

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

PROPHETIC PARENTING



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Foundations of Parenting

- The foundation of Islamic upbringing is the connection with Allah
 - Tarbiya is not about instilling qualities in your child that were absent. It is about helping your child fulfill a potential that is already present and cultivating their existing qualities.
 - When we serve the purpose of our existence, we will have a happy life. If you are connected to Allah, you are connected to the ultimate source of happiness.
 - Allah is at the center of tarbiya and everything else revolves around that
- The dual nature of the human being is important for children to recognize.
 - We are made from clay, but we are also honored creatures.
 - As human beings, we are different and special creations.
 - Children's needs are not only spiritual. They are also intellectual and physical.
- Moderation
 - The Prophet ﷺ warned us against being excessive in worship
 - Moderation does not necessarily mean complacency or negligence. It means to follow the moderate path that was trodden by those before us.
 - Islam does not believe in monasticism. This is because it has many drawbacks.

- One of them is that you are isolating the most righteous elements in society and taking them away. Righteousness is to act righteous in the midst of life and reality, not to isolate yourself for comfort and let other people be destroyed.
- Another drawback to monasticism is that it spreads the message that one cannot attain righteousness if they mix with other people and do things that regular people do.
- Recognizing and respecting human capabilities
 - You have to understand the different capacities of man as a parent
 - For example, a toddler is selfish by definition. A parent needs to understand this weakness so that they do not get upset when their toddler acts selfishly.
 - Every child comes with strengths and weaknesses and they are all different.
 - Allah diversified the ways for us to enter paradise because we have different strengths in terms of worship
 - Help enhance your child's strengths and work with them on their challenges
- Malleability of character
 - As Muslims, we believe that people can change. The idea that a person is born a certain way and cannot change is not accepted Islamically.
 - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Acquiring knowledge is achieved through learning. Cultivating forbearance comes from conscious practice. Those who seek good will surely find it, just as those who seek bad will inevitably encounter it."
 - People recognize that acquiring knowledge is through learning, but when it comes to forbearance, some may think that you are either born with it or not.

- The Prophet ﷺ is telling us here that as much as we believe that knowledge comes through learning, know that having patience comes through practice.
- You can practice a quality until you achieve it.

What Should Be Emphasized in the Early Stages?

- The relationship with Allah needs to be emphasized
 - When Luqman advised his son, he started by reminding him to worship Allah alone.
- Allah's presence and watchfulness
 - In order for your child to be watchful of Allah, they have to recognize that Allah is watching them all the time.
 - If your child sees that you are mindful of Allah's presence, then they will develop an awareness of Allah
- Allah's love
 - Their relationship with Allah should be based on love and this will make your child feel safe and comforted, rather than anxious and scared.
 - Scholars would say, "The essence of worship is ultimate love and ultimate humility."
 - The only being for whom you will have ultimate love and humility is Allah
- Qadar
 - The Prophet ﷺ said to Ibn Abbas, "Oh boy! Safeguard Allah (i.e. be conscious of Him) that he may safeguard you, when you ask (for your needs) only ask Allah and when you seek help only seek it from Allah and know that if all mankind concerted to harm you, they won't be able to unless Allah so decreed and if they concert to benefit you, they will not be able to do that unless Allah so decrees, pens were lifted, and the scriptures are dry."

- We recognize that everything that happens is known and predetermined by Allah, but we also recognize human accountability and responsibility.
- You have the ability to choose your actions, but they do not occur unless Allah wills it.
- Teach your child with examples and have a pragmatic approach to the issue, not a philosophical approach.
- The hereafter
 - You should use every opportunity to remind your child that this life is only a phase of our existence and that we will exist again after this world.
- The Prophet ﷺ
 - Whenever Allah talks about aqidah in the Quran, Allah and the Day of Judgement are mentioned together. But, who guides us to Allah? The prophets.
 - Instill a deep love in their heart for the Prophet ﷺ
 - Make them understand that the Prophet ﷺ is their ultimate role model, not you as a parent.
 - If you make yourself the ultimate role model, then you are asking your children to be copies of you. Then, when they get older and want to have their own identities, then they will not want to be a copy of anyone. But, when you point to the ultimate role model, then you are telling them that you are both on this journey together.
 - Another reason why you should not encourage them to see you as the ultimate role model is that you should want your children to be better than you.
 - You can instill this love by telling stories of the Prophet, especially stories of the sacrifices the Prophet went through to convey the message to us.

- Emphasis on worship
 - Prayer is the manifestation of your belief in everything else, so naturally, it should follow the belief in Allah
 - If you experience a lack of motivation to pray, then it is a sign of a bigger problem.
- Etiquettes
 - The Prophet ﷺ used to teach children etiquette. For instance, he taught Ibn Salama correct table manners and advised him to eat with his right hand.
- Embracing the primacy of Islam, righteousness, and the community of believers
 - Identarian religiosity is the biggest enemy of true spiritual religiosity
 - Teach your child that you are superior only if you are from the true believers. This superiority only comes from your righteousness, which is not innately in you. It can leave you at any time if you abandon Islam or behave wickedly.
 - They need to take pride in their faith and actively educate their peers.
 - If you are not giving da'wah, you are receiving it.
 - Give da'wah through good character and abstaining from immoral acts.
 - Promote goodness before others promote evil.

The Necessary Knowledge of Child Psychological and Mental Development

- Raising a Child 0-2: Developmental Stages
 - In the sensorimotor stage, infants use their senses to understand their environment.
 - They learn concepts such as causality and object permanence.

