Role of Parents in Religious and Social Education of Children

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Abstract

Education is the most important and vital institution that is in charge of upbringing and development of the personality of adolescents and youth. The essential vitality of paying heed to the development of human personality and the importance of psychosomatic cultivation of the students have caused this important issue to be considered as one of the essential functions of the educational system. Thus conceived, the goals of higher education are realized when the coordination with other social institutions including family is reached. Most of the educational instructors, psychologists, sociologists, and so on and so forth, trace the origin of many social and behavioral problems of students back to the existing behavioral patterns at home. Accordingly, the role of family in education and its ideal methods has been continuously recognized by humans and has had great importance in human life in all ages. The negligence or ignorance of families regarding the issue of religious education has caused many psychological, social and religious harms. In the current essay, we seek to explain the religious and social education in family and the methods of religious and social education of the family.

Keywords: Education; Social Education; Religious Education; Social Education Resources

Introduction

Religious and social education (upbringing) is one of the key dimensions of education, which has been undertaken by the religious and social figures and built into great heights. The legal treatise of Imam Sajjad (PBUH) contains many suggestions and recommendations on how to establish social relationships with religious scholars, neighbors, spouses and other Muslims. These rules should be first observed by the parents so that they can pass them unto their children.

The conducted researches also show that religious education by families plays a major role in mental health and social adjustment. Moreover, studies suggest that religion can enhance patience, which is a fundamental element in education, and in this regard the family can be considered as the most important and vital element of religious education. In addition, Quranic verses also emphasize the social and social activities, insofar as most verses of the Quran have a social aspect rather than an individual aspect (Imani., 2012: 369).
Holy Qur'an underlines the social ties between Muslims and their interactions. The Lord states: "And hold fast to the Bond of Allah, together, and do not scatter" (Ale-Emran., 103). Since the family is the first social institution in which one begins his/her life and the first buildingblocks of education are grounded, the existence of love and affection in the family is the key to the happiness of man and the key to many problems and the chief way through which we can learn to respect and observe the other peoples’ rights. The emotion, love and affection dedicated to the children can cure their shaky will and their distressed spirit and enhance their expectation for a happy and successful life.

Therefore, for better education of the children, an environment should be prepared in which there is no conflict. Love and honesty, faith and love for goods, intimacy, unity and communion can tackle numerous problems. Thus, if these very beliefs emerge in the family atmosphere, they will always keep the family members together and the husband and wife will not think of separation. If family members become divided, they have certainly provided the conditions for decline, inefficiency and collapse of the family, while via being together, they can be benefited from the Divine Hands full of blessing. In such conditions, the couple, as two fly-mates, will soar in the sky of spirituality and perfection, and hand in hand with their children in the light of divine spirituality, they will also near them to the perfection (Imani., 2012: 2).

**Research Background**

The results of the conducted research and studies indicate that academic achievement, academic failure, and dropout are the result of several factors some of which are as follows: home and family environment, mass media, peer groups and peers, students' mental environment, motivation, personality traits, past skills and knowledge, teacher and school expectations, and so on and so forth. Each one of the aforementioned factors can both guarantee the health and well-being of the individual and the context for the tendency towards crime and criminal action.

Shoarinejad (1989) believes that the economic status of the family is very influential in the child's personality: a child raised in the poor family always grows with a sense of uncertainty and humiliation. Having a wealthy family insures the child's satisfaction in earning a social reputation. While having a poor family definitely wins a lower social reputation for the child.

Taqipour Zahir (2003) considers the socioeconomic status of the parents effective in the students' learning, and states: intrinsic cabilites of the learners are influenced by socioeconomic status in many ways. Cognitive types, processes of thinking development, self-conception, group relationships, teacher-student relationships, creativity and experience acquisition opportunities are profoundly influenced by the particular social class in which the child was born and raised. Moreover, he also alludes to the relationship between parents education and the students interest in education.

