will encourage the imaginative faculties of the child. But the author feels that the reading of imaginary and fictitious stories can promote the habit of lying in the child. His mind will become the storehouse of false thoughts. When he grows up, he might allude to falsehoods to fulfill his needs and wishes.

It is true that a child prefers to read stories than other reading matter. But care must be taken that he is given a carefully selected mix of books on various subjects and not just the story- books. The child must slowly develop interest in reading and understanding intricate subject matter of serious literature.

It is not true that the children are fond of only fictitious stories. They will definitely show keen interest in reading the stories of great personalities, their lives and achievements. They can have their role models in these personages and aim to model their own lives on the lives of the great personages.

PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Some children are physically handicapped from birth, others develop infirmities after accidents. There are many physical disabilities like blindness, lameness, deafness, dumbness etc. There are other children, who may not have any

physical abnormalities, but they might be abnormally short, fat, with jutting teeth, small and sunken eyes and several such features.

There is no fault of the individuals with these aberrations. Allah has given birth to them, as they are. All the creations have their own beauty, it is our thinking that makes yardsticks for judging good looks.

Since the disabled individuals will be conscious of their disability, they will be sad and subject to the feeling of inferiority. If efforts are not made to remove this feeling from their minds, they will always be sad and morose. With the inferiority complex in him, a person loses his vibrant personality. They start thinking that they are incapable of any good. They will be reluctant to accept responsibilities and come forward to work with alacrity. They literally surrender ignominiously. They might even have access to criminal thoughts as a rebellion against their pitiable condition in the social fabric.

The disabled are pitiable. It is the duty of the other members of the society to put such handicapped persons at ease.



They should give them the same treatment as they give to any normal person. They should not make them conscious of their defect through any overt or covert act. Some people cut practical jokes on the handicapped persons making their defect a matter of ridicule. This will be like piercing their hearts with arrows. Islam strictly prohibits laughing about the physical defects of others. This attitude is counted amongst the major sins a person can commit. There is order for so much care in this matter that the believers are required not even to

do anything that can slightly remind the handicapped person of his defect.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Don’t stare at people under distress and at the lepers, lest your looks provoke the feelings of sadness and shame in their hearts.”[¹]

It is the responsibility of Muslims to show more attention and care to such persons with a view to ameliorate their feelings of sadness. They must encourage the handicapped to lead as normal a life as possible. The parents of handicapped children carry an onerous responsibility. They should remember that even the handicapped are having the capacity to excel. If the parents try to fathom the aptitude of such children and help them to utilize their latent capabilities properly, they can be molded into efficient and skilled persons. They can excel in scientific and technical fields. Thus they can achieve respected positions in the society. There are innumerable instances of handicapped persons

[¹] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۰, Page ۱۰.

scaling big heights in different activities and reaching the pinnacle of success despite their defects. The parents should not be conscious of their child’s defects and also abstain. from mentioning about it to anyone, at least not in the presence of the child himself or his siblings. They should not mention about the

defect in the child even in a commiserating manner. Their treatment of this child should not be any different than the treatment they give to their other normal children. If a handicapped child expresses his anxiety about his defect, the parents must try to put him at ease. Remind him of, and praise, his other faculties and encourage him to make good use of them to prove himself a useful member of the society.

The parents must make a careful study of the latent capabilities in the handicapped child and then consult knowledgeable persons to seek their advice and recommendations for the right course of action. Then they should humor and encourage the child to try and develop the chosen skills. The parents will thus be doing a great service to the society by making their handicapped child a useful member of the community.

Thus, the handicapped person would, in a way, overcome his handicap and make the best use of the talent gifted by Allah to him.

A girl writes in her letter thus:

A friend of mine told her life's story to me in these words:

One day I fell down to the ground from the terrace when I was thirteen years old. My backbone was fractured which rendered me a handicapped person for life. For some time I got treatment at a hospital.



