

## The Role of the Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) in Consolidating the Family Institution and its Socio-Political Education

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### Abstract

Imam Reza (A.S.), in continuity with the tradition of his infallible forefathers and through an emphasis on ethical, spiritual, and social principles, has played an unparalleled role in elucidating educational models for the family and society. Utilizing contemporary theoretical frameworks -including Social Capital Theory (Putnam), Social Learning Theory (Bandura), Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner), Political Culture (Almond & Verba), Critical Pedagogy (Freire), Ethics of Care (Noddings), and Structuration Theory (Giddens)- and adopting a descriptive-analytical method with thematic analysis, this research investigates the position of the family and socio-political education as the primary nucleus of human development, based on the attributed sayings, conduct (sirah), and narrations of Imam Reza. The findings indicate that the teachings of Imam Reza extend beyond education within the family sphere to foster social capital and promote political participation in society. By emphasizing ethical leadership and citizen responsibility, Imam Reza presents a model for social and political education whose pillars are founded upon mutual respect, ethical democracy, the pursuit of justice, and the struggle against oppression. In conclusion, considering contemporary challenges in the realms of family and socio-political education, the research proposes practical strategies derived from the sirah of Imam Reza to strengthen family cohesion, enhance collective responsibility, and confront ethical crises in modern societies.

**Keywords:** Imam Reza (A.S.), Family, Social Education, Political Education, Sirah of Imam Reza, Islamic Ethics.



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## **1. Introduction**

The family, as the most fundamental educational institution, plays a crucial role in shaping the individual and social identity of persons. Within the intellectual framework of Islam, the family, beyond its emotional function, serves as an arena for nurturing responsible, justice-seeking, and participatory individuals in the social and political spheres. The conduct (sirah) and sayings of the Infallible Imams (Peace be upon them), particularly Imam Reza (A.S.), hold an unparalleled position as guiding lights for formulating educational models aligned with the needs of Islamic society. In the contemporary world, crises such as extreme individualism, social disintegration, and ethical challenges have redoubled the necessity of re-examining Islamic teachings in the realm of family, social, and political education. Focusing on the sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.), this research investigates the position of the family and socio-political education as the primary nucleus of human development based on his attributed sayings, conduct, and narrations.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this research is to explain the role of the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) in consolidating the family institution and socio-political education, relying on contemporary theoretical frameworks. The specific objectives are:

1. Examining the foundations of family education from the perspective of Imam Reza (A.S.) and analyzing key themes related to children's rights, parental rights, family ethics, and intra-family justice.
2. Analyzing the principles of social education in the Razavi sirah, with emphasis on responsibility, empathy, social rights, and human dignity.
3. Investigating the foundations of political education in the thought of Imam Reza (A.S.), centered on concepts such as justice, consultation (shura), leadership (imamah), public oversight, and the reciprocal rights of the people and the government.
4. Presenting an integrated educational model based on the Razavi sirah and its alignment with contemporary theories in social and educational sciences.

### 3. Methodology

This research is fundamental-applied in purpose and descriptive-analytical in nature. Data was collected through a documentary method by referring to reliable narrative sources. For data analysis, the “Thematic Analysis” method using the Attride-Stirling (2001) thematic network model was employed. In this method, themes are organized at three levels: “basic,” “organizing,” and “global.” The statistical population of the research includes reliable narrative sources related to the three axes of family, social education, and political education, selected through purposive sampling. The theoretical framework of the research is based on interdisciplinary integration and utilizes contemporary theories including: Social Capital (Putnam), Social Learning (Bandura), Ethics of Care (Noddings), Critical Pedagogy (Freire), Political Culture (Almond & Verba), Ecological Systems (Bronfenbrenner), and Structuration (Giddens).

### 4. Findings

The research findings indicate that the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) in the three domains of family, social education, and political education possess internal coherence and can provide a comprehensive model for human education in the contemporary world.

In the domain of family education, the key themes are: emphasis on the inherent dignity of children, parental responsibility in religious and ethical upbringing, the necessity of justice among children, the importance of good character within the family, and the necessity of mutual respect between parents and children. The practical *sirah* of Imam Reza (A.S.) in addressing his child with a respectful *kunya* (agnomen), encouraging children’s practical participation in charitable deeds, and emphasizing financial provision for the family as the basis of psychological well-being, are concrete examples of this educational approach. These principles align with Putnam’s Social Capital theory and Bandura’s Social Learning theory.

In the domain of social education, Razavi teachings emphasize collective responsibility, empathy with the deprived, observance of social rights (especially the rights of neighbors), justice in social interaction, and avoiding the humiliation of individuals. By defining a Muslim as one from whose hand and tongue people are safe,

Imam Reza (A.S.) considers the ultimate goal of social education to be providing security for others. This perspective is fully congruent with Noddings' Ethics of Care and Putnam's Social Capital theory.

In the domain of political education, the findings show that Imam Reza (A.S.) conditioned the legitimacy of governance on justice, receptiveness to consultation, accountability, and observance of the reciprocal rights of the people and the government. By negating obedience to rulers in matters of sin, he rejects the divinization of power and emphasizes public oversight as a religious duty. Justice in his political thought is both the criterion for evaluating governance and the lens for citizens' critique. These foundations align with Freire's Critical Pedagogy and theories of good governance.

The analysis of global themes revealed that Razavi teachings transform the family into a workshop for human development and the cornerstone of an ethics-based civilization, nurturing responsible, critical, justice-seeking, and participatory citizens.

## **5. Conclusion**

The present research, by systematically investigating the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) in the spheres of family, social, and political education, presents an integrated and coherent model that positions the family as the fundamental nucleus for educating responsible, justice-seeking, and participatory human beings. The findings clearly show that the Razavi sirah views education as a comprehensive and continuous process that begins with bestowing dignity within the private sphere of the family and extends to assuming responsibility in the public sphere of society and active oversight of political structures. This perspective, by deeply integrating the foundations of Islamic ethics with social functions, constitutes an intelligent response to the challenges of the contemporary world—including extreme individualism, the disintegration of social bonds, and the crisis of legitimacy in governance.

The most prominent achievement of this research is the discovery of a significant alignment between Razavi teachings and advanced paradigms of contemporary humanities—from social capital and social learning to ethics of care and critical pedagogy. This alignment, besides bearing witness to the universality and rationality

of Islamic teachings, provides an unparalleled capacity for constructive dialogue between religious tradition and new knowledge. By centering “justice” as the criterion for the legitimacy of governance and “responsibility” as the essence of citizenship, Imam Reza (A.S.) delineates a model of ethics-based and people-centered governance in which obedience is conditional and critical, and public oversight is considered a religious and rational duty.

### **Suggestions**

In practice, this model can provide a strategic framework for educational, social, and cultural policymaking in Islamic societies. It is suggested that utilizing this framework, family-centric educational programs be designed, mechanisms for strengthening social capital and public trust based on the ethics of care be redefined, and a political culture based on participation, transparency, and receptiveness to criticism be institutionalized. Furthermore, conducting comparative studies between the Razavi sirah and other global educational schools of thought could be an effective step in enriching the discourse of Islamic education and presenting an alternative model on the global stage. Finally, elucidating and promoting this comprehensive model can transform families and educational institutions into living workshops for nurturing citizens who are both committed to authentic Islamic values and active, aware, and transformative agents in their societies.

**Keywords:** Imam Reza (A.S.), Family, Social Education, Political Education