Shariatmadari (1996) endorses the impact of the parents socioeconomic status on the intelligence of their children, and states: some research suggests that the socio-economic status of parents affects children's development. Parents' occupations and their social status are not as such decisive in raising the children's level of intelligence, rather their level of education, the educational opportunities that are brought about by them and the experiences they acquire in their home environment are effective in the development of their intelligence.
Education

Ragheb Isfahani argues: "education is devoted to affairs that are associated with repetition and abundance, in such a way that an effect is brought about by it in the student's mind. Some have defined education as preparation of soul for imagination of the concepts, and learning as the soul’s preparedness for such an imagination (Ragheb Esfahani., 1953, the material on knowledge; Zobeidi., 1993, the material on knowledge).

Numerous definitions have been proposed regarding education. Mortaza Motahari considers education to be tantamount to cultivation; that is to say, the internal talents that exist in a potential form in an object are to be actualized and cultivated. Therefore, education is only true as regards the living beings, i.e. the plant, the animal and the human being. From this, it becomes clear that education should be subordinate to human primordial nature. In other words, it should be a function of the nature of the object. (Motahhari., 1994: p. 56 and 57).

Thus, education is not only a means of cultivation, rather it is as such an example of cultivation and upbringing. Of course, there is a difference between education as a practice and the science of education. Education in practice is an affair applied to a person or group of people or is accepted by a person or group of people; but the educational science is a discipline that investigates the educational realities and situations and it has proven its legitimacy today in the field of sciences. Having specific interests, the order of questions and the way to answer questions, provides a specific conceptual framework that distinguishes it from other sciences.

Family Religious Education

According to Islamic revealed verses and prophetic traditions, the head of the family, whether parents or other people, is thoroughly responsible for the religious education of children and other subalterns. For this very reason, the Almighty God has warned the believers about otherworldly punishments and stated: "O believers, keep yourselves and your family away from the fire the firewood of which is the people and rocks". Keeping oneself is possible via repentance and not surrendering to the unamenable carnal lusts, while keeping the family away from that fire is only possible through proper education and providing a clean environment away from any intellectual and practical deviation." (Arbli., 2000: 247).

Furthermore, family is of a noble place in cultivation of the ethical virtues of a generation. If people are left to their own accord, and anyone is allowed to follow his own desires and whims, the community will turn uneven and inconsistent, and will be prevailed by chaos and debauchery, because the community is hinged upon family and education. Since the reformation of the society depends on the correction of the individual, until the individual is not be corrected, society will not be reformed too, and in this reform, the role of family and woman is of paramount importance. Generally speaking, the community takes on the same characteristics that are found in the citizens, and the environment gets healthy when the people are pious and continuously tread the path to correction. This educational and ethical movement in society bespeaks of the existence of women and mothers who raise pious men in the family and their loving bosom (Fazlullah., 2001: 236).

Thus, parents, and the father in particular, as the head of the family, have an important role as regards the religious issues of children and other members of the family. Then, all fathers and mothers are obligated to undertake this responsibility by using new educational methods in the form of promotion of the virtue and prohibition of the vice among their family members. Parents’ careful attention to the
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religious education of children at home and the necessary investment in this area will have important educational and personal effects on the child.

**Religious Educational Methods**

1- *Love Based Method*

One of the most important and enduring methods of religious education is love. The positive attitude of children towards religion has its origin in the love that parents dedicate to them. Using emotions, affection, good will and kindness in this regard has a tremendous effect.

2- *Example Based Method*

Since parents are sacred for the children and on the other hand, the former serve as the latter’s example in life, the parents need to be a perfect example of the religious behaviors so that these to be carved on the child’s soul and mind.

3- *Epistemic Method (Teaching Learning)*

Curiosity and the will to know is a primordial quality that can be found in everyone. We should seek to provide the ground for the consciousness raising and knowledge acquisition in the children. Because the child is ready to receive every type of education and knowledge. The parents should teach the child according to his attention and mental capacity and give logical and demonstrative answers to his religious questions.

