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The Rights of Children in Islam

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Children are gift from the God to parents. As a gift from the God, parents should be able to take care and raise their children with love and affection. Children themselves are unable to take care of themselves from consequences of their actions. Hence, parents must always help their children in formulating options that fits their mental and physical development. Parents or those who are responsible of the children's upbringing are perceived to be competent in making ideal atmospheres for the physical, mental, social and spiritual developments of their children. Children have a number of needs to be fulfilled based on their position at the continuum of developmental stages. Understanding the needs of children is, indeed, never an easy job.

Children's needs range from good social learning to harmonious and supportive social relation for the maturation process of their psychosocial aspect. Fulfilling spiritual needs of children is believed to have positive contributions to the development of the children's coping mechanism to face their social problems including poverty and neglect. Besides that, fulfilling spiritual need is as important as the fulfilling of other needs of children. All kind of these needs are not hierarchical in terms of their necessity, thus, must be provided simultaneously. For a healthy growth of children, fulfilling one need should not sacrifice the fulfillments of other needs.

In religion, Islam Allah Almighty commanded Muslims to give honor, respect and obey our parents in entire life except when it comes to the disobedience of Allah (SWT). Islam raised the status of parents and made it obligatory for Muslims to obey their parents with love and respect. It is the right of parents to be loved and respected but as we all know rights also come with responsibilities and duties. Parents' responsibilities for the upbringing and care of their children are mentioned in many verses of Holy Quran and Hadith's.

Allah Almighty said in Holy Quran about the responsibilities of parents in these words: **“O you, who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...” (Quran, 66:6)**. Question is how we can save our families from this fire? The answer is very simple we have to show them right path as described by Allah Almighty in Holy Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). We need to teach the difference between right and wrong to our children.

Children have the rights to be fed, clothed, education and protected until they reached to adulthood. These rights are for both girls and boys there is no difference between their rights. We can say that children are a trust given to the parents. Parents will be held accountable for this trust on the Day of Judgment.

Parents are responsible for the moral, ethical and the basic and essential religious teachings of their children which is their responsibility. Allah Almighty says in Holy Quran: **“And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith – We will join with them their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained...”** (Quran 52:21)

Children’s responsibility is not only on father but also on mother as mentioned by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in one of his hadith in these words: **“Take care! Each of you is a shepherd and each of you shall be asked concerning his flock; a leader is a shepherd of his people, and he shall be asked concerning his flock; and a man is a shepherd of the people of his house, and he shall be asked concerning his flock; and a woman is a shepherd of the house of her husband and over their children, and she shall be asked concerning them”** (Al-Bukhari). The parents’ right to respect from their children is dependent upon the children’s right to loving care and guidance of their parents. The future of children depends on the teachings given to them by their parents.

Some basic rights of children are mentioned below:

- a. Children have the right to be fed, clothed, education, protection until they reached to adulthood. Protection means protection against moral and physical harm.
- b. Parents should give a good name to their child.
- c. It’s the responsibility of parents to develop the child’s personality in all fields.
- d. In Islam education is not limited to bookish knowledge but includes moral and religious training also. It means healthy all-round growth of child’s personality by giving them both religious and bookish knowledge or we can say worldly knowledge. It is famous hadith of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in which He (PBUH) said: **“The best of you is one who gives a good education (intellectual and moral) to his children”**.
- e. Children need to be loved, kissed and special treatment by their parents. Parents should treat their children with love and leniency but in some cases where they need strictness, it is also allowed.
- f. This means that parents should not spend all that they have their own comforts and luxuries but must make a board for children’s progress after the parents die.
- g. Parents should teach children Islamic manners and etiquettes in accordance with the beautiful example of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).
- h. Parents should also give them learning to read and recite the Quran from an early age when the child’s memory finds it easy.
- i. It also includes the development of the regular performance of Prayer between the ages of 7 and 10.
- j. The respect that parents impart to their children will help them to become respectable, responsible, kind, friendly, obedient, patient, humble and honorable children and human being for their entire life.

Children in Islam are the joy of life and sight of the sore eyes. Islam paid a special attention to children and the Islamic Shariah stated that children have rights and duties toward the parents. Children and impact of the environment on raising them!

A child got the first images of life enshrined in its mind from the environment of the parents. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "No child is born but has the Islamic Faith, but its parents turn it into a Jew or a Christian". The parents have the greatest influence on children's religion and morals. Therefore, children's interests and the future of the nation depend on children's righteousness. Accordingly, children's rights begin as early as before their birth.

Children also have the right to be treated equally in terms of financial gifts. No one should be preferred over the others. All must be treated fairly and equally. None should be deprived his gift from the parents. Depriving, or banning the right of inheritance, or other financial gifts during the lifetime of the parents or the preference of a parent for one child over the other is considered according to Islam as an act of injustice.

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