

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE ALL-BENEFICENT, THE ALL-MERCIFUL

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى:

ڈ ڈ ڈ ژ ژ ڑ ڑ ک ک ک

Indeed, Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(*S£rah al-A¦z¡b* ٣٣:٣٣)

Prophetic traditions, mentioned in both Sunnī and Shī'īte most reliable reference books of *H□adīth* and *Tafsīr* (Qur'anic Exegesis), have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively involve the five individuals of the Cloak; namely, Muh□ammad, 'Alī, Fāṭīmah, al-H□asan, and al- H□usayn, peace be upon them, to whom the term 'Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House)' is solely dedicated.

For instance, refer to the following reference books:

A. Sunnī Reference Books:

(١) Ah□mad ibn H□anbal (d. ٢٤١ AH), *al-Musnad*, ١:٣٣١; ٤:١٠٧; ٦:٢٩٢, ٣٠٤. (٢) *S□ah□īh□ Muslim* (d. ٢٦١ AH), ٧:١٣٠. (٣) At-Tirmidhī (d. ٢٧٩ AH), *Sunan*, ٥:٣٦١ et al. (٤) Al-Dūlābī (d. ٣١٠ AH), *al-Dhurriyyah at□-Ṭāhirah an-Nabawiyyah*, pp. ١٠٨. (٥) An-Nassā'ī (d. ٣٠٣ AH), *al-Sunan al-Kubrā'*, ٥:P١٠٨, ١١٣. (٦) al-⍟akīm an-Naysābūrī (d. ٤٠٥ AH), *al-Mustadrak 'ala as□-S□ah□īh□ayn*, ٢:٤١٦, ٣:١٣٣, ١٤٦, ١٤٧. (٧) al-Zarkāshī (d. ٧٩٤ AH), *al-Burhān*, pp. ١٩٧. (٨) Ibn Hājar al- Asqalānī (d. ٨٥٢), *Fath□ al-Bārī Sharh□ S□ah□īh□ al-Bukhārī*, ٧:١٠٤.

B. Shī'īteReference Books:

(١) Al-Kulaynī (d. ٣٢٨ AH), *'Us□ūl al-Kāfī*, ١:٢٨٧. (٢) Ibn Bābawayh (d. ٣٢٩ AH), *al-Imāmah wa't-Tabs□irah*, pp. ٤٧, H. ٢٩. (٣) Al-Maghribī (d. ٣٦٣ AH), *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, pp. ٣٥, ٣٧. (٤) Aṣ-S□adūq (d. ٣٨١ AH), *al-Khis□āl*, pp. ٤٠٣, ٥٥٠. (٥) At-Tūsī (d. ٤٦٠ AH), *al-Amālī*, H. ٤٣٨, ٤٨٢, ٧٨٣.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse involved in the following reference books of *tafsīr*: (١) At□-T□abarī (d. ٣١٠ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (٢) Al-Jassāss (d. ٣٧٠ AH), *Ah□kām al-Qur'ān*. (٣) Al-Wah□īdī (d. ٤٦٨ AH), *Asbāb an-Nuzūl*. (٤) Ibn al-Jawzī (d. ٥٩٧ AH), *Zād al-Mas□īr*. (٥) Al-Qurt□ubī (d. ٦٧١ AH), *al-Jāmi' al-Ah□kām al-Qur'an*. (٦) Ibn Kathīr (d. ٧٧٤ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (٧) Al-Tha'ālibī (d. ٨٢٥ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (٨) As- Suyūṭī (d. ٩١١ AH), *ad-Durr al-Manthūr*. (٩) Ash-Shawkanī (d. ١٢٥٠ AH), *Fath□ al-Qadīr*. (١٠) Al-'Ayyāshī (d. ٣٢٠ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (١١) Al-Qummī (d. ٣٢٩ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (١٢) Furṭ al-Kūfī (d. ٣٥٢ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*; in the margin of the exegesis of verse ٤:٥٩. (١٣) Al- Tabrīsī (d. ٥٦٠ AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other reference books of *H□adith* and *Tafsīr*.

The Prophet's Attitude towards

Children and Youth

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ 3:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ: كِتَابَ اللهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي، مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَداً، وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

The Messenger of Allah (¥) said:

"Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*Thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'Itrah*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [¦*aw¤*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some of its references:

Al°¡kim anNaysh¡b£r¢, *AlMustadrak 'al¡ aṣ-¯a¦¢¦ayn* (Beirut), vol. ٣, pp. ١٠٩-١٠, ١٤٨, ٥٣٣.

Muslim, *Aṣ-¯a¦¢¦*, (English translation), book ٣١, ¦*ad¢ths* ٥٩٢٠-٣.

AtTirmidh¢, *Aṣ-¯a¦¢¦*, vol. ٥, pp. ٦٢١-٢, ¦*ad¢ths* ٣٧٨٦, ٣٧٨٨; vol. ٢, p. ٢١٩.

An-Nass¡'¢, *Kha¥¡'i¥ 'Al¢ ibn Ab¢ ±¡lib*, ¦*ad¢th* ٧٩.

A¦mad ibn °anbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. ٣, pp. ١٤, ١٧, ٢٦; vol. ٣, pp. ٢٦, ٥٩; vol. ٤, p. ٣٧١; vol. ٥, pp. ١٨١-٨٢, ١٨٩-٩٠.

Ibn alAth¢r, *J¡mi' al'U¥£l*, vol. ١, p. ٢٧٧.

Ibn Kath¢r, *AlBid¡yah wa'nNih¡yah*, vol. ٥, p. ٢٠٩.

Ibn Kath¢r, *Tafs¢r al-Qur'¡n al-'A¨¢m*, vol. ٦, p. ١٩٩.

N¡¥ir ad-D¢n al-Alban¢, *Silsilat al-A¦¡d¢th a¥-Ṣa¦¢¦ah* (Kuwait: *Ad-Dār as-Salafiyyah*), vol. ٤, pp. ٣٥٥-٨.

THE PROPHET'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

By Muḥammad ʻAlī Chenārānī

Translated from Persian to English by
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Ahl al-Bayt (ʻa) World Assembly

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PREFACE

In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has given many scholars to the Muslim *ummah* who, following in the footsteps of Imāms of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shī'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in edition and publication of the valuable works of leading Shī'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (*'a*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Mr. Muḥammad 'Alī Chenārānī, the author of the present book, and Mr. Mahdī Āzādī, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.✍

Cultural Affairs Department

The Ahl al-Bayt (*'a*) World Assembly

FOREWORD

In today's world, the instruction and upbringing of children are among the most basic social issues and important elements for the happiness of humanity. Therefore, scientists have carried out deep psychological and educational studies and research and have written an infinite number of books on this subject.

In addition, countries have formed extensive organizations for the proper physical and psychological upbringing of children and have put children under theoretical and practical monitoring in every respect.

١٤ centuries ago, however, when people were engulfed in an age of darkness and ignorance, the great leader of Islam paid full attention to the value and importance of children's upbringing and provided the necessary teachings to his followers.

If scientists today pay attention to the instruction of children after birth, Islam has provided step-by-step specifications for marriage, conditions of spouses, having pure children, breastfeeding, and the physical and psychological upbringing of children.

If scientists today include precise psychological and instructional points in their books about children, the leaders of Islam noted the same in their sayings and demonstrated the same in their practices long ago.

Out purpose in writing this book is two-fold:

One: It is hoped that all the Muslims, especially educated young people, who constitute a large part of the society, will become aware of the comprehensive programs and orders of Islam and the practical value of this religion while relying on their solid

faith and beliefs in order not to be deceived by the programs of others.

Two: It is also hoped that parents will become aware of their religious and national duty in the upbringing of their children. In order to help parents carry out this great responsibility, for doubtless a great part of the social problems and moral pollutions experienced today are due to ignorance and unawareness about how to perform one's duties, we decided to provide a practical model for those who want to bring up physically and psychologically healthy children. The best model for Muslims is the great leader of Islam, Prophet Muhammad and his rightful heirs, who can be our reliable models throughout life, as they did not commit any mistakes. It is hoped that humanity will become aware of the true models to follow and will surrender the false satanic models in order to achieve happiness in this world and the next.

This book consists of two parts:

١. The Prophet's attitude towards children, consisting of five chapters, each having its own subject heading.

٢. The Prophet's attitude towards youth, consisting of four chapters, each chapter having several subtitles.

Finally, I would like to express thanks, especially to Ḥujjat al-Islām wal-Muslimīn Ilāhī Khorāsānī, managing director of the Foundation, and my beloved children Majīd, Muḥsin, Iḥsān and Sa'īd, who helped me organize the notes for the book, and to Messrs Ja'far Sharī'atmadarī the editor, Riḍā Arghiyānī the compiler, Riḍā Waḥdatī the proofreader and Muḥammad 'Alī 'Alāqemand, the typesetter, all of whom played a significant role in the preparation of this book. I wish all of them increasing success.

PART I

THE PROPHET'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDREN

Kindness towards children was one of the Prophet's special characteristics.

Chapter One

Upbringing

The Noble Prophet (ṣ) said:

"Respect your children and treat them with good manners."

CHAPTER ONE:
UPBRINGING

The Importance of Upbringing

From the time a child is born until he separates from the family to establish a shared life with others, he passes through two phases in his upbringing.

١. Childhood, from birth until the age of seven, is the time when the child is not well prepared for direct instruction as he does not know his world.

٢. From the age of seven to the age of fourteen is the time when the intellect grows gradually, in preparation for intellectual activities. In this stage the child can learn and be instructed.

In the first period, instruction has to be indirect without commands and psychological pressure. Rather, the child becomes familiar with good manners and is instructed by the people surrounding him. In fact, the moral foundation of his character is laid and good memories and proper treatment become etched in his mind.

In the second phase, the child should not be left free to behave and do as he pleases and his faults should not be ignored. Rather, his ill manner should be discouraged and he should be taught order and discipline, while emphasizing the proper use of time and he should be encouraged to perform religious worship and do good things.[١]

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[١] Bā Tarbiyat-e Maktabī Āshnā Shavīm [*Let's Get Familiar with Scholastic Upbringing*], PP.٧٧-٧٨.

Unfortunately, most people do not know when to begin to train their children. Some parents believe that instruction should begin after the age of six and some say that instruction should begin at the age of three.

Nevertheless, such beliefs are incorrect because when a child has completed the third year of his life, ٧٥٪ of good and bad characteristics have already become formed in him.

A number of psychologists believe that the training of a child begins from the moment of birth. However, some others are cautious and say that the training of a child begins on the first day of the second month after his birth. In depth practical research at the University of Chicago has reached the conclusion that:

> "Any healthy child gains ٥٠٪ of his intelligence by the age of four, ٣٠٪ by the age of ٨ and ٢٠٪ by the age of ١٧. Then, any ٤-year old child has ٥٠٪ intelligence and the changes between the ages of ٢ and ٣ are far more important than the changes between the ages of ٨ and ٩."[١]

How to Begin the Child's Upbringing and Instruction

For training to be effective, one has to begin much sooner than is generally thought nowadays, i.e. from the very first weeks after birth. First, one has to consider the physiological issues and from the first year, the psychological issues.

One point to consider is that the value of time is not the same for a child as for an adult. One day at the age of ١ is much longer than the same period of time at the age of ٣٠ and it perhaps includes six times the physiological and psychological occurrences. Therefore, one should not leave such a fruitful

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[١] Rawān-Shenāsī-ye kūdak [*Child Psychology*], P.٧٧.

period of childhood unused, for in the first six years of life, the outcome of the performance of the rules of life is more definitive.[١]

It is because of this that Imām ʻAlī said, "He who does not learn in childhood, cannot progress in adulthood."[٢]

Therefore, childhood is the best time for learning the right way of living because the child is very apt to imitate, adopt and learn. At this time, the child records in himself all the movement, speech and behavior of the people surrounding him, with the utmost care, as if recorded on film.

Therefore, the child's psyche needs to be guided to the right path simultaneously with his physical growth and development because it becomes very difficult at the adult stage to change the character of one who was not properly instructed in childhood.

The happiest people are those who have been reared in a correct and healthy manner from the very beginning and who have adopted good characteristics.

According to some psychologists, a child is like a sapling that the gardener can easily change according to his own plans. Yet, correcting those who are like old trees and have grown accustomed to bad ways, is very difficult indeed. One who intends to change the attitudes of such individuals must endure many hardships[٣].

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[١] *Rāh va Rasm-e Zendegī* [*Ways of Life*], P.١١٨.
[٢] *Ghurar al-H□ikam*, P.٦٩٧.
[٣] *Kūdak az Naẓar-e Wirāthat va Tarbiyyat* [*The Child in terms of Heredity and Upbringing*], PP.٢٢٣-٤.

The Prophet as an Example for the People

God says in the Qur'an, **"You have had a good example in God's Messenger."**[١]

The Prophet of Islam has been the greatest example for humanity throughout history because, in addition to teaching and guiding the people with his words, he instructed them with his personal behavior.

The Prophet's personality is not an example for a specific period, generation, nation, religion or place. Rather, he is a lasting global symbol for all peoples of all times.

With reference to reliable evidence and documents, the Prophet's attitude towards and behavior with respect to children and youth shall now be considered.

Respecting the Child's Personality

In today's world, children are considered to be very important. Full attention is given by societies and governments to their upbringing and respecting their personality in the family and the society. In spite of this, people today do not pay as much attention to children's instruction as the Leader of the Muslims did.

Although sometimes statesmen in industrialized countries visit orphanages and kindergartens, sometimes hugging children for photo ops and media publicity, demonstrating their love and respect for children, to date no individual can be compared with the Prophet of Islam. With the utmost simplicity and kindness, he passed through the alleys and streets, expressing his love and kindness towards children and hugging them. The Prophet had a special love of children, whether they were his own children or

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[١] *Aḥzāb* [*The Confederates*], ٢١.

those of others. It has been written about him: "Kindness towards children was one of the special practices of the Prophet."[١]

This same practice was continued by Shī'īte religious leaders and Imāms. They respected children's personalities. Some examples have been provided below.

١. Asking Children's Views

Imām 'Alī asked his children intellectual questions in the presence of others and in some cases, he would let his children answer the questions of others.

Once Imām 'Alī asked his children, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusain some questions. The latter responded wisely and briefly. Then Imām 'Alī turned to someone known as Ḥārith A'war, who was present in the gathering and said: "Teach these wise words to your children to improve their reasoning and thinking abilities."[٢]

Thus Imām 'Alī expressed his respect for his children in the best possible way and contributed to the creation of the greatest personality and independence in them.

٢. Sociability

One of the most basic factors in the development of a child's personality is sociability and proper treatment. Prophet Muḥammad clearly advised his followers concerning this. He told them: "Respect your children and treat them with good manners and in an acceptable way."[٣]

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[١] *Al-Maḥaj□jah al-Bayd□ā'*, Vol.٣, P.٣٦٦.
[٢] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٥, P.٣٥٠; *al-Bidāyah wan-Nahāyah*, Vol.٨, P.٣٧.
[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٥, ḥ.٤٤.

