Desire for children and their proper upbringing

Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba); Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

relayed live all across the globe

July 14th 2017
Summary
Desire for children and their proper upbringing

Huzur (aba) explained in his sermon today that many men and women write to Huzoor requesting prayers for their unborn child.

There are clear guidelines and prayers for the moral training of children from even before their birth in the Holy Quran.

In order to partake in the revolution for which the Promised Messiah (as) was sent, we must pray to bring our children up in a manner that despite all of the filth and indecencies found in the society, we will not allow Satan to be victorious.

In order to safeguard our progeny from the evil influences of the time, it is necessary that both the husband and wife should act in a virtuous manner.

The Quranic principle is that along with prayers the conduct of the mother and father plays a big part in the upbringing of children.

July 14th 2017
Children

State of the world

Prayers

Role of parents

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Well being of children

Many men and women write to Huzoor requesting prayers for their unborn child.

At times, parents ask for guidance for their children who are getting closer to adolescence and adulthood.

By the Grace of Allah, the majority of the Community think in this manner and they are focused on how they should undertake the tarbiyyat (moral training) of their children.

This is a great blessing and favour of Allah the Almighty upon us Ahmadis that due to accepting the Promised Messiah (as), where worldly desires have engulfed everyone, we are not only concerned about the worldly well-being of our children, rather, we also strive to care about the improvement of their faith.
Allah the Almighty has also bestowed this favour upon us Muslims —

There are clear guidelines for the moral training of children from even before their birth in the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran teaches prayers for this purpose.

If we offer these supplications and spend our lives in this way and pay attention to the *tarbiyyat* of our children, then we can send forth a pious progeny.
The daunting task

There is no doubt that the *tarbiyyat* of children is not an easy affair and especially in this age, where at every turn attractions created by Satan entice us in various ways.

A true believer is indeed expected that being attached to Allah the Almighty, he should save himself as well as his children from the onslaughts of Satan, instead of giving in to despair and negative feelings while being frightened.

A harrowing example of negative thinking, came before my eyes when a person wrote to me that given the prevalent immorality in the world today and the state of the general moral depravity, I would choose to not have children after I get married.

This is an extremely pessimistic view. This is akin to accepting defeat from Satan, taking Satan as the final authority and acting as though Allah the Almighty has no power to save us and our children from the onslaughts of Satan, regardless of how much effort we exert and prayers we offer.
Hence, this way of thinking is extremely disappointing and does not behove the followers of the Promised Messiah (as).

In other words, this is like granting absolute freedom to the followers of Satan, leading to annihilation of the progeny of believers in due course.

In order to partake in the revolution for which the Promised Messiah (as) was sent to the world by Allah the Exalted, we must use our capabilities and faculties to the utmost and we must also infuse this spirit into our offspring.

We must pray for our objectives and bring our children up [in a manner] so that despite all of the filth and indecencies found in the society, we will not allow Satan to be victorious, Insha’Allah [God willingly].

Thus, there is no need to be disheartened.

Rather, we must act in accordance with the prescribed path by Allah the Exalted with determination.

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Allah the Exalted has taught us prayers in the Holy Qur’an to be blessed with virtuous offspring.

This is the prayer of the Prophet Zachariah, ‘My Lord, grant me from Thyself pure offspring; surely, Thou art the Hearer of prayer.’.

So, we should pray for virtuous progeny as well as act in a virtuous and pious manner, which are the characteristics of virtuous people and prophets.

In order to safeguard our progeny from the evil influences of the time, it is necessary that both the husband and wife should act in a virtuous manner.
Munshi ‘Ata Muhammad Sahib, the revenue collector, says that I was a non-Ahmadi, I did not practice faith, drank heavily and lived on bribes. I was invited to Ahmadiyyat by a friend. The Promised Messiah (as) prayed for a son for him provided he repented as Zachariah repented. Munshī Sahib says that I learnt that the repentance of Zachariah is to abstain from irreligiousness, earn lawfully, to regularly pray and fast and to visit the mosque more frequently.

He says that upon hearing this, I refrained from alcohol, I abstained from taking bribes and became regular in praying and fasting. He says that a period of approximately four or five months had passed when my wife (the eldest wife, he had three wives) showed signs of pregnancy. I told people that I will be blessed with a son, who will be healthy as well as beautiful. Accordingly, a son was born. He says that I pledged initiation following that and many other people from that area also pledged initiation.
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<th>The prayer of Zachariah</th>
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<td><strong>Remember, when we offer the prayer of Zachariah for our children, it is necessary for us to develop a pure change with ourselves as well.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>This was a special case of a man with virtuous potential, however, acceptance of Ahmadiyyat cannot be conditional to any desires or personal gains.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Becoming an Ahmadi on conditions is not [the definition of] accepting faith. Rather, it is forcing Allah the Exalted to accept our conditions.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We are required to follow His guidance, He is not bound to follow our desires.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nevertheless, as I mentioned, whilst we pray for our children, we must also develop a pure change within ourselves.</strong></td>
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The Promised Messiah (as) says

The prayer of Zachariah is mentioned in Surah Al Anbiya of the Holy Quran – *My Lord, leave me not childless, and Thou art the Best of inheritors.* (Al-Anbiya' 90).

