

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Improving the Spiritual World of Children in The Family

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Abstract

This article examines the role of the family in shaping children's spiritual and moral development and fostering the personal growth of younger generations. Particular attention is given to the educational potential of Karakalpak traditions, customs, proverbs, and oral folklore. The article highlights the importance of parental example, respect for elders, diligence, responsibility, kindness, and the preservation of national values in family upbringing. It also discusses the educational ideas of Eastern thinkers and their relevance to children's moral development. The family is presented as an essential environment for transmitting cultural heritage, moral principles, and life experience from one generation to the next. The article concludes that family education should be improved by considering children's age-related and individual characteristics while maintaining a balance between national traditions and universal human values.

KEY WORDS

Family education, spiritual and moral development, children, Karakalpak traditions, folk pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

In the historical development of every society, it is important to take into account the age-related and individual characteristics of the younger generation in order to foster the development of their personalities in a gradual and effective manner. Pedagogy and psychology provide the methodological foundation for this process. This article examines universal values such as family, child-rearing, and the wisdom of great thinkers. Particular attention is given to one of humanity's most important missions: ensuring continuity between generations, safeguarding children's health, supporting their comprehensive development, and addressing the challenges and responsibilities associated with

these objectives.

METHOD

The family, or the "school of parents," is the most powerful and sacred environment in which a person takes their first steps in life and develops into a mature individual. It is here that the younger generation learns traditional values, unity, and appropriate behavior through parental example, shared family meals, and the wise advice and guidance of parents. Without textbooks or written records, children acquire the foundations of knowledge, learn to play, count, and sing, and develop qualities such as openness, politeness, and respect.

Their emotions, attention, and memory develop, while the foundations of basic skills and habits are established.

For humanity, regarded as one of the most remarkable creations of the world, education and upbringing have always represented a challenging yet honorable responsibility. Every day, parents nurture their children, enriching their inner world with sincere words, attentive care, and lullabies.

Even in times when writing did not exist and knowledge had not yet been recorded in written form, humanity was concerned with the moral upbringing of its descendants. People instilled work-related skills in children and prepared them for life and labor. This has been a longstanding historical practice. Every nation developed its own spiritual world based on unwritten laws, customs, and traditions. Despite historical changes and events, peoples preserved and practiced their distinctive ethnopsychological and ethnopedagogical characteristics.

The family-based system of upbringing makes extensive use of traditions, customs, and national values that have been passed down from generation to generation for centuries, serving as moral and psychological standards for child-rearing. As in other cultures, the upbringing of children among the Karakalpak people involves the continuous transmission of national customs, traditions, and life experiences to younger generations, making these values an integral part of their identity and inner world.

Karakalpak folk pedagogy includes various child-rearing traditions practiced from the moment a child becomes part of the family. These include shillekhana (a celebration associated with the birth of a child), qırqınan shıǵarıw (the forty-day ceremony), besikke bólew (placing a baby in a cradle and swaddling), tawsaw kesiw (the ritual cutting of a child's symbolic bonds when the child begins to walk), súnnet ettiriw (circumcision), the child's first day at school, and wishes for happiness when a son or daughter establishes a family. Certain customs are observed even before a child is born. For example, pregnant women are not expected to lift heavy objects, are given the foods they wish to eat, and receive special care. New mothers are provided with nourishing broths, while infants are breastfed.

Other traditions include bathing infants in salt water, applying oils to their bodies, performing exercises to strengthen their limbs, inviting a respected woman to conduct the ceremony of placing a baby in a cradle, choosing a child's name with the

participation of respected elders, and performing the tawsaw kesiw ritual when the child begins to walk. These traditions reflect the rich and meaningful cultural life of the Karakalpak people.

A profound understanding of world science and culture requires an appreciation of the significance of family, society, and parents in historical and social life. Great Eastern thinkers, including Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Qabus ibn Wushmagir (Kaykaus), Alisher Navoi, Magtymguly, Abai, Berdakh, and Ajiniyaz, devoted particular attention in their works to family life and the upbringing of the peoples of Central Asia.

The wise thoughts of great thinkers, regardless of the language in which they were expressed, have always occupied an important place in human consciousness because of their profound meaning and enduring value.

This is particularly evident in the work *The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City* by the great philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi. In this work, he emphasizes that one's own home is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Al-Farabi presents his ideal vision of the household, stating:

"The household consists of certain components and relationships through which it prospers. These components include husband and wife, master and servant, parents and children, property and its owner. The person who governs these components and brings them together to achieve a common purpose, provides the household with various benefits, and maintains relationships among all its members is the ruler and head of the household. Such a person is called the master of the household, just as a ruler is called the head of a city."

