

Family and Values from the Viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an

Abbas Ali Roostami Nasab & Zahra Shabestari Nejad Ravary

Education is certainly the most significant factor behind the formation of human character and her/his identity. Proper education should no doubt be regarded as the education based upon Divine values and imparted through knowledgeable, committed instructors the first of whom being parents, since education starts in the family environment, as we observe that the role of the family in education have been pointed out in the Holy Qur'an. And obviously, through benefiting from the Holy Qur'an, families can as the most fundamental units of education and training, take the most effective steps towards presenting Islamic education to the offsprings.

Undoubtedly, education and training are among the most significant and most valuable responsibilities of human being, since the most exalted and revered human beings, namely Divine Messengers(AS) and their righteous successors have been appointed by Allah to educate and guide human beings and have sought human happiness and salvation in this very realm; Education, of course includes many aspects, all of which are immensely significant in their own rights, yet it can be claimed that values and imparting values constitute the most considerable aspect of education, because values are the base of the contents of the education programs and also are directly connected to the most basic unit and centre of education, namely the family. Thus, getting adequate knowledge of values is to be

regarded as the first step towards education and no doubt Allah's Book is the best and most authentic source for our reference and knowledge in this regard.

“You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who hold command. If you should quarrel over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger if you believe in God and the Last Day; that will be better, and finer in the long run.” Al- Nisa: 59

The life-giving messages conveyed through the above verse are to be considered as Divine values in themselves and also as being the bases of many other Divine values. These teachings should certainly form the basis of education in families and should be imparted by parents to their children for their guidance. This Islamic education is just the opposite of the misleading ideas and concepts spread by the world arrogant powers and their Zionist-led media throughout the world. They know Islamic education protects family environments and so prevents their evil plots from being implemented and so they try hard to spread corruption in societies, because they have realized that corruption ruins families through taking the sacred values away from them and so they have aimed at misleading the world people through obscene films and books and propagation of false values, consumerism, materialism, individualism, and so on, to lead human beings and of course families and the youth astray and to make them submissive to colonialism and follow a slavish way of life. Here, let's turn to certain guidelines

presented by the Infallible (AS): According to Imam Ali (AS), both the family and the associates can impress the youth. From this Divine teachings, it can be inferred that parents should guard their young ones in the face of the companionship of the corrupt, astray friends. Also, according to our Divinely-guided teachers, education starts even before the child is conceived by her/his mother, as we read in a Hadith: “Educate your children two years before their birth.” This Hadith reveals the significance of the spiritual, moral condition of the would-be parents, teaching us that to be good parents, we need to educate and purify ourselves even before getting married. A pregnant and also a nursing woman's emotional and spiritual peace and welfare have also been emphasized in Islam; both in the Holy Qur'an as well as in the teachings of the Infallible (AS). No doubt, if Divine decrees and teachings are followed and acted upon by both men and women, not only their marital life will become a happy life for them, but also they will be blessed with healthy, intelligent and upright children as the fruits of their lives.

“A good land brings forth its plants with its Lord's permission, while whatever is sterile will produce only grudgingly. Thus We spell out signs for folk who act grateful.” Al-'Araf , 58

According to Qur'anic commentators, the expression ‘*Wal Baladel Tayyib*’ (a good pure land) in the above verse can also be taken to mean a ‘good virtuous family’. Likewise, according to Allamah Tabataba'ii the well-known theologian and

commentator of the Holy Qur'an, this expression also points to the fact that good virtuous deeds originate from good roots and in the same vein, evil deeds have their roots in evil origins.

So, we can conclude that properly guided parents can hope for pious promising children who in turn will contribute towards the well-being and prosperity of the society in numerous ways. And accordingly, impious, ill-mannered parents should expect undesirable offsprings. In the Holy Qur'an we are advised to protect ourselves and our families.

"You who believe, shield yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel will be men and stones: over it there (lurk) fierce, stern angels who do not disobey God in anything He commands them (to do). They do whatever they are ordered to." Al-Tahrim: 6

From this verse of the Holy Qur'an we can learn that Allah wants us to do our best to lead our families towards piety and a virtuous life and that we have certain responsibilities regarding our family members too. According to Qur'anic commentators keeping the family environment pure and away from impure conducts and sins is an injunction conveyed by the above-mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'an. No doubt, to fulfill this duty, careful plannings should be made from the very start; before choosing a spouse and should be continued throughout the phases of life. In other words, the rights of one's family members cannot be regarded as confined to the fulfilment of their material needs and rather they have the right upon us to be

provided with a spiritual guidance and proper religious education as well.