Although I had terrific pain, later on I realized that the days at the hospital were

the better days for me than what I suffered after returning home. When I was discharged from the hospital and reached home, my parents started treating me as a sworn enemy. They used to say, ' You are the cause of shame and ill luck for us! How can we tell others that we are the parents of a crippled daughter? You will remain foisted on us forever! Instead of consoling me for my predicament, day and night they were taunting me. They never for a moment thought that I was the victim of an unfortunate accident and personally not responsible for what happened. to me. I used to plead to Allah every day to give me death and release me from the life I was living! With my paralyzed legs, I used to drag myself around the house and do the work. None ever bothered about my predicament. In fact my parents stopped considering me their daughter. My youth was being spent in sorrow and pain. At the age of 10 I looked like an old woman of fifty. My parents died and my brothers and sisters never bothered about me. After sometime I was married. My husband was a very kind person. He loved me very much. Prior to this I had forgotten what is love and affection. Now my condition started to improve day by day. I am now a hale and hearty person. Allah has given me children. I am now spending a happy and contented life.

PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

Lots of parents give physical punishment to their children in the interest of proper upbringing. Even some teachers too contribute to this attitude. They believe that the devils cannot be tamed with mere words. In the past a majority of people believed in this dictum. Those days the canes, chains and whips were considered important tools to be handy with a school. The parents desirous of good upbringing of their children never abstained from beating them when

required. But most intellectuals consider this tyrannical method of upbringing as barbaric and harmful for the children. In most developed countries of the world there is almost a total ban on the physical punishment for correction of children.

A child cannot be reformed through physical punishments. Perhaps, it might have a temporary effect on the child, but will be very harmful in a longer run. For example:

When a child is beaten, he gets habituated of bowing down his head to torture and force. He may perhaps start thinking that force is the only key to success. He starts thinking that when one is angry, he should beat. By



giving physical punishment to the children, the parents set an example for them to adopt the tyrannical laws of the jungle in their future lives.

The children who get beatings, develop hate and antagonism against their parents. The children never forget the harsh treatment they received at the hands of the parents. Such children might even become rebellious.

Repeated beatings can make a child timid and cowardly. The personality of the child can also be suppressed with physical punishment. He might later on become a victim of psychological ailments.

In most cases physical punishment seldom improves the child. It doesn't create a wish in the child to correct his behavior. . He might perhaps show some momentary signs of change out of fear of the rod and the beatings, but is no

guarantee that he will not repeat the same act again. His basic failing will persist in his subconscious mind. It will manifest itself later on in some other form.

One person says:

“My twelve year old son picked up some money from my wife’s wardrobe. When I came to know about this, I punished him with a stick. From that time, he never went near his mother’s wardrobe.

It is true that the boy did not pick anything else from his mother’s wardrobe. The father appears to have succeeded by meting out physical punishment to the child. But the matter was not so simple. The story proceeded further. The boy found other subterfuges to continue his bad activities. He started boarding the omnibus and avoiding to pay the fare to the conductor.



When his mother asked him to shop at the grocers, he would pinch the change. Later on it was learned that he has stolen money from his friends too. The conclusion of the story is that, when the child was beaten for one fault, he cleverly didn’t repeat that act. But his mind worked overtime, and he invented other methods of committing thefts.”[१]

One intellectual writes:

“The children who receive corrective beatings, become weak and useless persons. Or, otherwise they turn into stubborn and deceitful persons...They seem to be taking revenge of the ill treatment received in their childhood.”[२]

Mr. Russell writes:

“In my opinion, physical punishment of children is not right in any way.”[۳]

Islam too has termed physical punishment harmful and has prohibited it.

Hazrat Ali says:

“The intelligent person gets guidance through politeness, it is only the animals that cannot be corrected without beatings.”[۴]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq says:

[۱] Ruwan Shinasi Tajrubi Kudak, Page ۲۶۳.

[۲] Ibid., Page ۲۶۶.

[۳] Dar Tarbiat, Page ۱۶۹.

[۴] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۲۳۶.



“Whoever whips another person once, Allah will shower the fiery whip against him.”[۱]

The Prophet of Islam said:

“Use love and affection in education and upbringing and don’t have access to cruelty because a wise mentor is better than a cruel one.”[۲]

One person said that he complained about his son to Imam Moosa bin Ja’far.

