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Miscellaneous topics- Prayer times (Mawaqit Assalat)- Lesson (12-15): Raising children to commit to Salat

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All- Knower, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Allah the Almighty says:

((And enjoin As-Salat (the prayer) on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the Salat (prayers)].))

[Ta-Ha, 132]

Raising children to commit to Salah:

Our children are the apples of our eyes, and we are trusted by Allah the Almighty to look after them and be responsible for them, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards.))

[Bukhari]



We are the guardians of our children and we will be asked about them on the Day of Resurrection. Jaber Ibn Sumrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((A man gives good education to his child is better for him than that he gives a large measure of corn in alms.))

[Tirmizi with a weak authentication]

It has been narrated in the tradition:

((Play with your children for seven years, teach them for seven years, observe them for seven years and befriend them for seven years.))

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((When a human being dies, all of his deeds are terminated except for three types: an ongoing sadaqah, a knowledge (of Islam) from which others benefit and a righteous child who makes du'a for him.))

[Hadith Sahih by Muslim]

((The pious son is man's best earning.))

The pious son is considered an ongoing Sadaqah, because the good deeds of the father's own children, his grandchildren and their offspring will be added to his Record on the Day of Resurrection, Allah says:

((And those who believe and whose offspring follow them in Faith, to them shall We join their offspring))

[At-Tur, 21]



Interpretation scholars said: "The deeds of their offspring will be added to theirs on the Day of Resurrection."

The most profitable business in the sight of Allah is to educate your son properly and to implant faith in him.

((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.))

[At-Tur, 21]

It is deemed the greatest deed in the sight of Allah to have a pious son from whom people will benefit after your death.

Imam Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "By Allah, whenever I have intercourse with my wife, I do not do that to satisfy a desire I have, but to have a pious son from whom people will benefit after my death."

Hence, the Muslim's children are his provision and path towards Paradise. Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her said: the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((When Allah loves a family, He bestows upon them clemency.))

[Ahmad]

In another Hadith, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((Whenever forbearance is added to something, it adorns it; and whenever it is withdrawn from something, it leaves it defective.))

[Sahih Hadith, by Muslim and Abu Dawood]

Raising your son to have a sound Aqidah, a proper performance of the acts of worship and good conducts in order to be a useful member in the society, is the

greatest deed a father will ever offer. Indeed, this is the basic mission of the father in his life.

The conclusive evidence in the following Ayah is very clear:

((And enjoin As-Salat (the prayer) on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the Salat (prayers)].))

[Ta-Ha, 132]

The Prophet, peace be upon him, also said:

((...and the comfort of my eye is in Salat.))

[An-Nasa'i, Hasan Hadith]

In another Hadith he, peace be upon him, said:

((The head of its matter is Islam and its pillar is the Salah.))

[Hadith Sahai by Tirmizi]

Furthermore, the Prophet's commandment, peace be upon him, before he joined the companion of the Exalted (Allah), was:

((Salah and those whom your right hands possess.))

[Hadith Sahih by Ibn Majah]

When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was stabbed he said:"Did Muslims offer Fajr prayer?"

Stages of teaching children to commit to Salah:



Habituating the child to perform Salah, has a great positive effect on his faith in the future. Although childhood is not the stage of fulfilling religious responsibilities, it is

the stage of getting children prepared and used to performing acts of worship till they reach the age of puberty.

A child at the age of seven is not assigned to offer Salah, however, he should be raised according to Islamic morals, and he should be trained to offer Ibadat (Islamic acts of worship). As a result, when he reaches the age of puberty, Salah will be part of his life.

The stages, which the father should consider in raising his children to commit to Salah, are the following:

1- Standing with other prayers:

In early childhood when the child starts to perceive things around him, the parents should only ask their child to stand while they are offering Salah. It was narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said about a child in that regard:

((If he knows his right from his left, order him to perform Salah.))

[Hadith Hasan by Abu Dawood]

When your child starts to understand things, ask him to stand next to you while you are offering Salah, even if he performs Ruku'(the bowing performed during salat) before you, or he stands next to you in the first Rak'ah only and leaves. The main point is accustoming your child to join you in Salah. Your child has no idea about the rulings of Salah, so he may walk, shout or sit in front of you while you are praying, and he will not be held responsible for this. However, your job as a father is encouraging him to join you in your Salah when he starts to understand things around him. Also, it is preferable to take him with you to the Masjid and keep him close to you in order to get used to going to the houses of Allah the Almighty and to get accustomed to this obligatory act of worship.

