

my family





In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

my family





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PREFACE

Family is the name of the magnificent togetherness that makes people meet with meaning in the adventure of life that starts with childhood and continues through youth, adulthood, and old ages. Bringing different lives together under the same roof, family makes them intertwined with the ties weaved between, and makes them complete and strengthen each other. Relatives, who actually are together with us under an invisible roof, are one of the knots of these ties although they live in different homes. People feel the joy of being cared and protected, loved and respected; trusting and believing, sharing sadness and happiness, and attaining peace thanks to their families and relatives. They inherit their ethics, culture, tradition and values from their family. They learn feelings, gain their first habits, and try first solutions in the school of family. Briefly, family means unity; it means to be alive by being one...

The deepest effect of modern times over families is the loosening of family ties by harming the feeling of unity and pushing them to loneliness. The decision of family members with financial freedom to separate from each other with the claim that they can sustain their life independently by being free is one of the most painful experiences of modern societies. Yet, family members need each other not only materially but also spiritually. They are responsible not only for feeding, dressing up or earning living for each other but also for



training each other emotionally and intellectually. Family is not “to live together but lonely”; it is “to live together and one”...

The permanence and felicity of the family unity is closely related to the love and respect received by each individual of the family regardless of age and sex. It is natural to have different characters, experiences, priorities, dreams, thoughts and ideals among family members. The peace in family can be obtained only by recognizing these differences, and paying attention to turn them into richness and establishing healthy communication.

From this point of view, the book in your hands aims to consult social sciences and religious sources in establishing, protecting, and strengthening the family; and propose solutions to problems by considering the risks that a family may face. It encourages and invites us to remember our family values, take responsibilities concerning our families, and to make effort for happier, safer, and stronger families.

Editor

What would our Prophet do when he was not in the mosque, in the market or not travelling? What would he do at home and how would he spend his time? Would he worship by isolating himself from his family members or spend his time by contemplating alone? One of his companions who could not restrain his curiosity about this issue came to his beloved wife Aisha, and asked: “*What would the Prophet (saw) do at home?*” She replied, “*He would keep himself busy serving his family and when it was the time for prayer he would go for it.*”¹



my family and i

Prof. Huriye MARTI



Our Prophet (saw) would supplicate as,
*“O Allah, I ask you for forgiveness and
wellness in my religion and in my worldly
affairs, in my family and in my property.”*

(Abu Dawud, Adab, 100-101)



What is family?

*F*amily is the name of the unique togetherness that embraces, cares, protects and enfolds people from the moment they open their eyes to the life. Family is the first trust, peace, and happiness of a small and confused baby who does not know what to do in this huge and noisy world. Mother whispers with a lovely voice to her baby that s/he is not alone. Father says “You are not alone or without support, we are with you.”

The baby sees the world from the perspective of their family. As time goes by, s/he lives their childhood, enjoys youth and then becomes an adult. Family is a school that encourages them to stand on their own feet at every step, educates and prepares them for life. It is the most long-term house of education that teaches altruism, loyalty, morality, and faith. People inherit their culture, tradition and values from their families. They share both the grief of death and the joy of weddings with their families. They see responsibility, justice, and honor in their families. They learn feelings, acquire their first habits, and try their first solutions. Briefly, family is the life source of people...

A Family is Being Established

Allah the Almighty, Who has no associates or partners, granted a spouse to every creature from plants to animals. He did not deprive human beings, the most precious kind of existence, of this blessing, and granted them a spouse as well. The souls that find peace by having a family and the bonds established between men and women by Allah are explained in the Qur'an as follows: *“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”*²

In the first family of the Earth, the lives of Adam and Eve got together under the same roof. Life is a trial, and the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve start their adventure to bear the material and nonmaterial difficulties of this trial by standing shoulder to shoulder. Because, they are *“two equal parts of a whole that resemble and complete each other”*³ with the way they support, complete, care and protect each other, as expressed by our Prophet.

Our Lord wants men and women to share the same home by getting married with the verse, *“And marry the unmarried among you...”*⁴ Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) also expresses earnestly that marriage is of his sunnah, and addresses the youth as follows, *“Whoever among you is able to marry, should marry for it restrains eyes from casting (evil glances) and preserves one from immorality.”*⁵ A healthy family which will be established with the bond of marriage is a blessing that heals souls. A heart that is lonely in the crowds wants a mate...

Two different ways of two different lives are united through marriage. *Duas* (supplication) are recited as:



“O Allah! Make this agreement fortunate and blessed. Unite this newly-wed couple with the emotions of accustoming, affection and faithfulness. Do not let hatred, dissention and separation drive a wedge between them. Just as You united Adam and Hawwa; Muhammad (saw) and Khadijah al-Kubra; Ali and Fatimah al-Zahra.”

New rights and positions are obtained through marriage. But, it is also time for taking responsibilities to sustain marriage peacefully! The Messenger of Allah says, *“Beware! Your wives have rights over you just as you have rights over them.”*⁶

One obtains a strong shelter for both their bodies and souls when they get married. Our Prophet heralds that Allah will surely help those who want to have a family to protect their chastity and honor.⁷ Therefore, Allah is the One Himself who is pleased with the establishment of a family, and He supports the families. So, family is not a random living place; but it is a valuable place protected by the mercy of Allah which is improved and beautified with the children that Allah grants. Family is the core, the essence and the building block of the society. Through marriage, not only two bodies are protected, but also a pure generation comes. Establishing a family does not only make two people one, but also builds a society...

Develop unconditional love in your family. Have deep love towards your family members without laying down conditions such as “If you do like this, I will love you” or restricting as “If you accept that, I will love you”. Trust your family, and give confidence to them.



A Family is Maturing

Marriage certificate, witnesses, guests, offerings, hopes and *duas*... Sometimes wedding ceremonies, feasts and drums accompany establishing the unity of family while sometimes simple and small ceremonies are preferred. In fact, all of them give the same message: From now on, two people became spouses by signing a “heavy contract”⁸, in other words, the marriage contract. They left a lonely life behind and reached their life partner. Now they need to understand what being a family means, realize their responsibilities, and mature.

In fact, being a family is important as much as establishing a family. Spending the days under the same roof and having the same surname are not enough to be a family! Although it is not possible to always meet in the same thoughts, it is necessary to listen and share each other’s feelings. As Rumi



says, *“Not the ones speaking the same language, but the ones sharing the same feelings can understand each other.”*

A family needs closeness of the souls as much as the closeness of bodies.... There are a lot of spouses who seem to be so close to each other while eating together at the same dining table, but in fact they are far away from each other as continents! “Together but lonely” family members are always sad inside.

The Qur’an says: *“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong...”*⁹ It tells us the family of Imran as an example of sharing and helping, and remembers them nicely.¹⁰ The Qur’an also informs us that our Lord will say to His Muslim servants, *“Enter Paradise, you and your wives, in (beauty) and rejoicing.”*¹¹ On the other hand, the Qur’an also tells us how Abu Lahab and his wife will be punished in Hellfire because of their supports in deceitful plans for oppressing our Prophet...¹²

Then, family means establishing a connection of feelings and thoughts beyond a connection of contract and kinship only. It means uniting the hearts and sharing a life in the way Allah enjoins, and acting with the consciousness that they will not be together only in this world but also in the Hereafter.

A Child is Joining the Family

After finding its soulmate, a heart wants to have a baby as well. They want their lineage to continue, to experience being mother and father, and to inherit their traces to the future. They raise their hands and pray just as the Prophet Zakaria opened his hands and prayed, *“My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring.”*¹³



When the prayers are accepted, the first knot tied between the man and woman by marriage tightens. Children weave the idea of being a family, and makes it stronger. They settle in the center of the marriage and give an entirely new shape to the adventure of family. From that moment, decisions are taken by considering their needs, and plans are made giving priority to their benefits. Days, nights and wealth are all devoted to them.

Women experience the happiness of being “mother” when they have a child. They enfold them in their arms with compassion. They prefer the benefits of their children, whom they carry, give birth and feed, to their own benefits. They cannot stand their sadness or separating from them. This situation is explained in the Qur’an as follows, *“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. (Therefore, we ordered man as) Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.”*¹⁴



The ties established between mother and children from the first day is so unique that any single thing that harms this relation is dangerous as much as preventing the growth of a healthy child. Therefore, our Prophet warns us as, *“Whoever causes separation between a mother and her child, then Allah will separate him from his beloved ones on the Day of Judgment.”*¹⁵

When we observe our mother, we learn self-devotion and sincerity. There is a famous saying as, *“Your mother alone will grieve for you”*. Mother is the name of sacrificing everything without even thinking. Mother is the name of the love presented unlimitedly, unconditionally and without jealousy...

We take refuge in our mother even if we make mistakes and make them sad. A proverb reflects it as, *“There is no lover as mother, nor a homeland as Baghdad.”* Mother is the name of compassion and tolerance... And the name of an education shaped by patience...

According to the description of our Prophet (saw), heaven is just one step away from mothers¹⁶ and mothers are those who are most worthy of being treated with the best companionship.¹⁷ Our Prophet protects mothers... And he strictly prohibits to behave disrespectfully, to break their hearts with useless discussions and to offend them by hostile attitudes.¹⁸

And men experience the honor of being “father” when they have a child. They work and strive for meeting the needs of their family, protecting them from any kind of evil, and preparing a good future for their children. The best role model for them about bearing responsibilities of their family is our beloved Prophet (saw)... His glad tiding always rings in their minds: *“If a man spends on his family (with the intention*

of having a reward from Allah) sincerely for Allah's sake then it is a (kind of) charity in reward for him."¹⁹

Responsibilities do not end by only providing food and clothes for family members... A father must also make great efforts for every member of their family to join the society as well-mannered, healthy and balanced people. They must meet their nonmaterial needs as much as the material ones; and raise a generation who are trained to be merciful and equipped with good morality, and who internalize their culture and values. In this issue, our beloved Prophet said, *"There is no gift that a father gives his children more virtuous than good manners."*²⁰

We learn respect while living with our father. Father is the name of the respect fed by love, an authority that does not hurt but instead gives trust and peace. We feel protected and supported with the existence of our father. We say "Effort is from father, service is from child." Father means the sweat of brow, *halal* earning, and determination.

We learn justice, fairness and mercy by observing our father. How sad it is for a child to identify violence with father, to remember father with fear, and to learn violence at home! We learn the lives of fathers that are exemplars of love and mercy such as the Prophet Ibrahim, Yaqub and Luqman. We read the way they call their children as "my dear child". We know the moments of our beloved Prophet (saw) playing and laughing with his grandchildren, hugging, kissing and playing with them by taking them to his shoulders, letting them to sit on his knees even while he is performing prayer or delivering a *khutbah*, and raising them with *duas* full of love. How could a father have benefitted from the examples of the prophets if he hides his good feelings from his children, keeps silent and does not appreciate the good behaviors of them, and beats instead of loving!



Read books with your children, think and imagine with them! Because the basis of belief and values that your children will have in their rest of life will take form at home in preschool period.

We pray as, *“Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.”*²¹ None of us can choose our families, nor can we decide where or when our journey of family, which will last a lifetime, will start. But how to develop our relationship in the triangle of mother-father-child depends on us! Allah, the Creator of our families, establishes the foundations of this relationship on goodness: *“And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment.”*²²



Family is a Trust

Both opening the eyes in a family and establishing a new family mean joining the circle of *amanah* (trust). People, especially those who have close relations with each other such as spouses and children, are bound up not by “the bond of property” but by “the bond of *amanah*”. Allah, the only Owner of all lives, entrusted us to each other by crossing our paths. Then, we don’t have the right to behave each other in the way we want irresponsibly. Don’t those who do not protect the *amanah* attentively but harm, hurt and misuse them forget that they will give account for the *amanah* to its Owner when the day comes?



Our Prophet (saw), who called out to a huge crowd as far as the eye could see in the Farewell Pilgrimage, reminds the Owner of *amanah* as follows: *“Fear Allah concerning women! Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah, and intercourse with them has been made lawful unto you by words of Allah.”*²³ Therefore, being spouses does not mean dominating the other side, but supporting each other to ease and beautify life.

We, as parents, are the candidates to raise the most valuable creature of the Earth, human being. There is an ore in our hands ready to be processed. This unique ore, which requires attention, is at the same time a sensitive *amanah*... As this little child who needs attention, love, toleration and education grows up, our responsibilities towards them increase as well. Our Lord (swt) says: *“Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life.”*²⁴ and adds, *“And know that your properties and your children are but a trial and that Allah has with Him a great reward.”*²⁵

**Embrace your family with the
“awareness of *amanah*”:**

Be forgiving.



