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Part 3: Children are Tomorrow's Adults

Question no. 141: What are practical methods for raising upright children?

Question: How should we educate our child and feed him with religious teachings, moral values, social principles, and historical lessons? Could you suggest a practical and successful method?

The answer: There are still fathers and mothers like those of the past who at bedtime tell their children nice stories with useful meanings and in a wonderful manner of telling. Many of those meaningful stories have educated children with sound concepts, and when they became old, they still remembered them and took sufficient lessons from them.

In our present age, we should not ignore the sincere efforts of those who spread modern Islamic information through audio and video cassettes, CDs, magazines, and books. May Allah reward them with the best of good.

It is wrong to think that a child does not understand or comprehend what we mean or that he does not benefit from our stories. The Islamic experts, based on the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and different experiments, have discovered that a child is able to comprehend the meanings of others' words from the fourth month in his mother's womb. Therefore, traditions recommend mothers to recite the Holy Qur'an during the period of pregnancy and after giving birth even if it is through audio cassettes because a child responds and reacts to the Qur'anic inspirations, which have an influence on his mentality, morals and behaviors when he grows up. Similarly, the azan and iqama are recited in the two ears of a newborn child.

Thus, a meaningful story with good moral and social contents leaves a constructive effect on the personality of a child in the present and future.

From among the necessities of education at this stage is buying some books for the child that fit his intellectual level, and it does not matter if he tears them, because after tearing the tenth book, for example, he will make friends with the eleventh book. He will keep it safe and read it. Here you can win his friendship with books throughout his life, and the loss of tearing ten books in comparison with this winning is not so important.

Parents can read to their child from the storybooks of children, and they will thus kill two birds with one stone, because the child will like books and benefit from the contents of the stories at the same time. I suggest that you hang this statement on the most noticeable wall in the house: “a good book should be read several times, discussed several times, and relied on throughout one’s life.”

Question no. 142: What is the best way to raise children and teenagers: closely watching and managing their affairs, or trusting them and giving them freedom?

Question: I am often confused as to how to deal with my children. In this age, in which corruption has spread everywhere, I do not know which way I should follow in educating them, especially those among them who are teenagers. I am very careful for them and precise in watching them because I am afraid that they may do some things secretly that may displease the Lord. Their father is opposite to me and this causes disagreements and disputes between us many times. He says that my way will lead them to deviation while I think that his way in not watching them will be responsible for their deviation if one day it happens—Allah forbid! What do you think, Your Eminence?

The answer: Moderation in everything is the aspect of the umma that Islam wants us to adopt. We are people of a religion that permits neither waste nor excess. It announces clearly that ***(And thus We have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you)***¹.

Dear sister, if you are excessive in the educating of your children, please read carefully what I quote here from a letter written by a twenty year old young man to his mother complaining of his state to her for she has been excessive in watching him. He says:

‘I like to choose my concerns by myself. I like if you would permit me to try life. I like to travel by myself. I like to...

But you always say to me: if an accident happens to you, then what? If some misfortune afflicts you, then what? If...

You still want to catch my hand and take me with you wherever you like. My opinion and thought have no value in your judgment.

You say to me: What if you fall into an accident? Or you are involved in a trap? Or you commit a sin? Or you become corrupted...?

O mother, everyday you repeat these words many times instead of guiding me with what I should do in order to not fall into an accident or become involved in a trap or commit a sin or slip into corruption!!

O mother, now I am twenty years old, but I have no will. Do you know why?

It is because of your excessive fears; you have killed confidence inside me. You have prevented me from learning self-confidence in taking decisions because you always made decisions for me. Perhaps, you wished to sit beside me on the chair in my classroom fearing that I might make mistakes in my school lessons!

O mother, today I am unsuccessful in my social relations. Between myself and those of the same age, there is a big difference in mentality. They say to me: O weak, fearful, pampered, coward...

Yes, I really am so. I fear all. I trust in no one. I have no hope for the future. Today, I am unable to even choose my university specialization or my future job.

O mother, I like to do many things, but your "NO" makes me give up everything. With this "NO" you have closed my way. I think if you could breathe for me, you would...!'

Dear sister, with the aforementioned lines, I do not want to say that you are mistaken in watching your children, but I want to say that too many warnings that exceed reasonable limits will have the exact opposite effect from what you want.

By the way, it is said that one day a father saw his son on the front edge of the house's roof and ordered him to go back lest he should fall down. The son went back a few steps, but the father, out of his fear for his son, ordered him to go back further and the son went back a few more steps. The father was still worried and ordered his son to go back even more until the son fell down from the other side. The father hit his head crying: O my son!

It is necessary for parents to know that each age has its own particular moralities that should be acknowledged within the general topic of morals in Islam. Let us not complicate our children and then cause them to appear abnormal among people! At the same time, we should not let them be so free to

do whatever they like as if they have no religion and forsake the best of the heavenly religions.

You would be better off in allowing your children to advance in their lives, but with teaching them virtues and warning them of vices and their ends.

When you detect some deviation in them, you must suppress your anger and be calm and give them advice in a wise way. You should know that Allah has opened the door of repentance to His people, especially to the youth, and He knows they are weak. Hence, you should not suspect them and not be severe to them because this will take them away from religion and make them resist and go astray.

Besides all this, you should discuss the matter with your husband if he is lacking in his relation to the children. You should sit together and formulate wise methods of dealing with your children because they represent you before others and will replace you after your death. See how you want others to regard you!

Question no. 143: Would you please do us a favor by showing the stages of the cultural growth of children in the light of the Islamic view?

Question: Would you please do us a favor by showing the stages of the cultural growth of children in the light of the Islamic view?

The answer: There are four stages:

First, the stage of suckling, which begins from birth and lasts until the child becomes a year and a half. In this period, the child receives his cultural growth through his attempts of success and failure. The mother must undertake her basic role in this important stage because the child is a deposit of Allah in her hand. If she does not help him to begin his life with the name of Allah, he will get to the Satan and the responsibility will be on her.

Second, the stage of childhood, which is composed of two periods: the first one begins after the year and a half of suckling up until the age of seven and the second period begins from the seventh year up until the twelfth.

The child learns in the first period – until the seventh year of his age – words, concepts, morals, and habits by watching and imitating. Therefore, those who are responsible for educating the child must pay close attention to this opportunity of teaching the child good morals and habits. These morals and habits

can be noticed when the child imitates his father or mother in some of his plays such as the way of their speaking, gaits, and looking.

In the second period – until the twelfth year – the child begins analyzing meanings to comprehend bigger things. However, the family still has an effective role on his growth, but it is less than that of the first period because, in this age, the child is connected with school and classmates, and therefore, his presence among his family becomes less than before, and on the other hand, his mind opens for other things.

In this period, the child looks for a role model. It is very important for parents to either be good examples or find their child a good example to imitate. The socio-psychological studies have showed that most of the deviate youth and criminal men were, in this period, receiving their deviate and criminal lessons from their bad role models. Let parents beware that their children not take their role models, in this period from seven to twelve, from films or other programs that they watch.

Third, the stage of adolescence, which is from the twelfth until the eighteenth year. This is the most critical stage of growth that the Prophet (S) has described as “a kind of madness” and Imam Ali (a.s.) has said, “It is intoxication”.

The physical changes that take place in this stage are:

1. Quick growth; some changes take place in the outer shape of a man in this stage that cause a teenager to often look at himself in the mirror and ponder long over his new shape.
2. Change in the tone of a teenager’s voice to becoming rough and hoarse
3. Growth of the sexual lust; if a teenager is not instructed with the lawful and the unlawful concerning the matter of sex, he will become involved in sin.

The psychological changes are:

1. Excitement and nervousness
2. Secret thinking and pondering over what will happen
3. Feeling independent

The changes in the practical field:

1. Mutiny and objection
2. Taking occasional and sudden decisions without premeditation
3. Acting and then thinking
4. Taking famous persons as examples
5. Not accepting the supervision of others; a teenager does not tolerate the direct ordering or forbidding from his parents.
6. The desire of venturing and showing one's personality

In this stage, the influence of parents on the youth weakens while the influence of the street, school, and the outside becomes strong. If parents spend the previous stages with their child in the correct way, they can easily, in this stage, connect their child with mosques, Islamic foundations, good scholars, and faithful friends to help them pass this stage without troubles; otherwise, the hands of the devils will snatch him to educate him with the culture of the people of Hell.

Fourth, the stage of youth, which begins after the eighteenth year when the storm of adolescence gradually calms down. Now, a young person begins his/her practical thinking of his/her scientific and professional future and thinks of choosing a spouse. This responsible state continues and becomes stronger after marriage and parenthood. Due to past and present cultural spheres, discernment and serious thinking emerge in one's personality. The general social spheres and the cultural establishments surrounding man have a great effect on forming his personality.

Question no. 144: Please explain the Islamic philosophy of education so that I may compare it to modern theories of education.

Question: I am a university graduate. I am married and have children. I have read books on education by non-Islamic authors. Would you please show me the educational dimensions in Islam so that I can compare what I have read with what you will deign?

The answer: First, I would like to invite you to read what our virtuous scholars have written in this field. They have written useful studies, and some of them have completed what others have written. Here, I am just noting for you some important bullet points followed by summaries. I would like to say: educating

man with the perfect Islamic teachings requires paying great attention to all dimensions, beginning with the first moment when the sperm and the ovum convene, such as being in a state of purity, choosing a suitable night and a suitable hour (for sleeping together), being mentally calm, reciting supplications, beginning with the name of Allah, and seeking His protection from the Satan as detailed in certain religious books. As for after birth, there are four dimensions that must be kept in mind:

1. Bodily dimension

Great attention must be paid to the course of food, cleanliness, times of rest, and treatments of diseases before the rise of complications; otherwise, a child will be nervous and gradually become sick, introverted, and lacking in self-confidence.

2. Moral dimension

It means the ability to act according to the moral values. Without this ability, man's actions will be away from the virtuous, moral values.

3. Social dimension

If a child is introverted or aggressive, it means he has had a weak social education and must then be taught the principles of social relations with others, such as respecting others, dealing with them peaceably, and not violating their rights.

4. Mental and intellectual dimension

This is a very important factor in educating a child and finding in him an open, delightful, and balanced mentality, because man's knowledge and wide range of information enable him to comprehend different affairs.

The ground of these dimensions is formed in the stage of childhood if attention is paid to the aforementioned points. I hope that you will benefit more from what the virtuous scholars have detailed in their books about this matter.

Question no. 145: We are exhausted in trying to raise upright children in light of all the challenges today; what should we do?

Question: I think educating children is one of the most difficult tasks in this time period, when we are surrounded with the cultural attacks of imperialism and corruption, when poverty and our worries about

the futures of our children have increased, and likewise when the different diseases of this age have increased. All of this has made us exhausted in life. I think we are in a time where we have lost sight of the right way because of the many suspicious ways. Do you agree with me on this?

The answer: We confess that education in the past ages was much easier than it is in our present age due to some real reasons and facts. With this confession, we do not aim to submit to the negative sides of those reasons, but rather, we aim to understand them in order to undertake the legal responsibilities towards preventing their dangers. Here we would like to refer to these facts:

The first fact is technological development and the penetration of material means into man's life, such as the television, telephone, video, computer, internet, fax, and different films, which enter houses and closed rooms via satellites.

The second fact is the increase and ease of the means of interrelations and communications between people, which make information and cultures intermingle with each other.

The third is the variety of people's needs and their dissatisfaction with certain things. In other words, they are busy with fashions besides their desires to possess all that is new.

The fourth is the activities connected with the adventitious facts that have entered the lives of individuals and families and are followed by cultures and interests of the same kind.

The fifth is the prevalence of information, or what is called "the information explosion." As soon as one understands a piece of news or an information, hundreds of news and information come to him to exhaust his mind, and then he cannot conceive which one is the most important or, in fact, he cannot distinguish between the important and the more important ones.

The sixth is the differences between tastes and facts concerning the new things and facts mentioned above and their consequences. These differences cause disagreements, quarrels, and different problems that instigate in man a state of abandonment, resistance, and mutiny, even in intellectual and religious matters as is clear from the conducts of the youths of nowadays.

These facts are features of the globalization the universal arrogants offered to the nations at the beginning of the year 2000 to let them enter a third millennium full of moral corruption, perversion, and the diseaseful consequences that lead to mistrust of the beliefs, deviation, class-war, and social disassembly.

In our present age, man, due to these facts, suffers mental and physical exhaustion. He has no morale or power to communicate with his children or discuss with them their affairs and problems. This has a

bad influence on the educational and sentimental affairs inside his family and on the private relations with his wife. Therefore, man has to know his time and its facts as carefully as he can, besides knowing his religion and the goal of his existence in the earth. Thus, he will be able to choose the way to success and be safe from becoming involved in the trap of imperialism. If we do not analyze things in the correct way, others will dissolve us with their ill analyses.

Question no. 146: How is the personality of a child formed?

Question: After having our first child by the will of Allah the Almighty, an argument took place between my wife and me about how the personality of a child is formed. Would you please give us an answer to settle our argument?

