



Confronting Contemporary Parenting Dilemmas Through The Lens Of Islamic Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Family is the most fundamental unit of society in Islam. It provides the primary intellectual, moral, and spiritual environment for children. A child's character is initially formed within the context of the family through a process involving the internalization of parental values derived from their emotions, attitudes, and actions. Islamic teachings provide a paradigm that can guide parents in raising their children as religious individuals. Being a holistic worldview, Islamic texts adequately designate the rights and duties of parents towards their children and promote the establishment of a family based on mutual respect, understanding, loyalty, and a responsible attitude. Highlighting those fundamentals becomes all the more imperative considering that a family is the most fundamental unit of society in Islam. It provides the primary intellectual, numerous studies in the recent past have shown Muslims experiencing an increasing faith crisis as is the case among other religious groups. Furthermore, among the top reasons that lead to doubt and abandonment of Islam is the behaviour of Muslims themselves, in terms of personal conduct, misinterpretation, and toxic parenting. Against this backdrop, this study uses mixed qualitative methods to explore the principles of parenting from sources of Islamic teachings that can act as a reference for Muslim families in the nurturing of their children.

Keywords: Parenting, Islamic Psychology, Paradigm, Family

Prevention of Violence Against Children in School through Islamic Parenting Styles: The research found that parenting in Islamic families is carried out as early as possible before a child is born. The parenting style not only includes physical and intellectual aspects, but also includes emotional and spiritual aspects. A child's inherent rights are present from the very beginning. Article 28B, Paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia declares that every child shall have the right to live, to grow and to develop, and shall have the right to protection from violence and discrimination. Family is the most fundamental social unit. The **family** is the primary and most important learning environment for children (Andriyani, 2016). Parents have a crucial part in the education of their children (Sandarwati, 2014; Nurhayati, 2021; Yuliharti, 2011). A child's character is initially formed within the context of the family. The process involves the internalization of parental values derived from their emotions, concerns, attitudes, and daily actions (Hasanah, 2016). Parents play a significant role in shaping the character of their offspring. Parents have a significant role and obligation in fostering the growth of their children's potential. In addition to meeting their children's bodily requirements, parents are responsible for providing them with attention, affection, motivation, direction, education, and the inculcation of positive values (Jailani). The parenting style employed by parents in educating their children will influence the child's personality in all facets of his life, including at school. The results demonstrated that parental parenting affects children's academic achievement. Good parenting (i.e., authoritative parenting) has an effect on a child's academic success (Efobi & Nwokolo, 2014; Nursa'adah et al., 2022; Nyarko, 2011). On the other side, bad parenting (such as dictatorial, permissive, and careless parenting) contributes to the development of a child's bad character. In reality, due to inadequate parenting, youngsters become school bullies (Efobi & Nwokolo, 2014; Eşkisü, 2014). Parental ignorance exacerbates poor parenting practices. Parents are not aware that their approach to child rearing is improper. For instance, they educate with a pattern that is not recognized as containing violence, so shaping the character of youngsters who are predisposed to be abusers (Thohir, 2015). Violence is contrary to the precepts of the Islamic faith. As implied by its name, Islam is a religion of "peace" and salvation. Islam is a religion that bestows goodness upon all humans and other living

things on Earth. In other words, Islam is a religion founded on the principle of “*rahmatan lil’ alamin*” as implied in the Quran Chapter 21 Verse 107 (Al-Anbiya: 107) (The Clear Quran, 2015). It also affirms that Islamic teachings are exhaustive and universal as implied in the Religion and faith play a crucial influence in avoiding aggressive behavior among adolescents (Ismail & Rahman, 2012). Encouragement can be derived from the fact that the pupils recognize how improper conduct impacts their academic success (Kurniawan, 2016). This awareness is crucial as a first step in preventing student misconduct, including school violence. Socialization and counseling are two methods that can be utilized to promote comprehension and awareness of the detrimental impacts of incorrect behavior (Sujadmi et al., 2018). The solution to the problem of the quality of human resources, particularly with regard to the quality of children, is a complete strategy that includes the education system and the family (Asbari et al., 2019). Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the values of Islamic education inside the family. It is envisaged that families who parent in accordance with Islamic educational norms will raise children with a noble character and persona. Thus, school-based acts of violence and bullying can be stopped. Several factors contribute to violence against children, including: 1) children with physical or mental disabilities, as well as a child’s high reliance on adults; 2) low family economic status; 3) discordant family; 4) psychologically immature and mentally disturbed families; 5) the presence of an unwanted child; 6) a historical repetition of the treatment parents received as children; and 7) a poor social environment (Fuadi, 2018). The most important of these aspects is the child’s family situation. Acts of violence against children are not limited to being performed by adults. In certain instances, a child acts as an abuser. This type of violent behavior is commonly observed in schools and is known as bullying. Bullying is an aggressive style of conduct that negatively impacts academic, social, emotional, and psychological growth. Especially in youth and adolescence, it is crucial to address this problematic behavior. The act of bullying is typically perpetrated by a student against a fellow student who is weaker (Eşkisü, 2014). In other words, a student (child) can be both a victim and an aggressor in bullying situations. The family has a crucial influence in the prevalence of child abuse and bullying. In addition, the family has a crucial role in avoiding violence towards children and bullying. According to Eşkisü (2014), bullying is closely associated with parental views, family connections, family violence, parental supervision, techniques of imparting discipline, and behavior management.

Parenting Style

According to Jus’at & Jahari (2000) parenting is essentially a set of actions and attitudes that parents have toward their children, such as how to feed, excite, and provide affection in an effort for the children’s healthy development. While Fellasari & Lestari (2017) described “parental parenting” as a pattern of parental attitudes or behavior of children. The parenting style or treatment given to children by their parents will affect the child’s behavior and intellectual, emotional, and social competence.

Darling & Steinberg (1993) stated that “parenting style” refers to a collection of parental attitudes that are exhibited to children in order for them to develop an emotional state that is manifested through actions. There are various ways to raise a child. Diana Baumrind suggests four parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved/neglectful. Democratic parenting is authoritative parenting. Children are taught to conduct responsibly with autonomy. However, parents continue to provide guidance and oversight as necessary. The definition of authoritarian parenting is when a parent supervises and evaluates a child’s behavior without taking the child’s feelings into account. In authoritarian parenting, the kid is expected to comply with parental norms without being given a reason for their necessity. Permissive parenting is when a parent always accepts and approves of the child’s desires. Parents always permit their children to do anything they desire. The parent with uninvolved/neglectful parenting style does not expect anything from the child, does not react to the child’s conduct, does not supervise, and does not provide assistance (Efobi & Nwokolo, 2014; Fellasari & Lestari, 2017).

Education and parenting styles have a significant impact on the character formation of children (Nurhayati et al., 2021; Nurhayati & Rosita, 2020; Ratningsih et al., 2021). Parenting influences the child’s disposition, attitudes, and conduct, as well as the child’s capacity for self-control (Anisah, 2017). In social circumstances, children will behave better if their parents practice good parenting. The results revealed a link between parenting and emotional intelligence in children. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that democratic parenting is the optimal way (Asbari et al., 2019). According to other studies, parenting influences children’s academic performance. Good parenting (i.e., authoritative parenting) has an effect on a child’s academic success (Efobi & Nwokolo, 2014; Nyarko, 2011). Poor parenting, on the other side, affects the development of children’s personalities into bad people. In reality, due to inadequate parenting, youngsters become school bullies (Efobi & Nwokolo, 2014; Eşkisü, 2014).

The family plays a crucial role in fostering the development of a responsible subsequent generation. The objective of the family is to provide its members with unending emotional support and affection (Friedman et al., 2003). Consequently, the parenting style within a family has a substantial impact on the character of the next generation. The family’s role in the education of children is crucial. Family connections and relationships have a significant impact on the behavior of children. Positive family interactions have a significant impact on the mental development of children. The mechanism by which a child acquires knowledge of values is communication developed inside the family. This stage in the family’s development will influence the child’s

personality in the future. In order for the child's personality to flourish, the family (parents) must teach and demonstrate positive values (Andriyani, 2016). In actuality, not only a child's behavior but also the way of their parents affects child's personal development (Muntoni & Retelsdorf, 2019). Multiple elements influence the formation of a person's behavior or character, 83% of a person's conduct is impacted by what they see, 11% by what they hear, and 6% by other factors. Consequently, the best way to mold a child's character is by setting a good example (Supaat & Fa'atin, 2019). Parents are the primary agents in the development of a child's character. Therefore, parents should be children's role models (Irmalia, 2020). Parenting in accordance with religious teachings will shape a child's character so they grow up to be a person of impeccable virtue (Anisah, 2017). Children who are raised in accordance with the Islamic parenting philosophy of holistic parenting will develop a respect for others, preventing them from engaging in harmful behavior, such as bullying (Rahmawati, 2016). The teachings of Islam cover a wide range of life topics as implied in the Quran Chapter 17 Verse 12 (Al-Israa: 12), Chapter 6 Verse 38 (Al-An'am: 38), and Chapter 16 Verse 89 (An-Nahl: 89) (The Clear Quran, 2015). Education inside the family is an area of life that Islamic teachings emphasize heavily. This is because parents are obligated to protect and care for their children from things that can lead them to ugliness as implied in the Quran Chapter 66 Verse 6 (At-Tahrim: 6) (The Clear Quran, 2015). Children are a responsibility given to parents by God, so they must be cared for properly (Masrur, 2013).