Kill your anger.



Cover the faults of others.



Apologize when you make a mistake.



Family is a Test

Our family is a serious test that requires effort and patience... Our roles in life may change, we may become mothers tomorrow while we are children today; or we may become spouses tomorrow although we are children today. But our need for our family and our test with them continue as long as our lives last. Then, family bonds have a feature that cannot be limited with time or place. Family life is not a process ending with death, but it goes beyond it, to the Hereafter. One cannot write off their relatives or family members by crossing, refusing, forbidding or taking unbreakable oaths! Nobody can root out their family from their souls.

People get lost in family issues at times. Illness, trials of life, new birth, death, happiness, and sadness follow each other. Spouses are also tests for each other! Children from every age means the tests at different sizes. While we are being dragged in this absolute chaos, the Qur'an calls out as, *"O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that – then those are the losers."*²⁶

Undoubtedly, keeping the sensitive balances is not easy. There are responsibilities as much as rights, and there are borders as much as freedom in family life. It is necessary not to be oppressed or saddened as much as not oppressing and not saddening. Family life requires justice! When people go home, the masks fall and everyone wants to behave as they wish. Therefore, it is harder to get on well with our spouses, children and parents than being kind and patient to the people at the office, shopping center, or school. That's why the Prophet of Mercy (saw) said: *"The best of you are those who are best to their families."*²⁷

Protecting the family integrity is possible only through valuing family, making efforts for it, and spending time with our family. Sometimes people find it difficult to get on well



with their spouses; and sometimes they take the burden of family alone after losing their spouse. Sometimes they make efforts throughout their life to raise a good child; and sometimes they endure the death of their child, the pain of whom deeply hurts them. In any case, they are addressees of our Prophet's warning: "*Your family has rights on you!*"²⁸

Do you want to be respected?

Be exemplary by respecting to your family members. Accept that "they have a different character and world of thought than you".

Do you want to be understood?

Choose simple and sincere words that explain what you feel instead of using accusive expressions while talking to your family members.

Do you want that your words be paid attention?

An ironic, humiliating, blaming, sarcastic, or attacking speaking style will never work.

Do you want to solve your problems?

Believe that you can solve them! Consult your family members, and be respectful and well-intentioned to the solutions they bring to you.

At the end of the day, all of us are responsible for remembering the verse: "*O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones*"²⁹ frequently, and keep ourselves and our families away from evil people and the evil. Despite many difficulties, people should not ignore their family in the test of life and should seek for happiness not outside but at home.



We pray for “felicity in both worlds” to the newly-wed couples... If we want felicity in both worlds, it is worth making efforts for a peaceful family life that:

Does not consume but nourishes,
 Does not weaken but strengthens,
 Does not tucker but instills in joy of life,
 Does not ignore but respects,
 Does not hurt but values!

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Bukhari, Adhan, 44. | 16 Nasai, Jihad, 6. |
| 2 Rum, 30:21. | 17 Bukhari, Adab, 2. |
| 3 Abu Dawud, Taharah, 94. | 18 Bukhari, Adab, 6. |
| 4 Nur, 24:32. | 19 Bukhari, Iman, 41. |
| 5 Bukhari, Nikah, 1-3. | 20 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 33. |
| 6 Tirmidhi, Radha, 11. | 21 Ibrahim, 14:41. |
| 7 Nasai, Jihad, 12. | 22 'Isra, 17:23. |
| 8 Nisa, 4:21. | 23 Muslim, Hajj, 147. |
| 9 Tawbah, 9:71. | 24 Kahf, 18:46. |
| 10 Al-i Imran, 3:33-34. | 25 Anfal, 8:28. |
| 11 Zukhruf, 43:70. | 26 Munafiqun, 63:9. |
| 12 Masad, 111:1-5. | 27 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63. |
| 13 Al-i Imran, 3:38. | 28 Bukhari, Adab, 86. |
| 14 Luqman, 31:14. | 29 Tahrir, 66:6. |
| 15 Tirmidhi, Buyu', 52. | |

The kid was sad. It was so obvious that he needed an elder who would understand his sorrow and console him. He was Abu Umayr, Anas ibn Malik's brother. Our beloved Prophet (saw) would visit them frequently, take care of Abu Umayr and love him. He had a sparrow called Nughayra. When the Prophet (saw) came across Abu Umayr, he would ask about his sparrow as well, "Abu Umayr! How is your little sparrow doing?"¹

That day, the Prophet (saw) came and asked as usual. What was the reason for his sadness? He would never remain unconcerned with the problems of people, especially kids... People said, "His sparrow died, that's why he is so sad." The Prophet of Mercy (saw) caressed Abu Umayr's head, consoled and condoled him. The little heart of the kid relieved, because the best of those who understand people's problems touched his heart.



*there is a child in
my family*

Prof. Huriye MARTI



*“Our Lord, grant us from among our wives
and offspring comfort to our eyes and make
us an example for the righteous.”*

(Furqan, 25:74)



Who is a Child?

A child is the joy of life, the blessing of home, and the hope of a family. They settle in our hearts with a warm happiness and affection from the first day we are informed that they will join our family. A sweet feeling of rush and responsibility accompany this happiness. Months pass, and our souls start to get prepared for the arrival of this new life. And the most valuable guest of home shows up! They become the source of life at home with their smiling, crying, breathing, blinking, crawling, speaking, shortly everything...

The child is the cutest one among the unique blessings of our Lord (swt). As expressed in the Qur'an, they are "the light of eyes". They are the wish of parents to leave a trace to the future, and to continue their lineage.

They are the answer given to the prayers like *“My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication.”*² Child is a blessing. The name of the divine gift, the taste of blessing...

Indeed, children bring their own difficulties like any other blessings. Firstly the months which were waited patiently pass, then, with the statement of the Qur’an, the weeks made of “troubles over troubles” are left behind, and then sleepless nights start... With the mercy that our Lord, the Most Merciful, inspires to us, care, cleaning and education of them get easy for us. Although it seems hard from an external perspective, when one becomes a mother, she doesn’t eat but feeds the baby first; a father doesn’t buy for himself but cares for the baby first.

Children are a test. A long test with both their existence and absence... The Holy Qur’an expresses this fact clearly: *“And know that your properties and your children are but a trial and that Allah has with Him a great reward.”*³ Absence of them is a heartache, one of our essential wishes while praying to Allah... First, we pray for having a baby, then we pray for their health, success, good morality, and a peaceful future. Remember how the Prophet Zakariya opened his hands to pray Allah for his Yahya (John)! And think how the Imran family invoked for a child and then Maryam was entrusted to her family as a respond to their invocations! Yet, the most difficult patience test for parents is Allah’s taking His *amanah* back.. Remember the tears our Prophet (saw) dropped to soil when he was burying his son Ibrahim.

The existence of children is a test as well. A fresh life is in our arms ready to be shaped. How will their parents raise them? How will they educate them? How will they support them in the way of becoming a good servant? Will they be



able to raise this fragile *amanah* in accordance with this *fitra*? Or will they let them go astray and get lost? Being parents is like walking on a bridge that is sharper than a sword and thinner than hair. Because children may be either the key to the Heaven or the source of disappointment.

A child is also the most valuable *amanah* that Allah the Almighty (swt) gives to a family. It is a life not belonging to us, but to Allah.

Let's have a look at what is said in the Qur'an: "*To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what he wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is the Knowing and the Competent.*"⁴ In that case, we are just a responsible and volunteer means for them to be born, raised, and educated well.

Childhood is the most innocent phase of the most valuable creature of the Earth, human being. Parents should respect their children's existence and act without forgetting that they are "the *amanah* of Allah". No one has the right to say "Isn't this child mine? I can behave the way I wish!" If this little heart is an *amanah*, then when the day comes, account will be given to Allah, the Owner of this *amanah*. Did we hurt or neglect them? Did they hear insult or compliment from us? Did they get a beating by our hands or get halal food? Did they get dressed by ill-gotten gains from our wallets or with clean clothes?

Children are entrusted to the society as well. Protecting them, respecting their rights, supporting them for growing up and getting education are the responsibilities of the society as much as the parents. Embracing and protecting orphans and

parentless kids who need love is the duty of humanity. Our beloved Prophet (saw) says: *“The best house among the Muslims is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated well. And the worst house among the Muslims is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly.”*⁵ Therefore, extending our helping hands on abandoned and broken-hearted children is also a requirement of our faith. Because, not only their lives but also the future of the society will be saved through the effort exerted for them.

Being parents is a fast and natural process most of the time, but the real skill is being a good mother and father. Being parents is not only about providing food, clothing or education, or supporting for finding a job and getting married. It means to feed and protect their heart just as we feed and clothe them, and protect them from cold or illness. Regarding this issue, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: *“There is no gift that a father gives his children more virtuous than good manners.”*⁶

Every child is an individual. They have their own unique choices, tastes, habits, ideas, and decisions. It is quite natural that they think and comprehend life differently from us. They are not our mini copies. The first step of preparing children to life begins by knowing them, respecting their existence and accepting the basic characteristics they have from their nature. Children deserve to be respected as much as an adult! They, also, are the members of human race, created as the most honorable creature; they are respectable, too...

At this point, the relation of our beloved Prophet (saw) with children is the best example to us. He (saw) is our best example with his actions like never passing by them; always greeting and talking with them. He would take the opinions of children on the topics related to them, and respect their



decisions. He would serve them, pray for them, embrace and kiss them. He valued children as individuals to such an extent that he accepted them as the answerers to invitation of Islam, and included children in the *ashab*^{*} who swore allegiance. Because only the child who is respected, who is taken into consideration, whose feelings are cared and thoughts are listened wants to be a good person.

Our beloved Prophet (saw) said, *“Every child is born with the true nature (true faith of Islam, to worship none but Allah alone). Then his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity or Zoroastrianism.”*⁷

Humankind is created with tendency to the good, and wish to learn the truth regardless of color, race, and gender. Like any other creature, children like good and goodness, beauty and kindness. They deserve good and beautiful things like other human beings.



Children are Different than Adults

Children are special.

Every child is different from each other, like adults. They have different *fitra* and creation codes from each other. Every child is special. Some are calm while some are active; some of them are desirous while some others are cautious. Some

* T.N.: the plural form of the word *sahabi*, meaning Companions

children like speaking while others like reading. Some like kitchen while some others like toys. Each one of them must be behaved attentively by considering their characteristics, talents, strong and weak features.

Children learn visually.

Children watch adults, imitate our behaviors, and take us as examples. They are like tiny cameras; they see every single detail, take photos of them, keep in their mind and then look at them many times! They are much more interested in what we do than what we say. They easily forget what we say, but they do not forget what we do. Then, the best way to educate them well is to set a good example for them!

Children believe easily.

Children actually trust adults and believe their words easily. Because they are willing to grow up and they admire their parents. But if they see that the things they are told are not right, or witness being lied or cheated, they feel deeply disappointed. Then, they lose their trust to not only their parents but also all human beings. For this reason, they need to be behaved honestly.

Children are inherently curious.

Everything in life is new to children. Objects, feelings, people, animals, machines... They are astonished at everything. They want to learn and know more about the world by asking endless questions. You must answer them patiently with a simple speaking style so that they can understand. If you ignore their questions, they may try to find the answers through different methods such as asking friends or searching the internet, and they may face wrong answers. You must encourage their curiosity but at the same



time, you should teach them to respect the privacy of people and not to exceed the limits!

Children cannot comprehend abstract concepts.

Thoughts and feelings are too complex for children. They might say “tomorrow” instead of “yesterday”; or “I am sad” instead of “I am mad”. They suppose that fairy, magic, dragons, or legendary creatures are real and live with us in the world. For this reason, it is necessary to speak with children by taking into consideration that they cannot distinguish the imaginary from reality. Being quite simple instead of using literary words, long sentences and equivocate will strengthen our relation with them. In addition, not blaming them with lying while listening to what they create in their imaginary world is also important.

Children are selfish.

Every child thinks that they are in the center of the world. They think that everything is for their happiness, everyone is responsible for serving them, and that their families and beloved ones live for their comfort only. They always want priority and admire to be the first in everything. A proverb in this issue is as follows: “Hungry does not accept “no” as an answer, children do not accept time as an excuse.” Parents should be patient by considering this fact. Because their children will learn by time that other people have rights, too.

Children cannot hide their feelings.