A important fact:

Jaber Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((If anyone of you finishes the prayer in the Masjid, so it would be better if he perform a part of his prayer in his home because Allah will award him the good in his house due to his praying in it.))

[Hadith Sahih by Muslim]

It is Sunnah to perform the Fard (obligatory Salah) in the Masjid and to perform Sunnah Salah in your house, so that your house will not turn into a grave. For instance, you can pray the Fard (Isha'a) in the Masjid and leave its Sunnah and Witr (a voluntary, optional night prayer of odd numbers Raka'at) till you get back home in order to attract the attention of your children while you are praying. Regarding this point, there is another Hadith: Abdullah Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((Offer some of your prayers in your houses and do not make them graves.))

[Hadith Sahih by Bukhari and Mulsim]

Since the child is molded to imitate his parents by nature, he will imitate them when they offer Salah at home.

2- Learning the simple rules of Salah:



Before reaching the age of seven, the parents should teach their child the simple rules of Taharah (cleanness): like how to avoid Najasah (impurity), how to perform Istinja'a (the process of cleaning the private parts after relieving oneself), the manners of using the bathroom and the necessity of keeping his body and clothes clean. Besides, the parent can give a simplified explanation about the connection between Salah and Taharah; he can give him simple pieces of information, which are the basics in a gentle, kind and soft manner.

Moreover, you can teach the child to recite Al-Fatihah and some short Swar before he reaches the age of seven to get him prepared to perform Salah. Also, you can teach him how to perform Wudu practically (encourages him to watch you perform it) following by that the steps of the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, in training their children. Furthermore, before the child reaches the age of seven, we should train him to offer Salah and encourage him to offer at least one Fard or more during the day, especially Fajr Salah before he goes to nursery. We shouldn't ask him to offer all the five Furood till he reaches the age of seven. Again, let me remind you how important it is to bring your children to Jumu'ah Salah after you teach them the manners of being in the Masjid.

3- Getting children used to performing Salah regularly:

The age between seven and ten is when the following Hadith should be applied: Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-A'as, may Allah be pleased with them both, said, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((Order your children to pray at the age of seven, and beat them [lightly] if they do not do so by the age of ten, and separate them in their bedding.))

[Abo Dawood with a Hasan authentication]

We should teach our children this Hadith in order to make them aware that they reach the stage of becoming committed to Salah. Therefore, the specialists of educating children advise parents to make the day when the child reaches the age of seven a unique event in his life. An esteemed wise brother told me that when his son reached the age of seven, he held a big celebration for that event, and he prepared himself to apply the commandment of the Prophet, peace be upon him:

((Order your children to pray at the age of seven, and beat them [lightly] if they do not do so by the age of ten, and separate them in their bedding.))

[Abo Dawood with a Hasan authentication]



We should avoid violence and punishment before the child reaches the age of ten, so we should ask him leniently, mercifully and affectionately to offer Salah as the Prophet, peace be upon him, recommended in this stage. After the child reaches the age of seven, he should be fully taught the rules of Taharah (purification from ritual impurities by means of wudu or ghusl), how the Prophet, peace be upon him, offered Salah and some Salah supplications. Also, he should be encouraged to offer it with present heart and mind and with as lesser movements as possible, and he should be reminded of the following Hadith:

Ammar Ibn Yaser, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that he offered two quick Raka'at, so Abdul Rahman said to him: "O Aba Yaqzan, I see that you offered the two Raka'at quickly?" To which Ammar answered: "I did that on purpose to avoid scrupulosity, for I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying:

((One might finish the Salah, but only have a tenth, ninth, eighth, seventh, sixth, fifth, fourth, third or a half of it written for him.))

[Sahih Hadith by Abu Dawood and Ahmad in his Musnad]

When we teach the child that unless he offers his Fard perfectly, only tenth, fourth or fifth of it will be accepted (the part that he offered with present heart and mind), he will offer it perfectly.

4- Threatening of punishment if Salah is abandoned:

We should repeatedly remind the child, who doesn't reach the age of ten, that after he is ten years old, he will be called to account, disciplined and punished in case he leaves Salah. Also, we should mention this Hadith in order to prevent him from leaving Salah and make him committed to offering it.