Numerous verses of the Quran and Hadith illustrate the fundamentals of Islamic family education. Quran Chapter 31 Verses 12-19 (Luqman: 12-19) are among the verses of the Quran that hint at the fundamentals of family education. These verses describe how Luqman al-Hakim educated his son. Luqman al-Hakim's strategy for educating his son consisted of teaching by example and persuasion. In the Quran Chapter 31 (Surah Luqman), it is implied that the first component of Islamic education is *altawhid* (unity of God), or belief in Allah as the one and only God; there is no god but Allah. Following a belief in God as the one and only God is appreciation to God as the Creator and Organizer. This educational foundation is expressed in Verses 12 and 13, namely thanksgiving and worshipping God alone, as well as the admonition against shirk (Katsir, n.d.; Shihab, 2006). *Altawhid* (unity of God) is the most fundamental indication of human consciousness as God's servant. According to the Quran Chapter 31 Verse 14 (Luqman: 14), the second essential of family education is to be kind to parents. Children must be taught that they are obligated to do well for their parents because their parents are responsible for their presence in the world. Parents have struggled to care for and nurture their children. In addition to stating the requirement to do well and to thank parents, this verse also reiterates the command to thank God (Katsir, n.d.; Shihab, 2006). With these two fundamentals of education, children are taught gratitude and when to repay a kindness. Should be grateful to God as the Creator, and parents for their care and education. Quran Chapter 31 Verse 15 (Luqman: 15), emphasized on *altawhid* (unity of God) as the foundation of Islamic education. The child is not required to obey a parent who instructs him or her to defy God and breach the concept of *altawhid* (unity of God). Nonetheless, the child must be kind to his parents. The manner in which a youngster rejects a parent's offer to depart from the teachings of *altawhid* (unity of God) must remain positive (Katsir, n.d.; Shihab, 2006).

As stated in the Quran Chapter 31 Verse 16 (Luqman: 16), the second pillar of education is the cultivation of the nature of "*ihsan*", or the cultivation of the awareness that man is always under God's supervision, wherever he is. *Ihsan* refers to a person who worships God while having the sensation of seeing God. Even if he cannot perceive Allah, he trusts in his heart that Allah constantly sees him (Al-Bukhari, n.d.). A youngster that possesses this character will develop into a consistent individual committed to truth and goodness (*istiqomah*). This character will also keep a person from sinning out of shame and dread of God, who is constantly observing him. The assumption that every action will surely be rewarded, for better or worse, also contributes to this perspective. Allah is all-knowing and all-observant, thus nothing escapes Allah's examination and awareness (Katsir, n.d.; Shihab, 2006).

Darajat (1970) stated that there is a rising and evolving awareness in the child's personality that God is always watching, which will be the strongest personality controller. Thus, a strong awareness of God's watching will have a favorable effect on the child's psychological psychology as he lives his life, particularly in choosing and defining what is right and wrong. According to Islamic thinking, the foundation of *altawhid* and *ihsan* education is faith and *ihsan*. According to Aristotle, habituation and character are intimately intertwined. Consequently, parents should habituate their children so that they develop into people of character and noble character (Khakim & Munir, 2019).

In the Quran Chapter 31 Verse 17 (Luqman: 17), parents are admonished to instruct their children in prayer as the primary obligatory act of devotion. However, the Quran Chapter 31 Verse 17 clearly implies that individual devotion (exercising the responsibility of prayer) is insufficient. Concern for fellow humans must also be taken into account. Parents should instill in their children a sense of duty to encourage others to do well and discourage them from doing wrong. Through this verse, it is also emphasized that a kid should be taught to be patient and firm when carrying out the obligation of worship and inviting others to do well in the face of difficulties or tests. A youngster must also be taught to develop a strong mentality so that he or she can face any issues and disasters (Katsir, n.d.; Shihab, 2006).

In addition to the cultivation of *aqidah* and the understanding of the responsibility to perform worship, moral education is another factor that must be considered. This is implied in the Quran Chapter 31 Verse 18 (Luqman: 18). Children must learn not to be arrogant and conceited as one of the noblest of values. The cultivation of virtue is also mentioned in the Quran Chapter 31 Verse 19 (Luqman: 19). This passage contains the

fundamentals of education: good etiquette when walking and humility when speaking (Katsir, n.d.; Shihab, 2006). THE detailed description of moral education in two consecutive verses (Quran Chapter 31 Verse 18 - 19) demonstrates the significance of moral education in Islamic teachings. According to the Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, was sent to improve human morals (al-Baihaqi).

From the preceding, it can be inferred that Surah Luqman Verses 12 - 19 describe the fundamentals of family education. These fundamentals can be summed up in three significant aspects: *aqidah*, worship, and morals. These three characteristics are referred to the Quraish Shihab as *aqidah*, sharia, and morality. In this instance, worship and sharia have the same meaning (Bolotio et al., 2020; Sutikno, 2016). These three facets comprise a full process of self-development in humans. The fundamentals of education are supposed to mould youngsters into whole people and reinforce them against harmful (Alam, 2017). The fundamentals of education in Surah Luqman Verses 12–19, according to Khakim & Munir (2019) are *aqidah*, worship, *muamalah*, and morals.

The Quran Chapter 31 (Surah Luqman) depicts Luqman's approach to educating his son as one of outstanding instruction and exhortation. In other words, what Luqman taught and counseled to his kid was first demonstrated and exemplified to him by his own actual acts (Sada, 2015). This is consistent with Zakiah Drajat's belief that the example method has the greatest impact on the character formation of youngsters. What children observe has the greatest impact on the development of their character (Supaat & Fa'atin, 2019). Sutikno (2016), however, argued that the type of teaching alluded to in Surah Luqman verses 12 - 19 is advice (*mau'izhah*). To be effective, the method of advice (*mau'izhah*) in education must meet many characteristics. These prerequisites are as follows: 1) the advisor must first implement his own advice. This is referred to as "exemplary" advice; 2) give advice privately, not in public, so that the counselee does not feel humiliated; 3) convey advice briefly, so as not to be boring; 4) the advice must be clear and appropriate to the psychological needs advised; 5) give advice gradually; and 6) give advice with affection, as opposed to being condescending and scolding.

Luqman's experience can serve as a model and lesson for parents who wish to adopt an Islamic parenting style. The actualization of the Islamic educational values contained in Surah Luqman requires the cultivation and development of various dimensions, namely: 1) the spiritual dimension, namely faith, piety, and noble character; 2) the cultural dimension, which is a strong and independent personality, responsible in personal life and society; and 3) the dimensions of intelligence that bring progress and goodness, namely smart, creative, skilled, disciplined, high-purpose, professional, and self-motivated. In conclusion, Islamic family parenting focuses not only on intellectual intelligence but also on emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence (Khakim & Munir, 2019).

The substance of Surah Luqman also suggests that parents play a significant role in molding the character of their offspring. The effect of parental education on their children's personal development is considerable. If the family provides the child with a strong education, the child's personal development will also be positive. Conversely, if the child has a poor education, the child will experience negative personality development. This is consistent with the Hadith, which states, "No child is born except on *Al-Fitra* (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian" (Arifin, 2017).

Parents are required to teach their children appropriately. There is no greater present a parent can give their child than a quality education. Another Hadith adds, "A parent who educates his child well is superior to the daily distribution of a half-sheaf of food to the needy." According to one narrative, when the Prophet of Allah was asked by his parents about the rights of children, he said, "The child's right is to be given a good name and educated well" Educators, especially parents, should use the appropriate methods to educate children so that they always adhere to the rules. Educators should address them if they are perverted, change their attitudes and mindset, edify their religion, and instruct them in the concepts of kindness, virtue, and morality. As a result, individuals will develop good character, which will be reflected in their good behavior, positive mental attitudes, and adherence to the rules. Not only do they have a significant obligation to themselves, but also to others. They care about doing good and encourage others to do well (Ulwan, 1985).

As discussed in the preceding section, the fundamentals of Islamic education in the family demonstrate the significant role of parents in forming the character of their children and giving them complete personalities. Fuadi (2018) states that the efforts that parents must make in educating children are the focus in overcoming violence against children in the perspective of the Islamic Family. Parents are required to carry out their roles and functions properly, with good parenting methods and patterns, in order to create a good next generation as well. If it is related to the theory of the types of parenting that have been described above, the parenting patterns contained in Islamic family education can be categorized as authoritative parenting.

Islamic Parenting and Motivation from Parents and Its

Influence on Children's Ability to Read the Quran: the ability of children to read the Quran is influenced by various factors, environmental conditions such as family have a significant influence. These findings environmental conditions such as family have a significant influence. These findings prove that the position of parents in the successful education of children is very decisive, and therefore realizing the family as the "first and foremost madrasa" must be realized. From the conclusions outlined, researchers recommend that every parent babysit with Islamic patterns, and never get tired of motivating children to learn the

Quran and read it. Based on the results of the research it can be suggested that every educational institution strengthens collaboration with the parents of inner learners.