The answer: The personality of a child is built through the following factors:

1. The natural faith in the true religion of Allah; a child, regardless of whoever and whatever he may turn out to be, is born with the divine nature that is the true Islam. Allah has said, ***(Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam)***². However, it is the parents who make their children either Jews, Christians, or Magi based on their own beliefs. So deviation begins with external factors, the first of which is the parents' beliefs and conducts.
2. The intellectual and practical level of parents; however developed in intellect and conducts they are, their child will be similar to them.
3. The relationship between the parents and the child; if it is close, full of love and care, the child's personality and mentality will be shaped in a way that will help him to be successful in the future.
4. Orderliness, mannerliness, discipline, and cleanliness; the child grows accustomed to these items from his environment, and they become parts of his future personality.
5. The wise administration of the family; many sufferings inside the house are caused by a weak administration of family affairs. The father or the mother, or both, must have the ability of leadership to administrate every affair concerning the family in order to help the family arrive at the shore of happiness and ease. Leadership is not dictatorship, but rather, it is the art of winning hearts and attracting them to the right opinion.

Question no. 147: From where do children receive their culture?

Question: From where do children receive their culture? Is it from their parents, TV programs, or school programs? This was the subject of a discussion that recently took place in a family meeting. Most of us said that TV programs were the first source from which a child obtains his culture and conducts. Do you have anything else with which to advise us? Thanks.

The answer: The child begins receiving his culture from the first moment when he begins to feel whatever is happening around him inside the house. Thus, the parents are the first source of the culture by which the child is influenced and with which he grows up. His first step begins with the blind imitation of every movement, gesture, and word of his parents, especially the mother and then the father, and then the others in the family and the children of the same age whether in the house, street, school, TV, or illustrated magazines.

Allama Sayyid Hadi al-Mudarrisi says, 'Man is not only the son of his class – as Marx says – but he is the son of his culture, education, and environment before all.'³

The experiments of educationists have proven that the child receives from the one around him all his gestures and words and even his gait, way of eating, etc. They say that man is a creature who acts according to nature and is sociable by influence. The kind of culture around him enables him to change continuously, whether positively or negatively, until the last moment of his life.

TV programs are one of the most important sources of injecting cultures into a child, but it is not more important than the culture of the parents, except if their culture is to throw the child towards those programs to feed on them all the time.

Question no. 148: What is your opinion about the plays of children and with what do you advise parents to play with their children?

Question: What is your opinion about the plays of children and with what do you advise parents to play with their children?

The answer: Man is a sociable being by nature, but if he does not protect himself with a sound culture, he will turn into a sick member of society, and his personality is shaped according to the culture he receives and the social role he plays. This matter begins with childhood. If a man receives during his childhood a sound culture and sound social senses, he will be ready to enjoy success; otherwise, he will

be liable to deviation.

Educationists say that childhood is a third of one's normal age. If the needs of a child are satisfied and he is provided with useful toys and playthings, he will be more ready to undertake a successful role in society in the future. In the light of this theory, we present the following suggestions:

1. Parents have to choose for their child useful playthings that have constructive and educational purposes and that can open his mind and help him mix in society successfully. We do not mean to totally prevent the child from playing alone, but let most of his play be of the kind that needs another child to play with; and however more players the play may require, the sense of sociability and communication with others will increase.
2. There is no doubt that mental games are preferred in importance to physical games, but each have their undeniable importance and advantage in building a well-rounded personality of the child.
3. Parents should know that however they conduct themselves, whether with good behaviors and nice words or with quarrels and bad words, will reflect on the child, especially when he is alone with his toys. He will behave according to what he has acquired from his parents because they are the closest ones who the child imitates and is influenced by. This state remains with the child, whether it is good or bad, and others can discover the morals of the parents in the house through the behaviors of the child. Hence, parents must be careful regarding their behaviors with their child or in his presence because this will leave a great influence on his mentality.
4. It is necessary to submit to the child's desire in choosing the kind of toys for him, but if he chooses something that is harmful for him, he must be convinced wisely to choose better alternatives.
5. Parents should keep the child away from plays and games of violence, especially computer games such as wrestling, karate, and the like.
6. Providing the child with different kinds of useful toys and games is very important for him.

Question no. 149: I would like to know the motives for my child's acting nervous and violent.

Question: I would like to know the motives for my child's acting nervous and violent. He rebels against my advices and does the opposite of what I ask him to do.

The answer: First, when your child rebels, you have to think of these three questions: when, why, and

how. When you are able to identify when this state begins, why it begins, and how, then you will recognize the motives that make him resist and rebel against you. Most likely, you will find that it is you who should be blamed for that. If it is in fact so, then you must change your manner of advising him.

Second, sometimes your intention is good when advising, but your manner of advising is not right. You should know that it is wisdom to choose effective ways and manners of giving advice because sometimes the manner is better than the advice itself.

Third, the kinds of foods you often have in your house, and especially canned foods and other products that come to us from foreign countries, may have a negative effect on the nerves, cause excitement, and increase the temperature of blood. It is necessary to follow, in our foods, a culture derived from our Islamic values.

Fourth, watching violent films has a very bad influence on children's mentalities. Children learn from such films mutiny, resistance, and other bad behaviors that do not befit a Muslim.

Question no. 150: What should I do if I have a teenager who neglects prayers and is not interested in hijab?

Question: My daughter is seventeen years old. She pays no attention to prayers. I hate forcing her to offer prayers against her will, but at the same time I cannot bear to have her give up prayers. Moreover, she does not care for her veil. With what would you advise me to make her abide by these religious obligations?

The answer: First, please, excuse me to say that you have come late!

Second, you should offer prayers in her presence without making her think that you do it intentionally, and after your prayers, supplicate to Allah for her. Mention her name and pray to Allah to make her successful in her life! This will gradually make her love prayers, and whenever she achieves success or gains some good, tell her that this is because of the blessing of supplication after prayers!

Third, you should buy her some Islamic books, especially those concerning the importance of prayers and veil and their meanings and constructive influences in life. Bring her audio and video cassettes and CDs to create a religious atmosphere in the house for her!

Fourth, ask her to remind you of the time of azan! By this you will make her, somehow, care for prayer and you will pave the way for her to accept this sacred obligation. On some occasions, you should mention to her the advantages of veiling and show her the opinions of the Qur'an and the Prophetic

traditions about it.

Fifth, if she is not affected after practicing these steps for sometime, you should discuss with her why she does not offer prayers and why she does not care for her veil. Try to answer her questions quietly, logically, kindly, and attractively!

Sixth, when, someday, she does offer the prayer, thank her and encourage her! Tell her: dear daughter, I see a light on your face. This light will illuminate your way towards the perfect happiness if you keep up your prayers thoughtfully and longingly!

Finally, you should know that this role is not limited to you alone. You have to encourage your wife and other religious women in the family to participate in it. If it is possible, you can bind her to friendship with some religious girls.

Question no. 151: How should I deal with my children being constantly quarrelsome with each other?

Question: I have three quarrelsome children. They quarrel at everything with each other and with other children too. I do not know how to deal with this problem, which is about to destroy my nerves!

The answer: The most important causes of such a case, as I think, are:

1. The participation of the children in the same things, such as the same toy, the same meal, and the same clothes; this causes competition and quarreling amongst them
2. Showing love to a certain child and depriving the other
3. The smallness of the house or the room of the children
4. When children watch quarrels, whether in the house, the street, the school, or in films.

Treating this problem requires dealing with the causes besides continually advising in a quiet and lenient manner. In addition, you may embrace the children in the same way and kiss them from time to time because this will plant sympathy inside them and make the solution of the problem easier and faster inshallah.

I suggest that, on some occasions, you buy a box of chocolates, for example, and give it to your children to distribute it among other children so that they may learn the spirit of gift-giving and altruism and thus

the case of quarreling to seize others' possessions will decrease or disappear.

Question no. 152: What should we do to make a child give up playing with others' things?

Question: What should we do to make a child give up playing with others' things?

The answer: The following steps are sufficient for this aim:

1. Let others not play with his things.
2. You should teach him about the rights of others and how to regard their possessions through stories and instructions in accordance with the level of his understanding.
3. When your child takes others' things, you should immediately return those things to their owners and make the child participate in it himself in order for him to keep in mind how to respect others' possessions.
4. When the child gives up playing with others' things, you should reward him and declare to him that the reward is for his amiable situation of not playing with others' things.

Question no. 153: My wife and I differ in ideas of child rearing and she acts contrary to my wishes in child rearing; what can I do?

Question: I suffer, in educating my children, from a problem that may destroy all my efforts. The problem is that my wife does not coordinate her efforts with me. For example, I ask my daughter not to buy toys for boys, but after a few days, I find my wife buying those toys for her. I encourage my older son to choose the profession of medicine, while my wife encourages him to choose engineering because her father is an engineer. Do these contradictions not corrupt the education of our children? Does it not create a duality that wastes our efforts and makes the children complain to their parents? Your Eminence, would you please guide me how I can get rid of this suffering by giving a suitable solution to this problem?

The answer: A concordant family is the family whose members manage their affairs together with good faith, mutual trust, and hopefulness. The children of such a family will graduate with good mentality, high

self-confidence, and hopefulness in life. They will have enough motives of progress to help them pass any difficulties in their ways.

Dear brother, if you ponder on this fact and sit with your wife to discuss all its dimensions, you will agree on coordination, cooperation, and interchanging opinions regarding the educational and future affairs of your children.

If you want your suffering to not cause you problems one after another, you should hasten to cure it. Your wife is the closest one to you and she has the right to participate with you in educating your children, for children are not the possessions of just one of the parents. It would be better for you both to sit together and agree on the same strategic aims in educating your children and then you can agree on suitable manners to carry out those aims. When there is any disagreement between you and your partner in life, you must avoid despotism and quarreling in the presence of the children. You can discuss your different affairs in a closed room and away from the children, even when you discuss nice matters quietly!

You should keep in mind that your children have the right to give their opinions on the matters that concern them, especially those concerning their future, when they are fit to choose. Their opinions and legal wishes must be requested so that they feel the freedom of choosing and discussing in a sphere of consultation full of love and sincerity. This is one of the necessities of good education, which has unfortunately disappeared from the conducts of most people.

Question no. 154: I feel I treat my children unequally and love some more than others: What is the solution to this problem?

Question: My children are not the same in most of their qualities, and this makes me and those who are in contact with them love some of them more than the others. Sometimes, I feel remorse; what is the guilt of this child who receives less love and sympathy than the others just because of the difference in beauty and sweet-tonguedness? Would you please guide me to the right, because, as you know, this is a problem of many people?

The answer: There is no doubt that each child has a special position inside his parents' hearts and also in the house, school, and society. It is because of the qualities each child has and his/her educational manners that parents and others differentiate. An only child has a different position from one who has siblings. Likewise does the only male child among some sisters. A clever child is often preferred to a dull one. But, when admiring a certain child, one should be fair in dealing with all. He should show love and kindness to all of his children equally; otherwise, unfairness causes envy of the pampered child. Hence, parents should be careful in dealing with their children to get balanced relations among all. And, in order

to not wrong the clever child when he and the dull one are treated equally, you should make the dull one understand that your greater care for the clever one is just because of his qualifications and efforts and make him understand that when he himself makes an effort to improve himself, he will deserve more care too. The matter will be different if the difference between the children is natural. For example, if one of the children is handicapped from birth. In this case, the handicapped one should be treated with more care than the others due to the mercy that Islam has made incumbent upon us and in order to avoid the psychological effects that may affect the children.

Here, I must mention two necessities:

First, we must think of the punishment in the afterlife if we harm a child or deprive him of his rights that are obligatory on parents or those who are responsible for him to fulfill.

Second, we must think humanely towards a deprived child.

I hope that in the future we can learn how to keep ourselves safe from the remorse that stems from the bad education of our children and its negative effects.

Question no. 155: How can I make my child more serious in his study?

Question: How can I make my child more serious in his study? Do you have any way with which I can help him out of his laziness in learning? I hope that you will guide me in this matter that decides the future of my only child.

The answer: There are two factors stimulating one towards what is required and taking laziness and languor away from him. The first one is the internal motive and the second is the external goal.

A motive is the mental and intellectual state from which one receives nourishment. A goal is the external attractiveness of the aim in one's eye and mind.

In order to be successful in leading your son towards a good future that pleases Allah and that is respected among people, you should create for him a motive and assign to him an important goal. This requires concentrating on the following points:

1. You should take out of his mind the example he follows in his laziness and unwillingness to study, and explain to him the harms of imitating an ignorant example. At the same time, you should mention to him

a good example and explain to him the advantages of following it.

2. Whenever he changes his conduct and tries to turn towards a good example, you should reward him and repeatedly encourage him. Some experts of modern education advise of limited and reasonable punishments if a child continues imitating an ignorant example. Islam also advises of this matter according to the requirements of the situation and the decision of a wise educational leader.

3. You should educate your son with any means he likes. For example, if he likes watching films, you can bring him good cultural films, and if he likes games, you can bring him mental games.

In general, you should create cultural spheres in your house by, for example, bringing books and attractive meaningful magazines, inviting scholars and learned people to your house to discuss cultural and intellectual questions, and talking about different educational issues.