Believe me when I say that being committed to Salah as parents and setting a good example to your son and daughter will make your children keen on offering Salah, especially when they are encouraged by all ways (morally or materially). A father may hit his son severely if he misses Salah, but another one may reward his son whenever he offers Salah at the proper time. There is a big difference between the two methods; encouragement and punishment. I think that rewarding the child for performing Salah is more effective than punishing him whenever he misses it.

After your son reaches the age of ten, you should check on him and make sure that he is offering all the five Furood, and you should threaten him of punishment in case he leaves Salah. In addition, you should draw his attention to the fact that Salah is an obligatory and leaving it is a major sin.

Dear brothers, the Almighty Allah says:

((And whosoever honours the Symbols of Allah, then it is truly from the piety of the heart.))

[Al-Hajj, 32]

5- Teaching children to pay Kaffarah (expiation) for the missed Fard:



This stage entails guiding your son when he misses a Fard to perform a good deed, do someone a favor, fast a day or pay Sadaqah from his own little allowance in order to make up that the missed Fard. By doing this, the father will be following the guidance of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Abu Dhar said: the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((... and follow the bad deed with a good one to erase it))

[Hadith Hasan by Tirmizi]

Allay says in Quran that our Master Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said:

(("O my Lord! Make me one who performs As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and (also) from my offspring))

[Ibrahim, 40]

Allah teaches us how to supplicate, He says:

((And those who say: "Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders for the Muttaqun (pious)."))

[Al-Furqan, 74]

6- Drawing the child's attention to the importance of Salah:



If your son asks your permission to go to sleep before Isha'a Salah, you should remind him that there are only few minutes left before Isha'a Azan (call of Salah) and you should say to him: "O son, offer Salah, then you can go to sleep." Also, if he asks for your permission to go to a picnic or to visit relatives before sunset, you should say to him: "Let us pray Maghrib first, and then we can go." One of the methods of drawing the child's attention to the importance of Salah is to link all appointments which parents set to the times of Salah, like saying: "We will meet after Asr Salah, or we will visit you after Maghrib Salah..." and so on. Linking all the appointments of the father and the family to the five Furood will make the children understand that Salah is essential in Muslim's life.

Furthermore, you should teach your son the Qasr (shortening the Zuhur, Asr, and Isha'a from four Raka'at to two) and the Jame' (combining Zuhur with Asr or Maghrib with Isha'a) during travels. You should tell him that this is Rukhsah (An exception to a general law, granted to preserve life or remove hardship) and that Allah is pleased when the Muslim adopts Rukhas (plural of Rukhsah) as much as He is pleased with him he applies Aza'em (obligations in Islam).

The father should also gradually train his son to offer Nawafel (an optional, supererogatory Salah) like: Ad-Duha prayer (supererogatory prayer after sunrise), night prayers, Al-Awwabeen prayer (offering six to twenty Raka'at after the Maghrib obligatory prayer), Al-Hajah prayer (the prayer for need) and Al-Shukr prayer (the prayer of showing gratefulness to Allah). Such a thing implants the seeds of commitment (to Salah) within the child at an early age.

Teach your son to be brave enough to ask his friends to offer Salah even if they were in a picnic. Also, teach him not to feel embarrassed to finish a phone call or a chat with a friend for the sake of offering congregation Salah in the Masjid. Make Salah the most important thing in your child's life.

7- Going early to Congregational Prayers and to the Masjid:

When you take your son early to the Masjid on Friday (Jumu'ah Salah) you make it one of his habits till he dies. Once, I wanted to meet a brother for a scientific issue, and he asked me to meet him at 5:30 AM at his office. He noticed that I was surprised at such time, so he told me, "My father used to take me to the Masjid before Fajr Salah when I was a kid, and that has become a habit for fifty years." This man wakes up before Fajr, offers Salah, offers Fajr Salah and then goes to his office. This incident drew my attention to the fact that when the father is keen on offering Fajr Salah and Jumu'ah Salah, and when he goes early to the Masjid to offer them, he makes this one of his son's habits. On the other hand, the father who comes to the Masjid before the Khutbah is over, he subconsciously makes his son careless towards attending Kutabah.

As a father, when you are keen on bringing your children to perform Eids Salah and Istisqa' Salah (prayer for rain), you make this habit part of them, and thus Eids Salah or may be Janazah Salah (funeral Salah) will be part of their life. The child will be strongly committed to offering Furood regularly when you reward him either morally by praising him, or materially by buying something he loves. Also, when teachers at school are keen on communicating with the family to ask about their son's commitment to Salah, the child will always be reminded of the importance of performing it.