Parents of learners must increase attention and motivation to each learner in order to achieve targeted learning goals. Every Muslim is expected to know how to read the Quran. However, Mahdali (2020) stated that some believers and Muslims could not read the Quran. This makes it difficult for them to understand its content and leads to ignorance within the community and failure to adhere to the commands of Allah. According to Nurlaili et al. (2020), several factors, including the learning environment, will affect the ability to read the Quran and strictly follow Islamic laws (Wodon, 2015). The use of learning methods (Sabiq et al., 2020) and learning models (Mustaqim et al., 2020; Hakim et al., 2020) has an impact on the ability to read the Quran. Furthermore, the basic learning abilities help students memorize and understand the Quran (Fauziah et al., 2020). However, previous studies showed that parenting style in the family environment significantly affects the children's future success and learning (Sarwar, 2016; Masud et al., 2019). Parenting techniques that consider the family environment will enable children to establish a good relationship with the wider environment (Ghozali, 2020). The family as an *al-ula* madrasah significantly contributes to building children's future (Gadsden et al., 2016; Ritonga et al., 2021). The family unit is key in building children's future by developing their cognitive, psychological, and social aspects of life. However, previous studies did not explain the effects of Islamic parenting on children's ability to read the Quran. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to bridge this information gap. Children's learning ability is affected by motivating factors in the environment (Vuslat, 2010; Realyvásquez-Vargas et al., 2020; Kovas et al., 2015). The children's desire to learn is motivated by their environment (Bellieni, 2016; Ng et al., 2010; Gherasim et al., 2011; Gopalan et al., 2017). This research focuses on how parental motivation affects children's ability to read the Quran. Parenting style and motivation affect the cognitive and psychological roles of children. However, this view has divided experts' opinions, with some agreeing and others thinking otherwise. The initial observations of the study established that students in several Al-Quran Learning Places (TPQ) in Pasaman cannot read the Quran. For example, TPQ al-Hidayah has students with less interest in participating in the Quran program due to poor parenting styles and lack of motivation from parents. These parents work long hours to meet the needs of their children, spending less time with them. Therefore, children stay with their grandmother or brothers, and are hardly motivated by their parents to read the Quran. The less time parents spend with their children, the less attention and motivation they get to carry out maghrib readings. The study also found that some of these children leave home but do not reach the TPQ. Parents who neglect parental attention and the motivation of their children make them lazy to study at TPQ. Instead of studying, these children pick other bad behavior such as smoking, sucking glue, and others.

ISLAMIC PARENTING IN SANDWICH GENERATION: The results of this study indicated that the application of Islamic parenting in the sandwich generation has been going quite well. The differences found in implementing Islamic parenting were based on differences in parents' economic conditions, which gave impact to the availability of time and understanding of religion by parents who became the sandwich generation.

Islamic Parenting

As a kaffah religion, Islam has provided instructions for humans to guide in carrying out the best life as a Khalifah. For example, in connection with the phenomenon of parenting and sandwich generation, Islam has presented what is called Islamic parenting (Anwar & Cristanti, 2019).

In millennial families, husbands and wives tend to work, so inevitably their parents participate in providing care for their children. The participation of millennial parents in providing care and family education to children of millennial parents results in parenting patterns that are not only carried out by parents, but also grandparents who play a role in providing care and family education to their grandchildren (Husain & Sartika, 2021).

According to Islamic teachings, Islamic parenting is parenting children in the process of growth and development. (Rachman 2014). According to Abdullah Nashih Alwan in Anis Nur Lailiyah and Lauwahatul Izzah (2021) in the book *Tarbiyah al-Aulad fi al-Islam*, exemplariness of parents in children's education can be implemented in parenting.

In the book *Al-Thifl Baina Al-Waratsah wa Al-Tarbiyah*, Muhammad Taqī Al-Falsafī in Wan Muhammad (2021) suggests that education in children includes do not break promises with children; train children to be honest; glorify the child's personality; foster faith in children; and not excessive in loving children. In line with that opinion, research conducted by Adi Heriyadi (2021) revealed that honesty education for children is how to coordinate their hearts and brains through words and actions. Based on the journal of M. Sahal (2020) Islamic Parenting that can be applied in dealing with the sandwich generation phenomenon is: First, *al-Mukalatah* or Socialization. In this phase, parents can start by showing their children behavior that reflects Islamic etiquette (Pertiwi & Muminin, 2020). This process can be done through observation or *al-Mushahahadah*, and mentoring or *al-Musahabah* (Ningrum, 2015). Parents can observe the extent to which the child can adopt the exemplified behavior. Then, parents can guide the child to find out the child's shortcomings. Second, *al-I'tiyad* or habituation. The habituation referred to here is supervision, which is disciplinary. It ensures they can continuously carry out what their parents have taught them. Manners that can be accustomed to such as eating

with the right hand, respect for elders, cover the genitals, love each other and share (Machfudh, 2020). Third, al-Ta'allum or learning. Learning process or al-Ta'allum will begin when the child is 7 years old, the period when the child begins his formal education. In this phase, it is enough for parents to monitor their children's behavior because, in general, in this phase, children have started attending formal schools. In this phase, parents must teach recitation of the Qur'an and Islamic law, which children will need. Fourth, namely internalization and integrity. In this phase, the child can carry out worship and is obligatory of his own volition. Parents can help children to stay istiqomah by praying for them. Suwanto, Yulistyaningrum and Hartinah, 2019 in Yessy Nur (Sary, 2020) stated that parents can also teach cultural values in this stage, because one of the factors that affects the success of parenting is culture. Fifth, the religious children. Research conducted by Yuarini revealed that Islamic Parenting has an impact on children's obedience (Pertiwi & Muminin, 2020). In this phase, children have become part of the expected Islamic generation. Pious children is the ultimate goal of this Islamic parenting (Machfudh, 2020).

Islamic Parenting Paradigm:

Along with the very rapid development of technology, today's children face various challenges and very serious threats [1-3], in addition to obtaining various facilities [4,5]. On the other hand, parents need to make every effort to protect their children [6,7], providing them with mentoring and mentoring to grow and develop in a good value system in all environments and various aspects of their lives [8,9]. For Muslim families, carrying out this noble task is the implementation of Allah's commandment, which is to protect them from the fires of hell (Al Qur'an Surah At-Tahrim 6) [10]. This is one of the starting points for the parenting paradigm in Islamic teachings. This verse emphasizes that childcare is a great responsibility [11,12]. Parents must prepare and deliver their children safely and happily to eternal life (heaven).

In Islam, preparation for the presence of children has begun since the selection of a life partner [13,14] accompanied by prayers for obtaining good offspring (Al-Qur'an Surah Ali Imran 38; Al-Qur'an a Surah Al Furqan 74; [15]. Then proceed with a blessed marriage as the beginning of building a good family for the birth of a child [16]. During pregnancy, Islamic teachings provide instructions regarding what good things are done by the father and mother of the baby in the womb [17]. Similarly, when and after the child is born [18,19].

Many Muslim families are alienated from Islamic teachings [20,21] regarding childcare. They realize it or not adopt secularistic conceptions and habits and ways of raising their children, even that applies to non-Islamic families [22,23]. This certainly deviates from the philosophy and theological norms of Islamic teachings regarding marriage and family. Thus, the goals of Islamic marriage and descent [24,25] are not supported by their practice in caring for, nurturing, and educating children. The question then is, which paradigms or principles in Islamic teachings can be referred to implementing childcare.

Based on a study of several al-Quran texts and al-Hadith texts, obtained some instructions regarding the treatment of children that describe the paradigms and principles of parenting in Islamic teachings. Among these treatments are:

- • Giving a meaningful name and giving a good influence on the child [26-30],
- • Breastfeeding which strengthens the first physical and psychological bond between the child and his mother, and has an impact on the child's physical and mental health (Al-Qur'an Surah Al Baqarah 233),
- • Sufficient funding so that children are cared for, cared for, raised and educated properly, neglecting this is considered a sin in the view of religion (Hadith Abu Dawood, 1692),
- • Fair treatment of all children, both boys and girls (Hadith al-Bukhaari 2447 and Hadith Muslim 1623) [12],
- • Develop a good and loving relationship between parents and children [31,32], both in words, attitudes and actions (illustrated in the Qur'an Surah Luqman 13),
- • Establish good communication [33] as the basis for forming the child's personality [34-39],
- • Provide comprehensive education both physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually,
- • Instilling faith as the highest responsibility and noblest task, • Teach the rights of others, both within the family lineage environment and beyond (Al-Qur'an Surah An-Nisa 36),
- • Provide direction on who deserves to be role models, besides presenting themselves as role models for their children,
- • Develop independence in various matters, including financial matters [40-50],
- • Development of noble character and morality,
- • Creating a positive environment in the family as a stimulus and conditioning children's attitudes and behaviour,
- • Always pray for the good for their children, and the prayers of parents for their children include prayers that are not rejected by God,
- • Choosing friends to hang out with for children because they can influence children's behaviour,
- • Fostering a sense of brotherhood with fellow Muslims regardless of nationality,
- • Foster pride as a Muslim.

The main principle of parenting for Muslim families is comprehensive starting from choosing a husband or wife, giving a good name to the baby, building a close physical and psychological relationship between mother and child, treating children with love and affection and appreciation. Islam forbids ignoring children's rights to grow and develop according to their unique potential. Islam provides guidance in developing all aspects of a child's personality including: physical-motor, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, language and language ethics, spiritual by maintaining purity of heart/qalb. Islam emphasizes the importance of guiding children to choose role models, and parents must be role models for children in all aspects of their lives. All educational efforts are theocentric on the basis of faith in Allah SWT.

Education and nurturing in Islam is carried out by example, habituation, training for independence, fostering a sense of brotherhood between Muslims and between humans, as well as self-confidence as a Muslim.