The Islamic decrees on bidding the good and forbidding the evil (*Amre bil-Ma'ruf wa Nahy Anil Munkar*) are obviously to be applied in this case, besides others. The story of the birth of a highly-revered Divine Messenger – Prophet Isa/Jesus Christ (AS) to Her Holiness Maryam/Mary (SA) told in the Holy Qur'an most beautifully can be considered as a proof for the significance of piety and chastity of parents in relation to the spiritual health, integrity and Godliness of the children. As pointed out by the Holy Qur'an, the parents of Her Holiness Maryam (SA) were known among their people as pious and chaste and honorable persons and also Her Holiness Maryam (SA) was very pious, chaste and devoted to worship of God.

Also, in the supplication for paying homage to the Master of Martyrs - Imam Hussein (AS) we say addressing the Imam (AS): "I bear witness that you have been *Noor* (Divine Light) in the upright loins and pure wombs," These words are also used when addressing all the Ahlul-Bait (AS) in supplications for paying homage to them and indicate our belief in the uprightness, purity and chastity of the ancestors and ancestresses of Ahlul-Bait (AS) the purified family of Allah's last Messenger - Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Thus, according to Islamic teachings, besides education, heredity plays significant roles in the formation of traits and characteristics; in the case of the Ahlul-Bait (AS) the righteousness of their fathers and chastity of

their mothers being reflected most brilliantly in those exalted personalities. So, both men and women should first and foremost be careful about their own thoughts, manners, and conducts as we are advised in the Holy Qur'an.

"You who believe, your souls are in your own care. No one who goes astray will harm you, provided you are guided. Toward God will you all return together, and He will notify you about whatever you have been doing." Al-M'aidah: 105

and also: *"Are you ordering people to be virtuous while forgetting it yourselves, even as you recite the Book? Will you not use your reason?"*

Al-Baqarah:44

These verses of the Holy Qur'an command us to be very careful about self-purification and to start the implementation of Divine decrees from ourselves; avoiding greed, jealousy, selfishness, and all other evil traits in order to become worthy of Allah's Mercy and unending blessings: *"Her Lord accepted her in a handsome manner and caused her to grow like a lovely plant and told Zachariah to take care of her. Every time Zachariah entered the shrine to (see) her, he found she had already been supplied with food. He said: 'Mary, how can this be meant for you?' She said: 'It comes from God, for God provides for anyone He wishes without any reckoning. ' " Al-i Imran, 37*

These Divine words point among other things to the factors behind the upbringing, training and education of Her Holiness Maryam (SA) who became the mother of an exalted Divine Messenger. These factors obviously included her mother's

chastity, purity of heart and intention and devotion to God. Besides, the parents should ask Allah for His help in this regard, as we see Allah's Prophets (AS) have done so.

*“My lord, make me keep up prayer, and have my offsprings [do so too].
“Our Lord, accept my appeal!” Ibrahim: 40*

“O Lord, leave us peacefully committed to You, and make our offspring into a nation which is at peace with you. Show us our ceremonies and turn towards us, you are so Relenting, the Merciful.” Al- Baqarah: 128

Accordingly, we observe that Imam al-Sajjad (AS) –the fourth infallible Imam has prayed to Allah for having pious offsprings: “O Allah! I beseech You to grant me the blessing of your protection of my offsprings and I beseech You to make them benevolent, pious, virtuous, knowledgeable and truth seeking servants of Your,” *Al-Sahife Sajjadiyeh*

No doubt, pure belief in Allah is needed by every man and woman in order to be regarded as a worthy spouse, as we are commanded in the Holy Qur'an regarding the prohibition of marriage with the *Mushrik* men and *Mushrik* women.

“Do not marry women who associate [others with God] until they believe. A believing maid is better than an associating woman, no matter how attractive she may seem to you. Do not let [your daughters] marry men who associate [others with God] until the later believe; a believing slave is better than an associator, no matter how attractive he may seem to you. Those people invite (one) to the Fire while God invites (us) to the Garden and to forgiveness through His permission. He explains His

signs to mankind in order that they may bear them in mind.” Al-Baqarah: 221

Bad women are for bad men, and bad men are for bad women; while good women are for good men and good men are for good women. The latter are absolved from anything they may say; they will have forgiveness and generous provision. Al-Nur: 26

In this connection, it is also worth mentioning that the Infallible (AS) have also advised their followers to choose spouses from among chaste, good-tempered people, because children will inherit the same. Also there is a Hadith saying that children are basically the products of their mothers.

Hence the significance of having a virtuous spouse becomes apparent and of equal significance is the behaviour of parents in the family environment, since children markedly tend to imitate their parents. In the Holy Qur'an, those who are faithful and have children who follow them in faith are promised Divine rewards thus.