Question no. 156: Why do my children not respect me?

Question: My elder son does not respect me, and the younger one has begun imitating him in that for some time now, though I think that I have not failed in satisfying any of their rights. What do you think the reason is?

The answer: Whenever the father shows his love to his children in different ways and on different occasions, they respect and regard him more, except if there are special defects in the children's mentalities the blame of which does not lie with the father.

The father is the first factor in forming the type of relationship between him and his children. The father who does not allow his son to talk freely and declare what is in his mind should not expect his son to respect him from the moment he begins opening his eyes to life.

The father who treats his child coercively, shouts at him, insults him, or maybe even slaps him if he is a little late in carrying out his orders will destroy every excuse for making his child respect him.

The father who treats his children unequally and does not show them the same love and respect should accept the fact that they will not respect him because he himself has not respected them.

The father who allows his children to revel in every bad culture and suspicious friendships and is indifferent to any bad habit they adopt will not find in them what will please him.

Dear brother, as long as you have not neglected your children's rights, perhaps there are other reasons

behind their not respecting you. From among these reasons is that your children may be teenagers. This is a temporary state that often disappears between the age of twenty-five and thirty. If your child is older than this age, his conduct towards you may be because he has thoughts opposite to yours.

Anyhow, I would advise every father to not make himself as a military officer, his house as a military barrack, and his children as his soldiers! Fathers should, from the very beginning, plant love into their children's hearts and educate them in a way that makes them feel they have independent personalities in the house and in life.

The moral teachings and values Islam has issued are sufficient to make man perfect, but it is the duty of fathers, mothers, and children to adhere to these teachings in order to protect themselves from any educational disease that may trouble their family life. Surely, prevention is better than cure but most people are indifferent.

Question no. 157: What is the influence of television and computer games on our children?

Question: What is the influence of television and computer games on our children? Some people say they are good because they keep children away from bad deeds, but others mention the harms of these devices of which no house is empty. What is your opinion about the subject?

The answer: My opinion is in accordance with the second one as Dr. Hamid al-Mutayri has detailed in al-Furqan Magazine, vol. 121, saying the following:

“Many educationists think that watching the TV too much often causes dullness in children and watching the TV for long periods makes children see many bad things such as immodest pictures and scenes that they should not see in such a stage of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends making children under two years not watch the TV and the reasons behind that are many. Here are some of them:

1. Watching TV means wasting the opportunity of reaction and association between the child and the rest of the members of the family. The child who sits before the television for a long time does not read, write, argue with others, or play well with those around him.
2. The TV means laziness in full. He who watches TV needs little concentration and attention, and perhaps this is the reason that has made the TV so amusing.
3. Watching TV lessens the child's attention span, because one who gets used to watching TV moves

from one channel to another continuously and thus cannot fix on the same subject. This matter affects the opportunity of learning and makes listening to the teacher carefully very difficult.

4. We should know that the TV broadcasts destructive messages that cannot be avoided easily. For example, the rate of the scenes that have sexual gestures and hints, which the ordinary spectators see in a year, is nearly fourteen thousand scenes, and the commercial advertisements we watch in a year are more than eighteen thousand. This is besides the scenes of violence, which different programs are full of. As a result, we can say that the TV may be a dangerous factor leading towards corruption and violence.

To cure this problem, Mr. William Baniet, a previous American minister of education, presents the following solutions:

1. Legislating certain laws on what is possible for children to watch with assigning a suitable time for that; some suggest that the time of watching TV should be after the times of reading and doing homework.
2. Consolidating these laws by putting near the TV where it can always be noticed a sheet having special instructions concerning watching TV
3. Choosing useful programs that are possible for children to watch and suitable for their ages
4. Offering alternatives when decreasing the period of watching TV, which means busying the children with other activities instead of watching TV
5. We ourselves must be good examples to our children. It is not reasonable that we warn our children of watching TV while we ourselves spend long hours watching it.

We should take lessons from the results that have come out of TV programs up until now. They are too bad. However, the results will be opposite if the programs are meaningful and in the light of Islamic values as a source of education.

Question no. 158: How can I make my son leave bad friends?

Question: My son has bad friends. Would you please guide me with how I can make him leave them? Should I do that with violence or is there another way?

The answer: You can offer him alternatives by acquainting him with good friends from among your

friends' sons. You may do that by suggesting and agreeing with those fathers on a group trip to a summer camp, for example, or a travel to the holy shrines or something like that to allow him to make friends with these good kids. It is better that you not tell him about the purpose of this step. Besides, you yourself should make him your friend. The transcendence we find in most fathers before their children is not acceptable. The father can be the best friend of his son. He can teach him his experiences, talk with him about his past, and direct him towards the future tactfully, kindly, and wisely.

It is necessary for the father who is concerned for his son's future to appreciate his son, praise him, respect him, encourage him to always strengthen his self-confidence, and enable him to deal with those around him in an acceptable social manner.

Question no. 159: How do I teach my child to keep in order his toys and stuff?

Question: How do we deal with the child who does not collect his toys and return them to their proper places after he is done playing with them? This tires me out in addition to my work in serving food, washing clothes, and sweeping the house.

The answer: You can follow these suggestions or some of them according to your need:

First, before your child begins playing, you should remind him that one of the conditions for his playing is that he has to collect the toys after he has finished playing with them.

Second, if he does not abide by this condition and leaves his toys scattered everywhere, you can prevent him from something he likes as a kind of punishment until he carries out that condition. If he returns to his bad habit, you can return to punishment, and so on until he starts to follow what is required from him.

Third, in times other than his playtime, you can tell him some tales having concepts of discipline and orderliness. You can tell him that a lovely child and a successful man are the ones who undertake their responsibilities, care for their things, protect them, and put everything in its place.

Fourth, at the end of his playing, you may help him a little and then begin a competition with him of who can collect the most toys.

Fifth, you can assign to him an independent room where if he does not collect his toys there, it will not matter. However, from time to time, you should arrange his room so that he does not grow accustomed to disorderliness.

Question no. 160: When my son became a teenager, he became disrespectful; why has this happened?

Question: My son is fifteen years old. Now, he is different from how he was before. He used to be quiet and well mannered, but now he is very mutinous. He refuses to be advised and turns his back on me whenever I ask him for something. I do not know why he has suddenly become like this.

The answer: Your son is now passing through the stage of moving from childhood to youth. Physically and mentally, he is undergoing changes of cells and reactions of hormones. He is at the threshold of a new stage, where he will like to know about what he has not known before. Things around him are new for him. He does not like to deal with them as before when he was a child. Now, he considers himself an adult. Socially, people, friends, the media, and all that he sees in the street affect him. Intellectually, he looks for the proofs of everything that has been said before about beliefs and ideas. Questioning in this transitional stage is natural for him. If parents scold or shout at him in their manners of guiding, he will slip into deviation and then into the major deviation, especially if he falls into the traps of bad friends.

It is necessary for parents to be accurate and careful in dealing with children in this new state, regardless of whether they are boys or girls. It is a temporary state that just needs wisdom and great care, and then both, you and your children, will be comfortable.

Question no. 161: How can we teach children not to be envious?

Question: I am a teacher. I find that some of my students are envious of their classmates. I try my best to remove this bad feature from them but with no use. I can say that this feature is present even in my children in the house, and I do not know how to control it.

The answer: Envy has many causes such as:

1. The discrimination in parents' treatment of their children; showing love to some children and depriving the others of it is an educational error that is widespread among families. This discrimination may lead the children to even commit crimes against the parents, the newborn child, or people outside the house. Wisdom requires parents to show love to their children equally in order to not shed tears of regret later on.
2. The natural gifts in individuals like beauty, neatness, tactfulness, and the like; here a wise teacher and a kind father should not prefer one (student or child) to another according to inexcusable sentiment and

love. Preference is right when someone makes efforts to be successful and the teacher intends by that to draw the attentions of the others that whoever makes efforts to be successful will be preferred, and thus, preference is just a result of efforts and success.

3. Praising someone before his mates without justification; when one is praised before his mates, the reasons behind that praise, such as personal efforts, success, and the like, should be declared to make his mates understand that praise is a fruit deserved by whoever does good.

4. A teacher or a father should explain moral concepts and stories about the outcomes of enviers and then ask the listeners to give their opinions about envy and after that advise and warn them of envy.

5. It is good for a teacher sometimes to ask his students to write articles on envy and assign a prize for the best of them. Doing this leads them to read and ponder more over what they suffer from, and consequently, they try to rid themselves of this bad feature.

Parents have to prepare the mentality of their last child to respond to the coming of their new child. They should plant love inside their child for his coming brother or sister so that he can be delighted when it is born, and this will remove envy from him.

Question no. 162: What are the causes of envy among children and what are the solutions?

Question: What are the causes of envy among children and what are the solutions?

The answer: There are many causes that prepare the ground for this bad quality. Here are some of them:

1. Moral defects in the family, such as the lack of indulgence, not pardoning one another, watching each other suspiciously, and the like

2. The parents' disagreements and quarrels

3. Discrimination amongst the children

4. Natural differences between the children themselves, like cleverness, beauty, good speaking, activeness, etc.

5. Siding with one of the children against the other when they quarrel without listening or being certain

about who is actually guilty

As for the solutions, they are:

1. Holding family meetings from time to time to discuss the matters that often cause quarrels, and the children should be given a full opportunity to talk freely while being listened to carefully and respectfully
2. In spite of all the quarrels between the children, the parents should deal with all of them equally and fairly
3. Making efforts to end every quarrel between the children from its very beginning
4. Avoiding discrimination; the parents should accept their children as they are and not make them feel that their parents love or care for a certain one of them more than the others
5. It is very important too that parents should adapt themselves to the natural rate of envy in their children, and at the same time that they explain to their children the harms of envy, they should not, by their actions, encourage it to increase in them

Question no. 163: My son is lazy and does not like his lessons. How should I deal with him?

Question: My son is lazy and does not like his lessons. How should I deal with him?

The answer:

1. He has not found a motive that makes him love studying. Such a motive must be created in him by explaining to him the advantages of knowledge either by you or by others. You can talk to him about the great scientists, scholars, and inventors and explain to him how they have gained the respect of people and will gain the high degrees in Paradise.
2. He must be taught the right ways of learning and understanding the lessons.
3. The actual reasons for his hating studying must be identified. He may be harmed by his classmates or mistreated by his teachers or something else.
4. He should not be blamed too much, because this will make him more obdurate and obstinate.
5. Laziness sometimes is symptomatic and it would be better to see a doctor too.

6. If there are around him family problems or marital disagreements, you should try to determine them because such problems are the main reasons that cause laziness and boredom, and they are the key to every evil.

Question no. 164: Would you please explain to me the most important bases of education?

Question: I have just one child, and I have prayed to Allah for so long to grant me her. Therefore, I am very concerned to educate her as Allah the Almighty wants. Would you please explain to me the most important bases of education? I will be very grateful.

The answer: Islam has divided the education of children into three stages.

The first stage begins from birth and lasts until the seventh year. In this stage, the child should taste the full meaning of freedom. He should be free to do whatever he likes except if he wants to do something that may harm him, and then he should be prevented in a way that his dignity is not harmed and his freedom is not restrained.

The second stage is from the seventh until the fourteenth year. In this stage, the child should be taught useful knowledge especially the beliefs, juristic principles, morals, and contemporary sciences.

The third stage begins after the fourteenth year where the parents by now should have prepared him to be as their friend and as an independent person. However, in this age, the parents should help him in the field of life and teach him good lessons from their experiences.

This is in general, but as for the conduct required from you as a mother towards her daughter, I would like to draw your attention to the following points:

1. You should teach your daughter good habits and morals.
2. You should strengthen in her the motives of goodness, knowledge, and longing for Paradise.
3. Let her see in you the exact practical example of what you tell her!
4. Let yourself be so close to her to the extent that she can speak frankly to you about anything that is in her mind!

5. You should plant in her self-confidence and teach her to not be satisfied with a certain level of success! Always tell her: "High determination is from faith".

6. You should continue reading books concerning your goal!

Question no. 165: What do you think about beating children?

Question: What do you think about beating children? Do you think it is one of the successful ways of education?

The answer: Most people prefer beating and neglect using kind and persuasive words. I think that those who beat the children are in greater need of education than the children who are beaten. Children do not perceive the mistakes they commit nor do they understand the cause for being beaten.

Hence, the beater is worthier of being punished according to the very principle he follows in beating the child.

We should know that the child who is insulted and who suffers the pain of beating will not give up the thing for which he is beaten; rather, he will continue doing it secretly or will learn how to beat and practice beating another child or he will hide inside himself his hatred against the beater until a day when he will show his hatred to restore his dignity due to his childish understanding. The children that are deterred by beating are very few. Therefore, it is not right to utilize beating as a successful educational means, except according to the limits of necessity as studied by a wise educator.

Question no. 166: I feel ashamed about my child's bad behavior; what can I do?

Question: My child is quick-tempered, quarrelsome, and aggressive. He asks for some things at inappropriate times. He wants to possess whatever he likes, and sometimes he seizes others' things and holds them whiningly and stiffly. I feel ashamed before others because of him. Would you please give me a solution?

