PARENTHOOD AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: ISLAMIC APPROACH TO RAISING NOBLE PERSONALITIES

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Accepted date: 20-06-2019
Published date: 01-07-2019


Abstract: Children are Divine gifts. One of the ways to show and express appreciation to the Merciful Giver is to raise children to know and worship their Creator and to be useful members of their communities and the entire human race. To Muslims, Children are not only Divine gifts but also Trust (‘Amanah). To that extent, Muslim parents have responsibility to ensure that children are treated with kindness, protected and nurtured to become God-fearing, God-conscious, kind, dedicative, hard-working, productive and abundant assets to themselves, their families and ultimately to the Islamic Ummah. It is a challenging task to raise a child for future leadership. But, for parents who are focus and who are committed to observing and upholding the tenets of their faith, it is easy. Islamic processes of parenting are essentially based on the concept of Fitra. Fitra serves as a lunch-pad for the Islamic Tarbiya of a child. A proper observance of the Islamic approach, it is argued makes parenting an easy task. This work is an attempt to explore the processes of raising children within the framework of Islamic elucidation. It will examine the implications of some classical and modern approaches to child parenting and child development. For example, the issue of corporal punishment and the emergence of the internet and social media. Against this background, this study will seek to establish a synergy between Islamic and Western liberalism approaches to child parenting and development among young parents generally and particularly the Muslim families that are domicile in non-Muslim societies consequent to the emergence of multi-cultural and pluralistic societies.

Keywords: Parenting, Tarbiya, Fitra, Faith, Corporal Punishment Controversy, Love and Kindness, Preferential Treatment, Mosque, School, Friendship and Internet/Social Media

Introduction
Parenthood is an indispensable ingenuity in human development against the backdrop of the saying that children of today are leaders of tomorrow. Their upbringing and development are matters of great importance not only to parents, their immediate communities but, also to the entire human race. How children develop are key-determinants to attaining peaceful, prosperous, respectful and orderly society. Perhaps that explains why though, there are

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similarities in parenting concepts globally, the styles and approach may differ from culture to culture, dogma to dogma and sociological compositions. Generally, child parenting covers and takes into account various factors such as the child’s physical and social environment, customs and practices. Islam, as a religion and way of life has its own guiding principles in the upbringing and parenting of a child or children. The ultimate goals of those principles are to raise noble and pious personalities (men and women).

Parenting
It is a divine privilege to be parents. In appreciating this special privilege, parents, are expected to discharge the onerous responsibilities involved. There is no doubt that parenthood responsibilities are challenging especially when the hope is to raise God-fearing and responsible child or children in an un-Islamic environment or society.

It must always be remembered that children are gifts from Allah. In all instances where the Holy Qur’an talks about children, the common term is (هبة) ‘Hibah’ which may literally mean ‘gift’. Thus, as far as Islam is concerned, a child is a divine gift and a trust that must be well appreciated, well-treated and well-nurtured in accordance with Allah’s dictates.

Fredrick Douglas was a notable African-American statesman who in 1855 while engaging in dialogue with white slave-merchants who could not comprehend that slavery was morally wrong wrote: “it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”. This statement remains valid even today as it directly connected with the issue of parenting, early childhood experiences, and the development of individuals’ roles, and functioning in a particular society.

Collective responsibilities in parenting are therefore, a matter of basic necessity for positive child development as noted by James E. Faust who observes that: “To be a good father and mother requires that the parents defer many of their own needs and desires in favour of the needs of their children. As a consequence of this sacrifice, conscientious parents develop a nobility of character and learn to put into practice the selfless truths taught by the Saviour Himself.”

Text writers and child development psychologists including Jane B. Brooks, Haim Abraham and others have attempted several descriptions or definition of parenting. For example, they argue that it is the totality of process of promoting and providing support for physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child right from birth, infancy to adulthood. Quite frankly, it is the intricate processes of raising a child including the natural inbuilt relationship that flow from the parent to the innocent child which in normal cases is extensive throughout the parent-child relationship.