Therefore, those who want to have children with a strong personality must guide them with good training and avoid treating them improperly as an improper practice cannot lead to the upbringing of worthy children who have a strong personality.

٣. Fulfillment of Promises

Fulfillment of promises towards children contributes to the development of their self-confidence and affects their personality. The true leaders of Islam have given much advice about the fulfillment of promises to children. Some examples are as follows:

Imām ‘Alī said: “It is not appropriate to tell lies, whether seriously or jokingly. It is not appropriate to make a promise to one’s children and fail to fulfill it.”[١]

Imām ‘Alī also said: “The Prophet said, ‘If any of you makes a promise to his child, he must fulfill it.”[٢]

Numerous sayings have been recounted in Shī‘īte sources from the Shī‘īte Imāms about the necessity of parents, fulfilling their promises.

٤. Familiarizing the Child with the Difficulties of Life

One of the ways to strengthen a child’s personality, especially in the case of boys, is to familiarize them with the difficulties of life so as to prepare them for the future; children must understand in practice that one has to work hard to obtain anything. If a child is not familiar with the problems and difficulties of life, when he

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٢٩٥, P.٧٢; *Amālī S□adūq*, P.٢٥٢.

[٢] *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, Vol.٢, P.٦٢٦; *Wasā’il ash-Shī‘ah*, Vol.٥, P.١٢٦, the old print.

does face difficulties, he will become easily frustrated. This has been discussed in the sayings of religious leaders as well.

Imām Mūsā ibn Ja'far has said, "It is better for a child to become familiarized with the unavoidable difficulties of life, which are the toll of life, during childhood so that he can be patient during youth and adulthood.[١]

It must be remembered that familiarizing the child with the difficulties of life should not bother the child, i.e. the jobs given to him to do should not be beyond his capabilities. Therefore, the child's abilities must be taken into consideration as well.

The Prophet reminded us of four points in this respect:

١. What the child has been able to do should be accepted.

٢. The child should not be asked to perform difficult tasks beyond his abilities.

٣. The child should not be persuaded to commit sins or be rebellious.

٤. The child should not be told lies and silly things should not be done in front of him.[٢]

It has been narrated elsewhere that, "One day, when the Messenger of God was seven years old, he asked his nanny (Ḥalīmah Sa'diyah): 'Where are my brothers?' (The Prophet lived in Ḥalīmah's house and he called her sons as brothers.) She answered: "Dear child, they have gone to graze the sheep with which God has blessed us.' The child responded: 'O Mum, you did not treat me justly.' 'Why?' she asked. 'Is it right that I should

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[١] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol.٥, P.١٢٦.
[٢] '*Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol.٦, P.٥٠.

stay in the shade of the tent and drink milk while my brothers are in the hot desert sun?'"[١]

٥. Appreciating What the Child Does

The Prophet himself practiced all that he advised his followers concerning the upbringing of children and respecting their personality. One of the things he often did was to give a high value to actions performed by children.

'Amr ibn Ḥarīth has been quoted as saying: "The Prophet passed by 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib, while the latter was a little child. The Prophet thus prayed for him, 'O God, bless him in his dealings and commerce.'"[٢]

٦. Rising in the Presence of Children

In order to show respect to his own children, the Prophet would either lengthen his prostration during prayer or would end the prayer quickly (depending on the circumstances). In all occasions he respected children and he would teach the people in practical terms how to train the personalities of their children.

One day, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn arrived while the Prophet was sitting. The Prophet rose to show respect to them and waited for them. As they were little children and weak, this took some time. The Prophet went towards them to welcome them. He opened his arms, took them both, put them on his shoulders and walked, while saying, "What a good ride you are having and what good riders you are!"[٣]

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٥, P.٣٧٦.
[٢] *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, Vol.٩, P.٢٨٦.
[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٢٨٥, ḥ.٥١; *Manāqib ibn Shahr Āshūb*, Vol.٣, P.٣٨٨.

The Prophet would also stand in the presence of his daughter, Fāt□imah Zahrā.[١]

٧. Foresight for Children

One day Imām Mujtabā called his children and his nephews and said to them, "You are the children of the society. It is hoped that in the future you will be great members of the society and that you will strive to acquire knowledge. Any of you, who cannot memorize scholarly material, should write it down, keep the written material at home and refer to it whenever necessary.[٢]

As you see, Imām Mujtabā thought of the future of children and familiarized parents with this reality. It was reported that:

> "A man from among the Helpers died. He had a small amount of capital which he had lost towards the end of his life in worship and in seeking God's pleasure. On the same day he died, his children were forced to ask the people for help. This story was told to the Prophet. He asked, 'What did you do with his body?' They replied: 'We buried it.' 'If I knew this earlier,' said the Prophet, 'I would not have allowed you bury him in the Muslim cemetery, because he lost his wealth and properties and left his children to beg among the people.'"[٣]

٨. Teaching Religious Edicts

If children practice praying and other acts of worship, these activities will have a bright effect on their internal characters. Although a child may not understand the meaning of the words and sentences in the prayer for example, he will no doubt begin

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[١] *As-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, Vol.٣, P.٤٨.
[٢] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٢٥, ḥ ٢٢.
[٣] *Qurb al-Asnād*, P.٣١.

to understand the need to focus attention on God and this will enable him to have a close relationship with God, experience peace of mind in times of hardship and obtain His infinite mercy and support. God says: **"Who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."**[١]

In order to bring up pious, God-fearing children, there needs to be harmony between their bodies and their souls. To this end, Islam has obligated parents to draw the attention of their children to God and to teach them to worship Him and the knowledge of religious precepts. Islam has ordered parents to make their children pray.

Mu'āwiah ibn Wahab asked Imām Ṣādiq, "At what age should we make children pray?" "Between the ages of six to seven years, make them pray." Imām said.[٢]

The Prophet is quoted as saying, "Make your children pray at the age of seven."[٣]

In another narration about parental duties with respect to children's faith, Imām Bāqir is quoted as saying, "At the age of three, teach the child the words of monotheism, i.e. *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh*. At the age of four, teach the child to say *Muh□ammad rasūl Allāh* (Muhammad is God's Prophet). At the age of five, make him face the *kiblah* and order him to prostrate before God. At the age of six, make him bow before God and teach him the right method of prostration. At the age of seven, tell the child to wash his hands and face (ablution) and pray."[٤]

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[١] *Sūrah ar-Ra'd,* ١٣:٢٨.
[٢] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah*, Vol.٢, P.٣.
[٣] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.١, P.١٧١.
[٤] *Makārim al-Akhlāq,* T□abarsī, P.١١٥.

Parents and instructors should be aware that religion is of the greatest help to them because faith is like a burning torch that lights up the way and awakens the conscience. It can easily show the right path wherever there is deviation.

Effects of Instructing the Child in the Right Way

Properly instructing children can enable them to have independence of will and self-confidence and respecting them gives them a strong personality and the awareness of their true value and when they grow up, they are less likely to experience humiliation. According to Islamic sayings, "The child and his heart are like a land with no seeds or plants. Whatever seed one casts therein, it will take root.[١]

For example, the character of Imām ʻAlī blossomed as a result of being instructed by the Prophet. Although Imām ʻAlī was not a normal child physically or psychologically, and he had special merits in himself, yet one should not ignore the special care that the Prophet took of him.

An effect of proper instruction of a child is that he will be brave. This can well be seen in the case of Imām Ḥusayn.

Ibn Shahāb says, "On a Friday, the second Muslim caliph was at the pulpit in the mosque. Imām Ḥusayn, who was only a little child, entered the mosque and said, 'O 'Umar, come down from my grandfather's pulpit!' 'Umar cried: 'You have spoken the truth. This belongs to your grandfather. Wait nephew!' Imām Ḥusayn grasped 'Umar's clothes and tugged at them, saying, 'Come down from my grandfather's pulpit.' 'Umar was forced to stop his speech. He descended the pulpit and began praying. After the prayer, 'Umar sent someone to fetch Imām Ḥusayn. When he

[١] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Faydﻫ, Letter Vol. ٣١, P.٩٠٣.

arrived, ‘Umar asked him, ‘Nephew, who told you to do this to me?’ ‘No one.’ replied Imām Ḥusayn. Imām Ḥusayn repeated this three times even though he had not yet come of age.”[١]

It has been quoted about Imām Jawād, that after Imām Rid□ā passed away, Ma‘mūn, the Caliph at the time, came to Baghdād. One day, he went hunting. On his way, he reached a place where some children were playing. Imām Jawād, Imām Rid□ā’s son, who was ١١ years old at that time, was among the children. When Ma‘mūn and his company arrived there, all the children ran away except Imām Jawād. When the Caliph approached, he looked at him and was strongly attracted to his appearance. He stopped and asked, “Why didn’t you run away along with the other children?”

Imām Jawād responded immediately, “O Caliph of the Muslims, the way was not so narrow that I should widen it for the Caliph to pass by running off. I haven’t done anything wrong that I should try to run away. I am optimistic about the Caliph and think that he will not harm the innoncent. This was the reason why I did not leave.” Ma‘mūn was surprised by his logical reply and his attractive appearance and asked, “What is your name?” “Muh□ammad,” he answered. “Whose son are you?” Ma‘mūn asked. He replied, “‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā.”[٢]

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[١] *Tārīkh al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*, Vol. ٣, P.٧٩٩.
[٢] *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol.٥٠, P.٩١; Kashf al-Ghummah.

Chapter Two

Affection

The Prophet:

"Love children and be kind to them."

CHAPTER TWO:
AFFECTION

Affection for Children

As a child needs food and water, he also needs to be caressed and to be treated with love and affection which is the best food for a child's psyche. Children love to be kissed and hugged. The one who from early childhood receives an adequate amount of love from his parents, is likely to have a pleasant disposition.

In many of the narrations of our religious leaders, affection for children is expressed and advised in various forms, some of which are as follows:

In the Sermon of Sha'bāniyyah, while outlining various duties, the Prophet advised: "Respect your elderly and be kind towards children.[١]

The Prophet is quoted elsewhere as saying, "He who does not have affection for children and does not respect the elderly is not one of us."[٢]

According to a narration, the Prophet also said, "Love the children and be kind to them."[٣]

Just before his martyrdom, 'Alī thus advised, "In your family, be kind to children and respect the elderly."[٤]

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[١] *'Uyūn Akhbār ar-Rid□ā,* Vol. ١, P.٢٩٥; *Bih□ār al-Anwār,* Vol. ٩٦, P.٣٥٦; *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah,* Vol. ٥, P.١٢٦.

[٢] *Majmū'ah al-Warrām,* Vol. ١, P.٣٤; *al Maḥajjah al-Bayd□ā',* Vol. ٣, P.٣٦٥.

[٣] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah,* Vol. ٥, P.١٢٦; *Man lā yah□d□iruh al-Faqīh,* Vol. ٣, P.٣١١; *Furū' al-Kāfī,* Vol. ٦, P.٤٩; *Bih□ār al-Anwār,* Vol. ٩٣, P.١٠٤.

[٤] *Bih□ār al-Anwār,* Vol. ٤٢, P.٢٠٣; *Amālī Mufīd,* P١٢٩.

In another account, he said to his followers, "The child must follow the elderly in his behavior and the elderly must be kind to children. Be careful not to behave like the oppressors of the Age of Ignorance.[١]

Imām Ṣādiq said, "A man who has much affection for his child will receive special mercy and attention from God."[٢]

The Prophet's Affection for Children

'Alī said, "When I was a little child, the Prophet would sit me on his lap, hug me and sometimes let me sleep in his bed. He would kindly put his face on mine and let me smell his fragrant body."[٣]

Yes, a child needs to be caressed. He should be stroked gently and lovingly on the head and looked at with affection. Looking at a child warmly and kindly will make him happy.[٤]

The Prophet was so kind to children that it was said that on the occasion of his trip to T□ā'if, the Prophet did not react to the children who threw stones at him. Rather, it was 'Alī who chased them away.[٥]

When the Prophet saw the children of the Helpers, he would stroke their heads, give them *salāms* and pray for them.[٦]

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[١] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Fayd, P.٥٣١.
[٢] *Makārim al-Akhlāq* by Ṭabarsī, P.١١٥.
[٣] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Mulla Fathullah's version, P.٤٠٦.
[٤] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol. ٢, P.٦٢٦; *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, P.١١٣.
[٥] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٢٠, P.٥٢ & ٦٧; Qummī's *Exegesis*, Vol.١, P.١١٥.
[٦] *Sharaf an-Nabī*, Khargūshī, Vol.١, P.١١٥.

Anas ibn Mālik said: I saw no one kinder to his family than the Prophet.[١]

Everyday, he would caress his children and grandchildren on the head[٢]. Kindness and affection for children were characteristics of the Prophet.[٣]

One day, the Prophet and his companions were passing by a place where children were playing. The Prophet sat next to one of them, kissed him on the forehead and treated him kindly. Someone asked the Prophet about the reason for his behavior and he said, "One day, I saw this child play with my child Ḥusayn. He took earth from under Ḥusayn's feet and rubbed it on his face. Therefore, since he is a friend of Ḥusayn's, I like him too. Gabriel told me that this child would be one of the companions of Ḥusayn in Karbalā."[٤]

Imām Ṣādiq said, "Mūsā ibn 'Imrān asked in his prayer, 'O God, what deeds are the best ones to Thee?' It was revealed to him, 'Friendship with children is the best of all deeds to me, as children are god-fearing in essence and love me. When a child dies, I will mercifully make him enter Paradise.'"[٥]

However, one should not show excessive affection for children as this will be harmful. There are many Islamic narrations which forbid such excess.

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[١] *Sīrah Dah□lān* on the margins of *Sīrah Halabiyyah*, Vol.٣, P.٢٥٢; *as-al-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, ibn Kathīr, Vol.٤, P.٦١٢.
[٢] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٩; *'Iddah ad-Dā'ī*, P.٦١.
[٣] *Al Maḥaj□jah al-Bayd□ā'*, Vol.٣, P.٣٦٦.
[٤] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٩٧, PP.١٠٤ & ١٠٥.
[٥] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٤, P.٢٤٢, ḥ.٣٦.

The Prophet's Affection for Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn

The prophet had much affection for his children, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn. Some examples of this fact as verified in various documents are listed below:

Sunnī books quote ʻAbdullāh ibn ʻUmar as saying, "The Prophet said, 'Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn are my sweetsmelling flowers in the world."[١]

Anas ibn Mālik is quoted as saying, "The Prophet was asked, 'Which member of your family do you like the most?' The Prophet said, 'I like Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn more than the others.'"[٢]

In another account, Saʻīd ibn Rāshid says, "Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn ran towards the Prophet. He embraced them and said, 'These two are my sweetsmelling flowers in the world.'"[٣]

Imām Ḥasan said, "The Prophet told me, 'O my child, you are like part of my body, good for those who love you and your children and woe to the one who kills you."[٤]

The Prophet's affection for Ḥusayn was so much that he could not bear his crying.

