

Developing Competent and Responsible Global Citizens

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There are three keywords in the title - Competent, Responsible, and Global Citizens. How do you develop a person who has all these three characteristics? Let us come and deliberate on the issue.

A human being is a social entity. Basically, he is influenced by four factors around him/her: (1) Home atmosphere, (2) School environment, (3) Neighbourhood of the living area, and (4) Friends. There are also some additional factors, for example, media, including the Internet, but I will not deliberate on these additional issues here. I will stick to the above-mentioned four factors.

Let us first talk about the home environment. Actually, I consider home as the best school. The best teachers are the parents. But becoming good parents sometimes is not an easy task. Once, the son of the former PM of United Kingdom (UK), Mr. Tony Blair, was lying on the open street after drinking excessive alcohol. The news reached the Prime Minister immediately. Then he made a comment which is noteworthy. "It is much easier to become Prime Minister of UK than becoming a father". Anyway, though it is difficult to become a father, there is no choice; parents should be the role models for their children. By becoming so, parents can leave lasting marks on the lives of their children.

Roughly speaking, a person's life can be divided into two parts: Before getting adulthood and post adulthood. Parents have a huge responsibility in the part of pre-adulthood period of a person. One of the responsibilities of parents is to provide a good education to their children. Rasulullah (pbuh) once said the best gift parents can give to their children is good education. Hence, there is a need to choose a good school.

A school is composed of teachers, students and administrative staff. The role of a teacher is of paramount importance in the school. A teacher plays a dual role in discharging his/her responsibility, namely teaching and character building. One of my teachers said once, "I have learnt discipline in my life from my secondary school". That was a Christian Missionary school. They upheld strict discipline in their schools. So, in addition to imparting quality education to the students, a school must teach discipline to their students and help them build their character. Like parents, a teacher is also expected to be a role model before his/her students. A good teacher is highly knowledgeable, a subject matter expert, has good communication skills, is dedicated to his profession, and, above all, loving-minded.

Once, at a residential school, a student was caught on a theft charge. All the other students complained to the teacher, but the teacher did not take any action against him. Then again, the same student stole some belongings of his classmate. So, this time, all the other students were very agitated and told their teacher to expel the student. Otherwise, they would leave the school. Then

the teacher said, all of you can leave; it is all right for me, but I cannot leave this student. Then all the other students asked, Why not, sir? The teacher said, all of you are on the right track, but unfortunately, this poor guy is out of track. So, if I leave him, then maybe his whole life will remain out of track. But as his teacher, I need to correct him so that he can succeed in his life.

The true purpose of education is not to get a degree but to be a good human being. You may be a doctor, engineer, or professor, but that is not your actual identity; the actual identity is how good you are as a human being. So, that school is a good school where students not only excel in their studies but also, at the same time, get practical lessons for becoming good human beings. Further, you may be a good doctor or a good engineer, but you could not become a good human being. Despite being a Muslim, you don't pray, you don't fast in the month of Ramadan, you don't give Zakat, you don't differentiate between halal and haram earnings, and you don't honour your parents. If this is the case, then I will say you could not achieve anything in life. In other words, your achievement in life is almost zero. Why? The answer is simple. On the Day of Judgement, will Allah ask about your qualification or your 'amI? You know the answer. But if you discharge all these religious obligations mentioned above, then you have become successful in this world and in sha Allah in the life hereafter. Furthermore, becoming successful in the life hereafter is more important as that life is infinite. So, intelligent people will prioritise success in the life hereafter over this mundane life.

Now, let us talk about the environment of the neighbourhood. Actually, individual homes are the units of a society or a neighbourhood. So, if we make our individual homes good, then the entire society will become automatically good. In this case, also, the village or town administration's role is very important.

Now, the fourth or final factor is friends. Once, I heard that we can judge a boy by looking into his three things: What kind of books are on his table, what kind of pictures are hung on the wall of his room and what kind of friends he has chosen. So, be careful to choose your friends. Choose friends who remind you of Allah's presence in case you deviate and help elevate your level of *Iman* and *Akhlaq*.

So far, whatever I have said is applicable to the pre-adulthood period. Now, I will write a few words about post-adulthood, which means you are an adult, so you have developed a conscience to judge which one is right and which one is wrong. Here, you have entered into the actual struggle of your life. You must have an ambition to become somebody, and you need to constantly endeavour to become that. Let me share a story:

A boy lost his father at the age of 14 in a family in Mumbai. Being the eldest in his family, he started working as a hawker on the streets of Mumbai. Life was so difficult to survive. Luckily, his uncle was working in Kuwait, and he invited him to come over to Kuwait, which he did. He worked there for eight years, but he had to return to Mumbai after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Life again became tough for him. Fortunately, he got another opportunity to go to Dubai. He joined a company that manufactures building construction materials. Notably, after a few years, he left that company and formed his own company manufacturing building materials. That was 1993, and he named his company Danube. Since then, he has never looked back. Presently, the

yearly turnover at his company is \$1.3 billion, i.e., 10,660 crore Indian Rupees. His name is Rizwan Sajan. Stories like Rizwan Sajan are numerous who started their life journey with zero but later became heroes. So, it is possible to achieve great success. But we need to note the characteristics and traits of these people's lives: 1. They have a clear ambition to become somebody, 2. They work wholeheartedly and sincerely to realise that ambition, and 3. They work very, very hard.

Here I would like to point out an important matter. While working, we can make mistakes. In fact, it is very common to make mistakes. But we must learn lessons from our mistakes or failures. We know that the Muslim regiment was defeated at the Ohud battle in Medina. The mistake was that few of the companions of the holy Prophet (pbuh) did not obey his commands. So, it was a terrible mistake, and they learnt a hard lesson. Later, they did not make similar mistakes again, and in no battle they were defeated. In recent times, in the last Soccer World Cup held in Qatar, in the very first match, Argentina was defeated by Saudi Arabia. It was very hard for Argentina to digest the defeat. Their star player, Lionel Messi, said, "We are dead". But notably, the whole team rose from the ashes, and the team eventually became world champions. In another example, recently, we became successful in the moon landing expedition. But in the past, we have witnessed failures in this mission. But we have repaired all the holes, and this time, we have become successful. We know many IAS toppers who could not even make Main in their first attempt, but they were consistently persistent in their quest for success, so they became successful and became IAS toppers. So, here are three lessons: 1. Be patient; success will come at last; 2. Be persistent in reaching your goals, and 3. Take lessons from the failures. Swami Vivekananda once said, "Take risks in life. If you win, you can lead; if you lose, you can guide.

Having said the above, I will advise youngsters a few more things: 1. Never stop learning. We need to learn from the cradle to the grave. There is no age of learning; there is no end of learning. 2. Be always humble, observe humility, and leave your ego. Iblis became Satan just for one reason. He could not leave his ego; he disobeyed Allah's commandment. 3. Try to nurture good behaviour. Rasulullah (pbuh) said, that person among you the best whose behaviour is the best. Finally, I will conclude by saying one thing that: our beloved Prophet (pbuh) was *rahmatullil 'Alamin*, i.e., *rahmah* or blessings for the whole of mankind. We are his followers, so we also need to spread the message of love and kindness to the whole world. If we can do this, only then we have become competent and responsible global citizens.