

## Parental Responsibility in Moral Security of Children in Shi'a Teachings

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### Abstract

This scientific article has explored the concept of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the framework of Shi'a teachings. Parenting plays a fundamental role in shaping the character and moral development of children, and understanding the specific principles and guidelines provided by Shi'a Islam can greatly inform and guide parents in fulfilling their obligations. The article begins by examining the significance of moral security in the context of Shi'a teachings, highlighting the emphasis placed on nurturing virtuous qualities and safeguarding children from moral deviations. It delves into key themes such as the role of parents as primary educators, the importance of positive role modeling, and the cultivation of ethical values based on Islamic teachings. The study also explores various practical strategies and approaches suggested by Shi'a teachings to foster moral security in children. These include nurturing a strong spiritual connection, providing a nurturing and loving environment, promoting ethical behavior through discipline and guidance, and encouraging community involvement to reinforce moral values. In conclusion, this article underscores the critical role of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings. By emphasizing the unique principles and guidance provided by Shi'a Islam, it provides valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in fostering the moral development of children within a religious and cultural context. Recognizing and implementing these teachings can contribute to the overall well-being and moral security of future generations.

**Keywords:** Responsibility, Moral Security, Parents, Children, Shi'a.

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**Introduction:**

Parenting is a complex and multifaceted task that carries immense responsibility in shaping the character and moral development of children. Across various cultures and religions, the role of parents in nurturing and safeguarding the moral security of their offspring is widely recognized. In the context of Shi'a teachings, a branch of Islam with a distinct set of beliefs and practices, parental responsibility holds particular significance and is deeply rooted in religious doctrines.

Shi'a Islam places a strong emphasis on moral education and the cultivation of virtuous qualities from an early age. The teachings of Shi'a scholars provide comprehensive guidance on parenting and offer a framework for parents to fulfill their obligations effectively. Understanding the specific principles and guidelines outlined by Shi'a Islam can not only empower parents but also contribute to the overall moral security and well-being of children.

This scientific article aims to explore the concept of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the framework of Shi'a teachings. By examining the religious and cultural context, as well as the practical implications of these teachings, this study seeks to shed light on the unique perspectives and approaches that Shi'a Islam offers to parents and educators.

The article will begin by elucidating the concept of moral security and its significance in Shi'a teachings. It will delve into the rich tradition of moral education within Shi'a Islam, highlighting the importance of instilling ethical values and protecting children from moral deviations. By exploring the scriptural sources, interpretations, and scholarly works, the article will uncover the underlying principles that shape the understanding of parental responsibility in the context of moral security.

In addition to discussing the theoretical aspects, this article will explore practical strategies and approaches suggested by Shi'a teachings to foster moral security in children. It will examine the role of positive role modeling, nurturing a strong spiritual connection, creating a nurturing and loving environment, and implementing effective discipline and guidance. Furthermore, the article will explore the significance of community involvement and the role of the wider



society in reinforcing moral values within the framework of Shi'a teachings.

By delving into the teachings of Shi'a Islam, this article aims to provide valuable insights and guidance for parents, educators, and policymakers in fulfilling parental responsibilities and ensuring the moral security of children. Recognizing and implementing these teachings can contribute to the well-being and moral development of future generations, fostering a society that is grounded in strong ethical principles and values.

About the background of the subject, articles and books have been written about the educational role of parents or their moral responsibility towards children. Of course, all of them are in Farsi language, and less attention has been paid to the issue of children's moral security. I mention a few things below:

1. An Analytical Look at: The Moral Responsibility of Children and Parents from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadiths, Mohammad Mahdi Shamsi, 2016.
2. The requirements of children's religious education from the perspective of the Qur'an and hadiths; From before birth to seven years old, Abolfazl Assari, 2015.
3. Explanation of encouragement and punishment in moral education from the perspective of the Qur'an and hadiths, Maryam Esmaili, 2017. To clarify some of the terms, we first provide definitions of ethics, responsibility, and moral security.

The most commonly used terminology of “morality” among Islamic scholars and philosophers is the stable virtues in the soul that produce the actions for a man without the need to think and reflect. (IbnMiskawayh, 2002, p. 84)

“Security” means relaxing and feeling unafraid, which can be considered in a variety of ways, including social security, human security, financial security and moral security. The meaning of security in this article is moral security, and the meaning of responsibility here is moral responsibility of parents toward their children.

