

Islamic Pedagogy

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A sister asked me about the proper teaching of children in this society.

One of challenges in Hijra (Migration) is to educate our children according to Islamic values, norms and principles so they should live in felicity, success and happiness physically and spiritually.

Education in Farsi has been translated as “Aamuzish wa Parwarish.” Combines of two words that means learning and growth of manners/behavior. It goes hand in hand. Muslims call a person educated when he/she is not only educated and learned in sciences, but also has learned and follows the manners and behavior set by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Islamic pedagogy which is the method of teaching children according to Islamic educational methodology requires that parents should be educated and follow Islamic values, morals and principles in order to transmit those values to their children. Parents are the role model of conduct, behavior, values and teaching a child and to teach him/her Islamic education. That is why men of knowledge in Islam call “home” a place of learning and educating. Therefore, this is what parents should do:

1. Create an atmosphere of learning and educating. That is peace and tranquility at home. A child’s brain will be badly damaged when parents are constantly fighting or arguing. They should avoid this in front of children. The Qur’an says that home is made for your tranquility.
2. Parents should not command children to do things but become a role model of practicing the right conduct, speaking the right word and become exemplar of values and norms. Parents should do things and invite children to join them. For example, before meals it is the tradition of the Prophet to wash hands. Parents should invite their children and wash first their hands and next help their children to do the same.
3. From very childhood try to be kind, gentle and a good friend to your child and have open communication with them.

Age 3 to 6: This is the age of developing linguistically. Children are taught proper language usage and pronunciation. Parents should speak to their children their mother language and read them stories. For example, if the mother language is Pashto, the child must be communicated in Pashto not any other language. This is extremely important for children brain development and the level of his/her I.Q. Alphabet letters should be introduced and the proper pronunciation should be taught at this level. For example, there are different letters in Farsi or Pashto that we do not have it in English such as (ق) [Qaaf]. Remember that the first word revealed to the Prophet was “to read.” The first revelation to mankind has a universal significance that reading and educating become our first responsibility in life. The Qur’an also means “Reading”. The meaning of the Qur’an invites people toward reading and educating. Hence we should read to our children on a daily basis and read to them short stories derived from the Qur’an. For example, read the story of Isa Alaisalaam, (Jesus, peace be upon him). In a simple language. Children’s books are available via different Islamic Internet outlets. The challenge of a mother is to read them in her own language not in English. Therefore, it is important that those stories translated in speaking language first. Unfortunately, we do not have Farsi/Pashto children literature in this country. Please understand that children’s brain formed as such that they learn different languages at the same time without having an accent or mispronunciation. When they go to school, they will learn English very rapidly. Parents should continue speaking in their own language and read for them in their own language. At the age of five, parents should teach children how to read the Qur’an, how to perform wudhu (ablution) for prayer and the child should join some prayer optionally. All this information can be obtained from the Internet. If a child optionally stands up for prayer that is fine; if not, they should not be forced. At the same time, parents should say, that there is a time for everything in life. For example, parents should say driving is at age 16, graduation is at the age of 18 and so on. Prayer age is 7. You have time. This way the child would know that not only there is a time for

everything, his real time to stand for prayer is age 7. (The Prophet recommended that children should be made to pray at the age of 7). This means he learns that there is no excuse after that age not to pray.

According to human development studies, children are “little people.” They have feeling, personality, character, comprehension and understanding within their own world. This should be taken very serious. Children have the capacity to learn things rapidly and tend to forget rapidly. If this is the case, in order to log things into the brain eternally we need to repeat educational topics over and over. At the age of five children should be introduced to writing what they have learned in their mother language. Age five to seven is the age of memorization. It is at this age that short surahs should be introduced and the memorizing technique should be increased from short surahs (chapters) of three verses to longer surahs. By the end of age six, a child should have memorized at least ten short surahs. This could be achieved through the Internet such as available in “My Qur'an.” The Qur'an can be learned through the Internet at your own convenience.

According to Islam, mankind has been created with the nature of Islam. Since the law of God and the law of nature are one and the same because God created nature according to Islam; mankind is part of this creation and is a natural entity. Therefore, when educational tools are introduced naturally, moderately, scientifically and systematically, we will get the best results. Children are very curious creatures. They keep asking questions. Parents either should provide the right answer, or refer to the right books or men of knowledge. There are many books available and at the same time beautiful videos are made about creation even for children.

Age of 7 to 14 is intellectual growth, practices, and application of knowledge
Children should not miss their daily prayer and this should be performed with parents. Children should put into their schedule daily to read the Qur'an, and in the evening read their books. Besides reading small Islamic books, children should be also reading other books on sciences, short novels and have a strong work schedule that includes playing sports, watching TV, reading books, and learning and playing a musical instrument. Learning a musical instrument is vital for the development of the brain and the child would have a positive entertainment. Children should be taught that as long as they have a systematic schedule, they can do everything. Their schedule should be posted in their room as well as on the back of the refrigerator door. Every field of study has its own merit. For example, those who read history, mostly become good decision-makers and thinkers. Therefore, it is important that we introduce good books and read them together and question each other. Videos should be watched weekly with the whole family. The following morning, we should discuss the content of the video. All videos should not be educational because children get bored. Some fun movies and music are good to create enthusiasm of life affairs. Also, children should be involved in some decision making within the family. For example, if the family want to go to picnic, children should be assigned to find a good spot for the picnic. This way children feel comfortable that their parents trust their judgment and we develop their self-esteem.

Children should not be criticized but communicated to. Parents should be very kind to their children as the Prophet recommended. This kindness should be with positive discipline, and listening. Parents should listen to their children's needs and explain to them their position. Parents should not lie to their children. For example, a child wants a toy but parents do not have the budget. It should be communicated that we cannot afford this rather than making false promises or lying to them. Parents should always mention that they are Muslims and have their own lifestyle. Children should be told that a Muslim is the one who is on time, always polite, always clean, care about others, respects their neighbors, respects their teachers in school, does not waste time, study hard, eats properly and moderately and dresses properly and modestly. If children use improper language, they should be told that this is not the way a Muslim should talk or speak. Muslim children should learn that being a

Muslim means he/she lives and conduct according to the guidance of the Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet.

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