8- Teaching children Quran, supplications and Adhkar (remembrance of Allah):

It is good to teach the child to repeat Adhkar of the day and the ones of the night, and to make him comprehends the following Ayah in which Allah the Almighty says:

((and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat). Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed, etc.) and the remembering (praising, etc.) of (you by) Allah (in front of the angels) is greater indeed [than your remembering (praising, etc.) Allah in prayers, etc.]))

[Al-Ankabut, 45]

Teaching him these Adhkar and supplications before and after Salah and those that go with Azan will make him familiar with them, and they will be part of him. Also, encourage him at an early age to memorize the Noble Quran, is a golden opportunity to do so, since it is said: "Learning in youth is like engraving on stone". You can mention to him the following Hadith concerning memorizing Quran: Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((The Qur'aan will be brought on the Day of Judgement, and it will say, 'O My Lord! Adorn him (the one who read and practised it)! So he will be adorned with the crown of glory and honour. It will then say, 'O My Lord! Increase this!' So he will be clothed with the clothes of glory and honour. Then it will say, 'O My Lord! Be pleased with Him! So He (Allaah) will be pleased with him. It will be said, 'Recite! And rise!' And every verse he recites will bless him with a good deed.))

[Sahih Hadith by Al Hakem in his Mustadrak]

When you inform your son about the exalted position of the Hafez (the one who knows the Quran by heart), the one who recites it, the one who learns it and the one who teaches it, you will be make him enthusiastic and eager to memorize it.

9- Using educational tools:



Right down a timetable of the daily prayers with a check box next to each Salah in order to be marked when this Salah is performed. Install a computer program through which your son can learn performing Salah and the principles of wudu. When the Mu'azen says: "Hayya alal Falah (rush to success)", Hayya alal Falah (rush to success)", repeat before your son: "La Hawla wa La Quwwata Illa Billah (no power or strength except with Allah)".

Moreover, repeat the word of Tawhid and the Shahadah in front of him, for all this will become deeply rooted inside him.

- Teach him the supplication of going out of the house to offer Salah.
- Teach him the supplication of entering the Masjid and the one of going out of it.
- Teach him the supplication of entering the bathroom, because he will benefit from all that in his future.
- Warn him from pecking like a crow while performing Ruku' and Sujud (prostrating in Salah), telling him that by doing this he seems to be stealing from his Salah:

Narrated Abi Qatadah, may Allah be pleased with him, he said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

(("The worst of stealers are those who steal from their Salahs." People asked: "O Messenger of Allah, how could one steal from his payer?" He said: "He would not bow down and prostrate completely."))

[Ahmad and Tabarani and his followers]

You will instill in him the spirit of performing Salah honestly.

10- Leniency and using encouraging and interesting tools:

Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-A'as, may Allah be pleased with them both, said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

((The merciful people will have mercy bestowed upon them by Allah (S.W.T.). Be merciful with those on earth, so He who in the heaven (Allah) will have mercy on you.))

[Hadith Sahih by Abu Dawood and Tirmizi]

He, who gives guidance to little children, should avoid giving lots of orders. He should reward the child for the good behavior either morally by showing contentment or materially by giving him gifts. Also, he should say to the child: "This is wrong" whenever he makes a mistake instead of saying to him "You did something wrong". He should be nice to him and show him the right thing to do. If the child makes the same mistake over and over again, he can deprive him of things he loves. These are some of the tools through which the child is encouraged to commit to offering Salah.

The topic of "Raising Children to Commit to Salah":

((And enjoin As-Salat (the prayer) on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the Salat (prayers)].))

[Ta-Ha, 132]

This is a Divine command, and every divine command entails obligation.

Tell your children before they offer their Salah about the One they are praying before and about the One they are secretly talking to. Teach them that their prayer is performed to please Allah only, not to please this or that person. Also, teach them that earning Halal money will help them being submissive in their Salah. Furthermore, teach them that if they recite Quran properly, Allah will be pleased with them and will reward them in this worldly life and in the Hereafter.

These are some of the instructions which are deduced from the following Ayah:

((And enjoin As-Salat (the prayer) on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the Salat (prayers)].))

[Ta-Ha, 132]

I repeat again: it is an ordained Divine command, and every Divine command entails obligation.

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