

## CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

### LOVE TOWARDS CHILDREN: THE SUNNAH WAY

*O Allah (The Exalted) bless our lord and master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as many times as those who neglect to remember him do so.*

Children are a major issue in an Islamic society as today they are children but tomorrow they shall become parents. If they are not trained properly and educated adequately, it will be detrimental to the future of society. Children are a blessing of Allah (The Exalted) and a source of happiness for the parents. However, if not brought up in the Islamic environment they could be a source of sorrow.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had much love for the children and he would put them in his lap, put his blessed hands on their heads, and make supplication for them. He would kiss them on the forehead, play with them, make them smile, take them up in his arms, and would give them a ride on his horse or mule if he met them while riding. He would lengthen his prostration in prayer if a child rode on his blessed back. He would have love and affection and would always smile at them and joke with them by saying *“O you with the two ears!”*

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“Each of you is a shepard and each of you is responsible for his flock. The leader is a Shepard and is responsible for his flock; a man is the Shepard of his family and is responsible for his flock; a woman is the Shepard in the house of her husband and is responsible for her flock...”*<sup>i</sup>

Islam has placed a burden of responsibility on the shoulders of all people, from which none may be excused. Above all, parents are responsible for providing their children with a sound Islamic education and upbringing.

#### **Be just?**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“O Muslims, Allah (The Exalted) desires that you should be just in dealing with your children.”*<sup>ii</sup>

If you have two or more children then treat them equally, if you get something then do not forget the others, but bring them something too.

Nu'man bin Bashir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“When giving, be just with your children just as you would like them to be good and just to you.”*<sup>iii</sup>

Nu'man bin Bashir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“Allah (The Exalted) likes that person who is just to his children to the extent even when kissing them.”*<sup>iv</sup>

#### **Command children to pray**

Amr bin Shu'aib (may Allah be pleased with him) reports from his father that his grandfather reported that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“Command your children to observe prayer when they are seven years old, and beat (lightly) them (for not praying) when they are ten years old.”*<sup>v</sup>

Every family which is aware of this hadith but the parents do not teach their children to pray when they reach seven or hit them if they do not do so when they reach ten, is a family that is failing in its duty and neglecting its children. These parents are sinners who are responsible before Allah (The Exalted) for this failure and neglect. There is no one in the world that showed more love towards children. However, when it comes to Salaah, even children have been ordered to be hit (lightly & not on the face).

The home is the first environment in which these little ones grow: it is the milieu in which their inclinations, attitudes and personalities are formed. This explains the importance of the parents' role in nurturing their young ones and paying equal attention to their physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

### **Good manners are the best gift**

Amr bin Sa'eed bin al-Aas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"No father can give a better gift to his son than good manners."*<sup>vi</sup>

Meaning teach them respect of the teachers, elders, youngsters and about general life, especially following the Sunnah.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"Look after your children and teach them good manners."*<sup>vii</sup>

### **Playing with children**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would line up 'Abd-Allah, 'Ubaydullah and Kuthayyir, (may Allah be pleased with them) the sons of 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and say: *"Whoever reaches me first, I will give him such and such."* So they would race towards him and jump on his back and chest, kissing him.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Love towards children**

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, *"I never saw anyone who was more compassionate towards children than the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). His son Ibraheem (may Allah be pleased with him) was in the care of a wet nurse in the hills around Madinah. He would enter the house, pick up his son and kiss him, then come back."*<sup>ix</sup> *Subhanallah!*

### **Respect youngsters and elders**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"He is not one of us who does not show compassion to our little ones and recognise the rights of our elders."*<sup>x</sup>

### **Show children mercy**

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, *"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) kissed Hasan Ibn 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and Aqra Ibn Habis (may Allah be pleased with him) said that 'I have ten children, and I have never kissed any of them.' The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'He who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.'"*

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) states that, *"A person asked the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), 'You kiss your children, we don't', and he said, 'Allah (The Exalted) has taken the mercy from your heart so what can I do.'"*<sup>xi</sup>

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that, *"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'When a man spends on his family with the intention of pleasing Allah (The Exalted), then it will be counted as Sadaqah (charity) on his part.'"*<sup>xii</sup>

### **Children are entitled to the following rights:**

**A good name:** children have a right to be given a good Islamic name. Islam denounces name-calling and distortion of ones name.

**A proper upbringing:** Children are to be provided with a suitable upbringing with good food, adequate clothing, and residence, all in an appropriate morally Islamic environment.

**Love and kindness:** They need to be shown tenderness and affection; this negates all types of verbal or physical abuse.

**Good training:** They should be educated and trained into becoming well-mannered members of society.

**Inheritance:** Their economic aspect is taken into consideration and so they are entitled to inheritance.

Let's try to bring up our beloved children in the Islamic manner by giving them the environment that a Muslim deserves. When our children return from school ask them what they have learnt and also ask what they have learnt in the Madrasas too by sitting with them and go through their homework from school and the

lessons given by the teacher from the Madrasas. Learn to support your children because if you do not do so then the bad and corrupted in society will support your children in the incorrect manner.

