

The rights of the children

A child's right over his/her parents is to choose him a good name, to give him the proper upbringing and to teach him the Quran.

[Nahj ul-Balaghah, Hikmat, p399]

The Path to Prosperity

At first we will mention the following words from the Commander of the Faithful about prosperity. These divine and wise words have risen out of his heavenly heart to guide man towards prosperity. In response to one who asked what prosperity is he said: Prosperity does not depend on having more wealth, children, but it depends on having more knowledge, patience and perseverance; and on being proud of your worshipping of God. Thank God if you have good behavior. Ask God for forgiveness, if you do bad deeds. There is no property in this world for anyone except those who have committed sins and repented; and those who have striven to do good deeds. Deeds which are done with piety are not trivial. How can such deeds be so small if they are accepted? [Nahj ul-Balaghah, Commented on by Ibn Abel Hadid, v.18, p.250]

In these divine sayings three facts have been pointed out: being knowledge; perseverance; and the application of both which is God's worship. It is also mentioned that knowledge, perseverance and their application should be void of sin to be accepted by God. Knowledge of an impious one, perseverance mixed with sin, and worship without piety are all sources of harm or a waste of time. Those who achieved something in this world achieved it through knowledge and wisdom, worship and repentance, and piety and abstinence. The uninformed and the unwise; the weak and the impatient; the slaves of lust and carnal desires; the ones who delve in sin; and the refugees from good deeds are all useless folks who are a source of harm.

We can conclude from these divine words that parents must first realize their Islamic duties towards their children, and then patiently perform their duties. They should be happy and proud of doing these duties, and thank God for enabling them to attend to the needs of their children, and respect their rights. If they have had some shortcomings in performing their duties, they should ask

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God to forgive them. They should be pious in all aspects so that their efforts are not wasted. There is no doubt that attending to the needs of the children, and striving to provide for them is a great form of worship and a good deed which will be rewarded both here and in the Hereafter.

Children's Rights

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

The rights of the child over the father consist of teaching him/her writing, swimming and shooting, and should only feed him/her clean and lawfully-earned food.

Of course, one need not directly perform these duties. If the father just sends his child to school, and swimming and shooting classes, he has done his job. The duty of feeding them only lawfully earned food is really important, and one must be very careful about this so that no problems arise here or in the Hereafter. How good it would be if there were sports clubs and mosques next to all our schools so that our children could go to learn how to swim or shoot after their studies, or could go to the mosque to learn religious matters. Thus, in addition to physical and mental development, they would receive spiritual training too. Literacy, swimming, shooting and eating lawfully earned food are four sources of power for the children. Once they are equipped with these, they will be safe from many dangers. Pursuit of such activities shall fill the free time of the youth, and is very effective in balancing out their instincts and sexual energy. In the book entitled "Mukhlal", Sheik Bahayee has narrated that a man called Hassan said:

Should I find a bit of lawfully earned bread, I will dry it; grind it firmly until it turns into powder, and keep it. Then whenever someone comes to me with an illness being difficult to cure, I will feed him with a bit of it so that he gets cured.

The Effects of Lawfully or Unlawfully Obtained Food

I heard the following from one of the great religious scholars: When I studied in Qum as a student of Imam Khomeini, I used to go to the villages for preaching during the first ten days of the month of Muharram. I went to Imam Khomeini and asked him for permission to go to a new village to preach for which I had been invited to do so. The Imam prayed for me and advised me on how to treat the people and preach. I went to that village.

When I entered that village which had no more than two to three thousand residents, I saw a religious-looking farmer who asked if I had come there to preach. When I replied positively, he told me to only preach about the lawful and the unlawful as ordained by God. This, he said, is what they need to know the most about since they do not care about it. Then he asked me not to go to anyone's house except his since he is the only one who strictly watches out for the divinely ordained lawful and unlawful. He added that I would be more

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enlightened and preach better if I dined at his house. So I went to stay at his house, and everything was fine just as he had predicted. I could deliver a good speech whenever I wanted to preach in the mosque. He used to leave the house early each morning to go to the field, and I left the house with him. He would come to the mosque for evening prayers, and we returned to his house together after the preaching.

One day I accepted someone else's invitation to go to his house. I did not inform my

host. When I wanted to preach that night I was not at ease. The audience did not notice anything but I had a hard time getting words out of my mouth! My host who was among the audience noticed my unusual state, and gave me a few bad looks which implied his objection to what I had done. When we went back to his house that night, he asked me why I went to someone else's house to eat that day. He stated that he realized this from the way I preached. He ordered me not to go to anyone else's house to eat for the rest of the duration of my stay there. He also advised me never again to eat unlawfully obtained food and be careful about whom I associate with. Once again I shall remind you about what to feed your children by stating the divine words of the Prophet:

Do not take home anything but what is lawfully earned for your family's daily bread.

