

The Children and Their Social Responsibilities

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And we have charged mankind, that he be kind to his parents, his mother borne him impatiently, and painfully she gave birth to him; his bearing and his weaning are thirty months. Until, when he is fully grown, and reaches forty years, he says: O my lord, dispose me that I may be thankful for your blessing where with thou hast blessed me and my father and my mother, and that I may do righteousness well-pleasing to Thee; and make me righteous also in my offspring; surely I repent to Thee, and I am of those who surrender (to Thee).

Those are they from whom We shall expect the best of what they have done, and We shall pass over their evil deeds. They are among the inhabitants of Paradise. This is the true promise which they were promised (in the world).

But he who said to his father and his mother: Fie on you! Do you promise me that I shall be brought forth, when already generations have passed away before me? While they call on Allah for succor. Woe on you! Believe! Surely, Allah's promise is true; then he says: This is naught save the fairy-tales of the ancients.

Such are those on whom the word concerning nations of the Jinn and mankind which have passed away before them has effect. Surely, they are the losers.

[Sand-dunes]

First of all, it should be stressed that man is by nature under the influence of the various elements and factors daily surrounding him all through his life, such as, the cultural milieu, his family atmosphere, economic needs and requirements, the nature of the ruling or political system, and even his interaction with the historical changes leading to his status quo.

But, in spite of that all, man remains a free creature who is able to overcome and pass across all factors and elements of pressure which might divert him from the upright right. He remains by virtue of the strength and durability bestowed on him by Allah the Exalted capable of encountering and surpassing his cultural and family environment; the economic, political, social, and all other sorts of pressures.

Pharaoh's wife is one such example. Who does know of any human being more oppressive than Pharaoh? This great woman was Egypt's first lady, and all the conditions surrounding here pushed here to be a member of Pharaoh's tyrannical circle. But, surely, she did get out of this circle, believing in the Exalted, One, Matchless Allah. Although she underwent various other sorts of pressure, which did eventually end in her martyrdom in the way of Allah, the way she had chosen by herself ending to the eternal gardens of Paradise she liked and wished for.

So, man is well capable of exiting the circle of pressures no matter how vast and affecting they be.

Therefore and according to this fact, man does not have the right to justify his mistakes and errors because of his parents' sins or those of his society. For, if a father do not pray, a mother be not committed to her Islamic dress and veil, or a school be a corrupt and an improper one, all this and others do not entitle man to justify abandoning his prayers, chastity, deviation, or ill-manners. For, man is the chief responsible for both his life and destiny. No man should lie in another man's grave, or be rendered accountable for his deeds. For, Allah has finalized his signs and conditions to all men, and has equipped them with the means needed to face and overcome these pressures.

All this treats an extremely important issue, man's treatment of his parents and his positions regarding them.

The verses coming at the start of our speech treat this important issue, and man's interaction and affectations with his parents. The Quran has built the ideal method for men's correct and suitable interaction with their parents by saying "And we have charged mankind, that he be kind to his parents....", thus throwing all the responsibility on the children to be kind and mohsenin to their parents. In fact, ihsan is not just kindness. It is above all kinds of appreciation and thankfulness, and it covers man's highest ability in being and doing good. Man can be charitable rightly and based on his wishes, within the limits of the Islamic rule which orders him to avoid "excess".

So, if a man be rich, he is responsible of financially supporting his parents during their life and after they pass away, by providing them with the means for a noble and respectable life, or by contributing to charity foundations, such as, schools, health care centers, mosques, or by reciting the Quran, and praying presenting their rewards to both parents.

I say one might happen to be very kind and good to his parents while they are alive, but then as they die he might forget and neglect them by not doing good or praying to their benefit. This will make the parents complain to Allah for the negligence their children practice.

Now, the second issue is that the Holy Quran in the following part clearly testifies to the mother's first rank and place, "... his mother borne him impatiently, and painfully she gave birth to him; his bearing and his weaning are thirty months..." for, the days of pregnancy pass for mothers as hard as years and ages. We even read in the sayings quoted from the prophet's progeny that any pregnant Muslim woman if dies, shall be rewarded as the martyrs. What a great reward this is !! One should pay attention to how such a fair and delicate creature as the woman does put up with the difficulties of the energy and powers consuming pregnancy for

nine months, days and hours, the normal and natural period for pregnancy, all the time watchful not to lose her child, even though she knows not the future reality of this embryo, and whether it would be obedient to her or otherwise.

And even after its delivery she does very kindly wean and take care of her child, accepting its responsibilities by all means, until it reaches maturity. Then when he/she become parents should understand how hard a task and function their parents had undertook with bringing up the children, them. It is then that they ask Allah's favors to be able to thank his grace upon themselves and parents, asking Him to give them good children and successors, so that they could all build a good and righteous society.

This righteous model of a society is that which is promised Allah's forgiveness, and eternal residence in Paradise, the promise which Allah has ascertained and should never break.

