

Raising Pious Children

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Achieve Noble Character

Raising Pious Children

ShaykhPod Books

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All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

There is no doubt children can be the comfort of one's eyes and a source of happiness. But this only occurs when children are raised correctly by their parents.

When the parents raise their children in the correct way their goodness will extend to their parents, society and all of humanity. However, if this important duty is not fulfilled correctly then a person's children will adopt bad character and therefore become a curse for their parents and the rest of society. This important duty has been addressed throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire...”

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, that each person is like a shepherd who will be held responsible for their flock. Parents are shepherds of their children and they will be questioned on the Day of Judgment about this important duty. Therefore, this short book will discuss some aspects of raising a pious child so that they succeed in this world and the next.

Raising Pious Children

Learn Obligations and Established Traditions

Parents must teach their children the obligatory duties all Muslims must fulfil and to act on as many established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible. Therefore, parents must strive to gain correct Islamic knowledge so that they can teach their children correctly. They must organise for someone to teach them if they themselves are still learning the duties of Islam. Parents cannot live in ignorance and simply command their children to gain knowledge. It is no secret that a child imitates their parents. If a parent prefers ignorance over gaining knowledge there is a good chance so will their child. Gaining knowledge in order to act on it and to teach one's children is an important aspect of raising children in the correct way. This is one of the reasons why obtaining useful knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Simply put, how can a parent guide their child if they are ignorant? This is like the lost traveller guiding other lost travellers.

Start Early

It is lethal to ignore raising one's children in a good way from a young age while believing they will adopt good character when they become older. It is much more difficult for older children to change their character compared to younger children. Therefore, parents must ensure they teach and guide them from a young age. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, to encourage their children to offer their prayers before they become mature and it becomes obligatory on them. This Hadith can and should be applied to all aspects of a child's life. This early preparation ensures children adopt good character before they become set in their ways. It is not a secret that changing one's character for the better after they become set in their ways is a very difficult challenge.

Leading by Example

The next aspect of raising pious children is for a parent to set a good example. All parents desire for their child to be pious but this is unlikely to occur if they themselves possess bad character. Many parents often complain when their children do not offer the obligatory prayers. And in many cases, the parents themselves have not established their prayers. If parents do not control their tongues how can they expect their children to do so? Children imitate their parents, if their parents pay little respect to adopting piety, in most cases, so will their children. Therefore, it is important for parents to practice what they preach. No one is demanding perfection but they must strive to fulfil their obligatory duties at all costs and act on as much of the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible. This correct attitude will encourage their children to do the same.

Kindness

An aspect of raising children in the correct way is to constantly encourage them towards good behaviour in a kind loving manner. In most cases, aggression will only push a child away from what the parent desires. As advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, Allah, the Exalted, prefers kindness in all matters. A family will therefore be more blessed when they treat each other with kindness. Only on rare cases should aggression be used but even then it must be controlled and only be used in a parent's tone not their physical actions. This is similar to punishing a child within limits when showing kindness will not help, such as grounding the child. But in most cases, kindness is preferred and should be shown in words and actions, such as rewarding children who have behaved well with gifts. Giving gifts for no reason can spoil children but rewarding them for doing well for example, in school, is an important aspect in raising pious children.

Warn Against Sins

Another aspect of raising pious children is teaching them from a young age to abstain from sins and bad characteristics, such as lying. A parent should not ignore this aspect by simply claiming their child will not be held accountable for their actions. This attitude will only encourage children to become more daring in adopting negative characteristics which will become very difficult to abandon once they become mature and accountable for their actions. They should be reminded of the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, so that from a young age they refrain from secret and public sins. This will also encourage them to perform both secret and public good deeds.

A Good Environment

Another aspect of raising pious children is to ensure they spend their days in a good environment. The environment one spends time in has a huge impact on their behaviour and character. The same way a library is the best place to study for worldly exams certain places are better for developing a child's character, such as a Mosque or a supervised educational centre. Parents should never be heedless of where their children are as this is the first step towards sins and crime.

Good Companionship

Another aspect of raising pious children is ensuring they have good friends. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, a person is on their friend's religion. Meaning, a person will adopt the characteristics of their friends. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4829, warns that a bad friend will affect a person just like a blacksmith will affect the people around them with fire or smoke. Similarly, a good person will positively affect their friend just like a perfume seller whose nice smelling perfumes will affect others. Parents cannot ignore this duty as it is the main cause for children going astray. The majority of the youth involved in crime is down to this reason. Parents must question their children about the company they keep and meet them to ensure they are suitable for companionship.

Good Health

Another aspect of raising pious children is for parents to ensure their children develop healthy bodies, minds and spirits. A part of developing a healthy body is cleanliness. This has been declared a part of faith by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 534. Children should be encouraged to keep their bodies, clothes, and bedrooms clean. This is a good way of preparing them for physical worship which demands physical purity, such as the prayer. In addition, it helps to build up their character such as becoming independent by using their own physical strength instead of relying on others to do things for them. In fact, the children who were not taught these basic manners become a burden for their future spouses. Many married couples argue over small things like not cleaning their bedroom.

