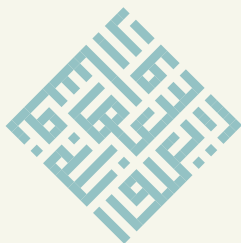


ISLAMIC PARENTING

Nurturing Your Child's
True Potential



MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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Nurturing Your Child's True Potential

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

Translated by
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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| FOREWORD | 5 |
| Better Home, Better Society | 11 |
| The Status of Children | 13 |
| The Responsibilities of Parents | 15 |
| It is Necessary to Let Go of Certain Things | 17 |
| A Remarkable Example | 19 |
| The Upbringing of Children | 21 |
| Cultivating a Religious Environment at Home | 25 |
| A Moment of Reflection | 28 |
| Approach to Upbringing of Children | 30 |
| Unnatural Love | 32 |
| A Lap Too Big | 34 |
| Emperor Akbar's Mother | 36 |
| The Home Environment | 38 |
| The Importance of Family | 40 |
| Training at Home | 42 |
| A Father's Gift | 44 |
| There is an Inheritance for Him as Well | 46 |
| The Upbringing of Girls | 50 |
| The Detrimental Effects of Family Culture | 52 |
| No Recognition of God | 54 |
| A Case of Serious Negligence | 56 |
| Little God | 58 |
| The Path to Success | 59 |

PARENTING: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

| | |
|---|-----|
| Contentment and Progress | 61 |
| Parents' Responsibility | 62 |
| Home: A Training Ground | 64 |
| How to Reform Children? | 67 |
| Spoiled Children | 69 |
| Negative Parenting | 71 |
| Education and Hard Work Pay | 73 |
| Conditional Love | 74 |
| Goodwill or Ill-Will | 76 |
| Future Consideration | 78 |
| The Harm of Pampering | 80 |
| Optimism or Realism | 82 |
| Suffering the Pangs of Separation from Children | 84 |
| The Trial of the Family | 86 |
| The Test of Life: An Examination | 88 |
| Negative Role of Home | 90 |
| The Loss of Pampering | 93 |
| Weak Personality | 98 |
| Raising Children | 100 |
| Deprivation: A Divine Blessing | 103 |
| Differently-Abled Person | 105 |
| Proving One's Worth | 107 |
| Looking For Work | 111 |
| Training and Education | 113 |
| The First School | 115 |
| He Was Expelled From School | 117 |
| Importance of Education | 120 |
| LAST WORD | 124 |

FOREWORD

According to a narration attributed to Hazrat Aisha, Prophet Muhammad said: ‘The best among you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family.’” (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3895)

Families are fundamental units of society, collectively shaping its fabric. If families are in good order, society will follow suit. Conversely, if families sink into a low moral state, society cannot prosper. Every person is born into a family, where he experiences his first lessons about home, family, and society. Therefore, we must improve families’ quality and focus on children’s positive upbringing to improve society.

Everyone experiences both positive and negative aspects. In a family, however, all these experiences remain confined within the boundaries of the home. Within the home, individuals, regardless of gender, learn the importance of alleviating the distress of family members and wholeheartedly acknowledging the benefits bestowed upon them. The positive upbringing of children is, therefore, essential. The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said:

“There is no gift that a father gives his child more virtuous than good manners.” (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 1952)

Another tradition in this regard is as follows: “Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet of Islam said, “Treat your children well and teach them good manners.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3671).

These traditions emphasize treating children well while focusing on instilling good manners in them. Here, good manners encompasses training in life management. This means teaching children to live in the world to become an asset rather than a liability to their family and society.

To prepare children for a better life, we must prepare them in their formative years at home. The personality formed during this period becomes deeply ingrained within a person. Parents must realize that mistakes made in their child’s upbringing during this phase cannot be easily compensated for in the future. While corrective measures may be possible under exceptional circumstances involving shocking experiences that can become a turning point for him, such instances are rare when such experiences cause a positive revolution in a person. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize providing a nurturing and balanced upbringing during the child’s formative years.

Then, it is crucial to refrain from pampering children in the name of love, just as one would abstain from anything forbidden. Pampering disconnects the child from the realities of life, hindering the development of a realistic approach. Moreover, it fosters a self-centred personality, which becomes a significant obstacle to achieving a successful life. Pampering children is the worst gift parents can give their children. According to the natural order, a child is not meant to remain in the shelter of their parents' lap indefinitely. They are born to explore the world's vast fields, engage in life's struggles, and gather experiences to shape their future.

Consequently, familiarizing a child with excessive parental affection contradicts the natural scheme of life. Parents ought to comprehend this inherent reality and raise their children accordingly. True love for a child lies in preparing him to face the realities of the future rather than making him live in a world that does not exist beyond their parents' lap.

Parents must train their children to lead a principled life. For instance, instilling in children the attitude of refraining from complaining about others and making them realize that they alone will bear the consequences of their mistakes. No one else will pay the price for their errors. Complaining about others is a futile use of time. They must help them to reflect on their mistakes in every situation, make corrections, and

strive to become better individuals. They should help them make modesty their guiding principle, rejecting attitudes of pride and superiority. They should hold themselves accountable rather than try to hold others responsible, thus channelling their time and energy into productive endeavours.

Parents should follow simplicity in their homes and lives so that their children can focus on the higher realities of life. Parents should strive to develop a strong understanding of monotheism and Islamic beliefs in their children. The remembrance of God and engagement in worship should become integral components of their personality. They should adhere to prayers and fasting. The desire for charity and good deeds should be instilled in them, and they should develop a passion for the daily study of the Quran and Hadith. Observing them, everyone should recognize them as pious children.

Then, parents must make their children understand the Creation Plan of God, that the present worldly life serves as a test for man. One kind of life can lead individuals toward Paradise, while another makes them deserving of eternal deprivation. This testing nature of life is related to the affairs within one's home and the affairs outside the home. The essence of this matter is that individuals should make their Creator their most significant concern. One who

makes other things besides God their concern will not pass the test and rise as destitute in the Hereafter when all his support has been cut off from them. At that time, they will lament, realizing their wealth did not benefit them and their power has vanished (Quran 69:28-29). Understanding this, parents must instill duty-consciousness rather than right-consciousness in their children. They must help them embrace positive thinking while guarding against negative thoughts. When children are brought up in such a manner, they will exemplify the highest moral character and contribute to the betterment of society.

This exemplifies the essence of the upbringing of children. It is not about allocating specific times to sit with children and deliver lectures or advice to them. When practical situations arise within the home, offering the children a choice between the right and wrong paths ensures their proper upbringing. In such instances, emotions must be controlled, personal losses endured, and the appropriate guidance provided to family members. Their minds should be redirected in the right direction. Upbringing is given within these circumstances, not through preaching sermons. Based on my experience, I advise parents to introduce printed and online CPS material to their children diligently. Encouraging them to engage with our curated audio and video content is equally essential.

The greatest guarantee for children's progress lies in cultivating a realistic approach and the spirit of action within them. Parents should awaken their children's inner potential, understand their circumstances, and shape their lives accordingly. Actual progress is achieved through diligence and hard work; progress bestowed by others is not genuine progress. This is the way forward for those interested in the upbringing and education of their children.

Wahiduddin Khan

January 2019

New Delhi, India.

BETTER HOME, BETTER SOCIETY

Families and homes are schools of informal education. If family members develop goodness and high moral character in themselves, they will contribute to the betterment of society.

According to a narration attributed to Hazrat Aisha, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: ‘The best among you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family.’” (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3895)

Families are fundamental units of society, collectively shaping its fabric. If families are in good order, society will follow suit. Conversely, if families sink into a low moral state, society cannot prosper. Every person is born into a family, where he experiences his first lessons about home, family, and society. Therefore, to improve society, we must improve the quality of family members.

There are two forms of education: formal and informal. Formal education equips individuals with skills for employment, whereas informal education focuses on fostering better individuals for society. Schools and

colleges represent formal educational institutions, while families function as informal educational establishments.

Everyone experiences both positive and negative aspects. In a family, however, all these experiences remain confined within the boundaries of the home. Within the home, individuals, regardless of gender, learn the importance of alleviating the distress of family members and wholeheartedly acknowledging the benefits bestowed upon them.

Those who receive such upbringing within their homes will likely exhibit similar societal behaviour. They will actively promote goodness, overlook unfavourable situations, and sincerely appreciate positive attributes in others. These individuals exemplify the highest moral character and contribute to the betterment of society.

THE STATUS OF CHILDREN

This world is like an examination hall; everything bestowed upon humans is an examination paper. Wealth, children, and everything else must be considered as a test.

A person called me on the phone and asked me what the Quran means when it refers to children as a trial or tribulation (8:28; 64:15). Muslims commonly understand that children are a gift from God; they do not perceive their children as a trial. So, how should we interpret the Quranic verses that describe children as a trial?

In response, I explained that children themselves are not inherently a trial. Poison, for example, is intrinsically harmful, but the issue with children does not lie in their inherent nature. The reality is that the wrong disposition of parents can turn their children into a trial for them. If parents possess a righteous spirit, their children will not be a trial for them. The word 'trial' literally means a test. This world is like an examination hall; everything bestowed upon humans is an examination paper. Wealth, children, and everything else can be considered a test. One should

perceive all these aspects from the same perspective and constantly strive to pass this test.

The essence of this matter is that individuals should make their Creator their most significant concern. No worldly possessions should be their sole focus whether wealth, children, or power. One who makes other things besides God their concern will not pass the test and rise in the Hereafter as a destitute person when all his support has been cut off from him. At that time, they will lament, realizing their wealth did not benefit them and their power has vanished (Quran 69:28-29).

Therefore, children, in reality, are a matter of responsibility rather than a matter of pride.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents must instil duty-consciousness rather than right-consciousness in their children. They should help them make modesty their guiding principle, rejecting attitudes of pride and superiority.

Regarding the upbringing of children, there is a hadith narrated by Anas ibn Malik: “Treat your children well and teach them good manners.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3671) This hadith emphasizes treating children well and instilling good manners in them.

In this hadith, good manners encompasses training in life management. It implies teaching children how to live in the world so they become an asset rather than a liability to their families and society.

Pampering children is the worst gift parents can give them. Conversely, training them to lead a principled life is the best gift parents can offer. For instance, instilling in children the attitude of refraining from complaints about others and helping them learn to reflect on their mistakes in every situation, make corrections and strive to become better individuals.

They should help them make modesty their guiding principle, rejecting attitudes of pride and superiority. They should hold themselves accountable rather than try to hold others responsible, thus channelling their time and energy into productive endeavours.

Parents should teach their children that they alone will bear the consequences of their mistakes. No one else will pay the price for their errors. Complaining about others is a futile use of time. Embracing positive thinking while guarding against negative thoughts is crucial. The most important thing is that parents must instil duty-consciousness rather than right-consciousness in their children.

IT IS NECESSARY TO LET GO OF CERTAIN THINGS

To fulfil essential obligations, one must practice patience and contentment in less significant matters. But people prioritize things on their home front and neglect important matters concerning religion.

While passing the road near Ajmeri Gate in Delhi, I overheard a bangle seller woman whispering, “If I wear a thousand rupees saree, I won’t be able to care for my children.” The bangle seller sitting next to her had criticized her ordinary saree. In response, the woman explained that she could indeed buy a better saree, but its cost would burden her to the extent that she would have nothing to spend on raising and educating her children.

This simple truth applies to everyone’s life. Every individual knows that to fulfil their essential obligations; they must practice patience and contentment in less significant matters. They must be willing to settle for less in certain areas to attain more in others.

