

UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN



You who have faith!
safeguard yourselves
and your families from
a Fire whose fuel is
people and stones.

AT-TAHRĪM 8

THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

Children are without doubt an amazing blessing of Allāh ﷻ. With their arrival while still being unable to speak, they give their parents a very powerful message: that the roles of these two individuals have now forever changed. From being a carefree youthful couple they have now transformed into a caring set of parents, whom the child will soon lovingly refer to as mum and dad.

But as every parent knows, with children also comes an enormous responsibility that had never before been experienced. The parents both collectively and as individuals are now responsible for a life other than their own.

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones. at Tahrīm 66:6

The above injunction of the Qur'an gives magnitude to the responsibility that accompanies parenthood. This has been further explained by the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ:

Everyone of you is a shepherd (over your families), and every one of you will be questioned about his flock.

al-Bukhārī and Muslim

It is clear that if anything has a divine injunction, it is no small matter. We should understand from this that if we are negligent of this duty of upbringing children then both we and our offspring, and in turn, their offspring will suffer in both this world and the Hereafter. If on the other hand we are vigilant and attentive to the responsibilities involved, we, our children and in turn their children will benefit. This benefit will be in this world, in the form of mutual love, affection and caring and also in the Hereafter through attaining the eternal pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

This booklet touches upon various issues revolving around bringing up children. Through this we hope that our children will become a means

of directly benefitting their parents in both the worlds and also benefit Muslims in general. It is hoped that it will be an eyeopener for parents and allow them a more complete and deeper understanding of Islām, and what Islām says regarding children.

Undoubtedly, Islāmic education is the best gift a parent can give to a child, but we do not imply that ‘worldly’ knowledge is unimportant. Islām can be benefitted in many different ways by many different means and so all of these are themselves Islāmic if the objective is to lead a full, rich life in obtaining the pleasure of the Creator of both Heaven and Earth. All children must be raised in accordance to Islām and that they be taught proper Islāmic manners, as opposed to made up customs.

The majority of the advices given are universal in regards to them being applicable to all children. They do however remain a guide, not the final word. The parents themselves need to be the best judges in determining what methods are best for their situation and when and how to utilise them.

Although this booklet focuses on practical tips and guidelines for parents based on Islāmic teachings and experience, we cannot over emphasize the need to repeatedly turn to the greatest tool in your toolkit: Du`ā'. Ultimately, it is only Allāh who decides the outcome of all affairs and can guide to success and bless with His mercy. The Prophet of Allāh ﷺ has mentioned amongst those whose prayers are accepted without any doubt in their acceptance, “the prayer of a parent.”

Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah

It is with this combination of prayers and practical steps that will lead us to become successful parents, bringing up, by the Will of Allāh, children who will be a source of pride for us in this world and the next.

INTENTION

Islām has stipulated a few simple things to be observed at the time of any good or permissible action for these to be more acceptable in their presentation to Allāh ﷻ. The first and foremost of these things is correct intention, which is fundamental.

It thus stands to reason that marriage and upbringing children also reaps reward for the Muslim couple. It even specifically appears in many Aḥādīth that the fulfilment of one's spouse's conjugal rights is a means of reward in the eyes of Allāh.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has stated, 'In the fulfilling of your sexual desires there is ṣadaqah (i.e. the reward of charity).'

The Ṣaḥābah ؓ (surprised) asked, 'Is one of us to come to his lusts and have a reward in it?'

Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, 'Tell me, if he were to place his lusts in Ḥarām would he be sinful? So accordingly, when he places his urges in Ḥalāl there is for him a reward in it.'

Muslim

One must not be blind to the fact that children are mirrors of their parents and of whatever takes the place of the parents, i.e. friends, television, teachers etc. Good breeds good, and bad breeds bad.

It is worth remembering that people, generally, are not able to change overnight. Thus if one wants to be the best parent for their child, preparation needs to start earlier than even childbirth. Parenting starts from the time of choosing a partner, through trying for children and then pregnancy, and only becomes visibly apparent through childbirth.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN CHILD

One's Own Marriage

One of the criteria for choosing an ideal spouse for oneself, should be that the prospective partner is also the best supporting parent for one's children.

Abul-Laith as-Samarqandī (R.A.) in his book, *Tambih al-Ghāfilin*, relates that a man brought his son to `Umar ؓ during his Khilāfah, and said: "My son does not obey me, he is very disobedient to me."

Hearing this `Umar ؓ said: "Boy, don't you know what rights a father has over his son?" Thereafter he narrated the rights of the father, which are duties on his children.

The boy after listening asked: "Commander of the Faithful, Do children also have rights over their father?"

`Umar ؓ said: "Yes! The children too have rights over their father."

"What are those rights?" asked the boy.

`Umar ؓ replied: "First of all, he should search for a good mother for his son. He should marry a virtuous, religious woman, and not any woman of questionable nature and doubtful character.

"The second right is to name a child with a good name.

"The third right of the child is that he should impart religious knowledge to him and teach him the Qur'ān."

The boy replied: "Commander of the Faithful, my father has not discharged any of these duties.

"Firstly, the woman who is my mother is a slave woman that he had bought for 400 dirhams. She is a woman who is ignorant of religious education, Islāmic social manners and morals. It is in her laps that I have passed my infancy. She has not given me any religious education. Who then could I learn from?

"Secondly, they have not named me with a good name. He has named me Ju`al (meaning an ugly man). I should have been given a good

name which was my right, but my father did not discharge his responsibility towards me.

"The third is the right of religious education, which they did not give me at all. Now whatever decision you give, I will accept it."

At this `Umar ؓ said to the boy's father: "You, first of all, have been neglectful regarding the boy's rights which you did not discharge and now you tell me that your son does not obey you. Get out! It is you who has been disobedient and oppressive."

From the stance taken by `Umar ؓ and the truth spoken by him, one can see that it is an imperative duty for the parent to prepare for a child by considering the child's rights prior to having a child. The stance that many people take saying that they will end all their bad traits when they become parents is wrong and may also be a massive compromise in regards to the child's upbringing.

At The Time Of Sexual Intercourse

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

'Whenever any of you makes love with his wife (i.e. before he starts), he should say:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ لِلشَّيْطَانِ فِيمَا رَزَقْتَنِي نَصِيْبًا

ALLĀHUMMA JANNIBNASH-SHAYṬĀNA
WA JANNIBISH-SHAYṬĀNA MĀ RAZAKTANĀ

*O Allāh! Do not give Shayṭān a share
in what You have bestowed upon us.'*

Shayṭān will not be able to harm any child conceived from this union.'

al-Bukhārī

It is advisable that the wife too makes this du`ā'.

One must at this time especially, remember Allāh ﷻ and thank Him abundantly. If one is oblivious of Allāh's ﷻ mercy, then this defiance will be seen in one's children and their behaviour towards the parents.

Both the spouses must ensure that cleanliness (religious and physical) is habitual. The need for this is that its absence can have short and long term detrimental effects on the temperament and health of a child.

Pregnancy

During the entire pregnancy period, the wife is mothering her child. The child is dependant on her for its air, water and food. Junk food, cigarettes, and other unhealthy items all effect her health and also the health of her unborn child.

The wife should not be so lazy as to avoid all activities. Walking and other mild activities are immensely beneficial to her health, which in turn is good for the child.

At all times and especially during this period the mother should instead of listening to music and watching TV, spend as much time as possible engaged in the recitation of the Qur'an and Dhikr. The external environment that the woman is subject to also has an effect on the internal environment that her child is subject to.

Boy Or Girl?