The answer: Anger is a kind of excitement inside man that appears through his words and gestures. Excitement has external incentives at some times and internal ones at other times.

In fact, the power of anger is a good defensive instinct in the life of man and nations that Allah has created in man to help him be in certain situations brave, valiant, and heroic. However, it is like other

instincts. If it is not guided in the way of goodness, reform, and piety, it will move in the opposite direction and destroy the noble values.

There is a saying that courage and full-heartedness are among the hereditary aspects, and so are anger and quick-temperedness.

As for anger in children, educationists say that it begins in the third year and decreases when the child becomes five and a half years old. Children learn anger and nervousness from their parents and the persons around them in the house, kindergarten, or school. Children also learn that from some exciting films. They imitate what they see in those films thinking it is a condition for them to be accepted by society or to prove their personalities and existence among their fellows. Thus, they feel the pleasure of pride and importance.

Regardless of the age differences of those who show their anger, the common thing between all kinds of anger is that the angry person places himself at the center of all things and becomes utterly selfish when he wants something, which could be his or others', and he then disagrees with others.

On the other hand, an angry child provokes his parents' anger and then his desire to defend his pleasure and aim increases in him. In this wrong way, anger deepens in the child while his parents and relatives do not feel it.

To cure this state, one should not reciprocate the angry child with anger. When the child becomes angry, parents should not be angry with him, because in order to put out the fire, one needs to pour water on it and not add fuel!

Besides, you should make the child understand that the pleasure of proving his personality and existence among others is not gained through anger or forcefully seizing things but is instead gained through love and cordiality.

At the same time, the parents should not submit to the unreasonable desires of the child. Submission to all his desires makes him ask for anything at anytime and deepens in him obduracy and obstinacy, and then he does not care whether his parents are able to meet his requests or not. In fact, excessive pampering makes the child ask for everything and with no limits. Of course, he becomes angry if he faces a limit that he has not faced before. Hence, the parents may be, most of the time, the cause in making the child grow accustomed to asking for everything because they meet all his requests in order to avoid his insistence, as they think, but the fact that is not known to them is that their child will now ask for new things again and again.

Yes, if parents are able to buy for their child what he sees in the hands of others and wants, they should

do so; otherwise, they should be patient enough to tolerate their child's angriness and insistence.

Question no. 167: I need advice on how to manage my children given their own unique characteristics and ambitions.

Question: Each one of my children has his own special characteristics and ambitions. How should I deal with them in the house? I love them from the depths of my heart, but I am too arbitrary with them, and I fear that it will affect their futures. I do not know whether I am right or wrong in my way of dealing with them!

The answer: Dear brother, I have read wonderful educational statements of an Iranian writer called Muhammad Taqi Ma'soomi. I translate them here with my additions in reply to your question. The author says,

1. If you want your children to live psychologically and mentally in safety and soundness, you should avoid quarreling in their presence.
2. If you want your children to not be obstinate, you should not always reject their requests, insult them, or shout at them before others.
3. If you want your children to listen to you, you should listen to them carefully and respectfully.
4. If you want your children to not get used to bad morals and nervousness, you should not treat them with rude, superior orders and strict instructions.
5. If you want your children to not feel desperate or disappointed, you should not scold them with severe words when they fail to achieve success in something.
6. If you want your children to not mistrust you, you should not promise them what you cannot fulfill.
7. If you want to strengthen your children's self-confidence, you should praise them for their good deeds and reward them with some gifts.
8. If you want your children to obey you, you should not scold them or insist that they obey you.
9. If you want your children to be successful in the future, you should be a good example for them in orderliness, planning, and deliberation.

10. If you want your children to not be slack in speaking and talking to you, you should smile at them whenever they want to speak and show them that you will listen carefully to them when they want to talk.

11. If you want to help your children in studying their lessons, you should not do that without consulting someone who specializes in school affairs.

12. If you want to guide your children out of their troubles, you should listen to their questions carefully and react to their sufferings.

13. If your children are weak in their studies and you want to help them, you should not blame them with words like “failure”, “weak”, “dull”, “stupid,” etc.

14. If you want your children to not be defeated by despair and to not submit to failure when disappointed, you should assure them that bitter events pass away quickly.

Finally, dear brother, you should not lose your patience and be desperate because life is full of difficulties and memories. You should write down on its pages what pleases you and what will make your family remember you after your death with good thoughts and prayers⁵.

Question no. 168: How can I sow the love of religion in my children so that they will adhere to it up to the last moment of their lives?

Question: How can I sow the love of religion in my children so that they will adhere to it up to the last moment of their lives?

The answer: There is no doubt that the true religion of Islam has intellectual and practical teachings that feed man with a sound sustenance and make him happy in all fields of life. Since it is so, then the importance of religion in man’s life makes it obligatory on him to make every effort to arrive at religion. Allah has said, (***O you who believe! save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones***)⁶.

Now, what should we do to sow the seed of religiousness in our children and to assure their adhering to it throughout their lives?

It is very important for fathers and mothers to know that children are born with a certain nature, but the environments they live in take them away from that nature. And there is no difference between home,

school, and the street.

Watching the environment and purifying it from cultural poisons is the first step in the educational task. After that, you can make your children memorize the Qur'an, Hadith, or some religious oratorios and anthems according to their ages and incorporate that into their daily affairs; for example, when they want to go to bed, you can teach them to recite some Qur'anic verses and some supplications. You can say to them that these verses and supplications will make them sleep comfortably and they will see nice dreams and on the Day of Resurrection their reward will be great, or when they have their examinations, you can teach them to give alms and recite certain Qur'anic verses and certain supplications so that Allah may grant them success. You can also prepare some religious competitions for them and give prizes to the winners. Besides this, you should continuously take them to religious meetings.

Religious stories have great influences on planting Islamic concepts in children's minds, especially the stories of the prophets and imams (a.s.) and the stories of Paradise and its pleasures. Children must be taken to religious meetings and given a role there, such as distributing sweets, arranging books and the copies of the Qur'an, or the like.

You have to protect your children with spiritual relations and strengthen religious values in them before they reach adolescence or adulthood, because this stage is the stage of physical, psychological, mental, and intellectual changes. If their foundation is solid and firm, they will not be defeated by suspicions, and they will pass the stage of adolescence soundly and successfully.

Question no. 169: Is it lawful to kill one's daughter that left the house and became a prostitute?

Question: Once, one of my friends told me that his daughter had left his house, and it was said that she had been a prostitute. He asked me if Islam permitted him to wipe off this disgrace by killing her.

The answer: Ask your friend to review himself first whether he has been wrong in his conducts towards his daughter that led her to practice this sin!

I know someone whose two daughters have openly been prostitutes. When I asked one of his relatives about the family circumstances of the two girls, he confirmed to me that their father was a drunkard. I said that the offspring coming out of drinking would not be better than that!

I hope that your friend is not of this kind! On the other hand, when some fathers see a mistake or a suspicious behavior in their children, they begin inquiring suspiciously, and then they treat the guilt as if it is true. They begin insulting their children, beating them, and demeaning them in the presence of others.

And consequently, if that child has not committed that guilt, he will then commit it defiantly.

This way of education has led many youths astray because they think: as long as our parents suspect us, then let us be as they suspect! They begin looking for bad friends, bad films, narcotics, or the like. Thus, they begin the journey of deviation. Therefore, the first thing that leads the youth to go astray is the kind of conduct displayed by parents towards their children, whereas parents can protect their children by following another manner in dealing with them: it is the manner of the holy Prophet (S), about whom Allah the Almighty has said, ***(Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you)***⁷.

Leniency, mercifulness, and kindness are basic elements of the successful manners of education and guidance. Unfortunately, most Muslims have given up these elements, and therefore, Allah has not blessed their lives!

Sometimes, youth are led astray by the habits of the masters of the family themselves. For example, you find a father forbidding his son from smoking while he himself smokes, or forbidding him from watching bad films while he himself watches them, and, on some occasions, talking about his past youth and how he spent his nights watching bad films or going with his friends to the cinema. Or you may find a mother talking about the past days of her unveiledness or showing photos of herself while unveiled, whereas she now asks her daughter to veil herself without criticizing her own past behaviors or feeling sorry for it. This duality in the parents' personalities will be planted in their children's personalities.

Let us first watch ourselves to make sure that we are not unknowingly the cause of our children's deviation.

Regarding permission for killing one's daughter after the guilt has been proven, it is to be determined by the religious authority (marji' at-Taqlid) who the father imitates. Let this father ask his authority about the matter. However, I think that there is no one who will permit him to kill his daughter. There is a certain punishment for adultery, but that is carried out only when it is possible and justifiable. We wish he would guide her with leniency, love, and kindness and forgive her for what she has committed, for surely Allah loves those who repent and purify themselves.

Question no. 170: How do we cure drug addiction and how do we deal with the many problems caused by it?

Question: My son is a drug addict. He has troubled us with problems that we never imagined would someday occur with him. What is the cure? What is the required conduct we should follow with him that

pleases Allah? And how can we raise our heads before people?!

The answer: It is supposed that you could have managed his affairs before this fall. However, since the calamity has already taken place, the first possible solution is to adapt yourselves to it, but this is not the cure for addiction as you may think. However, what doctors suggest can be tried.

As for dealing with a drug addict, it differs from one to another. Sometimes, it would be better to deal with a drug addict kindly, and sometimes severity is required so that others are not encouraged to walk in the same way. In general, you have to be wise and moderate in dealing with your addicted son, for it is the closest way to righteousness and the reward of Allah.

A manner of suppression or severance does not solve the problem at all; rather, it complicates it. A reasonable person is he who acts according to the reality and limits the area of the calamity that has afflicted him and tries his best to not let others fall. Islam has taught us that “a believer is not stung from the same hole twice”.

Question no. 171: Would you please advise me as to how to deal with my children when they make mistakes?

Question: I have four children. I am retired and I cannot tolerate seeing their mistakes. Would you please advise me as to how to deal with them when they make mistakes?

The answer: The mistakes may be intentional or may not be, as when they are committed because of the lack of full experience or immaturity. A successful father has to distinguish between these two kinds of mistakes and react accordingly. In any case, the father should strengthen his children's personalities by injecting knowledge and intellect in them on every occasion and should make his children understand the consequences of committing mistakes and the suffering of regret. The father should instruct his children in a lenient way full of love and kindness and away from coercion and compulsion. The father has to make friends with his children to gain their love, and then his advices will have a good influence on them.

If you want this, you have to be lenient in dealing with your children. You must give the mistaken one an opportunity to reflect and review his situation and must not attack him severely and in deliberately, for then you will cause him to respond in the same way, turn his back on you, and hate you forever. You should keep in mind that the mentality of the youth is like glass, which if broken, one will have to face many difficulties to mend. Therefore, it is very necessary for you to follow wise manners in advising and criticizing your children. When you want to make them understand that they have committed a mistake, you should talk with them leniently about the harms of mistakes and sins and teach them ways of giving

up or avoiding mistakes and sins and the advantages of that. With such a quiet method of blaming, you will make them understand their responsibilities, and they will then give up erring.

If you follow these important points for a short period, you shall not find yourself in need of being angry at your children when they commit mistakes, especially when you remember that Allah becomes angry at you if you commit a sin intentionally, and He forgives you if you repent sincerely. Let your morals towards your children be like the morals of Allah towards sinners in both cases!

Question no. 172: Would you please guide me as to what are the most important manners I need in educating my children?

Question: Would you please guide me as to what are the most important manners I need in educating my children? I am very concerned to make them good believers following the true Islam and serving the society. I want to be proud of them in this world and in the afterworld.

The answer: May Allah bless you for this high determination. I pray to Allah to make you successful in achieving your goal and it is not difficult for Him. However, this task has some conditions, such as the following:

1. You have to read about the details you will need in the religious books of education because they will open the doors for your ambition.
2. You have to consult with someone regarding the educational questions and cooperate with him in the tasks that require more than one person.
3. You should try to discover in your children their distinguished talents and then try to direct them in a way that pleases Allah the Almighty.
4. You have to always show your love to your children and regard their wills, and when your will conflicts with theirs, you have to discuss the matter leniently with them, determine the important and the more important things, and then agree with them on the best possible solution.
5. Smiles and cheerfulness have a great influence on man's success and happiness. Try your best to plant these things in your children, and the best artist is he who wipes away a child's tear to draw a smile and delight on his countenance.

Question no. 173: Would you please give us a summary of the Islamic opinion about education?

Question: Western and eastern scholars have written many books and detailed studies on education, and Islamic scholars have also written much on this subject. Would you please give us a summary of the Islamic opinion in this concern?

The answer: In spite of what has been said about education by scholars, whether concurring or conflicting, I think that what the Prophet (S) and his progeny (a.s.) have said is the most correct because they are connected, in their sayings, with the Aware Creator, the Lord of the Worlds, Who has sent to us His prophets to purify and teach us. It is the Islamic education that is derived from the Holy Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet (S) and his progeny.

Allah says, (***Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know***)⁸.

