

# MAKING FAMILIES WORK – TIPS FOR MUSLIM PARENTING



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The following is the video and transcript of Shaykh Yasir Qadhi's khutbah "Making Families Work." The transcript includes slight modifications for the sake of readability and clarity.



# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam, in today's khutbah insha'Allah ta'ala we will talk about the importance of parents and some of the Islamic principles and tips that we as parents need to know when we deal with our children.

We all know, my dear brothers and sisters in Islam that children are of the greatest blessings of life. Allah ﷻ tells us in the Qur'an "*Al maalu wal banuuna zeenatul hayatid dunya*". Money and children, that's what makes life beautiful for us. What makes life worth living even for those who don't believe in a God – for us, of course we have the akhirah but even for those who don't have any iman, what makes life sweet? Al maalu wal banuun. And Allah mentions this as a blessing for us, as a blessing that He has given us. Allah says in the Qur'an, Allah is the One who has given you, He has aided you, He has helped you, He has blessed you with money and with children and that is why having children, this is a natural desire in every human being. It's ingrained in us. Allah says in the Qur'an "It is pleasing to men, it is alluring to men that they desire women and they desire children." Every single person, and of course the ayah is directed to men that they want women, and of course women as well want husbands, women as well they have the same desire, they want a loving spouse, they want a healthy relationship and they want children as well.

And in the Qur'an we have so many stories of those who did not have children and they want to have children, so much so that they will even adopt in order to have a child. The famous story of Imra'atul Aziz in the Qur'an, Yusuf, the story of Yusuf and the family that adopts him, they did not have a child. What does the wife say? And in fact the exact same phrase that this woman says, another woman also says in the Qur'an; and that is the wife of Firawn. Firawn and Aziz, two different people in two different time places, they both did not have children. When Asiya the wife of Firawn sees this child and when the wife of Aziz, when Aziz brings home Yusuf, they both say the exact same thing: "This child, hopefully he will benefit us and we will adopt him as a son, we will take him as a son."

You see, parents, they want children that when they grow older, these children will benefit them. That when they grow older, somebody will take care of them. Parents, they have it inside of them to see their children flourish, to see their children grow. It is an amazing psychological reality that no human being on the face of this earth wants to see another human better than him except for the father when it comes to his son or the mother when it comes to her daughter. You don't want to see your cousin richer than you, or your uncle smarter than you, even if you accept it grudgingly. But you're not happy to see another person richer than you. You're not supportive to see another person with a better job than you. You will accept it as a reality of life, okay there are people that are above, there are people that are below. But the only time that you will feel happy that someone is better than you is your own son or daughter.

You will genuinely feel proud. *That's my boy, that's my daughter, he's done this he's done that.* no jealousy at all, 100% support. And this is an amazing psychological reality that Allah ﷻ created in every one of us. And that is why, as I said, it's a natural desire to have children.

Ibrahim [as], he doesn't have a son or child, he makes duaa to Allah. So Allah sends him an angel to tell him yes you're going to have a child, you and Sarah will have a child and after this child you'll even have a grandchild. And Zakariya [as], he's making duaa to Allah, that beautiful, that poetic duaa. He makes duaa to Allah in a language that is so beautiful that we cannot even translate it into English, but he makes duaa that he wants a child, that I want a child that shall inherit from me, that shall carry my progeny on, and therefore it is indeed a sign of mercy from Allah ﷻ that He has allowed us to have children and that we take care of these children. And taking care of children as well is a human emotion. It transcends religion and culture. Muslim and kafir, we all love our children.

The famous story of the bedouin who came to the Prophet ﷺ and he saw the Prophet ﷺ kissing Hasan and Hussain, playing with them, throwing them up in the air -and this is his grandson. can you imagine what he would have done with his own children. We don't have any stories of how he raised Fatimah and Umme Kulthoom when they were babies because this was pre-Islam. But we have stories of Hasan and Hussain, that he would kiss them and he would play with them and he would allow them to come on his back when he was in sajdah, the most humbling and the most religious position. But when Hasan is on his back, crawling, he allows Hasan to play even if this is kind of interfering with salah, but that love that he has for his grandson, it allows him to remain in sajdah longer so that Hasan is not harmed when he stands up. So he's playing with his grandchildren, and he kisses them, and this Bedouin, he's amazed, he's astonished, and he says, “Do you kiss your children?” because in their culture, it was considered unmanly to show this love. It was considered a sign of weakness to show love to your children. Do you kiss your child like this? “By Allah, I have ten children and I've never once kissed one of them.” He's trying to boast that he is so manly, he's so macho that he's never kissed any of his children. And the prophet [saws], even though he was the gentle rahmatal lil alameen and he had the height of adab, when he saw such callousness he could not help but give a callous response back. Because sometimes you have to be harsh and sometimes you have to be strict. This man is boasting that he is not merciful to his children. And he's swearing by Allah, wallahi, and he's using Allah's name to feel a sense of pride that I'm so detached from my kids.