“Moral upbringing” means how to use and cultivate the inner talents of a person to grow and establish moral qualities in order to



conduct moral behaviors and avoid immoral mistakes. (Deylami & Azarbaijani, 2000, p. 19)

“Shi'a” is one of the two great schools of Islam, which refers to the followers of Imam Ali. Shia has several sects, Shia in this article means Imami Shia (Imamiyyah). They believe in the caliphate of Imam Ali after the Prophet and consider the Imamate to be limited to 12 infallible people, all of whom are descendants of Imam Ali. Shia teachings are based on the Quran, and the narrations of infallible Imams (Mofid, 1993, p. 35).

### **Problem statement**

The problem addressed in this scientific article is the need for a comprehensive understanding of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the context of Shi'a teachings. While parenting plays a crucial role in shaping the character and moral development of children, there is a lack of specific guidance and exploration of the unique principles and guidelines provided by Shi'a Islam. This knowledge gap hinders parents, educators, and policymakers from effectively fulfilling their obligations and promoting moral security in children. The problem statement emphasizes the importance of recognizing the significance of moral security in Shi'a teachings, understanding the role of parents as primary educators, and exploring practical strategies and approaches derived from Shi'a teachings to foster moral development. Addressing this problem will contribute to the well-being and moral security of children, as well as provide valuable insights for individuals involved in parenting and education within a Shi'a religious and cultural context.

### **1. Parental responsibility for children's moral security**

From Islamic point of view, one of the important family responsibilities is parental responsibility for children's moral security. Two points should be mention here; first, a man has many responsibilities in various personal, social, legal, family and moral dimensions. The second, man's evolution is based on the proper fulfillment of these responsibilities. Because Islam sees human development in the path of the family, one of the most important



responsibilities of the man is responsibility towards family members, especially children. In Shiite narrations, the emphasis is also placed on the responsibility of parents for the upbringing of children (Saduq, 1413, p. 2:623). Parents' responsibilities to children are many, this research will focus on moral upbringing and moral security of children.

### **1-1. Importance of moral upbringing of children**

Morality has an essential role in Islamic teachings. Morality discusses moral virtues and vices, and the aim of it is to bring the man to perfections. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) considers his goal of prophethood, the completion of moral values, and says: "انما بعثت لاتيتم مكارم الاخلاق." I was sent to perfect honorable morals (Al-Tabarsi, 1992, p. 8)

It should be also noted that, the morality is the secret of the continuity and life of nations. The moral ethos develops friendships, improves the inner peace of the individual, secures the social spirit, and controls the misconduct of human beings. (Imani, 2011, p. 20) In short, moral upbringing has a great contribution to mental health of humans in individual and social arenas. These points indicate that moral upbringing is very important in Islam.

### **1-2. Parent responsibility for the moral upbringing of children**

Parents are the most influential factor in the moral upbringing of children. The flourishing of high human talents and values is based on upbringing and education. Given that Children are born without social knowledge or social skills, parents are child's first teachers and role models, and usually, children are affected by what their parents do. Therefore, parents should be careful about how they interact with their children. Moral or immoral behavior of parents is the first threat to the moral safety of children .

In the formation of the moral and behavioral character of children, two factors of heredity and environment are involved. Among the environmental factors, the most influential factor is the family and the most important factor among family is parents. (Panahi & Sharifi , 2009, p. 139)



When we come to the narratives in this field, we find that the most emphasis is on parental behavior. For example, about lying as an immoral attribute, several factors can be involved in how the child may become a liar, like friend, environment, etc., but from the point of view of Shi'a, parents can play a key role as child's first teachers and role models, in their behavior and in the importance of choosing a suitable friend for their children. When the father or mother is accustomed to lying, often their children will also become a liar.

If parents want to improve others, they must first be self-righteous and have moral qualifications and good behaviors. The behavioral patterns of children should be high-quality people, and their character must be a blend of honesty, purity, affection, sacrifice, steadfastness, and self-confidence. If the children see these features consistently from their parents, then they will believe them, and they try to think in a way that parents like to behave in a way that is pleasant to parents. (Mahmoudi, 2007, p. 31)

### **1-3. Responsibility for providing children's mental and physical needs**

One of the responsibilities of parents in securing the moral security of children is to pay attention to the material and spiritual needs of the children. For instance, one of which is paying attention to Halal earning.

Halal earnings have many features, one of which is the growth of moral and special virtues in the child. (Paknia, 2003, p. 22) The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) says:

"The worship of God is seventy parts, and the best of them is Halal earnings" (Boroujerdi, 2007, p. 77).