Imam Ali (a.s.), the master of the eloquent, the leader of the intellect, and the pioneer of the pious, showed the goal of the prophets' missions by saying, 'And sent to them His prophets, one after the other, to take from them the covenant of His nature, remind them of His forgotten blessings, argue against them with delivering the missions, and move the hidden secrets of minds...⁹'.

Allah has created man for an exalted goal and He knows what He has created. He knows what benefits His creatures and makes them happy and what harms them and makes them wretched. Allah has created man from a spirit, then clothed him with the body, placed in him the will, and granted him the blessing of freedom to choose on his own one of two things: either good or evil.

Allah the Almighty says, (***Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways?***)¹⁰

Allah also says, (***Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful***)¹¹.

The task of the prophets, imams, sincere clergymen, and all the followers of this straight path comes to form the conduct of man and guide him to the path of goodness. However, if man, after that, wants evil for himself, he himself is to be blamed. Allah says, (***Say: Every one acts according to his manner; but your Lord best knows who is best guided in the path***)¹².

This care clearly shows that Allah loves man, has dignified him, and prefers him to most of His

creatures. But, has man been sincere to this honor and preference?

Proofs and evidences show that man, as Allah has described him, is unjust and ignorant, except those who believe in Allah and have been granted knowledge. Allah has elevated such people to confirm that He rewards man for what he chooses for himself; if he follows the path of guidance, he will live happily in this world and be rewarded with the bliss of Paradise in the afterlife, but if he goes astray, he will live wretchedly in this life and be rewarded with the Fire of Hell. There will be degrees and differences among the people of Paradise and the people of Hell according to their level of guidance or deviation.

Allah says, ***(And the soul and Him Who made it perfect. Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it. He will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it)***¹³.

And this is from the theophanies of the wisdom, justice, and power of Allah in man's life before he is created, in the womb, and after birth.

If parents and educationists care greatly for children, the children will grow positively and their hidden powers will take their courses in the right paths.

Imam Zaynol Aabidin (a.s.) says in his supplication, 'O Allah, support me in bringing them up, educating them, being dutiful to them....'

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'Everyone is born on the Divine Nature, but his parents make him either a Jew, Christian, or a magus.¹⁴'

Parents should know that their child, when born, is pure and innocent in nature, such is ***(the nature made by Allah in which He has made men)***¹⁵. Let the parents be careful in how they deal with this pure nature!

In other words, a child is like gold and silver. A skillful goldsmith is able to mold any of these metals in the best way.

Please ponder on the questions and answers in this chapter about educating the children who will be, after a few years, masters of their own families and of society, and then see what kind of masters you want!

Question no. 174: How can I make my children love reading so that books and knowledge can be an important part of their interests in life?

Question: How can I make my children love reading so that books and knowledge can be an important part of their interests in life?

The answer: First, you should make your children find this interest in you. It means that you should read books before them, bring good books home with you, care for new cultural publications such as religious and scientific books or magazines, and let them notice this clearly in you.

Second, you should tell your children about what you have read and talk to them about the facts, wonders, and attractive tales you have read.

Third, when you reply to their questions, you may refer to books to obtain the answers to their questions, and, at the same time, tell them that they can learn many things by referring to books.

Fourth, you can take your children to the library to see scenes of great volumes in order so that books can take roots in their minds. At the same time, you can talk to them about the great advantages of those books and their roles in achieving the happiness of man and society, and how the authors have strived day and night to present those books to their readers to illuminate their ways towards goodness and happiness.

Fifth, when your children finish reading a book, you can ask them to tell you what they have understood from that book, and you may encourage them by offering them some gifts.

This is if you yourself are interested in reading; otherwise, you can talk to them about the advantages of reading books and show them that you are very sorry because, for certain reasons, you have had no opportunity to read books and you do not want your children to be sorry like yourself in the future.

Question no. 175: How do I deal with my teenager having unIslamic behaviors and interests?

Question: My fourteen-year-old son likes listening to songs, watching foreign films, and imitating western fashions. Besides, he is lazy in performing his religious obligations. How should I deal with him?

The answer: Man often, especially in the transitional period from childhood to youth, becomes involved

in some slips and sins. Perhaps he does not intend to commit them willingly, but because of the Satan's incitement, he goes towards those prohibited things just for a change, out of curiosity, or as a new experiment.

If you follow the three steps mentioned below, you will be successful in guiding your son and rescuing him from the swamp of sins; otherwise, you will make him continue his sins if you follow the wrong manner of dealing with him.

To behave wisely, you should tolerate your son's mistakes in this stage of his life because they will come to an end. You should remember that Allah is merciful to His people and He forgives their sins.

Here are the three steps:

First, you have to make friends with him and show him your love and kindness. You can go out with him to buy for him what he needs of clothes and other things. Always smile at him, and consult with him on some affairs with which you entrust him. Continue doing this until you become certain that he trusts you and begins obeying you sincerely.

Second, you have to prepare for him some alternatives, such as religious oratorios instead of songs and Islamic films instead of foreign films. Talk to him about the harms of imitating westerners. Tell him that nowadays many western people have begun imitating Islamic conducts because they find in them gravity, purity, and high morals.

Third, you have to take him with you to the mosque, to religious meetings, and to the meetings of the *Ulama*'. You have to acquaint him with good youth so he can befriend them.

Question no. 176: I feel my teenaged son is argumentative; what do I do?

Question: My son, who is fourteen years old, is too opinionated. He argues over every subject I discuss with him to the extent that sometimes I feel I dislike him, whereas he was not like this before.

The answer: This state is one of the results of adolescence and it will continue in your son until the age of eighteen or after that. You should tolerate him in this period. When you order him to do something or forbid him from something you have to justify your ordering or forbidding with logical reasons. You should not expect him to respond to you immediately. You should leave him free if he is not somehow harming himself or destroying his future. You should give him enough time to ponder over your advices.

In this way, you will win him over in the long range. When he becomes an adult, he will appreciate your wise manner of treating him during his adolescence. Your advices and instructions to him will remain as good lessons in his life with which he can treat his own children correctly in the future.

Question no. 177: I have wicked sons who cause problems for neighbors and passers-by; what can I do as their father?

Question: My sons are wicked. Whenever they go out in the street, they cause troubles to the neighbors and passers-by. Would you please instruct me with how to deal with them? I have been ashamed of myself for being their father.

The answer: These phenomena often arise due to previous reasons and previous neglect in educating the children. Now, it is too difficult for the children to change in a short time. However, following these points can help you to decrease the problem:

1. You should talk to them about the religious and worldly rights of people, relate to them some stories, and bring them some social films and cassettes of religious lectures about the subject.
2. You should tell them that evil will return to its doer someday, and surely Allah will punish the wrongdoer.
3. You can ask some notable persons to advise them in a wise way. They may make friends with them gradually through presents, invitations, and picnics to guide them little by little.
4. You have to apologize to whosoever your children may have harmed and pray to Allah to forgive you for being negligent in educating your children.
5. You may arrange with some good boys in your neighborhood to befriend your children and contact them most of the time.

Question no. 178: How can I solve my child's habit of lying?

Question: My child has grown accustomed to lying. He fabricates news as if they are true. Would you please give me a solution to save him from this vice?

The answer: Lying has some reasons. One who lies aims for one of the following:

1. To harm or take revenge on some persons whom he hates or with whom he is angry
2. To escape punishment
3. To show off

There is a kind of lying resulting from imagination, which is the most usual among children. The reason behind lying is sometimes because of TV and bad films, sometimes because of the strained atmosphere in the family, and other times because of the influence of friends who practice lying.

To treat this problem first you have to remove its causes and then teach the child the advantages of being truthful and the disadvantages of lying. In all of this, you should speak with your child respectfully and leniently. You may read some books of ethics about the subject and then mention it to him through stories and attractive statements. You should beware of being severe to him or beating him because this will lead him to be obstinate and obdurate for he will then try to prove that he has a personality that cannot be defeated by beating.

To treat this problem you yourself have to be truthful to him and not let him find any kind of lying in you at all. If you lie and he discovers that, you should either apologize to him or explain the reasons that led you to lie in a persuasive manner.

Question no. 179: Whenever my child commits a mistake, I beat him but this method is not working, what should I do?

Question: Whenever my child commits a mistake, I beat him a lot, but he still repeats his mistake obstinately though he suffers the bitter pain of beating and cries. I then punish him more severely than before, and he intentionally commits the mistake again and with more obstinacy, all the while looking at me as if to let me know that he does it intentionally. I do not know how to deal with him! Sometimes I fear that I will not be able to control my nerves when I beat him and I may cause him a permanent handicap in his body, and this will cause me great remorse besides the punishment of my Lord. Would you please tell me what I should do with him and with myself?

The answer: By beating him, you implant the mistakes in him more deeply. Extra beating and punishing do not lead the child to aught but greater obdurateness or physical hindrances and psychological complexes because the child, in return for being beaten and insulted, will defend his dignity and personality with all the physical and mental powers he has. His obduracy will continue until all his powers run out.

Do you want this? Certainly not! However, if you do not control your nerves, you may realize that which you fear, and then regret shall neither restore your child's soundness nor inspire the soul in him again. Therefore, you should not destroy your child's personality, dignity, and powers. The mistake he commits, whatever it may be, is less harmful than the harms you cause him. A mistake may disappear by advices or by the passing of time, but the physical and mental damage cannot be treated by advices or by the passing of time.

Besides, severe beating is not lawful in the Islamic Sharia. You have to keep this legal matter and the aforementioned fact in mind to give up your wrong manner of dealing with your child. You can follow another manner in educating him that is closer to the Sharia, reason, and peace of mind.

I remember a story of a young man who beat his father until he was about to die at his hands. One day I asked my father, 'Why does he do so to his father?' My father said, 'He is just reaping what he sowed! He used to always beat his son when he was a child and did not think that some day things would change, that he would be weak and his son would grow stronger and avenge himself on his father in the light of the scenes he had kept in mind since childhood.'

You should give up angriness, severity, and beating. You should adopt the qualities of the true believers as Imam Ali (a.s.) has said, 'The believers are easy and lenient¹⁶'.

Dear brother, I would ask you to write down this saying (of Imam Ali) and hang it on every wall of your house so you can remember it whenever you become angry. I would also ask all those who disagree with others to hang this holy tradition before their eyes lest they follow the steps of the Satan when they are in disagreement.

Question no. 180: Please explain about the harms of dealing with children severely and beating them.

Question: My husband is quick-tempered. He does not tolerate the noises and mistakes of our children; therefore, he does not treat them but with beating and severe punishments. He is like a military officer, our house is like a camp, and our children are like powerless soldiers. As for me, I am worried about the future of our unlucky family. I want you to write to these fathers about the harms of severity and beating the children that they may decide to live quietly and comfortably. What is the value of a life in such tension?

The answer: One of the fathers' problems is that they have not learned their religion concerning education and the rights of the family. They think they possess the necks of their wives and the lives of their children. Children are deposits that Allah has entrusted parents with, and women are humans

having rights and duties just as men have.

The state of this father, as an example, is very dangerous, and he will be blamed and punished severely for it on the Day of Resurrection. The least danger of this state is that the children who graduate from this “military camp,” will be quarrelsome, severe, and violent against people and even against their wives and children. The guilt of this is the father’s, and he will receive the curses of people as well.

Beating is one of the widespread wrongs of education. Islam has prohibited beating except in some exceptional cases. Beating should be utilized for discipline only and within the following guidelines:

1. A child should not be insulted and blamed; rather it is his wrongdoing that is to be criticized.
2. Parents should be certain of whether or not their child deserves punishment, according to whether or not the wrong was committed intentionally.
3. Before beating, parents should make their child understand the harms of his wrongdoing.
4. Parents should choose a suitable place, suitable quantity, and suitable means for punishment.
5. Before being punished, the child should know the reason for his punishment.
6. After punishing the child, parents should deal with him as normal, with love and mercy.
7. Punishment should be carried out secretly and not in the presence of others, and this will be more fruitful and positive.

Question no. 181: My son is almost an adult and I worry about him getting into sinful behaviors such as relations with girls; what should I do?

Question: My son is about to be an adult. I fear for him that perhaps he shall be corrupted, sinful, or shall have suspicious relations with girls. Would you please show me the successful manner of dealing with him before such a calamity will afflict him and me?

The answer: You should know, first, that a young man always looks for whatever makes him delighted, joyful, and pleased. Some of the things that cause joy and pleasure are lawful and some are unlawful. It is your duty to show him which of them are lawful and which are not. But, if you prevent him from his

ambition, you will lead him to either suppression and psychological complexes or to practicing sins secretly with complexes as well. Then, you will involve him and yourself in the calamity from which you want to escape.

The only way of a sound education, in which the youth are guided to a happy moral and material life, is to let one live naturally without depriving him of the good blessings Allah has given to His people.

Once, I admired one believer brother who lived in a Western country for saying to his adult son in my presence, 'My son, keep yourself safe and beware not to slip into the traps of the western girls!'

His son replied frankly, 'They are very beautiful, and they themselves follow me. What shall I do if I cannot be patient?'