And what did the Prophet ﷺ say? Do I have any control over your attitude, that Allah ﷻ has snatched away rahmah from your heart? Is it my fault that you have no rahmah, that you're boasting that you don't kiss your own children? And this is a harsh response, this is a verbal slap on the face to this man, but sometimes harshness requires harshness. And this boast, it required a firm response back to it. That, are you boasting that you've never kissed your children, and then you expect me to sympathize or have mercy? Its not my fault, he said, that Allah has stripped your heart of any mercy. And this clearly shows us, brothers and sisters, that in our

religion, to have a loving attitude towards your children, this is a sign that Allah ﷻ has blessed you. It's a sign that you have rahmah in your heart.

As we said last week, that it is not the sign of a man to mistreat his woman. Now we say in this khutbah, it is not the sign of a man or a woman, it is not the sign of a loving parent to mistreat their own children, to always be harsh, to always be strict on their children.

And indeed as Allah ﷻ has blessed us with children, with every blessing comes responsibilities. With every blessing comes responsibilities. There is no blessing that comes with no strings attached. Children are one of the biggest blessings of life. In fact they are really what makes life worth living for everyone amongst us who does not even, as we said, even people without any religion, children will make their life worth living. How about us who have iman? Of course children make our life much better living. So, with that blessing comes responsibility, and the primary responsibility that muslim parents have is to raise their children to be righteous muslims, to be good muslims.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an *“Oh you who believe, it is your responsibility to protect yourselves and your families from the punishment of Allah ﷻ”*. And our Prophet ﷺ said “Every one of you is a shepherd and you are responsible for your flock.” And number one, he said, the father is responsible for his flock and the mother is also responsible for her flock. The father and the mother, he mentioned the both of them in this hadith. They are both responsible for their flock and their flock is but one because their children are the same. Both mother and father are responsible for the same flock. They're responsible for the same set of sheep if you like. And both of them will be asked by Allah ﷻ about how they dealt with their flock, with their responsibility.

And therefore in today's short khutbah, I wanted to remind myself and some of you of some practical advice about tarbiyah, about raising children. And today's khutbah is primarily directed at the parents. Today's khutbah, the emphasis is on the parents, so those who are parents, pay heed. Those who are not yet parents, pay extra heed; because every one of us, Allah ﷻ blesses and tests and tries through the issue of children.

The first advice to myself and all of you, and really the most important advice, the best way to raise one's children is to be a role model yourself in their lives. If you yourself are not of good character, there is no way your children will have a good character after you. And this is the ultimate reality. Brothers and sisters wallahi the media is to blame a lot, television is to blame a lot, internet is to blame a lot, society is to blame a lot. But the number one blame for a disrupted family, the number one blame for a broken family is the parents themselves. This is the number one blame. And before any of us, and I speak to myself before I speak to any of you, before any

of us is ready to point our finger anywhere else, be prepared to take a solid look in the mirror. Because the number one guilty person in any broken family, in any broken relationship is the person you're looking at in the mirror. If you have not been a role model to your son or daughter, if you have not lived up to the ideals that you should live up to, then how can you blame your own child for failing to live up to those responsibilities?

And there are two elements here by the way. When it comes to being a role model, there are two elements here. There's a worldly element and there's a religious element. There's a deeni and there's a dunyawi. There's a psychological and there's also a spiritual. When it comes to psychological, when it comes to the worldly element, there's a simple common sense here; that as you do, it shall be done unto you. It's not a coincidence, brothers and sisters, there are thousands of surveys done, it's not a coincidence that children who grow up with parents who are smoking are much more predisposed to smoking. Children who grow up in abusive households, abusive relationships, when the husband is beating the wife, that these children will also beat their spouses when they grow up. It's not something that takes rocket science. As you do in your family, your children will do when they grow up. This is the reality. This is the fact of science, of psychology, and it doesn't take rocket science.