TEACHING CHILDREN: A Moral, Spiritual, and Holistic Approach to Educational Development:

Fitrah or Behaviourism: This (*fi~rah*) is the natural disposition God instilled in mankind – there is no altering God's creation... (Qur'an □□:□□) *Fi~rah* is a gift given to each of us by the Creator, a gift that is maintained to some extent throughout our lives. Yasien Mohamed, in his book on *fi~rah*, looked closely at the works of both classical and modern Muslim scholars and their richly diverse interpretations. □□□ Based on a combination of linguistic and religious explanations, he defined *fi~rah* as “an inborn natural predisposition which cannot change, and which exists at birth in all human beings...that is inclined toward right action and submission to Allah, the one God.” He speaks of *fi~rah* as original goodness as opposed to original sin, the doctrine of original sin being irreconcilable with the Islamic concepts of divine mercy and human responsibility. He has observed that *fi~rah* is a human quality, endowed in each of us by God, which, though subject to environment, cannot be totally extinguished. Actualizing our *fi~rah*, assuming the role that God intended for us, should be the goal of every human being. The intellect and free will that distinguish us as humans either complement and build upon the pure human nature with which we have been endowed or oppose it. Our intellect allows us to distinguish between right and wrong and our free will to choose which path to follow. Over and over again, the Qur'an addresses the Muslim as those who believe *and* do good. These God-given characteristics □ *fi~rah*, free will, and intellect □ provide the basis on which we, as educators, will achieve our mission and raise righteous individuals who love God and strive for justice. This concept – that we are created completely pure with the potential of growing into the ideal individuals that God intended – is so basic to Islam and so evident in the way that Prophet Muhammad treated children that it must take a central role in the Islamic way of teaching. Since the child's *fi~rah*, pure at birth, is clearly subject to the influence of the environment it is our responsibility to see that the child is nurtured within an environment that is truly Islamic. Educators have no more important task than to contribute to building the Islamic personality of the children we teach and to aid in the development of their understanding of the purpose of their time on earth, the actualization of their *fi~rah*. Even without the guidance of revelation, reason and contemplation can lead to an understanding and appreciation of human nature with which each of us have been endowed. The poet William Wordsworth shared his own understanding of *fi~rah* in his long poem *Intimations of Immortality* when he wrote: Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar: Not in entire forgetfulness, And not in utter nakedness, But trailing clouds of glory do we come From God, who is our home: Heaven lies about us in our infancy! Strictly through meticulous observation, Maria Montessori also came to appreciate what we call *fi~rah*. Her commitment caused her to base her entire pedagogy on the concept of the essential purity of the child. It is important to recognize that the Islamic conception of intellect denoted by the word *ʿaql* not only encompasses both reason and insight, or conceptualization through language and direct spiritual perception, but also includes a moral dimension. The conception of excellence expressed in the Arabic word *iʿsʿān* is in fact inseparable from goodness and virtue. We must ask ourselves if our understanding and appreciation of *fi~rah* guides our relationship with those precious ones in our care □ if it truly determines how we teach. Are we, as teachers, respecting the close relationship that naturally exists between the child and God? Are we providing an orderly, inviting environment in which they can explore and experiment, an atmosphere to allow them to fully blossom? Are we guiding and nourishing their *natural* tendencies to love God, to learn, to be the very best they can? Or are we assuming the worst, convinced that it is our job to rescue them from laziness and evil tendencies through regular, unrelated payoffs? Are we attempting to fill 'empty' minds with our own 'superior' wisdom, demanding silence and acquiescence while discouraging creative thinking, questioning and discussion? Are we, perhaps unknowingly, trying to pound round pegs into square holes to force their God-given natures into our own preconceived ideas? During their days of childhood and adolescence children must be given the opportunity to learn to make choices and to use their reason to make these choices. It is the role of the teacher to prepare them for the difficult decisions they will be required to make in a future that we cannot even begin to imagine. Children growing up in an environment that is overly strict, controlling and judgmental in regard to belief and behavior, are inclined to either adopt a similar attitude or to rebel against what they come to feel has been forced upon them. Free will *means* choice. Our role is to provide the children with the environment and the guidance to be able to make the choices that are pleasing to God. God has given us the gift of free will, but those who have power over others sometime assume the right to take it away. How can it be that we, as mere humans, could have the authority to take away that God-given right? The worship of God and behavior that is pleasing

to Him means little if it is imposed. In a free society individuals must have the right of choice as long as that choice is not negatively affecting the rights of others. Behaviorism is based on the notion that the conduct of an individual is due solely to the rewards or punishments that he has received in response to his behavior. It originated with the study of Pavlov who found that by ringing a bell when his dogs were fed, they became conditioned to salivate upon hearing the bell even if no food was offered. John B. Watson established behaviorism as a science, studying and promoting his ideas on animal behavior, child rearing, and advertising. B. F. Skinner became interested in behaviorism when he came into contact with Watson at Harvard and studied behaviorism for his Ph.D. Skinner went on to further develop the study and was instrumental in establishing behaviorism in the classroom. Behaviorism came to dominate the field of education during the first half of the last century and has become so deeply entrenched that it has remained the method of choice in teaching and classroom management. Mohamed noted that behaviorism cannot explain human nature because behaviorists do not even believe that we *have* a nature! Behaviorism denies the existence of both intellect and free will. An empathetic, generous person gives only because of his stimulus responses or reinforcement history. Ideas prevalent in behaviorism are (□) that humans and animals differ only in the behavior that they display and that the study of animals will therefore elucidate an understanding of human behavior; (□) there is no such thing as free will; (□) humans are born with a 'tabula rasa' (blank slate) and their development is determined strictly by the environmental stimuli to which they are exposed. As Muslims, we know that humanity has a relationship with God that places us more than a notch above other animals. We are specifically created to worship God and carry out His will on earth. Beginning from birth, and probably even earlier, the human individual has a relationship with God. He is curious with an innate motivation to explore and learn. This drive to improve skills and understanding is part of our human nature, our *fi~rah*. Our role and purpose would be meaningless if we fulfilled our role automatically as other created entities do. As humans, we have the choice of how or even *whether* to live our lives to carry out our roles as servants of God. Thankfully, during the past half-century psychology has moved away from the science of behaviorism. By the late "bringing the mind back in became the battle cry for a whole generation ... the primary objects of study were not stimulus strengths and response patterns, but mental actions□attending, thinking, understanding, imagining, remembering, feeling, knowing." Can we modify behavior through punishment and rewards?

Certainly, but the effects are likely to be short-term and will negatively influence the overall support and development of positive attributes. It is widely accepted today that the mind is far more than a physical entity where facts are stored. The human is not a passive victim of his environment, but a thinking rational being. Free will, humor, creative thinking in which understanding that can be applied to other areas of concern, connection to others – these attributes cannot be reduced to responses to stimuli. To encourage learning, teachers are often urged to focus on rewards and avoid punishment. However, Alfie Kohn cites numerous studies that demonstrate that rewards that are extrinsic to the action that is being rewarded actually *detract* from the enjoyment or interest of that task:

Behind the practice of presenting a colorful dinosaur sticker to a first grader who stays silent on demand is a theory that embodies distinct assumptions about the nature of knowledge, the possibility of choice, and what it means to be a human being.

The focus on rewards has become ubiquitous in contemporary Western-oriented cultures, undermining the natural processes that serve to keep us responsive to our environment and in touch with our real needs, replacing community, tradition, and values. The psychologists who have been the leaders in developing the alternative to behaviorism note that rewards can indeed be very effective but at a terrible cost! "Although tangible rewards may control immediate behaviors, they have negative consequences for subsequent interest, persistence and preference for challenge, especially for children."

In many cases rewards are used explicitly to try to get individuals to do what does not come naturally, work absurdly long hours, ignore interests and relationships, or engage in unvalued behavior....Imposed reward contingencies are, to an increasing extent, replacing...internalized values and natural consequences.

They compared the executive who makes millions of dollars a year, but neglects his health and family, to the story of a rat focused so strongly on rewards that he was the darling of his experimenters. One morning he was found disoriented from exhaustion with the only sign of life a weakened paw still reaching for the bar to tap just one more time for a final reward. Indeed, there is a severe cost to organisms □human and otherwise□when they become focused on rewards that do not satisfy real needs, and obscure the drives that should guide them toward spiritual, mental, and physical health. To fulfill our mission, we must become acutely aware of our own tendencies to overlook the influence of popular thought on our way of life, and question practices that are based on assumptions that may be contrary to the Islamic paradigm. Behaviorism can be particularly damaging when used in combination with competition. Teaching competition as a social value, in which one wins at the expense of others who, incidentally, lose, is beyond the realm of what Islam teaches. Instead we should be encouraging cooperation and collaboration. When children are expected to work together and to help one another a spirit of community naturally develops that is far superior to the dog-eat-dog atmosphere of many classrooms. In an effort to look good in relation to other students, competition often encourages dishonesty. Several years ago I received an email from a writer for a local Islamic publication. She asked me several questions about my recommendations for addressing the problems of cheating. My response is given below:

Cheating has never been a problem at our school. All people □ not just children □ are inclined to cheat when it is □ or seems to be □ necessary to avoid some kind of punishment. The punishment may be looking (and feeling) bad in relation to others or disapproval of parents or teacher. In general our students are encouraged to work together and help one another. On the rare occasions when work must be done independently, the students are informed that the purpose is to see how much they have learned or perhaps what they already know, where they need help and how we can improve on our teaching, so that at this particular time it is very important to work only by themselves. There is no incentive to 'cheat.' As any good educator can tell you, there are many, many alternative assessments to testing that do not encourage cheating. The excessive competition of today is the result of the extreme emphasis on individual rights that is attributed to the revolt against authority during the European Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the overthrow of absolute monarchies, and the rise of capitalism. Islam as the religion of the middle way looks at the apparently conflicting ideas of individualism and community not as opposites, but as complements. Individual rights are not absolute or isolated but are upheld in relationship with others, the group recognizing and supporting the well-being, rights, and growth of the individual, and the individual fulfilling his responsibility to the group. The approach in which the rights of individuals are given precedence over harm that may result to the community or other individuals is unacceptable. Most of the serious problems of society are the result of the undue emphasis on individual rights; the exploitation of the weaker members of society, destruction of the environment, obsessive materialism, and hedonism, including sexual promiscuity, alcoholism, and drug abuse. The insistence of the powerful gun lobby on the *right* to bear arms has resulted in the easy acquisition of deadly weapons not only by gangsters, terrorists, and mass murderers, but also by the mentally ill and children. Individualism has culminated in the social, political and economic extreme of capitalism – epitomized by the United States. Over a period of time capitalism has become so dominant that according to Michael Sandel the United States has moved from *having* a market economy to *being* a market society. Citing everything from college admissions, to the right to kill endangered species, and paying to upgrade your jail cell, he notes that almost everything has a price. He questions how we can protect the moral and civil goods that “markets do not honor and that money cannot buy. A reoccurring post on Facebook tells of an anthropologist in an African village who proposed a game to the boys. He put a basketful of fruit near a tree and told them that whoever got there first could have all of the sweet fruits for himself. When he said “Go,” they clasped hands and ran together, then sat sharing and enjoying their treats. When he reminded them that the winner could have had all the fruits for himself they said: “*Ubuntu*, how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?” *Ubuntu* can be defined as the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. This story, reposted over and over again, soon became viral. Although likely a fabrication, I wondered at its appeal. Was it perhaps a reaction to the individualism that so permeates our society?