“We shall unite those who believe and whose offspring have followed them in faith with their offspring. We will not deprive them of any action of theirs in any way; each man is a pledge for whatever he has earned.” Al-Tur: 21

The seventh Infallible Imam, Imam al-Kazim(AS), has also been quoted: “Good conduct by parents can have very good impressions on their children.”

Likewise, Imam al-Sajjad (AS) has addressed parents thus: “One of your children’s rights upon you is that you should know that they are from you and their goodness and/or badness will be related to you, and that it is your duty to guide them towards worship of and obedience to Allah. And so endeavor to educate them properly, keeping in mind the fact that you will be rewarded for the good actions they do and that if you mislead or mistreat them, you will be punished by Allah for that.” A very outstanding example in this regard is that of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his son - Prophet Ism’ail (AS). According to the Holy Qur’an, Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was himself a true Believer in the One God and a truth-seeking man of faith.

“Abraham formed a community that was devoted to God since he was righteous and was no associator; grateful for His favours, He chose and guided him to a Straight Road.” Al-Nahl: 120, 121

Educated by such a faithful, virtuous father, Prophet Ism’ail(AS) exhibited the best example of devotion to God and who became a great aide for his father in his efforts to serve God.

“Thus Abraham along with Ism’ail laid the foundations for the House; ‘Our Lord, accept this from us! Indeed You are the Alert, the Aware!’ ”
Al-Baqarah: 127

Prophet Ism’ail(AS) followed in the footsteps of his revered father - Prophet Ibrahim(AS) and called all, including his own offsprings to the worship of Allah and obedience to him.

“He used to order his people to pray and [pay] the welfare tax; he was approved by his Lord.” Maryam: 55

Regarding commentaries on the above verse, it has been held that according to the Holy Qur’an, to preach the religion, one should start from her/his own family and that is why the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam started the propagation of his Divine mission from his own near relatives and as we know his esteemed wife, Her Holiness Khadija(SA) was the first woman and his cousin, His Holiness Imam Ali(AS) was the first man (very young then) to believe in his Divine Mission.

And of course, all Divine Messengers (AS) have themselves set the best examples of piety and Godliness, though the disbelievers would stubbornly reject them. It should also be noted that according to the Holy Qur’an there were some who claimed that they were following in the footsteps of their forefathers and so saw no reason to believe in the religion of God and in God’s Messengers(AS):

“Whenever they are told: “Come to what God has sent down, and to [hear] the Messenger, they say: ‘We are satisfied with what we found our forefathers doing.’ even though their forefathers did not know anything and were not guided!” Al-Ma’idah: 104

“Whenever they are told: ‘Follow whatever God has sent down,’ they say: ‘Rather we follow what we found our forefathers doing.’ Even though Satan has been inviting them to the torment of the Blaze.”

Luqman: 21

So, besides being careful about our own piety, we have to care for and endeavour towards the piety of our family members, first and then of course the other people, as in the Holy Qur'an we read that Allah has commanded His Messenger to order his family to perform *Salaat*.

“Order your household to pray and to discipline themselves by means of it. We do not ask you for any provision; yet We will provide for you, and the outcome rests on doing your duty.” Ta-Ha: 132

“My dear son, keep up prayer, command what is proper and forbid dishonour. Endure patiently whatever may afflict you; for that shows determination in [handling] matters. Luqman: 17

To follow Islam – Allah's way has been the advice constantly given by all Divine Messengers to the last moments of their lives, as we read in the Holy Qur'an that Prophet Ibrahim(AS) and Prophet Y'aqub(AS) addressed their offsprings, thus: “

“Abraham commissioned his sons with it [as a legacy], and [so did] Jacob: ‘My sons, God has selected your religion for you. Do not die unless you are Muslims.’ ” Al-Baqarah: 132

And about the Infallible Imams (AS) we also read similar preaching. As a very noteworthy example here, we can cite the words addressed by the Commander of the believers - Imam Ali (AS) to his sons when His Holiness was in bed, (as a result of the fatal blow of the sword of a hypocrite) and going through the last hours of his blessed life: “I advise you to fear Allah, to avoid love of this world, to speak the truth and to work for Allah. I advise you, all my offsprings and family and also all

those who get informed of this last will of mine to fear Allah, to be careful and orderly in your life and regarding your duties and to be at peace and to make peace among yourselves.” *Nahjul-Balaghah*

The significance of being mindful of our duties towards our Omnipresent Creator - Allah, including performance of *Salaat* and paying *Zakaat* and also the necessity of avoiding attachment to worldly attractions can best be learnt from these Divine words of guidance. May Allah guide all of us to His Path.