



There was once a teacher who asked the students, “What do you want to be in life?” The children gave varying replies, typically ranging from ‘doctor’, to ‘lawyer’, to ‘accountant’ etc. However, from all the answers given, there was one answer that really stood out, an answer that the teacher had never heard before. The child spontaneously replied, “I want to be a Sahaabi”.

Obviously, nobody can become a Sahaabi, but what this ‘career choice’ said about the child is that he aspired to be LIKE the illustrious Sahaabah (radhiyallahu ‘anhum). While the other children were impressed with the lifestyle and wealth of doctors and lawyers, he identified with the beautiful qualities of the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu ‘anhum), such as their piety, generosity, love for Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), disinterest in the world, loyalty to Islam, etc. and he wished to follow in their footsteps.

*How proud his parents must have been to hear that he gave this amazing answer!*

Now, the question is, “What was it in the life of this child that molded his mindset and prompted him to give this response?” The answer ... *It was the effort of his parents at home.*

As parents, we chart the course of our children’s lives, give them direction, instill values in them and place them on the paths that they will follow. Let us ask ourselves, “What course are we charting for them, and what values are we instilling in them?”

Generally, from the tender age of six, the child is already enrolled into a school, and his schooling career lasts for a whole twelve years. At 190 school days a year, and seven hours a day, that equates to almost 16 000 hours spent in school! All this time spent in school is for one purpose – to one day enjoy a successful career and earn a lot of money.

Now, let us compare that to the amount of time dedicated to a child’s Deeni education. If the madrasah year is also 190 days, and the maktab session lasts for two hours, and the average

child attends the maktab for five years (if he even attends punctually for the full period), this equates to a paltry 1 900 hours in comparison.

Worryingly, it is in this meager amount of time that the child is expected to learn the entire Deen on which his eternal success depends.

This disparity is obviously a major problem...

This problem is compounded when the parents, directly or indirectly, 'teach' the children that Deen and Deeni education is unimportant and insignificant. For example, most parents will seldom allow their children to 'bunk' (remain absent from) school, yet frequently allow them to bunk madrasah.

Likewise, many children miss madrasah due to studying for school exams, yet a child has perhaps never missed school due to studying for madrasah exams. In some cases, the parents themselves encourage the children to remain absent from madrasah, in favour of some extracurricular activity such as sport or tuition.

How lamentable that even kicking a ball is given preference to learning the Word of Allah!

In essence, the child is taught that Deen is absolutely unimportant, as making money and living luxuriously is the goal in life.

If our children are acquiring a school education, there must be an accompanying effort, from the parents, for the imaan and Deeni education and security of the children. In order to achieve this, due importance must be shown to the maktab madrasah, and there must be a strong environment of Deen in the home (through making ta'leem, reciting the sunnah du'aas, teaching good manners and respect, performing all salaah, etc.). If this is done correctly, then throughout the child's life, whenever there is a clash between his material interest and Deeni interest, he will make the correct choice and remain loyal to Allah Ta'ala – safeguarding his entry into Jannah.

Remember, a child can be born a Muslim, but not born a Jannati, as Jannah has to be earned. Just as we prepare our children to earn a living, let us ensure that we prepare them to earn Jannah.