4- *Conditional Method*

The psychologists believe that whenever a relationship is established and internalized between the stimulus and the response the learning has been taken form and accordingly whenever the religious sacraments are handled along with the interesting affairs in the eyes of children in order to enhance their interest in such issues.

5- *Creating Attraction and Indirect Appeals*

Allocating the best part of the house and room for prayer and donating prayer mat, muhr, rosary and spiritual fragrances to be used in this religious event we have to create pleasing memories in the child’s mind in this regard.

6- *Instillation Method*

The religious sacraments should be described using the noblest and most lively words. For example, it should note that the man who reads prayer is of an open contenance; he does not speak ill; he is honest; he does not speak behind someone and so on and so forth. This is instilled in the child’s mind and he is religiously cultivated.
7- Authority Based Method

Using a respectful and affectionate language, we can authoritatively order our children to observe religious matters and rituals. According to Imam Ali (pbuh) the child should be ordered to read prayers when s/he turns 7 year old.

8- Repitition and Practice Based Method

The parents can upbring their children as religiously minded and Quranic citizens by repeating and practicing the religious rituals (Maleki., 2005: 34).

Strategies for Promotion of the Role of Family in Religious Education of Children

1. Choosing a proper consort who believes in pure Mohammadi Islam (pbuh).
2. Feeding and growing the child with halal milk and food and mother's having ablution when she is satisfying the physical and mental needs of the children.
3. Observing the golden mean rule in teaching and encouraging the child for prayer and other rituals.
4. Having educational conduct and knowledge of religious matters and transferring it to children.
5. Being patient in teaching the prayer and religious affairs to children.
6. Avoiding violent, forced, and obligatory religious practices.
7. Encouraging the children to curiosity and collect information and advice about religious instruction and religion in different books.

Social Education

Sociality is one of human features which, according to some, has its roots in the very creation of mankind. Insofar as it is said that man is a social entity by his nature (Bagheri., 2009: 43) and some believe that the motive behind this sociality is determinism and urgency, while another group contend that it is the wisdom and reason that orders man to take such orientation. Accordingly it is also argued that human beings with their sense of prudence have concluded that can enjoy better life in social partnership and cooperation (Baqi Nasrabadi., 2009: 32).

The Concept of Social Education

Social education is handled via the cultivation and conduction of an individual in a way that he can undertake his divine and human responsibilities with an emotional attachment to social life. Then man is informed that he can enjoy favorable conditions and social interaction for his development and evolution via respecting the mutual rights of his fellow human beings. Contrary to some of schools that
have turned either to negligence or to extremism and given the originality either to individual or to community alone, and ignored other factors, Islam simultaneously values the (individual) (and society) in view of their mutual impact and role, and in doing so fosters the personality of individuals and balances their forces and talents, aligns them with common human goals, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, takes into account the role of environment and relationships in creating appropriate social conditions and balancing group forces that would prepare the ground for individual and collective development in material and spiritual terms. The role of social relations in the formation of morality and human values is also undeniable. According to educationists, moral development depends to a great extent on social development and evolution, and its transformation is a function of the level of interest that one shows of common standards and values. On the other hand, this development is also dependent upon religious growth and the degree to which people are interested in customs and traditions and the reactions they show towards the good and evil. The perception of individuals as regards others, the value that is attached to their friendship by these people by them, trust, and affection for the relatives, are all related to how and to what extent they pay attention to the community and its principles (Mirdamadi and Abbasi., 2016: 4).

**Objectives of Social Education**

Some believe that the chief goal of social education of the child is preparing him to adapt to the social environment. The approvals of the Supreme Council of Education have set goals as general objectives of social education.