Children are so innocent that they cannot hide their feelings and they live happiness, sadness, and anger enthusiastically. A broken toy, pausing a movie they watch or not buying the chocolate they want may drive them mad. On the other hand, a small compliment, a box of candy, a balloon, or the



moment their parents arrive home may turn into a festival for them. Think again before saying “Why are you so mad at this?” or “What happened to make you that much sad?”. Try to understand their feelings because they will learn from you how to value and control feelings.

Children are energetic.

You cannot understand how they can carry so much energy in their little bodies! What prepares them for life is this energy although it is difficult to control. They are ready to explode any time like a pressure pot that gives alarm non-stop. As parents, you need to learn how to approach them carefully and to behave cleverly not to turn this energy into a chaos. You should use the methods of discipline with love, and direct their actions and energy rightly without harming either environment or your child. Otherwise, both yourselves and your child can experience unpleasant results.

Children’s perceptions are not like adults.

They see life through a different window. As we mentioned before, everything is new to them. This newness scares them as much as excites. They feel inexperienced, amateur, incapable, and helpless. They try to comment based upon what they have learned so far, try to understand what happens around them and draw a conclusion. So, it will be unfair if parents expect their child to behave as logical, calm, strong-willed and consistent as an adult.

Children show specific features in different age phases.

Childhood consists of different phases and children show different features according to these phases while climbing the stairs of growing up. A three year-old kid doesn’t want to let go of your hands while at the age four they insist not to hold.



During adolescence, they will not even want to walk with you or join social activities with you. Then, parents should know the phases of childhood and basic features of every phase not to be shocked or wavered. By this way, it will be possible to observe the child and be in correct expectations from them.

What should We Pay Attention to regarding Communication with Children?

Communication is a blessing that provides human beings' expressing themselves and establishing bonds with living and non-living creatures around them. Communication is not only performed through speaking but on the contrary, people understand and interpret each other through non-verbal communication mostly. Actions like smiling, frowning, blinking, or patting on the back are extremely effective in communicating with children.

The communication between child and parents start in mother's womb. This is the warmest, the closest, the most valuable and the most direct way of communication on Earth. When they grow up, their way of communication with parents diversifies. Above all, children use the same methods of communication with everyone they meet in their life as the way they communicate with their parents. Parents who teach their children healthy



communication will help their children with reaching their wishes and needs without hurting or being hurt throughout their life.

So, what are the points to be paid attention in healthy communication with children?

We should not forget that they are children.

Adults need to understand and tolerate the sentences children make, their worries, fears, and mistakes. They need to react by considering that they are “children”, and they need to put themselves in their place. Let’s remember how our Prophet (saw) spoke when people brought a child to be punished because of stoning date trees. After listening to the complaints, our Prophet turned to the child and asked, “*My son, why are you stoning trees?*” And when he learned that the kid did that as he was hungry, he taught him the right way by saying: “*Don’t stone trees, but eat from those which fall on the ground.*” And instead of punishing, he caressed his head and prayed for him as, “*O Allah, please feed this little boy.*”⁸ He didn’t get angry, shout, or insult him. He just wanted to know the reason for his behavior, then taught him to satisfy that need in the right way, and gave him the opportunity to make up for his mistake as soon as possible.

We should listen to them firstly.

Listening is an art. An adult should give an ear to children firstly before starting to speak. They should actually listen to them instead of pretending; and pay attention to them as if they are an important adult. They should keep in mind that children may have right and logical reasons according to themselves, and try to understand them honestly. They should provide the continuation of communication by using



expressions like “I understand you.”, “You are angry now, you don’t want to share your toys. I can see that.”, “I think you feel lonely.” If they are not in the mood to listen, they should suggest postponing it to another time instead of ignoring or scolding.

Who else do our children have with them to lean on, tell their problems and ask for help except us? If we are busy with something else while they are speaking with us, how can they feel valuable? How will they attempt to speak with us again if we interrupt their speaking; criticize, question, blame, or make fun of them?

We should speak with simple and positive sentences.

Children’s mental lexicon is small just like their life experience. Long sentences, proverbs, idioms, and metaphors are mostly incomprehensible for them. If we really want them to understand us, we should speak shortly and simply. We should not use indirect means, but instead, establish direct sentences, and effort for not to have an insulting tone of voice.

Turning to the child with our all body will make them listen to us more carefully. Holding their hands, touching their back or shoulders, making eye contact, and if we are standing, being at the same height with them are also some tips we can apply to make them feel safe and contact with us more comfortably.

We shouldn’t hesitate to show our love.

We are human beings; we all need to love and be loved. Children, too, want to know that they are loved. They may suppose that they are not loved if they cannot hear, see or feel it although they are loved. Yet, they become so happy when



they understand that we will never give up loving the apple of our eyes whatever happens.

We should tell our children as parents that they are precious, special and indispensable, and we should not compare them with their siblings or friends. We should remember that a child or teenager needs warm-hearted attitudes of their parents just like a baby needs attention and love. Is showing love to your child in front of elders considered inappropriate in your neighborhood? However, showing love and expressing it verbally is a habit of our beloved Prophet (saw). He looked at a guy who said, *“I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them.”* and said, *“Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.”*⁹ What an important message it is especially for fathers!

We don't need expensive clothes or toys to show our love to our children. Spending time with them, greeting and asking about them, making them feel good with little compliments, and pleasing their hearts with good words will be enough. All of these will be more effective than giving them admonitory speeches for hours. Because presenting love to a child doesn't make them spoiled; it makes them feel precious and happy. For this reason, our Prophet (saw) would take Usama on his one leg, and his grandson Hasan on the other, then embrace them and say: *“O Allah! Please be Merciful to them, as I am merciful to them.”*¹⁰

Fathers are irreplaceable.

Fathers have an indispensable place in raising children although mothers seem to be in the forefront. The image of a shadow father whose existence or absence does not make any difference will have extremely destructive impacts on both girls and boys since babyhood. Yet, a father that spares



time for his children, embraces them with his assuring arms, behaves calmly, patiently and positively against mistakes, and does not hesitate to show his love is a touchstone in their lives. When we read our beloved Prophet's biography, we see that father is the symbol of mercy: He guides, sets rules but never confuses discipline with violence.

Our little *amanah* needs their father as much as their mother in order to understand the meaning of the struggle of life, to acquire the habit of overcoming problems, to become confident, and establish a healthy gender identity. They feel safe when they establish a strong relation with their father, and embrace life with hope. Let's imagine the opposite: If they are deprived of the care and attention of their father, they fall apart and become prone to both material and immaterial dangers.

The strong relation between our beloved Prophet (saw) and his daughter Fatima (ra) is a great example. When she entered the room, our Prophet would stand up to welcome her, kiss her forehead, and told her to sit next to him. He always supported his daughter Fatima starting from her childhood to youth, marriage to motherhood and in all issues. Whose heart could remain indifferent to such attention? Fatima became a respectful daughter, a strong mother and a lovely wife thanks to her father.

Children have Rights

Human being, who is created as the honorable vicegerent on Earth, is precious at every age and have inborn rights. As children do not have the power to protect their rights, protecting their rights is the duty of their families and the society they live in, in other words, it is our duty.

The right to life

“Every child has the right to live and grow up.” In fact, children may be a surprise for their parents sometimes although most of the time they are loved and wanted. Accepting this sensitive *amanah* in hard situations is not easy for sure. But neither the baby’s parents nor the baby himself decided him to be created. Therefore, it is necessary to accept the life that Allah (swt) created. Don’t we need to trust our Lord while He warns as, *“And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin.”*¹¹

On the other hand, there are little children who are not welcomed and whose births are accepted as a source of sadness and shame just because they are girls; they are despised, humiliated, and even their right to life are violated and they are killed. The Holy Qur’an expresses this cruelty as follows: *“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.”*¹² However families must know that these beautiful girls are under the protection of Allah (swt). Because Allah informs us that those who don’t like their *amanah* and behave their daughters mercilessly will be brought into account in the Hereafter. Being parents means not to forget that Allah is the one Who gives life and sustenance...

The right to be named

“Every child has the right to be named with a meaningful name when they are born that is compatible with their dignity.” Parents must give a good and meaningful name that



sounds good, and that will not be a reason of embarrassment for the child. Our Prophet (saw), whose name and himself was beautiful, would give names and pray for the goodness of newborn babies when they were brought to him. He (saw) also prohibited the names whose meanings are not good. *“You will be called on the Day of Resurrection by your names and the names of your fathers, so choose good names.”*¹³

The right to know parents

“Every child has the right to know their parents and to be cared by them.” Knowing whose child they are has vital importance for humans. Knowing their family is a great situation for a child that establishes their identity, improves their character, helps them to know and define themselves. Bloodline is decided by the Divine Decree. Therefore, as nobody has the right to refuse their child, a child doesn't have the right to claim that they come from another lineage except their parents.

*“Whoever refuses their children; Allah will be away from them in the Day of Resurrection and disgrace them in front of everyone.”*¹⁴

The right to live with family

“Every child has the right to live with their family.” The smell of mothers' arms and fathers' home can never be replaced. A child needs the attention, trust, and affection of their parents even if they are grown up with perfect opportunities. Therefore, parents need to push every opportunity to be with their children. Society must support the families with financial difficulties for not weakening or losing their integrity. Alternative ways for not separating children from their parents must be sought.

“Whoever causes separation between a mother and her child, Allah will separate him from his beloved on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁵

The right to be respected (in terms of thoughts)

“Every child has the right to express their thoughts and views.” The ideas of children sometimes may seem funny and simple to adults. It might be supposed that they are objecting or creating a problem while trying to tell their wishes or needs. But, a child whose opinion is not asked concerning the topics related to them and whose thoughts are not respected cannot complete their mental development. A child who is silenced by saying “Speak after you grow up!” cannot acquire the skill of creating logical ideas.



Let’s give an example from our Prophet (saw) regarding this issue, too: He (saw) would lead both his grandchildren and other children around him to think. He would listen to their opinions and take their decisions into consideration. On one occasion, he turned to his right side to start offering what he was drinking. There was a child on his right side, and



on his left there were some of old companions of him. He asked the child: “*Do you let me offer this drink to them first?*” But this clever boy answered as: “No! I swear that I will never give any blessings up that comes from your side!” Then our Prophet started from the boy.¹⁶

The right to protection of dignity

“Every child has the right that their dignity be protected.” Being a human is enough to deserve an honorable life. We must be careful not to hurt their honor while calling out, speaking with them, asking them to do something or disciplining. We adults generally withhold from our children the effort we make not to hurt a friend of us. We forgive the mistakes of our friends easily but cannot forgive the clumsiness or mistakes of our children that easily. But children deserve patience, attention, compassion and kindness more than anyone else. We shouldn’t forget that children whose honor is harmed and who feel like they are oppressed lose their self-confidence and start not being able to do even the things they could actually do.

Our Prophet would call Anas ibn Malik, who grew up with him since the age of seven, as “little Anas” or “my son”. He never behaved him rudely, or shouted at him when he made mistake, or cursed him. On the contrary, he would hold his hands and show him the truth. Let’s see what Anas ibn Malik says:

“I served the Prophet (saw) for ten years. By Allah, he never even said to me, ‘Uff!’ He never scolded me for anything such as, ‘Why did you do that?’ or, ‘Why did you not do that?’”¹⁷



The right to learn

“Every child has the right to reach the knowledge they need for continuing their life.” For children, learning how to spend a healthy and successful life by themselves and standing on their own two feet like the novel characters living on a deserted island alone are impossible. They will meet the skills and knowledge they need in their family first, and learn the ways to be successful in the test of life from their parents. Every child has the right to learn and be supported until acquiring habits; from simple daily things such as self care or eating etiquette to more complex knowledge that are taught at the school age.

The right to play

“Every child has the right to play.” Playing is not a simple means of spending time or entertaining. On the contrary, playing is a very valuable means of learning. Playing means life for children who learn to follow rules, to wait for their turn, to win or lose, to be patient, the social roles, to communicate and to find solutions while playing games. Parents who do not remember their own childhood, the excitement of kite, the enthusiasm of jacks, the happiness of playing house, the warmth of the soil, the freedom of ball, and the sparkle of marbles, become alienated from their children. Good parents should not only let them to play or offer them opportunities to play but also join their games. Because the minutes spent on games with children are not wasted times, but they are precious times that strengthen family ties.

Mahmoud ibn Rabi says: *“When I was a boy of five, I remember, the Prophet (saw) took water from a bucket (used for getting water out of a well) with his mouth and sprayed it on my face.”*¹⁸



The right to be protected from abuse and negligence

As you might remember, we mentioned that children are entrusted to us by Allah (swt). Then, we adults are responsible for protecting them from any kind of badness, negligence, and abuse. Parents should be careful not to be negligent on children's material and immaterial needs. Opportunities may be limited, chances may be different. But not neglecting children doesn't mean buying anything they want for making them happy. Not neglecting them means caring their mental, emotional and mental needs as much as the physical ones, and cherishing them by doing our best. A couple of sweet words are sometimes more delicious than expensive chocolates and more valuable than luxury toys.