This principle applies to both the poor and the rich. The poor must reduce their necessities to adhere

to this principle, while the rich must reduce their luxuries and comforts. Sacrificing less essential aspects and favouring more important ones is a universal obligation. There is no distinction between individuals in this regard.

However, people seem to have forgotten this crucial principle regarding religion and faith. In this realm, everyone finds themselves in the same state described in the Bible: “God’s house is in ruins because each of you is running towards his own house.” (Haggai 1:9)

People often prioritize the matters within their homes. They leave behind what they perceive as less important and focus on what they consider more important. However, when it comes to religious and communal matters, they tend to disregard the distinction between the important and the less important. They follow their preferences in these areas, even if it means neglecting what is truly important and getting caught up in trivial matters.

A REMARKABLE EXAMPLE

Parents should follow simplicity in their homes so that their children can focus on their education and the higher realities of life.

A professor at a college in Delhi once shared an anecdote about an elocution competition in the city. Students from various colleges participated, delivering speeches in English. The key aspect the judge considered important was the style of delivery or presentation. Dr. R. K. Merchant's daughter possessed the most impressive style, securing her the first prize.

What was the secret behind her success? I discovered the answer on August 26, 2009, during a program at the Sai International Center in New Delhi, where I had the opportunity to meet Dr. R.K. Merchant. A highly educated individual residing in Delhi, he attended the meeting alongside retired General Chhabra and several others. Dr. Merchant revealed that they did not own a television at home and relied on the radio for the news. In this simple statement, I found the key to understanding why their children were so successful in their education.

I had previously visited Dr. Merchant's home, observing its simplicity. His two daughters were always engrossed in silent study and writing. Despite Dr. Merchant owning a car, his daughters travelled to school by bus. There was no trace of the "TV culture" in their home. This simple and principled way of life indeed contributed to the success of Dr. Merchant's children.

In today's times, fathers often complain about their children, but the truth is that they should be reflecting on themselves. Usually, parents contribute to this issue by failing to create a simple environment within their homes. Their primary desire becomes fulfilling every wish of their children, leading them to become absorbed in the "TV culture." This very phenomenon is what causes deviation within homes. The responsibility for this degradation lies solely with the parents, not the children.

THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

Parents must train their children and help them develop positive personalities in their formative years. CPS literature and videos serve as an introductory program for this.

In a Western country, a Muslim family expressed their desire for their children to stay with us for a few days and receive an Islamic upbringing. I declined this suggestion. From my perspective, such an approach is artificial. Any meaningful task can only be accomplished naturally, as unnatural methods never yield true benefits.

This brings to mind an incident from April 1981 when I attended an international conference in Barbados. As part of the program organized by the local Muslim community, a gentleman brought his 12-year-old child along with him. The child positioned himself outside the gathering with his back to me. When someone questioned his way of sitting and advised him to join the people inside, the boy nonchalantly responded, “Me not,” meaning: “I don’t care.” This incident holds symbolic significance for all Muslim

families in the present era. Nowadays, individuals work hard to earn money and then spend a significant portion of their earnings on their children in the name of love. However, this is not genuine love; it is mere indulgence that profoundly impacts the spoiling of their children.

A child's first ten years is the "formative period" in psychological terms. This phase holds immense importance as the personality that takes shape during this time has a lasting impact throughout one's life.

Unfortunately, in today's world, parents often unknowingly harm their children disguised as love during this formative period.

Based on my experience, the core issue lies in the lack of seriousness among present-day parents regarding their children's upbringing. Their efforts tend to be superficial, limited to providing Islamic attire such as round caps for boys and scarves for girls. They believe that this alone constitutes a complete Islamic upbringing. However, I offer practical advice for those genuinely concerned about their children's upbringing.

Firstly, it is crucial to refrain from pampering children in the name of love, just as one would abstain from

anything forbidden. Pampering disconnects the child from the realities of life, hindering the development of a realistic approach. Moreover, it fosters a self-centred personality, which becomes a significant obstacle to achieving a successful life.

Furthermore, it is vital to recognize that the child's initial formative period is spent with the parents. The personality that is formed during this period becomes deeply ingrained. Parents must realize that mistakes made in their child's upbringing during this phase cannot be easily compensated for in the future. Corrective measures may be possible under exceptional circumstances involving shocking experiences that can become a turning point for him. Although such instances are rare, they can become the cause of a positive revolution in a person. Therefore, providing a nurturing and balanced upbringing during the child's formative years is crucial.

Based on my experience, I advise parents to diligently introduce our organization's printed and online material to their children and ask them to read it not just once but repeatedly. Encouraging them to engage with our curated audio and video content is equally essential. These are accessible on our website, details of which can be seen on the last page.

Participating in this introductory program is crucial for parents who are genuinely interested in their children's upbringing and education. No magical measures can effectively reform children if they are not availed of this opportunity.

CULTIVATING A RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT AT HOME

If you genuinely want to instil Islamic values in your children, make religion the centre of conversations at home, prioritizing it over worldly matters.

I met an educated Muslim. He enthusiastically shared his daily practice of gathering his family members every morning to recite a section of a religious book. This approach is followed by many individuals who believe it fulfils their religious obligations. However, this method is undoubtedly underestimating human nature, as people are not influenced solely by formalities.

Teaching family members through reciting religious books is only one aspect of the overall responsibility. The other essential component is cultivating a conducive religious environment within the home. Without a suitable environment, mere recitation will not yield the desired result.

Presently, the environment in many households has become entirely materialistic. Complaints against one another prevail within the home. Negative news

remains the subject of discussion. Conversations related to human welfare are absent, replaced by an atmosphere of self-centeredness and a lack of empathy. Topics of discussion primarily revolve around food, clothing, money, business, and jobs.

Reading and reciting religious books at home is indeed a commendable act. However, for it to be effective, it is crucial to cultivate a conducive religious environment within the home. The same atmosphere described in the book should prevail in the house before and after reading the book. Creating a genuinely religious home requires complete sincerity. Such actions alone cannot fulfil the guardians' responsibility without establishing a spiritual environment at home.

I want to give an example in this regard. In August 1996, I travelled to America and attended a gathering at Mountain Valley Mosque in New Jersey. The event primarily involved women, and the focus of the speech was on the Islamic upbringing of children in American society. My message to them was that imparting Islamic upbringing to the next generation requires more than merely appointing a religious scholar to teach religious studies every evening or relying on distributing religious messages in the names of one's children or exposing them to cultural practices. The solution lies

in Islamizing your home. If you genuinely want to instil Islamic values in your children, make religion the centre of conversations at home, prioritizing it over worldly matters.

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The universe is God's silent book. It reveals divine truths through signs. If one can comprehend the silent language of the universe, it can become a boundless source of the realization of God.

The universe is God's silent book, revealing divine truths through signs. If one can comprehend the silent language of the universe, it becomes a boundless source of the realization of God.

Consider a tree. When it first emerges from the ground, it is a fragile plant without the strength to withstand a storm. It yields to the gusts of wind, moving in the direction they dictate. However, the same tree after 25 years presents an entirely different image. It stands tall on a sturdy trunk, unaffected by the wind. It remains upright, firmly rooted in the ground. It now exists as a "tree," whereas before, it stood as a "plant."

In this manner, the tree symbolizes that every individual reaches a point where they require a period of growth. The period of growth in one's life is a time to send roots into the ground, strengthen one's core, and manifest oneself as a powerful entity. During this

phase, one should not live how a person lives after becoming strong and stable. If he does not do this and misses out on this constructive growth period, he will not reach any stage of development. Such a person will always remain a weak “tree.”

APPROACH TO UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

When practical situations arise within the home, offering the children a choice between the right and wrong paths ensures their proper upbringing.

Once, a gentleman was severely scolded by his neighbour. But he quietly returned home without responding to the person who scolded him. Upon learning about the incident, his son became furious. He exclaimed, “How dare that person humiliate my father? I will teach him a lesson so he never dares to show such audacity again.”

The father managed to calm his son’s anger and said, “After all, he only used some words. He did not physically harm me. So, what is our loss in this? Why should we stoop to his level if he has an abusive tongue? Let’s forget about him and focus on our work.” What could have become a source of grief and a desire for revenge in normal circumstances became an opportunity for patience and tolerance. After a few days, the neighbour himself felt ashamed. He approached them, apologized for his insolence, and behaved well.

If the father had awakened a vengeful spirit in his son, he would have become an agent of evil. However, he became a beacon of goodness and truth by cooling down his son and guiding him toward tolerance. In the words of the Quran, he became a model (*imam*) for the righteous (25:74).

This exemplifies the essence of upbringing. It is not about allocating specific times to sit with children and delivering lectures or advice to them. When practical situations arise within the home, offering the children a choice between the right and wrong paths ensures their proper upbringing. In such instances, emotions must be controlled, personal losses endured, and the appropriate guidance provided to family members. Their minds should be redirected in the right direction. Upbringing is given within these circumstances, not through preaching sermons.

UNNATURAL LOVE

True love for a child lies in preparing him to face the realities of the future rather than making him live in a world that does not exist beyond their parents' lap.

On October 15, 2003, a local Muslim man visited me at my hotel in Surat, Gujarat. He had a young child in his arms, whom he sometimes carried on his shoulder and other times cradled in his lap. As they entered my room and sat down, I inquired if the child was his. With a joyful response, he confirmed that he was indeed his son. I then told him that he was inadvertently acting as an enemy to his son. His love for him had become synonymous with hindering his growth. Hearing this unexpected comment, he became anxious and asked me for an explanation. I explained that he could not keep his son in his lap forever, as eventually, he would enter a world where no one would hold him. True love for a child lies in preparing him to face the realities of the future rather than making him live in a world that does not exist beyond their parents' lap. He argued that he was still a small child. I countered that such thinking was contrary to nature.

Upon hearing this, he gently placed his child on the ground. Instantly, the child starts running, resembling a bird locked in a cage that begins to soar as soon as it is set free.

According to the natural order, a child is not meant to remain in the shelter of their parents' lap indefinitely. They are born to explore the world's vast fields, engage in life's struggles, and gather experiences to shape their future on their own. Consequently, familiarizing a child with excessive parental affection contradicts the natural scheme of life. Parents ought to comprehend this inherent reality and raise their children accordingly.

A LAP TOO BIG

One should live in the remembrance of God. Placing complete trust in Him, one should become so immersed in the magnificence of divine blessings that the omissions of others become insignificant.

In Indian tradition, a story is told that a king had two queens, each having a child. There was a rivalry between the two queens. One day, one of the queen's children sat on the king's lap. Observing this scene, the other queen got angry. She removed the child from the king's lap and replaced him with her own. The child then went to his mother crying and recounted the whole story. The mother advised, "Sit on the lap of Param Pita (God), and you will have no grievances."

Though symbolic, this story imparts a profound lesson. People often harbour different types of complaints bestowed upon them by their families and society. Yet, these grievances are trivial. The more significant issue is that a person should live in the memory of God. Placing complete trust in God, one should become so immersed in the magnificence of divine blessings that the omissions of others become insignificant.

Complaining to fellow humans is, in reality, a consequence of being unaware of God. The countless blessings showered upon humanity by God are akin to an ocean, while what comes from humans is merely a drop in comparison. Adding a drop from his side to this ocean of divine blessings would not increase it. Similarly, removing a drop from this ocean would not diminish it.

Everyone rests in the lap of “Param Pita,” God Almighty. If one fully grasps this reality, he will understand that even the most substantial complaints appear inconsequential.