The father said, 'Then, you can practice temporary marriage legally, but do not commit sin!'

The youth, in the age of adulthood and some years after that, must face the facts of life. If you want to protect your son, you should understand the new facts of life nowadays and make him understand them with love, kindness, and leniency but not violence or severity.

Have you ever experienced for yourself when you visit a country for the first time? What would you do in the first days where you know nothing about its places, streets, people, or laws? Would you not be cautious and, at the same time, be eager to know everything until you actually did learn some things and then you could set out confidently? There is no doubt that you would thank whoever helped you and showed you the ways there truthfully and respectfully. Wouldn't you?

Your young son lives in the same case when he opens his eyes to face the new facts of adulthood and the period after it. He looks for whoever can help him but with kindness, love, truthfulness, and respect. I am sure that he will thank you sincerely if you are that loving and merciful friend who will help and guide him to pass the way of adolescence. You may remember when you yourself were in this stage of life!

Question no. 182: What is the cause of children being disrespectful and disobedient?

Question: Why do our children stand still in their places and disobey us when we ask them for something? What is the cause of their mutiny, obdurateness, and disobedience?

The answer: You should not think that the cause of this phenomenon is only one cause. In fact, there are many causes. For example:

1. The child may not know the purpose of the thing requested from him. Here, parents can show him the purpose and instruct him in a language that he can understand.
2. He may think that the thing requested is not important, and so the importance of the thing should be declared to him.
3. He may not know how to carry out the thing requested, and here he can be taught the way.
4. He may not know which is of greater priority when two things are requested from him. Here, parents should explain to him what his priorities are.
5. He may think that he shall not be punished when he rebels and shall not be rewarded when he obeys. Here, parents should make him understand that there is a suitable punishment and reward.
6. He may not be able to carry out the thing requested from him. Here, parents should not burden him with what he cannot do.
7. The means required to carry out the things requested from him may not be available to him.

Question no. 183: How should I train my toddler in eating by himself?

Question: My child, who is two years old, insists on his independence in food. He does not accept for me to feed him. This causes him to dirty himself and his surroundings, and sometimes he scatters the food on the carpets where the colors of food cannot be removed from them. When I take the vessel of food away from him, he cries, resists, and refuses to eat at all. I do not know whether or not I should allow him to dirty everything. I am confused as to how to deal with him.

The answer: Dear sister, take life easy and adapt yourself to such matters! Do not trouble yourself and do not make your child angry! Let him feel his freedom because it is more important than his food. Let him build his personality on the principles of independence and self-confidence because these are the bases of his future. In a word, you should leave him free and not tire your nerves and his because you are in dire need of calm nerves to face the difficulties of life!

You have to put these advantages in a scale and dirty clothes, carpets, and other things in another scale and then see which of them you prefer.

There is no doubt that you will prefer the advantages of freedom, independence, and tranquility, and this is undoubtedly the right choice.

During meals, you can humor your child in any way that will make him cooperate. For example, after one, two, or three spoonfuls of food that he pours on himself, you can offer him the rest while playing with him by imitating the sound of a car, train, motorcycle, bird, or anything else.

I myself have been successful with my son “Muhammad Jawad” in this way. I would bring a spoonful of food close to his mouth and imitate the sound of the door when knocked. I would say, ‘Knock, Knock!’, and my son would reply, ‘Who is at the door?’ I would say, ‘Please open! I am the bread and egg.’ My son would then say while opening his mouth, ‘Come in please!’ Then I would put the food into his mouth.

In this way, one should play with his child and behave like him as the Prophet (S) has recommended us to do in his educational traditions.

It is a stage that will come to an end when the child grows older and becomes more reasonable while the concepts of freedom, independence, self-confidence, respect, love, and kindness are deeply rooted inside him, whereas the clothes and carpets that became dirty can be cleaned, and even if they cannot be cleaned, they have no great value when compared to the essential concepts of building the future personality of the child.

Indeed, if parents care for these bases of building their children’s personalities, they will produce wonderful fruits by them. However, most people think just of the present and ignore the distant future. For their temporary comfort, they destroy the real ease for themselves and for their children who are tomorrow’s adults.

Question no. 184: Could you please give me some educational recommendations for my seven-year-old son?

Question: I would like to ask for prompt educational recommendations with which you may help me deal with my seven-year-old son. With my regards.

The answer:

1. You should discover the hobbies and interests of your child and see which of them attracts him more so that you can direct him rightly.

2. You should explain to your child all the affairs concerning him and how he should behave when at home, in the school, on the street, or at other places.
3. You have to consult with him on issues concerning him.
4. You have to let him do certain things by himself because this will make him self-confident and help him discover his own abilities.
5. The child should be given his due freedom within the possible activities of the family.
6. When explaining to the child an idea or a matter that concerns him, you should use an easy language and understandable examples derived from his daily life.
7. At the same time when you are serious in dealing with your child, you have to be lenient to him too.
8. The child's being angry, escaping from school, and practicing aggressive acts show that he suffers from a psychological problem. Therefore, instead of beating or scolding him, which will make him mutinous and obdurate, you should identify the cause behind his psychological problem or problems. Being patient and wise in your dealing and talking with him will be the shortest way to get to his heart and then solve his problems radically and constructively.

Question no. 185: Could you please list the main point of Islamic education for the younger generations?

Question: I am a teacher of the Holy Qur'an in a mosque. I give short lectures on religious education and manage some programs on certain Islamic occasions. I have read some books on education. I would like you to show me, and those like me, what you consider to be fundamental in the education of the new generation according to the Islamic values in which we believe.

The answer: I thank you for your trusting in me in this concern. As for your question, here are some teachings that we have derived from the Islamic values according to the views of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.):

1. Religious education should be carried out in an attractive manner with clear examples, nice stories, and meaningful gestures of the face and the hands. Such a manner will have a great influence on the new generation and will help to plant and retain these ideas in their minds throughout their lives.
2. You should follow everything you say to your listeners so that they will find in you the practical example and will thus be certain that the religious teachings can be applied.

3. You yourself should believe in what you say to your listeners.
4. You should try to discover what things your listeners like and, through those things, get to their hearts. In this way, you can establish the religious concepts in them.
5. On every occasion, you should try to make them love Allah. Show them the greatness of Allah, His mercy, favor, and love for us. Show them that the cause of some of our problems is due to our ignorance, and the cause of some others is due to our enemies. In general, these problems are tests by which Allah tries our faith and will in this life.
6. Punishing, insulting, and ignoring deprive religious teachings of their spirit.
7. Using puzzles and confusing questions is a good manner in teaching that activates the students' minds and attracts their attentions to the lectures. However, it would be better to choose questions whose themes concern the practical affairs of life.
8. Graduality, systematicness, and unhurriedness in speaking are important factors in teaching and explaining themes and ideas.
9. Quoting from the stories of the prophets and from the lives of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the infallible imams (a.s.) is very important in teaching.
10. You should praise and appreciate the good features and deeds of your listeners.
11. You should keep your gravity and calmness and not resist an idea put forth by one of your students just because he is a student.
12. You have to watch for any change in the conducts of your students and always pay attention to their affairs.
13. You have to make use of modern equipments, such as computer, internet, films, and recorders, to develop educational methods. It is good to allow the students to work with these equipments by themselves.
14. You should not ask them for fees. You should be satisfied with your sincerity to Allah for He, Who will assure your reward in the afterlife, will assure your livelihood in this life from where you do not expect it.

Question no. 186: What are the concerns about putting children in day care or in the care of non muslim-maids and schools in order for both parents to work?

Question: My brother and his wife work in some offices. Their three children are brought up by a foreign maid in their home. She is very fanatic. She sticks to her own habits and traditions. I have another elder brother who sends his children to an Indian school, which is thought to be a suspicious missionary school. My family has objected to the actions of both of my brothers and explained to them the dangers of these matters, but they do not change their situations. One claims that English lessons will bring a good future, and the other says that his salary will not meet their needs if his wife remains at home without a job. This state of my brother reminds me of a wise saying I once heard in one of your lectures, 'How ignorant man is! He spends his health to get money and then he spends his money to get health!'

The answer: This problem has specific causes and consequences. As for the causes, they are:

1. The foreign cultures and values that have replaced our Islamic culture and values; your brother and his wife, as an example, have taken those cultures and values from school, university, and the media, which are supported by big companies and centers of finance and trade in general and which determine the way of living for people everywhere.
2. The absence of the goal of the afterlife from the lives of such people; they do not care with which face they will meet Allah on the Day of Resurrection.
3. The preference of material interests to moral and religious interests.

As for the consequences, they will result in a bad education of the children. A child who grows up away from morals will be as a curse on his parents who will ultimately spend all their wealth, which they have exerted themselves to collect, on his problems and troubles. It will suffice for such people to read about the horrible accidents published in newspapers and magazines everyday. Such accidents are not committed by religious persons who are educated by religious families.

The dangerous influence of a foreign governess on the future of the growing generation is like the influence of the satellite stations that play with the minds of parents and children according to the will of their managers, who are away from Allah.

I have read an article in al-Ra'iy al-Aam Kuwaiti Newspaper¹⁷ saying:

"I wonder how our children will be in this century! Will the satellite stations control them? Or will the

networks of the internet direct their conducts? Will our children learn morals and values from those shining satellites?

We fathers have been busy away from them either in looking for a job to increase our incomes or in building a new house, whereas mothers also have become busy running here and there to meet the unending requirements of schools from the kindergarten until the university.

If the father and mother are busy...it is not an excuse. Where is the role of the grandfather and grandmother in teaching our children our true morals and habits?

Where is the role of the mosque and the public meetings in planting values and completing the role of the home?

Where is the role of the teacher and the educationist? I think his name alone is “teacher” while his role is limited to just giving lectures, and thanks to the programs of the Ministry of Education and the modern methods of teaching...!

Yes! We have been in a merry-go-round that does not stop at all! Is it the rule of life? Or it is we who have made this our way of life?

A cry from the heart of a father to every father and everyone in charge: Save our children!”

This is the disease and with it is the call! But as for the solution, it lies in a harmonious expedition to find the Islamic understanding with its active spirit and attractive method for the man of this age. The responsibility of this expedition falls upon all due to the call of the Prophet (S): “Each one of you is a guardian and each one of you is responsible for his subjects”.

The government with all its bodies must set about to undertake the great task of deliverance. Clergymen, speakers, imams of the mosques, teachers of schools and universities, and officials of the media also have great roles in this task.

The task begins by inviting the experts and specialists of each one of these classes to a meeting where this subject will be discussed thoroughly, and then the meeting should present its reports to executive authorities in the government, in the centers of teaching and education, and in the religious establishments.

All the factors that make people desist from religion must be avoided, such as unjustifiable disagreements, manifestations of underdevelopment, and presentations of the religion in old methods; otherwise, the disaster will sit heavily on every family. A poet says,

“Let him whose neighbor’s beard is shaved

pour water on his beard.”

It is related that Imam Ali (a.s.) has said, ‘How many are the examples, but how little is the taking of lessons from them!’

I would like to invite these two brothers and those like them to know the real value of children, to know the role of intellect and culture in determining their futures, and to know how much love and kindness children need from their parents to live straightforwardly and confidently. If they know the real value of their children, they will not leave them with those who will inject poisons into them. Their example is like the one who draws in darkness and then laughs at his drawing when he looks at it in the light. Except, I fear he will cry bitterly instead of laughing at himself!

It is reported that once a man came with his son to the Prophet (S) and asked him, ‘What is the right of my son on me?’

The Prophet (S) said to him, ‘You should give him a good name, bring him up with good morals, and educate him well.’¹⁸

O Muslims, have you named your children with good names, brought them up righteously, and educated them well?

Question no. 187: Why my daughter chews her nails and is often absent-minded?

Question: My daughter chews on her nails and she is often absent-minded. What are the causes of this and what is the solution?

The answer: This bad habit shows that either she is worried or she is overstressed in thinking about something that she is hesitant to determine or she suffers from something that she wants to conceal.

You should know the harms of chewing on one’s nails with the teeth. The microbes stick to the tongue and sneak into the body, the stomach, and the intestines and cause troubles and diseases to the digestive system. You should also know that this bad habit shows to others your daughter’s mental state that she wants to hide, and this is a sign of weakness in personality.

The mother has to befriend her daughter until she reveals to her what is hidden in her heart and shares her personal problems. Then, the mother should try to find successful solutions and give effective advices to her daughter.

Question no. 188: How should we address concerns about globalization of Western culture, television and Internet?

Question: The train of our present age has entered into a tunnel of corruption of all kinds. This is because of the satellite stations that appear on television in every house, every room, and every hall. These satellite stations have destroyed the minds, the families, and the youth and have turned morals upside-down. On top of this, globalization and internet multiply these distresses. We do not know how to deal with these terrible dangers! Do the clergymen have any practical and civilizational projects in mind to face this destructive monster?

The answer: I have read such a thing in a project presented by the religious authority Great Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad ash-Shirazi, but I could not obtain the Arabic copy that was published in 1415 AH. However, I will translate for you some selections from the Persian copy that have recently been published under the title "What Do We Do With The Satellite Stations?"