Educating and disciplining children is an important profession requiring knowledge and skills. Beating children or shouting at them, comparing them with others, hurting their bodies and souls, punishing them by harming for the purpose of disciplining them do not comply with the lifestyle of our beloved Prophet (saw). The Prophet of Mercy (saw), who was a father, a grandfather and the leader of Ummah, never hurt children, and strictly warned those who did. The principle he set up is quite clear: *"Those who are not merciful towards our young, and who do not show respect our elders are not from us!"*¹⁹

The efforts of children cannot be abused. According to the law, everyone who is under 18 years is considered children. They shouldn't work until reaching the maturity to be able to work, and they shouldn't be deprived of education and improvement opportunities. The hands which should carry books shouldn't get dark in industry, and the hearts which should be happy by playing games should not be oppressed by the burden of working. If they reach maturity to work,



their salary should be given completely, and they should not be overburdened.

On the other hand, our children must be protected from evil-minded people. Parents should give privacy education to their children and teach them to protect their bodies and respect the boundaries of other people. All children need their parents to guide them on learning their culture, protecting their values, learning and loving their religion and nation. It is our duty to guide them on the things which they can reach easily but have difficulty in distinguishing between the good and the bad such as TV, magazines, and the internet. Because in the end, a child who is protected and educated today will carry hope and self-confidence to the future...



- 1 Bukhari, Adab, 81.
- 2 Al-i 'Imran, 3:38.
- 3 Anfal, 8:28.
- 4 Shu'ara, 42: 49-50.
- 5 Ibn Majah, Adab, 6.
- 6 Tirmidhi, Birr, 33.
- 7 Bukhari, Janaiz, 92.
- 8 Abu Dawud, Jihad, 85.
- 9 Bukhari, Adab, 18.
- 10 Bukhari, Adab, 22.
- 11 Isra, 17:31.
- 12 Nahl, 16:58-59.
- 13 Abu Dawud, Adab, 61.
- 14 Abu Dawud, Talaq, 28-29.
- 15 Tirmidhi, Buyu', 52.
- 16 Muslim, Ashribah, 127.
- 17 Muslim, Fadhail, 51.
- 18 Bukhari, 'Ilm, 18.
- 19 Tirmidhi, Birr, 15.

The army of our Prophet was getting prepared for an expedition to Roman territories. Our Prophet appointed Usama, son of Umm Ayman, who took care of him as a mother, and his freed slave, Zaid. Some people were worried as Usama was so young. Could a young person succeed in this heavy responsibility? On the other hand, there were old people in the army he was supposed to rule, how it was going to be? Hearing the conversations and seeing the worries of his companions, the Prophet gathered them and said: *“You (people) are criticizing his (i.e. Usama’s) leadership as you used to criticize the leadership of his father before. By Allah, he (i.e. Zaid) deserved the leadership indeed, and he used to be one of the most beloved persons to me, and now his son Usama is one of the most beloved persons to me after him.”*¹ With the words of our Prophet, both objections stopped and also Usama was encouraged.



*there is a young in
my family*

Dr. Fatma BAYRAKTAR KARAHAN



Our Prophet (saw) said:
*“Take benefit of five before five:
your youth before your old age,
your health before your sickness,
your wealth before your poverty,
your free-time before being busy,
and your life before your death.”*

(Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 341)



What is Youth?

The most beautiful period of life... The spring of hopes that blossoms with the excitement of growing up and being a teenager...A body improves and gets stronger every day, an enthusiasm, and a spiritual breath that is newly-discovered... The construction years of a character that will settle down, mature, and join the family of humanity as an adult when the day comes.

Youth... The phase of a life that we live at high speed but never want to lose... It is such a pleasant period that heaven, which is the felicity homeland of human beings, is described to us with “the youth”, the best among blessings and the best phase of life.² Human beings will give account for this blessing like any others. Our Lord (swt) states, “*Then you will surely be asked that Day about pleasure.*”³ As humans will be questioned about how they spent their lives, how they spent their wealth, whether they did righteous deeds with their knowledge or not; they will also be questioned about how they lived their youth.⁴ Therefore, this great period of life must be benefited, lived to the fullest, and spent by preparing for life. An enormous beauty appears if the energy of youth

is guided in the direction of the commands of Allah the Almighty, as seen many times throughout the history.

Didn't the Prophet Ibrahim put up a struggle against his polytheist nation all alone when he was young?⁵ Didn't the Prophet Yusuf become vizier of Egypt by saying "No" to his *nafs* with his honesty and modesty despite all negative conditions?⁶ And *Ashab al-Kahf*... The People of Cave... Didn't those young people become a subject of the Holy Qur'an? They left their homeland in order to live in the way they believed; and honored by the Qur'an because of



their determination in the truth: “[Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, ‘Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance.’ So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years. Then We awakened them that We might show which of the two factions was most precise in calculating what [extent] they had remained in time. It is We who relate to you, [O Muhammad], their story in truth. Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.”⁷



Youth, in which energy, power and excitement are at the highest level, begins with puberty meaning “growing and maturing”. Childhood is left behind. Young people have many things to contribute to life with their growing bodies and minds. But first, they need to get prepared for life; and they need to discover themselves and their potentials. They struggle for making everyone accept their boundaries and proving that they are different. Because of this, they object many things, rebel, and say “No” to everything. These objections are another way of telling “I am different and I am an adult!” Accepting that they are not children anymore, respecting their existence and trusting them are of high importance.

It is such an honor that our Prophet chose the house of Arkam, home of a 17 year-old boy, to declare the verses of Allah in the first years of declaring Islam secretly in Mecca! Islam blossomed at a young boy’s home. The Messenger of Allah (saw) trusted young people, gave them important duties, and gave them the opportunity to improve themselves and serve society. He instilled knowledge and confidence in them as well in order to destroy the worries that may occur because of lack of experience. For instance, when he assigned Ali as a judge to Yemen, Ali hesitated because of being young and inexperienced. But the Prophet encouraged him by saying, “*O Allah, guide his heart and make his tongue steadfast!*” Our Prophet relieved Ali by praying like this, and explained him how to judge in a case. Having the prayer and unmatched support of the Messenger of Allah, the following words of Ali is the best example of the confidence a young person feels when they are supported: “After that, I never doubted in passing judgement between two people.”⁸

Those who resided next to the mosque in Madinah and whom our Prophet would educate in person were young people, too. These young people who dedicated themselves to knowledge are known with the name “*Ashab al-Suffa*”. Abdullah ibn Umar, Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Muaz ibn Jabal and Anas ibn Malik are some of those famous companions of our Prophet who spent their youth with our Prophet (saw).

The need of youth is not only being encouraged against their inexperience. They also want us to know what an unsteady world of feelings they are in. They experience feelings deeply.

Therefore, they are called with the word “*delikanlı*” in Turkish meaning “crazy blood”. Experiencing wish, enthusiasm, pride, and excitement are good but also risky. Their deniable and uncontrolled feelings form the basis for making mistakes. Their emotional outburst sometimes causes them to be considered as wrong when they are right.



In this respect, our Prophet would prevent the excessiveness that may occur because of their feelings without hurting, harming, or insulting them. He would raise awareness against the wrongs by explaining and convincing, not by condemning or getting angry; and encourage them against sins. And by giving good tidings... According to his expressions, aren't young people who grow up with the awareness of being servants to Allah, and abstain from all forbidden things despite their non-



stop enthusiasm going to be one of the seven categories of people who will be under the shadow of Allah in the Day of Resurrection when there is no shadow other than that?⁹

We first need to know and understand our young generation in order to not leave them in the process of leaving childhood and entering youth, to help them attain the heralding of our Prophet, and to raise conscious generations: Who is a young?

I am Young!

My feelings are unsteady. That's why I seem to be unstable or indecisive sometimes.

Young people need to adapt a quite fast change with puberty. This physical change creates mental and social effects on them. So, they often tend to be angry, pettish, or touchy. A proverb says, "If the young could only think, if the old could only do!" Because, the feelings of the young mostly preclude their discernment.

They desire to be appreciated and loved by people around them, and want to make new friends, but they feel that they cannot achieve these goals and they become furious from time to time. Being admired, especially being valued by opposite gender may sometimes appear to be more important than anything to them.

I want to say "Here I am" and form a new identity for myself.

In the stage of life starting with puberty, systematical thinking skills of the young improve, and they start questioning themselves, their life, and all rules because they try to decide "who they are going to be" in the present order

of the society. They don't want to be the same as their parents, but a different person, a new individual... They try new things on their clothes, speaking, and hair style to be different. One day they may be so organized while the next day you can see a completely different person.

Their dream is to set a goal, and to prove themselves in a field which is not expected or desired by their parents. They use everything they have learned from their elders so far as construction materials, and build themselves. They object, criticize and believe that the best idea belongs to themselves. They may try to be different than all the authorities they see around them. That's why they don't like listening to advices. If we can be a little patient, let them to express themselves and welcome their efforts, it will be easier for them to find their way.

I want to have friends and I want to belong to a group.

Youth is the phase of proving ourselves. The young want to establish an area to show their existence. The sense of belonging has an important place for them. In addition to their family, they start to be loved and supported by others as well. While forming an identity, belonging to a group, realizing themselves in this group, and spending their energy on such a field are the attitudes that young people prefer.

Young people feel this sense of belonging mostly in friend groups. Being approved by friends of the same age improves their self-respect, and they feel more respected and reliable thanks to their friends. They feel that they can share everything with their friends who have similar features, problems, and experiences. They are happy and free among people who understand them.



I want to be independent.

Freedom for the young is to stand on their own feet, and people's accepting that they are grown. They make efforts for finding answers to questions such as what to think new, how to see the world through another window, and what decisions to take. Their struggle for freedom is the reason for their objection and always being ready for discussions. They may think that even sharing the same opinion with their parents prevents their independence. Briefly, being able to say "No" is the sign of independence for them.

When they are prevented to say "No", they might say "Okay" but not do what they were told. A delaying, hopeless and reckless attitude is the reflection of the passive resistance of the young. They may shut their ears to what is told them, and may not show interest to the things that are considered important by elders. But they may make great sacrifices for the things they consider important. Because this is their choice!

I learn many things: discussing, putting forward an idea, social rules...

Leaving childhood behind, the young want to be more visible in the family, at school, neighborhood, and among relatives; and they want to take place in social life more actively. So, they try to learn and understand social rules, and to question and change on the other hand. This may be the reason behind the saying, "People learn when they are young, and understand when they are old." Trying to determine the rights and wrongs of life is quite positive for the future of young people. But sometimes, they may not know how to do this.

Young people need social acknowledgement, too. It is not easy to be accepted by the society and take a place in it

for a young shy person who mostly hesitates to join a new environment. Even when they want to take responsibility and prove themselves, adults generally think that it is still early. Yet, young people need free realms in which they can prove their existence and express themselves. Just like everyone else, they also want to be understood and accepted, and want to feel special.

What do Young People Expect from Us?

Listen to them.

An adult who wants to establish a healthy communication with young people should listen to them carefully even if what they say seem to be unimportant, and spare time for them without interrupting or criticizing. Having someone who give an ear to them and care their ideas helps young people to have self-confidence and develop strong relations with the listener.

The existence of a healthy communication and its effect is obvious in loyalty of the young around our beloved Prophet (saw). The conversation between a young boy and our Prophet (saw) is a quite interesting and valuable example for both parents and adults. Once, a young boy came to our Prophet and told that he could not control his desires anymore and so he wanted to commit adultery. Hearing this trouble and wish of the young boy, the companions tried to silence him immediately. But our Prophet did not let them to do so, let the young boy sit next to himself, and started to ask questions to him: Would he consent if someone tried to do the same thing with his mother, daughter, sister, or aunt? Each time, the boy said no. And each time, our Prophet (saw) calmly explained that others would not agree that either. Finally, the



young boy said that he changed his mind, and was honored by the *dua* of our Prophet (saw): “My Lord, forgive the sin of this boy, clean his heart and protect his purity.”¹⁰

A young person’s deciding to talk to his parents and expressing his problems or demands is a highly important opportunity for parents to establish good relations with their young child. Because young people behave unwilling to express their feelings most of the time. We shouldn’t forget that they will not listen to the solutions we find if we don’t listen to their problems.

