

Different Kinds of Kindness Expression towards Children from the Viewpoint of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth

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Abstract

Kindness is the basic need of children, and it gives them an opportunity, away from any anxiety, to ponder about their acts and words and, if necessary, to refine them. Moreover, they learn what kindness is and how to use it in their lives. Considering the importance of kindness towards children for their training, this article discusses different kinds of kindness towards children from the viewpoint of the Qur'ān and narrations with a descriptive-analytical method. Findings of this research show that under the light of noble kindness, children find the future more promising. Kindness binds the children to the family and keeps them safe from the consequences of the future mishaps. Addressing children in a dignified way, playing with them, respecting and honoring them, having tolerance in dealing with them, ignoring their misconducts, making friends with them, encouraging them, making them happy, taking them out to play, appreciating their efforts, giving them gifts, keeping your promises, praying for them, and forgiving their mistakes are different kinds of kindness expression towards children.

Keywords

The Qur'ān, Narration, Child, Training, Kindness.

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Introduction

Human is a trainable creature and has a deistic nature and an independent character. Hence, wisdom, kindness and compassion should be used for training a human, and not violence. Human child listens to advice and becomes impressed through a kind training. Due to kindness, relations in the family become strong and parents become hopeful of a bright future for their children. They are willing to have successful children in return of all their efforts. The precious blessing of God to humans for the survival of coming generations is the love towards children through which their generations would survive well. God has put the ground for this friendship in the family.

God has started his holy book, which has been set by God as a guide for human life towards the abode of blissfulness, with the pure expression of "in the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful". He has reminded his mercy attribute twice to show that the human training is effective under the light of mercy and kindness.

Through the fond set in the heart of the enemy of Moses (a), the great prophet, God provides an opportunity for him to be raised and trained next to and under the supervision of his enemy. "But I cast (the garment of) love over thee from Me: and (this) in order that thou mayest be reared under Mine eye" (Qur'ān 20:39) so that "Children of Israel! Call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all other (for My Message)" (Qur'ān 2:47).

This article which is written with a descriptive-analytical method investigates the importance of kindness and its types in training children from the viewpoint of Islam. The main question of this research is that what the ways of expressing kindness towards children and its instances from the viewpoint of the Qur'ān and narrations are.

The importance of loving your child

One of the blessings of God to humans is having children who are the only love of their parents and these parents find their own existence connected to the existence of their children. Also, when God gives the news to His saints on their having children, He uses the term, "glad tidings" which suggests good news (Qur'ān 11:71; 3:39 & 45).

Due to the precious blessing of children, God has obliged some rights to be observed by parents and also by children, and has set children as a test for parents: "And know ye that your possessions and your progeny are but a trial" (Qur'ān 8:28). The Honorable Prophet (s) and Imām Ṣādiq (a) said, "Child is a test" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 50).

According to what Imām Sajjād (a) said, children have rights which should be observed by their parents, "However, the right of your child is that

you should know he is from you and is your follower in the good and the bad of this passing world, and truly you will be asked about his good training, his guidance towards his Lord, about helping him in obeying God, and about his right. So [if you do your duty], you will be rewarded and [if you underdo], you will be censured. So do your duty about your child as someone who dresses his act in this passing world with beneficence, and be justified in the relation between you and your child with your Lord due to your good guardianship and the divine outcome you get from him (Ibn Shu‘bah Ḥarānī, 1983: 263; Ṣadūq, 1983, vol. 2: 622).

Expressing kindness towards a child is one of his rights on parents. In a letter to his son, Imām ‘Alī (a) beautifully depicts the closeness of a child to his parents and their kindness expression towards him, "I saw you as a part of me, even rather all of my life, in a way that I get hurt if you get hurt, and I die if death comes to you. So I deemed your work as my work, and I wrote a letter for you, so it would guide you in life hardships, whether I am alive or not" (Nahj al-Balāgha, 2007: letter 31).

Self-esteem, munificence, generosity and moral virtues of children are fairly the result of parents’ kind training, and among all one can leave as his legacy, good training and chastisement of children is the best of them. Imām ‘Alī (a) said, "There is no legacy as decorum" (Ṭabrisī, 1965: 250; Majlisī, 1982, vol. 1: 94; Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, 1988, vol. 12: 40). Of course, this can be achieved with cognizance and effort in expressing kindness towards children over the years.