Yazīd ibn Abī Ziyād said, "The Prophet left ʻĀishah's house and passed by Fāt□imah's house. He heard Ḥusayn crying and said

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[١] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.١٠, P.٥٩٥, quoting Sunnī documents.
[٢] Ibid, PP.٦٥٥, quoting various documents.
[٣] Ibid, PP.٦٠٩, ٦٢١, ٦١٩, ٦٢٣, quoting a large number of documents.
[٤] Appendices to *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol. ١١, P.٣١٦.

to Fāt□imah, ‘Do you not know that Ḥusayn’s crying hurts me?’”[١]

The Prophet Prayed for Children

The Muslims would bring their children to the Prophet and ask him to pray for them.

Jamarah, ‘Abdullāh’s daughter, quotes a girl as saying, “My father took me to the Prophet and asked him to pray for me. The Prophet sat me on his lap, put his hand on my head and prayed for me.”[٢]

Tolerating Children

Umm al-Fad□l, ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Mut□allib’s wife, who was Imām Ḥusayn’s nanny, says, “One day, when Ḥusayn was still a nursing baby, the Prophet took him from me and hugged him. The baby wet the Prophet’s clothes. I took the baby back hastily and he began crying. The Prophet told me, ‘Do not rush! My clothes can be cleaned with water, but what can remove the memory of pain from the heart of my child Ḥusayn?’”[٣]

It has been narrated that, when a child was taken to the Prophet either for prayers or to be named, the Prophet would open his arms to take the child and put the child on his lap. Sometimes the child would wet the Prophet’s clothes and those present would scold the child and would treat him harshly in order to stop him from urinating. The Prophet would stop them and say, “Do not stop a child from urinating by being harsh.” Then he would allow the child finish.

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[١] Appendices to *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol. ١١, PP.٣١١-٣١٤.
[٢] *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id*, Vol.٩ , P.٢٦٦.
[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol. ٨٠, P.١٠٤; *al-Lahūf,* ibn T□āwūs, P.١٢; *Hadiyyah al-Ah□bāb*, P.١٧٦.

When the praying and naming ceremony was finished, the child's relatives would happily take their child and the Prophet would not be the least bit upset with the child for wetting him. After the relatives left, the Prophet would wash his clothes.[١]

The Prophet's Gifts to Children

One of the practices of the Prophet towards children was giving gifts to them.

'Āishah reported, "Najāshī, the king of Abyssinia, sent a golden ring to the Prophet, which had been made in Abyssinia. The Prophet called Umāmah, the daughter of Abī al-'ĀṢ (the Prophet's stepdaughter) and said, 'My dear little daughter, adorn yourself with this gift.'"[٢]

There is a story quoted from 'Āishah: "A gold necklace was brought to the Prophet as a present. All the wives of the Prophet were present and Umāmah the daughter of Abī al-'Āṣ, who was a child, was playing in the house. The Prophet showed the necklace and asked, 'What do you think of this?' All of us looked at it and said, 'We have never seen anything more beautiful than this!' The Prophet said, 'Give it to me.' It seemed as if everywhere around me became dark. I was deathly afraid that he might put it around someone else's neck and everyone else thought the same. All of us were silent until Umāmah came to the Prophet and the Prophet put it around her neck and left."[٣]

In was reported that an Arab man came to the Prophet and said, "O Prophet, I have hunted a fawn, which I present to you for your children, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn." The Prophet accepted the present

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[١] *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, P. ٢١١; *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, P. ١١٥; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol. ١٦, P. ٢٤٠.
[٢] *Sunan ibn Mājah*, Vol. ٢ , P. ١٣٠٣.
[٣] *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, Vol. ٩ , P. ٢٥٤.

and prayed for the hunter. Then he gave the fawn to Imām H□asan. He took it and showed it to his mother, Fāt□imah. Imām H□asan was very happy with this gift and he would play with the fawn.[١]

The Way the Prophet Treated the Children of Martyrs

Bashīr, son of ‘Aqriyah ibn Jahnī, says, “On the day of the Battle of Uh□ud, I asked the Prophet, ‘How was my father martyred?’ The Prophet said, ‘He was martyred in God’s way, may God’s mercy be upon him.’ I cried. The Prophet hugged me, stroked my head and put me on his steed and said, ‘Do you not like me to be like your father?’[٢]

In the month of Jumādī al-Awwal of the ٧th year after the Hijra, the battle of *Mawtah* occurred, in which three of the commanders of Islam namely, Zayd ibn H□ārithah, Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib and ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāh□ah were killed. The army returned to Madīnah.[٣] The Prophet and the Muslims went to welcome them, chanting hymns. The Prophet was riding on an animal. He said, “Take the children for a ride. Give Ja‘far’s child to me.” They brought ‘Ubayd Allāh, son of Jā‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib. The Prophet took him and put him to ride in front of himself.[٤]

Ibn Hishām wrote: “Asmā’, the daughter of ‘Umays, the wife of ‘Abdullāh ibn Ja‘far said, ‘The day when Ja‘far was martyred in the battle of Mu’tah, the Prophet came to our house. I had just finished the housework and grooming the children. The Prophet told me, ‘Bring me Ja‘far’s children.’ I took the children to him.

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol. ٤٣ , P. ٣١٢.
[٢] *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id*, Vol. ٨ , P. ١٦١.
[٣] *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, Vol. ٢ , P. ٣٨١.
[٤] *Musnad Ah□mad H□anbal*, Vol.١, P.٣٣٤; *Sīrah Muslim,* Vol.١٥ , P.١٩٦; *as- Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, Vol.٣, , P.٦٩.

He embraced them and began caressing them while shedding tears.

I asked, 'O Prophet, why do you cry? Has there been any news of Ja'far and his companions?' The Prophet said, 'Yes, they were martyred today.'"[١]

Other children were also not deprived of this kind and fatherly attitude by the Prophet. It has been told that the Prophet would embrace the children and would carry some of them on his shoulders and back. (He told his companions, "Embrace the children and put them on your shoulders.") The children loved such displays of kindness and would be endlessly happy and would never forget such sweet memories. After a while, they would get together to recount the event for each other. Some would proudly say, "The Prophet took me on his back." And another would say, "The Prophet ordered his companion to take you on his back."[٢]

The Way the Prophet Treated his Children during Prayer

Shaddād ibn Hād said, "The Prophet had one of his two children, either Ḥasan or Ḥusayn, with him during prayer. He stood in front of the rows and had his child stand on his right side. He lengthened his prostration."

The narrator quoted from his father, "I raised my head and saw the Prophet with the child sitting on his back. I returned to my prostration. When the prayer was finished, the people said to the Prophet, 'The prostration was so long in today's prayer. Has there been an order to you about this or has there been a revelation to

[١] *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, Vol.٢, P.٢٥٢-Translator.
[٢] *Al-Maḥaj□jah al-Bayḍā'*, Vol.٣, P.٣٦٦.

you?' The Prophet said, 'None of these. Rather, my son was sitting on my back and I did not want to bother him. I let him do what he wanted.'"[١]

There is a narration by Abʾ Bakr, "I saw ʿasan and Ḥusayn while the Prophet was saying his prayer. They jumped on his back. The Prophet held them when he was standing up so as to let them smoothly stand on the ground. He would put them on his lap and caress their heads and say, 'These two boys are my two sweetsmelling flowers in this world.'" According to another saying, the Prophet said, "A child is a sweetsmelling flower and my sweetsmelling flowers are Ḥasan and Ḥusayn."[٢]

In another narration, it is said that, "One day, the Prophet was saying prayers with a group of Muslims. When the Prophet prostrated, Ḥusayn, who was a little child, mounted on the Prophet's back and move his legs as if urging his steed forward.

"When the Prophet wanted to sit up from prostration, he took him and put him at his side. This continued to the end of the prayer."

A Jew witnessed this event. After the prayer, he said to the Prophet, "You treat children in a way we have never done before."

The Prophet said, "If you believed in God and his messenger, you would be kind to your children." The Prophet's kindness strongly impressed the Jew and he converted to Islam.[٣]

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[١] *Mustadrak ʿākim*, Vol.٣, P.١٦٥; *Musnad Aḥmad ʿanbal*, Vol.٣, P.٦٩٣.

[٢] *Maqtal al-H□usayn Khwārazmi*, P.١٣٠; *al-Irshād Mufīd*, Vol.٢, P.٢٥; appendices to *Ihqāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.١٠, P.٦١٥ & Vol.١١, P.٥٠.

[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٢٩٤-٢٩٦.

Chapter Three

Kissing Children

"A child is a sweetsmelling flower."

The Noble Prophet

CHAPTER THREE:
KISSING CHILDREN

When a parent kisses his child, such behavior strengthens the affection between the parent and the child and it is the best way to quench a child's thirst for love. A kiss shows that parents are kind to their children. It feeds the seedling of love in the child's soul while it makes him aware of his parents' love for him and it stimulates the creation of a new force within the child.

The Prophet also kissed children. Interestingly, his love for children was publicly displayed. This has two advantages:

Firstly, a child's personality is radically reinforced by being respected in public.

Secondly, the Prophet thus taught the people how to strengthen and encourage their children.

Islam often emphasizes kissing children.

The Prophet said, "One who kisses his child does a pious deed and one who makes his child happy will be made happy by God on the day of Resurrection.[١]

'□ishah said, "A man came to the Prophet and said, 'Do you kiss children? I have never done so!' The Prophet responded: 'What can I do when God has taken his mercy from your heart?'"[٢]

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[١] *Kāfī*, Vol.٦, P.٤٩; *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, P.١١٣; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٢٣, P.١١٣.

[٢] *S□ah□īh□ Bukhārī*, Vol.٨, P.٩.

It has also been reported that a man came to the Prophet and said, "I have never kissed a child!" Later the Prophet said, "I think this man is one who will end up in the fire of hell."[١]

There is another saying that, "The Prophet kissed Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. Aqra' bin H□ābis said, 'I have ten children, none of whom I have kissed.' The Prophet turned to him and said: 'What can I do when God has taken his mercy from you?!'[٢]"

'Alī said, "Kiss your children because there is a rank and position for you in every kiss you give."[٣]

Imām Ṣādiq said, "Kiss your children often because everytime you kiss them, God gives you a rank."[٤]

Ibn 'Abbās reported: "I was with the Prophet. Ibrāhīm, his son, was on his left knee and Imām Ḥusayn was on his right. The Prophet sometimes kissed Ibrāhīm and sometimes Ḥusayn."[٥]

Justice for Children

One thing that parents have to consider about their children is establishing justice among them. Children should taste the flavor of and feel justice from the very beginning, become familiar with it and consider it as a necessity for the society and for their lives, while avoiding any injustice and oppression. Therefore, the

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٩; *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah*, Vol.١٥, P.٢٠٢; *Kāfī*, Vol.٦, P.٥٠.
[٢] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٣.
[٣] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'a*, Vol.١٥, P.١٢٦.
[٤] Ibid.
[٥] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'a*, Vol.٤٣, P.١٦١ & Vol.٢٢, P./١٥٣; *Manāqib ibn Shahr Āshūb*, Vol.٣, P.٢٣٤.

smallest matter should be treated with importance and administered with justice.

‘Alī said, “The Prophet saw a man with two children, one of whom he kissed and the other he did not. The Prophet said, ‘Why do you not treat them with justice?’”[١]

Abī Sa‘īd Khidrī said, “One day, the Prophet went to his daughter’s house.

‘Alī was sleeping in bed and the children Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were beside him. The children asked for water. The Prophet fetched them water. Ḥusayn came forward first. The Prophet said, ‘Ḥasan asked for water first.’ Fāt□imah asked, ‘Do you like Ḥasan more?’ The Prophet answered, ‘Both are equal to me [but justice demands that each one takes his turn to drink water].’”[٢]

Anas said, “A man was sitting with the Prophet. The man’s son entered the room. The father kissed him and sat him on his lap. Then the man’s daughter came and [without kissing her], he sat her next to himself. The Prophet said, ‘Why did you not treat them with justice?’”[٣]

‘Alī said, “Do justice to your children as you yourself wish to be treated with justice.”[٤]

The Prophet Kissed Fāt□imah

The Prophet loved his daughter Fāt□imah and still kissed her even when she had a husband and children.

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٧; *Nawādir Rāvandī*, P.٦.
[٢] *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id*, Vol.٩, P.١٧١.
[٣] *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id*, Vol.٨, P.١٥٨; *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, P.١١٣.
[٤] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٢; ḥ.١٦.

Abān ibn Taghlab said, "The Prophet often kissed his daughter Fāt□imah."[١]

Imām Bāqir and Imām Ṣādiq have said, "The Prophet kissed Fāt□imah at night, when she was asleep and put his face on her chest and prayer for her.[٢]

'Āishah said, "The Prophet once kissed Fāt□imah on the neck. I told him, 'O Prophet, you treat Fāt□imah in a way that you do not treat others.' The Prophet said, 'O 'Āishah, whenever I take interest in the Paradise, I kiss her on the neck.'"[٣]

When Should One Stop Kissing Children?

One may ask, at what age should one stop kissing children. To answer this, we have referred to the words of the religious leaders.

Islam pays special attention to the ages of ٦ to ١٠ in the upbringing of children and gives special instructions to its followers while taking into consideration the divine laws and the physicial and spiritual conditions of children. Therefore, with practical applications, it has controlled the sexual urges of children so as to prevent the development of immoral practices in them.

Islam keeps children ٦ years of age or older away from any sexual provocation and instructs parents to provide a favorable environment in order to control their children's sexual tendencies.

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[١] Ibid, Vol.٨, P.١٤٢.
[٢] Ibid, Vol.٤٣, PP.٤٢-٥٥.
[٣] *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā*, P.٣٦; *Yanābi' al-Mawaddah*, P.٢٦٠.

The Prophet said, "A ٦-year-old girl should not be kissed by a ٦-year-old boy and women should avoid kissing boys ٦ to ٧ years of age."[١]

The Prophet Kissed Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn

In addition to kissing his daughter, the Prophet loved her children Imāms Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and kissed them.

Abū Hurayrah said, "The Prophet was kissing Ḥasan and Ḥusayn when one of the Helpers said, 'I have ten children none of whom I have ever kissed.' The Prophet responded, 'One who shows no mercy will be shown no mercy.'"[٢]

Salmān Fārsī (Salmān the Persian) said, "I came to the Prophet and saw that he had put Ḥusayn on his lap and was kissing him on the forehead and lips."[٣]

Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā' said, "Zayd ibn Arqam saw in 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Ziād's court that the latter was hitting the lips of Imām Ḥusayn's severed head with his cane.