### **The father of Today!**

A father will come from work today and put his feet up whilst watching the television and reading the newspaper and instruct the child to do his homework and will not sit with him/her and assist. This is one of the reasons why the children of today do not respect their parents because they have not supported their children and brought them up in the Islamic environment but have learnt bad manners from the media watching soaps and films etc.

### **Success in both worlds**

If you want to be successful in this life and in the hereafter then follow the teachings of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and take them to the Masjid when the time for Salaah comes and instead of telling them to go whilst you remain at home. If you practice Islam then sons and daughters will learn from their parents. A very common saying 'Like father like son', if the father is a good Muslim then Insha'Allah the son will follow in his footsteps.

### **Leave behind good children**

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) has related the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said thatm, *"When a man dies no further reward is recorded for his actions, with three exceptions. 1) Sadaqah which continues to be supplied, assisted in building a Islamic educational Institute, or 2) knowledge from which benefit continues to be preached, or 3) the prayer of a pious son for his dead father."*

We hear shocking incidents that the father has died and the body is laying there and the son does not know how to offer the funeral (Janaza) prayer, he can't wash his fathers body, he doesn't know how to recite the Fatiha, Allah (The Exalted) forbid and give us the ability to learn and fulfil this part of the rights of the parents, Ameen.

### **What do fathers leave behind today?**

We hear of situations today where the father's body is in front of the son and the son does not know how to pray the Janaza (funeral) Salaah and does not know how to make supplication. May Allah (The Exalted) save us from illiteracy and give us all the ability to learn the knowledge of Islam and bring it into our lives by practising it.

### **True Heroes of Islam**

'Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates: *"In the battle of Badr, I noticed two youngsters, one on either side. One of the boys caught my hand and said; 'Uncle, do you know who Abu Jahl is?' I said 'Yes'. The boy said, 'If I see him I will not leave him until I kill him or I am killed.'* I noticed Abu Jahl dashing in the battlefield on the back of his horse. I said to the boys, *"There is the object of your quest.'* Both of them immediately darted towards him and started attacking him with their swords, till I saw him fall from the horse's back." <sup>xiii</sup>

These boys were Ma'adh bin Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) And Ma'awwaz bin Afra (may Allah be pleased with him), may Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to bring up our children like these warriors of Islam.

The following principles should be useful in establishing a childbearing method that is not too extreme.

### **Start Early**

Although many parents believe that small children are too young to understand, their early years are probably the most important opportunity for parents to start them in the right direction. Once good patterns are established, they will be easy to maintain. Once bad patterns are established, they will be difficult to change.

### **Have your Emotions Under Control while Instructing Children**

Don't discipline your child because you are angry with him, but rather because you want to teach him. Motive is important here. As a Muslim parent, your motive should be to help your child.

### **Parents should Present a United Front**

Parents should discuss their strategy for training and disciplining their children and agree to work together as a team. If children realise that one parent is strict and the other is easy, they will play the parents against each other. When the strict parent stops them from doing something, they will go ask the easy parent for permission. Both parents need to tell the child the same thing. If parents sometimes disagree on how to discipline the child, they should discuss it privately, not in front of the children.

### **Be Consistent**

Most experts on children agree that parents should be consistent. Constantly changing the rules and expectations will only confuse your child. If you stop him from writing on the walls today, and you allow him to write on the walls tomorrow, he will not understand when you get angry the next time he writes on the walls. If you inconsistently apply the rules, he will also test you at times to see whether you are going to be tough this time or easy. If, however, he knows from experience that you always stop him the first time, he will quickly learn it does no good to try to get away with something. Although consistency is essential, it does not mean that parents cannot change their minds about the rules. If you do change the rules, however, you must inform your child in advance so that he will know what to expect. This failure to be consistent is at the root of many parents' inability to control their children.

### **Never Lie to your Children**

If you lie to them "every now and then," they may not believe you when you tell them the truth. This also applies to those situations when you tell your child to stop doing something, or you will put him in his room, spank him, or take away his toys. If you make that kind of a threat, you must stick with it. Otherwise, you have lied, and your child will not know when you are serious and when you are not. He will then be forced to test you again and again to see.

'Abd-Allah bin Aami narrated that (When I was a child) one day my mother called and said "*Come I will give you something, at that time the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was sitting in our house.*" He inquired from my mother: "*What is it that you want to give him?*" She replied: "*I want to give him dates,*" He said, "*If you had given him nothing the sin of one lie would have been entered in your account.*"<sup>xiv</sup>

### **Don't Reward Crying**

If children realise that every time they cry, they get what they want, crying will become like money for them. Every time they want something, they will cry. On the other hand, if you teach them that crying doesn't get them anything, they will stop crying for things. Let them cry and cry and cry, but don't give in. In the beginning, it will be difficult, but be patient. Once they learn the lesson and stop crying for everything, you will be happy that you were firm. You can either listen to crying for a few days or for the rest of your life. It's your choice.

