

The Prophet's (Peace be upon him) treatment of Children

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) realized that dealing successfully with a child depends on studied educational methodologies based on learning, experience, experiment, patience, and comprehension. Because of the importance of this category of age, he (Peace be upon him) created a scientific and educational methodology to handle it. Hence, this methodology produced successful and achieving characters, unique distinguished leadership, and peerless intellectual scientists. So, among the most important pivots of the educational :methods in his (Peace be upon him) dealing with children are

:Showing kindness and simplicity when dealing with them

Children always love the one who is kind to them and lives with them as equals, but they shun the one who is harsh, grim, and angry. Also, they are enthusiastic with the one who is venerable and serious. Hence, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) knew the natures of this age. Furthermore, he used the things they love when dealing with them and tried to spread - through his simplicity, humor and kindness - important messages to build .good behavior and a successful character

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "We were praying with Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) the night prayer , whenever he went down for prostration Al-hasan and Al-husayn jumped upon his back. When he went to raise his head he took hold of them both, with a soft grasp, and placed them upon the ground and he kept

doing this until the end of prayer and they were setting on his [thigh". [1

Through his five senses, the child cannot comprehend duties, rights, origins, principles, values, and meanings. Yet, he starts to learn them step by step during his life span. It is a huge mistake to treat a child the same as one would treat an adult who is familiar with principles and restrictions. Therefore, it is obviously incorrect to ask a child to be calm and quiet when .doing so is beyond his ability

A female companion named Omm Khalid narrates to us a scene from her childhood that she remembered well, she says, "I went to Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) with my father and I was wearing a yellow shirt. Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said, "sanah, sanah!" (` Abd Allah, the narrator, said that 'sanah' meant 'good' in the Ethiopian language). I then started playing with the seal of Prophethood (in between the Prophet's shoulders) and my father rebuked me harshly for that. Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him)Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him said. "Leave her," and then Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) (invoked Allah to grant me a long life) by saying (thrice), "Wear this dress till it is worn out and then wear [it till it is worn out, and then wear it till it is worn out". [2

This simple story is unique and expressively portrays the message we wish to deliver. The man comes with his daughter to Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and he knows that he loves children and is never annoyed when dealing with them. On the contrary, he (Peace be upon him) used to welcome them warmly and was happy to meet them. Hence, the girl was not shy as she tried to climb upon his back and play. Yet, he (Peace be upon him)Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him was laughing and did not feel disturbed but he made a supplication for her .thrice

Also, the Messenger Muhammad (Peace be upon him) would carry a small child whose urine might reach his clothes. So, he (Peace be upon him) would ask for some water to splash onto his clothes, without washing them. Due to his love for children and his patience with them, the case of a child's urine on his clothes and in his lap occurred more than once. This was not only limited to boys but happened with girls as well. Omm Karza, from the tribe of Khuza'a, said that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) carried a boy and the boy urinated on him, so he asked for some water to be splashed onto his clothes. Also, he carried a girl and she did the same thing and he ordered the .[clothes to be washed][3

His Companion Abu Musa al-Ash'ari said, "I had a boy and I carried him to the Prophet (Peace be upon him). He named him Ibrahim and chewed a date and put it in the child's mouth. Then, he asked Allah to bless him.[4] The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) used to joke with children even in the streets. Ya'li ibn Murrah says, "I went with the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to have food, and Al-Hussein ibn 'Ali was playing in the road. Then the Prophet (Peace be upon him) hurried in front of the people then spread his hands out to catch him. The child started to run here and here and the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) chased him and laughed with him. He even used to take Osama ibn Zaid and Al-Hassan ibn 'Ali and would put them on his thighs. Then, he would embrace them and say, "O Allah! [Please be Merciful to them, as I am merciful to them". [5

Even when he was praying, his granddaughter from his daughter Zainab came in front of him and he carried her even though he was praying. When he bowed, he put her down and [then when he stood up he would carry her.[6

Maḥmoud ibn Rabie’ says: “When I was a boy of five, I remember, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) took water from a bucket (used for drawing water out of a well) with his mouth and he threw it on my face”. [7] Namely, he still remembers that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was playing with him by throwing .water at him while he (i.e. Maḥmoud) was five years old

If he (Peace be upon him) heard a baby crying during his prayer, he shortened it so that the mother of the child could finish the prayer and carry her baby or comfort him and fulfill his needs. It is reported that he said, “I stand in prayer and would like to make it long but I hear the crying of a child and shorten my [prayer not wanting to make things difficult for its mother”. [8