Kinds and instances of exerting kindness towards children

Exerting kindness towards children can be shown in different forms. Some of them are only in words and some others are practical which the most important ones are as follows.

Addressing with munificence, respect and kindness

Good training has different aspects. One of the primary foundations of good training is the proper way of talking to children. In Islamic training pattern, the qur’ānic addresses of fathers and mothers are formed based on human munificence.

Out of compassion, great fathers of the history have addressed their children "O, my little son" with compassion and kindness; a term which signifies kindness. Prophet Noah (a), boarding the ark, said to his son "O my son! Embark with us, and be not with the unbelievers!" (Qur’ān 11:42). Luqmān, giving his fatherly advices to his son, talks with complete kindness with his son "O my son! Establish regular prayer ..." (Qur’ān 31:17).

Although children of Jacob (a) did a big oppression to their father and

brother which made Jacob (a) upset and blind, when they went to Egypt to find their brother and get some wheat, their father addressed and recommended them kindly, "O my sons! Enter not all by one gate ..." (Qur'ān 12:67).

Therefore, talking to children should be in an explicitly tender and kind way, and vulgar, irritable and violent acts and talks should be avoided.

Playing with children in their childhood

In Islamic narrations, the principle of kids playing as well as playing with kids is emphasized. The Honorable Prophet (s) considered playing a natural need for a child; even in congregational prayer he did not stop kids playing. One of the companions of the Prophet (a) said, "At the time of prayer, the Messenger (a) of God came to us while he was carrying Ḥasan (a)... . The Messenger of God put him on the ground, said Allāhu Akbar, began the prayer and had a long prostration in the middle of the prayer. I raised my head and saw the child on the back of the Messenger of God while he was in prostration, so I got back to my prostration. When the Messenger of God finished his prayer, people said, 'Oh, the Messenger of God! You had a long prostration in the middle of the prayer in a way that we thought you had received revelation.' He said, 'No, I did not receive revelation, but my son went on my shoulder and I did not like to take him down hastily so that his need can be met'" (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 294). Imām Ṣādiq (a) also said, "Let your child free for seven years so that he can play (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 46; Ṭabrisī, 1991: 222).

Playing activates a child's emotions and is a good way to be applied for educating and training children. On the other hand, it is possible to treat some of the mental illnesses and behavioral problems of children through playing. Nowadays, play therapy is considered as a one of the important discussions of children's training.

Since a child can express his emotions through playing, he can show his talents and can have a basis for his personality growth. Through playing with children, adults figure out the positive and negative mental aspects of the children and improve positive behaviors in them.

Not only should children be allowed to play, but also parents should play with children. Playing is an essential foundation of a child's life, and parents also as a part of a child's life have a special importance for him. Therefore, it is very important for a child that parents enter into his childish world. This increases a child's munificence and self-esteem and bring him the feeling of self-worth. Also, at the time of playing, children can make a good and strong relationship with their parents.

The Honorable Prophet (a) and Imām 'Alī (a) said, "Who is with a child

should behave like a child to train him" (Şadūq, 1983, vol. 3: 484; Kulaynī, 1986: 50).

The Messenger(s) of God played with Imām Ḥasan (a) and Imām Ḥusein (a) in their childhood. He took their shoulders and put their feet on his own feet and said, "Come up, come up." The child went up so that he would put his feet on the chest of the Honorable Prophet (s). Then, the Prophet said to him, "Open your mouth." After that, he kissed the child's mouth and said, "God! I love this child, so you love him too" (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 286). One day Imām Ḥasan (a) and Imām Ḥusein (a) in their childhood went to see the Honorable Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) walked towards them slowly, put them on his shoulder, and said, "Your horse is a good horse, and you are good riders" (Ibid.).

When her children were small, Lady Zahrā (a) played with them and sang some songs for them as she expressed her kindness.

Expressing kindness towards children, not just heartfelt affection

Making friends with and expressing kindness towards children are prerequisites of training. It is through a positive relationship with children that their problems can be recognized and alleviated easily. As the gardeners of life, parents should guard the new blossoms of their garden and water them with the kindness from their hearts and nurture them with their munificence, remove their hurdles so that they can flourish and their fragrance can permeate in the society and make the society happy.

