

Dear Mu'mins!

Allah, the Exalted, created the human as a worthy being, who is pure and ready to be educated. Therefore, humans have been given talents, which can be utilized for both righteous or damaging deeds. Our dear Prophet (S.a.W.) informed us that human spiritual characteristics, such as the heart, mind, and conscience, are shaped according to the religious and cultural environment in which the individual has been raised. The following ayah in the Quran emphasizes the abilities that are given as a blessing from Allah (S.w.T.): "It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when ye knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affections: that ye may give thanks (to Allah)."¹ Therefore, as they differ from other creatures, humans must develop their abilities and skills, which are potentially inherent, through an educational process, and cultivate these abilities and skills to a satisfactory level.

Allah (S.w.T.) informs us that it is our responsibility to prepare our children for this world and for the hereafter through the following ayah in the Quran: "O ye who believe! save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded."² Similarly, Allah's Messenger (S.a.W.) warns us that this duty shall never be neglected through the following hadith: "A father leaves his child nothing better than a good education and morals."³

Dear Mumins!

If we look at how Allah's Messenger (S.a.W.) dealt with children, and what He taught about the upbringing of these children, we understand that a child's upbringing must start with the birth, or even before the birth. According to Aisha (r.ah)'s explanation, the Prophet (S.a.W.) recommended that we should pray for a newborn baby and ask for a righteous and prosperous lifetime for him or her.⁴ Furthermore, Allah's Messenger (S.a.W.)

ordered that the first sounds read to a newborn baby's ears shall be 'azan and iqamah (takbir)'. When his grandsons Hasan (r.a.) and Hussein (r.a.) were born, he read azan to their right ears, and iqamah to the left ears.⁵ This tradition is a good sign, showing the necessity of not neglecting the child's education and the importance of introducing religious values, even from the first day of his or her life in this world. Another important point, to which Allah's messenger attributed special importance, is 'to give a good name' to the newborn baby. Regarding the naming, He tells in the following hadith, "On the Day of Resurrection, you will be called by your names and your fathers names, so make your names good."⁶

Esteemed

Mumins!

Our dear Prophet (S.a.W.)'s methodology of explaining 'religious values' to the children started from the easy and fundamentals and gradually continued to

more difficult sections and details. Therefore, we should give priority to explaining the principles of iman (faith), which are the fundamentals of the religion. One of the Prophet's (S.a.W.) companions, Jundab b. Abdullah informs us that the companions learned the principles of faith before learning the Quran, thus enhancing their faith, and afterwards they started learning the Quran.⁷ After teaching the principles of faith, the Prophet gave special importance to teaching the daily prayers, advising believers to gradually start teaching their children how to pray when they are seven years old, so that they can become accustomed to this practice.⁸ Another important step about teaching the religion to children, which our Prophet (S.a.W.) emphasized, is teaching the Holy Quran. He advised His companion Anas b. Malik (r.a.) as follows: "My son! Do not neglect reciting the Quran. (Do not forget that) Quran gives life to the dead hearts, and saves the human from bad deeds and transgression"⁹



¹ Nahl, 16/78

² Tahrîm, 66/6

³ Tirmizi, Birr 33

⁴ Buharî, Daavât 31

⁵ Ebû Dâvud, Edeb 107

⁶ Ebû Dâvud, Edeb 61

⁷ İbn Mâce, Sünnet 9

⁸ Tirmizi, Mevâkitû's-Salât 183

⁹ Deylemî, Müsnedü'l-Firdevs, II/377