EMPEROR AKBAR'S MOTHER

Women, as mothers, play a vital role in shaping their children's minds. They should listen to their children and offer them guidance based on wisdom.

Mulla Abdul Nabi (died 991 AH) was a prominent scholar during Emperor Akbar's reign. The Abdul Nabi Mosque, built by him, still stands near Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in New Delhi. Mulla Abdul Nabi served as Emperor Akbar's teacher, which led to his frequent visits to Akbar's court.

Recognizing their special bond, Akbar appointed Mulla Abdul Nabi as the *Sadr-us-Sudur*, head of the Ulama, and chief advisor of the King in his government, granting him a position of great honour. Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni remarked that the importance of presidency achieved during the times of Mulla Abdul Nabi was unparalleled in any kingdom.

Akbar held Mulla Abdul Nabi in such high regard that he would even assist him in wearing his shoes. He would visit Mulla Abdul Nabi's place and attentively listen to his teachings. This association left a lasting impact on

Akbar to the extent that he would personally give the call to prayer (*Azaan*) at the mosque and occasionally sweep its floors so that he may be rewarded by God.

On one occasion, during Akbar's birthday celebration, he donned saffron-coloured attire as part of his well-known policy. However, Mulla Abdul Nabi mistakenly interpreted the colour as that of Hindu Sadhus and became upset. In response, he struck Akbar with his cane in the crowded court. Although saddened by this act, Akbar quietly rose and retreated into the Palace, where his mother, Mariam Makani, was present, and Akbar confided in her, revealing that Mulla Abdul Nabi had struck him in the court. Akbar said there would have been no issue if Mulla Abdul Nabi had privately advised him.

Mariam Makani, a wise and knowledgeable lady, attentively listened to her son's account and advised him not to hold grudges in his heart. She explained that it would lead to his salvation in the Hereafter. She prophesied that until the Day of Judgment, people would recount how a powerless *Mulla* (a religious scholar) provoked the king and how the gracious king responded with patience. This incident of Emperor Akbar shows women's vital role in shaping their children's minds.

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Genuinely religious people maintain a constant awareness of God's authority. They live with a mindset of accountability, always mindful of their actions.

In today's world, the distinction between secular and religious individuals appears visible in their outward lives but not within their homes. Outwardly, they may wear different attire. While a secular person might say, "Good morning," a religious person might say, "As Salaam u Alaikum". A secular person may go to a club, whereas a religious person may go to a mosque, and so on. However, these differences are limited to their external lives. If we observe the environment inside their homes, we will not find any noticeable differences between the houses of secular and religious individuals. And if any differences exist, they are merely superficial, relating to customs rather than actual reality.

The Quran provides descriptions of both types of homes. To understand the characteristics of a non-religious person's home, we can refer to this verse: "He used to be happy with his people" (Quran 84:13). This implies that a non-religious person leads a family-oriented life and finds happiness among their family

members. Such people invest their time and resources in their family, confident they have utilized them wisely. Seeing their family brings them joy, and their interests and activities revolve around their loved ones. However, those who live solely in this manner can never become faithful servants of God or partake in His eternal blessings.

On the other hand, the identification of a religious person's home is revealed in another verse: 'Before this, when we were among our families, we were full of fear of God's displeasure' (Quran 52:26). This indicates that the dwellers of Paradise will attest to having feared displeasing God even in the presence of their family members. It is evident from this verse that a genuinely religious person is always aware of being accountable to God, and is always mindful of his actions whether inside or outside of his home.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

Family represents a microcosm of the broader human community, encapsulating all its situations. Each individual is offered an invaluable education within a family. If one can receive a proper upbringing in one's family, one will surely acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for a successful life.

Family represents a microcosm of the broader human community, encapsulating all its situations on a larger scale. Each individual is offered an invaluable education within a family, acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for a successful life. However, one crucial condition must be met: individuals should avoid falling victim to blind family attachment and instead view their family members like any other human being.

The reality is that the diverse array of character types found in the world is mirrored within one's own family. The family can be likened to the mythical "Jam-e-Jamshed", for which it was believed that all the seven heavens of the universe could be observed by looking into this cup. Similarly, a family reflects a spectrum of moral examples. By observing their family and

relatives, individuals can gain life experiences and make realistic plans for their own lives.

Unfortunately, only a few people genuinely benefit from this proximity. What causes such deprivation? There is a singular reason: the absence of objective thinking among individuals. People often succumb to bias when thinking about their family members. They overlook their family's mistakes while adopting an unsympathetic attitude towards those outside the family. They view outsiders from one perspective and their family members from another, resulting in an inability to learn from their own experiences or seek guidance from the lives of others.

TRAINING AT HOME

The home serves as a natural training ground for individuals. If one displays good character within the limited circle of the house, one can exhibit good character within the wider circle of society.

The upbringing within the home is of utmost importance. The Prophet said, “The best among you is the one who is best to his family members” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 1977). This implies that someone who treats his family members well will also excel in interactions with others outside the family. The home serves as a natural training ground for individuals. Interactions within the home occur within a confined sphere, whereas in society, interactions occur on a broader scale. Therefore, displaying good character within the limited circle of the house will translate into exhibiting good character within the wider circle of society. It enables individuals to become better human beings in a broader context.

There was once a gentleman working in the government service who believed in keeping his wife under control. He consistently put this theory into practice within the confines of his home, speaking harshly to the women

of his household, treating them oppressively, and not allowing them any freedom.

He brought this temperament from his upbringing at home into the office. Unfortunately, his behaviour extended to his fellow officers, including a lady officer. Consciously or unconsciously, he maintained the same domineering attitude towards her as with the women in his home. Initially, the lady officer tolerated it. However, his excessive behaviour eventually affected her. She became irritated and intentionally sabotaged his record. Consequently, his promotion was revoked, and he became entangled in various office problems.

The correct principle is one which is equally applicable, both within and outside the home. People should uphold their dignity within the home, respect their elders, and show kindness towards the younger ones. This principle is successful both within the house and in interactions in the outside world. Man needs to live with moderation both within and outside the home.

A FATHER'S GIFT

A father should thank God Almighty for allowing him to provide for his children. And when he cannot bestow worldly possessions upon his children, he should offer heartfelt prayers to His Lord for his children.

When a father cannot provide material possessions like a house and wealth for his children, he often feels worthless. As a father, he has been unable to build their world for them. However, this is not a positive feeling of a father towards his children. Instead, gratitude should be the correct sentiment. A father who can offer worldly possessions to his children should be grateful to God for granting him the ability to provide. God has blessed him with hands and feet, enabling him to earn and fulfil his children's material needs.

On the other hand, for a father who cannot bestow worldly possessions upon his children, prayer is still something significant that he can offer them. He can humbly say in his prayers, "O God, I may not have been able to provide my children with what I desired, but You are their Lord and mine. Grant my children what I could not provide. Accept my supplications on behalf

of my children, just as You have inspired human beings with the prayer: ‘Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.’” (Quran, 2:201)

When a father makes this prayer for his children, he bestows them something more significant. He desired to give himself to his children, but his circumstances have allowed him to surrender them to their Lord through his heartfelt prayers. He wanted to offer his children something small; his circumstances enabled him to give them something far greater—God, the Lord of the Worlds.

THERE IS AN INHERITANCE FOR HIM AS WELL

Most fathers believe wealth and property are the most significant inheritance they can leave for their children. The truth is that the most valuable legacy a father can bestow upon their children is moral inheritance.

Karim Bukhsh was a simple, religious man. He lived in the village, earning an average income. When he passed away at the age of 65, he left four children without any significant property to bequeath to them. Following their father's demise, the eldest son, Rahim Bukhsh, moved to the city for livelihood. There, he started a small business with limited capital.

Rahim Bukhsh did not inherit material wealth from his father. However, he inherited something more valuable—contentment, simplicity, and the ability to work diligently without complaint. These qualities proved to be immensely advantageous for Rahim Bukhsh. Despite having an average income, his simplicity and contentment propelled him forward. His temperament of avoiding conflicts and disputes further aided his progress. He gained the favour and

support of everyone around him. Though his progress was gradual, it was unwavering.

While Rahim Baksh's business may have been modest, his integrity, selflessness, and honesty earned him the respect one would associate with a person of great stature. Despite having limited capital, people in the market would say to him, "*Mian ji*, take as much merchandise as you need. Do not worry about payment. It can come later." Occasionally, he faced disagreements but remained silent rather than retaliating against those who wronged him. He focused on his business and offered prayers for their well-being. Whenever negative thoughts crossed his mind, he would envision his father's innocent face, reminding him that engaging in dishonest dealings or conflicts would harm his father's soul in the grave. This thought swiftly suppressed his emotions, and he resumed following the path of progress, the same path his father had shown him.

Their business expanded, necessitating additional help. Consequently, he decided to involve his brothers. Gradually, all four brothers moved to the city. Over time, their business flourished, establishing four permanent branches, each entrusted to one brother. While they would gather, dine, and socialize together from a business point of view, each brother operated his branch independently.

After a while, Rahim Baksh, the eldest brother and the business owner, noticed that his other brothers were not exhibiting the same level of commitment as he had expected, considering their responsibility. Rahim Bukhsh had to make one of the two choices: either assume complete control of the business and sever ties with his brothers, resulting in lifelong enmity, or allow the current state of affairs to persist, including mutual grievances, and eventually divide the business with bitter memories.

Rahim Baksh pondered over this dilemma for a few days. Subsequently, he gathered all the brothers and openly discussed the matter with them. He expressed gratitude to God for the absence of major issues thus far and proposed the best course of action: each brother would assume individual responsibility for one business. This way, their father's soul would find peace, and Rahim Baksh believed it would bring blessings to everyone. The other three brothers were grateful for his generosity and agreed to abide by his decision. After a brief discussion, they opted to draw lots to determine the assignment of each brother to a specific business.

Now, all four brothers are engaged in their respective businesses, working diligently from morning till evening, often accompanied by their children.

Surprisingly, their relationships have improved even more than before. They willingly assist one another and have established separate residences. However, Rahim Baksh remains the same elder brother he always was. No brother ever denies a request made by another, and when there is a need in one household, the women and children from all four families join forces to fulfil it, treating it as a collective responsibility.

Most fathers believe that the most significant inheritance they can leave for their children is wealth and property, focusing solely on worldly possessions. However, the truth is that the most valuable legacy a father can bestow upon their children is a principled life. It is through imparting these lessons that children learn to place trust in their hard work, engage in their pursuits by avoiding conflicts, be content with their rightful share, prioritize future possibilities over immediate benefits, embrace realism instead of indulging in fantasies, and understand that moral inheritance surpasses material wealth. Unfortunately, only a few fathers are aware of this profound reality.

THE UPBRINGING OF GIRLS

Whether a father has sons or daughters, he is responsible for providing them with the best education, instilling in them a strong work ethic and the skills to build a prosperous future for themselves.

Regarding the upbringing of girls, there is a Hadith states: “Whoever has three daughters, and he is patient with them, gives them a good upbringing, and treats them well, he becomes deserving of Paradise.” (*Sunan Abu Dawood*, Hadith No. 5147)

This Hadith, narrated by Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri, conveys that the Prophet of Islam emphasized the importance of raising and educating daughters, marrying them off, and treating them with kindness. Such actions are rewarded with Paradise.

It is common for some individuals to devalue daughters when there are no sons in their household. However, this Hadith refutes such a mindset. Whether a father has sons or daughters, he is responsible for providing them with the best education and upbringing to equip them for a successful life.