And the fact of the matter, husbands, if you're mistreating your wife, if you're abusing your wife, are you going to blame your son when he grows up and he also then starts abusing his wife? If all you do is scream and shout at your wife, ask yourself, do you want your daughter to have a husband like you? Ask yourself this. Do you want your daughter to be treated the way you treat your own wife, the mother of your daughter? So, relationships begin in the house. Relationships begin with oneself. As you do unto others, your child will learn to do unto others. And this is wallahi the fact that scientists, psychologists, everyone can tell you and it doesn't take a genius to figure this out. So the first way to have good children is to be a good man or a good woman yourself. The first way to have children who are polite, children who are respectful, is to be polite and respectful in your own life to others.

And I have seen with my own eyes, brothers and sisters, I am now of middle age and I have grown up here. I'm of that generation that is of the first generation to immigrant parents here in America. And I have seen plenty of horror stories and plenty of good stories of the children of my generation that are now young adults, that are now reaching their maturities and primes. I have seen with my own eyes, brothers and sisters, that every time a husband and wife, a couple, had good Islamic values in their life, the child eventually returns to Islam. Eventually. Yes I have seen some times children go away, especially in the teenage years, especially in the young twenties. But if the husband and wife raised them with an atmosphere of love, with an atmosphere of Islam, then when the child comes of age, when the child becomes twenty five or thirty, becomes a married adult, automatically they revert back to the only memory they have of living like a family, and that's the memory of their parents. And I have seen with my own eyes so many of my friends go through rebellious teenage years, go through a lot of evil, dating, womanizing, drugs, alcohol, then they grow into young men and women, they get married, they start their careers, and all of a sudden, they turn over a new leaf.

And why is this the case? Because when they are blessed with children, when these children have children of their own as young men and women, and they realize, you know what, I can't afford to let my son or daughter go. They have to change their own lives around. And how do they change it around? As I said, to the one memory that they have, the one role model that they grew up with, and that is their parents. And I have yet to see one example of a young man or woman who has grown up in a religious environment who permanently leaves that religious environment. I have yet to see one example in my own extended relatives and family and extended acquaintances that I knew growing up, this is the reality that I have experienced and of course there might be one or two exceptions, but the general rule of thumb: as the family is, so too when this child grows up, he will replicate that family in his own family.

And so, you want to have good children, start with yourself. Start with your own relationship with your spouse. This is the human level. There's a spiritual level as well. And the spiritual level, I've spoken about it here on this mimbar many times. And the best example is the story of Khidr and the young boy that he killed. Why did Allah ﷻ spare those two parents from this boy? Why did Allah give them another boy that was better for them? Allah says in the Qur'an, *the parents were righteous, the mother and father were good people, they were believers in Allah ﷻ, so Allah did not want to test them with a rebellious, with an evil child. Allah wanted to give them a good child, a respectful child. And so Allah ﷻ blessed them with another child that would be good to them, that would be righteous.* Because they were righteous, Allah gave them righteous children. So you want to have good children, you have to start with yourself. You have to start at home. You have to start with your relationship with your spouse. This is number one and this is something that religion tells us, science tells us, psychology tells us, every single doctor, every single person who knows anything about sociology, humanities, will tell us. This is the way of the world. As you do unto others, it shall be done unto you.

The second advice to myself and all of you: As-salah, as-salah, as-salah. This cannot be overemphasized. We need to make sure that our children grow up praying on time.

Why? Not just because salah is important in our religion. Of course that is a big issue which we can get into, but we don't have time for this. Not just because our Prophet ﷺ said, *make sure that your children are praying at the age of seven and then force them to do so at the age of ten.* Not just because we're required to do so, not just because Allah says in the Qur'an, *“command your family to pray and be persistent in that command”*. Not just because all of this, no. There's also a selfish reason that every one of us should want our children to pray. When our children pray regularly, we are teaching them that there is an authority higher even than their parents. There is an authority that must be obeyed even more important than the authority of the parents. And you see brothers and sisters, the one real authority to keep children in check when it comes to their parents is not the parents themselves, this is circular logic. The parent cannot force the child to respect the parent simply because it's a parent. This is a circular logic. You have to go to a higher authority, and that higher authority is only Allah ﷻ.