Very often parents express extreme joy and happiness on the birth of a boy and feel disappointed and disheartened on the birth of a girl. Whether the child is a girl or a boy, parents should show their appreciation and gratitude to Allāh ﷻ for blessing them with a child who will increase the Ummah of our beloved Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Being thankful to Allāh at the birth of a girl is not meant to be in the way of 'making the best of a bad situation' or 'putting on a brave face,' but to recognise the enormous benevolence of Allāh that He has granted you the gift of a living soul, a pure and innocent child to be yours and so show genuine gratitude to Him. A daughter is as much a gift as a son is.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said, "When a female child is born, Allāh ﷻ sends the angels to that house. They come to the dwellers of that house and pray that peace may be upon them. The angels then cover the newly born girl in the shadow of their wings and caressing the head of the baby with their hands say that this is a weak and frail girl. Whoever will bear the responsibility of her needs, will go on having the blessing of Allāh ﷻ as long as this girl remains alive." aṭ-Ṭabarānī

Anas ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Whoever maintains two girls until they attain maturity, he and I will come on the day of Qiyāmah like this," at which the Prophet ﷺ joined two adjacent fingers. *Muslim*

ʿĀ'ishah ؓ narrates: "a woman came to me with her two daughters. She asked me for charity, but I had nothing with me except a single date, so I gave it to her. Accepting it, she halved it for both her daughters. The mother did not eat. She then got up and went out with her two daughters. Meanwhile Rasūlullāh ﷺ visited me and I narrated this story to him. Thereupon Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Whoever is tried with any amount of difficulty in bringing up daughters and treats them well, they will be a protecting barrier for them from the Fire. al-Bukhārī, Muslim

In another version ʿĀ'ishah ؓ narrates, "a poor woman came to me with two daughters. I gave her three dates. She gave each of her daughters a date and took one for herself. She was about to eat the date when one of the daughters expressed a desire for it, she immediately split the date equally between her daughters, and left

nothing for herself. This kind treatment of hers really impressed me, and I related it to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Upon which he stated: “Allāh ﷻ has guaranteed her Jannah because of her kindness.” (In another narration the words, “Allāh ﷻ has rescued her from the fire of Jahannam,” are used).

Muslim

From almost prehistoric times the birth of a boy meant honour and respect for a family, whereas the birth of a girl meant shame and disgrace. This discriminating view is absolutely un-Islāmic as can be read below.

The following incident is concerning the ordeal of an innocent girl who was buried alive. The people of the tribe of Banū Tamīm in pre-Islāmic Arabia were most prone towards this inhuman practice. The reason for this stance was that they considered it a matter of shame to become fathers-in-law. The chief of the tribe, Qays Ibn `Āṣim, after embracing Islām confessed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ the following incident:

“O Messenger of Allāh ﷻ! A daughter was born to me when I was away from home on a journey. In my absence, her mother out of natural urge nursed her for a few days. After some days fearing that I would kill her or bury her alive, she sent the child to her sister to be looked after. When I returned from my journey I was told that my wife had given birth to a dead child, thus the matter was shelved. The child remained in the care of her aunt for a few years.

“Once I went out of the house for the whole day. Thinking that I would be out for a long time, my wife called her daughter to enjoy her company during my absence.

“I changed my mind and returned home much sooner than expected. When I entered the home my eyes fell upon a very beautiful, little girl playing in the house. When I looked at her I was suddenly overwhelmed by a strong and spontaneous urge of affection for her within me. My wife also sensed it and became sure that my blood had

recognised my blood and that my fatherly love and affection had sprung up for the child.

"I asked my wife, "Whose daughter is this? She is really charming!"

"My wife told me all about her. I could not control myself and eagerly took my daughter in my arms. Her mother told her that I was her father. She immediately began displaying her love for me, and lovingly called me, "My father! My father!"

"At those moments I felt an indescribable fatherly pleasure by embracing her while she put her arms around my neck.

"Days and weeks went by in this manner, and the child remained with us, free from any worry or discomfort. But at times when she caught my attention such thoughts came to my mind, that I shall have to be a father-in-law, by giving her off to someone in marriage. I shall have to bear the insult, that my daughter will be someone's wife. How shall I be able to face the people? All my honour and pride will be ruined. These thoughts took hold of my mind and tortured me continuously.

"Ultimately these thoughts aroused my pride and provoked my hard-heartedness, and made me devoid of any patience. Thus I firmly decided to do away with this stigma of shame and humiliation for me and my ancestors. I decided to bury the girl alive.

"I then asked my wife to get the girl ready as I planned to take her to a feast with me. My wife gave her a bath, clad her in pretty clothes and made her ready to go with me.

"The little girl was bubbling with happiness, thinking that she was accompanying her father on a happy occasion. I set off with her towards the jungle. The child was going with me leaping with joy and pleasure, holding my hand here, getting ahead of me there, prattling to me with squeaks of innocent gaiety and laughter. But I had become blind to see and enjoy these innocent acts and was impatient to get rid of her as soon as possible. The child was absolutely unaware of my sinister intention and followed me merrily.

"I finally stopped at a place which I cannot remember now, and started

digging. The innocent child was surprised to see me doing that and repeatedly asked, "Father, why are you digging?" but I did not pay any attention to her queries. How could she possibly know that I was digging that pit to bury her own cheerful and beautiful self in it with my own hands?

"While digging, dust would fall upon my feet and clothes. My daughter would clean the dust from my feet and clothes cheerfully complaining "Father you are spoiling your clothes". But I, like a deaf person, did not even care to look at her. It was as if I had not heard her at all.

"I viciously continued my job and dug a pit big enough to serve the purpose. I then in cold blood, threw the innocent child into the pit and hastily started to fill it.

"The poor child looked into my eyes, frightened and surprised. She was frantically crying and screaming, "Father! My dear father! What is happening? I can't get out! Father please help me! What are you doing? Why are you hiding me in the ground?"

"But I kept on doing my work like a deaf, dumb and blind person without paying the least attention to her desperate struggles and begging pleas. As I continued to bury her suffocating body, I in my malice towards her being a girl, raised a rock above my head and brought it crashing down upon hers, in an attempt to stop her struggling, striking her either dead or unconscious, I cannot recall.

"As the earth slowly rose to consume her still body I heaved a sigh of relief when finally her bleeding face disappeared from view. I then returned home satisfied that I had saved my honour and pride from humiliation".

Hearing this man describe the cold-blooded murder of his own helpless, innocent daughter, Rasūlullāh ﷺ could not control himself, and with tears streaming down his cheeks ﷺ, he let out such screams in his crying that people began to worry about him. He slowly recovered and managed to say: "This is extreme cruelty. Can one who does not have pity or mercy on others be shown mercy by Almighty Allāh ﷻ?"

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was extremely fond of children. Throughout his entire life there is not a single incident where he ever hit or was unkind, indifferent or harsh to any child. On the contrary, he would become greatly saddened at the ill treatment of any child. But the pre-Islāmic Arabian practice of people burying their daughters alive for the sake of ‘saving face’, would put him through unbearable anguish and misery. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was so affected by this murderous tradition that, at `Aqabah he made the Arabs include in the oath of allegiance that they would not kill their offspring. Thus this crime was finally put to an end.

Lesson: We obviously would not go to such an extent as to do something so barbaric, but it is not true that this draconian ideology does not exist at all. Many times son-expecting fathers are so disturbed by the birth of a daughter that they refuse to even lift the baby, when her sex is announced. This is terribly wrong. As kindness to these daughters can be our means of gaining salvation, so will cruelty towards them be a means of destruction.

Still Born Children And Infant Death

Abū Mūsā al-Ash`arī ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "When a person's child dies, Allāh Almighty asks the angels, "have you taken away My servant's child?"

They reply in the affirmative.

Allāh ﷻ asks, "Have you taken away from him the fruit of his heart?"

They again reply in the affirmative.

Allāh ﷻ asks, "What did My servant say?"

The angels say, "He praised You and said,

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

INNĀ LILLĀHI WA INNĀ ILAYHI RĀJI`ŪN

We belong to Allāh and to Him we shall return"

Hearing this Allāh ﷻ commands the angels to construct a house in Jannah for His servant and name it, "The house of praise". *at-Tirmidhī*

Abū Sa`id Khudhrī ؓ narrated that the women of Madīnah asked the Messenger ﷺ to allocate a day for them, (wherein he could address them. In one such gathering when) he addressed them, he said,

“Any woman whose three children die, they become for her a barrier from the fire.”