Ayatullah ash-Shirazi says,

1. The Islamic Conference Organization must ask the United Nations Organization to prevent the corruptive western satellite stations from being broadcasted into the Islamic countries because they affect the morals of our societies.
2. In order to force the Muslim governments to execute this task, we should make use of different media, Human Rights organizations, and international laws.
3. Public pressure on governments in peaceful ways and by different classes of the society should transpire.
4. Participation of all of the foundations and establishments in society, like the cultural centers, religious societies, political parties, and all local and national blocs, is required to achieve this goal.
5. Exposing the companies that produce corruptive films and distribute them among all peoples is very necessary in this concern. Those companies belong to Zionism, the Mafia, freemasonry, and whomever their agents may be in the Islamic countries.

6. Preachers and good authors and journalists should be encouraged to spread the religious and humane cultures among people and to warn them against becoming involved in corruption.
7. Protests, marches, and demonstrations should be organized without destroying or attacking anything but rather acting according to the saying of Imam Ali (a.s.), 'The messenger of Allah has ordered us to meet sinners with gloomy faces. 19'
8. Protective programs should be created in the mosques, houses, and libraries.
9. TV and radio stations should be established only to be run by religious people.
10. Serious and practical thinking should be employed by charitable committees and governmental departments to solve the problems of the youth concerning career, residence, marriage, and sports.
11. Good morals and virtues should be emphasized in society, and many lectures on piety and the good end should be given regularly.
12. The *Ulama'* and preachers should pay great attention to these matters and regard them seriously because they concern the religion, beliefs, morals, family, nation, and high position of man in general.
13. Muslim experts have to devise an electronic means to block the corruptive satellite stations.
14. Alternative satellite stations for Muslims should be established and attractive Islamic films with high technology should be produced. Such stations can be established by cooperation between the governments and the private sectors, investors, scientists, scholars, and technicians.

I would like to say in addition to that: the religious authorities should issue fatwas in this concern and the *Ulama'*, preachers, wealthy people, and the religious youth should found committees to implement those fatwas and suggestions.

Question no. 189: What is the best way to teach adolescents so that they will follow good advice?

Question: I am a teacher in an intermediate school. The girls whom I teach are in the stage of adolescence, the stage that determines the coming stages of their lives. Would you please tell me how and in what way I should talk with my students so that they will be influenced by my advices?

The answer: First, I would like to pray to Allah for you and everyone who is sincere like you. Your question shows your feeling of responsibility and love towards others' welfare. As for the answer, here are some points:

1. You should think deeply about the subject you want to explain to your students.
2. You should make use of nice words and in attractive phrases with a voice full of love, kindness, and sympathy.
3. When your students are in a state where they do not want to hear preaching and advising, you should stop advising them until a suitable opportunity arises where they can perceive the goal of your speech, except if you are so eloquent that you can treat their state and make them accept your advices and instructions.
4. Let them find in you a practical example of all that you say to them, and let them feel in you truthfulness and sincerity.
5. When they talk, you should be a good listener and not interrupt them.
6. You should strengthen your friendship with them and through that you will assure the effectiveness of your advices on them.

Through these points, and with an easy and calm manner, you can have a great influence on them. Since you are a teacher, these manners are not limited to giving advices in the school only, but you can also follow them with your children if you are a mother, and you can make use of them in society for the sake of Allah and in the way of goodness and benevolence.

Question no. 190: How can we face the mutinous conduct of juveniles and prevent them from making friends with deviants outside the house?

Question: How can we face the mutinous conduct of juveniles and prevent them from making friends with deviants outside the house?

The answer: A youthful person likes for his parents to stop regarding him as they did during childhood. If parents change their view towards him, the relations between them will be normal; otherwise, he will behave in a way that will not please his parents. He may not mean by his mutinous behavior anything

else than to prove to his parents that he has passed the stage of childhood and that they have to stop considering him as a child.

This matter forms the basis of the behavioral contradiction between the young and the old. Parents, before their children arrive at this critical stage, should make them understand the concept of adulthood, which is reason, equanimity, and discipline. For example, some youths may think that smoking, shouting loudly, haughtiness, accompanying older youths, and returning home late are the signs of adulthood and independence!

If parents notice these incorrect concepts and try to correct them in their children's minds before they reach the stage of adolescence, they will clear the way for mutual understanding between them and their children after that stage. But, by being ignorant and indifferent to this, they should not wonder if their obedient children turn upside-down and become mutinous, obstinate, and disobedient.

A mistake may have a prior cause and that cause may lead to one mistake after another. However, standing against the youth is just a mistake resulting from the prior cause.

For example, it is wrong when parents treat their children unequally by preferring their daughters to their sons or vice versa or when they punish their children immediately as soon as they commit a mistake without having warned or advised them before. Parents may abuse their children and call them names because of some defects in the children such as unattractiveness, weakness in study, or a handicap. Some parents may call their children bad names full of hatred and suspicion, such as "liar", "stupid", "donkey", etc. These names and those manners are the first steps in making the youth rebel against Islamic values and their parents. Thus, in fact, parents themselves are the ones who lead their children to be undutiful towards them and to turn their backs on religion as well.

It is very important for parents to show sincere love for their children. They should make their children feel their care by being merry, active, and careful towards their children at home. They should sit with their children, talk about and discuss different subjects with them, and consult with them on their affairs. When the children's opinions are right, they should be praised, and when their opinions are wrong, they should be taught the right in a pleasant manner that does not demean them or degrade their personalities before others. This conduct can protect the youth from becoming mutinous, going astray, and befriending deviants.

Question no. 191: How should we deal with a son who was once

religious but left religion?

Question: My son used to be very religious. He used to offer his prayers in the mosque and recite the Qur'an and other books of supplications. But when he became twenty years old, he changed little by little, and now finally, he has given up these rituals and mocks at them. How do you justify this case, and why has he become like this? Do you have any suggestions to save him?

The answer: If actions of worship are done out of understanding and satisfaction, they will not die away. Rather, they will take one to the highest degrees of nearness to Allah the Almighty, to spiritual and material happiness, and then to the eternal bliss of Paradise.

However, as for the opposite effect that appears in your son, it shows that his practicing of worships was without any apprehension of their essence. Before the age of twenty, circumstances might have taken him towards prayers, the mosque, the Qur'an, and supplications, and then at the age of twenty, other circumstances might have taken him towards the opposite side. Usually man slips into bad spheres through bad friends.

If the worships of your son were done with understanding and apprehension of the real meaning and goal of worship, he would influence those with whom he correlated and would guide them towards the right path and so would earn more reward for his afterlife, but since he was not so, he failed in the test and went towards the opposite direction.

I think reforming him will not be difficult. The one who can reform him should be wise in dealing with and advising him and should discuss the matter with him in a proper way. You have to look for someone with these qualities to associate, in a clever way, with your son.

Question no. 192: What are the most important education fallacies we live with due to the effects of foreign cultures?

Question: There is no doubt that we, due to the effects of foreign cultures, unknowingly live with educational fallacies. Would you please point out the most important of these?

The answer: Yes, there are many widespread errors that people do not notice, not even educationists. Here are some of them:

1. It is wrong to believe that education means habituating the child to a certain behavior without making him understand the goal of that behavior.

2. It is also wrong to think that the best education is the one that subdues and subjects the child to the parents' will.
3. It is wrong to think that the correct education is manifested by the apparent behaviors without paying attention to the inward purity.
4. It is wrong to prevent a child from undertaking some tasks that befit his age and powers because if he does not become acquainted with difficulties, he will not be successful in undertaking his actual responsibilities in life.
5. It is a popular fallacy that when a child falls to the ground or collides with the wall and feels pain or cries, his parents hasten to him blaming the ground or the wall, and, in order to calm him, they beat the ground or the wall with their hands as a kind of punishment.

Here, the child learns false justification, unreality, and blaming of things instead of being shown the truth to recognize his actual mistake that caused him to fall to the ground or collide with the wall. If he is shown this fact, he will know how to avoid the same mistake again and will know that life means seriousness and not mockery.

6. It is wrong when a child falls to the ground for others around him to hasten to lift him from the ground. Thus, he learns dependency and loses the sense of independency and self-confidence.

7. It is wrong to frighten and threaten a child, and the worst of that is to frighten him by illusions or imaginary ghosts. For example, parents will describe to their child a monster coming from the darkness, or they will imitate a sound and tell the child it is the voice of the jinn, etc. In this way, parents make their child weak, cowardly, and illusive. Parents may mean, by frightening their child in this incorrect way, to calm him and make him stop crying, but they ignore the bad effects that will linger in the child's mentality throughout his life. This is a crime that is unknowingly committed against the child.

8. Some people say bad and severe words full of debasement and humiliation to a lazy or an introvert child. This is another crime committed against a child suffering from a temporary psychological trouble that can be better solved by some lenient words, a warm kiss, or an embrace full of love and kindness.

In fact, the child who is tense at home, unsuccessful in school, and strained in society reveals the defects of his family or the deprivation his family has imposed on him. This is what educationists and psychologists notice in the personalities of the parents and close relatives of that child. Therefore, we find among the educational principles in Islam that it is prohibited to call one another by bad nicknames. Parents and others are not permitted to call the child with bad names that demean and humiliate him. Unfortunately, this is widespread in our Muslim societies!

We hear many bad words from the old when they call the young as if they were calling beasts! What would you expect from the young after that?

What is odd is that the old punish the young when they hear them uttering the same words they have learned from the old themselves! Children become confused before the contradictions of the old. On the one hand, they find their parents using such words, and on the other hand, they are punished when they themselves use these words. Children think that if these words are bad, then why do the adults use them, and if these words are good, then why are they punished for using them. It is not odd when we realize these parents, whom we call adults, have acquired this wrong education from other preceding adults, whether at home, in society, in school, or from the media. So, the problem is deeper than deep!

Question no. 193: Would you please show me the causes of the good and bad phenomena I find in children?

Question: I am a father and a teacher in a school. Would you please show me the causes of the good and bad phenomena I find in children? With great thanks.

The answer: There are correlations between the methods of education used and their consequences. Parents and those in charge of education should realize this fact. For example, on the negative side, the child who often hears criticism learns to criticize bitterly. The child who lives among enmities learns spites and grudges. The child who is often punished without being taught what he should or should not do learns injustice and aggression. The child who lives with fears learns cowardice. The child who lives with excessive kindness and pity learns humility and regression. The child who is often mocked at learns to live with a weak personality.

On the positive side, we find the child who is often encouraged learns self-confidence. The child who is accepted by others learns to love them. The child who is given knowledge learns purposefulness in life. The child who lives under cooperation learns generosity and liberality. The child who is treated truthfully and fairly learns truthfulness and sincerity. The child who is treated with love and kindness learns that life is beautiful. The child who is taught to bear sufferings becomes patient in life.

Since you are a father and a teacher in a school, your responsibility increases before Allah and the people. I hope that you live among your family with comfort and satisfaction with what Allah has given you. Thus, you will teach your children and your pupils how they can live without troubles. This is a firm basis in education. Paying attention to this basis and other bases of the task of education is a continuous necessity that will bring for you the delight of your heart with your children, your future, and the future of your religion and society. If you are successful in this life, you will be successful in your

afterlife too.

Is the worldly life not the farm of the afterlife? Be careful of what you should plant in your children and the children of other people in the school, and you and we both shall see what you and they will harvest. And tomorrow is near for those who wait; therefore, take lessons, O you who have eyes! Dear teacher, may Allah make you successful in making pious people!

Question no. 194: How can I come to accept the changing relationship with my daughter as she has become an adult?

Question: My daughter is nineteen years old. My problem with her is that I cannot tolerate her arguing with me, though I know that she is right most of the time, but I still contend with her proudly. I remember her childhood and my efforts for her until she reached this age. I do not know how to persuade myself that she has become an adult. Now, she is not a child that I can impose my opinion on her.

The answer: This feature is a result of some or all of the following reasons:

1. Each one belittling the other
2. Not comprehending the development of man and life
3. Being proud and haughty
4. Being impatient and intolerant because of the difficulties that affect one's nerves
5. Not knowing the subjects of discussions and disputes
6. Having an inferiority complex that leads to stubbornness and confrontation
7. The difference of intellects and cultures between the two generations

As for the solution, you should realize that your daughter has an independent personality in her understanding and existence, and this should make you proud and delighted. In order to realize that man is a developing creature, you yourself have to develop by reading continuously and by learning new ideas and news to enlighten yourself with that knowledge that concerns your life and your role as a mother who is still responsible in life.

Besides this, you have to have good manners as much as you possibly can in order to be the example

that your daughter will imitate. You should know that your daughter is a part of you; what makes you happy makes her happy, and what makes her sad makes you sad. You should look at her through yourself, for you are the mother who gives all favors to her daughter, and she is the daughter who will be a mother some day and will then, practically, understand your favors and appreciate your efforts. Consequently, she must respect you and be dutiful to you if she wants her daughter, in the future, to respect her and be dutiful to her.

The problem between you and your daughter is the opposition between your ego and her ego. As long as you are still within the circle of your ego, you should not expect her to love you from the depths of her ego because selfish people often clash with each other while altruists harmonize with each other. So you have to be altruistic and give up selfishness.