So when your child knows there is Allah, and Allah is watching me, and I believe in Allah; when your child is praying regularly, when your child has that relationship with Allah, and then he learns Allah has told me to be good to my parents, our Prophet ﷺ has said *my mother, then my mother, then my mother, then my father*. Our Prophet ﷺ has said that jannah is underneath the feet of the mother. Now he learns the Qur'an and Sunnah. It has an impact on him. Why? Because you have taught him to believe in Allah ﷻ. You've made him a good Muslim, you've given him those values. He knows who is his lord, he's praying on time, and now when his lord tells him "be good to your parents," he will listen to his lord because this is not circular logic.

The mother cannot say "be good, I am your mother." This is circular, right, this is going back to her. The father cannot say "you have to respect me, I am your father." These are going to fall on flat ear-sand by the time the kid is a teenager, khalas he won't care anymore. But when the child believes in Allah ﷻ, when the child is regularly praying five times a day, and he knows who is his lord, now you tell him, now he learns, now he hears in the khutbah, now he understands it is not my mother and father telling me to respect them. It is the Creator of my mother and father. It is my Creator, it is my Prophet, it is my book that is telling me this. Now all of a sudden the whole paradigm shifts, the whole reality shifts. And therefore, brothers and sisters, salah is of the utmost important element to make sure that your children are respectful, are good. And of course there's a whole other set of issues with salah in terms of routine, in terms of punctuality, in terms of responsibility, in terms of habits. All of this we can talk about in a different khutbah. But the person who prays regularly, all types of blessings open up, including the blessings of having good children, and this again goes back to my first point. If you're not praying five times a day, how do you expect your child to be praying five times a day? If you're not living the life of the Muslim, how do you expect your child to do this?

And realize in the advice of Luqman [as], that famous advice of Luqman, which is the most comprehensive passage in the Qur'an about parent and child relationships and parent and child advice and perhaps in one khutbah, that's another khutbah to be done, the advice of Luqman; what does Luqman say to his son? Of the first things that he tells his son, *my dear son, make sure you pray regularly*. Establish the prayer on time. This is in the top three pieces of advice he gives: Believe in Allah, worship Allah, then right then and there, right on the top of page, "*ya bunaya aqimis salah*". Oh my son, make sure you're doing your salah. and therefore brothers and sisters, the second piece of advice to myself and all of you: the salah, the salah, the salah. if you're not praying, make sure you start praying and then have your family pray as well.

The third piece of advice: Make dua for your children. Regularly, sincerely, make dua for you children. Let me ask you, and ask yourselves this: When was the last time you raised your hands up to Allah and asked Allah to make sure your children are good, asked Allah to guide your children, asked Allah to protect your children from the evils of society? Wallahi brothers and sisters, ask yourself this. If you're not asking Allah for it, why do you think you're going to get it? How do you think you're going to get it? if you're not asking Allah for good children, if you're not asking Allah to protect your children, frankly, where is your love for your children? Wallahi

one of the most important duaas you should always be making, the Qur'an tells you to make this dua, its in the Qur'an, pick it up. "Rabbana hablana min azwajina wa dhurriyatina qurrata 'ayun wajalana lil muta'eenah imama". Allah tells you in the Qur'an..make this dua that "Oh Allah bless us with good wives and good children , those that give us coolness of the eye" (i.e they make our lives easy, they don't make our lives difficult). Min azwajina wa dhurriyatina qurrata 'ayunin. This should be our regular dua.

And our Prophet ﷺ said that the dua of the father for his son, meaning the parent for the child, the dua that the parent has for the child, Allah never rejects that dua. Allah always accepts it. SubhanAllah one of the most acceptable duaas, one of the most highest chances of a dua being accepted, the dua of the parent for the child. When was the last time you made dua? How often do you make dua for your children? From now on, almost every dua that you raise your hands up to Allah, include something about your children. Make sure you ask Allah, oh Allah protect my children from this environment, protect my children from the evils. Oh Allah, make them good Muslims. Oh Allah, guide them and guide others through them. Make that dua from the heart and you know what, once again there's religious and psychological effects. Religiously, Allah will bless them. Psychologically, when you're always asking Allah, then when you see an opportunity to protect your children from evil, you will do it. When you see an opportunity to help your children religiously, you will do it. Because its on your mind all the time. If you don't even ask Allah, then how will it come? If you don't even ask Allah, you yourself will forget about it and you're not going to take advantage of every opportunity.

