

# GLIMPSES INTO THE FAMILY LIFE OF HAZRAT FATIMA (AS)

By Azra Ansari

## Relationship with Children:

The Fundamental Role of a Mother in the Well Being and Prosperity of a Generation:

There is no doubt that to a very large extent, the future of a child depends greatly on the mental and psychological influence that he is exposed to, through people closest to him in childhood. And naturally since the mother is the closest to a child during his growing years, her role in his upbringing is of utmost importance. Therefore, we could say that the starting point of success or failure of an individual's life is the mother's lap and the overall environment of his upbringing, of which the mother constitutes the main pillar. The child is therefore like a soft lump of wax which is moulded in the hands of his mother.

If we carefully examine the emotional and logical approach of Hazrat Fatima (sa) in the upbringing of her great children, we will be able to discover very subtle and delicate methods used by her in their upbringing. Behavioral psychologists and other experts who have studied these methods closely, have developed faith in the positive effects of the approach adopted by this great lady. This unique success in the upbringing of children has its roots in the profound understanding of nature of man as has been explained by Islam. Every school of thought has recommended methods of upbringing of children, based on its interpretation and understanding of innate human nature. An unbiased research and analysis easily proves that the definition and explanation that the divine religion of Islam has revealed, regarding the complete innate nature of man (taking in consideration, all his physical, emotional, material as well as spiritual needs), is the most perfect and objective. Moreover, since the method of child training and parenting used by Hazrat Fatima (sa) was based in this divine source, studying and practically adopting this method could ensure the success and well being of our children both in this world and the hereafter.

One of the most critical factors determining the characters of the children of Hazrat Fatima (sa) was genetics. As we all believe, she was an infallible (Mas'um) and was thus free from all kinds of sins and pollution. Imam Hussain (as) had himself emphasized on the purity of Hazrat Fatima (sa) on the Day of

Ashura when he announced: “The virtues of courage, freedom and generosity, I owe to the purity of my mother Hazrat Fatima (sa)”. All of us are aware of the importance of the greatness of Ashura (10th of Muharram), and as a matter of fact, the extraordinary roles that the children of Hazrat Fatima (sa) played throughout the historical even were the result of her powerful upbringing and training. In other words, the Kerbala phenomenon is one of the best testimonies of the divine nature of her methods of child rearing.

## **The Methods of Child-Upbringing Adopted by Hazrat Fatima (sa):**

Psychologists and child training experts have always debated regarding the best age to commence child training, and have not reached to any substantial conclusion regarding the issue even today. However, according to Islam, the point that actually starts affecting the soul of the child is the moment a name is chosen for him. And this is the first stage in the moulding of the character of a child. It is because of this very important reason that Islam has laid great emphasis on care and attention in naming of children. Thus, a good name has a very deep and lasting affect on the soul of a child. In this context, Imam Ali (as) has advised thus in one of his sayings mentioned in “Nahjul Balagha”: “... while the right of the father is that he should give him a new name.” (Saying No. 409). In other words one of the primary duties of parent’s, especially the father, is the selection of a worthy name for his child. It is for this very and important scientific reason that Fatima (sa), after consulting her husband, Imam Ali (as) and her beloved father, Prophet Muhammad (saw), chose the best name’s for her children.

## **Sacrifice of a Goat or Sheep (Aqiqah):**

Aqiqah (sacrifice of a goat or sheep) and also almsgiving are highly recommended acts that have been greatly emphasized in Islamic traditions. It has been recorded that whenever Fatima (sa) would be blessed with a child, she would sacrifice a sheep and distribute the meat among the people. Then on the 7th day of the child’s birth, she would shave of his/her head and distribute charity (alms), the equivalent in silver, of the weight of the shaved-hair of the child. Also she would send gifts to the mid wife as well as the neighbour’s such that they too, would share the happy event with her family (Bihar ul-Anwar, vol.43, p257).

Another custom followed by Fatima (sa) was that as soon as her child would be born, she would recite the ‘Adhan’ in his/her right ear and would recite the ‘Iqamah’ in his/her left ear. This was because she was well aware that if the child would be acquainted with the names of Allah, Muhammad (saw), salat, etc., from the beginning of his early life, it would have deep and lasting effects on

his/her psychological inclinations.

## **The Role of Maternal Emotions in Childs Upbringing:**

The soul of a human being is created in such ways that love and compassion are among one of its most basic needs. This is the reason why children who have been deprived of love, care and attention, become prone to various psychological and physical illnesses, a fact that has been proved scientifically. Research indicates that many crimes committed are rooted in the vacuum created by lack of love and affection in the life of an individual.

Fatima (sa) who had herself grown up saturated with the love and affection of her beloved father (saw), showered the same love and warmth upon her children. An incident that has been narrated by one of the close companions of the Prophet named Salman, says: "One day, I saw Fatima (sa) who was busy grinding some grain. In the meanwhile, her son Hussain (as) became impatient and started crying. I offered my help to Fatima (sa), asking her whether she would prefer me to take over grinding of grain or whether it would help her if I comforted the child. She answered by saying that it would be better for me to take over the grinding, since she would be better at comforting her child" (Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 43, p280).

This incident gives us the knowledge of the importance of a mother's soothing presence for a child. It indicates how no one else can soothe and comfort a child, better than his own mother, an important message to mother's in today's "crèche and milk-bottle" culture. She showed us just how important it is for a child to have his mother around when he need's her and how these little moment's of attention go a long way in shaping a confident, secure and powerful personality for a human being.