"Zayd ibn Arqam said to 'Ubayd Allāh, 'Take away your cane. I swear by Allah that I saw the Prophet kiss these two lips many times.' He said this and he began to cry. 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyād replied, 'May God make you cry. If you were not a senile old man, I would order you to be beheaded!'"[٤]

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[١] *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, P.١١٥.
[٢] *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, Vol.٣, P.١٧٠; *al-'Adab al-Mufrad*, Bukhārī, P.٣٤.
[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٦, P.٢٤١; *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Ni'mah*, P.١٥٢; *al-Khis□āl*, Vol.٢, P.٧٦; *Kifāyah al-Athar*, P.٧.
[٤] *Aṣ-S□awā'iq al-Muh□riqah*, P.١٩٦; *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaqq*, Vol.١٠, P.٧٤٦.

Zamakhsharī said, "The Prophet embraced H□asan and kissed him. Then he put him on his knee and said, 'My meekness, patience and dignity I have given to him.' Then he embraced Ḥusayn, kissed him, put him on his left knee and said, "I have given him my bravery, generosity and magnanimity.'"[١]

[١] *Rabī' al-Abrār*, P.٥١٣.

Chapter Four

Playing with Children

"Anyone with whom there is a child shall treat him as a child."

The Noble Prophet

CHAPTER FOUR:
PLAYING WITH CHILDREN

One thing that affects a child's personality is adult participation in children's games. A child tends to imitate adult behavior firstly because of his physical weakness and secondly because of the force and power he sees in adults and the love that he naturally has for growth and development.

When parents descend to the level of children and take part in their games, children will indeed be happy, excited and feel inside that what they do is very important.

Therefore, it is very important to play with children as part of their upbringing. This is considered by psychologists to be a parental duty.

T.H. Morris wrote in *Lessons for Parents*, "Be friends with your children and play with them. Tell them stories and have friendly chats with them. Parents should especially know that they have to come to the same level as that of children and speak to them in the language they understand"[١]

Another psychologist stated, "It is necessary for the father to take part in his children's entertainment and games. This mutual understanding seems necessary. Indeed, there are different times, places and chapters in life. A father who takes part in his children's games indeed does not spend much time for this, but he is aware of the great importance for the child of the fact that the father descends to a child's level to take part in children's

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[١] *We and Our Children*, P.٤٥.

games, however little the time may be that the father spends for this."[١]

The Playing Instinct in Children

One of the instincts that God has endowed children with is the interest in playing. Children run, jump, are sometimes entertained by toys and take pleasure in moving them around. Although such movements may appear useless in the beginning, they are necessary for the development of their tender bodies and souls and improve their abilities of thought and innovation. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Islamic narrations advise playing with children.

Playing with children is a practice that is important in the development of independence of will and the stimulation of creativity and innovation. When a child makes a structure with his toys, his thought mechanism functions like that of a construction engineer and he takes pleasure in his successes. When he faces a problem in his task, he thinks of a solution. As a result, all his actions strongly affect his personality.

The Prophet said, "One who has a child with him has to treat him like a child."[٢]

The Prophet also said, "God's mercy be upon the father who helps his child for good purposes, treats him well, is his friend and educates him well."[٣]

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[١] Ibid, P.٢٢.
[٢] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah*, Vol.١٥, P.٢٠٣; *Man lā yah□d□uruh al-Faqīh*, Vol.٣, P.٣١٢; *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, Sermon ٤٥٤١٣.
[٣] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٢, P.٦٢٦.

‘Alī said: “Let your child be free, until the age of ٧, to play.”[١]

Imām Ṣādiq said, “The child plays in the first seven years of his life, spends his time learning in the second seven years and learns about religious permissions and prohibitions in the third seven years.”[٢]

‘Alī also said, “One who has a child has to behave in a childlike manner in training his child.”[٣]

The Prophet Played with Children

The prophet played with his children, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn. There are many narrations in this respect, some examples of which are provided below.

It has been reported that the Prophet caressed his children and his grand children on the head lovingly every morning and that he played with Ḥusayn.[٤]

Ya‘lā ibn Marrah said, “The Prophet had been invited to lunch. We were with him, when all of a sudden we saw Ḥasan playing in the alley. The Prophet saw him and ran towards him with arms outstretched to catch him. However, the child ran this way and that, escaping from the Prophet and making him laugh. Then the Prophet caught Ḥasan. He put one hand under his chin and the other on his head. He brought his face close to the child’s and

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[١] *Al-kāfī*, Vol.٦, , P.٤٧.
[٢] Ibid.
[٣] *Wasā’il ash-Shi‘ah*, Vol.٥, P.١٢٦.
[٤] *Sunan an-Nabī, Raḥmat-e ‘Ālamiyān* [*Blessing of the World Settlers*], Vol.٦٥٨; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٢٨٥.

kissed him, saying, 'Ḥasan is a part of me and I am a part of him. God will love those who love him.'"[١]

Many narrations report that this incident was about Imām Ḥusayn [rather than Imām Ḥasan].[٢]

Imām Ṣādiq said, "One day, Imām Ḥusayn was sitting on the Prophet's lap and the Prophet was playing with him and laughing. 'Āishah said, 'O Prophet, you play so much with this child.' The Prophet said, 'O no, how can I fail to love him when he is the fruit of my heart and the apple of my eyes?!'"[٣]

Jubair ibn 'Abdullāh said, "The Prophet played with the children of his companions and comrades and let them sit beside him."[٤]

Anas ibn Mālik said, "The Prophet had the best manners among the people. I had a little brother who had just been weaned and of whom I took care. His nickname was Abū 'Umayr. When the Prophet saw him, he would say, 'See what weaning has done to you!' and he would begin playing with him.'"[٥]

There is a saying that, "The Prophet would call the children of 'Abbās. They were young and still loved to play. Then he would tell them, 'He who comes to me the fastest will be rewarded.' The children would race towards the Prophet. He would embrace and

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٣٠٦.
[٢] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٢, P.٦٢٦; *S□ah□īh□ Tirmidhī*, Vol.٥, P.٦١٥; *Mustadrak al-@ākim*, Vol.٢, P.١٧٧.
[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٤, P.٢٦٠; *Kāmil az-Ziārah*, P.٦٨; *H□ayāt al-H□ayawān*, Vol.١, P.١١١.
[٤] *Sharaf an-Nabī* by Khargūshī, P.١٠٢; *Nihāyah al-Mas'ūl fī Riwāyah ar-Rasūl*, Vol.١, P.٣٤٠.
[٥] *S□ah□īh□ Bukhārī*, Vol.٨, P.٣٧ & ٥٥; *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah* by Beyhaqī, P.١٥٤, tr. Dāmghānī, quoted from *S□ah□īh□ Muslim*.

kiss them.[١] Sometimes, he would give them a ride on his back and he would caress them on the head."[٢]

Giving a Ride

The Prophet would give rides to the children, seating them in front of or behind himself while riding. This had a very positive psychological effect on the children as they would consider this to be a very valuable and an unforgettable experience.

It is worth noting that the Prophet would sometimes carry children on his back and sometimes on his shoulders. Examples of these are provided in this chapter.

Jābir, a companion of the Prophet, said, "I came to the Prophet while Ḥasanand Ḥusayn were on his back. The Prophet was walking on hands and feet and saying, 'You are having a good ride and you are good riders!'"[٣]

Ibn Mas'ūd says, "The Prophet was carrying Ḥasan and Ḥusayn on his back, with Ḥasan on hs right and Ḥusayn on his left side while saying, "You are having a good ride and you are good riders. Your dad is better than you.'"[٤]

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[١] *As-Sīrah al-H□alabiyyah*, Vol.٣, P.٣٤٠; *Usd al-Ghābah*, Vol.٥, P.٢١٠; *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, Vol.٩, P.٢٨٥.
[٢] *Majma'az-Zawā'id*, Vol.٩, P.٢٨٥; *Musnad Ah□mad*, Vol.١, P.٣٣٧.
[٣] *Ih□qāq al-◌aqq*, Vol.١٠, P.٧١٤; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, ٤٣/٢٨٥; *Sunan Nisā'ī*, Vol.٢, P.٢٢٩; *Mustadrak al-H□ākim*, Vol.٣, P.١٦٦; *Majma'a az-Zawā'id*, Vol.٩, P.١٨٢.
[٤] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٢٨٦.

The Prophet Let Children Ride on His Steed

The Prophet treated the children of his companions just like his own and he would let them ride on his steed. Some examples of this are as follows:

‘Abdullāh, the son of Ja‘far ibn Abī T□ālib, said: “One day, the Prophet let me ride behind him and told me something that I will not tell anyone.”[١]

It has been said that whenever the Prophet returned from a trip and saw children, he would stop and order the others to pick the children up and he would let one of them ride in front of him and another behind him. After a while, the children would say to each other, “The Prophet let me ride in front but you rode behind.” Others would say, “The Prophet ordered his companions to let you ride behind them.”[٢]

Fud□ayl ibn Yasār said: “I heard Imām Bāqir say, ‘The Prophet was going somewhere when he saw Fad□l ibn ‘Abbās. He told his companions, ‘Let this child ride behind me.’ They put the child behind the Prophet and he was very careful with him.”[٣]

‘Abdullāh, the son of Ja‘far said: “I was with Qutham and ‘Ubayd Allāh, the children of ‘Abbās and we were playing. The Prophet passed by and said, ‘Lift this child and let him ride.’ They lifted ‘Abdullāh and put him in front of the Prophet. Then the Prophet

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[١] *Masnad Ah□mad H□anbal*, Vol.١, P.٣٣٥; *S□ah□īh□ Muslim*, Vol.١٥, P.١٩٧.
[٢] *Al-Muḥajjah al-Bayḍā’*, Vol.٣, P.٣٦٦.
[٣] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٧٧, P.١٣٥; *Amālī al-S□adūq*, Vol.٢, P.٢٨٧.

said, 'Bring this child too!' They lifted Qutham and put him behind the Prophet."[١]

Certain things have been said about the way the Prophet carried children on his shoulders:

١. He put the children on his shoulders in such a way that they faced each other.

٢. He put them on his shoulders in such a way that one's back faced that of the other.

٣. He put one on his right shoulder and the other on his left shoulder.

٤. He put one on his right shoulder, facing the front and the other on his left shoulder, facing the back.[٢]

[١] *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, Vol.٩, P.٢٨٥; *Musnad Ah□mad*, Vol.١, P.٣٣٧.
[٢] *Manāqib ibn Shahr Āshūb*, Vol.٣, P.٣٨٧; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤٣, P.٢٨٥.

Chapter Five

Feeding, Greeting and Punishing Children

It has been said of the Prophet:

"He would greet both children and adults."

CHAPTER FIVE:
FEEDING CHILDREN

One of the great requirements in the education of children is to maintain justice among them. Therefore, parents with more than one child should treat them with justice, fairness and equality and in practice, include all of them so that none feels humiliated. This was how the Prophet treated his children. In accordance with this, the following has been cited.

‘Alī said, “The Prophet came to our house while Ḥasan, Ḥusayn and I were sleeping under a blanket. Ḥasan asked for water. The Prophet rose and fetched a dish of water. At the same time, Ḥusayn woke up and asked for water, but the Prophet did not give him water first.

Fāt□imah said, “Apparently you love Ḥasan more than Ḥusayn.” The Prophet said, “Ḥasan asked for water before Ḥusayn did. You, Ḥasan and Ḥusaynand this one who is sleeping [i.e. ‘Alī] and I will be in the same place on the Ressurrection Day.”[١]

The Prophet also fed his children. This shows how fully he paid attention to his children’s needs.

Salmān said, “I entered the Prophet’s house. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were eating food with him. The Prophet would put some food in Ḥasan’s mouth and some in Ḥusayn's mouth. When they had finished eating, the Prophet put Ḥasan on his shoulder and Ḥusayn on his lap. Then he faced me and said, ‘O Salmān, do you like them?’ I said, ‘O Prophet, how can I not like them while I see their position and value to you?’”[٢]

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[١] *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id*, Vol.٩, P.١٦٩.

[٢] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٦, P.٣٠٤, ḥ.١٤٣; *Kifāyah al-Athar*, P.٧.

Greeting Children

One of the good practices of the Prophet was greeting children. Even though they are young, playful and free from responsibilities, they are very clever and well understand the meaning of kindness and love.

This practice of the Prophet contradicts the view of some short-sighted ignorant people, who have no place for children and consider them to be separate from themelves and of no importance. However, in Islam, it has been advised that they are worthy of the same respect as an adult. Yes, the Prophet respected children and acknowledged their presence in the society. Concerning greeting children, there is an infinite number of narrations.

Anas ibn Mālik said, "The Prophet passed by some little children, greeted them and gave them food."[١]

He says in another narration, "While we were children, the Prophet came to us and greeted us."[٢]

Imām Bāqir said, "The Prophet said, 'There are five things that I will not give up to the moment of my death. One of these is greeting children.'"[٣]

There is another saying that, "The Prophet greeted the people, young and old alike.[٤] He was the first one to greet others, even

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[١] *Sunan ibn Mājah*, Vol.٢, P.٢٢٢٠.
[٢] *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, PP.١٤٠٣١; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٦, P.٢٢٩.
[٣] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٢, P.٩٦; *Amālī al-S□adūq*, P.٤٤; *'Uyun Akhbar ar-Rida ('a)*, P.٢٣٥; *Al-khisal*, Vol.١, P.١٣٠, *'Ilal ash-Sharā'ī*, P.٥٤; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٦, P.٢١٥, ḥ.٢.
[٤] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٢, P.٦٩.

children.[١] Whomever he saw, he would greet first and shake his hands.[٢]"

In another saying, he [the Prophet] said, "I am very careful about greeting children, so as to make it a tradition among Muslims and to make it a practice for all."[٣]

Did the Prophet Punish Children?

Did the Prophet punish children physically as part of their training?

A careful study of the Prophet's practice reveals that he never punished children physically. Punishment of some sort is inevitable. One can hardly find a child who has never been punished or faced strict behavior during his upbringing. What is to be discussed here is whether or not one can punish a child physically.

A study of Islamic traditions and the behavior of the religious leaders reveals that one should never punish children physically. In today's world, beating a child or harming him for purposes of behavioral correction is deemed to be scientifically and pedagogically incorrect and almost all counties prevent such beating and physical punishment.

However, some people who are ignorant and uninformed about the practice of the leaders of Islam have been negligent and do not pay attention to the traditions concerning the beating of children.

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[١] *Raḥmat-e 'Ālamiyān*, [*Blessing of the World Settlers*], P.٦٦٣.
[٢] *Nihāyah al-Mas'ūl fī Riwāyah al-Rasūl*, ١/٣٤١; *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, Vol.١, P.٢٣.
[٣] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah*, Vol.٣, P.٢٠٩.

Imām Kāẓim explicitly told a man who was complaining about his child, “Do not beat your child, simply refuse to talk to him in order to punish him. However, be careful not to refuse to talk to him for a long period of time and reconcile with him as soon as possible.[١]

The Prophet of Islam never punished his children physically and would strongly oppose anyone who did so. Many examples of this are recorded in Islamic history.