This comparison and assessment of values, which have been preserved through the centuries, demonstrate the depth of universal values and social relationships.

The Karakalpak people, one of the ancient peoples of Central Asia, are distinguished by their unique customs, traditions, and psychological characteristics. Family values occupy a particularly important place in their culture, with clearly defined responsibilities and roles for men and women. The family is the foundation of everyday life and the principal center of upbringing.

Karakalpak oral literature and epic traditions, including *Qırıqqız* (Forty Girls), *Sharyar*, *Alpamys*, *Edige*, *Qoblan*, and *Góruǵlı*,

reflect national values such as courage, patriotism, honesty, keeping one's word, diligence, preserving family honor, love of the homeland, and aspirations for the future. These epic works celebrate wisdom, bravery, loyalty, and love between men and women while emphasizing their significance in social and family life. The wise advice and moral lessons embedded in these works continue to serve as an important source of education and guidance for younger generations.

The ideals associated with young women and men in Karakalpak society hold an important place in the cultural and moral upbringing of the younger generation. Particular emphasis is placed on building a family based on mutual love and fidelity, living in harmony and understanding, and observing established traditions and customs. These valuable qualities are preserved and passed down from generation to generation.

As the saying goes, "A bird does what it sees in its nest." What a child observes and learns from their parents takes root in the heart, grows, develops, and eventually becomes part of their character and way of life. By raising their children to be honest, hardworking, spiritually mature, educated, and virtuous individuals, parents lay the foundation for their children's happy future and take pride in their achievements.

Childhood is the most tender and brightest period of life, one that never returns. Therefore, questions concerning the upbringing of children always remain relevant. Parents who apply various methods of education and upbringing guide their children with wisdom and understanding, inspiring them to become good human beings. Their efforts have an enormous influence that cannot be replaced by anyone else. Thus, the role of parents in the upbringing of children is of paramount importance.

The Karakalpak people instill in young people a sense of honor and dignity, emphasizing these qualities as among the highest human virtues. Particular attention is paid to preparing young men and women for family life and helping them choose a life partner. Respect and esteem for girls have always been considered important national values. The Karakalpak people say:

A girl is a flower of paradise,

An incomparable heavenly maiden in her parents' eyes.

One day, when her destined groom comes to take her away,

She will nevertheless leave her mark on her parents' home.

Raising a daughter, preparing her for family life, and treating her with respect are sources of family pride and the foundations of happiness and harmony. By instilling the values of respect and dignity in their daughters, parents hope that they will become an ornament to their homes and a source of joy throughout their lives.

In Karakalpak folk pedagogy, the mother bears particular responsibility for preparing her daughter for marriage. This responsibility is expressed in the wise saying, "Look at the mother when choosing a daughter," which emphasizes the enduring importance of a mother's role in establishing a family home. A mother is her daughter's first teacher and closest companion. Therefore, she strives to raise her daughter so that she can find her place in life, stand firm in her convictions, and achieve happiness. To this end, the girl must first learn national traditions, understand that the family is a sacred institution, and learn to respect her relatives.

According to traditional beliefs about family life, just as a woman needs a man, a man needs a woman. Men and women are regarded as partners who complement one another. As long as life continues, this principle is considered an enduring part of human relationships. For this reason, a young woman eventually leaves the home in which she was born and raised, the place where she spent her happy childhood, and sets out to establish a new family in an unfamiliar household.

Wise mothers offer the following advice to their daughters as they prepare to become brides: "A girl should be raised by forty households and brought together by one." This saying means that a young woman should learn about the traditions and customs associated with family life and understand the important role that family plays in society. Mothers advise their daughters:

"Serve your husband in such a way that he becomes devoted to you. Be the earth for him, and he will become the sky for you."

If you follow this advice, you will live with your husband in peace and harmony, enjoy a beautiful life, and be happy and blessed. We, your parents, will take pride in you. If this does not happen, there will be neither peace nor harmony in your family, and you may feel as though you are living in hell.

"My dear daughter, everyone needs guidance, and everyone can benefit from advice. Guidance helps people learn new things and remember what they have already learned. Here is my advice to you:

1. Be content with what you have. Appreciate what you possess and be grateful for your circumstances. Whatever your husband brings home, whether food or clothing, welcome it with joy, a cheerful face, and kind words. Discontent and greed undermine the comfort and harmony of family life.

2. Listen to your husband. Do what he asks of you and avoid what he dislikes. When you speak with him or seek his advice, listen sincerely and attentively so that he feels respected and understood. In this way, you will earn the pleasure of God, and your home will always be filled with light and harmony.

