



There was once a farmer who planted a seed. With great care, he pressed the seed into the ground, marked the area and watered the small mound of soil. Day after day, he diligently watered the seed, watching as it gradually sunk its roots into the soil and pushed its tender stem out of the ground, emerging into the light.

As time passed, the plant grew stronger and firmer, and the aging farmer grew weaker and frailer. Yet, not for a single day did he neglect to water and tend to the tree. Without fail, he would examine the leaves and branches for signs of fungus, disease and pests. He would tie the thin trunk to a wooden stake embedded into the ground to ensure that the trunk grew straight and not crooked. He would prune the plant to promote growth and would hasten to shelter it when the weather became inclement.

Seeing this unceasing effort, someone asked the aging farmer, “Why are you undergoing all this trouble?” The farmer replied, “This tree is my investment. One day, it will give shade and shelter to people and feed them as well. Even if I am not alive at the time, I will surely reap the rewards!”

The farmer then explained, “The plant needs the most attention and care when it is young. During that time, it is most susceptible to being devoured by pests and ravaged by diseases. At that time, it needs constant watering, or else it will wither away and easily perish. In its early stages, it does not have the strength to weather the storm and thus requires shelter for its survival. Even when the stem develops into a trunk, it is weak and allows the breeze to easily bend it this way and that way. If it is left in this state, it will undoubtedly become crooked. Once the crooked stem becomes a firm trunk, it can never be straightened without being broken entirely. Pruning the plant may seem cruel, but it actually allows the plant to prosper and progress. Pesticide may seem to suffocate the plant, but it actually shields it from falling prey to insects and diseases.

Hence, if I am committed and diligent in attending to the plant, the day will come when it will

stand tall and tower over all the other trees. Its roots will run deep and its branches will stretch far. Its fruit will spread across the globe to benefit one and all. It will have such strength in its trunk that it will not be shaken by anything. At that time, I will be able to rely on the tree, and the tree will not need to rely on me.”

Each and every child is a budding plant while the parents are the farmers. Children require the most attention in the developmental stages – the stages in which they acquire life values and morals. They require constant watering with imaan and need to be ‘sprayed’ with Islamic values to shield them from the harmful effects of corrupt influences and attacks on their Deen. If they are not constantly under the watchful, concerned eye of the parents, they will easily fall prey to spiritual sicknesses.

When a flood of evil is unleashed, the parents need to hold onto their child firmly, lest he be swept away and lost forever. Upholding the way of Islam may seem oppressive to the ignorant, but a true Muslim understands that it is the pure progress and prosperity – just like pruning.

When the parents raise their child in this manner, and do not leave the child unattended with an iPad or entrust him to some day-care or crèche, then the result is a young man who is unshakeable in imaan and firm in Islam.

He will be of benefit to one and all while his parents will be able to completely rely on him in their old age and times of need. In fact, even after their demise, they will reap the rewards of raising a child who is an asset to Islam and society.

May Allah Ta‘ala bless every parent to take their responsibility as parents seriously and to raise their children in a manner that is pleasing to Him, aameen.