Abū Mas‘ūd Ans□ārī said: “I had a slave whom I beat. I heard a voice from behind me, saying, ‘Abū Mas‘ūd, Allah has given you power over him [has made him your slave].’ I turned around and saw the Prophet.”

“I said to the Prophet, ‘I freed him for God.’ The Prophet replied, ‘If you had not done this, the flames of the fire of hell would have engulfed you.’”[٢]

Imām Ṣādiqsaid, “The Prophet saw a man of the Banī Fahad [tribe], who was beating his slave and the slave was crying aloud, ‘O God, help me!’ However, the man was not paying attention. When the slave saw the Prophet, he said to himself, ‘I will get help from him [the Prophet]. The master desisted from beating him.’

“The Prophet told the master, ‘Fear God, stop beating him! Forgive him for God.’ Yet the man refused to free him. The Prophet said, ‘Give him away for Muh□ammad, but it is better to free someone for God than for Muh□ammad.’”

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār,* Vol.١٠٤, P.٩٩; ḥ.٧٤; *‘Iddah ad-Dā‘ī,* P.٦١.
[٢] *Bih□ār al-Anwār,* Vol.٧٤, P.١٤٣, ḥ.١٥.

"The man said, 'I freed the slave for God.' The Prophet said, 'I swear by God who chose me as a prophet that if you had refused to free him, the heat of the fire of hell would embrace you.'"[١]

A study of history reveals that the Prophet did not punish even delinquent children and he had a kind attitude towards them. It has been reported that when the army of Islam left for the Battle of Uhud, there were children among them who were eager to take part in the war. The Prophet pitied them and made them return. Among them was a child by the name of Rāfi' ibn Khadīj. The Prophet was told that the child was a good bowman. The Prophet therefore gave him permission to accompany the army.

There was another child who cried out that he was stronger than Rāfi'. The Prophet told them to wrestle. Rāfi' was defeated. Then the Prophet allowed them both to take part in the war.[٢]

Physical punishment should never be considered as a determining factor in the upbringing of children. Particularly, if this practice continues for a long time, it could harm the child's personality while it ceases to be effective. In addition, the child could consider it to be normal practice, do nothing to avoid it and not feel inhibited when subjected to it.

Imām 'Alī said: "Wise people accept advice through good manners and training. It is the beasts who are corrected by flogging".[٣]

Abstaining from the use of physical punishment is so important that there have been orders concerning those under the age of

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[١] Ibid, ḥ.١٥.
[٢] *Islām va Tarbiyyat-e Kūdakān*, [*Islam and the Upbringing of Children*], Vol.١, P.٢٢٤.
[٣] *Sharh Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol.١, P.١٠, ḥ ٨١.

adulthood who violate the law. In such cases they shall not be subject to flogging; rather, they shall receive correction.[١]

Therefore, there is no trace in the history of the Prophet of Islam or the other leaders of the religion of the need to beat children as part of their training. They were always kind friends and loving leaders who were sympathetic to children. This method of conduct should open the way for the followers of Islam in various times and places as the religion of Islam is not for a particular time, place, sect or group. Rather, it is for all times and places and for all humanity.

[١] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٣, P.٢٢٣.

PART II

THE PROPHET'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS YOUTH

Youth is one of the valuable gifts of God and a great asset for the happiness of human life.

Chapter One

The Life Force of Youth

"I advise you to be good to adolescents and youth."

The Noble Prophet

CHAPTER ONE:
THE LIFE FORCE OF YOUTH

In Part I, the Prophet's attitude towards children was briefly introduced. In Part II, consideration will be given to the Prophet's attitude towards the youth. It is hoped that this may be a guideline for Muslims and the society in general. Manpower is one of the greatest assets of any country and the most important part of this asset is the youth, for it is a force that can overcome the problems of life and progress beyond the difficult and rough pathways. If the farms are green and the big wheels of heavy industries are functioning properly, if underground deposits are mined from the depths of the earth, if there are grand palaces that ascend to the sky, if cities are developed and the economic bases of countries flourish, if the borders of countries are protected against foreign invasion and there is complete security, all these are due to the effects of the valuable activities of young people. These indefatigable forces are the reason for hope among all nations.

One ends childhood by entering into the phase of youth, the phase of personal responsibilities and social and public duties. Therefore, the world today pays special attention to young people and they have gained a special position in all affairs, including political, social, economic, industrial and moral.

For the last fourteen centuries, the holy religion of Islam, within its comprehensive, revivalist program, has paid special, unique attention to the young generation. Islam makes provision for young people in all material, spiritual, psychological, educational, moral, social, worldly and otherworldly matters while other religions and cultures only consider certain aspects of the world of the young.

The Value of Youth

As was mentioned, in today's world young people and their value is noted by all nations and peoples and everywhere there is talk of the young generation. Therefore, researchers, thinkers and writers have discussed the subject of the young generation from various intellectual perspectives.

The religious leaders have considered youth to be one of the valuable blessings of God and a great asset for happiness in life. Muslims have been reminded of this in various ways.

The Prophet said, "I advise you to do good to young people as they have a tender heart that is keen to learn. God chose me as a prophet to make people aware of the divine mercy and to warn them of his chastisement. Young people accepted my words and pledged allegiance to me but the old refused to do so and rose to oppose me.[١]

'Alī said, "There are two things whose size and price are unknown except to one who has lost them: One is youth and the other, health."[٢]

When Muh□ammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn H□asan rose up and got the people's allegiance, he went to Imām Ṣādiqand asked for his allegiance. The Imām refused and reminded him of certain things, one of which was advice about young people. The Imām said, "You have to keep young people close and keep old people far away from yourself."[٣]

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[١] *Bā Tarbiyyat-e Maktabī Āshnā Shavīm*, [*Let's Get Familiar with the Scholastic Upbringing*], P.٣٢٠.
[٢] *Sharh□ Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol.٤, P.١٨٣.
[٣] *Al-kāfī*, Vol.٢, P.١٦٣.

This advice of Imām Ṣādiqshows the value and importance of young people and calls attention to this great divine blessing. The Prophet told Abū Dhar:

> "Appreciate five things before you lose them. One is youth, which you must learn to appreciate before you get old…"[١]

Attention to Youth

The true leaders of Islam have given valuable advice about the pure spirit of young people and their interest in moral and humane principles. They have constantly reminded teachers and guides to make good use of this valuable investment through the proper training of the young generation.

A man by the name of Abī Ja'far Ah□wal, who was a friend of Imām Ṣādiq, spent some time promoting Shī'īsm and transmitting the teachings of the Prophet's family. One day, he came to Imām Ṣādiq. The Imām asked him, "How did you find the people of Bas□rah in accepting the practice of the Prophet's Household and what was the pace at which they adopted Shī'īte beliefs?"

He answered, "A small number of them adopted the teachings of the Prophet's Household." The Imām told him, "Focus your promotional activities on the young people and concentrate your energies in guiding them as they accept the truth faster and incline towards good things sooner."[٢]

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār,* Vol.٧٧, P.٧٥; Vol.٨١, P.١٧٣ & Vol.٧١, P.١٨٠; *al-Khis□āl,* Vol.١, P.١١٣.
[٢] *Rawd□ah al-Kāfī,* P.٩٣.

Ismā'īl, the son of Fad□l Hāshimī, asked Imām Ṣādiq, "Why did Jacob, delay in forgiving Joseph's brothers who had thrown Joseph into the well but Joseph himself forgave his brothers immediately and prayed for them?"

Imām Ṣādiqsaid, "Because the hearts of the young people accept the truth sooner than those of the old people."[١]

These two narrations show that young people love virtue and good and naturally incline towards and are keen in the performance of gentlemanly acts, speaking the truth, fulfilling promises, returning items that have been entrusted to them, serving the people, devotion and other similar virtues and they despise and turn away from undesirable characteristics.

Some Points

According to religious leaders, youth is a great asset. If there are those who seek happiness and want to make good use of this valuable force, they have to pay full attention to some points:

١. Youth is one of the best, most valuable and fruitful opportunities in one's life.

٢. A basic condition for success is using the strength of youthfulness and putting it in action.

٣. The happiness and misery of any person is based in his youth. He can guarantee his happiness by making good use of his abilities and opportunities.[٢]

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[١] *Safīnah al-Bih□ār*, the article on *'Qalb'*[*The Heart*], Vol.٢, P.٤٤٢.
[٢] *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol.٧١, P.١٨٠; *Amālī Ṣadūq* P.٢٥.

Questions about One's Youth on the Day of Resurrection

The Prophet said, on the Day of Resurrection, no one can take a step unless he answers the following questions:

First, for what did he live his life?

Second, how did he spend his youth?[١]

These words of the Prophet well indicate how Islam has appreciated and paid attention to the life force of youth. This valuable asset is so important that one will be asked about it on the Day of Resurrection.

The worth of young people with moral virtues is like a flower with a sweet perfume which, in addition to freshness, has natural beauty and a pleasant smell. However, if youth is not accompanied by divine values, it is like a thorn that will never be loved by others.

The Prophet said, "A faithful person has to use his abilities for his own good and has to make use of this world for the afterworld and has to make use of his youth before becoming old."[٢]

He also said, "Every night, the divine angel tells the ٢٠-year-old young people to be hard-working and serious in order to achieve perfection and happiness."[٣]

Therefore, the period of youth is the period of individual responsibility, awareness, preparedness and hard work. Those who do not make use of this divine gift will be blamed.

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[١] *Goftār-e Falsafī, Javān* [*Philosophical Discourse, The Young*], Vol.١, P.٧١.
[٢] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, Vol.٤, P.٣٠.
[٣] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٢, P.٣٥٣.

God says, **"Did not We grant a life long enough for him who reflected to reflect therein?"**[١]

Imām Ṣādiqsaid, "This verse blames the negligent young people who have reached the age of eighteen and do not make use of their youth."[٢]

[١] *Sūrah Fāt□ir*, ٣٥:٣٧.
[٢] *Al-Burhān Exegesis* on the abovementioned verse.

Chapter Two

Young People are Attracted to Religion

"If a faithful young person reads the Qur'an, the Qur'an will be mixed with his flesh and blood and will affect all the members of his body."

Imām Ja'far Ṣādiq

CHAPTER TWO:
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO RELIGION

Interest in religion is one of the intrinsic human inclinations that emerge in young people as they mature and like other natural inclinations, it urges them to make certain efforts.

Young people by nature are strongly interested in understanding religious issues. Therefore, they openly accept discourses on religion with love and interest. This opinion is held by many great thinkers and educational psychologists.

John B. Cyzyl said, "According to tests that have been carried out, generally the force of faith in religion begins at the age of twelve."[١] According to most scientists, at the age of twelve, i.e. the beginning of youth, another interest emerges in young people and this is love of and interest in religion. This tendency develops along with the other natural interests and inclinations in young people and increases until it reaches its peak at the age of sixteen.[٢] As a result, young people are troubled by the wrongdoings and bad conduct of others and lament the deviations of others while always seeking the development of moral virtues throughout the world and attempting to promote true values.

The Effect of Religious Teachings upon the Youth

The teaching of religious precepts and the development of faith and moral virtues among young people have two great effects:

١. The intrinsic religious feelings in youth are thus satisfied.

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[١] *Shād kāmī* [*Happiness*], P.٤١.

[٢] *Goftār-e Falsafī, Javān* [*Philosophical Discourse, The Young*], Vol.١, P.٣٧٥.

٢. The force of belief and religion controls the other natural and instinctive feelings in young people and prevents them from going to extremes or becoming rebellious. Consequently, they are saved and protected against misfortune and misery.

It is important to note that Islam has developed programs for training and for increasing faith and morals as essential aspects of the most basic elements for the development of young people in harmony with their intrinsic needs.

Therefore, when the desire to learn more about religion is aroused in the youth and they become interested in learning religious precepts, without wasting this opportunity, religious leaders must offer them constructive religious programs and encourage them to learn the Qur'an, religious precepts, ways of serving [God], ways of preventing violations and concentrating on doing good.

Imām Ṣādiqsaid, "One who reads the Qur'an, if he is a faithful young person, the Qur'an will become mixed with his flesh and blood and will affect all the members of his body."[١]

He also said, "Boys play to the age of seven, learn writing for seven years and learn the religious permissions and prohibitions for seven years."[٢]

Imām Bāqir said, "If I see a young Shī'īte, who is not learning religious precepts and who compromises this responsibility, I will punish him."[٣]

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[١] *Wasā'il ash-Shi'ah*, Vol.٢, P.١٤٠.
[٢] *Al-Kāfī*, Vol.٦, P.٤٧.
[٣] *Safīnah al-Bih□ār*, Vol.١, P.٦٨٠, the article on *Shabab* [*Youth*].

Therefore, young people who want to grow up with valuable moral and human qualities and who want to acquire the brightest spiritual personalities, exercise control over their personal desires in normal and critical conditions and spend their lives in purity and righteousness, must pay attention to religious beliefs from the beginning of youth and, by applying practical programs and following religious orders, consolidate their spiritual commitment with God and always remember Him.

The Result of Inattention to the Religious Feelings of the Youth

Inattention to the feelings of adolescents and young people contradicts the nature of creation. Refusing the orders and regulations of creation will not remain unpunished because the result of these refusals will be increased perversities and the uncontrollability of the youth throughout the world. Statistics show that crimes committed by youth are increasing in the western world and in countries that are away from religion and religious beliefs. Such tendencies towards violations, theft, breaking laws, inattention to education and the acquisition of knowledge, drug addiction and promiscuity are the outcome of a faithless upbringing and violating the laws of creation because sins and impurity are the result of irreligiousness which makes life undesirable for young people and difficult for all.

Therefore, in modern countries today, the issue of young people is one of the biggest social problems which occupy the minds of scholars.

The ٣rd United Nations Congress for the Prevention of Crimes and Control of Criminals, which was held in Stockholm with the participation of thousands of judges, sociologists and police,

ended after one week of meetings. In this Congress, all the countries of the world were asked to rise up against juvenile delinquency and take the necessary steps for the prevention of such crimes of which the world has grown tired.[١]

The National Crime Prevention Committee (Canada), *Annual Report*, ١٩٩١, stated:[٢]

> "In ١٩٩١, ١،٢٠٠،٠٠٠ children lived in poverty, ٥٠٠،٠٠٠ of whom were less than ٧ years old, and who had the highest delinquency rate. The cause of the crimes of these children was parental inattention and watching violent TV programs and movies.
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> "Children growing up in highly violent families are seven times more likely to commit suicide than those growing up in other families. This group is ٢٤ times more prone than their peers to sexual violation and ٧٦٪ of delinquent children in the United States are from among such families.
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> "The cause of murder of ٦٣٪ of the fathers killed by their children who were between the ages of ١١ to ٢٠ was that these children had witnessed domestic violence in the home, i.e. their fathers beating their mothers."