Islam gives much importance to kind relationships among people, especially family members. Imām ‘Alī (a) said, "The Faithful has amiable and friendly relations [with others], and who does not have amiable relationship with the Faithful is not benevolent" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 2: 102; Majlisī, 1982, vol. 68: 381). Also, that nobleman expressed his kindness towards his children, as in a letter in which he called his child "a part of me, even rather all of my life" and considered his child's work as his own work (Nahj al-Balāgha, 2007: letter 31).

The Honorable Prophet (s) made friendly relations with children. He put Imām Ḥasan (a) in his childhood on his shoulder and said, "O God! I love him. So you love him too" (Irbī, 1961, vol. 1: 520; Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 298; Bukhārī, 1980, vol. 4: 217; Muslim, n.d., vol. 7: 33).

Imām Şādiq (a) said, "God shows compassion towards a Servant because he has a strong interest in his child" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 50).

Kindness towards children should be expressed. In narrations, it is suggested to kiss children, and those who do not express their kindness towards subordinates, especially their children, are censured. The Honorable Prophet (a) said, "Kiss your children, for each kiss you would have a rank in

heaven and between each rank there would a distance of five hundred years" (Fatāl Neishābrūrī, 1996, vol. 2: 369; Majlisī, 1982, vol. 101: 92).

The Honorable Prophet (s) was kissing Imām Ḥasan (a) and Imām Ḥusein (a). At this time, one of the companions said to him, "I have ten children, but I have not kissed any of them." The Honorable Prophet (a) said, "Who does not show mercy won't receive mercy. What should I do if God has removed mercy from your heart? Who does not have mercy towards our children... is not from us (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 282-283). Someone in the presence of the Prophet (s) said, "I have not kissed a child so far." The Honorable Prophet (s) regarded him from the people of hell (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 50).

It is narrated from Imām Ṣādiq (a) that the prophet(s) had said, "Whoever kisses his child, God counts this as a good deed for him, and whoever makes his child happy, God will make him happy in the Judgment Day" (Ibid.).

The Honorable Prophet (s) went out of a house with the company of his companions. He saw Ḥusein (a) in his young years playing. The Prophet(s) opened his hands and went towards the child, Ḥusein (a), to take him. The child moved about laughingly and the Honorable Prophet (s) followed him with a smile. Finally, he got the child, put a hand under his chin and the other hand on his neck, put his lips on child's lips and kissed him (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 271 & 296).

The Honorable Prophet (s) behaved with his grandchild like this in the presence of people to do his duty as well as to inform people more about their duty for making children happy and playing with them.

In addition to meeting a child's internal and emotional needs, kissing a child gives him the feeling of acceptability and self-worth which are the causes of self-confidence and self-esteem and this provides a good basis for training and also demonstrating the child's talents.

Trained children in the school of kindness and munificence have a principled and solid personality and can be the builders of humane societies. By learning lessons in such an environment, they will behave accordingly among the people of the society in the future.

Respecting and honoring the child even in his childhood

God in the Qur'ān considers a high value for the human and says, "We have honoured the sons of Adam; ... and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation." (Qur'ān 17:70)

Respecting and honoring children, and also respecting their mother, is one of the rights of a child on his father. In stating the rights of children on their father, the Honorable Prophet (s) said, "Of the rights that a son (and also a daughter) has on his father is that his father should respect his mother, choose him a good name, teach him the Qur'ān, and train him to be pure and

have a pure heart (Ṭūsī, 1986, vol. 8: 112 ; Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 49; Feid Kāshānī, 1985, vol. 23: 1283; Majlisī, 1983, vol. 21: 8). If respecting the mother of a child is necessary, so respecting the child himself is also necessary.

The Prophet of Islam (s) respected his daughter Fāṭimah (a), stood up to appreciate her reverence, kissed her hand and gave her his place to sit. To express his deep interest in her, sometimes he called her with the deferential title of "the best woman in the world" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 49) and sometimes with the expression "may his father be sacrificed to her" and its repeating (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 20). Sometimes he used the title of "the mother of her father" (Ibid.: 16) for her to show the spiritual greatness, value, and importance of Zahrā (a).

Having tolerance in dealing with the child

Tolerance is one of the training tools without which one cannot succeed in good training. If parents have tolerance, they will react appropriately to different behaviors of their children and will tolerate their inappropriate behaviors and talks to a reasonable level with meekness and bearing, and refine them with appropriate reaction.