It is generally believed that parenting is an art that is exclusively restricted to biological parents. However, there are other agents that play vital roles in the upbringing and parenting of a child. These agents usually include government, society, faith and educational institutions. Parenting

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and child-caring are shaped by a number of factors. These may include effluxion of historical time space, cultural, racial and ethnicity, social and religious features.⁵

**Child’s Fitra: A Predisposition to Nobleness**

As earlier stated, Islam as a religion and a way of life, has its own guiding principle in parenting and child care. *Fitra* is a concept of human nature. The word *Fitra* is an Arabic word literally translated to mean “original disposition,” “natural constitution,” or “innate nature.” It is the state of purity and innocence of a child. Under the concept of Islamic *Fitra*, all humans are born pure and clean as known in the Latin terminology as *tabula rasa* – meaning a blank canvas.⁶ Human beings according to the concept of *Fitra*, are born with natural inclination to *Tawhid* (monotheism – belief in Oneness of Allah). This belief encompasses attributes such as compassion, intelligence, decency and good conducts as well as other natural qualities that characterize humanity positively.⁷

Presumably therefore, if the child were left alone, it would grow up with having awareness about God in His oneness, but all children are impacted by the pressures and influences of their environment whether directly or indirectly. Thus, the Prophet in a Hadith *Qudsi* states that Allah says: “*I created My servants in the right religion but the devils made them go astray.*”⁸

In another Hadith, he taught that Children are born on the basis of *Fitra*. They are later socialized into various concepts and dogmas by those responsible for their parenting and upbringing. He said: “*No one is born except according to intrinsic nature, but their parents make them Jews, or Christians, or Magains, just as a cow gives birth to a calf that is whole do you find it mutilated?*”⁹

It is noted that the concept of *Fitra* has been explored by notable scholars and jurist including Ibn Abd al-Barr, Raghib al-Isfahani and Ibn Taymiyah.¹⁰ The works of Islamic scholars in this area has been a turning point in the subject of human nature in comparison to what has been enunciated by Western scholars such as Sigmund Freud, and B.F. Skinner.¹¹

**Parenting: Islamic Perspective**

From the perspective of *Fitra* concept discussed above, the first immediate human and environmental agencies that impact and influence innocent new born babies are the fathers and mothers. It follows that parenthood should not be assumed by accident. It should be taken seriously and adequately planned for. In the light of Prophet’s Sunnah (SAW), parenting appears to start right from the choice of partners in marriage. Thus, the Prophet (SAW) was quoted to have said: “*A woman is married for four (reasons): her wealth, noble ancestry,*_

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⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Saheeh Muslim*

⁹ *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*


¹¹ Ibid.
beauty and religion. Choose the religious woman lest your hand is stuck to dust (because of
destitution).  

Religion of a woman here is in reference to her spiritual beauty which means the perfection of
religion and moral character. The more the woman is religious and perfect in moral character,
the lovelier she becomes, and the safer the expected outcome of marriage. There is every
tendency that a religious woman will be willing to comply with the commands of Allah The
Almighty, guards her husband’s rights, honour, children and wealth, and helps him obey Allah.
There is also tendency for mutual and harmonious matrimony which may provide conducive
atmosphere for righteous and positive parenting.

The next step after the matrimonial union is that the Muslim couples should pray earnestly with
good intention to be blessed with righteous children and to have as many children as possible
towards making up the Ummah of Islam and in the cause of Islamic advancement.  
This is in
line with the Prophet’s counsel when he said: "Marry those women who are loving and fertile,
for verily I want to be amongst those (Prophets) who have the most followers on the Day of
Judgement."  