When you change, your daughter will change her behaviors towards you. But if she does not change, you have to continue your new manner of dealing with her, expecting Allah the Almighty to reward you and, as a part of this reward, Allah may rouse your daughter's conscience and she may then change for the better inshallah.

Here, I would like to give the following advices to your daughter:

1. You have to be humble; the sun with all its greatness becomes humble and sends its light and warmth to the little earth and makes it fresh and lively. We, also, are required to be humble and to descend from our pride to the warmth of life. Beware of pride, because the first eclipse of one's soul is when he sees himself only.
2. You should regard the dignity and position of your mother in your heart, because your daughter may do to you tomorrow what you are doing to your mother today!
3. You should try to make your mother understand your opinions in a way that is full of love and respect.

Question no. 195: My husband makes many promises to our children that he does not fulfill; how can I deal with this problem?

Question: My husband often promises my children to buy them some presents, take them to the park, or something of that nature, but then he does not carry out his promises either because he is busy or because of an indifference I have noticed in him since we were married. I have been patient with him, but regarding the children, they are learning from him the bad habit of breaking promises. Would you

please tell me how to deal with this problem?

The answer: The moral negativities in persons' conducts cause many problems and pave the way for other negativities to come. However, Islam has treated these negativities with its great teachings concerning education, self-purification, and good deeds, but people, for the sake of their caprices and material pleasures, often harm themselves.

From among these teachings is the saying of Allah in this Qur'anic verse, (**...and fulfill the promise; surely (every) promise shall be questioned about**)²⁰,

and the saying of Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.), 'If you promise children (of something), carry out your promise because they see that you are the givers of their livelihood. Allah does not become angry for anything like He does for women and children.'²¹

Muslim jurists say that carrying out promises is obligatory and breaking them is unlawful. Rather, the traditions have considered breaking promises as one of the signs of hypocrites.

We also find a strong warning in this tradition reported from Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.): 'The promise of a believer to his brother (believer) is a vow having no expiation. He who breaks his promise begins opposing Allah and becomes liable to His wrath, for Allah has said, (**O you who believe! why do you say that which you do not do. It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do**)²².'

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) has also said, 'Do not promise your brother of anything that you cannot carry out!'²⁴

I hope that your husband and those like him will ponder over these moral teachings in order to become happy by them and make you all happy with him.

Question no. 196: How should I deal with my toddler who asks incessant questions?

Question: My three-year-old son asks too much about anything that he notices or that comes to his mind. Sometimes, his many questions make me bored and angry to the degree that I chide him severely or sometimes hit him on his back to make him stop questioning. Of course, this behavior is not right, but life has become so tiresome that I lose my patience and become irritable at once. I would be so grateful if you would offer your instructions in this concern.

The answer: Your son has the right to discover everything unknown to him. He wants a satisfactory answer to every question that comes to his mind. This is a sign of sound mentality and intelligence. Your behavior, which you confess is not right, suppresses his intelligence and does away with his activeness, and this is a great wrong against him. You have to remember this whenever your boredom leads you to that wrong behavior. That is first.

Second, you should pave the way for him to learn because knowledge will bring both you and him goodness, glory, and happiness.

Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) said, ‘and as for the right of child, you should know that he is from you and he belongs to you in this life with his good or evil, and you are responsible for whatever you entrust him with (whatever you teach him or make him to be).²⁵’

Third, consider yourself in his position; if you were to ask one who was more aware than you but he chided you and insulted you, what would you feel inside yourself? How would your situation and love be towards him?

Fourth, you should know that children have a great ability to learn, and when they learn useful things, they will lead good futures. Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who does not learn in childhood will not progress when an adult.’

Dear brother, this blessing requires you to thank Allah by caring greatly for your son and being patient with him, because you are the closest one to him.

This is your golden opportunity to plant in your son moral concepts and the meanings of piety, wisdom, honor, and freedom, and then he shall enter into life from the correct and wide-open gate; otherwise, he shall enter into life from other gates unknown to you. In the first case, you will be delighted with his good education, and whenever you find him successful, you will be even more delighted. But, in the second case, you will be ashamed of him in society.

Fifth, when you respond to your son’s questions patiently, you assume a role like the role of the prophets and apostles in teaching man. Are you aware of this high position?!

Sixth, when your son asks an unexpected question and you do not know The answer at that moment, you can apologize to him leniently and tell him in a language he understands that you do not know The answer but you will bring him The answer later on.

Seventh, in your circumstances with your son, you should remember that the best fruits are those that absorb the most amount of the sun’s light. Ask yourself, are you the sun for your son?

Question no. 197: My teenaged son keeps a very messy room, what can I do to break him of this bad habit?

Question: My son is a teenager. He does not care for the cleanliness or arrangement of his room. He does not put things, such as books and clothes, in their places. Sometimes, he sleeps in his clothes that he wears when he goes out and sometimes even with his shoes. Everything about his behaviors is overcome by absolute disorderliness. I go to his room and arrange it properly, but after a short time the situation becomes as it was before. I am tired of his state, and I fear that he will remain so all his life.

The answer: I do not think that all the blame is on this young man. There might have been prior incidents in the family from where he has acquired this disorderliness.

He might have been so in his childhood. You should review that period to ascertain from where he has originally learned this disorderliness. He might have learned it from the manners of his parents or brothers, or from school, or from the environment he lived in and then he took that with him when he entered his youth.

Sometimes, parents do not teach their children how to undertake responsibility. A pampered child, who is given everything without making any effort, remains the same when he becomes a young man. He expects others to serve him as before. It is not right for a mother to say: “do not let my son be tired”, “I fear for him”, “let him rest”, “I serve him”, etc.

This way of education makes a child grow accustomed to irresponsibility, and when he grows older, he will not be able to manage his affairs, arrange his things, or organize his life, and this is the very failure.

The cause of disorderliness of the youth often stems from the kind of education they receive from their parents during childhood. So parents should not let their sentiments and excessive love for their children give them such a result later on.

Parents should teach their child that they will not undertake his responsibilities for him. Everyone has his own existence and duties in life. Cooperation is necessary, but it does not mean being lazy and burdening others with one's own duties and tasks because this is an injustice and does not befit one with dignity and honor.

One of the reasons behind disorderliness in a young man's life may be his discontent with his state for making him bored and aimless. Such a young man may be angry at something and so his disorderliness is a means of showing his anger and obstinacy to make others feel his suffering. Sometimes, the cause

may be the state of adolescence and the change of instincts from which one suffers during the period of adulthood.

What is required in all these cases is as follows:

1. You should explain to your son the advantages of orderliness and its important effect on success and happiness in life.
2. You should inspire in him the spirit of undertaking responsibilities and encourage him with nice words of thanks and appreciation whenever he achieves something by himself.
3. You should not make yourself his deputy; rather, you should assist him in the task that he has to carry out. You can help him to carry out his duties, but little by little you should leave him alone to do his duties by himself.
4. You should teach him how to carry out some deeds and actions as a supervisor, without interfering in his achievement of them.
5. Let the things demanded from him vary and be free from monotony. You should not ask him to do things insistently or by threatening, shouting or begging.
6. You should not let him grow accustomed to stipulate certain things when you ask him to do something.
7. You should not punish him if he does not do what he promises to do.
8. You should be a practical example for him in all that you want from him, whether in orderliness, cleanliness, discipline, or any other good habits.

Question no. 198: My son monopolizes the telephone and spends too much money on phone calls; what can I do?

Question: My son talks with his friends on the telephone for an hour sometimes. He does not pay attention to the cost of it at all. He neither lets others use the telephone nor does he leave the line free for someone who may need to call us for something necessary. He does not think of the time that he wastes in nonsense and repeated talks of trivial things mostly. What should I do with him? I would like you to advise him and those like him and guide me to a solution for dealing with him.

The answer: First, I would like to ask you to be patient with him. Do not try to interrupt his calls with his friends by unplugging the telephone line as some fathers do, because this insult will leave a bad effect on him, and you shall pay the price!

Second, do not make him feel that you are spying on his calls!

Third, you can explain to him the negativities of busying the telephone for a long time and wasting the rights of the other members of the family in making or receiving telephone calls.

Fourth, you can give him some advices derived from the teachings of Islam, such as “when one’s mind is perfect, his speech becomes little”, “the best of speech is that which is little but full in meaning”, etc.

Question no. 199: Is it acceptable to let our children be educated by the media, schools and streets?

Question: Someone who is unable to educate his children may say, “What is the importance of education? Let us leave our children to be educated by the media, the schools, and the streets according to the requirements of the present age, for man is the son of his age.” What do you think about this opinion?

The answer: I would say to such a person:

1. Your child is a divine blessing in your hand; if you neglect him, he will be a curse on you and on everyone having relations with you. Education is of the utmost importance, and it is not achieved properly if the people in charge (especially the parents) do not know its principles and successful manners.
2. “Your first child is a complete educational map to your other children...if you educate him properly, he will relieve you from half of your efforts in educating your other children²⁶.” “As you do not allow your children to go into water before you teach them the principles of swimming, do not allow them to go into the sea of life before you teach them the principles of dealing with others.²⁷”
3. Let your attitude towards education be: “the crying of your children today while you laugh and educate them properly is better than your crying tomorrow for their bad education and their laughing at their distresses” because “lenience at its time is like strictness at its time; both are required in education²⁸”.
4. Your children are your wealth in the future. The more you care for them today, the more fruits you will gain from them tomorrow, and the more you neglect them today, the more you shall suffer from their

troubles and problems tomorrow.

5. Your children will be an evil over you in this life and torment in the afterlife if you do not educate them well.

After all this, would you say that education is not important?

Question no. 200: My children have bad eating habits; how can I fix this problem?

Question: My children do not eat the useful food I serve at home. They like the foods of the restaurants, chocolates, and sweets. This harms their healths. What would you suggest for me to do?

The answer: In general, our societies have incorrect alimentary cultures. Even what mothers serve at home lacks the required elements of nutrition. Money and efforts are spent for the taste and pleasure of food in their mouths. Most people do not care how useful or harmful to their bodies the food that they eat is.

As for eating in restaurants, it is reprehensible, as in the Islamic traditions and as some *Ulama*' think. They consider it as eating in the roads or some other sort of suspicious eating. I think that this is not absolutely right, because there are restaurants whose owners care for the legal and health aspects. Besides, eating in restaurants cannot be said to be eating in the roads.

However, it is not recommended to have meals at restaurants often and always, as is customary in our present societies and (lazy) families.

You should read books about serving healthy foods and consult with a specialist doctor to determine the proper diet for the family. You would be better off using a lot of legumes in your foods besides vegetable oils, especially olive oil.

You should replace chocolates and sweets with fresh fruits. Vegetables should always be eaten with the meals. Nuts, such as pistachios, hazelnuts, and almonds, are important for the body besides honey and milk, which are among the basic elements of food for the family.

You should follow attractive manners in inviting your children to the meals served at home. Explaining the advantages and disadvantages of foods has a great effect on children and makes them decide whether or not to accept those foods. Parents can play an important role in attracting their children towards the home-cooked foods when they themselves eat these foods. Of course, children always

imitate their parents.

One should eat food only when he feels hungry, and he should not eat excessively more than his need. Allah says, (...***eat and drink and be not extravagant***) 29, and the Prophet (S) said, ‘we are a people, who do not eat until we feel hungry, and when we eat, we do not satiate ourselves (we do not eat excessively)’.

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1. Holy Qur’an, 2: 143.
 2. Holy Qur’an, 3: 19.
 3. Brief Ways towards Glory, book no. 16 p.7.
 4. A Prophetic tradition.
 5. Iranian Hamshahri Newspaper, vol.2001.
 6. Holy Qur’an, 66:6.
 7. Holy Qur’an, 3: 159.
 8. Holy Qur’an, 2: 151.
 9. Nahjol Balagha, sermon 1.
 10. Holy Qur’an, 90:8–10.
 11. Holy Qur’an, 76:3.
 12. Holy Qur’an, 17:84.
 13. Holy Qur’an, 91:7–10.
 14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2 p.87.
 15. Holy Qur’an, 30:30.
 16. Jami’ al-Akhbar, p.217.
 17. In Safar, 1421 AH.
 18. Wassail ash-Shia, vol. 15 p. 124.
 19. Wassail ash-Shia, vol. 11 p.413.
 20. Holy Qur’an, 17:34.
 21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 104 p.72.
 22. Holy Qur’an, 61:2–3.
 23. Usul al-Kafi, vol.2 p.364.
 24. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 78 p.250.
 25. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.232.
 26. Turuq Mukhtasara ila al-Majd (short ways to glory) by Allama Sayyid Hadi al-Mudarrisi, vol. 16 p.6.
 27. Turuq Mukhtasara ila al-Majd (short ways to glory) by Allama Sayyid Hadi al-Mudarrisi, vol. 16 p.7.
 28. Turuq Mukhtasara ila al-Majd by Allama Sayyid Hadi al-Mudarrisi, vol. 16 p.26
 29. Holy Qur’an, 7:31

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