A woman asked the Messenger ﷺ “what about if two children die?”
The Messenger ﷺ replied, “even if two children die”.

al-Bukhārī and Muslim

Umm Ḥabībah ؓ narrates, “I was sitting with `Ā'ishah ؓ when Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to us and said, “If three children of a couple die without reaching the age of adulthood, they will all stay at the gate of Jannah on the day of Qiyāmah. When they will be asked to go in, they will reply, we refuse to enter Jannah unless our parents accompany us. Allāh ﷻ will tell them and their parents to enter Jannah.” *at-Ṭabarānī*

Lesson: It is indeed a great loss for anyone to lose a child in infancy. But Allāh ﷻ does not let His servants suffer without rewarding them for the patience they have. While one may find it difficult to come to terms with the loss, one should always bear in mind that they have returned to Allāh’s ﷻ custody. Without doubt Allāh ﷻ is a better custodian than anyone else.

Mas’alah

If the child is still-born and died prior to its emergence from the mothers womb, the baby will be washed and buried without Janāzah Ṣalāh being performed on them. The child need not be named. Although if the mother is in visible distress and it helps to pacify her to name the child she may do so.

If the child dies upon emergence, i.e. the child was alive at the time of birth, then the child will be named and bathed and buried with Janāzah Ṣalāh offered upon him/her.

MASĀ'IL FOR WOMEN PERTAINING TO BIRTH

Mas'alah

A woman should cover her `awrah (private parts) even in the presence of another Muslim woman. In this case, this is the area between the navel and the knees. A woman should not expose it unnecessarily before a doctor or a midwife.

Some women do not consider it necessary to cover their `awrah in the presence of other women despite it being forbidden. A woman should also not expose or open her `awrah in the presence of non-Muslim women unnecessarily.

Mas'alah

The `awrah should only be exposed when it is absolutely necessary to do so, and, then too, only to the extent that needs to be exposed. Exposure of her `awrah beyond the above guidelines will make one sinful.

Mas'alah

A nurse or a midwife can see the area below the navel during birth for the necessary period only. To see beyond that period is prohibited. It is also not permissible for any other woman to see those parts, even though it may be her mother or sister, as there is no need for it. It is wrong for a woman to disrobe completely during birth.

Mas'alah

Two Muslim women are regarded to be of the same nature; therefore, on such occasions believing women should be engaged if available to help deliver the child. If not, then non-Muslim women should be

consulted. Men should only be engaged as a last resort.

Mas'alah

The whole body of a woman is considered `awrah before a male who is neither her husband or Maḥram (relative with whom marriage is not permissible). If the doctor is maḥram of the patient, then too the back and stomach cannot be exposed unnecessarily.

Mas'alah

A simple method of keeping the other parts covered is to don some old clothes and to cut off that portion which corresponds with the wound, etc. that has to be treated. The other parts will remain covered by adopting this method.

Mas'alah

The same laws apply to men too. His `awrah is between the navel and the knees (the knees are included in the `awrah). If the thighs, etc. have to be treated, then the same method as mentioned above should be adopted.

FOLLOWING BIRTH

Ghusl

Upon birth the newly born child should be bathed properly. Thereafter *Bismillah* should be read and the baby should be dressed in wear clean clothes.

Adhān and Iqāmah

One of the first sound to reach the child should be the Adhān, which is the message of the Greatness and Oneness of Allāh ﷻ and the prophethood of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Facing the Qiblah, Adhān should be called in the right ear and Iqāmah in the left ear. A pious person of the family should be asked to recite them into the ears of the newborn child. If such a person is not available, then any Muslim male may perform this Sunnah duty. If there is no male to call the Adhān, then a female may also call the Adhān. By calling the Adhān the child is offered a means of protection from many unseen problems.

It is mentioned in a Ḥadīth that Ḥasan ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Whoever a child is born to, should call the Adhān in his right ear and the Iqāmah in his left ear. The child shall not be harmed by Jinn".

Muṣṣannaf `Abd ar-Razzāq, Musnad Abī Ya`lā, al-Bayhaqī

When Ḥasan ؓ was born, Rasūlullāh ﷺ recited the Adhān and Iqāmah in his ears.

at-Tirmidhi

To call the Adhān is an established Sunnah. After calling the Adhān and Iqāmah the child should be given to the mother for milk.

Taḥnik

Taḥnik means getting someone to chew a date and to then place a little of its paste on the pallet of the baby's mouth.

After the Adhān and Iqāmah some dates should be given to a pious person to chew. Thereafter he should place a bit of this date on his index finger and place it on the pallet of the mouth of the baby. The child will then suck it. Inshā Allāh, the following of this Sunnah will be very beneficial and will be a means of barakah for the child.

If such a person is not available, then any Muslim male may perform this act. If dates are not available, a little honey or anything sweet may be put into the mouth of the child with the finger.

Asmā' ؓ narrates: "When `Abdullāh ibn Zubayr ؓ was born, I placed him in the lap of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He sent for a date, chewed it and applied the chewed date to Abdullah ibn Zubayr's ؓ mouth, and prayed for the well-being of the child".

al-Bayhaqī

`Ā'ishah ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to have children brought to him, and he would call out the Adhān and supplicate for them.

Abū Dāwūd

Naming The Child

It is the parent's duty and the right of the newborn child that he/she be given a suitable and appropriate, Islāmic name. A name should be given to the child within seven days. As the name affects the child's behaviour, character and habits, Rasūlullāh ﷺ advised on keeping good names.

In a Ḥadīth in Abu Dawūd, it is mentioned: "Verily on the day of Qiyāmah you shall be called by your names and your father's names, so give yourselves good names."

`Umar ؓ said: "To whomsoever a child is born, he should be given a good name, sound education and when he becomes of age he should be married."

Tambih al Ghāfilin

`Abdullāh ibn Shukayr says that when Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked anyone his name and if it was a good name it became apparent on his face, and if it was not a suitable name he was displeased. And when he entered a village or a town he asked its name, if it was good he was pleased and if it was not suitable, it could be seen on his face.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said "Of your names, Allāh likes `Abdullāh and `Abdur Raḥmān the most," (*Muslim*) and "children should be named after the

names of the Ambiyā" (Abū Dāwūd). While choosing the names for children, the following points should be kept in mind:

It should not be against the spirit and teachings of Islām.

It should not reflect bad habits such as pride, haughtiness or hate.

It should not convey any improper and bad meaning.

It should not be degrading and disgraceful.

Undesirable names and incorrect spellings/pronunciation which may distort the meaning of a good name should be changed. `Ā'ishah ؓ says that Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to change bad names for good names.

at-Tirmidhī

One of the daughters of `Umar ؓ was named `Aṣyah. Her name meant disobedient, so was changed to Jamilah by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. *Muslim*

Zainab bint Salamah ؓ says "I was named Barrah (meaning pious) and Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Do not claim piety, for Allāh knows who amongst you are pious. Name her Zainab."

Muslim

Names can affect the lives of a person and his descendants. An example is shown in the following Ḥadith.

Sa`id ibn Musayyab ؓ relates from his father, that his grandfather went to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and was asked by the Prophet ﷺ: "What is your name?" he replied: "Ḥuzn." (meaning sorrow). Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "You are Sahl" (meaning ease). He replied: "I will not change the name my father gave me". Sa`id stated: "Thereafter sorrow was always with us." *al-Bukhārī*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ prohibited people from keeping names which contain any element of shirk, like linking `Abd (servant of) to any name other than Allāh's ﷻ. He also forbade pompous and self glorifying names.

Note:

It has become customary in many families to leave the naming of the child to the father's sister. Or in some cases an awkward name is selected from an unknown source. This tradition has no place in Islām or Islāmic teaching and often leads to foolish results which the child is forced to bear.

To anglicise or westernise Islāmic names is an un-Islāmic (sometimes even anti-Islāmic) attitude. Muslims must be proud of their names and faith, not apologetic or ashamed.

If there is a fear that some names will not be pronounced correctly, then it is better to avoid such names. Children should not be called by distorted or westernised names like: Mamed, Mamzy or Mo for Muḥammad, Ammed for Aḥmad, Solly or Sully for Sulaymān, E.B. or lbz for Ibrāhīm, etc, as this is very wrong.

It is also common in our society for people to keep names which may sound nice to them, but in reality have no meaning at all. Such names should not be kept. A name that merely sounds nice but has no meaning is void of any barakah and benefit. An example of such a name is Rukhsanah.