Many fathers prioritize material comforts for their

children, striving to accumulate wealth for them. However, this approach is flawed. The greatest gift a father can give his children is education, not wealth. Easy money earned by the father often leads to the downfall of children. Instead, parents should focus on educating their children, instilling in them a strong work ethic and the skills to build a prosperous future for themselves.

THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF FAMILY CULTURE

The foundation of family life should facilitate intellectual growth rather than becoming a constant obstacle to mental development. Families should engage in serious discussions on significant issues of life.

In the current age, particularly in the Eastern world, a culture known as “Family Culture” prevails around earning money and meeting the demands of family members. People consider this the sole model and remain unaware of any alternative one.

The major drawback of this family culture is that it has become synonymous with befooling of the family. Consequently, people’s thinking becomes extremely limited. Their minds are confined to their material needs, preventing them from thinking beyond these constraints. Reading books and engaging in meaningful discussions are not part of their environment. They lack the culture of interacting with people other than their relatives, learning from them, and benefiting from their experiences. It is typically for work, leisure, or shopping when they venture outside their homes.

Intellectual development is an unfamiliar concept to them.

The damage caused by this family culture is that while the people may appear to lead comfortable lives based on material wealth, they suffer from intellectual dwarfism. Engaging them in serious discussions reveals their lack of scientific thinking, knowledge of the universe of facts, and opinions on significant life issues. They may outwardly resemble human beings, but they are merely well-dressed animals. The foundation of family life should facilitate intellectual growth rather than becoming a constant obstacle to mental development.

NO RECOGNITION OF GOD

Recognizing that everything one receives is a direct gift from the Lord is acknowledgement or gratitude in religious terms. Only one possessing this psychology has the right to live legitimately in this world.

Nowadays, people earn money and buy cars to give to their children. The car windshields bear the words “Dad’s Gift.” This matter is significant. In reality, it reflects ingratitude toward one’s true Benefactor. Failing to attribute a blessing received from God to God Himself and instead claiming it as a personal accomplishment is a form of lack of acknowledgment of God’s blessings. Undoubtedly, ingratitude towards God is the gravest sin in this world.

Chapter 27, Verse 40 of the Quran mentions that when Prophet Solomon, son of David, received a material blessing, he immediately acknowledged, “This is by the grace of my Lord.” In other words, he recognized it as God’s gift. This is the correct way of faith. A true believer considers everything as belonging to God; he attributes any blessing he receives as coming directly from God.

In this world, it may seem humans receive things solely through their efforts, but this is merely the

outward aspect. The ultimate reality is that everything is a gift from God. The test for humans is to remove the external veils and recognise that everything they receive is a direct gift from their Lord.

This acknowledgment is known as gratitude in religion. A person possessing the psychology of appreciation and acknowledgment has the right to live legitimately in this world. Gratitude grants anyone the right to live in the present world. Conversely, those with the psychology of ingratitude and denial are considered intruders and criminals in God's realm.

A CASE OF SERIOUS NEGLIGENCE

Nowadays, every man is a case of 'losing;' no man is a case of 'gaining.' People should focus their actions on what they already have instead of on what they have yet to achieve.

I observed and interacted with a Muslim couple for an hour and noticed a lack of emotional connection between them. Throughout our time together, their mobile phones kept ringing with calls from their children. They conversed with their children on the phone, displaying a deep emotional attachment to them. I pointed out that their situation resembled that of an ignorant father. The issue with people like them is that they fail to appreciate what they already have practically acquired. Instead, they make their primary concern something they will not have.

I explained to the man that he possesses two things he has already obtained: his existence and his spouse. In his case, he neglected to pursue higher education, and in the case of his wife, he ignored her, leading to her frustration as she failed to find a creative role in her life. Meanwhile, all his interests have become solely focused on his children, who will eventually grow

up and forge their own separate lives. His children will not always be there for him. I explained that he was wasting what he already had while unnecessarily focusing all his attention on something he would not receive.

This is the case with almost all people nowadays. Nowadays, every man has become a case of 'losing.' No man is a case of 'gaining' in the real sense. A man discovers his negligence when he reaches the end of his life and does not have time to compensate for this serious negligence. People should focus their actions on what they already have instead of on what they have not achieved.

LITTLE GOD

Husbands and wives should harbour feelings of love and respect toward each other and train their children to become duty-conscious.

I met a married woman with two young children during my trip to America. It came to light that she was living separately with her children in a small house due to conflicts with her husband. I remarked that a peculiar phenomenon is emerging, where husbands love their children but harbour resentment towards their wives, and wives love their children but feel animosity towards their husbands. This contradiction goes against the laws of nature, as contradictory thinking and intellectual development cannot coexist. I noted that nowadays, for husbands and wives, their child becomes akin to a little god. But the husband and wife through whom this child was born grow distant from each other.

THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Adopting a realistic approach, people should plan their lives based on their capabilities rather than solely on their children's ambitions.

A gentleman worked for a Government Department but felt his income was insufficient for his children's progress. Consequently, he left the service and ventured into business to earn more and provide better opportunities for his children's progress. However, he did not achieve the desired success in his business. Owing to stress, he eventually contracted cancer and succumbed to the disease before earning extra money for his children. This unfortunate occurrence is common and has destructive consequences for most people. In such situations, individuals must adopt a realistic approach. They should plan their lives based on their capabilities rather than solely on their ambitions for their children. The matter of their children's future should be entrusted to the children themselves. They should never destroy themselves for the sake of the children and, ultimately, themselves.

The greatest guarantee for children's progress lies in cultivating the spirit of action within them. They

should help their children awaken their inner potential, understand their circumstances, and shape their lives accordingly. Actual progress is achieved through diligence and hard work; progress bestowed by others is not genuine progress. Those who harbour such desires mostly fail because of their emotional connection with their children. They become desirous of things that may not be destined according to the divine plan. Emotional decision-making should be avoided in such matters. Instead, a person should adopt a realistic approach, carefully consider their circumstances, and plan their actions in alignment with the laws of nature. In this world, a person will receive only what God has destined for him, neither more nor less.

CONTENTMENT AND PROGRESS

The two-point formula for success for people is contentment for self and further progress for children. People should prepare their children by providing them with a good education, teaching them valuable skills, and instilling a sense of responsibility for their future.

I have noticed a common tendency among low-income people: they are often preoccupied with increasing their earnings to provide greater comfort for their children. Addressing one such person, I explained that this mindset is flawed and leads to various detrimental effects, even disturbing one's peace of mind. Conversely, the correct attitude involves entrusting the matter of the children's future progress to the children themselves while striving to live in contentment with what one already possesses. If their income naturally increases, it should be seen as a blessing from God. However, excessive pursuit of monetary gain should be avoided. Instead, the focus should be on preparing the children for a higher income by providing them with a good education, teaching them valuable skills, and instilling a sense of responsibility for their future. Its two-point formula should be—contentment for self and further progress for children.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Parents play a significant role in shaping their children's positive or negative actions. The child's home serves as their first school, and parents are their first teachers, forming the foundation of their upbringing.

A narration found in the Hadith states: "Every child is born on (the right) nature, then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian." (*Sahih Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1358) This statement does not solely refer to religious labels but encompasses any deviation instilled in children by their parents. Other narrations also support this concept. For instance, "Every child is born on nature until one begins to speak. When one can express oneself, then one is either grateful or ungrateful." (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 14805). This means that children are born with a sound nature until they start speaking, and their subsequent attitude depends on their immediate environment.

Children do not begin speaking immediately after birth; it takes time. Before they start talking, the influence stems from their innate nature, while their surroundings shape them after they start speaking. Children under the influence of their parents or

immediate family members either learn to express gratitude to God for whatever they receive or consider it a gift from human beings. Their initial understanding of gratitude and jealousy is developed through their parents. Consequently, parents play a significant role in shaping their children's positive or negative actions. The child's home serves as their first school, and parents are their first teachers, forming the foundation of their upbringing.

HOME: A TRAINING GROUND

The present worldly life serves as a test for man. One kind of life can lead individuals toward Paradise, while another makes them deserving of eternal deprivation.

According to a narration, the Messenger of God said, “The best among you is the best for his family, and I am the best of you for my family.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 1977). This means that the best individuals treat their families well, and the Prophet Muhammad set the best example. This tradition highlights the significance of the home as the fundamental unit of society. What is reflected on a larger scale in society is mirrored on a smaller scale within the home. The judgment of a person’s character is often based on their interactions within interpersonal relationships. Every house represents a microcosm of these experiences, while society reflects the macrocosm.

Living with one’s family entails a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant situations, resulting in feelings of love and hatred, happiness and sorrow alternating, along with moments of solace and pain. Sometimes, their ego is satisfied, sometimes their ego is hurt, and so on. These diverse situations within the home provide

opportunities for training and personal growth. Those who maintain their consciousness of faith hold themselves accountable and navigate their lives while remaining firmly connected to the Hereafter. They become more alert and choose the correct Islamic approach when faced with similar circumstances.

Those men and women who lead conscious lives within their homes transform their living space into a nurturing environment. Consequently, their home becomes a training ground, equipping them for life beyond its walls. Then, they will be righteous in society as they did inside their homes.

Individuals who consistently engage in arguments and conflicts within their homes become habituated to such behaviour. Consequently, they are inclined to engage in disputes and clashes with others when they venture outside into society. This aggressive demeanour persists in their workplace, business dealings, and daily interactions, adversely affecting their domestic and external affairs. Likewise, some individuals exhibit rudeness within their homes but adopt a civilized and polite attitude in public, striving to create a positive image. However, this behaviour is hypocritical, and God disapproves of hypocrisy.

Fulfilling religious responsibilities for a Muslim goes beyond merely praying five times daily in the mosque,

fasting during Ramadan, and performing the Hajj pilgrimage. It is equally essential for them to uphold good morals and conduct towards others. When interacting with fellow human beings, they should adhere to divine commandments and live among people with the consciousness that they are answerable to God for their every word and action.

The present worldly life serves as a test for man. One kind of life can lead individuals toward Paradise, while another type of life makes them deserving of eternal deprivation in hellfire. This testing nature of life relates to the affairs within and outside the home.

HOW TO REFORM CHILDREN?

Striving to fulfil the desires of the children is a never-ending effort. The reform of children can only begin with the reform of the parents toward their children on realistic lines.

I was approached by a woman requesting an article on child reformation, highlighting the pressing need for it in the present age. I responded by pointing out the abundance of existing articles and speeches on the subject, with little to no tangible outcome. The solution lies not in more articles or speeches but rather in a fundamental change in parents' behaviour when dealing with their children. The prevailing situation is that parents excessively indulge their children, which is the root cause of their perversion. Until parents relinquish this pampering, true child reformation cannot take place.

Upon hearing my perspective, the woman expressed concerns about being too harsh with children. I clarified that I did not advocate for harshness but emphasized the importance of abandoning pampering. This parental disposition is what breeds deviation in children. The problem arises from parents being so

sensitive to their children's desires that not pampering them is perceived as cruelty, which prevents them from giving up pampering.

I further explained that no matter how much pampering you do, their demands are never-ending. They constantly yearn for more and more. Consequently, parents believe they have not done enough, as fulfilling their children's demands remains incomplete. The notion of pampering has become a misguided yardstick. Parents expect that when children stop making demands, they will only believe. However, children and adults alike are in a perpetual state of desire, where whatever they receive falls short. Hence, there are always new demands. Striving to fulfil desires is a never-ending effort. The reform of children can only begin with the reform of the parents toward their children on realistic lines.