Don’t criticize, but appreciate; don’t compare, but accept.

Every human being is different. They are unique and different individuals. Comparing young people with their siblings, relatives, friends, and even parents will damage their character. We should behave them with the awareness that they are different, and accept them as they are. Every young deserves appreciation for the features they inherit by birth, or improve by making efforts. We should show interest to the things they do and try to catch the chances to actually appreciate them. Otherwise, the young may give way to despair, and give up making efforts and trying to please you.

In a rush of finding themselves and making their own way, young people generally turn a deaf ear to the advices. We should act friendly when we want to talk to them about their behaviors. We should speak not by hurting or making fun of them but with a positive and respecting tone without damaging the character they are trying to establish yet. Although our roles throughout our lives are completely different, we should not forget that we are equal in the presence of Allah with regard to “the honor of being human”.



Be calm and patient towards them.

We all know as parents that a rise of tension with young people is a matter of time. We need to be calm on the issues we contradict with them and we need to be the one who keeps on the right side of them by remembering that we are more mature than them. We must neither discuss with them loudly nor threaten. Because, increasing the tension will no benefit for us but damaging our relationship. The more we be obstinate the more they will resist; and thus, ties of love and respect between us will be damaged.

Parents fear that their children might be hurt; and always wish that their children not have a trouble and not anything evil happen to them. In the same way, they need to make efforts and pay attention not to hurt their hearts as well. Sometimes young people cannot realize it; they cannot see that you want all good for them. Sometimes they need to learn life by being hurt. Then the duty of parents is patience and *dua*.

Try to find not mistakes but solutions.

Parents may have difficulty in showing patience towards their delirious or introversive attitudes. They may feel angry or sad due to their wrong behaviors. But no matter how much big mistakes they do, the love of parents towards their children never ends. Knowing that the love of their parents will continue in any case has a great importance for the young. By this way, they can protect the ties with their parents even when they make mistakes, and learn the way to correct their mistakes by their parents' help.

Youth is the phase of life in which people need love most. We should show our love towards them in the way they like, and support them when they face the results of their mistakes



or failure like the way we support them in good days. By this way, they can learn that they may make mistakes and turn to the correct path by leaving that mistake; and they will embrace moral values more every single day thanks to the love they receive.

A principle that both parents and the young need to learn is that there might be mistakes in life. The most important thing is realizing the mistake and being able to leave it and to turn to the correct path. Because, mistakes include important life lessons in them if we can realize.

Trust and give responsibility to them.

Young people need to develop self-confidence. They need to have self-confidence in order to decide, to attempt and to lead. It can only be provided by our trust first. Asking their opinion and taking their opinions into consideration are of vital importance for them. How could young people learn respecting different views and sticking by their decisions if their character is oppressed by the commands of others and ignored? Then, the thoughts of young people must be cared even if they contradict with ours, and their efforts must be appreciated even if their suggestions are wrong. By this way, they can be self-confident adults who can discover their own skills and benefit from their experiences.



Young people need to be given responsibilities as well. A young who is not given the right to speak or given

responsibilities at home will be weak in the social life. A young whose mistakes are always covered, deficiencies are compensated, and who is not allowed to bear the results of their responsibilities will not be able to strengthen. But if the freedom and responsibility in their life are in balance, they will feel the pleasure of being successful.

Explain them your limits, rules, and expectations.

Parents must show social and moral boundaries that the young need in order to take right steps, and must be coherent in their expectations. Because an inexperienced young needs to learn the boundaries in order to decide how to act in where, and which opportunities to accept or refuse. Unclear and unrealistic expectations will not guide the young, but instead, will cause them to waver, make mistakes, and develop negative feelings about themselves. On the other hand, incoherent rules that change according to situations or people will not let them be prepared for a life in which ethics and morals prevail. If you do not forgive something you tolerated before, or prohibit something you once allowed; they will have difficulty in being honest and sincere. Family must be the place where people can experience an atmosphere of tranquility and peace, and where the limits and rules are decided with a sound basis. Yet, instability, indecision, and incoherence can be normal not for parents but for the young only.

Set a good example by your actions. Not words but actions are important.

Puberty is a period in which we cannot explain things to young people sometimes, or even if we can, we cannot make them accept. In fact, listening to advices is something they really dislike and guiding young people is possible through



actions rather than words. A young companion, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud says, "Prophet Muhammad (saw) would deliver the *khutbah* and speeches in some specified days not to bore us."¹¹

Our Prophet hesitated to make long and boring speeches but educated people around him with his actions all the time. Then, our behaviors must be the ones we want them to learn. Our words should be compatible with our behaviors, and our behaviors with our words; so that young people can find meaning in what we say and their respect towards us can last forever.

People are warned by Allah the Almighty about their action which commands people to do something they don't do: "*O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do.*"¹² Yet the word which is not compatible with the action is null and fake. Being parents necessitates your words to be meaningful and actions to be sincere. The right actions of parents make their words influential, and the relation between the young and parents whose words are influential strengthens.

Help them to have a good friend circle. Meet their friends.

In the years of youth starting from puberty, friendship and friends preclude everything. Friend circle is the easiest way for the young who try to adopt social life. They will learn cooperating, expressing, mending, seeking rights and apologizing among friends. For this reason, they may care their friends more than anyone and anything. Parents should act considering this fact, encourage their children to make friends and be able to answer the question "Who are my son's/daughter's friends?"



On the other hand, meeting with the families of their friends is quite important to discover the environment they are interacting with. Because young people build a common culture by blending the knowledge and good manners they learn from their families. By meeting their children's friends, parents can protect their children from material or immaterial dangers by establishing new bridges and not harming the borders. Let's mention the warning of our Prophet (saw) here: *"Verily, the parable of a good friend and a bad friend is only that of a seller of musk and a blacksmith. The seller of musk will give you some perfume, you will buy some, or you will notice a good smell. As for the blacksmith, he will burn your clothes or you will notice a bad smell."*¹³

Offer opportunities for them to use their energy.

We mentioned that young people's power and life energy are at the highest level. Youth means energy, such that they may make great progress in this period either in goodness or badness! They need to use this energy given to them by Allah as a blessing in the right and meaningful way instead of suppressing. They may explode with anger if the energy overflowing from them cannot be spent in the right way. Their excessively energetic behaviors and the risks to commit sins can be eliminated only by guiding them to use their energy in the right way. Therefore, their energy must be transferred to a beneficial realm with sport activities, physical works and culture-art activities.

The youth are idealists and they can study hard in the direction of their goals. With their uncontrollable energy and idealist characteristics, they can be the target to abusing groups easily. The way to protect a young who is brilliant with his or her energy and dynamic feature is possible through encouraging them to have meaningful goals, and guiding them to the right and the useful.



Don't get desperate. Don't give young people up.

We do our best as parents. But sometimes we cannot get any respond even though all the efforts are made. Sadness and disappointments may occur in our hearts. We may blame ourselves, our luck, the young, or the time period we are living. But no matter how much the situation seems calamity, the one should never get desperate. And parents should never give their children up.

We shouldn't forget that a sapling takes time to grow up. In order to grow into a mature tree giving fruits, it requires persistent, decisive and conscious effort. Like the *dua* of the Prophet Yaqoob, an effort must be showed for youth's benefit and happiness by asking helping of Allah even it takes years, and one should not abandon hope from the young by saying "This one is a hopeless case".

*"He said: I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know. O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah . Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people."*¹⁴

1 Bukhari, Maghazi,88.

2 Waqi'ah, 56: 17.

3 Takathur, 102:8.

4 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah,

5 Anbiya, 21: 51-70.

6 Yusuf, 12:23-56.

7 Kahf, 18:10-13.

8 Ibn Majah, Ahkam, 1

9 Bukhari, Adhan, 36

10 Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.

11 Bukhari, 'Ilm, 11.

12 Saff, 61:2-3.

13 Muslim, Birr wa Sila, 146

14 Yusuf, 12:86-87.

The old man came to see the Prophet. He was going to listen to him, maybe ask questions, and pray behind him. It was crowded around our beloved Prophet (saw). Madinans, who admired his beautiful face and sweet words, surrounded him. The old man could not find a seat to sit, and people were hesitant to make room for him. Our Prophet realized what was happening. He couldn't consent to see an older one to stand, and a heart carrying the past to the present to be harmed, and said, *"He who does not have mercy upon our young, and respect our elders is not one of us."*¹



*there is an old in
my family*

Mürüvvet Aktaş



Our Prophet (saw) says:
“If a young person esteems an elder due to his age, Allah appoints for him people who will esteem him at that age.”

(Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 75)



What does Being Old Mean?

In Turkish culture, people who reach a certain age are called “*ibtiyar*”, meaning “prominent, chosen, and experienced”. Old people, from whom advices are taken, and whose opinions are valued, are good examples in the society with this identity. Getting old is the common destiny of all creatures. Human reaches another station of the journey of life after childhood, youth, and adulthood. This station resembles the evening of a day; or autumn among the seasons...

We change when we get older. Deep wrinkles occur on our faces. What is actually saddening is the reflection of this change to our minds rather than our faces. But in fact, those who can see life through a brand new window leave ageless traces behind. Just as the Great Architect Sinan, who already passed seventy years of age when he completed the Suleymaniye Mosque. Or Galileo, who was over seventy years old when he drew the daily and monthly phases of the Moon. Likewise, Pasteur was sixty years old when he discovered

rabies virus, and Sadi was eighty years old when he wrote “Gulistan”.

People experience physical, psychological and social changes as time goes by. Our memory weakens, our five senses decline, and our ability to move decreases. In the end, we may have to get used to the illnesses that never leave us. We feel the tiredness of years, and sometimes lose our power. Our Prophet (saw) would pray that this decaying not increase and cause the paralysis of one’s life as, *“O Allah! I seek refuge with You from laziness and old age, and from sins and debt.”*² Our relations with our family, relatives and neighbors may weaken as well. But our soul lives its maturest stage. A proverb describes it as follows, “Youth has a beautiful face, and elderliness has a beautiful soul.”

Our Prophet (saw) says: *“While the son of Adam grows old, two desires also grow old with him; love for wealth and a wish for a long life.”*³ The losses of human beings at their old ages may sometimes cause negative features to appear such as: fondness for wealth and money, being aggressive and incompatible, being too meticulous, reckless, and touchy. On the other hand, the feeling of getting closer to death (although everyone is equally close to death) may bring the feelings of being detached from life, worries for the future, hopelessness, and fear. Yet, death is not the end of everything, on the contrary, it is a salutation calling out to an eternal life. Death doesn’t drown the soul, contrarily, sets it free.

Growing old is a blessing, too.

Living long is actually a blessing that our Lord bestows upon us. It is an opportunity for producing more beauties and living with a more experienced mind and a maturer heart. The years of old ages can turn into great opportunities and



blessings if they are managed effectively. Ingmar Bergman says, “Getting old is like climbing a mountain; you get a little out of breath, but the view is much better.” This stage of life is indeed a period through which one can see the world from a wider perspective. A self-criticism of the past is made with its ups and downs; the blessing of time and the value of health are comprehended better. Old people sometimes take a handful of medicines, but the best medicine of elderliness is being wise and virtuous.

Growing old doesn't mean detaching from life.

Elderliness is snow-white. People say, “Did it snow on my facial temples, or what? Is this wrinkled face mine, o my Lord?” What a great news that the white hair of a person, who is attached to Allah and His Messenger heartily, conduce to the forgiveness of their sins, and the rise of their level in the presence of Allah. Our beloved Prophet (saw) honored old people with the following words, “*Whoever has his hair turned grey in the path of Allah, it will be a light for him on the Day of Resurrection.*”⁴

But, did this hair turn white for nothing? Of course not! Old people combine the knowledge they acquired when they were young with the maturity of the years, and then transmit this knowledge to next generations. By this way, they touch the dreams of children, and the hopes of the young and thus, they contribute to humanity.

A death which we get prepared for will be a wedding day for us.

By divine law, human beings climb the stairs of life one by one. They are born, grow up, and die. The Qur'an tells us this adventure as, “*Allah is the one who created you from*

weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent.”⁵

The most serious danger in old ages is the loss of hope and joy of living, and the fear of death. The nervousness of leaving life and beloved ones behind can sometimes be unbearable for the old. Faith and spirituality is the best supporter in overcoming these worries. We can make up for the deficiencies and mistakes in repentance. Our words of gratitude, the tears dropping from our eyes full of supplication, and the doors that open by submission relieve our souls. And we make peace with death, like Rumi’s calling death as “wedding”...

What do Old People Want?

They want to feel free as an individual.