As for the other models the Quran does demonstrate in its afore- mentioned holy verses, we come across cruelty and stepping out of good circle, saying, " But he who said to his father and his mother: Fie on you!..." It is the example of those who with no logical reasons desert and abandon their parents, or when seeing their prayers accuse them of being superstitious, or when are advised them to be good and well-behaving they do accuse them of the wish to rob children off their independence and freedom, or when parents go on the major pilgrimage , they accuse them of wasting their money.

I have even come across those children who prevent their parents from charity and accuse them of being foolish or excessive in their expenditure. All these examples fall into the frame work of children wishing to illogically and through religiously unlawful ways to desert their parents, what is asserted in the Quran's expression as " Fie ". Whereas children increasingly show their contempt for their parents, wholly denying the Day of Judgment in front of those people who actually feel most responsible to them, " While they call on Allah for succor. Woe on you! Believe! Surely, Allah's promise is true; then he says: This is naught save the fairy-tales of the ancients."

Among the things I can tell you is the case of that mother who had written several pages to me expressing her extreme concerns over her children's turning against Islam and converting to Christianity.

What could have possibly become of the young generations is their fascination with non-Islamic cultural airs, thus, fallaciously accusing their parents with awkwardness and stupidity. They claim to be an enlightened generation that wants to escape the burden of history in order to build a future based on modern and novel views and outlooks. Forgetting that the facts and truths of the original nature of man and that of faith are issues not susceptible to history and

old or new times and ages. For, they are constant facts ingrained deep in man's humanness, bringing about his creation and justifying his existence.

The Parents' Cultural Responsibilities

Every year, at the start of the new school year, it should be remarked and noted that the curriculums are not sufficient for building a conscious generation that is careful to build the human and Islamic future. Because such a task needs far more ethical and religious structures and building.

Whereas it is seen that most school material is not conducive to such aims and goals. Apart from their inability in forming that cultural and scholarly/scientific character needed to build and erect civilization. The most evident proof to this is the scientific retrogression becoming of our Islamic countries, and the continuing rush of technology being imported from the industrialized western states.

Yet, there is another important issue. The parents ,too, are responsible to know of the nature and manners of the teachers at our schools. Because, just cramming the children in schools whose teaching staff are neither well-qualified instructors, and nor morally fine people, should not ,on the parents' part, be a suitable response to the children's educational needs. Because, there are lots of teachers who have the worst educational practices, some even beating, insulting and destroying the students personalities.

Now, you, the student, should not believe that by studying and getting an academic degree you have offered all your services. Instead you should compare the truth of your learning by seeing how much services you are offering to your family, headed by the parents, your society, and religion. For, the children from one aspect and the parents from another are to know and recognize that, man's energy and powers are far above just being a school pupil. And that love and affection; clever, constant, and responsible attention and care on the part of the parents greatly help with forming man's character, making him an efficient and effective agent, and are far greater and better than most formal education.

There is still another note worthy issue. It is that the educational and teaching techniques are in themselves in need of repeated reconsideration. Because, for an individual to study just to obtain any certain certificate or degree is one matter, and his learning out of love for knowledge and self making is totally a different matter. Because, the first method does not end with the students' innovations. Whereas the primary reason for the innovators' innovations and the discoverer's discoveries is love for science and knowledge.

This love matches only evolution and creativity. Therefore, all students are to look for

knowledge that contains perfection and is a means to his goals in life. According to the holy prophet's words, " Pursuing knowledge is a must on every Muslim man and woman. ". And, it is foolish for the societies to spend huge amounts of money on educating individuals whose greatest concern is just passing different examinations and obtaining certificates, and on the other side to deliberately import foreign experts and consultants to run the projects.

But my advice to teachers and the intellectual within our societies is the necessity of their upgrading and elevating the cultural level with our young generation affected with the trivialities of the age and its liquid fashions. This calls for inserting purification and moral education indices and markers that are based on respect for the parents and the family and achieving pragmatism in life to meet the social, political, and economic responsibilities, injected with a scientific method in the educational and directive syllabi and curriculums, to rid the young generation from that shallow culture infecting it in this age of fluidity.

Man's existence in this life is closely related to his goal in life, achieving and capturing high objectives. This is only possible through making great efforts in education and the gradual development of sense of responsibility, exactly in the same manner the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali, says, " Learning at childhood is as inscription on stone. "

If we study the biographies of the great world figures, we will find out that there have been some bright spots in their lives leading them to this or that incentive, carrying them to their magnificent status. It is here that proper education mediates to create those luminous spots in man's life.

We do ask Allah the Exalted and Elevated to make us of those guided by Islam's light, those illuminated by the noble tradition's light, and to be among those who work for the good of the nation, serving the religion. Surely, He is the patron of all success.
.And, Allah's salutes to Muhammad(S.A.W.) and his pure progeny