

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Parents' Responsibility towards Children The Islamic perspective

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The divinely revealed scripture, the Qur'an, deals clearly with the civic, social, family, religious, spiritual, and many other responsibilities assigned to mankind in general and Muslims in particular. The teachings of the Qur'an and the sayings and the practice of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) provide a comprehensive code of life for a believer.

The responsibilities of Children towards the parents are dealt with elsewhere. In this brief presentation, responsibilities of parents, especially the father will be dealt with.

Islam assigns the primary responsibility of bread earning to the husband as the head of the family. This responsibility includes providing food, shelter, education, safety, etc. to the whole family, including the children. Under Islamic law, an offspring borne to, by his wife, belongs to the father. In case of a divorce, father continues to be the supporter, provider and he is fully responsible for his offspring.

God, Exalted, most High says in the Qur'an:

*“And the mothers should suckle their children for two whole years for him who desires to make complete the time of suckling; and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by their father according to usage. No soul should have imposed upon it a duty, but to the extent of its capacity; neither shall a mother be made to suffer on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child; and a similar duty (devolves) on the (father's) heir, but if both desire weaning by mutual consent and counsel, there is no blame on them; and if you wish to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there is no blame on you, so long as you pay what you promised for according to usage; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and know that Allah sees what you do. Chapter 2, verse 233. ***

About the newly divorced women: *“Lodge them where you lodge according to your means, and do not injure them in order that you may straiten them; and if they are pregnant, spend on them, until they lay down their burden; then if they suckle for you, give them their recompense, and enjoin one another among you to do good; and if you disagree, have another woman suckle for him.*

Let him who has abundance, spend out of his abundance, and whoever has his means of subsistence straitened to him, let him spend out of that Allah has given him; Allah does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent to which He has granted it. Allah brings about ease after difficulty.

Chapter 65, verses 6 & 7. **

Imam Ali Ibn al-Husayn, the great grandson of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon them and their progeny, who was a scholar and most learned man of his time, had written “The treatise on Rights” 1,400 years ago. Fifty-one rights are mentioned. The Right twenty-four is given here:

“The right of your child is that you should know that he is from you, and will be ascribed to you, both through his good and through his evil, in the immediate affairs of the world. You are responsible for what has been entrusted to you, such as educating him in good conduct, pointing him in the direction of his Lord, and helping him to obey Him. So act towards him with the action of one who knows that he will be rewarded for good doing towards him, and punished for evil doing.” ***

From the above it clear that by divinely mandated Islamic Law, man bears full responsibility for the care and upbringing his children. Those who willfully violate the Law will be held accountable, especially on the Day of Judgment.

(The End)

**The Qur’an, Translation by M.H. Shakir, Published by Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an, INC. Elmhurst, NY. ISBN: 0-940368-18-8 (racksize) English.

***The Treatise on Rights by Ali Ibn al-Husayn, Al-Shaheed Publications, Hyderabad, India. Library of Congress Catalog card No: 91-900844. ISBN 81-85686-01-7