The Imam replied:

“Don’t ever beat him! But maintain a distance from him, and this distance too should not be kept for too long!”[۳]

Physical punishments are very harmful for the upbringing of the children and they must be avoided. But if there is no other way of correcting the child, adopt it as a last resort. Islam too permits this in certain conditions.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Ask your children to start offering prayers at the age of six years. If they don’t listen to your repeated warnings, you may beat them to become regular at offering prayers when they are seven years old.”[۴]

In another tradition Imam Ja’far Sadiq says:

“When the child is nine years old, teach him to do the Wadu (the ablution prior to offering prayers); order

[۱] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ۱۹, Page ۱۴.

[۲] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۷, Page ۱۷۰.

[۳] Ibid., Vol. ۱۰۴, Page ۹۹.

[۴] Mustadrak, Vol. ۱, Page ۱۷۱.

him to do the Wadu and pray. If the child doesn’t obey, beat him and make him

offer prayers.”[1]

Hazrat Ali has said:

“As you reprimand your own son, so can you reprimand an orphan. And the occasion on which you might beat your son, you can beat the orphan on a similar occasion.”[2]

“If your slave disobeys Allah, beat him. If he disobeys you, forgive him.”[3]

One person came to the presence of the Prophet of Islam and said that an orphaned child was in his care. He wanted to know if he can beat the child to correct him. The Prophet replied:

“In a situation where you can beat your son, you may beat the orphan on a similar situation in his best interests.”[4]

It is always better not to make access to the physical punishment of children as far as possible. And when it becomes necessary, make use of maximum restraint in the matter. The punishment must be well thought out and appropriate to the occasion.

One person asked the Prophet of Islam:

“The members of my family don’t obey me. How should I reform them?”

[1] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. 3, Page 13.

[2] Ibid. Vol. 10, Page 197.

[3] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page 110.

[4] Mustadrak, Vol. 2, Page 620.

The Prophet replied:

“Forgive them!”

The man repeated the question a second, and a third time. The Holy Prophet gave the same reply; but then he said:

“If you wish to reprimand your people, then you must keep in mind that the punishment should not be more than their misdemeanour. You should also abstain from beating them on their faces.”[۱]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq has said:

“If needed, don’t inflict more than five or six blows to your child or the servant and these blows should not be too severe.”[۲]

While reprimanding children, better don’t do it in the presence of others. Others’ presence might cause mental torture to the children and might harm them. If the beating is excessive, there is a Deet or fine prescribed in Islam for one who inflicts the punishment. Therefore, care must be exercised while beating the children to correct them. According to the Islamic Laws, if a person’s face turns black on account of the beating, the fine is six Gold Dinars (coins). If the face turns blue, three dinars and for a red face, a Dinar and Half.[۳]

The parents have no right to behave like tyrants with their children. They must not kick them, box them and

[١] Majma al-Zawaid, Vol. ٨, Page ١٠٦.

[٢] Wasaail al-Shiah Vol. ١٨, Page ٥٨١.

[٣] Ibid., Vol. ١٩, Page ٢٩٥.

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beat them with chains and rods.

Islam does permit reprimanding and beating the child for purposes of correction and, in fact, orders such action. We find that the youth in the Western countries go astray because of excess of freedom given to them.

(٣٣٦)

NON-PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS

Lots of parents prefer to give non-physical punishments to their children in times of need. For example, if a child misbehaves, he is locked in a dark room or a big trunk. Sometimes the parents shout and use bad language in anger when a child commits a mistake.. The impact of such cruel punishments may not be far less than the physical punishments discussed in the previous chapter.

Hazrat Ali says:

“There are many types of punishments which have bigger impact than physical assault.”[١]

It is possible that these punishments might be more severe on the minds of the children than the physical punishments. These punishments will injure the personality of the child and create elements of fear and restlessness in his nature. It has happened many a time that when a child is locked alone in a dark room, the effect on his nerves was so severe that he was not able to erase it from his mind for a major part of his life. Some of the victims of such nervousness sometimes swoon under its effect. The parents should therefore refrain from giving such punishments to the children. Shouting and using foul language with the children is taboo (Haram) and will have a very damaging impact on their upbringing.

[¹] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٤١٥.



This might motivate the children to learn such foul language for their future lives.