Completing the life without being in need of anyone’s care is the wish of every human being. But as a matter of fact, old people may need the support of first their families and then the society in their basic needs such as nutrition, sheltering, dressing, and health care.



There is a fine line between supporting old people and limiting their freedom by interfering with their life. Therefore, we should behave extremely careful, and give them the opportunity to provide their needs by themselves as much as possible. We should not forget that they



have their own decisions, thoughts and feelings; and we should make efforts to help them live in their own homes or in a family environment by respecting their characters.

They want to continue their journey to maturity.

There are “new generation elderly”, who are determined not to spend their life at home by just watching TV. They like traveling, follow technology, spare time for their hobbies, and appear in the society as individuals open to new experiences. Actually, regardless of the place they live and their financial possibilities, old people all deserve to meet opportunities to realize themselves. Some of them will attend courses, some others will write books or do volunteer-mothering at a kindergarten. So, they will experience the joy of discovering themselves, the peace of strengthening the ties with Allah, and the proud of being beneficial to the society. Then, old people should be enabled to improve their knowledge and skills, to attend educational and cultural events actively, and to participate in voluntary service activities.

They want to bring the past and the future together.

One of today’s problems is that modern people try to keep old people away from the tempo of life. Of course, it is not possible for old people to keep up with the hurry of youth. But there are many old people complaining that nobody calls them; they are unhappily and hopelessly suffering from loneliness. What should be done at this point is to visit them regularly.

Not being able to bring the past back and make up for the mistakes already affect them! We should not let them be in more sorrow. We should support them in continuing their social relations and should not leave them to the cold arms



of loneliness when they need affection and mercy more than ever. We should provide opportunities to bring them together with young people, instead of only gathering and talking with people of their age. Because people are never too old to contribute to humanity while young generations need the knowledge and experience of old people. Our attitudes and behaviors sometimes say “You are an old person. Move over, get lost, get away, don’t be a nosy-parker and wait for your death silently!” For this reason, people have started to feel afraid of getting old. They try to spend long time and much money to delay the effects of getting old, and delay their destiny. But isn’t it better to get prepared for elderliness with a logical attitude starting from youth instead of being afraid? As a mature human being, isn’t it better to take precaution by seeing the end from the beginning?

What if we instill in our people the consciousness of being strong and energetic both mentally and physically? And teach them to be happy and self-sufficient? And prepare ourselves to be healthy, wise and lovely old people? And raise people who can be contended with what they have instead of grieving for what they lost? What if we look for a way of life adorned with the knowledge and experience of the old instead of a life in which they are excluded?

They expect healthy and hopeful days.

An old person in the words of a poet says, “Days passed, but I couldn’t prevent time / I saw myself on the mirror, but I couldn’t identify.” As time goes by, social, economic, psychological and physical needs change. Especially the slowdown of physical performance effects the choices of old people. Eight-in-ten of people over 65 ages have at least one chronic illness. It is extremely important at this point for old people to take proper healthcare in a clean and safe



environment, and to benefit from protection and rehabilitation services. Protecting an old heart from exploitation, and an old body from physical and mental abuse is the duty of all of us.



They want to protect their dignity.

What do you think “goodness” means? What does goodness mean to a person who has lived bedridden for many years with their unceasing tears, who cannot speak and cannot even drink a cup of tea? Goodness is a warm smile, a helping hand that is extended with love, or maybe just being side to side...

People expect much more attention and love at old ages. They want to be called, remembered, and feel that they are valuable. They want to be cared and visited especially by their children. A small gift can give them hope and zest for life. In the cities that loneliness lays an ambush against them, the importance of these virtues increases more. Because they are the ones whom we neglect most in the chaos of life...

Human beings, who pay attention to their honor and dignity a lot when they are young, need to be honored and

respected when they are old, too. The Turkish proverb “When the wolves get old, sheep make fun of them.” points out such a sad reality... Let’s see what our beloved Prophet (saw) says about protecting the dignity of old people: *“Respecting a white-headed (old) Muslim is out of reverence to Allah.”*⁶

Our Duties

We should help them to live peacefully and healthily.

Human beings want to spend the second spring of their life in peace. They long for calm days without chaos and conflict. Because the fast tempo of life slowed down; rush and stresses are left behind. People start listening to themselves more as they grow old. The duty of the people around them is to respect their pursuit of happiness and to not make the happiness of the old harder, instead, to make it easier.

The happiness of old people does not mean that all their works will be done by another person instead of themselves. It is not kindness to make our older people whose actions already became slow, to just sit without doing anything. What is incumbent upon youth is not claiming all their responsibilities, but helping them and removing the obstacles while they are doing their stuff. Old people should walk, work in the garden, and experience the fruitfulness of working—unless they have a health problem. Our responsibility is to provide them with healthy eating and treatment when needed. Taking care of their health will hold them on to the life.

Our life motto should be “mercy”.

We are humans... We all need mercy regardless of our age... We are responsible for showing mercy as much as we want to be shown mercy.



We learn mercy by observing. Therefore, it is extremely important to be merciful in the family as parents and children towards each other. Our Prophet (saw) undoubtedly meant to behave kindly to all family members regardless of their age by saying, “*The best of you are those who are the best to their family.*”⁷ Parents who sow love and compassion to the hearts of their children will reap mercy when they get old. Is it possible to expect mercy from a person who grew up at a home ruled by violence and fear, and so filled his heart with anger for years?

Being parents requires to behave compassionately, patiently and tolerantly towards children not only when they are children but also when they become adults. A parent who forces as “What I say will be done! Otherwise I will not forgive my rights!” or a child who insists as “Your time passed, now I am the one who will decide!” cannot be happy even if they get what they want. Then, there is no other way than to connect the old to the young and the adult to the child by the bridge of mercy...

We should not deprive them of our love and attention.

Growing old and love actually resemble each other. Growing old is just like love, it cannot be hidden... When people get old, they need attention and love more. Because, the period they are passing through makes them sensitive and emotional day by day. It is explained in the Holy Qur’an that our parents deserve fondness and kindness as, “*And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], ‘uff, and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.’*”⁸

Our daily routine should not prevent us from calling the elderly and asking about them. Let us keep them alive with our love and attention, and stand thanks to their support and prayers. Are the time and effort we spend on an old person wasted? Or is it the best investment we do for our future? We should think about it well...

We should listen to them.

There is a Turkish saying as, “This hair didn’t turn white in the mill”. The bags of old people are full of wisdom. They saw, experienced and went through many things. They have stories to tell our children, and life lessons to teach to our youth. They saved lots of exemplary memories and advices that will guide us. What a big advantage it is to spare time to speak with them and listen to their words without interrupting in order to benefit from their wisdom! To grumble when they are speaking, to think that their words are bygone and consider a little patience too much for them are both against Allah’s command and a great disloyalty!

Let’s think... Weren’t they those who waited each word coming out of our mouth patiently, answered our endless questions, and listened our childish thoughts with a smile on their face? Even if they didn’t, maybe they did not know, or they could not realize. But we know now. We are aware how important communication is. Then, it is time to give an ear to the old.



We should not let them to be weary of life.

“Growing old is like starting a new job.” says Goethe. Getting old should not mean to be idle, to lose the feeling of being useful, and to be lonely. On the contrary, getting old means starting new things in a new social environment. They collected lots of experiences and compiled many memories about life. Now it’s time to turn them into benefit for humanity.

We should trust old people, and not hesitate to share the same environment with them. We should not raise our children as of those who hesitate to speak with old people, feel bored and don’t want to speak with them. If we want to raise decent and highbrow generations aware of their customs and

traditions, we should get support from old people concerning our children's care and education. And we should be aware that, it is not an obligation for them but they are just doing a favor to us. Love for their grandchildren will give them joy of life and make them feel that they are still beneficial. The joy of being a grandmother and the honor of being a grandfather will help them hold on to life. We should help them to make peace with getting old despite many difficulties. An old heart should not go to sleep with the wish of not waking up again, but with full of hope waiting for tomorrow!

We should receive their prayer.

If we become of the children that respect their parents, we will be honored with their priceless prayers. Our beloved Prophet says the following about the prayers accepted by Allah, *“Three prayers will not be rejected by Allah: The prayer of the father for his child, the prayer of a traveler, and the prayer of one who has been wronged.”*⁹



Our religion deems the respect to old people as a moral responsibility. This responsibility aims that children stand by their parents in providing the material and immaterial needs of them. The command of our Lord is quite obvious:

“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in



weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination."¹⁰

A healthy social fabric is possible by being able to live together despite many differences. Improving a harmonized relation between generations gives valuable opportunities not only to old people but also to young generations. Receiving *dua* from old people is just one of these benefits. Because of this, one day our Prophet (saw) said, "*Let him be humbled into dust!*" After he repeated this for three times, his Companions asked, "Who is he, o Messenger of Allah?" And he replied as, "*A man whose parents (one of them or both) reach old age in his presence, and they were not a cause for his entrance to Paradise.*"¹¹

They were always with us in our hard times, it is our turn now!

In a world where the value judgments are destroyed, we should think about the meaning of elderliness once again, and try to understand them. Nowadays, many old people consider themselves as unnecessary in the structure of elementary family. They are getting more lonely day by day with the changing world and with the death of the people they know. They have maybe the most painful feeling for old people which is "the feeling of being a burden on others". However, their existence was the source of not trouble but safety for their children once. They fed their children first before eating themselves; they clothed their children first before dressing themselves. And they raised their children by bearing many problems.

Now it is our turn! Providing peaceful, hopeful and respectable days for our old people in the last phase of their



struggle of life is a duty upon all of us. It is a duty of loyalty and humanity! The steps that we take by considering we will be the elders of tomorrow will make both us and them happy. Considering them as an *amanah* from Allah, and not giving up goodness and benevolence in any case are our responsibilities! Even if they don't share the same world of thought, similar tastes or life styles with us.

Let us not forget that the first address of the attention and affection for old people is family. What else could replace the warmth, friendship and trust of home?



- 1 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 15.
- 2 Ibn Majah, Dua, 3.
- 3 Bukhari, Riqaq, 5.
- 4 Nasai, Jihad, 26.
- 5 Rum, 30:34.
- 6 Abu Dawud, Adab, 20.
- 7 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63.
- 8 'Isra, 17:23-24.
- 9 Abu Dawud, Witr, 29.
- 10 Luqman, 31:14.
- 11 Muslim, Birr wa Sila, 10.

Our Prophet was advising his companions to do goodness and give charity. He was telling that they needed to give charity for the most valuable blessing from Allah, health. He even said that they needed to give charity for every joint of their bodies. His companions were shocked and worried. They were not that rich! They sadly confessed, “O Messenger of Allah! We are not wealthy enough to give charity every day..” Then our Prophet told them that charity was not only about wealth, and expressed how people could give charity even if they were not rich, as follows: *“Helping a blind person is charity. Expressing something in the way a deaf and dumb can understand is charity. Guiding someone who asks your help, and helping someone who needs solution are charity. Supporting someone to walk who has a problem in walking, and expressing one’s words who has difficulty in speaking are charity as well.”*¹



*there is a disabled
person in my family*

Halime KARABULUT



Our beloved Prophet (saw) says:
*“Verily, Allah does not look at your
appearance or wealth, but he looks at your
hearts and deeds.”*

(Muslim, Birr wa Sila, 34)



Being Disabled

Allah, Who created human being as the most valuable existence of the universe, created death and life to test who will make better deeds. The word “test” is the key word for our coming to this world and then leaving it when our time comes... Fear, hunger, illnesses, or losing wealth: test questions differ for everyone indeed. But there is an unchangeable fact in the Qur’an: *“Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned.”*²

One should not think that only poor and deprived people are those bearing the test. The test of wealth is as hard as poverty in fact. Obstacles are sometimes visible while they are invisible sometimes... Allah tests His servants sometimes with the blessings He gives, and sometimes with what He does not give. Is it possible to doubt the justice of Allah by prejudging according to what is visible while He says that “He is testing everyone and He is never unjust to anyone”?



Blessing means burden in a sense, and it is surprisingly beautiful according to the expression of our beloved Messenger that a believer lands upon both feet in any case and turns the test into advantage both in presence and absence: *“Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer. If he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (Allah), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.”*³

So, can we say that people whose tests seem to be harder are being punished? Is it possible to consider that while troubles are increasing, love of Allah decreases? Our Prophet (saw) states the following as an answer to this question: *“Believers should be stronger against disasters by looking at what I experienced.”*⁴ Prophets, the most precious servants, who were chosen as messengers by Allah, are those who dealt with the hardest tests. In this case, when the test becomes harder, the reward must be increasing as well...