1. Cultivation of the spirit of guardianship of the sanctity and relationships of family based on Islamic law and ethics

2. Fostering the spirit of realizing and safeguarding Islamic integrity and justice

3. Cultivation of the spirit of brotherhood and Islamic cooperation and national and cultural solidarity and strengthening it

4. Fostering the spirit of promotion of virtue and prohibition of vice as a public duty

5. Fostering the spirit of respecting law and committing oneself for its observation

6. Cultivation of the spirit of order in personal and social relationships

7. Fostering the spirit of accountability and participation in cultural and social religious activities

8. Strengthening the spirit of friendship with God’s friends and animosity with the enemies of God

9. The cultivation of spirit of sacrifice and devotion in social relationships

10. Cultivation of the spirit of patience and tolerating other peoples ideas

11. Fostering the spirit of respect for people’s personality and observation of their material and spiritual rights

Therefore, as the reader can see it by himself, if the families and the authorities in charge for social education properly conduct the social education of children who are prepared for learning, there
will be many personal and social interests that will affect the society for centuries and lead the community to path of the ideal society, which is intended by scholars and religious teachings (Salarifar., 2006: 54).

**Social Education Resources**

No doubt, the best social education program is the one that has been planned by the Lord who is the creator of man and knows his characteristics better than any other one. Due to the impossibility of direct communication of human beings with God, the best sources for knowing the ideal content and method of social upbringing are the heavenly books and prophets, which are somehow connected to divine sources of revelation. Since Islamic religion represents the last religion revealed from the heavens, then it is the best source for the education based on the Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Quemi., 2010: 76).

**Role of Father in Social Education**

Parents play an indispensable role in the social education of children and at the same time the fathers play a greater role than the mothers. By taking part in social activities the parents can become more familiar with the norms and customs, and in the light of this understanding and insight, they can better socialize their children, and familiarize them with the norms and values as well as social customs. Teaching social skills is another task that for the reasons mentioned above is primarily the responsibility of the father, although the mother also plays an integrative role in this regard. The father can prepare the ground for extensive family relationships with the relatives and friends, and through such visits, he can offer the family members the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of paying visit to the loved ones and friends, and thus increase the social development of their children. Learning social skills such as consulting with others, the ability to convince them, co-operation, consistency, agreement, building empathic and effective interpersonal relationships, etc. is necessary for the children, because having social skills keeps the individual from isolation and contributes to the further development of the child, and increases his level of satisfaction with life.

Then one can call an individual social when s/he knows the logic of social relationships as well as their reason and necessity and commits himself to the observations of the social norms and values governing the community and while paying attention to social values and attaching to them, he can defend the social values and norms that govern it. Through preserving the unity in family environment, the father prepares his child for social cohesion and solidarity. However, those fathers who are personally isolated and do not have good relationships with their wives, and sometimes their actions are nothing but separating family members from each other, their presence at home is effectless. But those fathers who have good relations with their wives based on the commands of the Lord and are intimate with them, all members of the family gather around them like a butterfly, because it is the good relationships between the wives that are extended to the children and thus an intimate gathering takes form. In this way the children in the family go through the process of social growth and socialization (Imani., 2012: 3).

**Strategies for Promotion of the Role of Family in the Social Education of the Children**

**Sense of Responsibility**

One of the social skills that children should have from their childhood is the sense of responsibility that parents need to teach them from their early childhood. Generally speaking, the parents should be themselves responsible individuals in the first place in order to be able to educate their children
through the various practical and useful ways in which they can socialize. There are numerous ways to create the sense of responsibility in children, including:

- Parents should begin with very small and elementary cases. The child should know from the very first day that he is responsible for taking care of his own personal properties and must be accountable according to the responsibility that he undertakes. For example, he must do his own homework and assignments and, if he does not, he himself should be accountable before the teacher.

- Responsibilities should fit the child's capability; we should not expect him to do anything that is beyond the limits of his capabilities; in general, parents should pay attention to the age and sex of their child, as well as their living conditions (Ferdowsi, 2009: 103).

- Parents' views and ideas regarding the sense of responsibility should be explicitly explained to the children. One of the most important steps towards the internalization of the sense of responsibility in children is assigning certain responsibilities to them by the parents and ask them to do these tasks. One of the solutions is that parents first write down all the things they want to assign to their children and determine the consequences of inattention to each one of the assigned tasks.