But definitely there are several non-physical punishments that will not have any negative impact on the minds of the children, and at the same time they are very effective in correcting them. For example, if a child misbehaves or doesn't give proper attention to his studies, the parents stop speaking with him for a time or don't take him out on picnics. Sometimes, as a punishment the parents don't take a child out to a party where the family is invited. Sometimes, as a reprimand, a child is made to miss a meal. At other time, as a corrective, the

child is given some difficult task to do. These punishments, used judiciously, might be very effective in controlling and correcting the child. They will not be accompanied with any deleterious effect on the mind and the nerves of the child. But punishments are punishments. There is one definite defect in punishments that they are not much effective for correcting the intrinsic defects in the nature of a child. With the fear of punishment the child might momentarily, or for some time, behave differently and properly. Or he might cleverly not make the same mistake openly. But when he finds a suitable opportunity, he might be up to the same behavior for which he has been reprimanded in the past. The punishments, therefore, don't cut away the cause of the misdemeanors of the child. It is possible that sometimes the child might take shelter behind lying and stealth. To make effective and judicious of the non-physical punishments, a few points are suggested to the parents and the mentors of the children:

(1) The punishment should be well thought out and



commensurate with the misdemeanour of the child. Ensure that the punishment is not more than the flaw or the misbehavior of the child. If the child thinks that the punishment was unjust, he might react in his defense and start to be rebellious and headstrong.

(2) The punishment should not be such that the child starts thinking that the parents are his enemies and they don't love him.

(3) If the child has committed something wrong unintentionally, he should not

be punished. Despite this, if the child is punished, it might have negative impact on his feelings and his mind.

(٤) Punishments should not become an every day affair if the parents wish them to be effective. If punishments are repeated too often, the child might turn into a compulsive offender. Then the punishments will not have any effect on him.

Hazrat Ali has said:
“Reprimand and punishment in excess might make one stubborn.”[١]

(٥) The child can be punished for a single act and not on a collective basis for his past misbehaviors. Otherwise the child will be confused as to why he is being punished. He will not repeat an act, only if he knows that he was punished for doing that. It is always better that the punishment is immediately after the commitment of the act.

[١] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٧٠.

(٦) To the extent possible, efforts must be made to see that the punishment is according to the mistake he has committed. For example, if the child has fallen behind in doing the exercises of mathematics, he must be ordered to complete the exercise and not to copy the entire book of mathematics from start to end. If the child has carelessly thrown away his school bag, and the uniform, after returning from school, he must be asked to immediately arrange them properly in the right place. As a punishment for this careless behavior he should not be

threatened that he would not be taken to the dinner scheduled for that evening. If the child had misbehaved at a party, his punishment can be not taking out to the next party and not stopping his allowance of the pocket money. If the child squanders his pocket money, then, as a punishment a similar amount may be cut from his next allowance.

(٧) After the punishment, the parents should not mention his mistake again and again. One person says that he complained about his son to Hazrat Moosa bin Ja'far. He replied, "Don't beat him. Just be cross with him! But this attitude of yours should not be for long." [١]

(٨) If you wish to punish a child, don't compare him with other children. Don't recount the qualities of the other children to him. You cannot reform the child through this attitude. You might give rise to

[١] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٧٠.



the feeling of jealousy in the mind of the child.

One person writes in his memoirs thus:

"In my childhood my father used to shout at me very much. He used to insult me in the presence of relatives and my friends. He always recounted others achievements in front of me. He always looked for an occasion to belittle me.

He considered me an inferior person. However much he insulted me, I became more stubborn. I lost interest in my studies. I had developed an inferiority complex. I started shirking work. I was not willing to accept any responsibility. My personality was injured because of constant nagging by my father. Today I am a lazy and lonely person.”

(३६१)

ENCOURAGEMENT & REWARD

One very good method of good upbringing is the appreciation and encouragement when a child performs well. This will have a salutary effect on the mind of the child. It will provide him the reason to do still better in the future. Every human being loves himself. In his own way he thinks of developing and advancing his personality. He wants that others recognize and appreciate his personality. If he receives the appreciation of others, he will strive for further improvement. But if he is discouraged, his enthusiasm will be dampened. A few suggestions for obtaining good results are given here:

The actions of the child can be appreciated, but not too often. Because, if the appreciation is too much, it might lose its importance in the eyes of the child. He may then take your appreciation as a matter of routine.