The ١٩٩٣ report by the National Advisory Council for the Status of Women in Canada stated:[٣]

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[١] *Iṭṭilā'āt Daily*, no. ١١٧٦٥.

[٢] National Crime Prevention Committee (Canada), *Annual Report*, ١٩٩١.

[٣] National Advisory Council on Status of Woman, ١٩٩٣ Annual Report.

"Every ١٧ minutes, one woman in Canada is sexually assaulted and ٢٥٪ of Canadian women are surely sexually assaulted once in their lifetime while ٥٠٪ of the men assaulting women are so-called respectable married men of the Canadian society and ٤٩٪ of such assaults are done in daylight. ٨٠٪ of assaulted women are between the ages of ١٤ and ٢٤.

"In ١٩٩٣, ٢٦,٨٪ of female students in Canadian universities and colleges were sexually assaulted by male students and ١٣,٦٪ of these assaults were committed while intoxicated.

One out of three females and one out of six males were sexually violated by the age of ١٨ and ٩٨٪ of the criminals were young people.

"٨٠٪ of children less than ١٠ years of age, whether male or female, are sexually violated by their fathers and therefore, sexual relations between fathers and daughters are increasing.

"It is worthy of note that ٨٠٪ of incarcerated juveniles have confessed that they were sexually assaulted by their parents or other men in childhood."

The Prophet and Youth

Young people are by nature, fond of truth, piety and salvation. Therefore, they are very keen to do right and good. They take pleasure in doing so and always think of piety and divine values while trying to base their words and deeds on righteousness and true values.

Young people regret when they see that others are not following the right path and they suffer on seeing people doing wrong. They also think that they should gain the power to prevent such unrighteousness.

When the Prophet publicly invited the people to Islam, the first people who followed him were young people. The important point to note is that these youth were the sons and daughters of the nobles, rich and renowned families of the Quraysh.

The youth who were tired of the miserable conditions of the backward Arab nation, and the out-dated superstitious practices of the Age of Ignorance, warmly welcomed the spiritually liberating invitation of the Prophet of Islam.

The valuable words of the Prophet were effective for all walks of life but the young people expressed more interest than others. The Prophet's words responded to their internal thoughts and nourished their spirits. When Mus□'ab ibn 'Umayr, the Prophet's special representative for teaching the Qur'an and propagating Islamic teachings arrived in Madīnah, the number of young people who accepted his teachings was larger than that of the elderly. Mus□'ab resided in As'ad ibn Zarārah's house. During the day, he would go to where the Khazraj tribes gathered and invite them to Islam and mostly young people accepted his invitation.[١]

The Struggle of the Youth against the Ideas of the Age of Ignorance

As we have already mentioned, the valuable words of the Prophet of Islam made a great impact on the youth, to the extent that they

[١] *I'lām al-Warā*, P.٦٨.

would defend their religion and religious beliefs at all times and in all places and would resist the ideas of the Age of Ignorance.

Sa‘d ibn Mālik was one of the passionate young Muslims during the early period of Islam. He converted to Islam at the age of seventeen, expressed his faithfulness to Islam and his opposition to ignorant ideas everywhere. This caused the polytheists to persecute him. In order to be safe from persecution, young people would pray during the day in the mountain passes of Meccan so as not be seen by the Quraysh infidels.

One day a group of infidels saw some young people engaged in worship. They began deriding them and insulting their beliefs.

This made Sa‘d ibn Mālik very angry. He took a camel’s chin bone and struck one of the polytheists on the head so hard that it began to bleed. This was the first blood shed in defence of Islam.

On another occasion Sa‘d said, “I loved my mother very much and was very kind to her. When she found out about my conversion to Islam, she said to me, ‘O son, what religion is this that you have adopted? You shall give it up and remain an idol-worshipper or else I will stop eating and drinking until I die!’

Sa‘d, who loved her mother very much, told her politely and kindly, “I will not give up my faith and I ask you not to stop eating and drinking.” But his mother did not pay any attention and did not eat for one whole day and night. She thought Sa‘d would give up his faith, rather he told her, “I swear by God, if you have one thousand souls and you lose them one by one, I still will not give up my faith!” When his mother realized that he would not

abandon his faith under any circumstances, she began eating again."[١]

Sa'd fought against the mode of thinking prevalent during the Age of Ignorance and the other young people joined him and broke the idols, destroyed idol temples, eliminated oppression and founded a new society based on faith, knowledge, piety and moral values. In this way they brought the most backward nation to the highest degree of spiritual perfection and moral values.

[١] *Usd al-Ghābah*, Vol.٢, P.٢٩٠.

Chapter Three

State Employment of Youth

"Wise young people make use of their transient youth, make good their deeds and work hard to acquire knowledge"

Imām ʻAlī

CHAPTER THREE: STATE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH

In developed countries, full attention is paid to respecting young people and acknowledging their worth while employing their tremendous energies. In various instances, sensitive state jobs have been entrusted to them and their youthful energies employed in the interest of country and nation.

Fourteen centuries ago, the leader of Islam paid special attention to this important social issue and, in his established state, he employed worthy young people in important, sensitive state jobs and supported them with his words as well as his actions.[١]

Such conduct was hardly acceptable in the ignorant and prejudiced atmosphere of that time, for the elderly were not willing to follow the youth. When the Prophet appointed a young person to a high position, the old people became upset and openly complained to him. Such was the case in the incident of the first invitation to his family.[٢]

The Prophet always insisted on solidifying his practice and resisted ignorant prejudices and false ideas. He would finally convince the people with his wise words and infinite reminders or they would have nothing to say. In addition to this, from the pulpit he would praise and express support for deserving young people and would establish them in high state positions.

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[١] *Dar Maktab-e Ahl-e Bayt* [*In the School of the Ahl al-Bayt*], Vol.٢, P.١١٧; *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol.٥, P.١٢٥.

[٢] *Tārīkh T□abarī*, Vol.٢, P.٦٢; *al-Kāmil*, Vol.٢, P.٤٠; *Musnad Ah□mad*, Vol.١, P.١١١; *Sharh□ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Ibn abī al-H□adīd, Vol.١٣, P.٢١٠.

It should also be noted that the basic condition for selecting young people was their qualifications and merit. This can be well understood by examining the Prophet's words. Young people chosen by the Prophet to basic state positions were wise, thoughtful, intelligent, faithful, moral, provident and deserving.

Provided are some examples of youth chosen by the Prophet for executive state jobs. In this way there will be no mistake in recognizing the true right of youth for the criterion in the selection of youth was their faith and spiritual values.

ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib

One of the young people who served by the side of the Prophet to the end of his life was ʻAlī. He actively participated in all events and was a favorite of the Prophet and from the beginning of Islam was a soldier for the cause.

ʻAlī, the son of Abū T□ālib, was from the biggest and the noblest tribe, i.e. The Quraish. His mother, Fat□imah, the daughter of Asad ibn ʻAbd Manāf, was a great woman of the Banī Hāshim family. Therefore, ʻAlī was a Hāshimī from both his father's and his mother's side.[١]

ʻAlī was miraculously born in the Kaʻbah. This was an honor that was not bestowed on anyone else. He was in the Kaʻbah for three days and then left it in his mother's arms.[٢]

Abū T□ālib, ʻAlī's father, had been the Prophet's guardian since he was eight years old. He defended the Prophet in the critical

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[١] *Tārīkh-e Anbiyā'* [*History of the Prophets*], Vol.١, P.٧٦; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٥, P.٦٨; *Sharh□ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī al-H□adīd, Vol.١, P.٦.

[٢] *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, Vol.٣, P.٤٨٣; *Kifāyah aṭ-T□ālib*, P.٢٦٠; *al-Ghadīr*, Vol.٦, P.٢٢.

days of Islam, when all were mobilized against him. In the ١٠th year of appointment to prophecy, Abū T□ālib and Khadījah, the Prophet's wife, both died. This year was known as the 'Year of Sadness'.[١]

When 'Alī was a young boy, the Prophet took him to his own home. Therefore, 'Alī grew up in the Prophet's house and under his guardianship.

After Gabriel revealed himself to Muh□ammad in the cave of H□irā and informed him of his appointement as a prophet, the Prophet went home and told 'Alī of the revelation. In spite of his young age, 'Alī accepted the Prophet's invitation to Islam and became the first male Muslim.[٢]

After being appointed as prophet, Muh□ammad did not openly reveal his appointment for three years. In the third year, he was ordered by God to reveal his appointment and he made the first invitation to his relatives. He invited them to a feast, in which he told them, "O children of 'Abd al-Mut□ṭallib, God has sent me to lead all people and especially you, my relatives and has told me, 'First warn your nearest relatives of refusing to obey [God].'"[٣]

He repeated this twice more and no one responded to his call except 'Alī who was only thirteen at that time. The Prophet said,

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[١] *Us□ūl Kāfī*, Vol.١, P.٤٤٨; *al-Ghadīr*, Vol.٧, P.٣٣٠; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٥, P P.٦٨-١٨٣.

[٢] *Tārikh T□abarī*, Vol.٢, P.٢١٢; *al-Ghadīr*, Vol.٣, P.٢٢٦; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٨, P.٢٦٢; *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٤, P.١٥٣.

[٣] *Sūrah al-Baqarah* ٢:٢١٥; *Tafsīr-e Furāt*, P.١١٢.

"O 'Alī, you will be my brother and substitute, inheritor and minister."[١]

'Alī Risks His Life in the Prophet's Bed

In the ١٣th year after the appointment to prophecy, the leaders of the Quraish plotted to kill the Prophet. One person was selected from each tribe and it was decided that as a group they would attack and kill the Prophet one night. The Prophet was made aware of their evil plan and he asked 'Alī to sleep in his bed so that the enemies would not find out about his absence from the house.

'Alī was ٢٣ years old at that time. He responded positively to the Prophet's request and slept in his bed. The Prophet left the city and hid in the Thūr cave close to Meccan. At the end of the night, forty conspirators raided the Prophet's house and found 'Alī asleep in the bed.[٢]

The Battle of Badr

Badr was the first battle fought in the history of Islam. In this battle, the army of Truth faced the polytheists, the army of Falsehood. It occurred in the second year after the Hijrah between the leaders of the Meccan infidels and the army of Islam, in a place known as the Badr Wells, some ١٦٨ km. away from Madīnah and ٦ km. away from the Red Sea. The army of the infidels consisted of more than ١٠٠٠ well-equipped fighting men. The Prophet, however, had only ٣١٣ soldiers. Three well-known heroes of the infidelity army, namely 'Atabah, his brother

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[١] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٦, P.٤٤٩; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٣٨, P.٢٤٤; *Manāqib ibn Shahr Āshūb*, Vol.٢, P.١٨٠; *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, Vol.٦, P.٣٩٧.

[٢] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٣, P.٢٦ & Vol.٦, P.٤٧٩; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١٩, P.٦٠; *Sīrah H□alabiyyah*, Vol.٢, P.٢٦.

Shaybah and his son Walīd were killed by ‘Alī, H□amzah and ‘Ubaydah. ‘Alī was ٢٥ years old in this battle.[١]

The Battle of Uḥud

One year after the Battle of Badr, the infidels replenished their armies and remobilized them under the command of Abū Sufyān. With three thousand fighting men from various tribes armed with adequate weaponry, they gathered to face the Muslims at the foot of Mount. Uh□ud, ٦ km. from Madīnah. The Prophet’s army consisted of only ٧٠٠ soldiers. He sent ٥٠ archers under ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr’s command to a mountain pass behind the Muslims and ordered them not to abandon their post under any circumstance.

Heroes such as Ṭalḥah ibn Abī Ṭalḥah, Abū Sa‘īd ibn Ṭalḥah, ◌arath ibn Abī Ṭalḥah, Abū ‘Azīz ibn Ṭalḥah, ‘Abdullāh Abī Jamīlah and Irt□āt ibn Sharh□abīl came to the battlefield one after the other and all of them were killed by a brave ٢٦-year-old young man named ‘Alī. The army of Islam was winning in the beginning but, as the mountain pass was abandoned by the archers, Khālid ibn Walīd and his horsemen attacked the Muslims from behind and defeated them. ٧٠ Muslims, including ◌amzah, were martyred. ‘Alī, the Prophet and a few others fought bravely. ‘Alī was wounded ٩٠ times and in this battle a voice from the sky was heard saying, “There is no young man like ‘Alī and no sword like *Dhu’l-Faqār*.”[٢]

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[١] *Iḥqāq al-◌aqq*, Vol.٨, P.٣٥٢; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol.٤١, P.٨٠; *Irshād al Mufīd*, Vol.١, P.٦٢.

[٢] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٨, P.٣٥٩; *Sharh□ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī al-H□adīd, Vol.٣, P.٤٠١; *Tadhkirah al-Khawās□*, P.٣٠; *Tārikh T□abarī*, Vol.٣, P.٣٧.

The Battle of Khandaq (*Ah□zāb*)

In the month of Shawwāl, the ٥th year A.H., the Meccan infidels in cooperation with the remaining Jews in Madīnah and with the help of other tribes, prepared for war with over ١٠٠٠٠ fighting men, in order to destroy the Muslims. ‘Amru ibn ‘Abdawadd, an ٨٠-year-old Arabian champion, was also present. He had been wounded in the battle of Badr and sought revenge on the Muslims. He had vowed not to rub oil on his body until he took revenge on the Prophet and the Muslims.

When the Meccan army reached Madīnah, the Jewish tribe of Banī Qurayz□ah, which had previously made a contract with the Prophet, broke its promise and prepared to fight in the company of the infidels. Following the advice of Salmān Fārsī, a ditch was dug around Madīnah so that the enemies would not be able to enter the city. The Muslims were under siege for ٢٨ days until the infidel hero, ‘Amru ibn ‘Abdawadd crossed the ditch and challenged them to fight. No one but ‘Alī volunteered to fight him as ‘Amru was a renowned, brave and valiant man. As ‘Alī walked courageously to the battlefield the Prophet remarked, “All of faith is facing all of polytheism.”

After some moments of intense fighting, ‘Alī killed ‘Amru ibn ‘Abdawadd and threw his head in front of the Prophet. The Prophet said, “The blow of ‘Alī’s sword in the battle of Khandaq is superior to the worship of all humans and Jinn.”

‘Alī, who did such great service for Islam and the Muslims on that day, was a ٢٧-year-old young man. After this battle, the Prophet along with an army under ‘Alī’s command, set out for the Jewish tribe of Banī Qurayz□ah. When the Jewish elder, H□uyy ibn Akht□ab was killed, the people of Madīnah were safe

from the danger of the Jews and Jewish properties and women were possessed by the Muslims.[١]

The Conquest of Khaybar by ‘Alī

In the year ٧ A.H., the Jews of Khaybar plotted against the Muslims. In keeping with this, they filled some of the ٧ castles of Khaybar ٢٠٠ km. to the northwest of Madīnah with arms. ١٤،٠٠٠ Jews lived in these castles. The Prophet went to Khaybar with ١،٤٠٠ foot soldiers and ٢٠٠ horsemen. ‘Alī, who was a ٣٠-year-old young man, was the flag bearer.