An extremely important aspect of developing a healthy body is consuming lawful food. They should be encouraged to eat a balanced diet thereby avoiding waste and extravagance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the key of good eating in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3349. One should split their stomach into three parts: one part for food, the second for water and the final part should be left empty. This can be achieved when one stops eating before they feel full meaning, when they are still slightly hungry. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 31:

“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”

Parents should encourage their children to partake in physical exercise without allowing it to compromise on their religious and worldly educational activities. This will aid them in building strong and healthy bodies which will aid them in their religious duties, such as fasting. In addition, it is an excellent way for children to have fun within the limits of Islam as a child who is overburdened with studying religious or worldly knowledge without taking part in fun activities is more likely to turn away from this knowledge when they get older and are less influenced by their parents and relatives. It is important to show children Islam is a simple religion which has been advised in a Hadith found in Imams Bukhari's, *Adab Al Mufrad*, number 287. A simple religion which allows one to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world in moderation and guides them to Paradise in the next world.

Treat Children Equally

Another aspect of raising pious children is to be fair by treating all of one's children equally. A child should not be praised or encouraged more than their siblings as this can create enmity between the children. The only time it can be acceptable to buy a gift for one sibling only is on special occasions such as birthdays.

Balanced Spending

It is important to teach children a balance between being stingy and wasteful. A parent should spend on things when it is necessary to spend but should avoid extravagance and waste. In this day and age children are very conscious of the clothes they wear and the things they possess. In many cases, this behaviour can even affect their confidence when interacting with others. In order to provide confidence to one's child a parent should spend on these things without being wasteful as providing confidence to a child is an invaluable gift a parent can give them. It is important to note, this does not mean a child should be spoiled as this can lead to other negative traits, such as pride. Not all requests from children should be fulfilled only the reasonable ones which are within limits should be especially, on special occasions or to encourage them to work harder. Showing this balance practically to one's children is an excellent way for them to adopt this balanced approach when they become older.

Show Respect

It is important for parents to treat each other with respect especially, in front of their children. When a person disrespects their spouse in front of their children it will only cause the children to lose respect for both parents. In fact, a child will even adopt this attitude and disrespect others in the same way their parents disrespect each other.

In addition, parents should not criticize other relatives in front of their children as this will cause their children to lose respect for their relatives. It is extremely difficult to uphold the ties and rights of relatives when one has little respect for them. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of raising pious children often overlooked by parents especially, Asian parents.

Constantly Chiding

Another aspect of raising pious children is for a parent not to criticize their child over every single matter especially, trivial ones. It is best to firstly criticize them over more important matters, such as lying. If a parent desires to criticize over small matters they should do so kindly as small matters do not need to be addressed harshly.

Advise Privately

Another aspect of raising pious children is not to admonish them publicly. It is best to do this privately as a child may feel embarrassed when this is done in front of others including their siblings. Embarrassment and anger are two traits which can prevent a person, especially a child, from accepting good advice. Both often occur when a person is publicly admonished.

Discipline Moderately

In some cases, punishing children is required in order to develop good character. But this punishment should always be mild and verbal and not violent as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1984. The mild punishment should be more concentrated on things such as temporarily taking away their privileges for example, taking away their game console. A harsh punishment can lead to bad character and may even inspire them to harm others when they are angered.

Avoid Spoiling Children

A child should not be pampered excessively as this can lead them to adopt a superiority complex whereby, they expect others to always accept their opinion and way. This can be disastrous for them especially, when they become adults and face other aspects of life such as work and marriage. A child should be provided with the essentials and given gifts on special occasions especially, to encourage them to work harder in school and their Islamic studies.

Avoid Laziness

Parents should not encourage their children to become lazy. This occurs especially, amongst Asian households, where the parents, specifically the mother, will perform all the household chores for her children even though they are physically able to do them themselves such as, fixing their bed in the morning. This only develops laziness and prevents them from adopting a disciplined lifestyle. This again will cause great problems for them in future years such as marriage. Many divorces occur simply because a husband or a wife refuses to do simple household chores and instead expects their spouse to do it just like their parents done it for them during their childhood.

Independence

Another aspect of raising pious children is not being over protective of one's child. Even though, this is a rare mistake made by parents nowadays none the less keeping children under lock and key for the sake of their safety can prevent them from adopting characteristics which encourages them towards independence. A balanced approach is best where a child is safely monitored without hindering their character development.

Insulting Children

It is important not to belittle children when they make mistakes as this will only cause them to adopt similar characteristics and it in some cases it will damage their confidence. Confidence is a key characteristic required for success. Having fun with children is important from time to time but a parent should not make fun of children often. The only exception is when one knows the child will not take it seriously.

Being Firm on Good Rules

An aspect of raising pious children is for parents to stay firm on established rules and the right decisions they have made. Being a push over whereby a parent always gives in to their children only leads to spoiling them and prevents them from taking what their parents say and decide seriously. It does not mean they should not change direction when they are wrong but it means when the correct decision is made they should stand firm on it.

Give Time to Children

It is important for parents to give time to their children by sitting with them and asking them about their day and their activities and who they spent time with on a daily basis. Unfortunately, some parents are so busy earning wealth and behave as if doing this for their children is their only responsibility thereby, neglecting more important duties like finding time to sit and speak with them on a daily basis. This allows the child to become comfortable discussing issues with their parents. But if parents are always too busy their children may find discussing certain issues too uncomfortable which only causes them to discuss these things with other people and some of these people will misguide the children with bad advice.

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