

Qur'anic Instructions Regarding Building Character Of Youths

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Abstract

The youth are the backbone and building block for a nation. They have potential to achieve the goals and play a vital role in society to raise their nation. They have mental and physical capabilities to encounter any situation. Owing to their best mental and spiritual abilities they can overcome hardship. Although wealth, education and power are necessary for a nation's progress, the most significant in this regard is the leading character of youth. Therefore, youth must be prepared to exalt their character to face the challenges of tomorrow. This is the youth who prove an asset for a nation. They participate in each and every activity in daily life including Emergency, first aid, in helping people during disaster, catastrophe, in distress, in celebration of special days, progressive activities, social work, educational and recreational activities. The youth must be content with inner peace to achieve the target perseveringly. As the law is a strong hold against confusion and chaos, the youth must abide by the rules and regulations in order to perform their duties as responsible members to take his nation towards success. Taking in consideration the Aesop's admonition serves as a guideline for the success of youth. In this paper we will explore the Aesop's advice from soora Luqman of the Holy Quran that He gives to his son.

Keywords: Holy Quran, Aesop, Advice, Youth, nation, character.

The importance of new generation

Young generation proves to be the backbone of any society in the world. In every era, they play a key role in the rise and fall of nations. Along with the development of the world, the importance

and role of the youth will also increase because the active nations, movements and ideologies in every period have given special attention to the youth. Since it is a fact that the role of the youth has always been prominent in keeping the nations active, in running movements and to make the ideas successful. The young generation has immense potentials. Perseverance and unabated are their distinguishable characteristics, they possess high ambitions and their favorite pastime is to face challenges.

They are blessed with the ability to change defeat to victory in the battlefield. The youth are the only ray of hope for the nation and movements, with the help of which nations and movements rise and achieve their various goals¹.

In young age the humans are blessed with perfect physical powers. Only young people are physically ready for thorny tasks. Besides, owing to the mental power of youth, they can do research and think in the best way. The young Companions of Prophet (PBUH) accomplished various difficult tasks. This is the time in which Osama bin Zayd shoulder the responsibility of leading the Islamic army. This is the time in which the nick name Saifullah was bestowed upon Khalid bin Waleed by Prophet Muhammad(PBUH). It means that the significance of youth is acknowledged at any time in every nation and will be recognized in future.

The continuous and tireless efforts of the youth, their enthusiasm and desire is the important and fundamental factor to take any nation from downfall to success. Development becomes the destiny of the nation whose youth has the passion to work and do something. But if this young is fond of ease and luxury, have no ambitious for high destiny, then any person would never have doubt concerning the downfall of that nation.

The importance of youth in light of the Holy Quran:

The value and importance of the youth can be gauged from the fact that there is a Surah named "Kahf" in the Holy Qur'an, which means "The Cave". In this surah, the story of those youth who stood against the oppressor and declared their faith in Allah Almighty has described in detail.

The Quran narrated the story of them in this way:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا (9) إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا (10) فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا (11) ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا (12) إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى (13) وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا (14) هؤُلاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا (15) وَإِذْ اعْتَرَفْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يُغْبِذُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأَوْوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِزْقًا (16)²

[18:9] Do you think that the People of Kahf (the Cave) and Raqim (inscription) were unusual out of Oursigns? [18:10] When the young men took refuge in the Cave and said, .Our Lord, bless us with mercy from Your own and provide us with guidance in our matters.. [18:11] So, We sealed up their hearing (putting them to sleep) in the Cave for a number of years. [18:12] Thereafter We raised them up, so that We know which of the two groups had better calculated the period in which they remained (sleeping).

[18:13] We narrate to you their story with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord and We gave them more guidance. [18:14] We made their hearts firm when they stood up and said, .Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We shall never invoke any god other than Him,

otherwise we would be saying something far from the truth. [18:15] These, our people, have adopted gods other than Him. Why do they not bring a clear proof in their favor? So, who is more unjust than the one who fabricates a lie against Allah? [18:16] When you have turned away from them, and those whom they worship, except Allah, then seek refuge in the cave, and your Lord will extend His mercy for you, and provide you ease in your matters..³

In these verses, a word "فتية" is used, which is the plural of "فتى", this word means youth. Scholars of exegesis declared that, in this word there is an indication that the time of character formation and growth and guidance (for humans) is actually the young age. At an older age, the past characters so firm in such a way that no matter how much truth is shown against it, it is difficult to be gotten rid of them. Most of the people who responded to the call of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were youth⁴.