The fourth piece of advice, and I speak as somebody who straddles both cultures of the east and the west, as somebody who has lived for long periods of time in the east, and was born and raised in the west. As somebody who was born as the first generation, basically the first born generation here of my parents who came and I speak very frankly, that oh parents amongst us who have come from different cultures to America, realize that we now live at a different time and a different place and a different society and a different culture. Frankly, you cannot raise your children with the same rules and relationships that your parents had back home with you. It's not going to work any more. It's a different reality. It's not just times that have changed. You have literally uprooted yourself from one culture and planted yourself in a completely different culture. The techniques and tactics that your parents used with you, you cannot replicate them for this generation in this land. And therefore, you are the ones that need to learn, not the other way around. It's not your children's fault that they were born and raised here. Frankly, it's yours. You came here, not them. You're the ones who decided to come to this land. They were born in this land, they're looking at the society, they're absorbing the culture, then you're going to get angry at them, "how can you do this, how can you do that?" think about it brothers and sisters, who brought them here? Who's raising them here? You are. So cut them some slack and realize you are going to have to learn more than they will. This is their culture, it's not your culture. And in order for you to have an effective parent, you will need to broaden your horizons. You will need to develop a new type of relationship with your children and that is a topic that is far



beyond the khutbah. This is a life long experience, but I just want to point out certain elements here.

No doubt, and wallahi there's no question the media, and television and the internet, but you know this khutbah is not about blaming *them* and blaming *those things*. That's a reality. It's a reality I cannot change, you cannot change. What can we change? Well, what we do at home. How we filter those things out. I can't change the internet or Nickelodeon or whatever, the music videos they're watching. This is the reality of the world we are living in. So instead of just blaming everything on that -and it might be true, there's a lot of blame there- instead of blaming everyone else, ask yourself proactively, what can I do to better the situation? Yes the music videos are there, yes the evil stuff on the internet is there, yes drugs are everywhere, but instead of just cursing and slandering and blaming, ask yourself: what can I do to protect my son and daughter?

This is the proactive mentality. Instead of just every pointing finger, see what is reality. See what is the best way to raise your child, and I have some basic points of advice here. First and foremost, within this area of changing cultural paradigms, do realize, brothers and sisters that our children, they do have a sense of know it all, a sense of I know better than my parents. Understand this. And they get this sense because of many facts of life. I mean, lets be realistic here. Our children know better than we do about technology. Our children know better than we do about the latest gadgets, about the latest this and that. And I will tell you, I grew up here. I thought that I knew this society and culture. Now that Allah has blessed me with children of my own, believe me I don't know the difference between this and that and sometimes my kid comes and tells me oh you need to get the iphone 5 because this has this and this has that and I don't know these things anymore, because now I'm getting out of touch. Even though when I was growing up, and I grew up in a western environment, I felt this way about my own father, that I'm more technologically advanced, that I'm in tune with everything. But this is a reality that when we reach a certain age, our children are more in tune with technology.

Now let me ask you, put yourself in the shoes of that 10 year old, that 12 year old. When he knows his father does not know how to operate a computer as well as he does, when he knows every single gadget on the market, he is more aware than his father, isn't it natural for this 10 year old to think *I know about life and reality and culture and society and people better than my father does?* Put yourself in his shoes. Do you blame him? And then it is true: the media also, television also, it gives the sense that the parents are backward and the child is know it all and the child is right. Yes it is true we can blame the media, but lets also sympathize a little bit. Is it really this child's fault now, to think this way? It's our job to educate the child: *you know what? You don't know everything. You might know the iPod or the iTouch or the I this better than I do, but you don't know human society. You don't know interactions. You haven't tested humanity the way that I have. You haven't lived amongst people the way that we have.* And that's your job in a gentle manner to teach the child.