Training a child is a gradual process and would not be complete through saying or doing something for one or two times. To reach the ultimate goal, it should be done step by step and should solve the problem little by little. The Qur'ān also suggests people to have patience in religious training of children and family members, "Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein" (Qur'ān 20:132). Training a child is a kind of management and every type of management needs tolerance. Imām 'Alī (a) has said, "Tolerance is a tool of headship and management" (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1987: 342).

Ignorance towards a child's misdeeds

In many cases, overlooking children's mistakes causes them to learn how to cope with their problems and how to correct their mistakes, and also their emotions won't be hurt. If a child demonstrates bad behaviors for pretension or his parent's irritation, one of the best solutions is overlooking and even detaching from him (Pantley, 2005: 51). When parents ignore their children's mistakes, children figure out that they can get lessons from their mistakes and gain experiences after making mistakes and can increase their abilities.

Basically, one of the requirements of tolerating children is observing the principle of ignorance. When children of Jacob (a) brought the shirt of Joseph which was contaminated with blood, Jacob (a) understood that Joseph was not really eaten by a wolf and that they were telling a lie, but he

did not call them liars and only said, "Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you, (for me) patience is most fitting" (Qur'ān 12:18), and this was the upmost level of ignorance observed by Jacob (a).

Imām Sajjād (a) also counted the ignorance of the child's mistake one of the rights of the child on parents (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 71: 19).

Creating a positive and friendly relationship with children

Making a positive and strong relationship with parents is one of the ways by which children can have the attachment feeling. This relationship teaches children the practice of cooperation and responsibility. Revering children, pursuing hobbies and having fun with them, encouraging and being kind towards them are of the main factors for making a constructive relationship with children. Also, spending time with children, eating with them at the same table and playing with them are some other ways to make relationships with children.

Parents should show to their children that they believe in them and they respect them. This increases the self-esteem of children. Self-esteem, in turn, helps children to solve their problems and reach success.

Through a kind and strong relationship, parents become their children's confidants and their reliable supporters. By this relationship, intimate dialogues are formed between parents and children, many problems of children are solved, they get lessons for their victory from their failures, learn how to fight with problems and also how to make a good relationship with others, and as a result in ups and downs of life won't lose their courage and won't deviate easily from the right path.

An instance of a good relationship with children can be seen in the conversations between the prophets of God and their children. As it was mentioned, "Oh my little son" addresses show a positive and strong relationship that exists between these fathers and their children.

Strengthening the relationship with children, with all their behavioral and mental differences and discrepancies is clearly mentioned in a verse of the Qur'ān where Prophet Joseph (a) talked about his dream with his father. Knowing his son's morality and mentality well as well as Joseph's distinctive traits, the father says, "My (dear) little son! Relate not thy vision to thy brothers, lest they concoct a plot against thee: for Satan is to man an avowed enemy!" (Qur'ān 12:5).

In another verse, addressing of Jacob to all his children also is mentioned with the sentence "oh my sons!" (Qur'ān 12:67). Therefore, parents should address children with kindness to strengthen their relationship with their children.

Due to an intimate relationship, children can easily talk about their concerns with their parents. Jacob who knows his children well does not cut his relationship with anyone of them and addresses all of them similarly. However, he states the act and plans of Satan to Joseph in his childhood and also causes him to understand that not everything should be said everywhere; some of them are secrets that he should keep them to himself. Moreover, he knows that some of his children can be influenced by Satan's hoaxes, so Satan should not be provided with an opportunity to deceive them.

The acclamation of children

One of the innate inclinations of the human which manifests itself from the childhood and remains until the end of life is the tendency for being accepted and admired by others. Being admired and acclaimed is one of the strongest incentives in human nature. Acclamation is one of the effective methods that parents and children can use in training, and when they see a good behavior, morality, or deed from their child or anybody else they can express their contentment through an appropriate act.

Children need to be attached and like to be accepted; however, knowing that they want to be attached is very important. Because of acclamation, the child feels being accepted, becomes encouraged to do his work, and shows seriousness to continue and complete the work. The Messenger of God (a) said, "Whenever a father makes his child delighted with an amiable look, God grants him the reward of freeing a slave" (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 71: 80; Nūrī, 1987, vol. 15: 169).