In the same way, those who believed in Hazrat Musa at the beginning were also youth, As Allah Almighty says, "Then no one believed in Moses except some young boys of his people"⁵. In this verse, the word "ذرية" has been interpreted as "youth" by many scholars, for instance, in the commentary of this verse, Allama Shabir Ahmad Usmani writes:

According to children of Israel ancient prophecies of the Israelites were waiting for such thing that an "Israelite" Messenger of God would come to overthrow the Pharaoh's empire, to end the atrocities. The emergence of Moses (peace be upon him) was naturally considered a great blessing by all the children of Israel, they knew Hazrat Musa to be true prophet from their hearts and also respected him, but despite this, most of the people, due to the fear of the paranoiac leaders, at the beginning, instead of believing according to sharia, Waiting for dominance (of truth). But few youngsters of Israelites dared to declare their Islam⁶. Similarly, Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S.) had the honor of being an iconoclastic his youth. As Allah Almighty says:

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذُكُرُ هُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ⁷

People said: We heard a young man who made up stories about these idols called Abraham.

The role of a Muslim youth in the light of Quranic verses:

How should be the character of a youth? What deeds should he adopt? And what deeds should he avoid? Luqman's sayings to his son are deemed the best admonitions that are narrated in soora Luqman. As Allah says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ (13) وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهَنَا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ (14) وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (15) يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَأْكُلْ مِنْ مِثْقَالٍ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ (16) يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (17) وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ (18) وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ⁸ (19)

[31:13] (Remember) when Luqman said to his son, while he was advising him. My dear son, do not ascribe partners to Allah. Indeed, ascribing partners to Allah (shirk) is grave transgression.. [31:14] We commanded man (to be good) in respect of his parents. His mother carried him (in her womb) despite weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. (We said to man,). Be grateful to Me, and to your parents. To Me is the ultimate return. [31:15] However, if they force

you to ascribe partners to Me about whom you (can) have no (source of) knowledge, then do not obey them. Remain with them in this world with due fairness, but follow the way of the one who has turned himself towards Me. Then, towards Me is your return, so I shall tell you what you had been doing.. [31:16] (Luqman went on saying to his son,) My dear son, in fact, if there be anything to the measure of a grain of rye, and it be (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Surely, Allah is All-Fine, All-Aware. [31:17] My dear son, establish Salah, and bid the Fair and forbid the Unfair, and observe patience on what befalls you. Surely, this is among the matters of determination; [31:18] and do not turn your cheek away from people, and do not walk on the earth haughtily. Surely, Allah does not like anyone who is arrogant, proud; [31:19] and be moderate in your walk, and lower your voice. Surely, the ugliest of voices is the voice of the donkeys...⁹

The Aesop's first advice concerning correctness of belief:

There is nothing dearer to a person than children and a person wants to give his best and most precious thing to them. Aesop gave advice to his son, the first among them is rectification of beliefs. The first thing in belief is to believe that Allah is exclusively the creator and owner of the entire universe. Do not associate anyone in worship with Allah, because polytheism is the greatest wrongdoing in this world, As it is narrated in Sahih Bukhari.....

لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ {الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ}، قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَيُّنَا لَا يَظْلِمُ نَفْسَهُ؟ قَالَ: " لَيْسَ كَمَا تَقُولُونَ {لَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ} بِشِرْكٍ، أَوْ لَمْ تَسْمَعُوا إِلَى قَوْلِ أَقْمَانَ لِابْنِهِ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ"¹⁰.

When the Verse "It is those who believe and do not confuse their belief with wrong (i.e. joining others in worship with Allah" (6.83) was revealed, we said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Who is there amongst us who has not done wrong to himself?" He replied, "It is not as you say, for 'wrong' in the Verse and 'do not confuse their belief, with wrong means 'SHIRK' (joining others in worship with Allah). Haven't you heard Aesop's saying to his son, "O my son! Join not others in worship with Allah, verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed." (31:13)¹¹

When this verse was sent down the difficulties occurred upon the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and they asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ Who among us has not committed any sin? And it is in the verse that those who do not mix faith with oppression are the ones who are peaceful and on the right path. So the Prophet ﷺ said that oppression does not mean common sin, rather oppression refers to the oppression that Aesop said while admonishing his son. My dear son! do not associate partners with Allah, indeed, polytheism is a greatest wrongdoing.

The Aesop's second advice concerning beliefs:

To firmly believe that Allah's knowledge is all-inclusive and is Omni-potent. No matter how small something is, which is not visible to common eyes, no matter how far away and how much in darkness and veils it is, that thing cannot be hidden from the knowledge and sight of Allah, and He can present it whenever and wherever He want. This verse" My dear son, in fact, if there be anything to the measure of a grain of rye, and it be (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Surely, Allah is All-Fine, All-Aware."¹² means this and it is the

basic belief of Islam that the knowledge and power of Allah Almighty encompasses everything, and this belief is also a great argument for monotheism.¹³

The Aesop's third advice concerning reform of deeds :

Mankind has been prescribed with many obligations, However offering prayer is the most significant of them. It is not only the base of Islam but also rectify other deeds of human beings. As Almighty Allah says: "Recite (O Prophet) what is revealed to you of the Book, and establish Salah. Surely Salah restrains one from shameful and evil acts."¹⁴

Therefore, limited the description of prayer among the obligatory righteous deeds. "يبنى اقم الصلوة" means, O my son, be steadfast in prayer.

