

ALI 530 – The Ahlul Bayt and Family Relationships

Session Two: Upbringing of Children

Ponder over this Hadith from Bibi Fatima (a)

الْمَرْءُ يُحْفَظُ فِي وُلْدِهِ

A person is preserved in his child

Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, by Ibn al-Hadid, v.16, p.212

Points about Upbringing

- Need for role models in upbringing
- Caring for all aspects of a child - body, mind, heart and soul.
- A parents' words, attitude, and actions largely affect a child's sensitive and gentle soul
- Negligence in upbringing would greatly damage an individual and society, especially during early childhood where a seed, like a plant shoot, is flexible; any action, word, or movement will have an effect on it.

Importance of upbringing

The Prophet (s) advised his companions;

لَأَنَّ يُؤَدِّبَ أَحَدُكُمْ وِلْدَانَهُ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَصَدَّقَ بِنِصْفِ
صَاعٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ

For one of you to train his child is better for him than that he give half a measure of charity every day.

Makarimul Akhlaq, v.1, p.222

Principles of upbringing

- 1) Love and Respect for each other
- 2) Respect for others
- 3) Gentle Discipline
- 4) Being childlike with children
- 5) Educating children
- 6) Teachable moments

1) Love and Respect

Imam Ali (a) says about upbringing;

كُنْ كَالطَّيِّبِ الرَّفِيقِ الَّذِي يَضَعُ الدَّوَاءَ بِحَيْثُ يَنْفَعُ

Be like a friendly physician who applies medicine
when it is useful.

Bihar al-Anwar, v.2, p.53

Love and Respect - Language

Bibi Fatima's words to her sons during the event of the Kisa.

وَإِذَا بَوْلَدِي الْحَسَنَ قَدْ أَقْبَلَ وَقَالَ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أُمَّهُ
فَقُلْتُ: وَعَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ يَا قُرَّةَ عَيْنِي وَثَمَرَةَ فُؤَادِي

My son Hasan came in and said, 'Peace be upon you, mother.' I replied, 'And upon you peace, O light of my eyes, and delight of my heart.'

2) Respect for others

Not imposing on Lady Fiddha

Once when Salman al-Farsi asks her why she did not let Fidda help her, she said;

أَوْصَانِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَكُونَ الْخِدْمَةَ لَهَا وَإِيَّيَ يَوْمًا فَكَانَ أَمْسَ يَوْمِ خِدْمَتِهَا وَ الْيَوْمَ يَوْمِ خِدْمَتِي

The Messenger of Allah told me that she and I should work alternate days. Yesterday was her day of work and today is my day.

Nahj al-Hayat, p.179

Praying for others

When Bibi Fatima (a) was asked why she prayed for others and not herself, she said:

أَلْجَارَ ثُمَّ الدَّارَ

The neighbor, then the home

Bihar al-Anwar, v.43, p.82

Etiquette with guests

When Imam Ali (a) brings a guest home, Bibi Fatima said (a) said;

مَا عِنْدَنَا إِلَّا قُوتُ الصَّبِيَّةِ وَ لَكِنَّا نُؤَثِّرُ بِهِ ضَيْفَنَا

We only have enough for a child but we will prefer our guest to have it

Bihar al-Anwar, v.41, p.28

3) Gentle Discipline

Imam Ali (a) says about strictness

الْإِفْرَاطُ فِي الْمَلَامَةِ يَشْبُ نِيرَانَ اللَّجَاجِ

Harshness in disciplining stokes the fires of stubbornness

Tuhaf al-Uqul, p.84

Reprimanding

Imam Ali (a) says;

إِذَا عَاتَبْتَ الْوَعْدَةَ فَاتْرُكْ لَهُ مَوْضِعًا مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ لِيَأْتِيَ بِحَمْلِهِ
الْإِخْرَاجُ عَلَي الْمَكَابِرَةِ

If you reprimand a youth, leave for him some room [for an excuse] concerning his fault, lest he be drawn to worse.

Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, Ibn al-Hadid, v.20, p.333

4) Be childlike with children

Imam Ali (a) says about behavior with children;

مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَ لَدُّ صَبَاً

Whoever has a child becomes (like) a child (with him).

Wasail al-Shia, v.15, p.203

5) Educating children

Imam Ali (a) says about educating a child;

عَلِّمُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَ أَهْلِيكُمْ الْخَيْرَ

Teach yourselves and your families righteousness.

Al Mustdarak alas Sahihayn, v.2, p.536

عَلِّمُوهُمْ مَا يَنْجُونَ بِهِ مِنَ النَّارِ

Teach them that which will save them from the Hellfire.

Muniyatil Murid, p.380

Teachable moments

Bibi Fatima's words as she played with her son Imam Hasan.

أَشْبَهُ أَبَاكَ يَا حَسَنُ وَاقْلَعْ عَنِ الْحَقِّ الرَّسْنَ
وَاعْبُدْ إِلَهًا ذَا مَنِّ وَلَا تَوَالِ ذَا الْأِحْنِ

Hasan, my dear, be like your father and free the truth by removing the rope from truth's throat and worship God possessor of bounties, and do not follow God's vengeful enemy

Bihar al-Anwar, v.43, p.286