The child naturally does activities and uses his childish forces to reach his own perfection. Acclamation and admiration of child's parents and relatives opens his way to more success and makes the flame of love and hope brighter in his mind and as a result, his internal talents flourish one after the other. Through acclamation, parents can motivate their child and keep him away from laziness and boredom and by this help him to recognize his strengths.

Imām 'Alī (a) ordered his son, Imām Ḥasan (a), in his childhood to give a sermon. Imām Ḥasan (a) said, "I am ashamed to do so in your presence." Imām 'Alī (a) gathered the females of the family and hid himself in a way that he could hear the talk of Imām Ḥasan (a) while Imām Ḥasan (a) could not see him. Imām Ḥasan (a) gave a sermon. After that, Imām 'Alī (a) acclaimed him, kissed his forehead and recited the verse 34 of the chapter of the House of 'Imrān to applause him (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 43: 351).

It is narrated from Imām Ṣādiq (a) that Ḥasan (a) and Ḥusein (a) – in their childhood – were wrestling in the presence of the Prophet. The Prophet said

to Ḥasan (a), "Take Husein..." (Ibid.: 276) and by this he encouraged them to wrestle.

Making a child happy and taking him out to play

Recreating and having fun is one of the foundations of one's relationship with his friends. This can be started with a smile in the morning. Wise people are exact and prudent and have short term and long term plans and goals for their smallest works and moments of life.

Imām Kāzīm (a) pointed out the importance of having fun in time scheduling and said, "Try to divide your time into four parts: some time for praying to God; some time for subsistence; some time for visiting and socializing with brothers and trustees; ... and some time for recreating and having pleasures which are not forbidden. It is this last time by which you get the power to spend time for the other three (Ibn Shu'bah Ḥarānī, 1983: 409-410; Majlisī, 1982, vol. 75: 321).

By considering recreation in life, humans gain more power against problems and can take them easy. Having fun with children has important outcomes. Children become more agreeable, tolerate their peers more and have more fun with their siblings and friends and fight less with them, and parents also enjoy more of having the role of parenting (Mayer, 2008:22).

Imām Ṣādiq (a) said, "Whoever kisses his child, God will consider a benevolence for him, and whoever makes his child delightful, God will make him happy in the Judgment Day" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 49). It is evident that one of the ways of making a child happy is taking him out to play.

Acknowledgement and appreciation of child's efforts

Appreciating the child's efforts gives him the feeling of happiness, pride and contentment because of which he considers himself deserved to be successful. One should figure out the child's effort or progress, notice his improvement, acknowledge him, and not to lose the chances for the appreciation of the child's good deeds. In appreciation, it is better to state tenderly the reason of thanking so that children would know that their good deeds are not overlooked. We have to also express somehow our discontentment about bad deeds of children. Of course, the child should know that we consider him and his acts separate. In this case, we can accept children without accepting their misbehavior.

Appreciating other people's efforts is one of the attributes of God, "... for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service)" (Qur'ān 42:23). It is a basic principle in the life of the religion nobles. Imām Riḍā (a) said, "Whoever does not thank a creature, who gives boons, has not thanked God"

(Majlisī, 1982, vol. 68: 44). Therefore, it is our imperative and necessary duty to appreciate others' efforts.

One of the ways to thank children by parents is their pray for the children which will be discussed later. We should thank children for their good deeds so that they would know their good acts are taken into account. By this, they both increase their self-confidence and are encouraged to do good deeds as well as to do deeds in a good way.

Giving gifts and bounties to the child

Gift-giving makes heart happy and encouraged and keeps the enthusiasm to do an act in the heart and perpetuate its memory. Gift should be suitable; it could be something or even an appropriate appreciation. It is recommended in Islam to give gifts to others, especially to buy a gift for your family every Friday (Kulaynī, 1896, vol. 6: 299). Giving gifts and bounties could be accompanied by children's good deeds and successes so that they would be encouraged to do that work.

Keeping promises given to children

From the time a child reaches a level of understanding, he is faced with promises from his parents; sometimes these promises are kept and sometimes not. It is highly recommended in Islamic teachings to keep promises. Breaking a promise is of the wrong traits; it goes for everywhere and for everybody and one of its instances is the child. On the other hand, the misbehavior learned by a child due to breaking a promise by a parent is too negative for the child. Although breaking a promise is generally banned, it is of special importance for a child due to the age condition and special training he needs. A child imitates other people's behavior, especially his parents' which has a deep and permanent impact on his personality. Imām Riḍā (a) states this fact like this, "Whenever you promise children, keep it because children think you provide their subsistence. Verily, nothing makes God angry as (trampling the right of) children and women" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 6: 50).