The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims

Introduction

The findings of the study, published in the journal *Religion, Brain, & Behavior*, became the impetus for this paper. The research suggests a correlation between parental behavior and the onset of atheism in their children. “People tend to become atheists at a younger age when their religious parents talk the talk but don’t walk the walk...The study provides evidence that exposure to religiously-motivated actions plays an important role in the onset of atheism.”² This study focused solely on those who left their faith and the age at which they did so. While it does not include analysis and comparison of those who remained true to their faiths, it does provide valuable insight into the crucial role and influence parents have on the religious beliefs of their children.

Parenting objectives

Leaving one’s religion is a grave matter for faith-based communities as a whole. This is certainly true for Muslims who believe that our purpose and salvation is centered on belief in and worship of the one true God. Naturally, we as parents are most concerned with providing for and nurturing our children. Typically, this necessitates a focus on their physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, along with their educational needs (both religious and secular). Parents hope to raise responsible, confident individuals who will reflect their upbringing and contribute. Is there a connection between parent behavior that contradicts their professed religious beliefs and the eventual outcome of atheism in their children? This question was the subject of a recent study conducted with over five thousand participants from diverse backgrounds, all of whom identified as atheists. All of the participants had some form of religious upbringing yet, at some point, chose to reject the

faith they were raised with. to society in productive ways. While each of these parenting objectives is important in and of itself, it is the level of prioritization and care given to each one that is influenced greatly by our own surroundings and experiences—that of an increasingly secular and materialistic world imposing constant demands on our time and energy. Factors such as higher divorce rates, single parenting, and parents who do not share the same religious beliefs will further shape the approach to parenting. The amount of time spent out of the house, on social media, and on entertainment, in place of quality face-to-face family time all have an impact on one's parenting methods. In addition to these factors, the global decline of morality has perhaps the greatest overarching influence on parenting today.

Implications for Muslim parents

The Muslim community is not immune to these factors, and studies are showing that we face many of the same religious and social challenges as our counterparts across the globe. 23% of Muslims in America no longer identify with Islam, half of whom choose to not affiliate with any religion, joining the fastest growing global group today.³ Studies are showing that Muslims are experiencing an increasing faith crisis as is the case among other religious groups. Furthermore, among the foremost cited reasons that lead to doubt and abandonment of Islam is the behavior of Muslims themselves, in terms of personal conduct, misinterpretation, and misconstruing Islam.⁴ No doubt, parents are the first and primary influence in a child's life. Hence, the greatest and most important provision of all to come from parents, that of instilling faith, may take a direction of its own—even in religious households. It is noteworthy that the same study also found that "...religious individuals who were exposed to high levels of CREds [*credibility-enhancing displays*] by their parents³ Mohamed, Besheer, Elizabeth Podrebarac Sciupac. "Islam Gains about as Many Converts as It Loses in U.S." Pew Research Center. January 26, 2018. Accessed March 05, 2019.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/26/the-share-of-americans-who-leave-islam-is-offset-by-ose-who-become-muslim/>.⁴ <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/en/youssef-chouhoud/modern-pathways-to-doubt-in-islam/><https://yaqeeninstitute.org/en/youssef-chouhoud/what-causes-muslims-to-doubt-islam-a-quantitative-analysis/>⁵ | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims were more likely to report believing in the existence of God with high certainty."⁵ A practical example of a CREd is seen in parents who worship with the same commitment and regularity they teach and expect from their child. Additionally, CREds are formed and reinforced through other religiously and morally driven actions and interactions of the parents, such as being consistently truthful, charitable, and just—at home, in the workplace, and in social settings.

What is the solution? Simply put, Islamic principles and values are timeless, comprehensive, and holistic in regard to all of life's experiences and challenges, including those that come with parenting. The findings of this study corroborate in many ways Islamic teachings in regard to the relationship between parents and the effective transmission of faith to their children. A number of arguments can be made in favor of the Islamic approach to parenting to safeguard against the unfavorable findings of this study. The first and most obvious one is the need for parents to actively nurture faith from birth. This is the essential first step on the path to raising the next generation of confident Muslims who will be equipped with sound knowledge, conviction in their belief and practice of Islam, and upright and empathetic character. It is this moral and religious foundation that will enable and motivate them to contribute to society in productive and meaningful ways. This paper serves as a primer to the topic of parenting in Islam by addressing its foremost aspect—that of the role of the behavior of parents in instilling faith in their children.

The parent-child relationship is built upon faith at its core

Islam assigns parents guardianship and primary responsibility for their children in terms of the child's physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Parenting in Islam is part of one's personal accountability and servitude to Allah through one's virtuous conduct and service to His creation. This was taught and exemplified by⁵ Dolan, Eric W. "How Parents Act on Their Religious Beliefs Linked to the Onset of Atheism in Their Children."

PsyPost. August 26, 2018. Accessed October 05, 2018.

<https://www.psypost.org/2018/08/how-parents-act-on-their-religious-beliefs-linked-to-the-onset-of-theism-in-theirchildren-52058>.

⁶ | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who said that "...a man is a shepherd in charge of the inhabitants of his household and he is responsible for his flock; a woman is a shepherdess in charge of her husband's house and children and she is responsible for them..."⁶ This obligation carries with it the noble charge of safeguarding the faith of one's children and, in turn, that of future generations to come and society at large.

Parenting is from the abundant provisions and blessings from Allah. As with every blessing, it is also part of the test of life in this world—one that demands sincere effort and gratitude at all times, for which there is, in turn, tremendous reward from Allah. The Qur'an states, "And know that your properties and your children are but a trial and that Allah has with Him a great reward."⁷ Allah acknowledges the commitment and the sacrifice parents make in this selfless endeavor by honoring them with the highest regard, after Allah and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. *And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with*

hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, 'My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims.'⁸

The foundation for sound parenting in the Qur'an and Sunnah

The foundation for sound parenting is clearly established in the Qur'an and Sunnah. We are given instruction and lessons through the narratives of the noble prophets and believers, such as those of Ibrahim, Yaqub, and Luqman. عليهم السلام Detailed accounts are found in the biography (*seerah*) and methodology of the final Prophet, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. They embody the importance of teaching the Oneness 6 *Sunan Abi Dawud* 2928, *Sahih Al-Albani* , <https://sunnah.com/abudawud/20/1> 7 Qur'an, 8:28, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/8/28> 8 Qur'an, 46:15, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/46/15> 7 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims of Allah (*tawhid*), sincerity in all affairs concerning worship and worldly matters (*ikhlas*), good character (*akhlaq*), etiquette and the appropriate response in all situations (*adab*) within the Islamic framework of justice and compassion. These parenting goals are emphasized in sacred text as part of the thorough and complete guide to humanity as to how to prioritize the needs of the child in order to ensure spiritual and physical wellbeing in this world as well as ultimate success in the Hereafter. As with every deliberate action we undertake, parenting requires sincere intention. This is demonstrated through supplications (*du'a*) for one's offspring, even prior to conception, throughout life and for future generations to come. Of the beautiful examples of this in the Qur'an is the supplication of the mother of Maryam who sought protection in Allah from the evils of Shaytan for her unborn child and the future progeny to come.⁹ Explicit parenting advice is found in Surah Luqman in the form of Luqman's words to his son: *And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], 'Be grateful to Allah.' And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor]—then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy. And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, 'O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice.' And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do. [And Luqman said], 'O my son, indeed if wrong should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted. O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be 9 Qur'an, 3:36, "...and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled [from the mercy of Allah]," *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/3/36> 8 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination. And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.'* ¹⁰ These verses of the Qur'an contain instruction, wisdom, and advice on servitude to and worship of Allah. They provide guidance as to how to interact with His creation with confidence, perseverance, and humility. Of their many benefits, they

highlight the perfection and balanced, holistic nature of Islam. The Qur'an is not only the source of guidance to strengthen one's own faith; it also teaches how to build a loving bond with one's children and how to instill faith in them. It is this prescription that enables children to grow into exemplary Muslims, who in turn becomes a means of reward for their parents. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "When a person dies, all action is cut off for him with the exception of three things: *sadaqa* [charity] which continues, knowledge which benefits, or a righteous child who makes supplication for him."¹¹

All humans are born on the *fitrah*

The concept of the *fitrah* is mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah as the innate aspect of human nature each of us is born with. The *fitrah* is naturally inclined toward the worship of Allah and toward morality.¹² When parents provide the ideal environment in which to strengthen and maintain the child's natural disposition to believe in Allah and to live by the moral compass and guidance Islam provides, the *fitrah* will remain strong and protected from corruption, enabling the child to remain steadfast in faith and practice. Research in the area of childhood psychology has shown that children, from the earliest stages of development, exhibit an inclination toward good over evil, toward ¹⁰ Qur'an, 31:12-19, <https://quran.com/31/12-19> ¹¹ *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* 38, *Sahih Al-Albani* , <https://sunnah.com/adab/1/38> ¹² Qur'an, 30:30-33, "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the *fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know..." *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/30/30-32> 9 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims justice, kindness, and empathy for others. "Humans are

predisposed by their *fitrah* to find purpose and prosperity in the world, so they cry for guidance and care, observe their surroundings, interpret their environment with causation and deduction, seek morally upright patterns of behaviour, and yearn for an existence worthy of God's friendship...The *fitrah* is thus comprised of a conceptual apparatus with ethical, spiritual, and intellectual processing functions by which the external reality is rendered meaningful, and life's journey towards God is appropriately conceived."¹³ Another manifestation of the *fitrah* is described in the Qur'an as man's natural instinct to call upon Allah in moments of helplessness and the dire need for divine intervention.¹⁴

What can go wrong?