### **Teach Your Child to Apologise When he/she Does Something Wrong**

This is important so that he will learn what is expected of him from others and from Allah (The Exalted). If he does something wrong, he should ask forgiveness from Allah (The Exalted) and apologise to any people who were hurt by his words or actions. This will be useful in developing his conscience.

### **Accept Child's Apology**

Be quick to excuse your child when he apologises and shows that he is sorry for his disobedience or bad actions. When we do wrong, we seek forgiveness from Allah (The Exalted) and want to be excused. Likewise, we should excuse others. This will develop in your child a sense of mercy and prepare him for an understanding of the forgiveness of Allah (The Exalted). Always make it clear to the child that you love him, especially after he has been in trouble and apologised. Let him understand that no bad feelings remain.

### **Apologise For Your Mistakes**

Don't be too proud to apologise to your child when you make mistakes. This will establish in him a belief in your sense of justice and prevent him from viewing you as nothing but a tyrant.

### **Teach Islam From an Early Age**

Teach your child from an early age about Allah (The Exalted), the Prophets (upon them all be peace), the companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and the great heroes of Islam. If we develop in them a

love for Islam and provide them with righteous examples for their heroes, they will be much less likely to go astray. A person wants to be like his heroes. If he admires the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), 'Abu Bakr and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them), he will try to follow their example. If he admires a rock star or a gang leader, he will want to be like them. If we inspire our children with good examples, when they are tempted to do wrong, they will Insha-Allah, remember these examples, and remain steadfast.

### **Discipline Your Child**

Discipline should not become the domain of one parent. Mothers and fathers should both participate in the disciplining of their children. Although mothers often threaten their children by telling them that they will get into trouble when their father gets home, this method is not very useful for three reasons. First, discipline should be carried out immediately after the disobedience occurs so that the child will connect the disobedience with its consequences. If parents wait until later, the child may have forgotten why he got into trouble, and feel that the parents are not justified in disciplining him. Second, sometimes the child must be stopped immediately, and the mother cannot wait until the father gets home. The child must be taught to respond immediately to her commands as well as his father's. Third, making one parent responsible for disciplining the child may turn that parent into the "bad guy" in the child's eyes. The child should recognise that both parents agree on their methods of disciplining him. Although the degree to which various parents use them will vary, the following five methods might be used for disciplining your children.

Respected brother/sister! You should also have love for children in the same way that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would love children. If you ever want to stop them from doing something wrong do not shout at them as they will have hatred for you but tell them by explaining in a nice way as the first teachings of Islam start with children. Teach them manners of eating, drinking and using the toilet etc. May Allah (The Exalted) help us all to love children and bring them up as good Muslims and staunch followers of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), Ameen!

A question was asked to Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan; what rights do the parents have over their children towards the parents when they die?

#### **Answer:**

1. The first right is to bath them, shroud them offer the funeral prayer, and bury them.
2. Make supplication and ask for their forgiveness.
3. Give charity in their name and any good deeds you perform send them the reward.
4. Pay of their debt as soon as possible.
5. Perform Hajj on their behalf, and pay off any Zakah that needs paying.
6. If they have willed for anything try to complete it as long as it is accordance to the Shariah.<sup>1</sup>
7. Stick to the promises made by your parents; such as you will not go to such a place, you will not meet such a person etc.
8. To visit their graves every Friday, recite the Qur'an and send them the reward.
9. Be good with the relations and the friends of your parents. <sup>xv</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some people tend to fly their deceased to another country abroad. This is because the deceased has requested the family and the family feel it is their duty to fulfil the wish. In the books of Hanafi fiqh it states that *"It is preferable to bury the deceased in the town where they passed away. If the deceased does not live there then bury the deceased in the cemetery of the town where he lived. There is no problem in taking the body couple of miles as the cemetery is usually this distance. Some scholars disagree with taking the body to another place to bury, however, this is when the burial has taken place and then it is transferred to another site as this is forbidden, unless there is a necessity."*

Another problem is that when the body is taken abroad, to preserve the body from decaying etc. they use chemical and I have heard also alcohol. Making it unlawful and that the burial is delayed which is not recommended.

*May Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to bring up our children in the Islamic environment and with love, care and respect, Ameen.*

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<sup>i</sup> Bukhari & Muslim

<sup>ii</sup> Tabarani

<sup>iii</sup> ibid

<sup>iv</sup> Ibn Najjar

<sup>v</sup> Ahmad, Abu dawud and Al-Hakim.

<sup>vi</sup> Tirmidhi & Hakim

<sup>vii</sup> Ibn Majah

<sup>viii</sup> Ahmad

<sup>ix</sup> Muslim

<sup>x</sup> Ahmad

<sup>xi</sup> Bukhari & Muslim

<sup>xii</sup> ibid

<sup>xiii</sup> Seerate Mustafa (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

<sup>xiv</sup> Mishkat

<sup>xv</sup> Nizam-e-Shariat