SPOILED CHILDREN

Excessive pampering is the underlying cause of children being spoiled. When parents spoil their children themselves, how can they blame others for this?

Nowadays, parents commonly complain that their children are spoiled, with television bearing the brunt of the blame. They believe that television is the catalyst behind their children's spoiled behaviour. When a person approached me, seeking my opinion on the issue, I responded, "If television is truly at the root of the issue, why do parents allow televisions in their homes? Children do not purchase televisions themselves; the parents bring them into the household to please their children. Thus, the real responsibility lies with the parents, not the children."

The truth is that excessive pampering is the underlying cause of children being spoiled. Parents believe that their children's every wish must be fulfilled. While children are young, their desires are limited to things like food and clothing. At this stage, parents may fail to recognize the error of their views. However, as children grow up, their interests expand to encompass

friendships, outings, clubs, and romantic relationships. At this stage, when parents attempt to intervene and impose restrictions, children resist, rejecting their parents' attempts at control. Undoubtedly, this is a consequence of the negligence of the parents themselves.

During their formative years, parents instilled in their children that all their desires should be satisfied. As they enter adulthood, this mindset intensifies, leading them to pursue activities disapproved of by their parents to fulfil their desires. Yet, one must question who instilled the "My desire is everything" disposition in the children. It was the parents themselves through their indulgence. The truth is that, in this regard, parents are unwittingly exhibiting enmity toward their children, masked as love.

NEGATIVE PARENTING

Parents must prepare their children to face the realistic principle—the more you give, the more you gain. They must inculcate in their children hard work and goodwill towards others.

Let me recount an incident involving a Muslim merchant. His daughter approached him with an urgent need for money. Without probing further, the merchant promptly reached into his pocket, withdrew all the notes inside, and handed them to his daughter, saying, “These are for you. I earn them for you only.”

This incident is not an isolated occurrence; instead, it reflects the general mindset of parents. Parents work hard, earning through their efforts, yet when it comes to their children, they believe their offspring should not face any difficulties. Parents willingly endure hardships, providing their children with every comfort and facility, ready to fulfil their desires regardless of the cost.

Parents’ disposition is the most significant obstacle to their children’s progress. In essence, it represents a reverse form of upbringing. However, the world that

awaits their children is one of the realities where the principal rule is—the more you give, the more you gain.

Regrettably, what parents foster within their children, within the confines of their homes, is precisely the opposite. Inside the house, children grow accustomed to an environment of receiving without giving, while outside, they encounter a world that expects them to give after receiving. Consequently, today's youth, both boys and girls, fall victim to negative thinking. They find fault with everyone, consciously or unconsciously, believing their parents were exceptional while perceiving others as evil.

This situation has eradicated two crucial values from the contemporary world: hard work and goodwill towards others.

EDUCATION AND HARD WORK PAY

Unearned wealth tends to corrupt a person's character. The foremost act of well-wishing towards children is offering them a quality education and guiding them onto the path of hard work.

During my trip to Moradabad in July 1995, I learned about affluent Muslims who have accumulated vast amounts of wealth. When questioned about their motive for earning more and more, they cited providing comfort for their children. I disagreed, stating that those who amass wealth and property solely for their children's comfort lack wisdom. It is observed that unearned wealth tends to corrupt a person's character, fostering superficiality and even immoral behaviour. The foremost act of well-wishing towards children should be offering them a quality education and guiding them onto the path of hard work.

CONDITIONAL LOVE

Love is primarily emotional, whereas goodwill represents a pure rational attitude. Those are incredibly fortunate to encounter a genuine well-wisher in their life.

A Muslim girl, the sole child of her parents, had an extravagant wedding arranged for her. Subsequently, she moved to her in-laws' residence, where she gave birth to a child. However, after two years, she had disagreements with her husband and returned to her parents. Expressing her difficulties, she conveyed that her husband possessed a difficult temperament, making it unbearable to live with him. Without delving too deeply into the matter, her parents accepted her words as truth and reassured her, saying, "Daughter, do not worry. We have been blessed with everything God has bestowed upon us. Stay comfortably here; you need not go anywhere."

Curious to uncover the truth, I met with the girl and posed several questions to her. She recounted instances where her husband displayed harshness in various matters. When I requested an example, she mentioned his reluctance to take her shopping or plan outings. I responded, "That is very good. Shopping often entails

wasteful spending, and outings are a waste of time. Your husband's actions seem commendable as he protects you from such futile pursuits.”

The actions undertaken by the girl's parents stemmed from a place of love, while her husband's actions emanated from a place of goodwill. In reality, goodwill surpasses mere love in significance. However, many individuals fail to discern this distinction, deeming those who love them as their sympathizers, although genuine sympathy originates from those who genuinely demonstrate well-wishing towards you.

Love is primarily emotional, whereas goodwill represents a pure rational attitude. Those are incredibly fortunate when they encounter a genuine well-wisher in their life.

GOODWILL OR ILL-WILL

A father should either refrain from excessive affection towards his daughter or, at the very least, ensure that he conveys to her that they conditioned her at home on unnatural lines and that the natural way forward entails adapting to the norms of her in-laws' home.

A father made arrangements for his daughter's marriage in a distant place. Throughout her upbringing, the daughter was never required to perform any chores. Her parents consistently prioritized her happiness, shielding her from any hardships. However, the father understood the situation would be different in her in-laws' home. As he bid his daughter farewell, he cautioned, "Wherever you go, it will be a new world for you. Do not anticipate the same comfort level in your in-laws' home as you experienced here in your maternal home."

From the father's perspective, this advice was offered under the guise of goodwill. Yet, in reality, it concealed ill will. In truth, it implied that his daughter would perpetually possess a negative mindset within her in-laws' home. She would forever feel deprived and harbour the belief that her maternal home was good

while her in-laws' house was undesirable. Consequently, she would live her entire life burdened by the notion that her marriage was a mistake, perpetuating a biased perception of her maternal relatives as good and her in-laws' relatives as bad.

In the present age, nearly every parent demonstrates this false goodwill towards their daughters, which ultimately transforms into continuous ill-will. The conditioning that the daughter receives from her maternal home prevents her from comprehending this matter objectively, while the parents inadvertently reinforce this conditioning instead of eliminating it.

It is indeed true that a father should either refrain from excessive affection (pampering) towards his daughter or, at the very least, ensure that he conveys, upon parting, that the methods employed thus far were unnatural and the natural way forward entails adapting to the customs and norms of her in-laws' home.

FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Each individual possesses opportunities for advancement. True significance in life is found in diligence, planning and hard work rather than in one's material wealth or lack thereof.

A man arranged his daughter's marriage with a young man from a distant place. The young man later appeared to have limited financial means and resided in a dilapidated house. He held no prominent position in society. When this information became known, people criticized the father, with some even suggesting he was mentally unstable.

However, the father chose to respond with patience. He prayed for his daughter, beseeching, "O God, rectify my error, help my daughter, and envelop her in Your blessings and mercy."

Over time, the daughter gave birth to several children. These children grew up to be healthy and diligent. Through their hard work, they pursued education and excelled academically. Their merit opened doors to promising job opportunities. The boys constructed a new house and acquired cars and possessions as

circumstances evolved. They earned respect and secured a commendable societal position through their good deeds.

Similar examples can be found in every society, illustrating the significance of not making judgments solely based on present circumstances but considering the future. No deprivation in this world is permanent. Each individual possesses opportunities for advancement through hard work and dedication.

The secret to a prosperous marriage does not solely lie in marrying one's daughter to a wealthy individual. Likewise, an unsuccessful marriage is not determined exclusively by marrying one's daughter to a person of limited means. Today's affluent can face tomorrow's poverty, while today's underprivileged can ascend to prosperity. True significance in life is found in diligence, planning, and hard work rather than in one's material wealth or lack thereof.

THE HARM OF PAMPERING

Observing mere rituals to God while centring real-life pursuits around their children is not true devotion to God. Devotion to God encompasses every facet of an individual's existence.

A hadith of the Prophet emphasizes that on the Day of Judgment, the most ashamed individual will be the one who traded their Hereafter for the worldly desires of others. This hadith, found in *Al-Tareekh Al-Kabeer* by *Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1927, holds particular relevance in today's society, especially for those consumed by the obsession with their children. In the present age, the mindset of parents revolves around treating their children as their ultimate priority. They become entirely absorbed in accumulating worldly wealth for the sake of their children, leaving little time for meaningful pursuits that contribute to their own Hereafter.

At this age, individuals have lost sight of the fact that their children are merely a test for them (Quran, 8: 28). While children are not solely bestowed upon parents to fulfil their happiness, parents invest all their energy in securing worldly success for their offspring.

Many individuals in today's society outwardly display religious devotion, meticulously observing rituals such as fasting and prayers. However, their main focus lies in dedicating all their time and effort towards amassing worldly possessions solely to leave behind a substantial inheritance for their children upon their demise.

Yet, such individuals are merely deceiving themselves. Their rituals offer superficial piety to God, while their real-life pursuits centre solely around their children. This is not true devotion to God; it is, in fact, akin to child worship. It must be understood that such a path does not grant anyone the credit of genuine devotion to God. Devotion to God cannot be an isolated aspect of life; true devotion encompasses every facet of an individual's existence.

OPTIMISM OR REALISM

Parents should adopt a realistic outlook to avoid disappointment regarding their children.

A father shared a strong bond with his son. Within the father's mind existed an idealized vision of work, and he desired to prepare his son for this ideal job. To achieve this ambition, he ensured his son received a high-quality education. All his aspirations were tied to his son's future. As the son grew older and completed his education, the father eagerly anticipated his pursuit of the favoured profession. However, the son declined. The father made numerous pleas, but the son remained steadfast. Eventually, the son told his father, "Mature children work according to their wisdom."

Upon hearing this response, the father experienced immense disappointment, leading to mental distress and elevated blood pressure. Yet, the truth is that the mistake lay with the father, not the son. It is an inherent truth that every child is born with intelligence. During their formative years, when they are still immature, they heed their parents' guidance. However, as his consciousness evolves, it allows him

to think independently. In such a state, the unrealistic expectations of parents like the father mentioned above become incongruous; they fail to materialize. Parents harbour deep affection for their children, and due to this emotional love, they become prone to wishful thinking regarding their children's futures. They nurture aspirations for their children that defy the laws of nature. Virtually every father is afflicted by such wishful thinking. Yet, these fantasies remain unrealized in the real world. Parents should adopt a realistic outlook to avoid disappointment regarding their children.

SUFFERING THE PANGS OF SEPARATION FROM CHILDREN

Serving parents has become a worn-out concept today. Parents can only watch with regret as their children progress, realizing that the shade of the tree they painstakingly planted does not extend to them.

A senior Muslim merchant was asked by someone about his 95-year lifespan, spanning almost a century. They inquired about his learnings and experiences throughout this long journey. After a brief silence, he replied with great solemnity, “No experiences. Just born, grew up, ventured into business, got married, and had children. I devoted myself to settling my children. Now, in the twilight of my life, I suffer the pangs of separation from children and await death.”

This narrative resonates with nearly all households in the present age. Almost all parents give their children too much attention, pouring all their love and effort into shaping their futures. However, in the end, many face disloyalty from them as their children depart to forge independent lives. The concept of serving parents has become worn out in modern times. Parents can

only watch with regret as their children progress, realizing that the shade of the tree they painstakingly planted does not extend to them.