3. Pay attention to the surroundings your husband sees. Keep your home clean and orderly so that he does not encounter anything unpleasant.

4. Take care of your appearance. Your husband should see you looking attractive and well-groomed. Avoid unpleasant odors, as they may diminish his regard for you and cause discomfort. Remember that cleanliness and neatness contribute to a person's attractiveness.

5. Prepare meals on time. Know when your husband usually eats and have the table ready at that time. Hunger can cause irritation, while timely care helps strengthen family well-being.

6. Take care of your husband's possessions. Look after his belongings and keep them in good order, because his wealth is also part of your family's wealth.

7. Respect your husband's relatives and loved ones. Make an effort to earn their trust and goodwill. Respecting his family is also a way of showing respect for your husband.

8. Keep your husband's confidences. Be discreet and do not reveal his private matters to others. If you disclose his secrets, you may provoke his anger, lose his trust, and damage the harmony of your family home.

These wise and profound teachings have emerged from the experience of everyday life."

In the past, great thinkers emphasized that the ability to listen to and follow parental advice was a virtue of a wise child. They believed that a child's intellect was their greatest treasure. As the outstanding poet Abulqasim Ferdowsi wrote in his immortal work *Shahnameh*:

Begin your account with wisdom,

With words that speak of reason.

Share what you know of the truth of thought,

And let your words bring pleasure to the listener.

Since God has granted you a clear and sound mind,

May your heart always remain bright.

Reason will bring no harm to the soul;

It is the light of life—remember this.

Reason will show the way and gladden the heart;

It will bring blessings in this world and the next.

Thus, in their reflections, the sages of antiquity asserted that cultivating the mind played a crucial role in preparing younger generations to become capable and worthy members of society. A wise person is distinguished by profound thought and a broad outlook on life. Such ideas have been passed down as a legacy through sayings such as "Reason is the golden crown of a human being," "Reason is a person's finest adornment," and "The moon is needed at night, but reason is needed every day."

Respect for Parents and the Duties of Children

Respect for parents and an awareness of one's lifelong obligation to them are virtues expected of every person. According to the sages, children owe their parents a debt of gratitude that can be divided into eighty duties: forty to be fulfilled during their parents' lifetime and the remaining forty after their passing.

During their parents' lifetime, children can repay this debt in forty ways: ten related to physical actions, ten to speech, ten to the heart and soul, and ten to material possessions.

Children should serve their parents sincerely and always treat them with respect. They should not do what their parents forbid or undertake anything without their permission and consent, thereby avoiding arrogance and self-will. They should show respect by standing up in their parents' presence and should not walk ahead of them. In dangerous places, such as swamps, forests, or other hazardous environments, however, they should walk ahead to protect their parents. They should always sit before them with an open and cheerful expression, never frowning or looking at them sternly. Whenever their parents call, they should respond immediately.

These teachings emphasize that respect for parents should not be expressed through words alone; it must also be demonstrated through actions that show love, reverence, and

care.

Ten principles concern the hearts and souls of parents: treat them with kindness and compassion; never hesitate to do whatever good you can for them; share in their happiness; find ways to support them when they face difficulties; and respond with understanding even when they say more than is necessary.

Do not become upset when your parents criticize you or point out your mistakes. If they are distressed, regard their distress as a matter of personal concern. Help them achieve their goals, wish them a long life, and try to comfort them whenever they feel sad or worried.

Ten principles concern how children should speak to their parents: speak gently; do not raise your voice or shout; do not talk excessively; do not address them merely by their names; do not interrupt them; do not refuse to fulfill their requests; do not argue with what they say; if they raise their voices, do not respond in the same manner; do not react to their words with irritation; and listen patiently whenever they speak.

Ten principles concern the material well-being of parents.

First, provide your parents with clothing. Offer them delicious and nourishing food. Eat together with them at the same table and serve them the best portions. If they wish to purchase something, buy it for them, remembering that when you were a child, they bought you everything you wanted. Make their living space comfortable, attractive, and well furnished.

Provide financial assistance even when they do not ask for it, as they may feel uncomfortable requesting help. Tell them that everything you do is for their sake so that they do not feel embarrassed. Show them respect and reverence, and extend the same respect to their friends. Strive to keep their faces bright with happiness.

Every dutiful child regards the contentment of their parents as a source of happiness and well-being and considers their approval a source of blessings. Sincere respect and reverence for one's parents represent the highest expression of humanity and gratitude.