So what can go wrong to corrupt the *fitrah* and take the child away from the path of faith? One narration of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم speaks directly to the role of the parents. He صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "No child is born except on *Al-Fitra* (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian, as an animal produces a perfect young animal: do you see any part of its body amputated?"¹⁵ This *hadith* affirms two fundamental truths: firstly, that children are born with the inclination to recognize and worship Allah, after which secondly, they come under the influence of their parents who will either nurture that inclination or teach them to reject it. Hence, in Islam, parents shoulder the primary responsibility for providing their children the optimal means to strengthen and maintain their faith. Islam teaches us that the *fitrah* remains susceptible to constant attack from the Shaytan.¹⁶ He will attempt to lead us astray through every means available in the daily interactions we

we 13 Khan, M. Nazir, Dr. "Fitrah – The Primordial Nature of Man," Spiritual Perception. January 01, 2015. Accessed March 05, 2019. <http://spiritualperception.org/fitrah-the-primordial-nature-of-man/>.

14 Qur'an, 31:32, "And when waves come over them like canopies, they supplicate to Allah, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, there are [some] of them who are moderate [in faith]. And none rejects Our signs except everyone treacherous and ungrateful," *Sahih International*, <https://quran.com/31/32> 15 *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 6, Book 60, Hadith 298, <https://sunnah.com/urn/44530>

16 Qur'an, 7:16-17, "[Satan] said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You]," *Sahih International*, <https://quran.com/7/16-17>

10 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims have with the world at large, including those people in close proximity to us who have the greatest capacity to influence our spirituality and faith—our own parents. *The servants of God are inherently compelled by their fitrah to love God, though amongst them are those who corrupt this fitrah ... and this love of God intensifies according to one's knowledge of Him and the soundness of one's fitrah . And it diminishes with diminished knowledge, and the pollution of one's fitrah with corruptive vain desires.*¹⁷

Self-esteem and a confident Muslim identity

The impact of Islamophobia and other factors

The term *internalized Islamophobia* denotes the harmful impact of Islamophobia on Muslims—one that takes a firm grip within the individual, creating fear, doubt, and, eventually, distance from God and religion.¹⁸ This is just one factor today on the spectrum of prevalent root causes, both from outside and from within the home, that can have detrimental effects on one's self-esteem and faith. Each of these factors, often traumatic, is deserving of its own discourse beyond that of this paper. ¹⁹ However, parents play a crucial role in overcoming these challenges, given the impact on the child's self-esteem and faith. It is paramount that parents create a strong foundation and proper understanding of Islam in regard to the child's core beliefs (*aqeedah*). They must provide the correct contextualized lens through which to apply those beliefs in every aspect of daily life, as is the goal of every conscientious Muslim. Experiencing life through the lens of the Qur'an and the Sunnah both strengthens the Muslim identity as well as provides the appropriate response to every situation, be that situation one that supports or challenges the core identity.

17 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-Aql wa'l-Naq* 1, <http://spiritualperception.org/fitrah-the-primordial-nature-of-man/> 18 <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/omar-suleiman/exploring-the-faith-and-identity-crisis-of-american-muslim-youth/> 19 For an in-depth discussion on trauma and its impact on faith: <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/series/trauma/> 11 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims

Inculcating love of Allah

It is clearly not sufficient for parents to limit the teachings and practice of Islam to ritual acts of worship in specific times and places alone, as is unfortunately widespread today. Rather, it is the awareness of Allah, His Names and Attributes, and the desire to connect with Him out of love and servitude toward Him that must be at the forefront of what is taught and applied at all times to strengthen that identity. Additionally, self-esteem is further developed from the realization that Allah bestows the most noble status on His beloved servants.²⁰ These concepts are further reinforced by parents through showing love, encouragement, and acknowledgment of the child—and, where possible, with the additional support of like-minded company. Of the core aims of Islam is to strengthen the individual both spiritually and practically by placing great emphasis on collective effort as exemplified by the prophetic model of family and community life.

The Companions as role models

Many of the Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم were either in the prime of their youth or children who grew up in his company. Their biographies provide abundant fruit from which to nourish young minds and to encourage them to emulate the praiseworthy character traits and conduct of these phenomenal role models who are among the best of humanity. While they exemplify faith in action, fortitude, and conviction, they were also among the foremost in their empathy and kindness. Given the self-serving, individualism-driven mindset of today, it is important to encourage these positive qualities in order to build a healthy level of self-esteem and confidence, while at the same time safeguarding against arrogance or bigotry toward others.

20 Qur'an, 17:70, *Sahih International*, "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference," <https://quran.com/17/70> 12 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims

Adverse effects on faith

Going back to the atheism study, we can draw parallels between the finding that loss of faith in children is linked to parental practices and the following problematic scenarios that have implications for Muslim parents:

a. When one or both parents barely practice Islam (or do not practice it at all)

Marriage and family life are central to Islamic teachings and the preservation of faith at the individual and collective level. Hence, when one or both parents is not a practicing Muslim, it is bound to have an impact on the transmission of faith to the child. Two key approaches—one preventive and the other corrective—provide the solution to safeguard the child's faith in this scenario. The first is that of spouse selection and the importance of choosing a practicing Muslim as one's life partner, for whom Islam is both the spiritual as well as the practical lens for all aspects of daily life and worship. The second is to remember that it is never too late to begin that journey together as parents. Instilling and nurturing faith is a work in progress for parents and children alike. The Mercy of Allah is boundless—especially for those who sincerely seek His Path.

b. The absence of active involvement of both parents working cooperatively to instill faith

Islam recognizes the individual strengths, contributions, and the role of each parent, while emphasizing the importance of working together for mutual support and benefit. This is encouraged in every aspect of the marriage, in regard to the relationship between spouses and includes the relationship with one's children and their upbringing.

c. The assumption that children will discover their own path to faith and a failure to set and establish boundaries when it comes to religious belief ²¹

²¹ Cragun, R. T., Hammer, J. H., Nielsen, M., & Autz, N. (2018). Religious/secular distance: How far apart are teenagers and their parents? *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 10 (3), 288-295.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rel0000205> 13 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims This is clearly a false assumption given that the roles and responsibilities of parents defined in the Qur'an, and exemplified by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as detailed above, involve actively instilling faith in their children. Parenting in Islam necessitates active involvement from birth to protect and strengthen the *fitrah* and to teach, by example, the correct understanding and practice of Islam, within its established boundaries. Additional pitfalls for Muslim parents, not directly mentioned in the study, but which can be derived from it include:

d. The assumption that Islamic schools, masjid programs and the like suffice as the primary source of Islamic education and religious upbringing (tarbiya)

This stems from thinking that these valuable resources are sufficient (without the reinforcement and active involvement of parents) to safeguard against the multi-faceted harmful effects of secularism, liberalism, atheism, and Islamophobia our children are heavily exposed to on a daily basis, via school, peer pressure, social media, and entertainment.

e. Prioritizing secular education over Islamic education

When secular education becomes the focal point, it sometimes replaces instilling faith and establishing a Muslim identity as the core upon which to build all knowledge and education, both religious and secular.

Knowledge is an essential tool

Parents as the primary sources of knowledge

Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim.²² Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Allah makes the way to *Jannah* easy for he who treads the path in search of knowledge."²³ This statement contains profound 22 Qur'an, 17:36, *Sahih International*, <https://quran.com/17/36>, "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned." ²³ *Riyad As-Saliheen*, Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 6, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/13/6>

14 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims wisdom for each of us—and particularly for parents who become the first and primary source of knowledge from the moment their children enter this world. Parents provide the initial surroundings through which their children filter and absorb the world during their formative years. This happens through both parent-child interaction,²⁴ and through the child observing and imitating the behavior of their parents.

Imitation is a powerful form of learning

A study conducted at the University of Washington states, "Imitation is a powerful form of learning commonly used by children, adults, and infants. A child's enthusiasm for imitative behavior prompts parental attention and interaction, and provides a mechanism for transmitting appropriate cultural and social behavior. Although simple imitative behavior is evident in the postnatal period, by around 14 months infants remember and repeat actions they observe in adults, other children, and on television. Imitation games provide early experience in mapping the similarities between self and other. Behavioral imitation, empathy, and moral sentiments may be part of the same developmental pathway."²⁵ Hence, children's faith and practice will reflect their parents' understanding of Islam and their parents' behavior in accordance with those beliefs—be it correct, uninformed, or misunderstood. The level of conviction with which parents are able to communicate the religion will impact the conviction and confidence of their children. In line with the atheism study, it is no surprise that parents whose behavior matched their religious beliefs were more likely to have children who continued to profess those beliefs as adolescents. ²⁴ Landry SH. The role of parents in early childhood learning. In: Tremblay RE, Boivin M, Peters RDeV, eds. Tremblay RE, topic ed. Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development [online]. <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/parenting-skills/according-experts/role-parents-early-childhood-learning>. Updated December 2014. Accessed March 6, 2019.