Circumcision (Khatnah) For Boys

The child could be circumcised on the seventh day. It is Mustahabb (desirable) that the Khatnah be performed before the boy is seven years of age. When circumcising, the health of the child must be considered. In any case the Khatnah must be made before the child is twelve years old, and the earlier it is performed the better.

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه relates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ once said:

“Five acts are from Fiṭrah (natural decency), *to get circumcised*, to

remove the pubic hair, to remove the hair under the armpits, to trim or shorten the moustache and to clip the nails." *al-Bukhārī*

ʿAqīqah

It is reported that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "If anyone has a child born to him and wishes to offer a sacrifice on its behalf, he should offer two sheep for a boy and one sheep for a girl." *Abū Dāwūd*

ʿAqīqah means to sacrifice an animal in a display of appreciation of the birth of a child. One animal is sacrificed at the birth of a girl and two at the birth of a boy. This is a Sunnah.

The ʿAqīqah may be included in the shares of a large Qurbānī animal (animal slaughtered at the time of ʿEid al-Aḍḥā), if the birth happens to fall during the Qurbānī period or if the ʿAqīqah is delayed till the Qurbānī days. Two parts should be included for a son and one part for a daughter. For those who cannot afford two animals for the baby son, even one animal will be recognised as ʿAqīqah. If one has no means to sacrifice even this much, then there is no harm.

To make ʿAqīqah and name the child on the seventh day of birth is Mustaḥabb (desirable). If ʿAqīqah is delayed for whatever reason from the seventh day then one should still perform it, if possible on any subsequent seventh day thereafter (14th, 21st etc). If it can only be performed on a day besides these, then there is no harm in performing it on that day.

The conditions regarding the quality and suitability of the ʿAqīqah animal are the same as those of Qurbānī animals.

The ʿAqīqah meat should be distributed amongst the poor but also may be distributed either cooked or uncooked to relatives or friends, who could also be invited to the home to partake from the meat.

ʿAlī ؑ narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ sacrificed a sheep for Ḥasan ؑ and said: "Shave his head and give silver equal to the weight of his hair as Ṣadaqah".

Tirmidhi

Depending on the financial status of a person it is Sunnah to sacrifice two sheep at the birth of a boy and one for a girl (*Tirmidhi*). If however, one does not own so much then he may give one for a boy also. *Tirmidhi*

Clipping the baby's nails

A baby's nails should be clipped so that it can not hurt itself or others by scratching or poking itself in the eyes, which could result in a serious injury.

Breast Feeding

The child has a right to be fed on the mother's milk. This is one of the bounties of the mother for which the Qur'ān emphasises on the child to treat the mother with exceptional love and kindness.

Mother's milk is the natural food for the baby. Almighty Allāh ﷻ sees to it that baby's growth and health are safeguarded by providing the mother with abundance of the most complete food of the baby's needs. Her own breast milk is naturally obtained and needs no preparations. If one were to try to buy something equal to it, its match will never be found.

Denying the child the right to be suckled without any valid reason is unfair and unjust and below the dignity of a mother. Mothers who do not suckle their children due to fear of being deformed and loss of their beauty and shape are no doubt extremely selfish, as the child will be unable to find an alternative to the milk of the mother.

Before breast feeding, one should read Bismillāh, the baby's first feed should be from the right breast.

If a suckling mother has a strong feeling that fasting would be harmful to the baby or to herself, she is permitted to delay her fasts till a later date.

Birthday Parties and Other Celebrations

Islām is not against the concept of having a good time. But it does not approve having a good time in an incorrect manner or for the wrong reasons. Thus the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ is always to be given preference to over one's own wants. Any type of celebration or party wherein there is music, wrong teachings or immorality are considered Ḥarām in Islām. It is Ḥarām to host them and it is Ḥarām to attend.

Regarding birthday parties, the reason for their disapproval is the fact that children (and immature adults) celebrate something that there is no cause to celebrate - becoming closer to death. It is the practice of a people who prefer to ignore death and so is unbecoming of a Muslim to emulate.

An alternative is that instead of having a birthday party, parents should at regular intervals show affection and consideration by arranging family events and outings. Keeping all the rulings of Sharī`ah into consideration, such events are factors which increase family ties.

The rulings are obviously for adults, as children are not held accountable. But the negative effects that will be subconsciously taken in by the children will effect their outlook on religion and life in the future.

RAISING CHILDREN

Pre-Infancy

This is the stage when a child is unable to speak or walk. Medical research has found out that despite the child at this stage not understanding anything, it still has an ability to imitate the things it sees or perceives around it.

At this stage the parents have to be additionally careful that they do not do or say anything which is contrary to Islām. Vulgar language and music, TV and fighting/arguing, are all noticed by the child and remembered.

Many pious people have mentioned that the constant reciting of the Qur'ān and the engaging in Dhikr and `Ibādah by the parents in front of the child has a positive influence on the copycat infant.

Infancy

The first words spoken by the child are usually hailed with great symbolism and joy. Although it is not an occasion of celebration, Islām has still given it some distinction, in the form of teaching.

When the child begins talking he should first be made to recite the kalimah:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ

LĀ ILĀHA ILLAL-LĀHU MUḤAMMADUR RASŪLUL-LĀH

"There is none worthy of worship but Allāh, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh".

The kalimah should be taught (and its meaning) so that from the very beginning the child has a clear idea and belief in the oneness of Almighty Allāh ﷻ and the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ.

In short parents should try to draw their child's attention towards Allāh ﷻ from the earliest opportunity. Parents should inculcate true belief in their children that Allāh ﷻ is the giver and performer of everything and so teach children to recite Bismillah before doing anything. Children should be told that if they act upon this, they will be successful in what they are doing. Also in this way, Inshā-Allāh, the quality of taqwā (consciousness of Allāh ﷻ) would come into them. Parents must explain that we are in this world only for a short while, for a test. Therefore we should not get attached to the worldly things.

Moreover, children should be taught the Ad`iyah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ of all different occasions e.g. going to bed, eating, drinking, wearing clothes, going to the toilet etc.

Parents should ensure that the Qur'ān is taught to their children from a young age. It is a fact that in childhood the memory is at its best. Anything memorised at that time is seldom forgotten. If children are made to memorise the Qur'ān, they will be able to do so very easily.

Many times this valuable ability of childhood is wasted in memorising nursery rhymes (which have wrong underlying meanings) like Jack and Jill, Baa Baa Black Sheep etc, instead of teaching them things of value which will benefit them.

Alqamah (R.A.) used to say that the knowledge acquired during youth sits as clearly in the mind as writing on paper.

The lesson here is that during childhood, the power to memorise things is generally extremely strong, (this is not true in all children, so it

is first essential to ascertain one's child's memory capacity). This opportunity should be used to benefit the child as much as possible.

Practical advice: Teach the children their names, the names of their parents and grandparents as well as their addresses. Ask them about these sporadically, so that they don't forget. In the event of them getting lost, they will be able to state their identity to the one who finds them.

At this stage parents must remember that children are receptive to their role models. So, as funny as it may sound, parents should, therefore, always be on their best behaviour in front of their children.

The mother and father should play with and show as much affection as possible to the child during the course of the day. In this way the child will be brought up in a healthy environment. Children need to be praised every now and again for their achievements and good behaviour. Some parents find it difficult to voice their approval or praise the child. However, there are other ways of expressing approval as well - a smile, caress or a kiss all convey approval. All these acts of love are essential for producing children who are healthy in mind and body. It is for this reason that our Shari`ah lays considerable stress on showing love and affection to children. Don't be always sour-faced, stern looking or a hard master. Be affectionate towards your children, run your hand lovingly over their heads, take them in your lap and play with them. A sour, unwelcoming attitude does not generate sincere love in children for their parents, but instead retards their natural development and destroys self-confidence.