- For making the right choice and thinking about the consequences of any decision, the children should be taught to ask themselves before each choice that If I do this right now, will it tomorrow sound right to me? How about next week? Generally speaking, this law should be taught to the child: "put aside any choice that you may regret later it" (Salarifar, 2006: 43).

- Parents should not turn a brown eye to the fact that they should not undertake the responsibilities of their children, because irresponsible children usually try to evade their responsibilities by apologizing, lying, justifying, and the like. Then, they should know that if the responsibility that is assigned to them is not done no apology could ever resolve it.

- If he continues to be irresponsible despite the application of above methods, then there should be a consequence for this behavior. Children should learn that every action has a consequence and they should face the consequences.

- For better conduction of these methods by parents, they have to take actions in concert with each other so that the orders issued by the mother or the methods used by the father are approved by other family members. (Mahmudi, 2007: 183).

**Making Legitimate (Halal) Living**

Besides meeting the mental needs of his wife and children, the father should also make halal living for healthy physical development of his children and family. The impact of food on the body and soul of children before their coming into this world is undeniable and must be fully taken into account during the upbringing process. Making legitimate halal living has several properties, one of which is the creation of a field for the growth of moral and special virtues in the child (Paknia, 2003: 22). From the point of view of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon him), the food which is consumed, not only is of certain natural effects on the body, rather it is also of other effects on our spirit, soul and personality, which cannot be demonstrated through material experiments and scientific and objective examinations. However, they are endorsed by Quran and the Prophet’s Household. The Prophet (pbuh) states: "the Lord’s worshipping is of seventy parts, and the best of them is asking for halal living" (Boroujerdi, 2007: 77). Imam Baqir (pbuh) also gives glad tidings to those who are trying to decorate their tables with halal living, and says: "they will meet their lord with luminous face as bright as the moon in the 14th day of the
month" (Koleini., 1986: 78). On the Day of Resurrection, they will meet with the Lord in a bright light like the fourteenth night. The development of livelihood is necessary for all fathers in order to ensure the legitimate living of the family and not to force the family to experience tough conditions in life.

Paying Visit to the Loved Ones and Friends

No doubt, one of the effective factors in social education and the creation of a suitable environment for social development is the quality and quantity of the family's behavior in relation to paying visit to loved ones, relatives and friends, because by engaging in such relationships the child can experience love and promote his emotions and learn to respect others. Specifically speaking, the following can be mentioned as the effects of paying visit to loved ones:

- Paying visit to the loved ones and relatives plays an important role in social education, because God has decided the worldly and otherworldly rewards for it.

- Reward is of a significant role in social education insofar as God has described paying visit to the relatives and loved ones as the key to paradise and long life.

- One of the most important educational manifestations is avoiding bothering others that is done through paying visit to the loved ones.

- Another effect of paying visit to the loved ones is avoiding vices and siding by goods, because when one is loved by relatives and family members, in order to maintain his position and dignity, he will be driven away from evil by goodness.

- Paying visit to the loved ones and family connects man to God, which is the main objective of social education and human perfection, and cutting one’s relationships with the relatives and friends distances one from God.

- The more a person visits his family and relatives, the more virtuous he turns. In other words, the person is encouraged inwardly to have a steady move towards goodness.

- The use of paying visit to the relatives and friends is the basis for having good life (Qaemi., 2010: 56).

Family’s Attitude to the Gender of Children

One of current social problems is gender discrimination, i.e. the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals due to gender related considerations. Usually in various societies more value is given to men, and women are considered weak and insignificant. Although various slogans are voiced regarding the equality of men and women, in practice, no concrete step is taken towards the realization of these slogans, and in most cases, women's rights are neglected. These differences are rooted in their childhood and how their fathers and mothers deal with them, but the costructive school of Islamic religion tackles this problem through valuable recommendations, including the above hadiths, according to which Islam does not justify gender discrimination and does not take gender as a basis for superiority.