Parents are struggling to meet the material needs of children, but there are psychological needs that are more important than material needs. Undoubtedly, one of the most basic needs of child, after material needs is the need to be loved. Parents need to pay particular attention to this child's need. The correct answer to this need of the child forms the basis of his upbringing. Because the realization of this requirement leads to mental relaxation, security, self-esteem, trust in the parents and even his physical health. The failure to realize it leads to self-denial,



feel sorry and deprived, and many social deviations. (Hosseinizadeh, 2009, pp. 83-84)

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him), one of the Shi'a infallible imams, says: "Moses asked God:" O God! What is the best action to you? The Lord said: love of children. (Al-Tabarsi, 1992, p. 237)

One should bear in mind that the consequences of parents' non-compliance with their moral responsibility are:

1. Unhealthy children; failure to pay attention to the moral security of children leads to having unhealthy children.
2. Unhealthy family; the result of having unhealthy children is having an unhealthy family.
3. Unhealthy society; the result of having unhealthy family is having an unhealthy society (Shamsi, 2016).

Considering the key role of parents in the transfer of moral values to children and the importance of moral development, some of the factors of moral upbringing of children and the ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral safety are referred to.

## **2. Ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral safety**

There are some ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral security. The first point is matching parents' thoughts and behavior with each other towards children. It is very important in this regard, because if the parent's thoughts are not in line with each other, it can have a significant negative impact on children. In this case, parents cannot play their role well in securing the moral safety of children.

The second point, which is the most important one, is that whatever parents will behave more intimate and emotional, they will be more successful in securing their moral security. Whatever parents provide the emotional and psychological needs of the child, the child will take the pattern of their parents and will more trust their parents. Parents should behave with their children as intimate friends, and accompany them in healthy activities, exercise, play, go to mountains, cinema, park, and allow the child to have a telephone interview with friends. Spending more time with children in the outdoors can be very effective and etc.



Ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral safety can be categorized into as follows:

### **2-1. Provide a safe and secure environment**

In Shi'a traditions, the provision of safe conditions for the moral education of the children is very much considered and they have tried to use the methods to create the environment for the fulfillment of the goals of moral education. Some of the methods are:

- a. Avoiding children from unhealthy environments (Seyed Razi, 1414, p. 460)
- b. Getting away from immoral friends, the friends who do not care about moral issue (Sadouq, 1983, p. 1:169)
- c. Creating a moral atmosphere in society (Davoudi, 2010, p. 116)

Today, cyberspace is one of the most important issues that threatens the moral security of children. Despite the positive points for the growth of children in Cyberspace, there are many negative points, some of which have a direct and indirect impact on the formation of the personality and attitudes of children. Informing children about cybercrime abnormalities is essential. One of the effective ways is to restrict the use of cyberspace.

Avoiding excessive monitoring and inquiring is necessary. We need to know that excessive over monitoring and inquiring into the activities of our children in cyberspace will erode their sense of independence and this will reduce children's trust in parents. The solution is to have enough information before entering the cyberspace and to use safe search.

### **2-2. Awareness of Parents and children**

Awareness plays an important role in shaping individual behaviors. This law also affects human moral conduct. Awareness raising should be done both for parents and for children. Parents should have sufficient knowledge and information about the child's moral development and responsibilities that parents bear. Parents should also be aware of the ways in which this responsibility is exercised. (Hoseini & Shamsi, 2009, p. 7)





Familiarizing children with ethical teachings play an essential role in moral development. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was especially concerned with the teaching of ethical education. We can find this point in the devise of the Prophet of Islam to Imam Ali (as) (Sadouq, Amali, 1400, p. 376)

Another way is to foster children's moral thinking. Those who possess this ability can easily identify their moral duty in different situations; make the right decision and avoid being subjected to moral deviations. To promote the development of moral thinking same ways can be noted like encouragement for thinking before doing anything (Al-Tamimi, 1987, p. 57), and the discussion of ethical issues (Majlesi, 2007, p. 67:141)

### 3-2. Methods of cultivating moral habits

Creating good moral habits is one of the most important parts of moral education. Therefore, in Shi'a traditions, besides creating the best conditions for moral education, and the growth of moral awareness, the development of desirable moral habits has also been considered. In order to cultivate the desirable moral habits, there are methods in narratives such as: Introducing ethical characters to the children (Seyed Razi, 1414, p. 300) and taking care of behaviors (*Moraqabah*) (Sadouq, Amali, 1400, p. 234)

### 4-2. Correction of moral wrongs

One of the main duties of parents in moral education of their children is to correct their moral mistakes. There are a number of ways in narrations to correct moral errors like remembrance (Tabataba'i, 1999, p. 78), one of the duties of the parent is to give advice to their children and give them their life experiences. With advice and guidance, prevent their children from walking on the path to error and deviation. Therefore, the Almighty God in the Holy Quran has narrated the advice of a kind father to his child and introduces it as an apostle and model for children and parents. (Paknia, 2003, p. 37) Lukman told his son while he was preaching:

*“And [mention, O Muhammad], when Lukman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with*



*Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice.*" (Al-Quran, p. 31:13)

Imam Ali also preaches his son, Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) and helps him on the right path of life. He says:

" Revive your heart with preaching and good words" (ImamAli, 2002, p. 370)

Another way is ignoring some errors. (Majlesi, 2007, p. 74:214)

Finally, Positive thinking and goodwill to others will reduce immoral behaviors.