The significance of establishing prayer: Only offering prayer is not the meaning of establishing. Rather, to offer it in fulfilling all its conditions, virtues and offer it in its proper time. All these issues are included in the meaning of establishing the prayer.

The Aesop's fourth advice concerning rectitude of manners:

Islam is a social religion in which the rectification of the whole community is emphasized along with the purification of the individual. Resultantly along with explaining the obligation of prayer, the duty of enjoining good deeds and forbidding from evil deeds are expounded that to call people to good deeds and forbid them from evil deeds. There are two obligations; the first one is connected with one's own rectification while the second is regarded with the guidance and rectification of others. One has to strive for implementing and need a great deal of hard work. Persistence is quite difficult in these issues .Especially the guidance and rectification of people results in enmity and conflicts in the part of reformer in this world. Therefore, Aesop's admonished his son, saying :

"اصبر على ما اصابك ان ذلك من عزم الامور"

That is, "How severely you are inflected by difficulties, be patient and show steadfastness."¹⁵

The Aesop's fifth advice concerning etiquette:

تصعر is derived from صعر, just as laqwa is a well-known disease in humans in which the human face becomes crooked. In the same way it is a disease in camels in which their necks are twisted. The meaning of this in the verse is do not turn your face. This means that during conversation and meeting with people, face turning with arrogance should be avoided. Because it is a sign of haughtiness, besides it is contrary to good manners.¹⁶

Similarly, this is also a general observation that often youth puffing up with pride particularly when they are rich and powerful. Then their gait is full of arrogance. The psychology of such youth portrays the verse "Who is more powerful than us?" In this verse, it has been explained to such youths that why you stubborn and it does not behoove you to be haughty, just look at your reality and see that the earth, from which you were created, is the lowest of all the elements. Therefore, while walking on it, do not be oblivious to your reality and do not walk with a lofty proud gait, which is the style of arrogant. That's why Allah says, Allah does not love anyone who is arrogant or proud.

The Aesop's sixth advice:

Like other affairs, be moderate in your gait. Do not walk too fast unnecessarily, for it is in contrast with dignity. As our Prophet(PBUH) said

«السُّرْعَةُ فِي الْمَشْيِ تُذْهِبُ بِهَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِ»¹⁷

walking too quickly destroys dignity of behavior. There is a risk of harming yourself or others by doing so. Similarly, don't walk too slowly because this is the habit of pretenders and want to show their distinction on people or it is the habit of women who do not walk fast due to shyness and modesty or else it is the habit of sick people who are compelled to do so. In the first case, it is prohibited and in the second case, if the aim is to show resemblance to women, then this is also illegal and if it is not intended, then it is a defect for men and in the third case there is ungratefulness to Allah, that in spite of health, the form of the sick is adopted. Hazrat Abdullah bin Masoud says that the Companions were forbidden from walking slowly like the Jews and the Christians. Rather they were commanded to be moderate between the above mentioned two gaits.¹⁸

The Aesop's seventh advice:

Unnecessarily loud talks, screaming, shouting etches things are very common in the youth. As a result, the youth has been admonished in this verse, to keep their voices low, for loud talks cause turmoil and disturbance. It is said that Umar's speech was in such a way that audience can hear clearly without ambiguity.¹⁹

Four points regarding the etiquette are mentioned below:

1. Prohibition from arrogant attitude while dealing people.
2. Prohibition from walking proudly
3. Moderation in gait.
4. Prohibition from vociferation.

The prophet (PBUH) was the epitome of all these manners. Hazrat Hussain RA narrates that he asked his father about the prophet's attitude while sitting with people? He replied that Prophet(PBUH) was always seen happy among them with bright face. There was no sternness in his disposition. Neither he slain any one, nor He was miser. He used to abstain from things that were not pleasant to his taste. However, he did not let others down about those things. Rather, would remain silent. The prophet(PBUH) had completely given up three things: (1) Altercation. (2) Showing haughtiness. (3) Indulging in frivolity.²⁰

Conclusion:

The conclusive remarks of this article are that in terms of religion and world the importance of youth role is absolute. As per society human capital the youth are blessed with best body functioning capabilities. Therefore, if youth are guided according to the teachings of the Holy Quran then their spiritual and corporal both capabilities will be improved and will be carried out for the development of the nation and country.

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