

Raising children in Islam

One thing guaranteeing men's prosperity is to have children whom they can help. [Kafi, v.6, p.2]

The Position and Worth of Children

Children, whether male or female, are the greatest and most beneficial blessing that God has favored his servants with. The Prophet Abraham (Pbuh) did not have any children and was sad about this. When he was very old, God gave his worthy servant two sons: Ismael and Issac. Issac is the source of the divine Prophets until the time of Jesus and Ismael is the source of all the Prophets to the time of Muhammad, the last Prophet (Khatim-al-Anbiyaa), the Immaculate Imams and thousands of wise men, mystics and religious jurisprudents. A child is a great blessing, a source of goodness, nobleness and benefit in this world and the Hereafter for an individual. Of course, the reference is to an individual believing in God and due to his belief trains his child to be a believer and a good and worthy person. Abraham wholeheartedly praised God for being granted offspring: Really, being granted offspring requires one to praise God.

Praise be to God, Who hath granted unto me in old age Ismael and Isaac: for truly my Lord is He, the Hearer of Prayer! [Holy Quran: Abraham: 14:39, p.631.]

We understand from this noble verse that the position of offspring is so important in life that Abraham requested children from God in his old age and his prayer was answered. When Zacharias was old he prayed to God in the prayer niche to give him a child.

So give me an heir as from Thyself, (One that) will (truly) represent me, and represent the posterity of Jacob [Holy Quran: Maryam: 19:5-6]

Ishaq ibn Umar quotes on the authority of the sixth Imam:

Mothers and fathers depart from this world and benefit completely from the worship, supplications and good deeds of their offspring in the case that their children were believers.

The Prophet (Pbuh) stated:

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Five people have left this world but their files have not been closed: Reward continually is bestowed upon them. 1) The one who plants a tree 2) The one who digs a water well for others to use 3) The one who builds a mosque 4) The one who has taken down the Quran and 5) The one who leaves behind a worthy child. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.104, p.97]

The sixth Imam said:

When Joseph saw his brother he asked him:

How are you going to make the preparations for marriage. His brother said that his father Jacob instructed them in the following way: If you can raise heavenly children, do

so. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.356]

Imam Sajjad said:

A Muslim man is fortunate in these regards: 1) His place of business is in the small city he lives in, so he can see his family after a day's work. 2) His friends are worthy and pious 3) He has a child whose help he can benefit from. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.103, p.7]

How blessed is a worthy child that the Glorious Quran says:

And God has made for you mates (and Companions) of your own nature, and made for you, out of them, sons and daughters and grandchildren, and provided for you sustenance of the best. [Holy Quran: Nahl: 16:72]

Imam Sadiq stated:

In the Hereafter, Muslim offspring will intervene on their parents behalf and the intervention will be accepted.

The seventh Imam said:

The man who does not die until he sees his offspring is fortunate. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.351-8]

The benefit of having children is so much that the Commander of the Faithful (Amir al-Mumineen) said:

A child's illness is the penalty for the parent's sins.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

Worthy offspring are a bunch of sweet-smelling flowers which God has distributed amongst his servants.[Ibid]

And the Prophet (Pbuh) said:

Worthy children are a bunch of sweet-smelling flowers from the Heavenly flowers. [Ibid]

In a tradition it was stated:

The Prophet (Pbuh) was on the Medina mosque pulpit preaching to the people when Hassan and Husayn (peace be upon them) entered the mosque. They were both wearing red shirts and while walking fell down. The Prophet (Pbuh) quickly came down from the pulpit and picked up both children. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.42, p.284].

Then he recited the Quranic verse:

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Your riches and your children may be but a trial: but in the Presence of God, is the highest Reward. [Holy Quran: Tagabun: 64:15]

In Tehran, a subterranean water canal had been dug whose excavator was a man named Hajj Alireza Zaba. For more than one-hundred years people from some parts of Tehran used that water. One of the great theologians said that someone saw him (the excavator) in his dreams. He was in a great orchard standing by a big river. The excavator told the man that his orchard was one of Heaven's orchards and that river was one of Heaven's, too. Those two blessings were the reward for excavating that canal in Tehran. But, alas! I wish I had a child who had said "There is no God but God" just once and then died. By stating his belief in monotheism, a great benefit would have been mine.

Love for children

The Sixth Imam quoted upon the authority of the Prophet:

Love your children and have mercy on them. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.483]

Some people do not show much affection for their children or do not show their affection. They are harsh and strict when interacting with their children. These people must know that using this method, which is inhumane and unIslamic, will deprive them of God's Mercy. Imam Sadiq said:

In fact, God shows mercy upon his servants, just for the strong love they have for their offspring. [Ibid]

The Seventh Imam said:

God the Great does use things like His Anger against women and children. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.484]

God's Anger is shown for the faithlessness and bad-temperedness to the family. The Sixth Imam said:

Moses said the following to God when he was on the Tur Mountain: God, which action according to you is the best one? God said that loving children is the best one.

Kissing the Children

In the valuable book Ruzat al-Vaizin Fatal Nayshaboori being one of the great Shiite scholars has narrated an Immaculate Imam as saying:

Kiss your children a lot. For each kiss you will get a divine heavenly rank which would otherwise take 500 years to achieve.

A man came to the Prophet (Pbuh) and said: I have never kissed my child. The Prophet (Pbuh) said that in fact this man was a resident of the fire of Hell. There is no difference between boys and girls in this regard. Those who look sad when God grants them a daughter, are similar to the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance: They are terribly stupid. God willing, I shall discuss later about raising daughters, so that it becomes clear how valuable it is in Islam to raise a daughter. Another important consideration regarding child rearing is stated by

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the Immaculate Imams , and is very important to follow: Separate the sleeping place of boys from girls at the age of ten. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.361]

The Prophet (Pbuh) has issued a very important recommendation in this regard:

Separate the sleeping place of boys from boys, boys from girls, and girls from girls from the age of ten. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.460]

It is not appropriate for two kids to sleep in the same bed, whether they be both boys, a boy and a girl, or both girls. Islam does not approve of this. Imam Sadiq said:

Let your children be free to play until they reach the age of seven. For the next seven years, keep a really watchful eye on him/her. If he/she accepts to be religious, it is fine.

Else there is no good in him/her. [Vasa'il, v.21, p.473]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

Teach your children to swim and shoot. [Kafi, v.6, p.473]

He also said:

Respect your children, and improve their behavior. Then you shall be forgiven.

[Vasa'il, v.21, p.476]

Malik Denyar said:

I was ignorant, a loafer and I married three times. I divorced all of them for being infertile. I had a son from my next wife. I took him to school at the age of six. When I returned home in the evening, I saw that he was ill. Then I found out that the following verse is the first thing that he was taught:

A Day that will make children hoary-headed?[Holy Quran: Muzzammil:73:17]

We could not treat his ailment, so he died. I went to stay beside his grave. One night I dreamt that I was alone in a scary desert. A strange creature attacked me. I started to run away, and then reached a wall. I tried to climb over the wall to get over to the other side and escape. But suddenly I saw a few kids playing. I called out to my son and asked where he was. He said that after he died he was taken to a Quran class, so that by learning the Quran, he could become qualified to enter Heaven, and gain God's Mercy. I asked him about the nature of the creature that followed me. He said that was the manifestation of my own ugly and immoral acts. I fearfully woke up and stopped all my wicked acts and repented. Then I trotted down God's path.

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