The arrival of a child or children in the family marks the critical phase of parenting which is
known in Islamic terminology as Tarbiyah. From this moment, the parent should be conscious
and seriously determined to run a peaceful, loving and God-fearing matrimonial home. They
should be good and the best examples to their children. They should hasten to do all good and
eschew all evil practices in words and action. This is because they are now the model for their
children who emulate them hook line and sinker. The innocent child or children love, respect
and admire them. They should also show them love, compassion in good conducts. They
should always remember that whatever the parents are upon, the children follow them. The
relationship between a child and parent is that of attribute and an inherent quality of care and
compassion. The parent is the person whom the child has an intrinsic and natural right to be
reared and nurtured by. Parents have an intrinsic and natural duty to rear and nurture their
children. It follows that parenthood implies rights and duties that are mutual, interdependent
and complementary because these rights and duties are sacred and have implications imposed
under Islamic law.

**Parenting and Islamic Tarbiyah**

‘Tarbiyah’ is the ideal approach in developing human nature, both directly through a method
of verbal or visual communication, or indirectly through providing a role model, according to
a specific curriculum that employs certain means and mechanism in order to facilitate positive
change. It is a continuous and comprehensive process of developing all aspects of a child’s
character and personality, i.e. spiritual, intellectual, moral, social and physical aspects. The
cardinal focus of Tarbiyah is to develop Taqwa (God’s consciousness) in a child leading to the
path of constant self-purification, self-correction and self-development and instil in him/her the
passion for truth, righteousness, justice and respect for others. The ultimate goals of this
concept is to produce distinguished personalities who strive for excellence, and who are self-motivated, conduct a balance life, live in peace with themselves and their environment, equipped with the necessary knowledge, understanding, and skills to make difference in the society by taking an active role in the reform process that seeks to make the betterment of their community, country and the entire human race.\footnote{What is Tarbiya? http://alhijrahschool.co.uk/tarbiyyah/what-is-tarbiyah/ (accessed 27 Mar, 2019)}

The Islamic Tarbiyah encompasses a wider scope of parenting and methodology of upbringing and child education. It is a concept that generates responsibility for every person whom Allah has been saddled with responsibility of guardianship to those under them – children or flock. The Islamic concept of child parenting and education covers all grounds that enable the child to develop spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, educationally, and socially. It covers biological and spiritual development, intellectual development; Creedal development; Devotional development; Behavioural development; and, Skills development.\footnote{Raising the next generation – practical tips from the Sunnah; https://www.islam21c.com/islamic-thought/40-hadiths-raising-children/ (accessed 27 Mar, 2019)} In other words, is a method that give a child balance upbringing and development. This is because it caters for both spiritual and biological growth of a child.

\textit{Tarbiya: Approach and Mechanism}

The totality of \textit{Tarbiya} approaches to upbringing a child or children are in the shade of what Allah states in developing His Prophets and Messengers. For instance, in respect of Prophet Musa (Alaihi Salaam) Allah says: “and you will be developed under our care”.\footnote{Qur’an 20:39} It was under the same methodology that the Companions and followers of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were nurtured and developed. All of them were born innocently to a society that was idolatrous, crocked and deviant. However, within a span of little over two decades, they were nurtured and developed to standard of noble and acclaimed men and women and world leaders. The approach is both direct and indirect

\textbf{Direct Approach:} Direct approach can be verbal expression or visual communication. It covers the following:

- Command (ammr)
- Prohibition (nahyi)
- Encouragement (nadbb)
- Prop up (tahbeeb)
- Detestation (tanfeer)
- Drawing Attention to (laftnathar)
- Enthusiasm (tashweeq)
- or Warning (takhweef).\footnote{General \textit{Tarbiya} – Definition and Mechanism, supra.}

Each of these forms can be delivered in form of reminder, a story, narration of events or incidents, an article, a study, lecture or movie. Each will be adopted according to the age and level of understanding of a child or children.

