

Nurturing Believers

Parenting Advice for Muslim Mothers

Part 2 - Why is *Tarbiyah* Important?

Most of us consider our children to be our biggest assets in the *dunya* (world), which is why we invest most of our resources, our time, and our mental and emotional energies in raising our children. We give them the best education we can afford, make contacts and develop relationships that will be beneficial for them, provide them with all possible comforts and facilities. We teach them the mannerisms of respectable people, inculcate in them the discipline to work hard, inspire them to reach for high academic and professional goals. In return, we hope that our children will be a source of pride and joy for us, that they will bring honor to our family, that our family name will continue through them, and that they will support us and take care of us in our old age.

However, the truth is that we are misdirecting our efforts at two levels.

First, it is not our children who are the source of honor and financial security for us. Rather, Allah ﷻ alone honors whomever He wills and provides sustenance for whomever He wills.

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ
وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

Say: O Allah! Owner of all dominion. You grant dominion to whomever You will and take away dominion from whomever You will. And You grant honor to whomever You will, and You humiliate whomever You will. In Your Hand is all that is good. Verily, You are Able to do all things. (Aal e Imran:26)

إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا

Indeed all power and honour belong to Allâh. (Yunus:65)

As for financial security, Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Quran:

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ﴿١٩﴾

Allah (swt) is most kind unto His servant, he grants sustenance to whomever He wills, He is the Most Strong, The Almighty (Ash-Shura: 19)

وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

And He provides from where they do not expect it, and whoever places his trust in Allah, then Allah is enough for him (At-Talaq: 3)

Indeed, when we raise children to meet the standards set by the *dunya*, and for success in the *dunya*, they may very well abandon us for the sake of the *dunya* in our own lifetimes, leaving us alone and helpless, weak and humiliated. How many parents today are truly satisfied with the way their children treat them when they are old?

Whereas children in whose hearts we establish the importance of the *hukm* of Allah ﷻ and the teachings of His Messenger ﷺ, will honor and obey their parents because of the Prophetic injunctions that **Paradise lies under the feet of mothers**, and that **the pleasure of Allah ﷻ is in the pleasure of the father and the displeasure of Allah ﷻ is in the displeasure of the father**. They will know that taking care of their parents in their old age is not a favor but rather the Prophet ﷺ said that **you and whatever you own, belongs to your father**.

The children we raise for returns in the *dunya*- not invested in their *tarbiyah* nor in nurturing their relationship with Allah ﷻ, nor teaching them the importance of the *deen*- they are not only unable to value us in this world, but on the Day of Judgement they will put the blame for their misguidance entirely on us.

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّنَا السَّبِيلَ

رَبَّنَا آتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنِّمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا

And they say Oh our Lord, indeed we followed our leaders and our elders thus they misled us; Oh our Lord, give them double punishment and curse them with a big curse (al-Ahzab: 67-68)

So of what benefit to us are our sacrifices, when our children abandon us in both the *dunya* and the *aakhirah* (hereafter), at times when we are most vulnerable?

Even if our efforts in raising our children yield the results in the *dunya* that we had hoped for, in truth we are selling ourselves short. The biggest rewards that we can hope to reap through our children are not in the *dunya* but in the *aakhirah*, when every single good deed performed by our children under our guidance will show up in our book of deeds. This will be because of the Prophetic principle, "**Whoever calls to guidance receives the reward of the one who follows him, without anything from their reward being diminished.**" For this reason the Prophet ﷺ told us that **among the three things that continue to benefit an individual after he or she passes away is a pious child**; one who makes dua for the deceased parents, and whose good deeds are counted in favor of the parents who inculcated that goodness in them. And it will not just stop with them, but rather this reward will go on multiplying for us as they teach these values to their children and the goodness carries forward in our future generations long after we have left the world.

Thus intelligent parents will put their trust in Allah (swt) and seek honor and financial security from Him, and raise their children to be assets for them in the *aakhirah*. This requires *tarbiyah*, and is one of the most important reasons for focusing on the *tarbiyah* of our children.

To be continued....