Once Āqra` ibn Ḥābis ؓ presented himself before Rasūlullāh ﷺ who, in front of him, kissed a child on the forehead. Āqra` ؓ was astonished to see this and said: "O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, you kiss children? I have ten children, yet I have never kissed any of them". Rasūlullāh ﷺ looked at

Aqra ؓ and said: "He who shows no mercy receives no mercy."

al-Bukhāri and Muslim

`Āmir ؓ held an important post during the caliphate of `Umar ؓ. He saw that `Umar ؓ was lying down and some children were climbing onto his chest and some were playing with him. `Āmir ؓ was displeased to see this. `Umar ؓ guessed from the wrinkles on his forehead and asked `Āmir ؓ how he treated his own children. `Āmir ؓ explaining his views said: "Leader of the faithful! Whenever I enter the house, everybody is put to silence". `Umar ؓ spoke with great regret and said: "`Āmir, how unfortunate is it that even being a Muslim you do not know that you should treat your kith and kin with affection and kindness"

Children should be treated with sympathy and consideration at all times and their requirements should be satisfied as far as possible. This will not only make them happy but will also develop sentiments of obedience and service in them.

Once Mu`āwiyah ؓ asked Aḥnaf ibn Qays ؓ how one's offspring should be treated? The companion of Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Leader of the Faithful! Our offsprings are the fruits of our desires. They are props for our backs. They are from the earth which is soft and harmless, our existence for them is like the sky which provides them with cover (protection) and through them we are able to perform their tasks.

"Thus if they ask for something, give it to them generously and if they feel sad try to make them happy. As a result of this they will develop love for you and appreciate your paternal affection. Never place or become yourself an unbearable burden upon them lest they become disgusted with you and even desire your demise and dislike your association."

The love and affection for children is a test for their parents. Rasūlullāh

ﷻ emphasised that one should keep one's love and affection for children within normal and reasonable limits and should not let it become a hindrance in the way of Allāh's ﷻ Dīn. Allāh ﷻ has created love in the hearts of parents and has also warned them to be careful of their children. This warning is given due to the fact that these very children sometimes bring destruction to their parents.

Advice: It is essential that the child gets used to others so that in case the mother is taken ill the child will not find it difficult to adapt to someone else's care.

Advice: Do not try to quieten the child by saying things that would frighten him like: "The police will catch you", etc. This can result in making the child a coward or at least a very easily intimidated person. It weakens the child and makes him insecure. Childhood fears and apprehensions often affect one subconsciously even in adulthood. Such children are usually rendered incapable of achieving success in life. To keep the child quiet, true and correct things should be told to the child. The mother should not fear the child's crying as this is normal for a child. If however, the crying is due to any pain, then treatment should be sought immediately.

Importance Of Education

As already established, education starts early. The first few years are extremely important and rightly called the formative years of life. Unfortunately, many parents fail to give the age of infancy the importance it deserves. At this age the child is in a pure state. Parents think that the child neither understands nor learns anything, and so they do not mind uttering obscenities, bad language and abuse in front of the child. However, all such things get inscribed on the tender heart and mind of the child.

Therefore, parents should always use good language and speak of good things in front of the child. They should particularly divert their attention to Islāmic things, for Allāh ﷻ says: "With Him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none know of but He. He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a Record clear." (6:59). If Islāmic beliefs, like these are spoken of day and night and at all suitable occasions in front of the child, these Islāmic teachings will be inscribed upon that pure mind so firmly that they will not be erasable from it, even when the child reaches old age.

What we can clearly deduce from the above is that this stage should never be under-rated. Schools like to drill into young minds all sorts of general knowledge, they have grasped the concept of the absorbing nature of an infant mind. It would be sheer stupidity and a blatant neglect of our duty towards the child, in not creating a proper Islāmic environment.

Every child has the right of Islāmic education and being taught good manners upon their parents. This in turn will ensure that they lead a proper Islāmic life and be saved from hardships in this world, and more importantly, they will be safe from the hardships of the Hereafter.

The Qur'ān says:

"O you who believe, save yourself and your family from a fire, the fuel of which is men and stones." Sūrah at-Taḥrīm

Saving your family from Allāh's punishment means to give them good education and good manners. Therefore to make one's children's lives successful according to the standards set by Islām, parents must train and educate them. Parents should carry out this duty with wisdom,

affection, patience and steadfastness. By doing this, their position will be exalted in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ, and their status will be raised in society.

Advice: Always bear in mind that the child is not the same as you. While you may have learnt all your lessons effortlessly, never expect this from your child. Always assume that the child needs help. And always be there to offer this help to the child without doing the child's work for him.

If you impart Dīnī education to the children and on growing up they live according to Allāh's pleasure and bring others (e.g. their children in turn) towards such a life, you as the parents will be rewarded for all these things continuously in the Hereafter by Allāh ﷻ for their efforts.

Abū Hurayrah ؓ said: "When a person dies, his deeds also come to an end. But there are three things which continue to obtain reward from Allāh ﷻ on his behalf: the first, an ongoing act of charity set up for the benefit of people which continues to benefit people; the second, knowledge which is continuously benefiting people; the third, pious children who continue to pray for his forgiveness." *Muslim*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "The parents of a person who acquired extensive knowledge of the Qur'ān and practised accordingly will be crowned on the day of Qiyāmah and this crown will shine more brilliantly than the sun if it were to be in your homes." *Abū Dāwūd, al-Hākim*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "The parents of a person who studied, learned and practised the Qur'ān will wear a shining crown which will shine like the sun. They will also wear such precious robes, which will be more valuable than the accumulated riches of the world." *al-Hākim*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Everyone of you is a shepherd and everyone of you will be answerable for his flock". *al-Bukhārī*

The mother in particular is responsible for the correct upbringing of the child. It is stated in a Ḥadīth about the mother: "she is a shepherdess in the house of her husband and of their children, and she is answerable".

al Bukhārī

Basic Islāmīc education and good morals can only be taught and practised at home. Therefore the first madrasah for the child is the mother's lap. The mother contributes the greatest share and plays the best role in the early training and education of her children.

By imparting Dīnī knowledge to their children, the parent's positions will be exalted in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ, and their status will accordingly be raised. It has been said that the best gift which a father can give to his children is that of (beneficial) education and good manners.

In another Ḥadīth it is mentioned that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "He who guides to Islām (i.e. good deeds) receives reward for all who act upon it, without their reward being decreased in the least, and he who leads away from Islām (i.e. bad deeds) is sinful for all who act upon it, without their sins being lessened.

Muslim

If parents bring up their children according to Islāmīc teachings, they will be regarded as *Ṣadaqah Jāriyah* (ongoing charity). And on the other hand, if the parent did not impart religious education, it can be regarded as *Sayyi'āt Jāriyah*, meaning that whatever evil the children do, the parents will also be punished for it after their deaths.

The incident of `Umar ؓ which was stated earlier, when he rejected the case of a complaining father for failing in his duties towards his son, should also be borne in mind.

Thus Rasūlullāh ﷺ has induced that parents should make their children learn and practice the Qur'ān. The underlying reason for this is that if a child should lack religious education, he/she will not be able to

understand and appreciate the Islāmic way of life. It is important for every child to adopt the habit of living according to true Islāmic teachings acquired. It also implies that parents who neglect the education and training of their children will be questioned and punished for their negligence.

Virtuous children will pray for the welfare of their deceased parents. In any event, the effort to make children virtuous in itself is a deed of perpetual benefit and, as long as they do good deeds, the parents will keep receiving the blessings automatically. Their prayers for the benefit of their parent will be an additional permanent treasure for them.

Importance Of Ṣalāh

The Aḥādith are very clear in illustrating the importance of Ṣalāh. It thus stands to reason that the Prophet ﷺ has also laid emphasis on instilling the importance of Ṣalāh in children from a young age.

The Prophet ﷺ has outlined that when the child reaches the age of seven they should be instructed (with love and affection) to perform their Ṣalāh. And when they reach the age of ten they should be pressed (again with sincere love and affection, not blindly beaten) to perform Ṣalāh.

Abū Dāwūd

Girls should be encouraged to pray at home with their mothers at the correct times with all relating masā'il. Boys from the age of ten should be brought to the masjid with their fathers and taught the Masā'il (laws) relevant to them.

Cleanliness And Personal Hygiene

As Ṣalāh is only complete if performed with cleanliness, it is also of utmost importance that the child is taught about personal hygiene from a very early age.