\textbf{Indirect Approach:} In most instances is by providing a role model. The subject (in this case, parents) (Murrabba) to mirror the righteous manners and deeds of the role model (Murrabbie).
Practical *Tarbiya*: Parent to Child

The most effective way of parenting is to be model to children. Parents should show examples. Parents should be consistent and there should be no contradiction between parents’ private and public life; utterances and actions. Children are born innocent. They lack social knowledge or social skills, and they are desirous of someone to imitate as model. That "someone" in most instances is one or both parents. Parents are a child's first teachers and role models. And usually children are more affected by what their parents do than by what their parents say. They learn how to behave by seeing how their mothers and fathers behave and by following their example. Qur’an is emphatic about *Tarbiya* through the mechanism of role modelling when Allah says in reference to Prophet Muhammad (SAW): “*Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the last Day and remembers Allah much.*”

Parents should know that children learn good manners more easily when they are treated with polite and respectful manners. Words of courtesy and appreciations such as “please” and “thank you” should be adopted as normal expressions in daily life of the family. Children that are respected by their parents at home have tendency to respect their parents and others outside home.

Faith: A Corner-Stone of Parenting

Faith and spirituality play critical roles in the lives of children. Belief in the Divine serves as a means to build that state of mind in parenting and upbringing of children in an efficient manner. It is a source of peace and tranquillity that provides check and balances between things spiritual and mundane. It checks its adherents from being carried away by glamor and influences of life. That explains why United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)’s Convention in its articles of the Convention on Rights of the Child explicitly recognize the ‘spiritual’ as an element of holistic child development, along with social and moral well-being, cultural development and physical and mental health. It is thus observed that ‘all children have a sense of awe and wonder that can lead them to connect with and derive meaning from the world around them, including the natural environment. As children develop, these innate sensibilities begin to be shaped more formally, primarily by the family and then by their broader communities. Religion often influences them through the social and cultural institutions in which they participate.’

Muslim parents particularly should make religion and faith in Allah the corner-stone of their agenda in parenting and upbringing of their children. They should raise their children to know that the most important aspect of his life is that he be upright in his *Deen*, correcting it and clinging to it firmly. Allah says:

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22 Qur’an 33:21

23 *Being a Role Model for Your Child*, supra.

24 *Children, Religion and Spirituality*, https://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index_60392.html (accessed 28 Mar, 2019). See Articles 17, 23(3), 27(1) and 32(1)).

25 Ibid.
"And this (submission to Allah, Islam) was enjoined by Ibrahim upon his sons and by Ya'qoob (as), (saying), 'O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the (true) Religion, then die not except in the Faith of Islam."  

Similarly, "And he made it (the Sha’hada -LaailahaillAllah - none has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone) a Word lasting among his offspring (True Monotheism), that they may turn back (i.e. repent to Allah or receive admonition)."

Much as parents aspire that their children attain position of eminence in life, excellence in spiritual and moral status should be upper most in such aspiration. However, to achieve this, emphasis is to be placed on religious faith, good conduct and positive disposition. Parents in the upbringing of children are expected to inspire in them noble character through the spiritual and moral instruction at home – in words and actions.

Parents should not be carried away by the ambience of materialism that is prevalent in the modern time. There are tendencies for both parents and children to be driven by the influences of the excessive materialism that are reengaging the minds of many at the expense of spiritual and moral values.

**Parenting by Du’a and Good Utterances**

Muslim parents should earnestly supplicate to Allah to guide their children and make them upright. This is necessary because human efforts alone are not sufficient to produce people of noble character. No one can solely guide his children, or to keep them upon the straight path, rather this essentially depends on the Divine Power of Allah Who is responsible for the creation of all things. We learn in the Qur’an how the Prophets and Righteous servants offered Du’a to Allah for righteous off-springs as evidenced in the account of Prophet Ibrahim (AS):

"O my Lord! Make me one who offers prayers perfectly, and (also) from my offspring, our Lord! And accept my invocation."

Thus, we find also in the Qur'an the invocation for righteous children:

"Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders for the Muttaqoon (i.e. pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much [abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden] and love Allah much [perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained])."