The appreciation of the child should be at a specific place and time so that he realizes why and for what he is being commended. Then he will try to perform better and earn appreciation on other occasions too. This is the reason that repeated and unnecessary appreciation is not advisable. For example, if a child is repeatedly given a pat on his back that he is a good and polite individual, it might lose its significance for him. The child will not be able to comprehend the

reason for the appreciation.

It is also necessary that good acts and works of the child are appreciated and not his person. This way he will



understand that he is praised for what he does, and not for what he is! The importance of every person is because of his achievements.

While praising a child, never compare him with other children. For example the father should not tell to his son, “You are a good and truthful boy, unlike Hasan who is a liar.” This attitude might make the child form a poor opinion about the other boy. While comparing the children, the parent is doing faulty upbringing of the good child.

The praises and commendations of the child must be within certain limits. Excess of these might make the child proud and conceited.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Lots of people develop conceit for the reason of praises heaped on them.”[١]

“Don’t exaggerate in praising others.”[٢]

One very good tool for effective upbringing and training is giving of rewards. Rewards are not a bad method of encouragement if they are spontaneous and not in fulfillment of an earlier promise that if the child achieved a certain thing, he would be given a particular gift. If promises are made to the child

beforehand, it might have negative impact on him. The child starts expecting a gift for every good thing he does. This will become a sort of gratification and the child would not strive to do better if these gifts stop forthcoming.

[١] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٧٢, Page ٢٩٥.

[٢] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٢٠٩.

A person should have the habit of doing good deeds. He should do them to please Allah and serve mankind and not with an eye on the probable material rewards. If the child gets used to receiving gifts for every small reason, he might become narrow minded and selfish. He may not think it his duty to do anything for others, unless he gets something in return for his efforts. He will try to escape from doing anything for others, as far as possible. This attitude is a very big fault in a person and the society. The rewards for any good work to the children, therefore, should be few and selective that receiving such gifts don't become a second nature for them. When a child gets into the habit of doing tasks with his own initiative, reduce the frequency of gifts and rewards. Encourage him to do the work. Many parents give gifts to their children getting higher grades at their examinations. This way they encourage them to work harder at their studies. Perhaps this method is effective to some extent. But there is a big defect in this. That it affects the child's sense of responsibility. The child works hard at his studies only because he wants to get the gift by obtaining higher grades. Otherwise, he would not bother to work hard. For

every thing he does, he expects a gift in reward for that.

One person writes:

“I was admitted to the fourth standard of a Religious School. I was very poor at the recitation of the Holy Quran. But my other class- mates were very good at their recitation. In the very first class I attended, the teacher asked me kindly, “Can you recite the Holy Quran?” I replied nervously,” No, Sir.” He rejoined, “Don’t worry! I shall give you the lessons. I know you



can become one of the good students in the class.. Whatever doubts you may have, don’t hesitate to ask me. These kind words of the teacher encouraged me and I started working with determination on my studies. By the end of the year I excelled at recitation of the Quran. I reached such a degree of proficiency that in the absence of the teacher I was asked to conduct the class. I was also made responsible for reciting verses from the Quran at the morning assembly before commencement of the classes”

One girl writes in her memoirs:

“My father was a progressive person. One day, when my mother was away, he invited some of my teachers for the meal. He brought the ingredients for cooking and gave to me. I started to work in the kitchen with enthusiasm. In the noon Dad arrived with his friends. When I poured the victuals in the dishes, I noticed that they were not cooked properly. The chicken was half done and the rice has become slushy with excessive water added while cooking it. All this

was because I had not properly learned the art of cooking. I was very worried. I was expecting a reprimand from my Dad at any moment. But contrary to all my expectations, Dad praised me in front of his friends. He said, “This food has been cooked by my darling daughter! It is so tasty!” The guests too assented in agreement and praised me for my effort. Later on my Dad gave me a pat on my back. This word of encouragement enthused me to start earnestly at learning the culinary art. Today I am an expert at preparing lots of very good dishes.”