Sheik Zahed

Sheik Muhammad Husayn Zahed was a noble scholar in Tehran. He was a real mystic who attracted many young fellows to the mosque or religious ceremonies and gave them religious training. He once told me that he was invited to a place where he should not have gone. He had only one ice cream there. When he got up at night to perform his ablutions in preparation for prayers, and then he fell down the stairs. He got injured and his wife treated the wound on his forehead. He could not pray due to the pain, and fell asleep. Then he heard a voice asking him why he had eaten that ice cream. He woke up and realized that his injured head was a penalty for committing that sin. The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

The child's right over his/her father is that a good name be chosen for him/her, the provision of the means for his/her marriage when the time comes, and teaching him/her how to read and write. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.10, p.720].

A man asked the Prophet (Pbuh) what rights do his children have over him? He replied:

Coose good names for them, teach them proper behavior and place them in good position. [Ibid]

He also said:

If a child grows up and gets ready for marriage, and the father can provide for his/her marriage but does not do so, then the father is responsible for any sin committed by the child. [Ibid].

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The Commander of the Faithful said: The rights of a child over his/her father include the choice of a good name, good upbringing and teaching him/her the Quran. One of the men from the Ansar asked Imam Sadiq whom should he treat kindly? He replied: Your parents. He said they have perished. The Imam said: Treat your children kindly. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.104, p.98]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Adorn your children with the following three characteristics: Love for your Prophet, love for the Household of the Prophet, and reading the Quran. It is the duty of the father to acquaint the children with the Prophet (Pbuh) and the pure

Household of the Prophet. This should start from childhood so that the child grows up with their love and recognition. The child can also coordinate all his/her life affairs with them, and adopt no other model to follow. This is because love of the Prophet, of the Imams, and following them are the best sources of prosperity for man.

A Good Memory

The first time I was invited to preach in Tabriz, I asked those who invited me to get me a moderate-priced place to stay in the poor areas of town. They accepted my condition. When I reached Tabriz, I was housed in a two-story building. The house owner lived in one story and the other story was used for religious meetings. He was a common man with a moderate income. He was religious. He asked me if I knew the reason why I was housed there? I told him that I had set up such a condition. He then told me that was not so. He said that he had attended one of the religious meetings I had held in Mashhad on the day of Arafah. At the end of that day, he had gone to the shrine of Imam Reza and prayed to house me if I should ever come to preach in Tabriz. He believed that Imam Reza had planned this.

He said that he and his family are all dedicated to serve the Household of the Prophet, and those who serve them. He then told me the following which was related to his father. He said his father used to say prayers at night throughout his whole life. He would kindly wake up his son since the age of thirteen and tell him that at night when everybody is sleeping, it is the best time to cry for the oppressions done to Imam Husayn. He told me that they are loyal to Imam Husayn and will not quit serving him until they die and join him in the Hereafter to serve him again. Imam Sadiq said:

A child should play for seven years, then study the book for another seven years, and then learn about lawfully and unlawfully obtained goods during the next seven years.

[Mizan al-Hikmat, v.10, p.222]

The Commander of the Faithful said:

Ask your children to seek knowledge. [Ibid]

He also said:

Teach your children the prayer, and be serious about their prayers when they mature.

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We read in three important Prophetic traditions that the parents may be cursed by the children if they do not honor their rights, and the same holds for the children. Both sides are required to honor each other's rights. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.70; Mizan al-Hikmat, v.10, p.723]

A Note to Parents

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

A good deed is recorded for whoever kisses his/her child. God will be pleased in the Hereafter with whoever pleases his/her child. The parents who teach their children the Quran shall be called in the Hereafter and given two dresses which are so shiny that will illuminate the residents of Heaven. [Furu al-Kafi, v.6, p.49]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

Whoever has a small child, should play childish games with him. [Vasa'il, v.15, p.203]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

Whoever kindly raises his daughter, kindly trains her, and feeds her from whatever God has bestowed upon him, shall have prepared himself a shelter from the Fire of Hell. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.10, pp.705-707].

The Prophet (Pbuh) has made the following recommendations regarding children:

Fear God and treat your children equally.[Ibid]

Do not treat your children differently in terms of gifts, just as you like to be treated fairly. [Ibid]

God likes you to treat your children equally even when kissing them.[Ibid]

The Prophet (Pbuh) saw a man with two kids. He was kissing one and ignoring the other. He told him he should treat them equally, and kiss both of them if he wants to kiss them. [Ibid]