Children should repeatedly be told that Muslims must stay clean at all times, and if they become dirty then they should immediately clean themselves, as cleanliness is half of Īmān. Parents should always keep their children clean, as this also contributes to good health and barakah.

Children should be potty-trained as soon as they can grasp the concept. If an accident occurs, they should be reminded of where they must go and relieve themselves in a firm manner. If the child needs help in getting to the potty then the child should be instructed to ask without fear.

If accidents continue to happen after being shown once or twice, the child should be reprimanded and made to understand that this is not acceptable behaviour.

Some parents beat their children so severely and reprimand them so harshly for relieving themselves at the wrong place that the poor child holds back when he needs to relieve himself for prolonged periods of time, which can lead to health problems.

Young children should be asked at regular intervals if they want to go to the toilet. In this way the child will learn to tell someone when he wants to go to the toilet.

At the time of istinjā', parents should make sure that the child does not sit facing or have his/her back directed towards the Qiblah.

Clothing

The best and most appropriate clothes for Muslims to wear will always be those that are closest to the spirit of the Sunnah.

Of colours liked or recommended for males, white is best. Green and also black are also colours favoured by the Prophet. Red and its variants, especially crimson, have been strongly disliked for males. This same principle would apply to any colour generally considered a "girls'" colour. All other colours are otherwise permissible.

Silk is not permitted for men to wear neither is gold or jewellery. Some people seem to think that only gold is disallowed, and other types of jewellery are permitted. This is not true. The only item of jewellery that men can wear is a silver ring. This too has its conditions. Besides this all other jewellery, regardless of what type of metal it consists of, is prohibited for men.

For women all colours are permitted, although black is best for the Ḥijāb. Besides this, silk is also permitted and so too is gold jewellery. Despite their permissibility, women are still recommended to exercise caution as extravagance in anything is something one will be questioned regarding.

Having said this, it is accepted that there is no forced uniform when it comes to what we may wear. Islām in this regard is very open accommodates local customs and culture. There are however certain guidelines that should be adhered to. Generally these are:

- The dress must not resemble the dress of the people of any other religion.
- The clothes must conceal the ʿawrah (parts of the body which may not be revealed before others). For males this is the area below the navel which stretches to include the knees. For females it includes the torso as well in front of close family members. In the presence of non-Maḥrams (people who a female can get married to) for girls who have past puberty, this extends to include the entire body besides the face, hands (until the wrists), and feet (until the ankles).

- Silk and jewellery cannot be worn by males except for a silver ring.
- Clothes containing pictures of living things (animals or humans; real or fictitious), are not permitted.
- Clothes should not be ludicrously expensive or extravagant.
- Clothes must not resemble those worn by the opposite sex.

Discipline

While corrective measures are essential in providing children with a good upbringing, it was never the practice of the Messenger of Allāh to hit a child.

Of course, this does not mean that children are to be left free to run amuck, but that disciplining a child is not by any means restricted to physical punishments. Constantly screaming and hitting a child - that is venting ones rage on the child - is not only a cruel abuse of authority which will have to be answered before Allāh, but is also detrimental to the child-parent relationship (which materialises in rebellion and estrangement in later years) and can lead to lasting scars on the child's development. Moreover, this type of response from parents soon becomes ineffective as a corrective measure in the long run as children become immune to their parents' tirades and just 'switch off'.

Parents must try to incorporate some sort of system that the child knows, understands and to an extent, fears. This will prove very effective in controlling the child.

Even manual punishments like writing lines or essays can be a very effective technique in keeping the child away from trouble. Start off small (1 page) going upwards if needed - This will have the benefit of improving hand-writing or typing speed. (Note: Do not give lines to type as they can be copy/pasted, and make sure if they are being made to write essays and need internet access that they are monitored.)

Physical exercises and chores are another option. Again common sense must be exercised in determining the size and nature assigned. Grounding the child or otherwise depriving him or her of certain privileges, as well as 'time out' or making the child sit alone in a quiet place to think over their actions (for no more than 10 minutes) are excellent alternatives for resolving unacceptable behaviour. Care must be taken to ensure such measures do not become meaningless by overdoing them or administering them too often or on the slightest pretexts.

If the voice has to be raised, then it should neither be excessive, nor should it be done unnecessarily. Most of the time, a hard silence is more of a punishment for a child than constant screaming.

Under no circumstances must a parent swear at, hurl verbal abuses towards, or curse the child. There is never any benefit in this. Instead of rectifying the child, this will only decay his/her moral outlook and manners. More over the child will see the parents' foul mouthing as a justification for the child to develop its own habit.

It is very important to realise that disciplining children is at least as much about recognising and commending good actions and achievements as it is about correcting misbehaviour. Parents must therefore make an equally great point of meriting and rewarding their children as they do of handing out punishments. It is through a balance of privileges and restrictions that children learn to appreciate the link between rights and responsibilities and the consequences of their actions.

The Child's Company

This is a massively important section, which is all-too-often ignored by the parents. Parents must ensure that their child only adopts company

of those children who are a good influence for them and for whom they are a good influence themselves.

If from a young age, parents discipline their children to only base their friendship on Islām and Islāmic teaching, mere explanation from them that a particular person is a bad influence, will be enough for the child to detach him or herself from the rotten apple.

Parents must understand that the character and views of the companion(s) of their children will be huge factors in forming their character. Good characteristics in friends will improve the child. Bad characteristics and carefreeness will destroy the child and his/her potential.

Choosing the right company is ultimately a decision that the child will make, and forcing the child will inevitably cause him/her to act behind the parents' backs. If the child is educated correctly with love, then he/she will see the value of choosing wisely.

Pre-Teens

This is when the child starts showing understanding towards the environment surrounding him/her. Children should be given small responsibilities to get accustomed to such things. If they fulfil these responsibilities they must be congratulated, praised and further encouraged. This will boost morale, develop self esteem and build confidence in the child. A child needs all of these qualities. If they do not fulfil the responsibilities, first stop and think that are these responsibilities too great for the child, (remembering that all children are different). Then accordingly either commiserate the child or express disappointment and advise the child how to do better. Do not ever mindlessly vent anger at the child either physically or verbally, as this does not achieve anything.

IMPORTANT: This stage is very delicate. Parents must realise one very important rule:

***Do not be too lax so as to spoil the child,
nor too strict so as to make them hate you.***

This rule is extremely inclusive in what it teaches. One important teaching is that when one is asked for something from the child, either grant it straight away, or give them a date and fulfil it then. If one refuses then one should not be affected by any tantrums that the child may throw. In this situation the parents should scold the child for throwing a tantrum and not listening. If one bends to these tantrums it is the fastest way of irreversibly spoiling the child. This caution applies to the entire upbringing of the child.

Bulūgh - reaching puberty (adolescence)

This is a period of time which is very awkward for children if they do not receive guidance or help from their parents. Sadly many parents are so oblivious to this stage of their children's lives that it is almost as if they refuse to believe that such a stage exists.

Things which the child needs to really appreciate at this stage include:

- that they are now accountable before the Creator for their actions, big or small, done openly or in secret.
- that free mixing with the opposite sex outside of one's Maḥārim is a sin and the clear reasons for that.
- the importance of abiding by all of the commandments of Allāh that now relate to them (e.g. observing the laws of Ḥijāb as they apply to both boys and girls).
- the importance of being responsible of their duties towards others and of being considerate of those around them.

Religious Accountability

From this age onwards the child must be taught that certain requisites are now incumbent on them. They should have been taught from an early age why they offer Ṣalāh and why they fast. Now they should be taught of the retribution for missing these duties.

Separation Of The Sexes

Before this time the children may have been moving freely between men and women. As the children approach puberty, they should be lead away from mixing with the opposite sex. Upon reaching puberty the reason for this should be explained to them. The concept of the different roles of men and women should gradually be explained also.

Female Roles And Duties

Girls also are to have an education, which slightly differs to that of boys. They are to be taught all the essentials of the home as well as whatever secular education they may wish to acquire.