The Wisdom of Berdakh on Respect for Parents

A profound idea is expressed in the work *My Son* by Berdakh (Berdimurat) Qargabayuly, the great thinker and poet of the Karakalpak people:

Respect your parents,

Speak kind words to them throughout your life.

When you become wealthy, surround them with care,

And be an example to your descendants.

These lines convey the idea that honoring and respecting parents has always been an important human value.

Respect for parents is a key to happiness. The key to happiness lies in receiving one's parents' blessing. Therefore, serving them and ensuring that their dignity and reputation are never brought into disrepute is a great honor. A child who damages their parents' good name and reputation wounds their hearts. Of such children, people say that even a stranger would be better than a descendant who brings shame upon their family.

"As you treat your parents, so your own children will treat you," says a traditional proverb. This saying emphasizes the priceless efforts of parents, their upbringing, and their care. They devote their entire lives to their children's well-being and future, praying for them and investing in them the strength of their hearts and the light of their eyes.

Family Culture and Its Reflection in Islam

The characteristics of family life and the culture of relationships among family members are reflected in the works of Islamic scholars such as Imam Bukhari, Ahmad Yasawi, Bahauddin Naqshband, and Najmuddin Kubra, as well as in the hadiths. Islam, through its holy book, the Qur'an, and the hadiths, offers valuable guidance on family life and the relationship between husband and wife.

The fundamental conditions of marriage include the following:

- Mutual consent of the individuals entering into marriage.
- Attainment of the legally or traditionally recognized marriageable age.
- Marriage conducted in the presence of witnesses.
- Payment of kalym (bridewealth).
- Absence of close blood relationships between the spouses.
- Compatibility in social status.
- Compatibility in spiritual and moral matters.

When these conditions are fulfilled, the marriage is considered legitimate, and the rights and responsibilities of both parties

are regarded as properly established.

Within these relationships, the roles of men and women are clearly defined. A man is responsible for the material and spiritual well-being of the family and for protecting it from external threats. He is therefore regarded as the head of the household, responsible for the family's welfare. His diligence, patience, and endurance are considered worthy of respect. A woman, in turn, is valued as a faithful life partner who brings warmth and beauty to her husband's home and serves as his trusted companion throughout their life together.

Folk Wisdom as a Source of Moral Education

Folk wisdom is a rich source of moral education. For centuries, popular wisdom and traditional teachings have been transmitted orally from one generation to the next, becoming a spiritual and cultural foundation for raising present and future generations. This knowledge is carefully preserved and used to support the continuous development of society.

For example, our ancestors raised their children with just three expressions:

"People will be ashamed of you."

"This will lead to trouble."

"This is a sin."

"People will be ashamed of you" means that shame can be worse than death. Do not commit disgraceful acts, because a sense of shame reflects a person's honor, dignity, and conscience.

"This will lead to trouble" means that one should avoid wrongdoing. Kind words are half of happiness, and goodness brings benefit, whereas evil leads to misfortune.

"This is a sin" serves as a reminder that every action has consequences. Something that may seem unnecessary or insignificant to you might be an unattainable treasure to someone else. Therefore, strive not to cause inconvenience or hardship to others.

Upbringing as the Most Valuable Legacy

The Eastern sages' view of upbringing as the greatest legacy makes it a fundamental element in the formation of personality.

Children spend most of their time within the family, close to their parents. What a child sees and does during childhood becomes a habit that continues to shape their behavior.

Scholars have noted that the formative influences of early upbringing can remain with a person throughout life. The seeds planted in a child's inner world today will bear fruit years later.

Within the family, children are immersed in the spiritual life of society every day and every hour. Step by step, they develop into the kind, compassionate sons and daughters their parents hope they will become.

According to popular wisdom, "A well-raised child grows into a good person, and a good person comes from worthy parents." When people notice good manners and exemplary behavior in a child, they often say, "His father is a good man from a respectable family."

The Role of the Father in the Family

The family, which brings together several generations, is traditionally headed by the father, who occupies a central position. Among all family members, the father's authority and status are regarded as particularly important. The father is irreplaceable.

The great thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau stated:

"To bring a new generation into the world and ensure its development is only one-third of a father's duty. He must raise not merely a human being, but a member of society and a worthy citizen. Anyone who fails to fulfill this duty is at fault."

A father cannot leave his child a greater inheritance than a good upbringing. The most valuable things he can provide are love, attention, and proper guidance. As the proverb says, "There is no child without principles, and a well-brought-up child will not become a slave." A child's respect for and reverence toward their father are regarded as signs of good upbringing and noble character.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said, "Obedience to one's father is obedience to Allah." Harmony and peace within the family are achieved when its members follow the unwritten rules established by the father.