Moralizing and advising out of kindness

One of the missions of parents towards children is moralizing. It should be sympathetic and be out of wisdom, intimacy, kindness, affection and observing the child's reverence; the expression of "oh my little son!" in the Qur'ān and our religious texts implies these points. This intimate conversation should be kept during the training through which important points suitable to the age of children can be shared, problem-solving can be taught to them as well as prioritizing important issues; they can be trained as pious, responsible, and gregarious people so that they can be in the future that type of individuals who know the recommended and the forbidden and

can, according to their age, be individuals who can properly enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

God has related Luqmān's advices to his son all of which are full of kindness and benevolence towards his son. In these advices, the wise Luqmān has given notice about his reason for recommending and prohibiting which shows all these orders are out of understanding, reason, and logic, "Behold, Luqmān said to his son by way of instruction: 'O my son! Join not in worship (others) with God: for false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing.'" (Qur'ān 31:13).

Also, the Noble Qur'ān points out the advice of the Prophet Noah (a) to his son (Qur'ān 11:42-43), though the son of Noah (a) did not listen to his father's advices due to obstinacy.

In addition to creating a sense of self-worth in children, moralizing flourishes their intellect. It makes them astute and observant, considering the understanding of children in their childhood. Also, the thinking power of children can be increased and activated by this so that life skills can be empowered within them, and later they won't be attracted to different negative tendencies and can say no to what they regard as wrong and won't yield to others. It is by the active power of thinking that children achieve their successes.

In addition to giving advice, Jacob (a) teaches his son not to say everything evidently because disclosing some secrets may cost dearly: "Said (the father): 'My (dear) little son! Relate not thy vision to thy brothers, lest they concoct a plot against thee'" (Qur'ān 12:5).

Children trained in this way can be asked for opinions in their teen years and can express accurate and strong opinions as when the Prophet Ibrāhīm (a) wanted to do his mission of killing his son, Isma'īl. He said to his son with perfect toleration and modesty, "Now see what is thy view!" (Qur'ān 37:102); It means that you think over your destiny and decide and clarify my task (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 17: 152).

Isma'īl who has been taught in the presence of his father reaches a perfection level that when he hears the news to be sacrificed for God, he accepts this difficult divine test, and also comforts his father, makes him clam, and says, "O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou will find me, if God so wills one practising Patience and Constancy!" (Qur'ān 37:102).

Praying for the child

The Prophet (s) calls prayer and adoration the core of worship (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1988, vol. 7: 27). Prayer saves the human in the most critical moments of life and returns hope and vivacity to his life. It has influence in all aspects of

human life and has much impact on human mind from a training and psychological point of view.

From the viewpoint of the Qur'ān, the life of humans is incomplete without prayer, "My Lord is not uneasy because of you if ye call not on Him" (Qur'ān 25:77). Prayer is sometimes for personal interests, sometimes for the interest of the human society, and sometimes for the children and family.

Prayers of Prophet Ibrāhīm (a) for his children and offspring are among the most enticing and beautiful qur'ānic topics. In the heart of Ibrāhīm (a), child love was so much that whenever this Honorable Prophet received a great boon, he remembered his offspring and asked this boon from God for them. For example, at the time of building the House of Ka'ba, he prayed God like this, "O my Lord! Make this city one of peace and security: and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols" (Qur'ān 14:35).

In another prayer regarding the people of the society, Prophet Ibrāhīm (a) has asked God to provide the spiritual and financial needs of the society, "My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its people with fruits, -such of them as believe in God and the Last Day" (Qur'ān 2:126).

Ibrāhīm (a) not only did pray for his children and the human society of that time, but also he prayed for his offspring till the end of the history. Also, he asked God to give him a truth tongue among the people of last days and God complied with this prayer, "Grant me honourable mention on the tongue of truth among the latest (generations)" (Qur'ān 26:84).

Ibrāhīm asked God to put his offspring as submissive people to Himself, "Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (will)" (Qur'ān 2:128).

Prayer is both a way for improving oneself, a method for familial training and a way for reforming the society and presenting Islamic knowledge properly.

When Ibrāhīm (a) leaves his dear wife and child next to the House of God and returns, he prays for them, "O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks" (Qur'ān 14:37).