In addition, he used to play with the children and talk to them about their private affairs, even if their discussions were not important to him. On the authority of Anas who said: “The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was the best of all the people in character. I had a brother called Abu `Umar and he had a bird that he used to play with. When he (that child) was brought to the Prophet (Peace be upon him), he (i.e. the Prophet) used to [say, "O Abu `Umar! What did al-Nughair (nightingale) do?" [9

:Appreciating and respecting the child

The Messenger (Peace be upon him) dealt kindly with children, and was eager to respect them. Moreover, he was keen to deliver the best lessons to them by the simplest and most well evaluated methodologies. He never treated them harshly. One of the children around the Messenger (Peace be upon him) named ‘Abd Allah bin ‘Amer narrates this situation and says, “My mother called me one day when the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him was sitting in our house. She said, Come here and I shall give you

something. The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him asked her: What did you intend to give him? She replied: I intended to give him some dates. The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him said: If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you.[10] Thus, He advises her against lying on the child or underestimating his feelings by telling him, "Come on, I will give you something", .”but she does not

When Muhammad (Peace be upon him) saw some behavior in children that required evaluation and amendment, he treated them kindly and neither blamed nor shouted. ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah said, “I was a boy under the care of Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said to me, 'O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your [right hand, and eat of the dish what is nearer to you. [11

Also, Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) tried to rear children on the meanings of manhood and bravery and he did so through his instructions and his own example. He gave them graded portions of those meanings according to separate situations. At times, he allowed some boys such as ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar in his gatherings and he did so to help them learn and develop. So, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar narrates “We were with the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and fresh dates of a palm tree were brought to him. On that he said, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree which resembles a Muslim." I wanted to say that it was the date-palm tree but as I was the youngest of all (of them) I kept quiet. And then the Prophet (Peace be upon him) [said, "It is the date-palm tree."][12

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) taught ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas, while he was a young boy riding behind him, great meanings

and he spoke with simple understandable words. He said to him, “O young boy! Be mindful to Allah and He will protect [you...”[13

Furthermore, Prophet Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) greatly appreciated children in a community which did not show real appreciation for them. So, a child would sit on his right side, and this would give him the right to be introduced to the older people. Sahl ibn Sa’d al-Sa’idi says: “The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him)Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him brought some water and drank some of it, and on his right side there was a boy and on his left side there was an old men. Then he (Peace be upon him)Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him said to the boy: Would you allow me to give to these people first? And, the boy said: No, I swear by Allah that I will not let [anyone take water from you before me.[14

Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) considered both matters. He respected the child’s right and took his permission, and respected the old men by asking the child to give them precedence. When the boy insisted, Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) neither blamed nor scolded him; instead, he gave him his .right

:Observing the child’s social and familial rights

The Messenger (Peace be upon him) was interested in observing the baby’s right to have a known, authorized, witnessed parentage, and to be born into a sound marriage. In addition, he banned having children from an illegal marriage to protect them from any problems in the future. Another purpose was to clear the society from depravity, corruption, and lineages .becoming confused

Also, Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) said it is the child's right that his father chooses a good and modest mother. Moreover, his father should choose a good name for him and this name should neither be derogatory nor sarcastic. Also, the child has the right to be nursed. In addition, he has the right to be raised in a sound environment and with relatives around him. Furthermore, it is his right to be raised with faith, and be protected from sexual violation, abnormality, being used, being held in bondage or slavery, and from being used for profiteering

As the prophetic message assured that the child has a right in inheritance and bequest, and confirmed an orphan's right to be completely cared for and protected, and that his wealth should be kept for him. Moreover, the community must keep him, be kind to him, care for him, and take full custody of him

Reported by Ahmad (no. 10281). In his book titled *mujma' az-Zawā'id*, Al-Haithami said that the narrators of this prophetic tradition are trustworthy. Al-Arna'ut graded it as hassan (i.e. fair)

(Reported by Al-Bukhari (No. 3071 [۲]

Reported by Ahmad (No. 26834) and authenticated by Al-Arna'ut [۳]

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [۴]

(Reported by Al-Bukhari (No. 6003 [۵]

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [۶]

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [۷]

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [۸]

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [٩]

Reported by Abu Dawud (No. 4993) and Al-Albani graded it [١٠] as good

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [١١]

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [١٢]

Reported by At-Termidhi (No. 2516) and authenticated by Al- [١٣] Albani

An agreed upon prophetic tradition [١٤]