

## **The Most Difficult Task Today**

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Bismillahirrahmanirahim

### **Our little Gems**

Various people were asked to define what children are.

A gardener replied: "Children are flowers of varying colours and fragrances that are found in every garden of the world.

A man of learning replied: "Children are like a book, the contents of which cannot be known without reading it."

A tailor replied: "Children are like an unsewn length of material. The more effort is put into its cutting and styling, the more beautiful it will be."

A doctor replied: "Children are like a medicine that brings peace to the heart and mind and which is necessary for good health."

An artist replies: "Children are a painting. The more colour you add to it, the more beautiful it appears."

A poet says: "Children are a striking blend of love, affection, purity and innocence."

A believer replied: "Children are like soft clay that can be moulded as desired and slowly baked in the oven of love and truthfulness until it becomes so sturdy that no power in the world can break it."

A pious servant of Allah once asked the people around him, "What is the most difficult task facing the people today. According to their understanding people gave different responses. Many were however unanimous that the most trying task of the times was earning halaal income and speaking the truth. The person posing the question however gave the reply himself when he said, "The most difficult task at hand today is bringing children up on the path of Islam."

It is obvious that children are not items of food and drink that can be protected by storing away in a refrigerator. They are neither items of jewellery that can be safeguarded by locking them away in a vault.

To acquire knowledge, it is imperative for children to sit in the environment of the classroom. For their physical well-being they will have to be sent to the fields and gardens, and for their social well-being, they will have to be in contact with friends and family from the very outset. They will also need friends to ensure their proper mental development. However, these are such needs which are fraught with dangers that threaten the child's character. The danger is that evil and bad behaviour spreads when children interact with other children in the classrooms, play grounds and social gatherings.

To make matters worse, children are unable to distinguish between the good and bad because of their naivety and young age. As a result, there always exists the possibility of the efforts of the parents going to waste.

In the light of the above, the question foremost in parent's mind is: "What can we do about it?" The simple but appropriate answer is that together with sincere and persistent duas to Allah, one must present a practical example and way of life and take steps to ensure that children are influenced by good and are protected against evil influences. The apparent workings of

Allah's system is that whenever man does that which is within his capacity, Allah will take care of all that which man is incapable of doing. The assistance from Allah is however directly proportional to the efforts that man applies. The more effort a man exerts and the more sincerity he has, the more assistance he will receive from Allah.

Just as children are a great bounty, they are also a tremendous responsibility. It is the duty of us all to tend to the proper upbringing of children because it is foolish to ignore this duty during their childhood and still expect good from them when they grow up. Whereas an intelligent gardener will securely tie the stem of a growing tree so that it grows straight, a negligent gardener will leave it as it is, thinking that he will correct the growth at a later stage. When the tree eventually grows crooked, all his hopes will be of no avail because the time of setting the tree straight has already gone by.