Prophet Muhammad's narration captures this reality: "A time will come when children will treat their friends with kindness and behave poorly with their parents." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2210). This saying aptly reflects the present situation prevailing globally. The most tragic aspect is experienced by those who spend their entire lives striving to bring happiness to their children, only to receive sorrow in return. Such parents exemplify the notion that sacrificing one's hereafter for the world of others leads to the greatest loss. (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3966)

THE TRIAL OF THE FAMILY

Outwardly, people may mention God and Islam, but their love is solely reserved for their immediate family. Their preoccupation revolves around their family's well-being. They dedicate their time, wealth, and resources exclusively to them. Upon death, they will meet God empty-handed.

The Hadith literature contains numerous narrations that shed light on family dynamics. Two such narrations are shared below: “Abdullah bin Umar narrated that the Messenger of God said, ‘Woe to the one who leaves his family in a good state and presents himself before his Lord in a bad state.’” (*Musnad al-Shihab*, Hadith No. 314)

The wording of the second narration is as follows: “A person will be brought on the Day of Judgment, and it will be said to him: ‘Your family consumed your good deeds.’” (*Takhrij al-Ahadith al-Kashshaf* by Zailai, Hadith No. 1357). This indicates that on the Day of Judgment, individuals will be confronted with the reality that their familial obligations consumed their righteous deeds.

In ancient times, this weakness was found only in a few individuals. However, in the present age, it has

worsened to the point where it seems all-pervasive. The root cause of this weakness is an excessive attachment to one's family. Outwardly, people may mention God and Islam, but their love is solely reserved for their immediate family. Their preoccupation revolves around their family's well-being, and they dedicate their time, wealth, and resources exclusively to their kin. However, upon death, they will face a compulsory detachment. When they meet God, they will find themselves empty-handed. This deprivation is undoubtedly the most significant loss. As per the Hadith, it equates to sacrificing one's hereafter to build the world of others. (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3966)

Moreover, even those family members who received everything from a person become so estranged after death that they never reunite.

THE TEST OF LIFE AN EXAMINATION

The most excellent gift parents can bestow upon their children is education and nurturing to cultivate their moral character. This is the real responsibility of parents.

A Muslim individual migrated with his wife from Uttar Pradesh to settle in Delhi, where he ventured into the property business and accumulated considerable wealth. However, they were unable to conceive any children. On one occasion, their mother visited Delhi and observed her son living in a grand residence. Although he possessed abundant worldly possessions, the couple had been unable to have children despite a significant duration of marriage. This predicament left their mother deeply concerned, often pondering, “Who will inherit my son’s wealth?”

This incident serves as a poignant reminder of why children are described as a trial in the Quran (64:15). The underlying reason behind this is that people view their children as an extension of themselves, hoping that their hard-earned wealth will not go to waste but instead be inherited by their offspring.

The notion of children being a trial is rooted in this perception. However, the most profound consequence of this viewpoint is its tendency to make individuals oblivious to the gravity of death. They fail to contemplate the repercussions that follow death earnestly. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they become ignorant of the realities of death and the afterlife.

The true significance of children lies in their role as guarantors of the continuity and advancement of the human race. Regarding wealth, it serves as an examination paper for the father and the son. When wealth is approached from this perspective, it ceases to become a problem. This truth is encapsulated in a hadith of the Prophet, which states that the most excellent gift parents can bestow upon their children is education and nurturing to cultivate their moral character. (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 1952)

NEGATIVE ROLE OF HOME

It is truly disheartening that people have become so consumed by their love for their children that they embody the Prophet's words, 'Your love for something makes you blind and deaf.'

Nowadays, it is generally the case that in every house, praises are lavished exclusively upon their family members, always speaking of them positively. Conversely, when discussing others, derogatory remarks are all too frequent.

This culture of extolling one's virtues while highlighting the flaws of others has become so pervasive that hardly any household remains unaffected by it. It is within the confines of the home; individuals are transformed into citizens of society and the nation. However, this prevailing culture has failed to nurture good citizens who hold fair opinions of others, harbour love for others, display tolerance, possess a spirit of generosity towards all, foster a sense of equality, find joy in the progress of others, and empathize with the suffering of others.

Social values have disappeared entirely, leaving only one prevailing concern: self-interest. This state of affairs has led everyone to become self-centred and

opportunistic, often at the expense of others. This alarming situation cannot be remedied through mere meetings and speeches. The sole path to rectification lies in developing the household environment to improve the moral character of children. Resolving this dire predicament remains elusive without addressing the deficiencies within our homes.

We had a well-educated Muslim associated with our mission who, at that time, did not have any children. However, they later became parents. As time went on, they gradually distanced themselves from the mission. In a subsequent meeting, I asked them why they had left the missionary work. They responded, “The responsibilities of raising children have increased to the point where we no longer have time.” This scenario is emblematic of the present age, where almost everyone considers their children their utmost concern. They dedicate their resources, time, and energy solely to their children’s well-being. While they may express words of concern for others, their actions are reserved exclusively for their offspring. Even concerning matters of God or divine work, their involvement remains limited to mere words. “Today, the individuals you encounter prioritize their children but display little concern for their future. This aligns with the saying, ‘sacrificing one’s hereafter to build the world of others’ (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3966).

It is truly disheartening that people have become so consumed by their love for their children that they embody the Prophet's words, 'Your love for something makes you blind and deaf.' (*Sunan Abu Dawood*, Hadith No. 5130) Their love for their children blinds them and hinders their judgment. Their attachment to their children is so overpowering that they fail to realize that while they are concerned about their children's future, they neglect their own. Consequently, they have no time for more significant pursuits such as religious studies, missionary work, and planning their affairs with a focus on the hereafter."

THE LOSS OF PAMPERING

Children view their parents as role models and older siblings become role models for younger ones. When parents and older siblings are on the right path, the rest of the children naturally follow suit.

In December 1929, my father, Fariduddin Khan, passed away when I was around six. I held a special place in my father's heart among all his children. He showered me with so much love, which made me very playful, and I indulged in childish mischief. My uncle, Sheikh Muhammad Kamil, would become angry whenever he saw me and would caution my father, "You are spoiling your son by undue pampering."

However, everything changed abruptly when my father passed away during my childhood. My mother, Zeb-un-Nisa (who passed away in 1985), used to recount how talkative I was in my father's presence. But after his demise, a profound transformation occurred within me. My playful nature vanished, and I became quiet and reserved. It was a pivotal event in my life. Had my father lived longer, I might have become a young man who would have been labelled spoilt and pampered. The realism and seriousness that came later in my life directly resulted from my orphanhood.

When a person is born, he initially experiences the care and presence of his parents. However, this period is fleeting, and the rest of his life is spent outside the protective cocoon of his parents, interacting with others. Parents tend to shower their children with affectionate pampering.

The consequence of this excessive pampering is that the child consciously or subconsciously perceives that love is equated with being pampered. Yet, as the children step out into the world beyond their homes, they do not receive the same level of indulgence from others. They suddenly feel insignificant in the eyes of the world. They get disillusioned with the whole world. This situation has made all women and men suffer from the psychology of complaint when the right thing was to develop a psychology of love for other human beings.

There is a narration mentioned in various Hadith books that states, “The Messenger of God said, ‘No gift from a father to his child is better than teaching him good manners.’” (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 1952) Although this hadith mentions only the father, it implies both the father and the mother. The word ‘adab’ used here encompasses all aspects of education and upbringing, whether religious or worldly.

Naturally, both men and women have immense love for their children. This Hadith elucidates the best way

to utilize this love and what should be done. The best use of this love is for parents to teach their children the etiquettes of life, moulding them into better individuals before introducing them to the world. It is often observed that parents misuse their love by constantly fulfilling every wish of their children, considering it the ultimate expression of love. However, this fails to fulfil the rights of the children.

A young child is unaware of anything beyond his desires. His thinking is limited to the immediate fulfilment of his wishes. Yet, this is a childish mindset because the child will eventually grow up and enter the realm of the world. To succeed in the next stage of life, the child must be equipped with appropriate etiquette. During their early years, the series of their education and upbringing should commence, instilling certain habits and integrating them into their lives. The three fundamental aspects of life's etiquettes are religion, morality and discipline.

A child's upbringing, with religious considerations, begins immediately after birth when the call to prayer enters their ears. It symbolizes that instilling religiosity in a child starts from a young age, and the mother and father play crucial roles in this endeavour.

Parents should strive to develop a strong understanding of monotheism and Islamic beliefs in their children.

The remembrance of God and engagement in worship should become integral components of their personality. They should adhere to prayers and fasting. The desire for charity and good deeds should be instilled in them, and they should develop a passion for the daily study of the Quran and Hadith. Observing them, everyone should recognize them as pious children.

Character development should be an ongoing process. If the child makes a mistake, he should be corrected. If siblings have a dispute, they should be immediately taught to understand and resolve it. If the child lies, uses abusive language or takes something belonging to someone else, it should be addressed firmly. All of this should begin in childhood so that the child becomes accustomed to specific values in life.

The same approach should be applied to discipline. The child should be taught to respect time, keep things in their proper place and eat and drink at fixed times. If they litter or throw paper on the road, they should be immediately asked to pick it up. Noise should be discouraged, and they should be taught to avoid anything that causes discomfort to others.

Parents must align their lifestyle accordingly to ensure a child's proper upbringing. Merely instructing the child not to lie while making excuses themselves renders the lesson on honesty meaningless. Similarly,

if parents smoke in front of their children and preach against smoking, it loses its significance. If promises are not fulfilled, but the child is told, “Son, always keep your promises,” they will not take such advice seriously.

Children view their parents as role models and older siblings become role models for younger ones. When parents and older siblings are on the right path, the rest of the children naturally follow suit.

WEAK PERSONALITY

If open lies are prohibited, hidden lies prove even more disastrous for human personality. In the realm of the Hereafter, individuals with such feeble characters will be deprived of proximity to God.

A radio program is dedicated to women. It covers various relevant topics. During one episode, the discussion focused on the relationships between mothers and their children. Numerous mothers shared their experiences from this perspective. For instance, one mother recounted, “I have a son and a daughter, and I work outside the home. Every day, before leaving for my job, I give my children strict instructions on what to do and what not to do.” She chuckled and added, “My daughter often teases me, saying, ‘Mommy, you’re like Hitler!’”

This conversation took place over the phone, and the female radio announcer explained that the comment indicated the mother’s authoritative approach. However, the mother quickly interjected, saying, “No, I don’t give orders.” Yet, her initial statement to her children undeniably resembled an order, as validated by her daughter’s remark. Despite this, the mother

insisted, “No, no.” This pattern is prevalent among both women and men in today’s time. They often say something but backtrack when further questioned, claiming, “That’s not what I meant.” This behaviour is a form of lying—a hidden lie. Such deception is immensely harmful to a person, eroding the strength of their character. Individuals with weak personalities struggle to attain mental growth and fail to cultivate noble character traits. In the realm of the Hereafter, individuals with such feeble characters will be deprived of proximity to God. If open lies are prohibited, hidden lies prove even more disastrous for human personality.

RAISING CHILDREN

Islam teaches that one's love for God should surpass worldly interests. One should be willing to sacrifice everything for God's sake. We must create a nurturing atmosphere at home and foster a spiritual mindset in them along these lines.

