**Parenting styles**

BY A M I N V A L L I A N I 2022-02-18

THOUGH all children may not be similar in nature or top their exams, they all require parental love, prayers, protection and patronage in their formative years.  
  
Therefore, it is rightly said that parents, if alive, are Allah`s greatest blessing for children.  
  
There are various styles of parenting which support healthy growth and development in children. Parents make untiring efforts to fulfil the needs of their children.  
  
Their attention on and interaction with children affects the latter for the rest of their life and helps them earn respect and dignity in society. Parents sacrifice their time, rest, efforts and other resources to look after their children in a way that enables them to become responsible citizens.  
  
As we live in a materialistic era and face many challenges in rearing children, most urban parents follow the modern patterns of living. They, most of the time, remain busy with their professional and household activities, but it is a miracle that despite all odds, parents are ready to sacrifice their life to protect their children`s future. They prefer their children`s happiness over everything and leave no stone unturned in fulfilling their needs. If a person achieves greatness in society, the credit goes to his parents.  
  
What will be the shape of our society in the years to come? The answer lies in parents` efforts to raise their children. Today`s children are tomorrow`s leaders. Therefore, parents should look after their children with utmost care and a sense of responsibility. They should be vigilant in their training. The result would make our society better. Sometimes, the parents` irresponsible attitude and undue favours spoil children.  
  
This may create a liability for both the parents and society.  
  
Islam provides certain guidelines for parenting. Allah says `And those who believe and whose offspring follow them in Faith, to them shall We join their offspring, and We shall not decrease the reward of their deeds in anything. Every person is a pledge for that which he has earned` (52:21). In the light of this verse, believers consider their offspring to be a blessing from Allah. They will become a constant source of benefit (sadga-i-jaria) in this world and the Hereafter. They prioritise their children`s needs but prefer religious and secular education as the first priority. They take interest in their children`s activities, feed them nutritious food, spend quality time with them, harness their potential, guide them in their learning but also keep a strict, though benevolent, watch on their peer circle.  
  
They keep close contact with their teachers and seek their help in character-build-ing. They think about the character formation oftheir children, and create a spiritual atmosphere in their home. This means that they avoid lying, backbiting, infighting, abusive language, brawls and unethical actions in their home environment. They inspire their children to think positively and help the needy as far as possible. They teach their children how to deal with challenges of the modern world and inculcate in them a love for all humanity. They encourage the children to help them in home keeping and support them in leading a disciplined life. In this connection, parents offer prayers regularly and want their offspring to follow them.  
  
There are other parents who want to see their children as high achievers in schools.  
  
They prefer good results for their children with distinction. They admit them in the most expensive schools and think that they have fulfilled their responsibility. They consider rearing children as an investment with hopes of good returns. They think that school will turn their children into good citi-zens and so spare little time to share their thoughts with their children.  
  
They want their offspring to secure the best position/ high-paying job in their selected profession. They are always mindful oftheir social status and try to maintain ties with people of their status.  
  
The third type unknowingly spoil their children. They are always ready to fulfil their children`s demands whatever they might be. In their view, their children are ethical, do not commit any mistake and are best in all school subjects. They forget the principle that gold can only be purified after melting. If they know that their children have made mistakes or done wrong or are weak in some subject, they blame their teachers and hold them responsible for their children`s weakness.  
  
In short, parenting is the most difficult job in society as it involves children`s physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development. Therefore, parents need to be realistic; they should analyse their strengths and shortcomings in bringing up their children. It is their responsibility to make their children an asset to society and save them from the fire of the Hereafter mentioned in the Quran (66:6).  The writer is an educationist with an interest in religion.  
  
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