²⁵ Meltzoff, Andrew M. "Born to Learn: What Infants Learn from Watching Us." 1999. Accessed March 7, 2019. http://ilabs.washington.edu/meltzoff/pdf/99Meltzoff_BornToLearn.pdf.

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Parenting with *ihsan* and *yaqeen*

Conveying Islam to one's child with sincerity, excellence, and due diligence (*ihsan*) means raising the bar for oneself first, to the best of one's ability. Hence, parents must be in constant search of sound knowledge to increase their own understanding and practice of Islam—in addition to acquiring secular knowledge and the necessary skills to practically navigate the world. Furthermore, one must address any questions, concerns, and doubts one may personally harbor in order to first build conviction (*yaqeen*) in oneself. This will, in turn, become a source of strength and inspiration to the child, as well as the means to tackle future challenges with confidence and clarity to help further build the child's faith and conviction.

Faith, Islam, and *imaan*

It logically follows that parents must themselves have a correct understanding of the core beliefs of Islam (*aqeedah*) as a foundation on which to build and instill faith in their children. With regard to the word *faith*, there is a theological distinction between the two Arabic words often synonymous with the English word *faith*—*Islam* and *imaan*.²⁶ The former is used in a general sense to denote the religion itself. The latter denotes a far more complex definition of faith which emanates with sincerity from the heart and influences one's speech and actions. *Imaan* is present in varying levels of strength at any given moment, such that it is entirely possible to claim and even practice Islam outwardly with little to no conviction in one's heart. Rituals such as prayer, charity, and fasting, along with morally upright actions are manifestations of *imaan* when accompanied by sincerity, as are virtuous character traits such as honesty and modesty.²⁷ ²⁶ Hamdan, Aisha. *Nurturing Eemân in Children*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House.

https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Nurturing_iman_In_Children.pdf, pp. 28-31 ²⁷ The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Faith [*imaan*] has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the path; and modesty is the branch of faith," *Sahih Muslim*, Book 1, Hadith 60, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/1/60> 16 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims

Cultural bias and societal norms

In addition to making an effort to learn and practice authentic Islam, it is just as important for parents to be aware of any cultural biases that may have shaped their understanding of Islam. These can be passed down automatically, generation to generation, often resulting in a skewed lens on one's religious beliefs and practice. It is important to note that Islam gives ample allowance for cultural norms and context. An example of this is the vast spectrum of permissible food and clothing, unique to each culture, from which to choose to eat and

wear. The biases referred to here are those which exceed the limits of the religion, falling into misinterpretation and incorrect belief and practice. Additional factors that necessitate a conscientious effort to acquire sound knowledge are the rise of secularism, the call to a more progressive and reformed Islam for modern times, and the many perceived conflicts and misconceptions that have arisen as a result. All of these factors are challenging to navigate successfully without knowledge of both the correct framework of Islam, as well as an understanding of one's current context.

The need for parenting resources

No doubt, there is a need for increased community-wide awareness and resources designed specifically for parents to be better equipped to face today's challenges.

Yaqeen Institute is a gateway to authentic and relevant material—as are other established and emerging Islamic organizations at the community level and via the internet. The local *masjid* may provide appropriate resources, along with the company of like-minded community members. The internet, with discernment, offers authentic and accredited programs for every category of student from the stay-at-home and working parent to those who are looking to supplement their education. Additionally, programs designed specifically to cater to families such as Islamic conferences, weekend schools, and parent support groups are also important to take advantage of. Foremost in all of these is the individual need for a daily regimen of the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) to build a strong connection to 17 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims Him as the means to fulfilling one's purpose in life as a believer and a parent who wants to instill faith in their child.

Practice what you teach

One of the key findings of the atheism study was that in cases where parents failed to act in accordance with their professed beliefs, their children abandoned religion at a younger age. The credibility factor in parent behavior can be the difference between faith, doubt, and rejection of faith on the part of the child. From the Islamic perspective, sincerity demands one be truthful, diligent in abstaining from hypocrisy, and consistent in one's belief and practice, to the best of one's ability.²⁸ In a detailed account of the numerous levels and characteristics of hypocrisy, Ibn Al-Qayyim (d. 1350 CE) mentions that foolishness and short-sightedness are attributed to hypocrisy. Those who exhibit these characteristics lack spiritual insight and are prone to falling into doubt and following their desires. Eventually this may lead to a contradiction between belief and practice—and ultimately, to one belittling the religion.²⁹ He describes a “people prone to laziness and laxity in fulfilling the orders of the All-Merciful and because of this they find sincerity burdensome.”³⁰ *And the Messenger has said, ‘O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Qur'an as [a thing] abandoned.’*³¹ Inconsistency in parent behavior feeds conflict, doubt, and lack of conviction, building the case for rejection of faith. Sadly, this has become a common phenomenon today. An obvious example of this involves parents expecting the child to observe the five daily obligatory prayers while they are inconsistent in doing so themselves. Yet, many are left wondering why the child refuses to pray or 28 *Sahih Al-Bukhari* , Hadith 6465, “The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was asked, ‘What deeds are loved most by Allah?’ He said, ‘The most regular constant deeds even though they may be few.’ He added, ‘Don't take upon yourselves, except the deeds which are within your ability,’” <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/81/54> 29 Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyah, Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr. *Characteristics of the Hypocrites* . Birmingham: Daar Us-Sunnah Publications.

<https://maktabahassunnahblog.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/characteristics-of-the-hypocrites.pdf>, pp. 21-28 30 Ibid., p. 28, see also [4:142], “...And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little.” 31 Qur'an, 25:30, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/25/30> 18 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims makes excuses not to. Contradictions between faith and action may be present in other areas such as one's daily interactions and general outlook on life, be it in the workplace or social settings—all of which are observed and scrutinized by the child. This is corroborated by the recent doubt studies conducted on Muslims which point to the behavior of Muslims themselves as a leading contributing factor to doubts about Islam.³²

Extremes and reactionary responses

When action stems from inaccurate or partial knowledge, it will logically lead to misinformed decisions which may fall into unhealthy extremes when it comes to how parents behave in regard to their religious beliefs. An example of this is the liberal and progressive outlook of many parents today who diminish the importance and existence of particular boundaries set by Islam if they appear cumbersome or to conflict with current prevailing norms. This can be contrasted with the opposite extreme of falsely attributed rigidity to Islam which parents impose on their children—to the point of it leading to undue hardship and excessive control.

These skewed approaches in parent behavior will naturally have an impact on the outcome and success with which parents instill faith in their children. For instance, neglect of obligatory actions, or a focus on the outward rituals, tradition, or appearance alone in place of emphasis on the child's relationship with Allah both carry potential for great harm. Parents may unintentionally drive their child away from true faith and practice. This may either result in the child identifying with Islam primarily in a cultural or social context, or outright rejecting it out of the false perception of Islam being harsh and oppressive. Likewise, this may also lead to religious conflict within the home between parent and child. Islam places great emphasis on the importance of balance in every aspect of life, including religious practice. The key is to avoid extremes and strive for consistency, with

a balance of compassion and discipline as taught and exemplified by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. 32 <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/en/youssef-chouhoud/modern-pathways-to-doubt-in-islam/> <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/en/youssef-chouhoud/what-causes-muslims-to-doubt-islam-a-quantitative-analysis/> 19 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims *But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet] do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.*33

Consolation for struggling parents

An important finding of the atheism study is that a match between professed beliefs and practices is not the only determining factor nor does it always provide a complete explanation as to why people believe or not.³⁴ This aligns with the fundamental Islamic principle that it is Divine Wisdom and the Divine Decree (*qadr* of Allah) that ultimately prevail in all matters—in this case, above and beyond the effort of the parents to instill faith in their children. Parents who find themselves in distress, faced with the reality of religious conflict or abandonment of faith by their child, are acknowledged and rewarded for their patience, steadfastness, and sincere effort to fulfill their responsibility in the sight of Allah. It is also important to acknowledge the pain and grief they experience as a consequence. Islam provides both spiritual solace and comfort in trusting the Mercy and Wisdom of Allah, as well as the guidance to seek practical solutions.³⁵ There is a tremendous need for increased awareness and for the encouragement to seek help and support from external resources as part of fulfilling the Islamic objectives of parenting and family life. This must be sought as needed through consultation with family and friends, a local imam, support groups, medical care, counseling, etc. Undoubtedly, people encounter life-altering and, at times, traumatic experiences beyond their control. While these are acknowledged as valid factors that contribute to doubt or rejection of faith in one's child, it must also be stated that they do not point to failure on the part of the parents. Islam teaches hope in the Mercy of Allah 33 Qur'an, 28:77, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/28/77> 34 Dolan, Eric W. "How Parents Act on Their Religious Beliefs Linked to the Onset of Atheism in Their Children."

PsyPost. August 26, 2018. Accessed October 05, 2018. <https://www.psypost.org/2018/08/how-parents-act-on-their-religious-beliefs-linked-to-the-onset-of-atheism-in-theirchildren-52058>.