There was a man, Malik Abdul Shakoor, who had a strong addiction to smoking. He would smoke three packets of cigarettes daily despite having countless reasons to quit, such as "Smoking is harmful to health" and "Smoking wastes your hard-earned money." He remained stubbornly attached to his cigarettes, even declaring to his friends after having tea, "Anyone who doesn't smoke after tea has no right to drink it."

However, a minor incident changed his perspective and made him give up his diehard habit. Whenever he discarded cigarette butts after smoking, his three-year-old son, Farooq Qaiser, would pick them up and put them in his mouth. Despite attempts to stop him, the child would not listen. One day, when the child's mother sternly forbade him, he responded, "But even daddy smokes." Hearing this from his child struck a chord in Malik Abdul Shakoor. Though he would

recite poems about his smoking habit in front of his friends, deep down, he knew that smoking was not only harmful to health and loss of money but also had a negative impact on morals.

When others urged him to quit smoking, he would offer a barrage of verbal justifications to avoid facing the truth of his addiction and unwillingness to admit his mistake. He clung to these justifications without seriously considering any reasons against smoking. However, everything changed when his child's life became intertwined with the question of cigarettes. All the veils were removed from his mind, allowing him to see the simple truth. The innocent words of his child completely shattered the person who could not put down his defences against strong arguments.

Realizing that if he continued smoking, he could not stop his child from following the same path, he made a profound decision. The child's words, "But even daddy smokes," struck him deeply. In a single moment, he made a decision for which years of efforts by his friends had proved inadequate. It was during the month of Ramadan when he decided to quit smoking altogether. The next day, he refrained from smoking and permanently abandoned the habit.

He prioritized his love for his son over his passion for cigarettes. He decided to give up smoking for the sake

of their child. Similarly, every individual has interests and benefits that he holds dear. Islam teaches that one's love for God should surpass worldly interests and be willing to sacrifice them for His sake.

During my interaction with a Muslim resident of America, he expressed concern about the religious identity of his children in the future. He mentioned that his children attend secular schools, but he strives to provide religious education at home, a practice known as home-schooling in America. I pointed out that when he chose to live in America, he should have recognized the inevitable influence of the culture on their children. Attempting to counteract this cultural influence solely through home-schooling is akin to trying to halt a flood with a paper wall. Experience has shown that very few children can be cited as successful examples of achieving the desired goals through home-schooling. In such a situation, it is necessary to adopt a different approach by transforming the home environment and cultivating a dawah mindset within the children. Without creating a nurturing atmosphere at home and fostering a dawah mindset within the children, it is challenging to combat the overwhelming impact of the prevailing cultural flood.

DEPRIVATION: A DIVINE BLESSING

Orphanhood is a transformative state that fosters self-awareness and instils in a person the determination to become self-sufficient. Such deprivation transforms an individual into a hero.

In May 2000, I embarked on a journey to Bihar, where I had the privilege of visiting Batia orphanage. This establishment, founded in 1928, made me realize that being an orphan is not a misfortune but a blessing bestowed by nature. If being an orphan were not a blessing, God Almighty would not have chosen orphanhood for the Prophet of Islam. For any child, being an orphan is a good tiding. It signifies that they have been entrusted with a unique path in life's journey, granted to an individual whom both Muslims and non-Muslims recognize as the most successful human being in history: the Messenger of God.

When an individual is born as an orphan, he is given the opportunity to actualize his inherent potential and receive what he needs in this world. The Quranic verse, "Did He not find you orphaned and shelter you?" (93:6), unveils the divine plan. It reveals that God did not leave you as an orphan but sheltered

you and created a haven to construct your life. In my interpretation, orphanages like this one are practical embodiments of this verse, offering refuge to orphans. I view such institutions as a manifestation of a divine plan.

A gentleman shared his story: “I became an orphan during my childhood, and my relatives placed me in an orphanage with two other children in the same situation. The three of us found solace in the shelter of the orphanage. Back then, our future seemed uncertain. However, by the grace of God, all three of us have achieved success in our lives. I believe this is the outcome of being an orphan. Orphanhood is a transformative state that fosters self-awareness and instils in a person the determination to become self-sufficient. An orphan perceives himself as lacking support, forcing him to rely entirely on his abilities. Consequently, he exerts greater effort than others. Orphanhood transforms an individual into a hero.”

DIFFERENTLY-ABLED PERSON

The term “disabled,” previously used to describe individuals with impairments, has become outdated. They are now called “differently abled,” emphasizing their unique abilities despite certain limitations.

In October 2000, I had the opportunity to visit Bhopal, where I came across a remarkable institution called “Shubham Viklang Seva Samiti.” Established in 1980, this welfare organisation caters to the needs of differently-abled children. During my interactions, I was deeply moved by the 63 children I met there, representing Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. I approached Santosh Chaurasiya, a 14-year-old and asked him about his activities at the institution. He responded that he was a student. Curious, I inquired about his aspirations. Santosh confidently expressed his belief that he would stand on his feet through education. Another child, Shankar Sharma, 12 years old and also physically disabled, introduced himself. When I asked about his plans, he echoed the desire to become independent through education. These were children who faced physical limitations and relied on support. Witnessing the immense power of knowledge,

I realized that it empowers individuals so that even physical weakness cannot hinder their mental strength and progress.

Moreover, research in the present age has unequivocally shown that no person can be labelled as inherently strong or weak. The term “disabled,” previously used to describe individuals with impairments, has become outdated. They are now called “differently abled,” emphasizing their unique abilities despite certain limitations.

PROVING ONE'S WORTH

When a person enters life fully prepared to meet its challenges, the world cannot but give him due recognition. Never in any environment does he fail to receive the position of honour, which is his due.

A young aspiring Muslim student from Azamgarh, A.M. Khan, stood nervously before the Principal of Hindu College and said, "Sir, I would very much like to be admitted to the B.Sc. course in your college." The reaction was sharp. "The admissions are closed. How do you expect to be admitted in October when you are already several months late with your application?" Unforeseen circumstances had prevented young Khan from applying sooner, but he said, "It would be extremely kind of you if you would help me." Then he added hesitatingly, "One whole year will be wasted for me if I am not granted admission." The Principal's reply was stern. "There is just no question of further admissions."

The Principal talked so offhand that it should have been evident that there was no point in persisting. Even so, the student was determined to try his luck, although he only expected to be asked to leave the

room immediately. On seeing the student's insistence, the principal finally asked him rather dryly what his marks had been in the previous examinations because he felt certain he must have failed to get admission elsewhere due to his low marks. If this were the case, the Principal would have had reasonable grounds for rejecting his application. But the student's reply was just the opposite of what he expected. He said, "Eighty-five per cent, sir."

These words worked like a miracle. The Principal's mood suddenly changed, and he asked the student to sit down and show him his certificates. When he saw them and was satisfied that the student's claim was valid, he told him to write an antedated application.

Not only was the student then given admission despite such a long delay in applying, but he was also granted a scholarship by this very same Principal who had been so reluctant even to give him a hearing.

Had the same student approached the Principal with a third-class degree and had been refused admission. As a result, he would indeed have gone away full of hatred for the Principal concerned and would have remarked to his friends that prejudice had come his way. He would not have admitted that he had been refused admission because of his poor results. He would have publicly laid the blame on the Principal.

It is not always clearly understood by aspirants to high positions that the response of our society is usually an echo of our condition. We tend to attribute the evils afflicting us to society so that we may shake ourselves free of the blame.

When a person enters life fully prepared to meet its challenges, the world cannot but give him due recognition. Never in any environment does he fail to receive the position of honour, which is his due. This results in his being able to maintain high moral standards. His experiences are marked by bravery, confidence, broadmindedness, gentlemanliness, acknowledgement of others' worth and a realistic approach to life. He has the will and the capacity to enter into proper human relationships. Society has recognized his talents, and he, having given due acknowledgement to society, can rise above the negative attitude of hatred and prejudice.

The reverse is true when, because he cannot meet the required standards, he fails to prove his worth; when he enters life with inadequate training, he fails to find a place of his choice. As a depressed personality, he almost certainly develops a low moral character. He falls prey to negative psychology—anger, complaint, even criminality. Failure in life gives birth to this negative psychology because it is seldom that the person concerned blames himself for his failure.

He almost always lays the blame on others for his shortcomings. Inadequate preparation for life brings two evils simultaneously—failure on one’s part and uncalled-for complaints against others.

A stone is hard to all and sundry. But it presents no problems to anyone with a tool that can break it. The same is true of the more complex obstacles that face us in life, for it is only if you enter the field of life equipped with the proper skills that you feel entitled to claim what is yours due. Even after the “last date”, you can be given admission to a college without anyone else intervening to help you. But without the necessary skills and ability, you will fail to find the place you aspire to.

Anyone who wants success to come his way in this world of God will first have to make himself deserving of it. He must know himself and his circumstances. He must organize and channel his energies properly. He must enter the field fully armed in every respect; others cannot fail to recognize his actual value. He must be like the tree which forces its way up through the undergrowth to take its place in the sun.

LOOKING FOR WORK

One should not rely on others to find work; instead, one should discover and cultivate one's talents to become a valuable asset to society. Becoming indispensable to others is the secret to achieving success.

On December 14, 2004, I met a Muslim youth named Muhammad Esa. Muhammad, unemployed since 1998, expressed his discouragement in finding work. He explained his circumstances, highlighting his lack of proper guidance and the absence of helpful advice from his parents, who only offered affection and love.

Although I could not provide him with a job, I shared an important fact of life regarding the availability of jobs worldwide. The reality is that the world is indifferent to one's unemployment status; it is solely interested in your skills or abilities that will benefit society. If you wish to secure employment, you must make yourself useful. By doing so, work will naturally gravitate towards you rather than you relentlessly searching for it.

The truth is that the architect of our present world has constructed it based on individual interests. Each

person is driven by their interests. In such a world, true success lies in proving your ability to fulfil the world's interests. Offer something of value to the world, and it will be compelled to provide you with work opportunities.

The employment search often breeds despair, while adopting a mindset of usefulness fosters confidence and determination. One should not rely on others to find work; instead, one should delve into one's abilities. Discover and cultivate your talents to become a valuable asset to society. Prepare yourself to be indispensable to others. This is the secret to achieving success in the world.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Japanese homes serve as training grounds for their children, focusing on education, patriotism, and nurturing a strong national character. The abundance of highly educated individuals has led to Japan being hailed as a highly educated and scientific nation.

In August 1945, Japan faced complete devastation, losing its political freedom and economic independence. However, Japan prioritized financial independence over political freedom, leading to remarkable success. Today, Japan is a super economic power. By 1990, Japan had loaned 5 billion dollars worldwide. By 2024, it is estimated to reach \$ 5056 in loans. Despite being politically dominated by America in 1945, Japan has become America's economic debtor.

During a visit to Kabul in May 1992, Pakistani columnist Mr Abu Zar Ghaffari had the opportunity to meet a Japanese journalist. Curious about Japan's extraordinary progress, he inquired about the secret behind their success. The journalist revealed that Japan's remarkable progress can be attributed to the pivotal role of education in their society. With limited natural resources, the Japanese people consider their children

as their most valuable asset. Japanese homes serve as training grounds for their children, with significant investments made in their education. Consequently, Japan is now a highly educated nation. The abundance of highly educated individuals, especially in science, has led to Japan being hailed as a scientific nation.

This emphasis on education and upbringing has nurtured a strong national character among the Japanese. Their unwavering patriotism is a shining example. A Japanese individual would willingly bear a loss of a hundred rupees to save the country from a one-rupee loss (*Nawa-i-Waqt*, Lahore, 12 July 1992). Japan's progress has surpassed its rivals, allowing them to establish a highly scientific society. This is a testament to the only path towards progress and success.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

Education holds immense importance in Islam. The first educational institution was established in Madina through prisoners of war from the Battle of Badr. Their freedom was granted in exchange for education.