Being a disabled person or a family member of a disabled person is not a punishment but a test like any other tests of this world waiting to be dealt with. We know that our days in this mortal world are limited, and our breaths are limited as well. And we believe that our good deeds, even if an atom's weight, will be responded⁵, and our success in the test will be rewarded with endless happiness.⁶ After all, being valuable in the eyes of Allah is not through our physical features, but through the generosity of our hearts and the deeds we have done.



Being Disabled is not an Obstacle!

People who lose their physical, mental, psychological, emotional and social abilities in various degrees (whether congenital or acquired) may face some difficulties to adopt social life and provide their daily needs. Even though they need support, it is not an obstacle for them to embrace life. Yet, being human means deserving a life without obstacles.

Every person has a value which they earn by birth by being created as a human being. They are honorable, and have the right to satisfy their needs in a respectable way. Being a woman or a man, young or old, sick or healthy does not make people more valuable nor overshadow their honor. Our Prophet (saw) expresses this situation to us ages before as, *“O people, verily your Lord is One and your father Adam is one. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab and a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab; nor does white skin have superiority over black skin or black skin over white skin. Superiority is only by piety (taqwa).”*⁷

There is No Obstacle to Be a Family!

Allah the Almighty created human beings at different levels of abilities, different genders, colors and languages, adorned them with countless beauties, and granted these differences as richness. We have such big achievements, serious savings and opportunities originating from being different from each other! Disabled or non-disabled, when all people accept their differences and



be at peace with themselves; their hopes will always be alive and they will be able to hold on to the life.

Human beings experience the feelings they have in their nature regardless of time and place, and repeat the behaviors inherited to them for generations. Both a black person and a white one feels the pain. Both a person who has legs and who does not feel happy. Both a blind person and one who can see want to feel the happiness... A family in which happiness and sadness are shared; hearts find peace, trust, and mercy is the need of every single person. *“Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous.”*⁸ We do not even know how many people prayed with this *dua* to Allah, because obstacles and troubles are overcome by the support of family members.

The sense of motherhood is same for both the disabled and non-disabled. The tears are same; mercy, compassion and fondness are same... Both disabled and non-disabled children need their mother... And responsibilities of a disabled father are not less than a non-disabled father. A disabled young is energetic as much as a non-disabled young. Their expectations from the future, dreams and hopes are not less than a healthy one. Shortly, there is no obstacle to be a family!

There is No Obstacle to Enjoy Childhood!

Every disabled adult is a child in a specific period of their life. They are born with inherent rights like any other child. They must be grown up with love of their parents and raised meticulously. Because they are entrusted to their parents by Allah (swt) like any other child.

Disabled children are special; they need special care and attention. They need to enjoy pure happiness, join social life,



and find opportunities to improve themselves. Their abilities should be discovered and supported. If life is a game for children, then disabled children shouldn't be the side which suffers all the time in this game.

Their family should accept their children as they are, make them feel that they are always with them, put up with their whims, and allow them to do the things they can do by themselves. They should teach them the realities of life and never compare them with non-disabled siblings and friends. Seeing a disabled child as a burden is a huge delusion. On the contrary, Allah the Exalted (swt) bestows blessings upon a home under favor of the weak, the children and the old, and protects that home from disasters.

There is No Obstacle to Enjoy Youth!

Youth is the most beautiful season of life. It is hard to hedge off to the spring of life and the reveries of youth. Physical and mental obstacles do not destroy the energy of the youth. The young disabled also want to remove obstacles like any other young person. They might have difficulty, sometimes feel broken and offended, but if they are supported, they will succeed. If they are not supported but excluded and silenced instead, they turn into introverts and start questioning the Divine Justice. They will be stuck in questions like "Why me?", "What was my guilt?", and then blame their parents.

We realize that the biggest obstacle most of the time is the prejudice that people around them create with their emotions and behaviors. When they feel lonely in social life or if they are implied that they are useless, see that people take pity on them or witness that they are forgotten during environmental planning... That is when they really feel that

they are precluded. They consider life as a prison, people as selfish, and society as unmerciful. Which one of us can accept being ignored?

Then, it is worth to make any efforts to help youth to overcome obstacles with their non-stop energy, and to contribute to the society.

There is No Obstacle for the Successful Adults!

The adults accept the fact substantially if the disability has been accompanying them since childhood. They accept that it is the predestination of Allah and a part of their trial, and do their best to live their life in the most beautiful way by believing that there will be nothing impossible if effort is done by whole heart, as long as the society accepts that obstacles can be overcome... And realize that it is not necessary to have the same opportunities for experiencing the beauty of life.

The folk songs of Aşık Veysel, the thoughts of Cemil Meriç, the paintings of Eşref Armağan, the speeches of Cicero, and the inventions of Stephen Hawking... Everyone should remember that all of these important names put their stamps on history not by having healthy sense organs or bodies, but with the power of their feelings and thoughts. Aren't their precious books, impressive detections, ageless folk songs, amazing paintings, discoveries and inventions which are contributed to humanity, enough to understand that obstacles cannot stop us?



The Experiences that a Disabled One's Family Goes Through

The feelings of fear, anger, despair, hopelessness, guiltiness and tiredness may be felt in a family with a disabled member. Drawn into the vortex of negative thoughts, they search for an answer in the beginning to questions such as, "Why me? What was my guilt? What will I do now? How will I overcome this?". Parents whose lives are limited according to their child's disability level will be in need of moral support besides being financially exhausted. Family passes through different phases like having difficulty in being limited because of the disabled child, having difficulty in raising him and being excluded from the society.

While the feelings of shock, refusal and despair have greater influence in the first phase, later on guiltiness, anger and shame replace them. When the situations such as setting unrealistic goals or giving opposite reactions are overcome, the period of acceptance and rearranging life starts. During these periods, it is crucial to give any kind of counseling and therapy to the family. The support of not only experts but also partner, families, relatives and neighbors are indispensably valuable.

I have Rights

I am a disabled. I am a human and the most honorable creature of the earth. I have rights worthy of that honor. Even though I don't have enough power to protect my rights, I have endless trust in you that you will not defraud my rights... Isn't it first of all a religious, moral, and humanistic responsibility to know what the rights of disabled people are, and obey those rights no matter how old we are? I will remind

you now of my rights to help you remove the obstacles all together by cooperating.



I have the right to life and be accepted.

One of the best things a person can experience is for sure, having a child. But if we think from the perspective of parents, having a disabled child is also a big test for them. When parents learn that their child is disabled during pregnancy, they pass through a big trauma. Their trauma and sadness is undoubtedly because of the compassion and mercy they feel towards their child. But they should manage these feelings correctly, focus their energy on solving problems instead of despair, and they should be patient and strong.

At this point, we must mention that nobody, including parents, has the right to kill their baby in mother's womb unless mother's life is in danger. Allah is the owner of our lives. Allah is the only One, Who has the authority to create whoever, wherever, whenever He wills. To kill a person that



He wills to create is both a crime and a sin. Doesn't it mean not accepting the test from Him and betraying to His *amanah*?

Living with a disabled child is not easy. But parents who introduce their child to society even if they face disturbing attitudes, who answer questions about them and who socialize with them outside instead of secluding will both win their child's heart and feel better themselves. It must not be forgotten that as having a healthy child is not a source of boasting, having a disabled child is not a source of shame.

I have the right to have health care.

Disabled individuals need long-term medical services. Treatment of patients with physical and mental disabilities requires expertise. Their families must both learn how to help their child to be healthy and provide him/her treatment by experts.

I have the right to education.

“The greatest victory is to conquer yourself.” says a quote. There are, for sure, things every person can do. Finding these things is possible only through realizing their own opportunities and abilities, and later on taking education in those fields.

Health is not the only problem of a disabled person. While having necessary health care and rehabilitation service on the one hand, on the other hand they need to discover themselves and socialize. Like everyone else, they also have the right to education for adapting to the society, realizing themselves and contributing to humanity through their abilities. It could be even said that it is more important for the disabled to have education to overcome troubles they may face in daily

life. Harmonized with resolution and patience, this kind of education will ease the employment of the disabled as well.

It is better to remind some famous names here again: The scholar Ibn Abbas, son of our Prophet's uncle and who is titled as "the Interpreter of the Qur'an", lived as sight-disabled for years. The master composer, Beethoven, acclaimed for centuries, suffered from hearing impairment in the last 26 years of his life. Another example, Nick Vujicic, giving self-improvement and motivation conferences all around the world, was born without hands and feet.



I have the right to employment.

People with many kinds of disabilities, including mental disabilities, are employed in respectable jobs now in many countries. The disabled can do the jobs that normal people cannot bear to do patiently and carefully in special workplaces. Because, lack of mental proficiency does not mean they also lack physical abilities. It is a fact that they need to be employed for being productive instead of being consumers only, providing needs of others instead of being in need, and



helpful individuals. And there are many fields of work for the deaf, blind and orthopedically-disabled people.

There are impressive examples in the life of the Prophet of Mercy (saw) related to the employment of disabled companions. For instance, our Prophet (saw) sent Muadh ibn Jabal, a young and lame companion, to Yemen responsible for almsgiving and judgement,⁹ and he employed a sight-disabled companion, Abdullah ibn Maktum, who was also one of the first to migrate to Madinah, as a teacher of the Qur'an, and in the following years honored him by appointing as the *muadhdhin* of the Prophet's Masjid.

I have the right to worship.

It is incumbent upon everyone as servants of Allah, both disabled and healthy, to thank for the blessings that Allah gives, to be in the presence of Him, and to pray Him. It is the wish of every Muslim to comprehend the *adhan*, understand the *khutbah*, perform the prayers with the jama'ah, recite the Qur'an, and learn about the words and life of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Even though a deaf person cannot hear, there are signs for them to understand; even though a blind person cannot see, they have the opportunity to understand by touching. There are many ways for mute (non-speaking) people to express themselves. Thus, none of the obstacles can prevent one from tasting the sweetness of worshipping.

The disabled are not exempt from worshipping except mentally-disabled people. In other words, being disabled is not an excuse for people to abandon worships like prayer, fasting, *zakat*, *hajj*, charity (*sadaqa*) and qurban. But everyone is responsible for what they can bear. In this regard, it is stated in the Qur'an that, "*Allah does not place a burden on a soul*

greater than it can bear."¹⁰ For this reason, disabled people and their families need to be conscious in this issue.

A disabled friend of our Prophet, Imran ibn Husayn is an example at this point as he continued worshipping even though he had an illness lasted for many years. When he asked to our Prophet about how to worship with his disability, our Prophet (saw) answered as, *"Pray standing; if you cannot, then sitting; and if you cannot, then lying on your side."*¹¹

A person who doesn't have legs of course cannot perform the duty of washing his/her feet while performing ablution. But he or she will be rewarded with the heralds of our beloved Prophet (saw) if behaves sensitive about worshipping and does his or her best: Disabled people who do their best in worshipping even though they cannot perform every detail of it will be rewarded completely. As a result, there is no obstacle for the spiritual rewards.

Our Duties

We should not forget that they are sensitive.

It is quite normal that being disabled makes people be more sensitive and touchy. Especially if disabilities appear after traffic or work accidents, people feel offended, broken and ashamed when they cannot fulfill their needs. These feelings may make them nervous and anxious. They may need attention and understanding in order to deal with the nervousness they feel because of their disability. This attention must be sincere and simple instead of exaggeration or showing off. Those who get moral support that will make them stronger will accept the realities faster and smile to life better.



We should communicate with them.

Allah the Almighty taught our Prophet (saw) centuries ago how to communicate with a disabled in a way compatible with human dignity. Once, a blind companion, Abdullah ibn Maktum came to our Prophet (saw), requesting to be informed about Islam, while our Prophet was explaining Islam to the notables of Meccan polytheists. And our Prophet was strictly warned by divine revelation as he did not pay attention to the blind companion much: *“The Prophet frowned and turned away because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified, or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, to him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge], while he fears [Allah], from him you are distracted. No! Indeed, these verses are a reminder; so whoever wills may remember it.”*¹²

After this event, our Prophet (saw) would greet Abdullah each time they met as, *“O the one for whom I was warned by our Lord, greetings to you!”* and pleased his heart. For sure, the warning from the verse calls out to today as well. Because the way to show the disabled that they are valuable to us is through communicating with them respectfully.

In this regard, we should remember that while speaking to a disabled, we should head towards them with our whole body, and behave according to their character, choose our words carefully, answer their questions without ignoring, and listen to them carefully even if they have difficulty in speaking. If there is anything we don't understand, we should ask again instead of pretending like we understood. Maybe most importantly, we should be patient and tolerant.