The Relationship Between Father and Child

The relationship between a father and child should be based on friendship and sincerity. At the same time, it is important for the child to respect the father, recognize his authority, and follow his guidance. Wise mothers always teach their children to honor and respect their fathers, instilling this value from an

early age.

Children's Responsibilities Toward Their Parents

Respect for parents is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Listen to them attentively without interrupting.
- Do not walk ahead of your parents.
- Fulfill their requests sincerely and without complaint.
- Respond willingly whenever your parents call you.
- Strive to make your parents happy and safeguard their peace of mind.

These qualities create an atmosphere of harmony and unity within the family, helping its members overcome various difficulties.

A person who causes their parents sorrow or hurts their feelings may lose happiness and success in life and face poverty and misfortune. Conversely, those who show kindness and care toward their parents are believed to attain prosperity, good fortune, happiness, and abundance.

Folk Wisdom on Respect for Parents

As the proverb says:

"Those who disobey their father

Will never achieve their goal.

They will be unable to prosper

Or stand equal to their peers."

Obedience to parents is believed to pave the way toward a long and happy life, a successful career, and the achievement of one's goals. It also helps individuals become worthy and cultured members of society who contribute to the well-being of their country.

The proverbs of the Karakalpak people reflect profound wisdom:

"Your parents are your wealth, and your children are your strength."

"Gold and silver cast no shadow, and parents have no price."

"When a father scolds, it is because he loves; when a mother strikes, it is because she protects."

"A child's happiness is better than a father's throne."

"Do not place your trust in your father's possessions; trust his

words."

"The words of our ancestors are the eyes of wisdom."

These proverbs and teachings, born of life experience, serve as a source of spiritual strength and inspiration for every individual.

Lessons Learned Within the Family

As the saying goes, "A daughter imitates her mother in handicrafts, while a son follows his father in his trade."

Within the family, boys learn their fathers' qualities, develop a sense of responsibility, and prepare for their future roles as heads of their own families. They strive to resemble their fathers and follow their example. Girls, meanwhile, seek to emulate their mothers by learning to clean, make beds, cook, sew, and practice handicrafts. They develop friendly, trusting relationships with their mothers, resembling those between close companions.

This first lesson, acquired in the "school of parents," becomes the foundation of a child's future life.

The Influence of Family Memories

The great thinker Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky wrote:

"Remember that, for the rest of your life, nothing is more valuable, important, or beneficial than memories of your parents' home and the wonderful, bright moments of childhood. The more of these memories a person carries into adulthood, the happier they will be throughout their life."

The Pride of Today's Youth

The pride of today's youth and the standard-bearers of a great future include outstanding sons and daughters of their people, whose courage has become legendary and whose heroism has been immortalized in epic tales. They include Maman Biy, Aydos Biy, Ernazar Biy, Erezhep Biy, Berdakh, Ajiniyaz, Allayar Dosnazarov, Qallibek Kamalov, Tolepbergen Qayipbergenov, Ibrayim Yusupov, Qydyrbay Sayipov, Dawytbay Qayipov, Allaniyaz Oteniyazov, Gayratdin Khojaniyazov, and many others.

These individuals served their communities in various fields, including public life, science, culture, and everyday social affairs. They were raised in the school of their parents, listened to their mothers' advice, and grew up in the "golden cradle" provided by their fathers. They became outstanding personalities who worked for the benefit of their nation, its

honor and glory, and its future and happiness. They devoted themselves to their homeland, contributed to its prosperity, and became shining examples for the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

Everything a person needs in life is shaped in the school of parents and nurtured through their care. From the moment a child is born, parental upbringing is as essential as air and water.

When we are born, we are:

- Weak and in need of strength.
- Dependent on others and in need of assistance.
- Unable to understand the world and in need of guidance.

Thus, parental upbringing provides everything that we do not possess at birth but cannot do without in life.

Where effective upbringing is present:

- The foundations for development are strengthened, while the child's age-related and individual characteristics are taken into account.
- The beneficial influence of the social and natural environment is used more effectively.
- The negative effects of the external environment are reduced.
- Coordination among all social institutions is achieved.
- Children learn to regulate their own behavior and become capable of self-education at an earlier stage.

The distinguished educator and enlightener Abdulla Avloni emphasized that a person's future and destiny depend on upbringing. He stated:

"Education for us is either life or death, either salvation or destruction, either happiness or unhappiness."

His educational ideals continue to be taught today as a foundation of the "school of parents."

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