And one of the best ways to do this brothers and sisters, and this is very difficult for those amongst us who have been raised in a different society and culture. We need to learn, there's a

common expression in America here that parents have to be friends with their kids. You know perhaps that's not going to happen, let's also be realistic, but let me tell you one thing frankly. Perhaps you're not going to be friends with your kids, but you will have to learn to have conversations with them that are beyond just rebuking or ordering or commanding. You're going to have to learn to talk to them and not at them. Look now, examine your own life. When you talk to your children, what is it about? Is it always “do this” “don't do that” “how could you have done this”? if this is your whole relationship with your son or daughter, frankly you're setting yourself up for failure. When is the last time you actually had a conversation that was not rebuking, not commanding, not derisive, not sarcastic? Yes they deserve a little bit of harshness every once in a while but if that's the only thing you can show them, what do you think their attitude will be towards you? Especially when they grow older, especially when they hit the teenage years, especially when they get their car and they get their first taste of freedom. I agree perhaps in our culture you can't be a friend to the child, okay. But you must be friendly with them. You must have some positive relationship that is above and beyond just rebuking and always getting angry at them. Have a conversation “what's happening?” “what's going on?” “what did you learn in school?”

Take them out, spend some quality time with them. And this is one of the biggest differences maybe between the previous generation and our generation. That perhaps for many of us, our fathers didn't really go out and play soccer and play basketball with us, with our friends. Perhaps. And you know I'm not criticizing them, maybe that works back there, I don't know. But over here, in this land, over here where we are, you have to have some type of friendly relationship with your own son or daughter. Let me put it this way, let me be really frank here. If your son or daughter does not feel comfortable coming to you for a problem that they're facing because of a mistake they might have done, then wallahi this is a very big problem. If your son or daughter has committed a mistake, and lets be honest, they're all going to commit mistakes because that's a part of growing up. Did you also not commit some mistakes when you were teenagers? Let's be honest here. If your son or daughter commits a mistake and then they don't want to come to you for help to clear that mistake up, well then honestly how are you being a good parent there? You need to have the doors of communication open. If your son or daughter is going through a standard problem of the teenage years, when they reach 13, 14, hormones are going to kick in, they're going to want to be interested in someone of the opposite gender, they're surrounded by drugs, pornography is everywhere. If you're not going to open up the channels of communication, if your son or daughter feels awkward coming to you, well then they're going to go to another teenager, they're going to go to the internet, they're going to go somewhere else for help.

No doubt maybe our parents could never have spoken to us about these issues. But I am telling you as somebody who straddles both generations, we need to be frank with our children. We need to tell them about things and honestly they probably know about these things before you mention them. But the very fact that you open up the topic, the very fact you take your 13 year old son and you tell him about the problems of internet pornography -and believe me every 13 year old knows about pornography, believe me every single teenager knows about this- if you're not going to open up the door, if you're going to be so taboo oh I cant do this, well then how

do you expect him to come for help to you if something happens that he needs some help about. There has to be open channel of communication. Mothers, talk to your daughters about the realities of this world. Talk to your daughters about basic biological facts. Let them know that you'll listen if they need any help, I'm here for you. Just give a generic statement like this. "If you need anything, come to me first, I will help you out". Just generic statements like this so that they know that their parents are there to help them in case they need that help.

Few more points, point number six in our list here, the Qur'an tells us -to basically summarize- the Qur'an is saying *test your children with responsibilities. Test the orphans in this case they're being raised in the family, give them responsibility and see how intelligent they are.* So a part and parcel of raising children is to stop treating them like kids when they're no longer kids. As our children grow up to become young men and women, and when do they become young men and women? According to Islamic shariah, when they hit puberty. And what that means at the age of 13, 14, 15 max, but usually 13, 14, Islamically speaking, these young children are now fully grown adults, according to the shariah; which means they are legally responsible for their sins, for their personal lives, for their salah, for their relationships, when they hit puberty they are young men and women according to the shariah.