In this battle, ‘Umar and Abū Bakr were defeated. ‘Alī entered the battle upon the Prophet’s order. He struck Marḥab, the Jewish hero, with a thunderous blow and threw him to the ground. Then the Muslims attacked and ‘Alī removed the iron gate of Khaybar and held it on his hand like a shield. In this battle, Murḥab, ◌ārith and Yāsir were killed by ‘Alī and Khaybar was conquered. Afterwards, forty people were needed to help in returning the gate to its original place.[٢]

The Conquest of Mecca

In the year ٨ A.H., Mecca was conquered by the Prophet without a fight. The Prophet entered Mecca with ١٢،٠٠٠ troops and he himself broke and threw down many of the idols in the Ka‘bah. Then he ordered ‘Alī to put his feet upon his shoulders in order to climb the wall and break the remaining idols. ‘Alī obeyed the order but when he was finished, he jumped down. The Prophet asked, “Why did you not put your feet on my shoulders?” ‘Alī

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[١] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٨, P.٣٧٨; *Mustadrak al-H□ākim,* Vol.٣, P.٣٢; *Tārikh-e Baghdād* [*History of Baghdad*], Vol.١٣, P.١٩; *Maqtal al-H□usain Khārazmī*, P.٤٥.

[٢] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٥, P.٤٢٠; *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, Vol.٥, P.٢٨٣; *Irshād Mufīd*, Vol.١, P.١١٤; *Mustadrak aṣ-S□ah□īh□ayn*, Vol.٣, P.٣٧.

responded, "To climb up, you ordered me to step on your shoulders and I complied, but while climbing down, you said nothing and therefore, I jumped down rather than rudely step on your shoulders. Thanks to God nothing happened to me!"[١]

This great hero of Islam was present on all occasions against the enemies and infidels in their attempts to wipe out Islam and the Muslims. 'Alī defended Islam with all his power and might and was honored with many great and singular achievements.

Ja'far ibn Abī T□ālib

Ja'far ibn Abī T□ālib was a companion of the Prophet and 'Alī's older brother by ١٠ years. He was a brave man and one of the pioneering Muslims. He is also known as Ja'far T□ayyār ('the flying Ja'far') as he lost both his arms in battle and the Prophet said, "God gave him two wings in heaven."[٢]

The Prophet liked him very much. In the year ٥ A.H., he migrated to Abyssinia with the other Muslims and was chosen as the spokesman of the migrating delegation while he was only a ٢٤-year-old young man. The Muslims were in Abyssinia until the year ٧ A.H. and then they returned to Madīnah. Their return to Madīnah coincided with the Prophet's victorious return from Khaybar.

Once the Prophet saw them, he went to towards his strong cousin, put his arms around his neck, kissed him on the forehead and

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[١] *Ih□qāq al-H□aqq*, Vol.٨, P.٦٨٢; *Sīrah* ibn Hishām, Vol.٢, P.٤٢٩; *Usd al-Ghābah*, Vol.٣, P.١٠٢; *al-Is□ābah*, Vol.١, P.٣١٨.

[٢] *Al-A'lām Zarklī*, Vol.٢, P.١٢٥; *al-Is□ābah*, Vol.١, P.٢٣٧; *S□ifah al-S□afwah*, Vol.١, P.٢٠٥; *Maqātil aṭ-T□ālibiīn*, P.٣.

cried. Then he said, "I do not know for which event I should be more happy; the arrival of Ja'far or the conquest of Khaybar."[١]

In ٨ A.H.—i.e. one year after the return from Abyssinia, he was selected by the Prophet to command an army of ٣٠٠٠٠ soldiers on its way to fight the Romans. The army of Islam departed from Madīnah and faced the Romans in *Mu'tah* in Syria.

Ja'far fought with unparalleled valor. He lost his tow hands. In spite of this, he still managed to hold the flag of Islam to his chest rather than let it fall to the ground. He was martyred after having sustained over ٧٠ wounds to his body.[٢] When the Prophet heard of Ja'far's martyrdom, he burst into tears and then he remarked, "One has to cry for a person like Ja'far."

Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr

Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr was a bright, well-built young man. He was very handsome, chaste, determined and noble. His parents loved him very much and he was respected by everyone in Meccan. He wore the most beautiful clothes and enjoyed a high standard of living.[٣]

He became fond of the Prophet's words and, after spending some time in the Prophet's company and hearing the verses of the Qur'an, he embraced Islam. In Meccan conversion to Islam was considered to be the biggest crime. Therefore, many people hid their belief in Islam. One such person was Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, until his parents found out and he was imprisoned. He escaped

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[١] *Al-Istī'āb fī Hāmish al-Is□ābah*, Vol.١, P.٢١٢; *H□ilyah al-Awliyā'*, Vol.١, P.١١٤; *T□abaqāt ibn Sa'd*, Vol.٤, P.٢٢.

[٢] *Al-Is□ābah*, Vol.١, P.٢٣٩; *Sīrah H□alabiyyah*, Vol.٢, P.٧٨٦; *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, Vol.٥, P.٢١٩; *al-A'lām Zarklī*, Vol.٣, P.١٢٥.

[٣] *Al-A'lām Zarklī*, Vol.٧, P.٢٤٨.

however, and went to Abyssinia with the other migrants and after a while, he returned.

On the occasion of *'Aqabah Awlā'* one moonlit night, ١٢ important persons from Madīnah met the Prophet and converted to Islam. When they wanted to return to Madīnah, two people by the names of As'ad ibn Zarārah and Zakwān ibn 'Abd Qays asked the Prophet to send a representative to Madīnah in order to teach the Qur'an to the people and call them to Islam.

Madīnah was then one of the most important cities in the Arabian Peninsula and two large tribes, Aws and Khazraj lived there. They were sworn enemies of each other and had been at war for several years.

From among all the Muslims and his companions, the Prophet chose none other than the young Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr. He sent him along with As'ad ibn Zarārah to Madīnah for this important mission.

Mus□'ab, who had learnt the recitation of the Qur'an very well, entered Madīnah and passionately began the promotion of Islam, with pure intentions and hard work. He resided in the house of As'ad, who was among the seniors of the Khazraj tribe. In the company of his host, he went to the house of Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh, the leader and chief of the Aws tribe, and called them to Islam, which they accepted. In addition, Asīd ibn H□ud□ayr also converted to Islam with Mus□'ab. Mus□'ab, the well-built young man, carried out his mission in Madīnah in the best way possible. He was the first one who performed communal and the Friday prayer in Madīnah and he made honorable achievements.[١]

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[١] *T□abaqāt ibn Sa'd*, Vol.٣, P.٨٢; *al-Is□ābah*, Vol.٣, P.٤٠١; *H□ilyah al-Awliā'*,Vol.١, P.١٠٦.

The effective promotional activities by Mus□‘ab prepared the ground for the Prophet’s arrival in the city of Madīnah and the people warmly welcomed the leader of Islam and his followers. This was but for the providence, piety, virtues, knowledge and insight of Mus□‘ab as he was the one who attracted the attention of women, men, the elderly and the young people as well as the leaders of the tribes and the common people of Madīnah to Islam. They learned the Qur’an, converted to Islam and drove away from their hearts all the old enmities and became brothers to each other and took part in Friday and communal prayers in a friendly atmosphere.

After the arrival of the Prophet in Madīnah, Mus□‘ab took part in the battles of Badr and Uh□ud. In the battle of Uh□ud, he held the Prophet’s flag and was finally martyred. He was buried next to ◌amzah, the Prophet’s uncle, the renowned champion of the army of Islam.[١]

‘Atāb ibn Usayd, the Governor of Mecca

In the year ٨ A.H., Mecca was conquered by the army of Islam without any bloodshed. After this conquest, the battle of H□unayn took place within a short period. The Prophet and his companions had to leave Mecca to go to the warfront.

On the other hand, a competent person had to be appointed as governor to administer the city of Mecca, which had just been taken away from the infidels and polytheists. The governor had to be able to manage the people’s affairs and to impede any action by the enemies.

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[١] *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, Vol.٢, P.٢٩٤; *Asad al-Ghābah*, Vol.٤, P.٣٦٩; *Ṣifah al-Ṣafwah*, Vol.١, P.١٢٥; *Biḥār al-Anwar*, Vol.٦, P.٤٠٥.

From among all the Muslims, the Prophet chose a ٢١-year-old young man by the name of ʻAtāb ibn Usayd, and issued him an order to pray with the people. He was the first amir to hold communal prayers in Mecca after the conquest.[١]

The Prophet told ʻAtāb, his selected governor, "Do you know what a position I have appointed you to and for which people I made you the governor? I chose you as the emir of the people of God's shrine, the residents of holy Mecca. If I knew a more worthy person than you among the Muslims, I would surely appoint him to the position. When ʻAtab was appointed as the governor of Mecca by the Prophet, he was about ٢١ years old."[٢]

The selection of this young man to such a great position strongly upset some Arabs elders and the heads of Mecca. They objected and complained, saying, "The Prophet wants us always to be humiliated. This is why he made a young man governor over us, the elders of the Arabs and the seniors of Mecca."

These words reached the Prophet's ears. He therefore wrote a long letter to the people of Mecca, in which he reminded them of ʻAtāb's merits and emphasized that the people should obey his orders.

In the final part of the letter, he thus responded to the inappropriate objection of the people:

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[١] *Tārīkh al-Islām* [*The History of Islam*] by Dhahabī, Vol.١, P.٣٨٠; *Shadharāt al-Dhahb*, Vol.١, P.٢٦; *Sīrah H□albiyyah*, Vol.٣, P.١٢٠.
[٢] *Asad al-Ghābah*, Vol.٣, P.٣٥٨; *al-Aʻlām Zarklī*, Vol.٤, P.٢٠٠.

"None of you shall object to a young man like ʻAtāb as superiority among people is not to be judged by age. Rather, it is virtue and spiritual perfection that must be considered."[١]

ʻAtāb remained governor of Mecca even after the death of the Prophet until he died in early ٢٣ A.H.[٢]

Muʻādh ibn Jabal

Muʻādh ibn Jabal ibn ʻAmru Ans□ārī was from the Khazraj tribe and was known by the nickname of Abū ʻAbd ar-Rah□mān. He was one of the well-known companions of the Prophet and was very wise, handsome, generous and well-mannered. He converted to Islam at the age of ١٨ and took part in all the battles during the Prophet's life time.[٣]

Muʻādh learned the Islamic sciences with hard work and natural talent, he was able to learn a considerable amount of Islamic teachings within a few years and became one of the outstanding companions.

He was ٢٦ during the conquest of Mecca. A merited person was needed to be appointed to that city at that time to teach the people the orders and regulations of Islam concerning worship and transactions.[٤] Muʻādh was selected for the intellectual affairs of Mecca and for teaching religious precepts. In fact, he was chosen as the cultural head of the city.

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[١] *Nāsikh at-Tawārīkh, Ḥālāt-e Payāmbar* [*The Prophet's Moods*], P.٣٧٨.

[٢] *Al-Aʻlām Zarklī*, Vol.٤, P.٢٠٠; *al-Is□ābah*, Vol.٢, P.٤٥١.

[٣] *Asad al-Ghābah*, Vol.٤, P.٣٧٦; *T□abaqāt ibn Saʻd*, Vol.٣, P.١٢٠; *al-Qism ath-Thānī*.

[٤] *Sīrah al-H□albiyyah*, Vol.٣, P.١٢٠.

After the Tabūk campaign, the Prophet sent Mu‘ādh to Yemen to be a judge and governor there. In a letter to the people of Yemen, the Prophet wrote, “I have sent you one of my best men.”

The Prophet ordered Mu‘ādh to teach the members of the army the Qur’an and the religious precepts and to collect the religious tax (*zakāt*) which was to be sent to Mecca for the Muslims.[١]

When the Prophet wanted to send this young man to Yemen, he asked him, “O Mu‘ādh, if there is a quarrel, how will you judge?” He replied, “I will judge based on what is in God’s book.”

The Prophet then asked, “If there is no order in the Qur’an, what will you do?” He answered, “I will judge according to the Prophet’s practice.” The Prophet continued, “If you do not find any order according to my practice, what will you do?” Mu‘ādh said, “Then I will judge according to my own opinion.” Then the Prophet put his hand on Mu‘ādh’s chest and said, “Thanks to God for you have satisfied the Prophet with that with which prophets are satisfied.”[٢]

When the Prophet died in the year ١١ A.H., Mu‘ādh was in Yemen. Abū Bakr reinstated him in his position. Then, during ‘Umar’s caliphate, he went to Shām and died in ‘Imwās[٣], in ١٨ A.H., at the age of ٣٤ due to the plague.[٤]

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[١] *H□ilyah al-Awliā’*, Vol.١, P.٢٢٨.

[٢] *Al-Is□ābah*, Vol.٢, P.٣٥٧.

[٣] ‘Imwās is a region of Palestine close to Bayt al-Muqaddas where in the year ١٨ A.H. an epidemic disease broke out for the first time that killed many Muslims and companions of the Prophet. The disease was caused by a microbe which entered the blood and could kill the affected person within a few hours. *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, Vol.٤, P.١٥٧.

[٤] *Ṭabaqāt*, Vol.٣, P.١٢٠; *al-Istī‘āb in the exegesis of al-Iṣābah, the article an Mu‘ādh.*

One thing that proves Mu‘ādh’s merits is that during the Prophet’s lifetime, he was authorized to issue *fatwās* and would infer religious precepts according to the Qur’an, *Sunnah* (the tradition) and reason. This shows the outstanding qualifications of this young man at the dawn of Islam.[١]

Usāmah ibn Zayd

Usāmah ibn Zayd was a Christian child of Arab origins from Syria. His nickname was Abū Muh□ammad and he was one of the respected companions of the Prophet. He was born in Meccan ٧ years before the Hijrah. The Prophet loved him very much. He was a clever, worthy and intelligent person.[٢]

His father Zayd, was killed in the war against the Romans in Mu’tah. He had been the second commander after Ja‘far ibn Abī T□ālib. The Prophet therefore decided to appoint Usamah, who was only ١٨, as the commander of the army of Islam to fight the Romans, in spite of the fact that all the high-ranked commanders of Islam, all the senior Immigrants, Helpers and prominent Arabs were present in the army. The Prophet went out of the city of Madīnah to visit the army. He saw that all the senior Muslims were prepared to fight.[٣]

The selection of the ١٨-year-old commander by the Prophet surprised many people and this practice made them look at each other with astonishment. As a result, some companions of the Prophet expressed their objection, saying, “Why was this young

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[١] *Majma‘az-Zawā’id*, Vol.٩, P.٣١٠; *Ghāyah an-Nahāyah*, Vol.٢, P.٣٠١; *S□ifah aṣ-S□afwah*, Vol.١, P.١٩٥.