With praying for children, Imām Sajjād (a) has shown the mutual rights of the father and his children, and has wished different financial boons for them. In his prayer for his children, Imām (a) has prayed for his children's long life and refinement, and has asked God to help him in training his children and bestow his children bodily strength, proper religion, good morality, the health of body organs, and abundant subsistence, and make

them pious, observant, advisable and obedient to Himself (Al- Şahīfat al-Sajjādīah, 1997: prayer 25).

Imām Bāqir (a) never forgot praying for his children even in ordinary matters like saying hello and goodbye. For saying goodbye, he gathered all the family together and said, "Oh Lord! I entrust myself, my possessions, and my family and my present and absent children to you. Oh Lord, put us next to your mercy proximity, do not take away your boons from us, do not turn away blessing, health, and your munificence and mercy from us" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 4: 283).

That Majesty also said, "Five individuals' prayers won't be declined in Divine Threshold: ... the prayer of a decent child for his parents; the prayer of a decent father for his child (Ibid., vol. 2: 509).

While parents do their best to train their child properly, it is on them to pray for their children a good life and a blissful fate for which God has given guarantee and said, "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer)" (Qur'ān 40:60).

Forgiveness towards the child

Forgiveness in life is emphasized by the Qur'ān and the Leaders. The Noble Qur'ān says, "Let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that God should forgive you?" (Qur'ān 24:22) and the Messenger (a) of God said, "It is on you to forgive, because forgiveness increases nothing except the Servant's dignity; forgive each other so that God would make you loved" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 2: 108).

In relations between parents and children, it sometimes happens that learning lessons from those relations can be effective in many problems in the future. For children to learn good lessons from the past and for the experiences to have a very good practical and qualitative impact on the life of children and their future, parents should discuss the mistakes with children that sometimes occur and try to change those mistakes into a bridge for children's success as well as to help children in building that bridge and attaining future successes. The Noble Qur'ān asked true believers to forgive each other's mistakes, "And when they are angry even then forgive" (Qur'ān 42:37) and asked the Honorable Prophet (s) to forgive people's mistakes (Qur'ān 3:159).

Of course, that forgiveness is valuable which causes one to refine. Especially, after doing something wrong or making a mistake, if children come to apologize, they should be forgiven quickly. The brothers of Joseph (a) came to Joseph to apologize. After hearing their talks, without waiting to hear their reason for doing so, he immediately said, "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: God will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!" (Qur'ān 12:92).

On this, good deeds of children can be considered to forgive them because "For those things, that are good remove those that are evil" (Qur'ān 11:114).

At the end of the discussion, this point should be mentioned that moderation is the basis of Islamic teachings, in a way that in its rules and regulations, every kind of excess and negligence is prohibited (Qur'ān 17:29). It goes the same for the issue of kindness. The age conditions and needs of the child should be taken into account, and kindness should be offered regarding these points. If kindness is expressed excessively or inappropriately, the child will be raised pampered, spoiled, bully or coward and dependent on parents.

Conclusion

Islam has mentioned proper ways of training the child with kindness. This research shows that:

1. Kindness, munificence, and acceptability are basic needs of the child. His mind is in a dire need of kindness and acceptability.
2. Being kind towards the child brings about a sense of security and composure, and the basis for his progress in the next stages of training would be available.
3. A child who is teemed with kindness and munificence would be someone self-dependent, kind and good-tempered and could be kind to other people and be resilient and patient facing the problems.
4. Offering kindness to children makes them intelligent, eloquent, and open-minded and keeps them away from depression. A child who is full with kindness has a good relationship with others, and he won't be entrapped in deviations because he does not feel any deficiency.
5. Kindness must be expressed to children and that we only love them in our hearts won't have the required effect on their training.
6. Moderation is necessary in the stream of kindness towards the child. Expressing kindness excessively or inappropriately has an undesired effect on the training of the child.
7. Some types of expressing kindness towards children are as follows: addressing children along with keeping their munificence, playing with them, revering and honoring them, having tolerance in dealing with them, ignoring their misdeeds, creating a positive and friendly relationship with them, encouraging them, making them happy, taking them out to play, appreciating and thanking their efforts, giving gifts to them, keeping our promises to them, moralizing and giving them advice out of kindness, praying for them, and forgiving their mistakes.

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