45359 - Effect of Dad Travelling on Kids

the question

I travel a great deal. I travel far away from my children for a year or two, then I come back and stay with them for one month, then I travel again, and so on. All of this is for the sake of earning money and providing for my children. In recent years I noticed that their attitude has started to become bad, and I fear that they may go astray.
What should I do? Should I keep on travelling in order to earn money, or should I stop travelling and go back to them?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

You should note that Allaah has placed a trust on the shoulders of every father, and a responsibility concerning which he will be questioned on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Each of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The ruler is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The man is the shepherd of his family and is responsible for his flock. The woman is the shepherd of her husband’s household and is responsible for her flock.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2409; Muslim, 1829.

The first thing that the father should pay attention to, regarding his children, is their religious commitment and morals; this will lead to their salvation in this world and in the Hereafter. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded”

[al-Tahreem 66:6]

‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib said: This means: teach them and discipline them.

And before the responsibility of earning money and spending on them comes the greater responsibility of ensuring that they be saved in the Hereafter from the punishment of Allaah.

There are brilliant examples of men who fulfilled this trust and did that which Allaah had enjoined upon them with regard to their wives and children.

There is a man who wakes his wife up to pray during the last third of the night, and at Fajr he wakes up his children and takes them to the mosque and sits with them, remembering Allaah and reading Qur’aan until the sun comes up.

Another has the habit of taking his sons with him to the mosque to perform the five daily obligatory prayers, and when they have finished ‘Asr prayer he stays with them in the mosque, teaching them the Qur’aan and how to memorize it and recite it properly (tajweed), and what it means, then they all go home together.

But unfortunately there are many fathers who do not do that which Allaah has enjoined upon them of taking care of their family’s religious commitment and all they care about is looking after their worldly affairs.

There are some fathers who, if their child falls sick and his temperature rises a little, they panic and go looking for a doctor and a remedy, which is all well and good, and is an act of compassion towards the child, but what is strange is that they do not care if their children commit haraam (unlawful) actions, even major sins that may doom one to Hell.

How high is the temperature of Hell?

How can they fear a slight rise of temperature in their child, and not worry about the fire of Hell?

There are some fathers who, if their child is falling behind in his studies and not keeping up with their classmates, go crazy and lose sleep, and worry a great deal until they bring a tutor who can help the child advance in his studies.

But if the children neglect their prayers or do something haraam, or commit a major sin, they do not blame them in that case.

Some fathers get very angry if their child transgresses one of their rights or ignores one of their commands, but they do not care if the child transgresses one of the rights of Allaah or disobeys one of His commands.

If a father neglects his children and does not teach them the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger and does not raise them according to the basic tenets of faith and Islamic behaviour, undoubtedly his children will go astray and will go out into society as weak and deviant personalities, and the first ones to suffer from their corruption and deviance will be this father and this mother who fell short in raising their children.

Hence our advice to you, if you think that your travelling and being far away from your children will affect their upbringing and cause them to go astray, is to go back to them and try to raise them properly.

What will it benefit you or your children if you amass wealth for them but they become deviant and corrupt?

If you look around you, you will see many examples of men who travelled and left their children behind, and who suffered alienation and loneliness for the sake of amassing wealth for their children, then they came back with the money, but they lost something that is more important than wealth, they lost their children, because the children went astray as a result of their father’s absence and their mother’s negligence.

The children do not appreciate what their fathers did for their sake, and they take the money and start to curse them and mistreat them, and even hit them sometimes, so the fathers regret deeply the fact that they travelled and were so far away from their children… but what good is regret when so much time has passed?

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about the heads of

families travelling. He replied:

With regard to the heads of families travelling, if their travel will cause harm to their families, then they should not travel, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “It is sufficient sin for a man that he should neglect those who are dependent on him.” Classed as hasan (sound) by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, 1692. Whether they will be harmed because of little maintenance or because of their weakness, it is haraam (impermissible) for such a person to travel. If they will not be harmed, but they will feel sad and will miss him, then if there is no real benefit in travelling which brings a greater reward than his staying with them, such as knowledge which he fears he will miss out on or a knowledgeable person he has to meet with, then it is better for him to stay with them. But if it is like the travel of many people, which is just for the purpose of leisure and filling time, then it is better for him to stay and worship Allaah at home in all cases. The person who is in this situation should consult a knowledgeable person who knows him and what is best for him and who is trustworthy, because people’s situations vary greatly with regard to such matters. And Allaah knows best.

From Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, 28/28.

We ask Allaah to guide you and to help you to do that which is best for you and your children.

And Allaah knows best.