35 "Anas bin Malik narrated that a man said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Shall I tie it [my camel] and rely (upon Allah), or leave it loose and rely (upon Allah)?' He said: 'Tie it and rely (upon Allah),'” *Jami' At-Tirmidhi* , *Hasan* , Vol. 4, Book 11, Hadith 2517, <https://sunnah.com/urn/678230> 20 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims and places great emphasis on the power of prayer as part of having faith and placing one's trust in Allah. The outcome is ultimately with Allah alone as proven in the powerful examples of the most righteous and noble parents who were tested with these very challenges such as Nuh and Yaqub عليهما السلام . In the case of the former, the son went astray, while in the case of the latter, the sons ultimately redeemed themselves.³⁶ Among the many blessings and wisdoms of being tested in life is that Allah tests His beloved servants in order to bring them closer to Him, to reward them, to raise them in rank, and to make that very test a means of forgiveness. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that."³⁷ Both one's provision and its removal are manifestations of divine Wisdom and blessings through which parents are tested for their gratitude and perseverance.³⁸ Allah's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “ Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.³⁹ Allah reassures the believers that they are never alone and abandoned, and He instructs them to seek help through patience and prayer.⁴⁰ This is the power of supplication (*du'a*) and placing one's trust in Allah as exemplified in the comprehensive and eloquent supplications in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

*And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous.'*⁴¹ 36 Qur'an, 11:42-49, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/11/42-49> , also 2:133-136, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/2/133-136> 37 *Sahih al-Bukhari* 5641, 5642 <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/75/2> 38 Hamdan, Aisha. *Nurturing Eemân in Children*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House. https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Nurturing_iman_In_Children.pdf, pp. 38-42 39 *Sahih Muslim* 2999 <https://sunnah.com/muslim/55/82> 40 Qur'an, 2:153, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/2/153> , “O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.”

41 Qur'an, 25:74, *Sahih International* , <https://quran.com/25/74> 21 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims

The prophetic model as the solution for all times

The prophetic model offers us far more than a fourteen-hundred-year-old historic reference to a flourishing society built upon moral standards and the worship of the one true God. It not only represents the pinnacle of all Islamic ideals, including parenting goals and methodology, for Muslims all over the world but it also contains within it the solution for a life lived to its fullest potential—for all of humanity, for all times. Hence, the prophetic model provides us with the most effective, practical, and rewarding plan of action to ensure success in this world and the Hereafter.

Inculcating prophetic character traits

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم embodied the optimum qualities for all humans, and in this case, parents, to emulate. He taught and demonstrated conviction in his beliefs. The most crucial takeaway is that he led by example—firmly establishing that parent behavior and the correct modeling of faith is essential in order to instill faith in one's child. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم took a nurturing approach to his relationships, building trust and credibility as their foundation. He showed compassion and empathy while maintaining self-discipline and balance in all aspects of life, with consistency and *ihsan* in his own actions and allowance for ease when it came to the actions of others.

it is well-documented that he was particularly kind and affectionate toward children.⁴² He was known to be loving and respectful, not only to his own children and grandchildren, but to all children. The most comprehensive point we can take from the prophetic model is that of his investing his time and attention in those around him—adults and children alike. Every encounter with him became a means of his imparting some benefit, even if it was a smile to bring about happiness, ease, or relief. Every individual was made to realize his or her importance and left the company of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم feeling loved, uplifted, and empowered, both spiritually and practically. This authentic and beautiful demonstration of Islam had a powerful impact. It would become the basis of 42 Hamdan, Aisha. *Nurturing Eemân in Children*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House.

https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Nurturing_iman_In_Children.pdf, p. 180 22 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims countless numbers of people wholeheartedly entering Islam and the establishment of faith and of lasting bonds with individuals, and in turn, entire communities. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم endured the weight of the world as the final Messenger of Allah and as the first head of state for the Muslim world yet he made time to greet children and to play with them. His grandsons would ride his shoulders and he would frequently embrace them.

*Abu Huraira reported that al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's Apostle صلى الله عليه وسلم kissing Hasan. He said: I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them, whereupon Allah's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said: He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him.*⁴³

The Prophetic model of teaching

The prophetic model of teaching is yet another discussion in and of itself.⁴⁴ Among its techniques and boundless wisdom is the compassionate and measured approach to inculcating upright behavior. This is illustrated through the gradual legislation and establishment of a number of religious obligations such as prayer (*salah*),⁴⁵ charity (*sadaqah* and *zakah*), fasting (*saum*), and the pilgrimage (*Hajj*). The Qur'anic verses in regard to the prohibition of intoxicants, for example, were divinely revealed in a systematic way to lead the early Muslims to successful and sustainable implementation of its final ruling, through establishing faith and conviction, and without placing undue hardship on a society that had been accustomed to consuming alcohol prior to Islam.⁴⁶ Additionally, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used storytelling and parables as effective means of teaching and communication.⁴⁷ He was known to repeat particular instructions in order to reinforce their importance. Viable alternatives were offered to redirect toward correct behavior, to facilitate ease, and to avoid embarrassment. Above all, 43 *Sahih Muslim* 2318 a <https://sunnah.com/muslim/43/86> 44 Hamdan, Aisha. *Nurturing Eemân in Children*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House.

https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Nurturing_iman_In_Children.pdf, pp. 73-76 45 The early Muslims prayed in the morning and evening until the five daily prayers were made obligatory during the Night Journey and Ascension, *Sahih al-Bukhari* 349, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/8> 46 See Qur'an, 2:219, 4:43, 5:90 and *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, <http://www.recitequran.com/tafsir/en.ibn-kathir/5:90> 47 Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 429, Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "The five daily *Salat* (prayers) are like a great river running by your door in which you take a bath five times a day, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/429> 23 |

The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was uniquely blessed with a level of emotional intelligence that enabled him to interact with each individual in terms of what was best suited for that person, at that time, in order to bring about the greatest benefit to that individual.⁴⁸ It

must be highlighted that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم exhibited remarkable patience in dealing with people—even those who ardently opposed him.

The Prophetic methodology of correcting and advising

The Prophetic methodology of correcting the behavior of others is anchored in sincerity to Allah.⁴⁹ As was mentioned above in regard to the need for consistency between one's beliefs and actions, sincerity is a prerequisite for parents in terms of their own behavior and when attempting to correct or to advise (*naseeha*) their children. Numerous examples from the *seerah* of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم detail the recognition and allowance for the fallibility of all humans. Much can be gleaned from the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم nuanced approach to people based on his relationship with them. How he corrected a senior Companion was different from how he corrected a Bedouin who lacked knowledge. We can summarize the prophetic methodology of correcting and advising with the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم impeccable abilities when it came to his principles of fairness, distinction between major and minor mistakes, avoiding the greater harm in a given situation, and critiquing the mistake without denouncing the individual. Care was given to conceal the faults of others and to pray for his *ummah* to be rightly guided and forgiven.

Planting the seeds of faith

All of these techniques ultimately became the means for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to achieve his greatest goal—that of planting the seeds of faith within the hearts of the people and effectively connecting them to Allah. This is further confirmed through his wisdom in focusing primarily on imparting the basics of *imaan* and nurturing it.⁴⁸ See https://yaqeeninstitute.org/mikaeel-ahmed-smith/shame-morality-and-emotions-understanding-the-prophetic-model-of-intelligence/#.XPQ-29OpE_U⁴⁹ Al-Munajjid, Muhammed Salih, Sh. The Prophet's Methods for Correcting People's Mistakes.

www.islamhouse.com,2005.https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Correcting_People_Mistakes.pdf , pp. 4, 13-15,17-21,28,35,39,43,62,103.

24 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims within the new Muslims for thirteen years in Makkah until it became firmly rooted in their hearts, before obligating them to uphold the legalities, which were not revealed by Allah in large part until after the migration to Madinah. No doubt, establishing a strong connection with Allah is the primary goal of every parent and the means to successfully instilling faith in children. Thus, one of the fundamental narrations we have is that of the recollection of the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم Companion, Abdullah ibn Al-Abbas, a young boy at the time, who said: *One day I was riding behind the Prophet when he said, "O lad, be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you shall find Him with you. When you ask (for anything), ask it from Allah, and if you seek help, seek help from Allah."*⁵⁰

Conclusion

The atheism study emphasizes the critical need for parents to be cognizant of their behavior at all times—particularly in regard to how they act on their religious beliefs. The Islamic approach to parenting not only confirms the correlation between parent behavior and the outcome of faith in the child, but it also provides the optimal solution to nurture faith and safeguard against its loss. The primary goal of parents is to actively instill faith in their children. This is best achieved when parents acquire the correct knowledge of Islam and have a comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities Allah has assigned to them. Seeking the support of external resources where needed and like-minded company is a necessary and practical application of the Islamic approach to parenting. It is also important to be aware of the challenges facing Muslims today in order to safeguard against them and overcome them—particularly those that contribute to doubt and abandonment of faith in our increasingly secular surroundings.

Furthermore, it is paramount for parents to spend quality time with their children and create an environment at home that fosters healthy and open communication between parent and child. The prophetic model provides the ideal roadmap for how to achieve these goals such that the child will actively look to the parent for guidance and answers, and willingly respond in accordance to their natural disposition toward⁵⁰ *At-Tirmidhi* , 1931, *Hasan Sahih* .

25 | The Importance of Conscious Parenting in Raising Confident Muslims faith and belief—the *fitrah* . Ultimately, this approach allows both parent and child to learn and grow together in their respective roles as confident Muslims who are equipped to nurture and benefit one another, and to contribute to society at large. Finally, making one's home a sanctuary where the remembrance of Allah is abundant is essential for every believer and likewise for every parent looking to instill faith in their child. In fact, it is essential to hope, to placing one's trust in Allah, and to life itself. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “ *The house in which*

*remembrance of Allah is made and the house in which Allah is not remembered are like the living and the dead .”*⁵¹ *Sahih Muslim* , Hadith 779, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/6/251>