Parents should always be conscious of their utterances especially when they are provoked by their children mistakes or/and misbehaviour. Parents are humans. Sometimes, some children can be nutty to the point of even misdemeanour. In the heat of such negative tendencies, parents can be tempted to utter bad expressions or even curses against their children. This should be avoided as they can have negative and regrettable impacts on the future of such children. Parents should cultivate the habit of praying for guidance when they are provoked by their children misbehaviour.

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26 Qur’an 2:132.
27 Qur’an 43:28.
28 Qur’an 14:40.
29 Qur’an 25:74.
Parenting: Corporal Punishment Controversy

There has been debate as to the propriety of administering corporal punishment on children at home and in the school. This perhaps has led to a recent court decision in a South African case where a High Court of that country ruled that the corporal punishment of children on the grounds of ‘reasonable chastisement’ is unconstitutional. Presently, law and policy makers around the world are contemplating the removal of exceptions in law that protect parents from being prosecuted for ‘assault’ when administering corporal punishment. There are example of the Welsh Assembly which has made move towards removing the defence of ‘reasonable chastisement’; Bahrain government move to abolish ‘reasonable chastisement’ as defence for parents;a bill in the Scottish Parliament to abolish the defence of ‘justifiable assault’; and the debate in the Jamaican Parliament to bring an end to all corporal punishment in both the home and public settings.

A Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) is to the effect that: “Order your children to perform prayer when they are seven years old and beat them (for neglecting it) when they are ten.”

It should be noted here that the Prophet (SAW) did not order beating children who neglect prayers prior to the age of ten, though, he ordered parents to direct their children to perform the prayers when they are seven. It follows that there is a gap of three years left between the two stages. The Prophet (SAW) in the Divine Wisdom bestowed on him delayed application of beating for three years and only allowed the parent to verbally direct and discipline during this period. This clearly shows that the Prophet (SAW) considered the negative impacts of beating on the children especially at their formative stages and thus, should be avoided by those who are responsible for their upbringing.

In the light of this Hadith and other authorities from the Qur’an and Sunnah (Shari’ah), Muslim Scholars and Jurists have advocated seven guiding rules for beating children in Islam. They include the following:

i. A long period after a child has attained the age of seven (at least three years) of direction, kind admonition and advise, must have preceded the application and resorting to beating a child as a disciplinary measure.

ii. Beating should not be used with children less than ten years old.

iii. The punishment with beating should commensurate to the misbehaviour.

iv. Beating should not hurt the child either psychologically or physically.

v. Punishment should be administered at a suitable setting and not in the presence of people, relatives or others so as not to subject the child to humiliation.

vi. Parents should avoid administering punishment while they are angry so as to avoid overreaction and excesses. Beating should be meant to serve as corrective measure and not as revenge or to inflict torture.

vii. Punishment should not be administered on the sensitive parts of the child’s body.

When Imam Ahmad was asked to comment about a teacher beating boys he

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Al-Albaani: Hasan
said: “Beating should be appropriate to their misdeeds and one should avoid dangerous places.”

Parenting with Love & Kindness
In another Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) was quoted to have said that: “Do not lift your stick against your wife and children and urge them to fear Allah The Almighty.” The lesson is that the motive behind doing what is right and good should not be through instilling fear of bodily hitting or physical punishment; rather, it should be inspired from within, an internal conscience which blames one even for an inappropriate whisper. It follows that where punishment is required at all, it should not be physical as moral chastisement is more useful, comprehensive and lasting.

It is instructive that it had never been read in the Sirah that the Prophet (SAW) used physical punishment on any of his children (RA). He rather showed them love and compassion right from their childhood. It follows that parents should treat their families with love, kindness and softness most especially when they are young and tender in age. Children should see their parents as loving partners, protectors, refuge and shelters. However, if the situation requires that they should also use harshness and hardness and even hitting their children, then they should do so as and when required, but they should not make this a fixed and permanent family rule.