- Social development occurs through developing trust or mistrust in their surroundings, largely dependent on consistent care.
- During the second year, a child starts developing autonomy or shame.
- Raising a Child 0-2: Recommendations
 - Make sure the care of your child is consistent
 - This does not mean that you have to respond to every single cry because sometimes you need to let your child cry. But, you cannot let them go hungry for 6 hours if they are on a 3-hour eating schedule for example.
 - Early reading aids language acquisition - a vital cognitive development.
 - Develop positive associations with Islamic symbols and acts through pleasant sensations.
 - The child experiences everything through their senses at this stage.
 - You develop admiration of a place through those sensations. The masjid should be pleasing to them.
 - Use appropriate games and toys to help your child achieve developmental milestones (e.g., peek-a-boo for object permanence).
 - Provide a safe environment for your child to move around and explore.
 - Allow your child some degree of independence in making choices, while setting reasonable limits.
 - Kids will make a mess if you let them feed themselves, but you should still let them feed themselves. If they are interested in feeding themselves, then they are interested in autonomy, so you should let them grow into that autonomy as long as the environment is safe.

- Raising a Child Ages 2-7: Developmental Stages
 - This period is called the pre-operational stage, where children have difficulty understanding contradictory concepts.
 - Thinking is often egocentric, with difficulty sharing.
 - Language develops quickly; by three years, they should be speaking in sentences.
 - Even if being bilingual delays speech for your child a little bit, it is still helpful in the long-run
 - Social development involves the transition from autonomy vs. shame to initiative vs. guilt, where children begin to take leadership roles.
 - You want to raise a child who does well in leadership and followership
- Raising a Child Ages 2-7: Recommendations
 - Faith is more caught and felt than taught and understood. A compassionate home and welcoming religious community are vital.
 - The greatest type of faith is faith by experience, rather than faith by persuasion or association
 - Between 2-7, children mainly have faith by association. But, you can drill concepts into them so that they gain faith by experience later.
 - This is when they will either like or dislike their community or family.
 - Foster a love of Allah and His Messenger through association with pleasant experiences.
 - When you go to the masjid, be cheerful and make them excited to go.
 - Teach affiliation through activities that connect them with a religious community.
 - Teach right and wrong in simple, clear terms.

- Kids are pre-operational at this time, so simply telling them that something is bad or good is sufficient.
 - You can explain things further when they are 12
 - Promote language development by reading and talking a lot, encouraging bilingualism.
 - While memory is good, focus on memorization should be moderate.
 - This phase is not for memorization. Some memorization is ok, but it is not the main focus at this age.
 - Utilize illustrated books and field trips to promote learning.
 - Encourage creativity and initiative within safe and reasonable limits.
 - Gently correct inappropriate public behaviors and selfish tendencies.
- Raising a Child Ages 7-12: Developmental Stages
 - This is known as the concrete operational period in cognitive development.
 - Children can factor in two dimensions simultaneously but struggle with abstract reasoning.
 - Concepts and behaviors are still seen as black and white.
 - Socially, children begin to develop a sense of industry or inferiority, feeling pride in their accomplishments.
 - This is when you need to praise them for their accomplishments, even if they are silly.
 - Raising a Child Ages 7-12: Recommendations
 - Utilize hands-on teaching due to limited abilities in abstract reasoning.
 - Continue to focus on memorization, potentially leading to complete Quran memorization by age 15-17.
 - This does not mean that you should not focus on understanding, but it is a good time for memorization.

- If you want to dedicate just one year for your child to memorize the Quran, the best age to do it is from 11 to 12.
- If you want to dedicate two years for them, then the best age is from 10 to 12.
- Use concrete props and visual aids, including story problems in mathematics.
- Ask open-ended questions to stimulate thinking and speed up cognitive development.
- Keep explanations simple, and present concepts as uni-dimensional.
- Encourage and praise accomplishments, but remind them of room for improvement.
 - Children should know that there is room for improvement so that they are motivated to do better.
- Foster both leadership and followership skills, reminding them of their accountability to Allah.
- Realize the important role of religious institutions in developing a child's attachment to Islam.
- Raising a Child Over 12 Years: Developmental Stages
 - The child reaches formal operational thinking and goes through identity confirmation during adolescence.
 - Children want to feel different from everyone else and be noticed
 - Personal, gender, and religious identity take shape during this turbulent stage.
 - Explanations must now be detailed and complete; kids can reason against facts.
 - Some kids reach this level earlier than 12
 - They can have abstracts thoughts and are completely operational in this stage
 - This is when you can ask thought-provoking questions like, "What would happen if there were multiple Gods?"

- Raising a Child Over 12 Years: Recommendations
 - Encourage abstract reasoning and questioning, which might include comparing different religions, ideologies, and ways of life to solidify their understanding of Islam.
 - Understand that they're searching for their own faith beyond family or group affiliation. Provide access to the right resources for their questions.
 - You may not have the answers to all of the questions, so you have to be humble enough to recognize this and admit that you need your help yourself.
 - Assist in confirming their identity and choosing their roles, without applying too much pressure. Be ready to let go of some of your dreams for them if necessary.
 - If you have always wanted your child to be a doctor and they are showing no interest, then allow it.
 - If you wanted your child to follow a certain madhhab just because it is yours and they do not want to, then let them choose another one.
 - Give them room to show their independence
 - Your child should still be respectful even if they disagree on certain things
 - Validate their attraction to the opposite sex and teach them the importance of controlling lustful desires. Initiate discussions about marriage plans.
 - It is ok to talk about marriage with them, even though they won't necessarily get married at that age.
 - This is the way to address these issues that they will encounter outside the home and make sure you are addressing them in a safe environment inside the home.
 - Ensure that you provide the right environment for their faith to blossom and strive to be a role model for them. Strive to be their most beloved person and best example.