

## **Family's Role in Spiritual Health**

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As a whole, the family systems can be classified into two systems; the progressive and the backward. In a progressive family system, high-level values such as honesty, chastity and politeness are honoured and promoted, while in a backward family system, indifference to honorable qualities and to proper manners prevail. In the former (the progressive) family members respect each other and observe the rights of the others, while in the latter (backward), disrespect and carelessness dominate the behavior of the members, leading in turn to their isolation in the society and many other problems which are faced by people who lack proper training and thus misbehave intentionally or even unintentionally. In such an undesirable family environment people, both young and old tend to be egoist; they are mostly concerned about their own wants and desires and are seldom attentive to their family members and careful about their interests. And obviously such attitudes lead to decreased and poor communication among the family members, since they find little, if any love and honesty among themselves, and just the opposite, families enjoying honorable conducts and proper attitudes are blessed with trust and love towards each other and can thus communicate in useful ways and for beneficial goals. In the favorable environment of such families, humiliating behavior is frowned upon and instead members are urged to make each other feel elevated and honored. Likewise, in such families, confusion is very unlikely to find a way, since there, uprightness and devotion to honorable values rule, just the opposite of morally backward family environments which naturally breed depression, confusion and deviation.

No doubt, without healthy, peaceful family environments, a society's members cannot be expected to have beneficial, desirable conduct. The rising rate of juvenile delinquency in some societies can be considered as a testimony to this claim, since in such societies because of the prevalence of corruption and consequently the break-up of families, youngsters naturally try to look for emotional satisfaction elsewhere, namely outside the family and they fall into the traps of narcotic-dealers and many such criminal groups, bringing ruin both to themselves and their societies, while had they been nurtured in a healthy family, namely by moral and wise parents, they would no doubt become able to distinguish between what is good and what is bad for them and would thus not fall into the traps of evil-doers. Obviously, when a child observes that her/his parents are abusive and yell and shout at each other and/or act dishonestly to the others most of the time and that they do not follow any moral principle, she/he is most likely to grow up with the same behavior pattern, whereas those children who are born to and raised by parents devoted to Divine values, and mentally able to keep their family atmosphere calm, peaceful and enjoyable, will naturally try to behave the same way and will try to avoid any unpleasantness at home, and also in their social contacts. Here, it is quite worthy to note that Islam has presented each and every rule and detail needed by human beings as spouses, parents, teachers, leaders and so on, for the fruitful fulfillment of their duties and desirable playing of their roles. In Islamic sources, we read many accounts of the exemplary behavior of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the other Infallibles both at home and in the society. As an example let's cite that Imam Ali (AS) as the Islamic Caliph, being most careful about the material and spiritual well-being of all, particularly the orphans was even seen (by his companions) making childish grimaces and uttering the sound of sheep, in order to make sad orphans laugh and when asked about the reason, His Holiness replied: "I am also responsible for their spiritual health and well-being."

The people around were surprised at such conduct of Imam (AS), yet His Holiness considered it among his duties to do his best to remove even the least bit of sadness from all particularly the orphans.