Education holds immense importance in Islam, surpassing all other interests. However, in the present age, Muslims have fallen behind in education compared to other nations. This can be attributed to a flawed decision by Muslim leaders, who believed admitting Muslims into educational institutions with non-Muslim teachers would corrupt their children. Consequently, Muslims faced significant setbacks in education. Their decision was incorrect, as we learn from the history of Islam.

The first school established in Madina, known as a training centre, had non-Muslim teachers who were prisoners of war. Some refer to *Suffa* as the first Islamic school, but it was not just an educational institution but a spiritual training centre. The first educational institution in Islam was established in Madina through prisoners of war from the Battle of Badr, and all its teachers were non-Muslims and polytheists.

This educational system even led to some problems in Madina. For instance, an incident narrated by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal mentions that the Prophet Muhammad decided to release prisoners of war from the Battle of Badr on the condition that they teach the children of the Ansar how to read and write. However, one day, a young boy came crying to his mother, revealing that his teacher had struck him. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 2216)

All the prisoners of war were enemies of Islam, and there was a fear that releasing them would pose a threat again. However, their freedom was granted in exchange for the value of education. This episode emphasizes the significance of education in Islam, which should be pursued regardless of other concerns.

HE WAS EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL

Instances recorded in history show that to achieve greatness, it is not necessary to be born great. A man can rise to greatness from the most obscure of beginnings—provided he is willing to strive for it.

Although his beginnings were humble, Albert Einstein succeeded in revolutionizing 20th-century science. The ordinary son of an ordinary father, he could not speak until the age of three and showed no signs of having even average abilities up to the age of nine. He was even once expelled from school because his teacher feared his poor academic performance might negatively influence other pupils.

Upon completion of his school studies, he failed to qualify for admission to the Zurich Technical College. It was only on his second attempt, after due preparation, that he met with success.

Up to the age of twenty, Einstein showed no exceptional potential. In fact, ‘Albert was a lazy dog’ was how a teacher once described him. Later, through sheer hard work, he rose to heights that no other modern scientist has been able to surpass. His biographer writes, “We

may take heart that it is not necessary to be a good student to become Einstein.”

Einstein’s first scientific book was published when he was 26, after which his fame spread far and wide. He led a simple life and ate simple food but often worked late into the night. At one stage, he was offered the presidency of Israel, but he declined. He believed that politics was the cancer of humanity. He left Hitler’s Germany with a price on his head—a reward of twenty thousand marks offered by Hitler’s government (at that time a great deal of money)—, but Einstein’s standing was such in the scientific world that no one dared come forward to claim it.

Countless instances have been recorded in history which show that to achieve greatness, it is not necessary to be born great. A man can rise to greatness from the most obscure of beginnings—provided he is willing to strive for it. Remembering that those struggling with severe difficulties are likelier to develop in estimable ways because adversity calls forth their hidden potential. It throws down a challenge that the aspirant to greatness must accept, failing which, he will sink into oblivion if not perish. Where the comforts and convenience of prosperity will cause him to become sluggish and unenterprising, the whiplash of adversity will drive him into purposeful action. In short, it will

bring out the best in him. Sir Francis Bacon observes in his essay, 'Of Adversity,' "Prosperity doth best discover vice, but Adversity doth best discover Virtue."

In God's creation plan, there are no limits to the humanly possible. Having had an undistinguished start in life should never, therefore, be a cause for despair. The ordinary circumstances of life—if we could but realize it—are the stepping stones to success. But before we launch ourselves on that path, we would listen to Sir Francis Bacon's final words of caution—and consolation: "Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes, and Adversity is not without comforts and hopes."

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Education creates awareness within the individuals. Undoubtedly, all successes are reserved for educated individuals. No progress and development is attainable without education in this world.

A team from BBC London's Urdu department visited the state of Gujarat in India, where they specifically met with the Muslim community and compiled a report on the subject. I became aware of this report through the publication of BBC London on July 22, 2004. The publication revealed a significant shift among the Muslims of Gujarat. Education has become a paramount concern for every Muslim in the state, with everyone emphasizing the importance of educating their children.

This represents a new trend. After 1947, Indian Muslims experienced ongoing unrest, being caught in a cycle of grievances, protests and responding to violence with violence. After more than half a century, it became evident that this approach proved unsuccessful. Now, for the first time, Muslims have adopted a mindset that recognizes dwelling on

revenge and bitter experiences of the past as futile endeavours. They now focus on education, progress and construction, leaving the thirst for revenge behind. This modern trend can be summed up in the following phrase: “Forget the past, educate the children.”

In light of the unpleasant events after 1947, Indian Muslims collectively fell into a psychology of reaction. I began advocating for positive thinking as the key to a meaningful life. I initiated my effort in 1965 through the weekly *Nida-e-Millat* in Lucknow. From 1967 onwards, I continued this work through the weekly *Al-Jamiat* in Delhi. In 1976, I launched the monthly publication *Al-Risala* from Delhi, furthering my efforts in a more organized manner. Additionally, I wrote articles supporting this message in various newspapers and journals nationwide. Through extensive travels, gatherings, and meetings, I conveyed this positive message to the Indian Muslim community.

This viewpoint was initially alien to Muslims, as the Arabic proverb states, “People become enemies of what they are unaware of.” Therefore, Muslims initially opposed the concept of patience and avoidance. However, continuous experiences have opened their eyes, leading to a change in the mindset of Muslims

in Gujarat and throughout the country. They have realized that blaming others is futile, and their efforts should focus on their education, development and empowerment.

Undoubtedly, this shift in perspective is a positive trend. The world has entered a new era in the wake of the scientific revolution. While it was previously believed that 'the sword was the key to power' (i.e., physical strength equates to power), every aware individual now understands that knowledge is the true key to power. In the past, dominance in the world was determined by those who possessed swords, but now it belongs to those who know.

This world is inherently competitive, and one will inevitably encounter challenging experiences from others. A foolish person dwells on past bitterness, whereas a wise person overcomes bitter memories, adopts the way of patience and tolerance, and spends all his energies building his future.

The purpose of education is not only to find jobs; instead, its true purpose is to foster awareness within individuals. The root cause of all problems in this world is unawareness, and the solution to these problems lies in making people aware. They must understand the true nature of the issues, possess the

ability to critically analyze situations, and discern what is attainable and what lies beyond reach in the world.

Education creates awareness within the individuals. Undoubtedly, all successes are reserved for educated individuals. No progress and development is simply attainable without education in this world.

LAST WORD

Family represents a microcosm of the broader human community, encapsulating all its situations on a larger scale. Each individual is offered an invaluable education within a family, acquiring the necessary knowledge, ethical values and skills to lead a successful life. Consequently, parents play a significant role in shaping their children's positive or negative actions. Mothers, in particular, play a vital role in shaping their children's minds. Parents should listen to their children and offer them guidance based on wisdom. The child's home serves as their first school, and parents are their first teachers, forming the foundation of their upbringing.

The most incredible gift parents can give their children is education and ethical values, not wealth. Easy money often leads to the downfall of children. Instead, parents should focus on educating their children, instilling moral values, a strong work ethic and the skills to build a prosperous future for themselves. There are two forms of education: formal and informal. Formal education equips individuals with skills for employment, whereas informal education focuses on fostering better

individuals for society. Schools and colleges represent formal educational institutions, while families function as informal educational establishments.

Parents must educate their children. The purpose of education is not only to find jobs; instead, its true purpose is to foster awareness within individuals. Awareness makes one understand the true nature of the issues, critically analyze situations and discern what is attainable and what lies beyond reach in the world. Undoubtedly, all successes are reserved for aware and educated individuals. No progress and development is simply achievable without this in this world.

The greatest guarantee for children's progress lies in cultivating a realistic approach and a positive spirit of action within them. Parents must make their children aware of the realities of life. They must make them understand that the architect of our present world has constructed it based on individual interests. Each person is driven by their interests. In such a world, true success lies in proving your ability to fulfil the world's interests. Offer something of value to the world, and it will be compelled to provide you with work opportunities.

Parents should awaken the inner potential of their children so they can understand their circumstances and shape their lives accordingly. They must make them

realize that there are no limits to the humanly possible in this world of God. Having had an undistinguished start in life should never, therefore, be a cause for despair. The ordinary circumstances of life are the stepping stones to success. Actual progress is achieved through diligence and hard work; progress bestowed by others is not genuine progress. Parents must make their children understand that to succeed in this world of God; one must be like the tree that forces its way up through the undergrowth to take its place in the sun. One must make himself deserving. One must first know oneself and one's circumstances and channel his energies properly so others cannot fail to recognize his value.

In this way, the most valuable legacy parents can bestow upon their children is education and training them to trust their hard work, avoid conflicts, be content with their rightful share, embrace realism instead of indulging in fantasies, and understand that moral inheritance surpasses material wealth. Those who receive such education and upbringing within their homes will likely exhibit similar societal behaviour. They will actively promote goodness, overlook unfavourable situations, and sincerely appreciate positive attributes in others. Such individuals will become positive contributors to society and the nation.

LAST WORD

To begin this process in their children, I advise parents to introduce them to CPS's printed and online material and encourage them to engage with this curated audio and video content. These are available on:



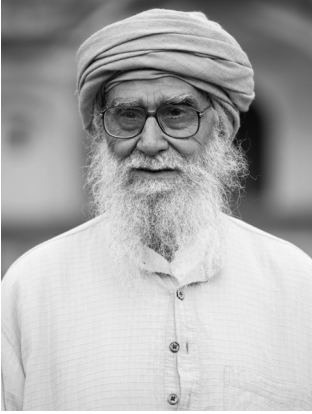
www.cpsglobal.org



www.facebook.com/maulanawkhan



www.youtube.com/user/centerforpeaceful



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and ambassador of peace. His English translation of the Quran and its Commentary are widely appreciated for their simplicity, clarity, and ease of understanding. He has authored over 200 books; and two magazines, *Spirit of Islam* and *Al-Risala*; and recorded thousands of

video and audio lectures. Demonstrating the relevance of Islam in the modern idiom, this material delves into Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's non-violent approach, its relationship with modernity, and other contemporary issues.

For his seminal contributions to world peace, Maulana received numerous national and international awards including the 'Demiurges Peace International Award' by the Nuclear Disarmament Forum AG under the patronage of the former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (2002). The Government of India honoured him with the 'Padma Vibhushan Award' (2021), and the 'Padma Bhushan Award' (2000) for his contributions to spirituality. He was also the recipient of the 'Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavna Award' (2010), the 'Communal Harmony Award' (2000), and the 'National Citizen's Award' by Mother Teresa (1996), to name a few. In 2001, Maulana founded the *Centre for Peace and Spirituality International* which is actively carrying his legacy forward by distributing copies of the Quran and peacefully conveying the spiritual message of Islam at a global level.

www.mwkhan.com
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Families are fundamental units of society, collectively shaping its fabric. Everyone is born into a family, where he experiences his first lessons about home, family, and society. To improve society, we must improve the quality of families and focus on the positive upbringing of children. The greatest guarantee for children's progress lies in educating them and cultivating a positive attitude towards life. Parents should awaken the inner potential of their children and make them aware that it is only through diligence and hard work that they can achieve success. Only then they can understand their circumstances and shape their lives accordingly.

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