Muslim parents should not be like others who are always hard upon their children as this may lead them to becoming hardened and develop criminal tendencies which may lead them astray. Neither should they be like parents in non-Muslim societies where children were given blanket freedom to do anything. This can be detrimental to them because they would not be able to differentiate between the rights and wrongs right from the early age. Muslim parents should rather take the middle course (balanced) in parenting their children, sometimes using harshness and sometimes softness as situation requires. They should always try to exercise balance in raising children, balancing their affairs correctly and making the uppermost characteristic that of love, compassion, softness and kindness.

Sow the Seed of Good Character
Muslim parents should instil good character in their children right from early age. They should make it a family routine to read and discuss the Qur'an, the Seerah of the Prophet and that of the Companions also (ra). Children should not be left to continue in bad habit or in making mistakes believing that they will correct them later when they get older. That is an easy way to imprint and stamp negative behaviour in them.

preferential Treatment
It is natural that parents are sometimes unable to love their children equally. However, parents should, as a matter of principle, avoid showing preferential treatment among their children. This may lead to unimaginable crisis in the family sooner or later. Parents should not show one of his children due favour more so than the other, by giving him more than his other children or praising him more than any of the others. Study had shown that preferential treatment had been a factor in children deviation and psychological trauma later in life. The Prophet had warned that: “Fear Allah and be just with regard to your children.”

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36 Al-Albaani: Hasan.
37 Yusef, A., supra.
38 Ibid.
Fathers and mothers should strive to spend upon their children. They should take the necessary steps to earn money and spend upon their children so as to meet their needs. The Prophet was quoted to have said that: "There is nothing that you spend upon your families, even the food that you put into the mouth of your wife, except that you will get a reward for it." Also that: "Two dinaars which you spend in the way of Allah, or two dinaars which you spend by way of sadaqah (charity), or two dinaars which you give to the miskeen (poor), or the two dinaars which you give to your family - with which of these is the greatest reward? Indeed, the greatest of these as regards reward is that dinaar which you spend upon your family."

**Mosque as Lighthouse for Parenting**

Mosque and other houses of worship are important agents of child development and education.

It has been observed that:

"the mosque, church or temple often provides children’s first point of contact with the community beyond their immediate neighbours and with wider social institutions. There, children learn not only religion but also important lessons about morals, social behaviour and their own value as human beings. They also learn subtle messages about whether the world is a safe place, how to be a good person, and what their responsibilities are as members of a religious group. Their developing religious identity becomes part of the wider, collective identity that binds children and adults together into a people having a sense of collective meaning and place in the world."39

Parents should encourage their children to have attachment to the Mosque regularly for Solat and other social and community activities. Apart from acquiring religious and moral values they would also have the benefit of socializing and keeping good friendship with their peers that will be beneficial to them at late age in life.

**Role of School in Parenting**

School as another agent of child education and development, plays an important role in child parenting. It helps a child learn to interact positively with their peers and teachers.40 Children learn about healthy relationship skills and develop them further through interactions, both in the classroom and on the playground.41 Rosenya Faith, quoting Irene Shere, Director of the Early Childhood Consultation Centre observes that: "The way that teachers interact with children and the way that teachers encourage interactions between children affect each child's development in important ways."42

It must be noted that Article 2 of Human Rights act 1998 provides that:

"No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions."\(^{43}\)

Thus, paragraph 2.1 of the Education National Curriculum in England states that:

"Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which: promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and, “prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.”\(^{44}\)

The importance of education in Islam cannot be overemphasised. The first Allah’s command in the first revelation to His Prophet states: “Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).” The word ‘read’ is the keyword to all derivatives of seeking knowledge and education. It encompasses all methodologies of education and learning in human system. Thus, knowledge, as far as Islamic is concerned, comes before action; there can be no action without knowledge. In many instances, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasized this fact as recorded in his Ahadith. For example, he was quoted to have said: "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."\(^{45}\) Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allaah will make a path to Paradise easy for him.\(^{46}\)

Imam Al-Ghazali was quoted to have said that: "knowledge exists potentially in the human soul like the seed in the soil; by learning the potential becomes actual." And that the child ‘is a trust (placed by God) in the hands of his parents, and his innocent heart is a precious element capable of taking impressions’. He then contended that:

"if the parents, and later the teachers, brought him up in righteousness he would live happily in this world and the next and they would be rewarded by God for their good deed. If they neglected the child’s upbringing and education, he would lead a life of unhappiness in both worlds and they would bear the burden of the sin of neglect.”\(^{47}\)

In the light of the above, a word is enough for a wise.