Since God Almighty has been called the ‘Best of Inheritors’, it is clear from this prayer that one should not pray to be granted offspring that can become their heirs in their worldly affairs, but instead such heirs be granted from God Almighty who give preference to their faith over the world. The desire to have children is a legitimate desire, but on top of that one must also pray for pious heirs.
The Promised Messiah (as) says

Then, in another place, whilst giving advice about children the Promised Messiah (as) states: “Become righteous yourselves and become an example of piety and righteousness for your children, and make efforts and pray to make them God-fearing and devout. .. The least one can do in training their children is to teach them about religion and for them to remain firm to their faith with the same effort they makes for them in worldly terms. ...”
God Almighty has taught us in the Holy Quran: 
And make my seed righteous for me. I do turn to Thee; 
and, truly, I am of those who submit to Thee (Al-Ahqaf 16)

Here the prayer is for the reformation of children, and 
alongside it has been acknowledged that the individual will 
aspire to become among those who submit to and obey God 
Almighty

God Almighty has then taught us a very comprehensive prayer; 
‘Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of 
our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous. (Al-Furqan 
75).

Hence, with every prayer, God Almighty has 
repeatedly advised us in the Holy Quran that we 
must watch over our deeds if we wish to have 
righteous offspring.
The Promised Messiah (as) says:

The Promised Messiah (as) states: ... one should also pay heed towards children’s moral reformation. Allah the Almighty has created man so that he may worship Him, just as Allah the Almighty states: And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.’

However, if one does not become a Momin [believer]; and does not devote himself to the servitude of God; and does no fulfil the true objective of his creation. ... ‘Thus, until one does not desire for a progeny which is religious, full of piety and serves faith while displaying complete obedience to Allah the Almighty, such a desire is completely futile, in fact it is a form of sin.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains that the desire to have children should not be merely to leave an heir to this world, but to have an heir who can continue the pious deeds of their elders.
The Promised Messiah (as) says further states: 'If a person states that he longs for a virtuous and pious progeny which shall serve faith (which indeed is a great desire to have), however this will merely be a claim unless he makes an effort to improve his own condition.' The Promised Messiah (as) states that moral training and prayers for this must be our top priority. ‘My own condition is such that there is not a single prayer of mine in which I do not pray for my friends, children and wife.’

The Promised Messiah (as) further states about children making mistakes in early childhood: ‘... If they are not stopped in their childhood and guided with love during their early years then gradually they will increase in their ill actions.’ In another place, the Promised Messiah (as) states: ‘It is also important to teach them about their faith. It should not be the case that they are completely occupied in pursue of their secular education and worldly endeavours and thus parents do not pay any attention to teach them about their faith and nor make any arrangements for them to be taught. It is extremely important to teach them about their faith and their beliefs.'
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<td>Allah the Almighty states: ‘Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous.’</td>
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<td>This can only be possible when the parents themselves do not lead a life of disobedience and falsehood, in fact they lead a life like the servants of the Gracious God.</td>
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<td>They give precedence to God over everything else</td>
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<td>After this God Almighty has then further elaborated by saying ‘and make us a model for the righteous’.</td>
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<td>If one’s progeny is virtuous and righteous then surely, he must be their Imam [head].</td>
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<td>Therefore, this is also a prayer for one to become righteous</td>
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<td>i.e. one prays for himself to become righteous and prays that Allah the Almighty makes him tread upon the paths of righteousness and then this prayer includes the children also become righteous</td>
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Therefore, one should always desire for their children to serve their faith. The parents of Waqfeen-e-Nau children should ensure that they guide their children towards their faith.

Nevertheless, as I have already mentioned, the parents of Waqfeen-a-Nau children should pay special attention towards the moral training of their children and they must pray for them to achieve this goal; for their children to grow up to serve the faith and give precedence to faith over all worldly pursuits.

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The Promised Messiah (as) states: “The succour of God Almighty descends only upon those people who excel in virtuous deeds and do not remain at one station. These are the people who have a prosperous end.” In order for one to receive a prosperous end the Promised Messiah (as) stated: “One should pray constantly for oneself, as well as their wife and children.”
The Promised Messiah (as) said:

"perform those deeds which set the best and perfect example for your children." This is the responsibility of the parents.

The Promised Messiah (as) further elaborates by saying: "That is why it is necessary to first reform oneself. If you become a righteous and temperate individual and strive to please God, then Allah the Almighty will always show benevolence to you and your offspring. In the Holy Quran, the incident of Khizr and Prophet Moses (as) is mentioned that together they constructed a wall belonging to a few orphaned children.

Referring to this God Almighty states: "their father had been a righteous man" The condition of the children themselves was not mentioned, rather the parents were mentioned. The Promised Messiah (as) elaborates by saying: "Therefore, always desire for your progeny to become pious, in return God Almighty will grant you the means and provisions for progress."
• This in fact is an elaboration of the Quranic principles, that **the conduct of the mother and father plays a big part in the upbringing of children**.

• May Allah the Almighty grant every single one of us to become the best example for our children. May we fulfil the pledge of giving precedence to our faith over all worldly objects. Instead of looking towards others to see what their condition is – as is the habit of some people – we should focus on ourselves. Only then will we be able to leave a pious progeny for the future that will tread the path of righteousness. May we constantly pray for our children, so that God Almighty makes them the delight of our eyes.