

A Father's Advice (A Letter)

Al Maskari,
Abid Majeed Road, Lahore
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My dear Son,

Let me tell you that you are a part of my body and soul. Whenever I look at you I feel I am looking at myself. Therefore, I am committing some pieces of advice to paper and sending them to you, since there may be a time in the near future when I will no longer remain with you, for whoever lives must die.

My first and foremost advice to you, my son, is to fear Allah. Be His obedient servant. Carefully guard the rope which connects you with Him for no other connection can be stronger and more durable than this to command greater respect. He who is the Master of death is also the Master of life.

My dear son, as far as your behaviour with other human beings is concerned, let your "self" act as a scale to help you judge its goodness or wickedness. Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you. Whatever you like for yourself, like it for others.

Whatever you dislike for yourself, spare others from it. Do not oppress and tyrannise anybody as you surely do not wish to be oppressed or tyrannised. Be kind and sympathetic to others as you surely want others to treat you kindly and sympathetically. Whatever habits you find hateful in others, abstain from developing those habits. Do not speak about others in the way you do not like others to speak about you.

Remember son, that vanity and conceit will bring you serious harm and will be a constant source of danger to you. Therefore, lead a well-balanced life. Neither be conceited nor suffer from inferiority complex and exert yourself to earn an honest living. Do not be proud, rather be humble and bow to Him whenever you achieve the things you desire, and realize that your success was due to His mercy and favour.

You must also know that you cannot have every wish of yours granted. You cannot expect to escape death nor the Day of Judgment; and you are passing the days of your life as others have done before you. Therefore, control your desires, cravings and expectations. Be moderate in your demands; earn your livelihood through honest means and be content with it. Go slowly and do not let your desires drive you mad because there are many desires which will lead you towards disappointment and loss.

Remember, he who controls his desires has self-respect. He does not beg or pray

for things and will not always remain unlucky, or disappointed. So, do not bring down your self-respect; do not be mean and submissive.

Nothing in this world can compensate for the loss of self-respect, nobility of mind and honour. Wages earned through hard but respectable and honourable labour are better than the wealth which you may gather through sin and wickedness, and poverty is better than the disgrace and humiliation of begging.

Finally, my son, do not make yourself a slave of anybody. Allah has created you a free man. Do not sell your freedom at any cost or in return for anything. If you can succeed in having nobody as your benefactor but Allah, then He will grant you your share. Know that there are two kinds of livelihood: the one you are searching for and the other which is in search of you. It will reach you even if you do not try to obtain it.

I would like to end by saying, do not be like the persons on whom advice has no effect and they require punishment to correct themselves. A sensible and reasonable man acquires education and culture through advice, whereas brutes and beasts always accept correction through punishment.

With this, I entrust you unto Allah and His protection in both this world and the hereafter.

Allah Hafiz.

Your affectionate father,
Ibne-Adam

Words

Meanings

durable	likely to last for a long time
oppress	rule cruelly
abstain	hold oneself back, refrain
tyrannise	rule cruelly and unjustly
conceit	too much pride in oneself
contented	satisfied
moderate	having reasonable limits
entrust	trust somebody to complete / safeguard something

EXERCISES

1. Use any five of the words below in sentences of your own.
durable, oppress, abstain, vanity, conceit, exert, moderate, contented, entrust.

2. Punctuate the following passage.

there are two ways of leading life one is the way of allah and the prophets (عليهم السلام) the other the way of satan the way of allah is to be honest virtuous pious and sympathetic toward mankind and all living creatures the other way is that of a dishonourable schemer who would not hesitate to follow any evil to gain his selfish ends

3. Pronunciation and spelling:

The sound of (er) is like a long (r). It is often spelled er.

better	international	longer	other	poorer
greater	rather	person	danger	water
wonderful	easier	serve	centre	never
modern	stronger			

Sometimes the spelling for (er) is or.

visitor	doctor	creator	benefactor
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In certain one-syllabic words, the sound is ear or ar.

earl	learn	earn	yearn
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4. Comprehension:

- i. Give the qualities of Allah as stated by the writer of the letter.
- ii. "Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you". What should one do and what should one not do according to the advice given in the letter?
- iii. What is required by a person who wishes to lead "a well balanced life"?
- iv. What does a man lose when he tries to attain his heart's desire?
- v. What is the respectable way of earning a livelihood?
- vi. What kind of advice has been given by the father to the son?

5. Match with the opposites as shown in the example:

durable		excessive
loathsome		noble
vile	→	temporary
base		worthy
moderate		lovable

6. Match with the word having the same meaning as shown in the example.

durable	→	dishonour
humiliation		disgrace
cravings		longings.
abstain		avoid
scandal		lasting

7. Make adverbs from the following words.

e.g. humble humbly
careful carefully

free, slow, honest, kind, serious

8. Use the following idiomatic phrases in the sentences of your own.

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| a) go slowly: | move or act careful |
| b) drive one mad: | make one act without careful thinking. |
| c) bring down: | lower, destroy |
| d) gather round: | move to surround or be close to |
| e) sell one's freedom: | give up one's rights for money, gifts or positions |

9. Write a letter to your father thanking him for teaching you so many good things and values of life (take help from the letter you have just studied). Show how your good habits have helped you in life and how you have been able to gain respect among friends.

10. Creative Writing

What are the duties of parents and teachers towards their children and students? Write in 100-150 words.