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\(^{45}\) Sunan Ibn Mājah 224

\(^{46}\) Narrated by al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-’Ilm, 10

Friendship in Child Development

Friendship has tremendous impact on the development of a child. However, this is usually underestimated.\textsuperscript{48} Recent research affirms the importance of friendship, and its impact on mental and physical health of a child. It is argued that “Friends also have a powerful influence on a child’s positive and negative school performance and may also help to encourage or discourage deviant behaviours.” It is also argued in a comparative sense that ‘children who lack friends, and children with ‘good’ friends have higher self-esteem, act more socially, can cope with life stresses and transitions, and are also less victimized by peers.’\textsuperscript{49}

The impact of friendship of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) on Abu Bakr and other Eminent Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) was a significant factor that turned these Noble Men to distinguished personalities that mankind would never forget.

It must be noted that the unfortunate phenomena of ‘terrorism’ and ‘knife crime’ that are rampant these days are, in most instances are linked to bad friendship. Therefore, parents should have interest in the kind of friendship their children keep. They should be encouraged to establish friendship with children of righteous families through social networks.

Internet and Social Media

Like any human inventions, internet and social media had been remarkable in the history of mankind. However, they have also posed serious social and ethical dilemma to the world. They may be improving the lives of growing children, by helping them become smart and well-informed, productive and creative.\textsuperscript{50} Through them, children and youth can discover new opportunities in terms of information, technological inventions, development agenda textbooks, friends, and employment prospects. However, they pose serious danger and indeed have negative impact on children; for instance, too much online communication and engagement can lead them to losing touch with the real life. Children become technology and machine addicts and even robot and apart from negative health effects as noted by experts, they no longer have close and real relations with their immediate environment.\textsuperscript{51} When students spend too much time online entertaining themselves or otherwise frivolously wasting time, they are neglecting their Solat, parents’ instructions, school works and even their human friends and relations. Apart from these it is through these medium many innocent children were indoctrinated into the life of dangerous drug, violence, terrorism, kidnapping, rioting, civil disobedience and knife crime, pornography and other social maladies.

It is doubtful that parents and community can stop their children from these-global phenomena. However, I believe and humbly suggest that the home, the Mosque and the School can teach these children how to search for information that would add values to their lives like for instance, websites that teach them how to read and memorize complete Qur’an, Seerah of the Prophets and Companions, science and technology and other useful website. This has to begin right from their early ages when they begin to understand their environments and what are


\textsuperscript{49}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{50}\textsuperscript{Matthew M., (n.d.), ‘Effects of Internet & Social Media on Students’}\url{http://www.effectsofinternetonstudents.matthewmuccio.com/} (accessed 16 April, 2019).

\textsuperscript{51}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
going on those environments. By the time the children engage constantly in these websites they become used to them and learn a lot that can be translated to their practical life. Allah knows best.

**Conclusion**

Parenthood is a Divine privilege as children are gifts of Allah. Thus, those who are privileged of having them, have responsibilities of parenthood to discharge. Discharging these responsibilities has to conform to the dictates of Allah Who created both the parents and children. How children develop are key-determinants to attaining peaceful, prosperous, respectful and orderly society. Child parenting covers and takes into account various factors such as the child’s physical and social environment, customs and practices. Islam is a way of life that has its own guiding principles in the upbringing and parenting of children. The ultimate goals of those principles are to raise noble and pious personalities (men and women) who will be successful in this world and life hereafter.

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General Tarbiya – Definition and Mechanism


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