Although the concept of women wanting an education may seem foreign to some, as long as there is strict adherence to Islāmic guidelines in both mannerism and content, as well as no immoral actions, then there is no harm in studying in fact in some cases it should be promoted. But to this it should be further stipulated that only such subjects should be taken up by the girl that are to be beneficial to her and to Islām and Muslims in general. Thus certain subjects, like medicine, are encouraged, while others are wrong for both boys and girls to study if they undermine their moral and Islāmic development.

Parents should see that if the girl is comfortable in the Ḥijāb then it is worth allowing her further studies. But for more reasons than can be noted, she should not be sent away from home to study.

The importance of the Ḥijāb is unquestionable and also its practicality is undoubtable. Parents need not impose Ḥijāb on their daughters, if correct education is given, and the correct frame of mind is made, they will eagerly wear the Ḥijāb out of their own accord.

The mother should also explain to the daughter the harms of getting into relationships with the opposite sex. She must warn of the heart break and hurt that follows what she may feel is, “the perfect relationship”. Also make sure that the daughter learns the lesson as to why Islām prohibits it (the displeasure of Allāh ﷻ, as well as practical reasons), and what the punishments are for those who indulge in such Ḥarām acts.

Male Roles And Duties

Boys (and their parents) seem to think that the chores of the house are for the girls only. Thus they do not contribute towards the general upkeep of the family home. Many boys sadly enslave their sisters to do everything for them, (cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, ironing etc). This is very wrong. Boys should initially be taught that it is their duty to help in the chores. The parents can show the male offspring that this was even the practice of the Prophet ﷺ. If they are lazy or refuse to do their share, they should, with wisdom, be ordered to do their part in helping everyone at home.

Many parents seem to think that there is a lot less effort needed in raising boys. This is untrue. The upbringing of boys is just as delicate as that of girls. This is proven by the fact that negligence in them can bring about results as disastrous as those caused by negligence in girls.

As the child grows older he needs from his father a friend as well as a role model. Friendship offered by the father should not be in what the father thinks of as fun, but rather within limits what the child thinks.

The father will enjoy the confidence of his son much more if he gets off his pedestal and becomes his son's best friend. This will leave no space for the child to do anything behind his father's back, as he will always turn to his father for advice.

The father should also explain to the son the harms of getting into relationships with the opposite sex. If the problem is dealt with in this way the child will be more protected from the immoral slogans around them, such as, "Don't have sex before marriage, but if you have a condom it's okay." The parents must make a lasting mark on their children's ideology before these kind of messages reach them - which needs to be earlier than most imagine e.g. around the age of 12 not 16.

The father should also try to get the son involved in crafts at home with him. His becoming accustomed to such things as D.I.Y. and repairing small things here and there is full of practical benefits, provided that the child is always supervised and not given beyond his capacity. (e.g. power-tools obviously should not be introduced to 7 year olds).

Responsibility And Accountability

It is accepted that children get into trouble and break things when they are young. Some parents seem to think that if the child gets into trouble they should still not be punished. This is wrong.

Many people are so narrow-minded and will jump to their child's defence in every instance, even if they are blatantly wrong. This is the quickest way to make the child immoral or even worse, a criminal. It is understandable that parents don't want to see their children in tears or in trouble, but this does not justify taking their side if they are wrong or have done something wrong.

Women especially seem to be prone to this. One must remember that

it is better to punish the child if they have done something wrong and see them sad for a few moments, than let them get away with doing wrong and put them on the road to getting into serious trouble and long lasting misery later on. If one adopts a lax attitude in this then unknowingly you will be helping your child become a thief, liar, bully or whatever else they can get away with.

Always remember that our little angels in devilry cannot still be little angels.

One must however also be wary of grabbing the other end of the stick. This is, if any complaint is made regarding one's child then, without listening to the child to beat and scold him/her.

One must remember to be a fair judge over the child, by listening to their side of the story before making any decision. This should be in all circumstances, and with one's child it should be a priority.

One must remember that children may be truthful in what they say. The following example is a famous example of this.

During the campaign against Banū Muṣṭaliq in 5 A.H. a Muhājir (immigrant from Makkah) had an argument with an Anṣārī (host in Madinah) over some trivial matter. Each called his own people to help him. And with the gathering of people increasing, there was a serious danger of a fight breaking out between the two groups. But eventually through the efforts of the Messenger of Allāh, this was averted.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy was the chief of the Munāfiqūn (hypocrites). He was a very bitter enemy of Islām. As he posed to be a Muslim he was treated with respect by the Muslims. When he came to know of this incident, he started to curse Rasūlullāh ﷺ and swear at him. And exploiting the situation he ridiculed his people saying: "All this is the

result of your own doings. You provide refuge to these strangers in your town and shared your wealth equally with them. If you withdraw your help from them they will be obliged to go back".

He further cried: "By God! On returning to Madīnah we, the exalted people of Madīnah, shall drive these ignoble people out".

Zayd ibn Arqam ؓ, an Anṣārī boy, heard him say all this. He could not control himself to tolerate these words and at once screamed at the older man: "By Allāh! You are the ignoble one. Your own people look down upon you. Nobody will support you. Muḥammad ﷺ is the most honoured. He has been exalted by Allāh ﷻ and he is revered by all".

ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy was furious but, being forced to back down, yielded: "All right. But don't mention this to anyone. It was a joke. I was not serious in what I said."

Zayd ؓ however went straight to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and narrated to him what had transpired. ʿUmar ؓ flew into a towering rage and sought Rasūlullāh's ﷺ permission to kill ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed him to have patience.

When ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy learnt that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had received word about what had happened, he came to him and swore an oath by Allāh ﷻ saying: "I could never have said such a thing. Zayd is a liar. He has lied to you and has given a false report."

A few of the Anṣār were with Rasūlullāh ﷺ at that time. They, not knowing the truth, sided with the hypocrite, pleading his case saying: "O Rasūlullāh ﷺ! This is the chief of the clan. He is a man of high standing. His statement is more reliable than the report of a mere boy. It is entirely possible that Zayd may have misheard or misunderstood him."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ accepted this and took no further action against him. When Zayd ؓ found out that the Munāfiq had succeeded in beguiling Rasūlullāh ﷺ through false oaths, he refused to come out of his house due to the shame of being considered a liar by everyone. He would not even go to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Ultimately, Allāh ﷻ regarding this, revealed the sūrah *al-Munāfiqūn* (the hypocrites) in which the report of Zayd ؓ was confirmed and the liar was exposed. After this everyone began to honour Zayd ؓ and look down upon the Munāfiq.

Teens

Yes this is the time when most children change their minds and outlooks faster than their parents can keep up. Again the secret is to work with the children rather than try to enslave them.

Children at this stage should be given more and more responsibilities to keep them occupied and off the streets and develop maturity, as well as be allowed to freedom to pursue the things they enjoy within the bounds of the Dīn. This is also the best way of keeping them out of trouble and away from bad friends without being prohibitive. But for this to be affective, one must not overdo it. If this is overdone then it too will have terrible effects. Always give the child enough breathing space to relax with friends who are beneficial to the child. Children should be allowed to enjoy themselves in a constructive manner, provided that they are punctual on all the Islāmic requirements which are binding upon them.

Parents at this stage should be extremely vigilant on their children, without being overtly paranoid. If it is noticed that the child is in the possession of unaccounted wealth, (e.g. money, mobile phones, expensive trainers, expensive clothes, etc) then parents must not hesitate to ask about its source. Some parents inadvertently accept gifts/luxuries from their children without enquiring of its source. This

may be bribery from their children and also their method of trying to justify what they may be doing. Many times (although we do emphasise, not every time) we cannot comprehend just how wrong this Hārah source of income can be.

Young Adulthood

As the child matures intellectually one must stop treating them like small children. If one treats them like small children then one of two negative effects are bound to be resultant.

The first is that the child may grow intolerant of this degrading treatment and start to rebel against everything regarding the parents, in an attempt to rebel against this authoritarian behaviour.

The second is that the child gets so used to being treated as if they cannot be expected to bear any responsibility that the child will become unwilling or totally incapable of accepting any responsibility.

Note: Under no circumstances should this be misunderstood to mean that the children are now free to do as they wish. The harms of being given complete free reign are more numerous than can be noted. Parents should try to understand that the child should be given enough rope to develop but no way near enough to hang themselves.