Therefore, girls are described as divine goodness and the boys are defined as the Lord’s blessing. The parents adherence to this hadith advances the equal treatment of the boys and the girls and thwarts the dangers of discrimination. This also immunizes both genders against social harassment and humiliation. This type of equalitarian treatment of genders in Islam does not allow any sex to harbor any sense of
superiority over the opposite sex, and accordingly this attitude can be with them right into their adulthood. As a result, gender discrimination as one of the problems of contemporary society and an obstacle to proper social and family relationships will be tackled. Moreover, Islam's vision of the girl as the eternal blessing motivates her parents to maximize their efforts to educate her so that they can survive with her in eternity. In other words, this notion of girl will increase the responsibility of their parents toward education in comparison with other religions and ideologies. This is also the case with the child's social education (Mahmoudi., 2007: 23).

**The Child's Naming**

Upon deep investigation of the prophetic traditions, one can easily understand that by choosing a good name, the family can play an undeniable role in the social development of the child and lead the future of the child's social life to prosperity. The following points can be mentioned in this regard:

- Choosing a good name for the child is so important that Imam Sadiq (pbuh) has recommended this task to be done in the early days of the child's life, and this is the very strong reason why choosing a good name has a great educational effect and from the very first days of life affects the education.

- Choosing a good name is so important by the Imams that they strongly advise the believers to use the name of Prophet Muhammad (the noblest man by God) for the child, and this issue is an indication of the essential value of man, and the purpose of this recommendation is to help the child to feel worthy from the very first days of his life, which is one of the important foundations for the formation of a valuable personality in children.

- The good name causes a person to think about his existential value and the great personality which belongs to his name when he turns to sin. As a result, it can be said that as long as a man lives on his pure nature, the good name keeps him away from sin as it is. For example, the way an individual behaves in the name of Muhammad or Ali is much different from that of the person whose name is Abu Jahl.

- Good name is so important that in the traditions it has been described as a gift to a child or among the important responsibilities such as education and work that are undertaken by the parents. It is said that a human child does not become a person without education or can not live without a job, choosing a good name has a value equivalent to these two important activities that can play important role in the formation of the human personality and its peaceful life.

- One of the other effect of good name is that people are usually psychologically identical with their names, for example, the name of Shamr implies that a person replicates his behavior with the historical personality of Shamr, or when someone is nicknamed as crazy he is somehow told that he is crazy. In return of choosing a good name, the child is expected to keep by goodness and behave appropriately, and the reality is this way indeed.

- The traditions suggest that choosing a good name for child is a blessing in the family because the good name creates good expectations in people and good expectations will lead to good behaviors and ultimately lead to blessings in the family home.

- One of the other educational effects of choosing a good name for the children is keeping the memory of great men alive through those names and blessing the society with reminding the great services offered by those figures (Ferdowsi., 2009: 87).
Conclusion

It should be noted that the family has an undeniable role in the guidance and education of the children. The conscious families and individuals seek to play their roles based on the religious teachings, Quran, traditions, divine blessings and providing the material and spiritual needs of the children including making halal living. Education begins from the time when the child is conceived in the mother’s womb; the parents’ ignorance of the Islamic doctrines and Quranic notions can leave negative effects on the education.

Religious and social education is of various effects, which lead to coherence, union and empathy, internal peace and changes in the individual’s relations with God and people and the individual acquires mental and social health. Moreover, paying attention to the role of family, the parents’ belief in a purposeful education, moral self-construction of women as the mothers of society, fortification of family, using educational principles and encouraging the yout to marry are among the solutions that enhance the role of family.

Thus, since many problems of the contemporary society have their origin in the families’ inattention to the correct education of their children, including the girl and boy, and also the licentious yout who commit crimes in the street and neighborhoods and pollut the society. These are all due to the family’s irresponsible actions and this is why the parents should pay more attention to the religious and social education of the children.

References


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