[٢] *Al-A‘lām Zarklī*, Vol.١, P.٢٩١; *al Is□ābah*, Vol.١, P.٢٩.

[٣] *T□abaqāt*, Vol.٤, P.٤٢; *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٢١, P.٥٠; *Usd al-Ghābah*, Vol.١, P.٦٤.

man selected as the commander of experienced Immigrants and pioneers of Islam?"

The Prophet was upset on hearing the sarcastic remarks of some officers. Therefore, he ascended the pulpit and after praising God, he said, "O people, what do you mean by the words that I have heard about the commandership of Usamah? Your sarcastic remarks today are not new. A few years ago, when I appointed Zayd, Usamah's father, as the army commander in the Mu'tah war, you also made blaming remarks.

"I swear by Allah that yesterday Zayd ibn ◌ārithah deserved to command the army and today his son Usāmah deserves the same and all of you must obey him."[١]

Such insistence by the Prophet in support of worthy young people had a deep effect on the thoughts of the Muslims in general and those who had incorrect thoughts about young people gradually became aware of their wrong attitudes. The selection of an ١٨-year-old person is rare in the military history of the world.

Usāmah's Story--The Outcome

The story of Usāmah's commandership and the Prophet's insistence that everyone should follow orders under his flag is an interesting story in the history of Islam. When the Prophet was sick and on his deathbed, AbūBakr and 'Umar went to bedside, once the Prophet saw them, he said to them, "Go to Usāmah's army. O God, damn the one who is prepared to fight but refuses to join Usāmah's army."[٢]

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٢١, P.٥٠; *Usd al-Ghābah*, Vol.٢, P.٨١.

[٢] *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa'd*, Vol.٤, P.٤٢; *Tahdhīb Tārīkh ibn 'Asākir*, Vol.٢, P.٣٩١.

After the Prophet passed away, Usāmah awaited further orders in the camp that he had arranged outside Madīnah. When Abū Bakr became the caliph, he sent Usāmah to the same place that the Prophet had ordered. Usāmah left for Syria but, when he arrived there, Abū Bakr deposed him and appointed Yazīd ibn Abū Sufyān instead.

When the young commander was deposed, he went to Madīnah and stood next to the Prophet's mosque, shouting, "O Muslims, it is surprising that the man whom yesterday the Prophet had appointed me as his commander is today commanding me and deposing me as the commander of the army."[١]

Usāmah lived in Madīnah until the year ٥٤ A.H. He died in a place known as "Jurf" during the rule of Mu'āwiah.[٢]

These historical examples indicate the true value of young people in Islam.

[١] *I'lām al-Warā*, P.١٤٥.
[٢] *Al-A'lām Zarklī*, Vol.١, P.٢٩١; *al-Is□ābah*, Vol.١, P.٢٩.

Chapter Four

Characteristics of Youth

"If a person is pious and worships in his youth, in the future his spiritual value will be increased several times":

Imām ʻAlī

CHAPTER FOUR:
CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH

The fact is that one needs guidance and advice from others throughout one's life. Even elders whose powers of reasoning have reached the ultimate degree of maturity and those who have had a great deal of experience in their lives are likely to deviate and need the advice of others, let alone young people whose thoughts are not yet well-developed. They, therefore, need more guidance. The following story is a confirmation of this fact.

Muh□ammad ibn Muslim Zahrī was a great scholar in his time. His love of wealth and power led him away from the right path and he became miserable in his old age.

The physician of the soul of that time, i.e. Imām Sajjād, wrote him a letter in order to give him advice, in which he reminded him of the dangers to which young people are exposed because of their unprovened ideas:

> "When the love of the world can lead a person like you to such a low level, despite the long life that you have lived and the scientific education that you have received and you are so close to death, then how can one expect a young person to remain unharmed by his sensual desires? A young person who has just come of age and is void of knowledge, while on the other hand he has weak opinions and his reason is insufficient and deviant."[١]

Imām 'Alī said, "The young person's excuse that he did not know is acceptable because his knowledge is limited and insufficient."[٢]

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[١] *Tuh□af al-'Uqūl*, P.٢٧٧.
[٢] *Ghurar al-@ikam*, P.٣٧٢.

Therefore, inexperience and ignorance are characteristics of youth. This should be considered in their upbringing. Therefore, God has left open the way of remorse for all his creatures and has advised young people more than others to resort to repentance because ignorance and madness in youth may be the cause of many errors and mistakes and the only way to be saved is to repent, turn to God and follow the religious orders.

Young people are not stable in the various issues they face and their views keep changing. Sometimes they tend to go this way and sometimes that way while they are under various threats at any given moment. Thus, the enemies take advantage of this characteristic in young people in order to achieve their goals.

Another characteristic of young people is their power, ability, liveliness, dynamism and activeness, which if not used for the right purposes, will make them subject to many mistakes that cannot be easily corrected. Therefore, this power and ability has to be coordinated with experience, knowledge and thought in order to achieve the desired result.

Imām ʻAlī said, "The clear thoughts of old people are more lovable to me than the strength and force of youth."[١]

The Characteristics of Faithful Young People

Faithful young people have certain characteristics, some of which are briefly stated below.

١. Familiarity with Religious Precepts

The most basic and the most important knowledge that a young person has to acquire is religious knowledge. Young people alienated from religion will destroy themselves. An

[١] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Faydﻫ, P.١١١٤.

understanding of religious precepts will lead to happiness for young people.

Imām Bāqir said, "If I see a young Shī'īte, who is not learning religious precepts and has no knowledge of religion, I will punish him."[١]

Musā ibn Ja'far said, "If I find a young Shī'īte who does not seek to know the religion, I will give him ٢٠ lashes."[٢]

٢. Familiarity with the Qur'an

The Qur'an is the word of God, the eternal miracle of the God's Messenger and a valuable book that contains the message for leading humanity to the right path and providing him with divine teachings. It is the duty of every Muslim to be familiar with the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences.

When a child becomes familiar with the Qur'an in his youth and reads it continuously, he will gain more spirituality from the Qur'an and it becomes mixed with his flesh and blood and affects all parts of his being.[٣]

٣. Familiarity with the Words of the Imāms

Adolescents and youth must become familiar with the teachings of the Shī'īte Imāms and the religious leaders, in order to keep their hearts clean and in order for their hearts to be adorned with such valuable gems. There is a saying about this:

> "Young people have to brighten their hearts with the sayings of the religious leaders in order to make their

[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.١, P.٢١٤.
[٢] *Safīnah al-Bih□ār*, Vol.١, P.٦٨٠.
[٣] *Al-Kāfī*, Vol.٦, P.٤٧.

speech and expressions tender and give merit to their ears by hearing those words."[١]

٤. Acquiring Knowledge

Imām ʻAlī said, "The experimental sciences, which provide for the material needs of young people and serve the needs of the society; the literary sciences and the humanities, each of which will be needed by the individual as well as the society, are all suitable to be learned by young people."[٢]

٥. Worship

The other characteristics of a worthy young person is that he pays attention to worshipping God, thus keeping his soul clean from any rust. It has been said, "If someone is pious in his youth, in the future his spiritual value will be increased several times."[٣]

٦. Repentance

Another characteristic of faithful young people is that they repent of their errors and mistakes. Young people are constantly developing and sometimes have spiritual inclinations and at other times they may act foolishly. Therefore, it would not be wrong to call youth the period of instability. Thus, believing young people are constantly repentant. This practice will save them from falling into misery.

The Prophet said, "The most beloved of God is the youth who repents his sin and asks God for forgiveness."[٤]

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[١] *Ibid*.
[٢] *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, Ibn Abī al-adīd, P.٢٠, *Hikmah*, P.٨١٧.
[٣] *Majmaʻ al-Bayān*, Vol.٢, P.٣٨٥.
[٤] *Majmūʻah al-Warrām*, Vol.٢, P.١١٨; *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, P.١٥٥.

٧. Hard Work

The period of youth, which begins around the age of ١٨, is the period of hard work, Any feebleness and laziness will result in a well-rooted lack of will in him. There is a saying in this regard.

> "If one does not control one's desires in youth (when one has an infinite source of physical and spiritual energy), how can one perfect his character in old age? One should not waste one's sources of energy as it would be very hard in old age to correct one's character."[١]

٨. Pleasant Appearance

Islam pays special attention to beauty and the religious leaders have noted many points about beauty, which indicate the importance of this issue in one's life. The desire for beauty is stronger in young people and the leaders of Islam have not rejected this; rather, they have approved it in practice.

While rubbing oil on his hair, Imām Ṣādiqsaid, "O God, I ask you for beauty."[٢]

He is also quoted as saying, "A man invited the Prophet to his house. When the Prophet was preparing to leave home to go and visit him, the Prophet stood in front of a mirror or a big dish of water and tidied up his hair and face.

'Āishah was surprised by this. When the Prophet returned, she asked, 'O Prophet, why did you stand up in front of the dish of water and tidy your hair and face?'

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[١] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol.٢, P.٣٥٣; *Tafsīr Burhān*, P.٨٨٢; *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, P.٦٤٥.
[٢] *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, P.٥١.

The Prophet said, 'God would like, if a Muslim is going to see his Muslim brother, he prepares a pleasant appearance.'"[١]

Islam has paid attention to beauty of the appearance and the clothes, but this should not overshadow spiritual values and spiritual beauty which is the essential true beauty. A beautiful appearance is good if it is accompanied by beauty of the soul and conduct.

Threats to Youth

Although youth is one of the great blessings of God, it is under certain threat, some of which are provided below.

١. Inattention to the Power of Youth

One of the threats against youth is failing to use the power of youthfulness or wasting it. This has been mentioned in many of the Islamic narrations.

The young person who has failed to use opportunities appropriately, when he reaches old age, he finds that he is no longer able to follow God's orders. [٢]

٢. The Transient Nature of Youth

Another threat to youth is procrastination.

Imām 'Alī said, "An intelligent young person will make the best use of his youth as much as possible and will improve upon his good conduct while trying to acquire knowledge."[٣]

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[١] *Bā Tarbiyyat-e Maktabī Āshnā Shavīm* [*Let's Get Familiar with the Scholastic Upbringing*], P.١١٣.
[٢] *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, Vol.٢, P.١٣٥;*Tārīkh ya'qūbī*, Vol.٢, P.٥٩.
[٣] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Fayd□, Sermon ٨٢.

How to Tackle the Mistakes of Youth

As we noted, the Prophet showed special respect to young people and was always interested in them. However, a careful examination of the Prophet's conduct also reveals the way he dealt with violating and sinful young people. Some examples have been provided below.

Imām Bāqir said, "On the Feast of Qurbān, Fad□l ibn 'Abbās, who was a handsome youth, was riding alongside the Prophet. A beautiful woman and her brother from the Khath'am tribe came to the Prophet to ask about religious precepts. The woman's brother was asking questions while Fad□l ibn 'Abbās was looking at the woman.

The Prophet took Fad□l by the chin and turned his face away from the woman so that he would not look at her anymore. The young man, however, was looking from the other direction, until the Prophet turned his face again.

When the Prophet finished answering the questions, he took Fad□l ibn 'Abbās by the shoulder and told him, 'Do you not know that time is passing and the one who protects his eyes and tongue will be rewarded by God as if he had performed the *ḥajj* pilgrimage?'"[١]

In another narration it is reported that, "'Abbās, the Prophet's uncle, said, 'Why did you turn your cousin's face?' the Prophet replied, 'I saw a young man and a young woman who were not safe from trouble and sin.'"[٢]

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[١] *Bih□ār al-Anwār*, Vol.٩, P.٣٥١, ḥ.٣; *Fiqh ar-Rid□ā*, P.٧٣.

[٢] *Islām va Tarbiyyat-e Kūdakān* [*Islām and the Upbringing of Children*], P.٣٨٣.

It has been reported that one day a young man went to the Prophet and said, "O Prophet, allow me to commit fornication." The people became angry and objected to him aloud. However, the Prophet said mildly, "Come close." The young man went close and sat before the Prophet. The Prophet asked him kindly, "Would you like if people do it to your mother?" He said, "No, dear Prophet." The Prophet said, "The people do not like it the same way."

Then the Prophet asked the young man, "Would you like if people do it to your sister?" He said, "No." The Prophet said, "The people feel the same way." Then the Prophet asked, "Would you like if people do it to your daughter?" He said, "No." The Prophet said, "The people would also get upset if someone does it to their daughter."

After this conversation, the Prophet put his hand on the young man's chest and said, "O God, clean his heart of sin, forgive his sins and keep him away from fornication." After this event, fornication was the most undesirable thing to the young man.[١]

The Prophet's behavior towards sinful young people is itself the best example for Muslims. However, one point worthy of careful consideration is that the commission of sins should be prevented according to the principle of encouraging good deeds and forbidding bad actions.

Imām Khomeinī's Wise Advice to Young People

Imām Khomeinī, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, made recommendations about young people on various occasions, including the following remarks:

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[١] *Ravesh-e Tablīgh* [*The Way of Propagandizing*], P.٦٣.

"We need our young people to be brought up in the right way, i.e. with an Islamic upbringing. These young people who have to protect the future of this country, who have to run this country, have to be brought up in the right way and have to be corrected. Islam has not paid more attention to anything than to the edification of our children and youth."

"I ask the young people, girls and boys not to give up their independence, freedom and human values, even if they have to work hard for them, in return for luxury, pleasure, irresponsibility and attending centers of corruption that are offered by the West and their agents. Those who want to plunder us have tried throughout history and especially in the last fifty years or so to make our youth indifferent."

"You, young Muslims, have to consider Islamic principles in researching and studying the truths of Islam from political, economic, social and other perspectives and should not fail to consider the advantages that distinguish Islam from the other schools of thought. The youth should know that if someone does not have spirituality and belief in monotheism and the Resurrection, he will be unlikely to give himself for the nation."

"You, dear youth, do not despair. Truth will be the victor. This country has to be formed and shaped by your strength young people. How fortunate we are that strong young people in our country are serving Islam. You, young people, who are my hope, maintain unity in your speech."

> "You, the young generation, must awaken the followers of the West and expose the crimes of the inhuman governments of the West."
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> "Some of our youth gave up their national pride for the West. This was a spiritual defeat which was the most significant of our defeats. Our youth should not think that the West has everything and they have nothing."
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> "Be diligent now that you are young and have the strength of youth within you to tackle the sinful desires of your soul. The spring of repentance is youth, when the load of sin is light and the heart is less dark, the soul is less defective and the conditions for repenting easier."[١]

Let us hope for a day when adolescents and youth will listen to this fatherly advice of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran , follow his path and shatter the hopes of all the enemies of Islam.

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[١] *Kalamāt-e Qiṣār, Pand-hā Va ◌ikmat-hā-ye Imām Khomeinī* [*Pithy Aphorisms: Wise Sayings and Counsels of Imām Khomeinī*], P.٢١٦.