Marriage

In the society that we are subject to, only the really blind would say that we do not have a problem regarding the youth and their inter-sex (and unfortunately even same sex) relationships. Parents are facing a war with ever increasingly rebellious children refusing to listen to even the most blatantly beneficial advice.

One method of resolving this situation is reverting to the original solution given by the beloved of Allāh ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ. That is: as soon as the children are of age, get them married.

This will no doubt put seem completely unrealistic to most readers as they in their wildest dreams cannot imagine their little 20 year olds attempting to stand on their own two feet. But this is unavoidably and undeniably the surest way to calm the urges of a sex-hungry youth in a free-sex society.

Judge for yourselves: is it more palatable for our children to engage in sex outside marriage with some unknown person(s) behind our backs, or that under parental guidance and support, the joining of two young people takes place in a legal and honourable way.

Due to customs and ideologies dictating that people should not get married before twenty-five, many of our youth are stuck in the mud of sexual confusion.

The sexual urges of a young adult can be enormous. It can possibly be controlled until marriage, but not all can control them. So what are the options available to them? Some take to masturbation. This, despite its evils and dangers, is probably the least dangerous. Some will take to pornography, which is disastrously easy to obtain from many different channels. Others will go one step further and resort to having “friends of the opposite sex who are “only friends”. It doesn’t take much to go one step further still and have sex with those who were only a week ago “only friends”. Some, especially those who are given too much freedom, resort to prostitutes for fulfilling their urges. This problem is not restricted to males or even male-female relations, as being pressurised into not keeping girlfriends/boyfriends can resort to same-sex orientated activities just to find a channel to release sexual urges.

This is all resultant of those backward customs that force the young to unnecessarily wait years before being able to settle down in marriage. If they were given the opportunity to channel their sexual needs through a legitimate medium, then the vices that we witness stemming from marriage's forced postponement, would almost certainly be completely crushed.

Parents should ideally have developed such a relationship with their children that if there is anyone they would like to marry, they would have the confidence to approach them. In case they don't, however, it is essential that parents speak to their children and ask them if there is anyone they have in mind. If there is, it is a parent's obligation to consider their children's choice fairly and Islāmically, and not to reject merely on the grounds of not meeting cultural or materialistic standards. It needs to be remembered that Islām demands the consent of the girl and boy, and not the parents on either side, for a Nikāḥ to be valid. This is for a reason: marriage is ultimately about them.

If the child's proposal is unacceptable for a legitimate reason, like the person being irreligious or immoral, they should explain the reasons for their refusal in a calm manner without losing their temper, while also turning to Allāh earnestly to guide the child's heart.

The Prophet did say, though, that "love for a thing can turn one blind and deaf."
Abū Dāwūd

There are some unfortunate instances when young people fall so blindly in 'love' that they become completely deaf to all good advice given to them by sincere well-wishers. If this is the unhappy situation with one's child, the parents, to whom Allāh has granted the wisdom of years and experience, must at all costs keep hold of reason. There is absolutely no sense in vehemently opposing the wishes of one's child to marry somebody if that will result in them running away together to

marry anyway or, even worse, live together in Ḥarām. As long as the marriage would be valid Islāmically, parents in these situations should come to a compromise with their children, agreeing to give the wedding their blessings if the child and their spouse will live by the guidance of Islām. This is sometimes the only way to prevent losing one's child and prevent them from losing their Dīn. While clearly a difficult proposition for a parent to concede to, taking this step for the sake of Allāh would reap one enormous rewards in this world and the next.

Parting Advice

The final phase of a parent's relationship with their child is once their own child has married. Parents need to be aware of how their behaviour must now be towards the child and his/her spouse.

While many parents feel the need to continually remind the married offspring that they are their parents by asserting authority over them and their family, the Dīn insists that they are given their own space to develop and make decisions. This is the reason the wife has the Islāmic right to ask for accommodation separate from her in-laws' (provided the husband can afford it or can make arrangements for it, otherwise she still has a right to a room where she will be afforded full privacy). Parents must respect these needs of the newly-weds and be supportive friends for them now, rather than prying burdens.

The in-laws (especially mothers-in-law) must understand that daughter-in-law is not another word for slave of the family. Allow the husband and wife to develop a good, strong relationship so that they form a healthy, loving family unit towards you as parents and towards your grandchildren. Do not place the new and still unstable relationship under undue stress by being overbearing.

Epilogue

As stated previously, this book is a very general guide and not the final word. The parents themselves need to be the best judges in determining what methods are best for their situation and when to utilise them.

The subject of upbringing children is not something that is read and memorised and acted upon to the letter. It is rather an entire occupation in which parents have to experiment and find the best methods for themselves and their children to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming people who love their Creator and lead lives of submission to His guidance. Surely Allāh is the best of objectives and attaining Him is itself the greatest reward.

May our parenting experience be a reflection of the Qur'ānic Du`ā':

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

RABBANĀ HAB LANĀ MIN AZWĀJINĀ WA DHUR-RIY-YĀTINĀ
QURRATA 'A'YUN. WAJ'ALNĀ LIL-MUTTAQĪNA IMĀMĀ.

*"Our Lord! grant us in our spouses and offspring the joy of our eyes.
And make us leading examples for the righteous." al-Furqān 25:74*

Āmīn!

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Please take note of the table below as our transliteration method may be different to those adopted by others.

The transliterated symbols are unvarying in pronunciation, e.g. the representation “s” will remain pronounced as “s” and not distort to “z” in any circumstance, e.g. Islām is *not* pronounced Izlām.

While every effort has been made to ensure the transliteration is as close to the Arabic as possible, no alphabet can ever fully represent another.

This is all the more true where recitation of Qur’ānic verses is concerned as this must adhere to the very precise science of Tajwīd. It is therefore imperative that the readers do not consider a transliteration a substitute for learning to read Arabic correctly from a competent teacher.

VOWELS

A / a	SHORT “A” AS IN “AGO”	I / i	SHORT “I” AS IN “SIT”
Ā / ā	LONG “A” AS IN “HAT”	Ī / ī	LONG VOWEL AS IN “SEE”
AY or AI	DIPHTHONG AS IN “PAGE”	AW or AU	DIPHTHONG AS IN “HOME”
‘	ABRUPT START/PAUSE DOES NOT OCCUR IN ENGLISH	U / u	SHORT “U” AS IN “PUT”
		Ū / ū	LONG VOWEL AS IN “FOOD”

CONSONANTS

ب	B	“B” NO “H” ATTACHED	ض	Ḍ	“DH” USING SIDES OF THE TONGUE
ت	T	“T” NO “H” ATTACHED	ط	Ṭ	“T” WITH RAISED TONGUE
ث	TH	“TH” AS IN THIN	ظ	Ẓ	“TH” AS IN THEN, SOUND IS WITH RAISED TONGUE
ح	Ḥ	“H” GUTTURAL SOUND	ع	‘	GUTTURAL SOUND - ACCOMPANIES VOWEL
خ	KH	“KH” VERY GUTTURAL NO TONGUE USAGE	غ	GH	“GH” VERY GUTTURAL NO TONGUE USAGE
د	D	“D” NO “H” ATTACHED	ق	Q	“K” WITH BACK OF TONGUE RAISED
ذ	DH	“TH” AS IN THEN	و	W	“W” READ - NOT SILENT
س	S	“S” ONLY - NOT “Z”	ي	Y	“Y” ONLY - NOT “I”
ش	SH	“SH” AS IN SHIN			
ص	Ṣ	“S” WITH RAISED TONGUE			

Note: Double consonants must be pronounced with emphasis on both letters without pause, e.g. **ALLĀHUMMA** should be read **AL-LĀHUM-MA**.

SYMBOLS

SUBHĀNAHŪ WA TA`ĀLĀ FOR ALLAH “GLORIFIED AND EXALTED IS HE”	ṢALLALLĀHU `ALAYHI WA SALLAM FOR MUHAMMAD “PEACE BE UPON HIM”
RAḌĪYAL-LĀHU `ANHU FOR COMPANIONS “ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HIM”	`ALAYHIS-SALĀM FOR PROPHETS “PEACE BE UPON THEM”