## **5-2. Convergence of religious beliefs**

The most fundamental issue in the family that promotes the moral development of its members is the principle of convergence of religious beliefs in family members, especially parents. (Faghihi & Najafi, 2013, p. 4) One of the principles that is recommended in Shi'a teachings when choosing a spouse is the principle of "*kofw*", which means equal and similar, meaning that men and women must be close in their thoughts and beliefs. (Majlesi, 2007, p. 10:236)

Convergence of religious beliefs in family members, not only is important in the consolidation of family relationships but also it influences the moral secure of children.

## **6-2. Honesty in behavior and speech**

One of the important ways in child moral upbringing is, to be honest in your behavior and speech with the child, and avoiding lies.

Non-honest behavior has three types of anti-training effects:

- a. Parents are a practical model for children, so parents' behavior has a greater impact on children than their spoken advice.
- b. Parents with Non-honest behavior loses their children's trust, a child who faces parents with non-honest behavior, does not trust their words and promises, so, parents training work will be ineffective.
- c. Parents thus hurt the child's personality, a child treated with non-honest behavior and falsehood, feels that his value is the same, because if he had value, respect and personality, this would not be treated with him. (Hosseinzadeh, 2009, p. 150)



### 3. Balancing religious teachings with modern influences:

The challenges and considerations that need to be considered when addressing the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings include the cultivation of morality from an early age to strengthen religious values (Effiati, 2018). Additionally, efforts must be made to protect children from sexual violence, including teaching them to recognize, reject, and report potential threats (Shohib, 2019). Religious education is seen as a solution to the problem of children's moral decay, with the hope that it will instill good moral values and ethics in everyday life (Assyauqi, 2020). These challenges and considerations emphasize the importance of parental involvement, protection from violence, and the role of religious education in shaping the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings.

Religious teachings can be balanced with modern influences in children's moral education by incorporating religious values into education, shaping children's character through religious education in family life, creating a favorable environment for spiritual and moral education, and using exemplary methods to develop moral religious values in early childhood (T.B. Baynazarova, 2022). By including religious beliefs in education, students' moral and spiritual development can be positively impacted, leading to a more respectful, compassionate, and sustainable society (Safitri, 2022). Parents play a crucial role in shaping children's character through religious education in family life, preventing children from being easily influenced by the negative aspects of the modern world. Creating a warm and respectful environment, involving children and parents in a uniform educational space, and utilizing play therapy can contribute to the spiritual and moral education of pre-school children. Exemplary methods, such as role models, use of audio-visual media, storytelling method, and habituation method, can influence the development of moral religious values in early childhood (Farisia, 2020).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this scientific article has explored the concept of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the framework of Shi'a teachings. The study has shed light on the



significance of moral security in Shi'a Islam, emphasizing the importance of moral education and protecting children from moral deviations.

Through an examination of the role of parents as primary educators, the article has highlighted the profound responsibility parents have in conveying religious teachings and instilling moral values in their children.

Moreover, the article has discussed practical strategies derived from Shi'a teachings for fostering moral security in children. Positive role modeling, nurturing a strong spiritual connection, creating a loving and supportive environment, implementing effective discipline and guidance, and fostering community involvement have been identified as key approaches in this regard.

Recognizing and implementing the teachings and principles discussed in this article can have significant implications for parents, educators, and policymakers. By fulfilling their parental responsibilities in line with Shi'a teachings, individuals can contribute to the moral development and well-being of children, ultimately fostering a society grounded in ethical principles.

However, it is important to acknowledge and address the challenges and considerations that may arise in implementing these teachings within diverse cultural and societal contexts. Balancing religious teachings with modern influences, accommodating diverse family dynamics, and promoting inclusive approaches are essential in ensuring the effectiveness of parental responsibility in moral security.

In summary, this article underscores the critical role of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings. By providing valuable insights and practical guidance, it offers a foundation for further research and informs the practices of parents, educators, and policymakers, leading to the cultivation of a morally secure and virtuous generation.



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