And I have said this many times before, one of the biggest complaints that I have about modern culture is this period of adolescence, of teenage years where children are treated like children even though intellectually, biologically, they're adults. Personally I don't believe in this. You start treating a 13 year old like a young man or woman because they are, at this stage, a young man or woman. You give them responsibilities, now obviously not all at once, you test them bit by bit. As the Qur'an says, the verse is about an orphan, when do you return the money, but again it applies to our own children. Give them responsibility. And our scholars of fiqh explain this and they say so you give some money to the child and you say, when he's in the marketplace, "go buy this" and then see does he buy the right item or not. And then you increase that responsibility. This is a part of our culture. You cannot pamper your kids until they're 18 years old, it's not going to work that way. Our children are going to face the real world, so we have to prepare them with responsibilities at home. And yes, you can quote me on this to your children: chores as well. It's a very important part of growing up. They're not always going to have their mother to clean after them. You have to have children learn to become self sufficient. This is a reality for their own good. You need to wash your dishes, you need to take care of your room, clean your room, do your clothes. This is a part of the responsibility to grow up. If you're going to treat them like kids, well then don't complain when they're 18 and they're still acting like kids. You need to start treating them like young men and women.

And the final point -time is of the essence here, there was much more but time is of the essence- the final point that I have for today's khutbah: A good environment, Islamic environment, the masjid, Islamic classes, Sunday schools, and I put this the last because many of you put it number one and they don't realize this is in fact the very last issue. Number one is yourself.

Number one is your own house. Number one is the family environment. If that is in order, everything else is secondary. But many families, they literally think of Sunday school or the masjid one hour a week to be the magic cure. They drop their kids off, then they pick them up in an hour, and then they complain and they say “Sheikh, my kid is rude to me.” And that's the only exposure they have to Islam is that one hour of Sunday school. No, this is the very last thing but it is also important.

Come regularly to the masjid. Let them see what is Islam. Let them see the Muslims. Let them interact with other Muslim children. And that's why here we are very eager about not just building a masjid, we want to build a family center. We want to build a place where our youth, they are pushing us to come and go; they're interested to come to chill out, to play basketball, to just socialize because we want them to be in this environment. Islam is not just about the salah, it's about living your life and that's what we want over here as well. So yes it is important, but I put this right at the end of the list because the most important is at the home. The most important is you and your wife, then everything else is secondary but outside of the house what can you do? No doubt outside of the house the most important thing is to have a good environment for your children, to make sure that their friends are also Muslim children, that you go to the masjid as frequently as possible.

And realize brothers and sisters, a khutbah or two is not going to solve the problem. It is a change in my lifestyle and your lifestyle and the final point of the first khutbah: realize that subhanAllah there is no magic cure, there is no solution to all of this. Even if you follow all of these guidelines, it is indeed possible that Allah tests people with calamities and difficulties. Look at the prophet Nuh [as] and his son and what happened with his son. And Nuh [as] is a prophet. And Nuh did all of these things and much more than these things but Allah chose to test him in a certain manner. So, do realize that there is no magic cure. It's a learning process, it's an ongoing process and we do what we can with duaa to Allah, with help from Allah ﷻ, with our own akhlaq and manners, and we put our trust in Allah ﷻ.

Brothers and sisters, the rewards of raising a good family, a righteous family, are too many to mention. And the losses for not doing so are also too great. I conclude this khutbah by simply reminding us of one ayah that talks about the blessings and one ayah that talks about the opposite of that. As for the blessings, Allah ﷻ says, “*those people who believed and their children after them, they followed them in that belief, we shall join those children with their parents up in jannah*”. And Ibn Kathir comments and other scholars comment and they say what this means is that if the parents lived a good life and they tried to have their children follow in that life, then even if the children didn't reach that high standard, Allah ﷻ will bless them and upgrade them to be with their parents as they were like one family in this dunya they shall be like that family in the akhirah. And what a beautiful blessing that is. What a beautiful blessing that is. That Allah ﷻ will bless parents through their children and children through their parents but if one or two of them was insufficient, was weak, then Allah will overlook that because of the family. This is what the ayah is saying. That if the general family, they were upon a righteous mentality, they were good

people, one or two of them fall short, we'll raise them up, we'll bring them back to the whole family. As they were in this life, they shall be in the next life. What a beautiful blessing is that.

And what is the opposite of this? If you don't live up to this, Allah says in the Qur'an that, *who is the worst loser*, Allah says, *"the worst loser is the one who's lost himself and his family on yawmul qiyamah"*. Neither did they benefit themselves, nor did they benefit their families because they had this materialistic, *nihilistic*, completely dunyawī lifestyle, not caring about Allah and His Messenger not having anything of Islam. They might have enjoyed this life but then in the akhirah they lost themselves, they lost their families, they lost everything. That is the ultimate loss. May Allah ﷻ protect us from ever facing that loss.