We should not make fun of their disability.

Making fun of someone's physical appearance, backbiting, whispering in front of him or giving nicknames they may dislike are completely against the Islamic morality. The command of Allah (swt) is quite clear at this point: *“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one’s] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”*¹³

Mocking a disabled person by imitating is also prohibited in our religion, and our Prophet said: *“I do not like imitating someone even (if I am paid) in return such and such.”*¹⁴ And he also said: *“It is enough for a Muslim to commit evil by despising his Muslim brother.”*¹⁵

There are so many people whose honor is humiliated as they were called as “lame” for not being able to walk well, “stutterer” for not being able to speak smoothly, “blind” for not seeing, or “insane” because of their mental disability! But who could actually guarantee that they will not face that kind of test one day as well?

We should respect their decisions.

We all want to be respected and face with trusting looks. It is extremely important for the disabled to be supported in the things they can do and feel that their boundaries are respected. We should offer help to them but if they don't want or let us help, we need to respect their decisions.



We should support their abilities and reward their success.

It doesn't mean that the disabled cannot do anything because they cannot do some specific things. As mentioned before, if they are given chance to discover their abilities and improve themselves, disabled people can achieve success and make both themselves and their families happy. Therefore, we should focus on not how many times they tried but on what they achieved in the end. We should encourage them each single time, and reward even the tiniest developments of them.

We should provide opportunities for them to socialize.

It is inequity to behave people who lose an ability as if they lost everything, judge them as unqualified, and prison them to home by making them offended to the social life. If the disabled and their family are offended by people in the society, they will have difficulty in breaking prejudices and feel like they are pushed behind unseen walls. This social pressure is, for sure, not a deliberate attitude to disturb the disabled. But most of the time, even pitiful glances are disturbing for them enough.

Then, it is the best way to behave naturally by showing that we don't believe in any obstacles. When Abdullah ibn. Ummi Maktum, a sight-disabled companion, asked permission to perform the prayers at home, our Prophet (saw) told him to come to the masjid as he can hear the *adhan*. And by this way, he prevented him from being away from the society.¹⁶

We should make things easy, not difficult.

We should make efforts to help the people who have disadvantages, such as the sick, disabled, old and children, to

join society actively. We should remember that a wheelchair or a hearing aid could change the life of the disabled. We should realize how important an elevator, Braille or a small curb cut is. We should take as motto of our life the hadith of our Prophet (saw) which reads as, *“Facilitate things to people, and do not make it hard for them. Give them good tidings and do not make them hate.”*¹⁷, and become pioneers for the services to make life easier and enjoyable for the disabled.

Those who care about not only their own comfort but also the comfort of other people with whom they share the same sky, water and city will see themselves in this hadith of our Prophet (saw): *“You see that the believers with regard to their being merciful among themselves and showing love and affection, resemble one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.”*¹⁸

We should visit them.

When Mecca was conquered, Abu Bakr took his old and sight-disabled father to his back and brought him to the presence of our Prophet (saw). That day, our Prophet, who entered the city as the victorious commander, showed unexampled humbleness and said: *“I wish you would leave him at home and we would visit him.”*¹⁹ and expressed his reverence to an old and disabled person.

We all want our beloved people to visit and ask about us in the chaos of life when we cannot leave our home because of an illness or a disability. So let's give an ear to the following saying of our Prophet (saw): *“Feed the hungry and visit the sick.”*²⁰ And let's refresh our belief that no goodness will stay without reward, and not neglect to visit the disabled for it is a source of moral support for both the disabled and their families.



We should help their treatment.

Disability of people may be permanent or temporary. Any way should be tried such as searching for cure and treatment for the illnesses in which treatment is possible. Refusing treatment or not searching for the cure of the disability or illness by saying that this is the predestination of Allah is not patience or trust to Allah (swt).

As our Prophet (saw) said, *“Receive treatment, o servants of Allah, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it.”*²¹ So, none of us should abandon hope in finding cure.

We should give moral support.

It is necessary for the disabled whose disability cannot be treated to benefit from both physical and psychological services to increase the quality of living. Their families and surroundings must be conscious, and must not deprive any disabled of guidance or counseling services given by the government or private organizations.

One of the inevitable values besides physiological, economical and medical support is for sure, moral support. A servant who has the belief *“When I am ill, it is He who cures me.”*²², will strengthen this belief with inculcations and probably overcome the hardest part of the disability. He will once again remember the value of depending on Allah by praying Him, patience, determination, and being grateful.

We should suggest patience to our friends, relatives or neighbors who face disability, and remind them that Allah never forgets us in our hard moments, He is with us all the time and will give the reward of being patient. And gladden their hearts with the glad tidings of our Prophet (saw): *“No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress*



befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that."²³ We should also remind how the Prophet Ayyub found cure with the Divine Mercy after suffering fatal illnesses for years.²⁴

We should believe in the power of praying, which makes human powerful and determined, makes away from fear and distress, and makes life livable. And we should witness again that our soul purifies, mood increases and hopes refreshes by praying. Let's pray for our disabled brothers and sisters with the words of our beloved Prophet (saw): *"Take away the disease, O the Lord of the people! Cure him as You are the One Who cures. There is no cure but Yours. Bestow this patient a cure that leaves no disease!"*²⁵



- 1 Ibn Hanbal, V, 168-169.
- 2 Anbiya, 21:35.
- 3 Muslim, Zuhd wa Raqaiq , 64.
- 4 Muwatta, Janaiz, 14.
- 5 Zilzal, 99:7.
- 6 Ta-Ha, 20: 75-76.
- 7 Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.
- 8 Furqan 25:74.
- 9 Bukhari, Jihad, 164.
- 10 Baqarah, 2:286.
- 11 Bukhari, Taksir al-Salat, 19.
- 12 'Abasa, 80:1-12.
- 13 Hujurat, 49:11.
- 14 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 51.
- 15 Muslim, Birr, 32.
- 16 Ibn Hanbal, III, 423.
- 17 Bukhari, 'Ilm, 11.
- 18 Bukhari, Adab, 27.
- 19 Ibn Hanbal, III, 160.
- 20 Bukhari, Mardha, 4.
- 21 Abu Dawud, Tibb, 1.
- 22 Shu'ara, 26:80.
- 23 Muslim, Birr wa Sila, 49.
- 24 Anbiya, 21:83-84.
- 25 Bukhari, Mardha, 38-40.

Our Prophet had to leave Mecca, where he was born, grew up and had many memories, and migrate to Madinah. In one of the first messages he gave when he arrived the city that embraced him, “paying attention to relative ties”, in other words, “*Silat al-Rahim*” was included as well. A Jewish scholar, Abdullah ibn Salam, who embraced Islam then, narrates: “When the Prophet (saw) arrived at Madinah, people went out to welcome him. When I heard people shouting “The Messenger of Allah came!”, I joined others to see him out of curiosity. When I saw his face, I understood that this face could not be the face of a liar. And the first message I heard from him was, “*O people, spread greeting among each other, offer food to people, take care of your relatives and pray at night when people are sleeping, you will enter Paradise in peace.*”¹



i have relatives

Assoc. Prof. Yaşar Yiğit



Our Prophet (saw) said:
“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should unite the bond of kinship (i.e. keep good relation with his kith and kin).”

(Bukhari, Adab, 85)



What is Silat al-Rahim?

*S*ilat al-Rahim means doing favor, taking care, strengthening ties and looking after the rights of relatives either through kindredship or marriage. Silat al-Rahim is a religious term, and the word “rahim” is taken from one of the names of Allah, al-Rahim. Our beloved Prophet (saw) explains this fact as follows: *“The merciful are those who are shown mercy by Al-Rahman. Be merciful on what is on earth, and you will be shown mercy from Who is above the heavens. Rahim (kindredship) is derived from the root al-Rahman, so whoever connects it, Allah connects him, and whoever severs it, Allah severs him.”*²

Then, relative ties are quite valuable and meaningful relations that reach to Allah, Who is *al-Rahman* and *al-Rahim*. Our relations with our relatives are important ties which can affect our relation with Allah. A healthy relationship with them established on goodness, tolerance, mercy and justice will open road to the mercy of Allah. It is obvious that we need this compassion and mercy so much as individuals, society, and even all humanity.



It is a fact that we become lonely and abandoned in crowds every single day. Our relations weaken with both relatives and other people. We do not care the problems of others except ourselves more day by day. We have started to experience peace, happiness, sadness, wealthiness and poverty all alone. But in fact, problems and sorrows get easier when shared; and in the same way, happiness increases and becomes more meaningful when shared. Our ethics, trade, art, and entertainment culture are getting degenerated day by day. The most important reason for this must be the lifestyle that modern life offers to us, and distancing ourselves from our values. We see that our family and relative relations weaken, even about to be extinct in the chaos of our daily life, especially in urban areas. But while our religion commands us to strengthen relative relations as much as possible on the one hand, on the other hand it prohibits us from severing our relations with our relatives.

It is expressed in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.”*³ And it is emphasized that except our worships to Allah (swt), it is also a duty to establish good relations with individuals who need attention, in particular our parents. And it is told that arrogant people who consider themselves superior to their relatives will never be good before Allah. Yet, there are lots of alone mothers, fathers, and relatives expecting a visit from their kids or friends; and longing for someone to talk and share their sorrow...



Visiting Relatives: Is it a Favor to Them or to Ourselves?

Sustaining strong relations with relatives is only possible by asking about them and paying them visits that make them feel that they are not alone. The priority in visiting belongs to parents according to the Qur'an. Besides, our aunts and uncles also deserve visiting and being in close relations. In this regard, our Prophet (saw) said: *“Paternal uncles are like fathers.”*⁴ and, *“The maternal aunt holds the same status as the mother.”*⁵ Once a man came to our Prophet (saw) and asked what he should do for a sin he committed. And he (saw) advised him to do good to his parents after repenting to Allah. But when the man said that his parents had died, our Prophet (saw) said, *“Then do good to your aunt.”*⁶

Visits first of all strengthen the relations between relatives, and destroy resentments. It leads us to share happiness and sorrow, removes troubles, and instills confidence. Unfortunately, today there are many people who don't even know their uncles, aunts and their children despite many channels for communication. The amount of people who know their relatives themselves but don't consider it necessary to introduce them to their children is not few as well! As a result, we started to long for the people to be with us in our weddings, funerals, happy and sad moments. We both ignore our relatives and also deprive ourselves of the mercy of Allah by isolating ourselves from them. We should visit our relatives once a week, month or at least once a year according to the distance we have between each other.



If it is not possible to see each other face to face, we can use different ways of communication to ask about them and keep our relations alive.

Priority of Help Belongs to Relatives

Helping our needy relatives is also a *silat al-rahim*. Giving our *zakah* and *sadaqa* to our needy relatives will increase our rewards from Allah. Our Prophet (saw) says, “*Giving charity to a poor person is charity, and (giving) to a relative has two rewards. First is the reward of charity, and second is the reward of upholding the ties of kinship.*”⁷⁷ Then, the best in relative relations is visiting our needy relatives, and both easing their financial difficulties and giving them moral support.

The amount of financial aid to our relatives other than those under our care differs according to our degree in relativity, their situation, and our financial possibility. *Silat al-Rahim* is the expression of solidarity and unity with our relatives materially and immaterially, in words and actions.

Besides meeting the needs of a poor relative, doing good to our relatives can also be realized by means of good words and smile. With the expression of our Prophet (saw), “*Saying a good word is also sadaqa.*”⁷⁸ A good word is better than even the material support which is done by hurting and humiliating their honor. “*Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing. O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day.*”⁷⁹



Considering *Silat al-Rahim* with Relatives as *Silat al-Rahim* with Allah

Silat al-rahim first evokes sustaining our relations with our relatives or those around us. But in fact, humans need to sustain their *silat al-rahim*, in other words connection, with their Creator, Who created them from nothing and hosts on earth with endless blessings. After all, *silat al-rahim* with relatives gain more importance when *silat al-rahim* with Allah exists.

Humans have to build a connection with Allah first. In other words, they are obligated not to weaken their *silat al-rahim* with the Almighty Creator (swt), Who protects, never leaves alone, and bestows all kinds of blessings. Because those who lose their bonds of love and gratitude with Allah do not have anything to depend on anymore. The relation such a person establishes with others does not mean anything in fact. How could a person who cannot be a friend of Allah establish a real friendship? How could a community formed by indispensable relationships or earthly interests experience unshakable trust and loyalty?

Isn't breaking connection with Allah the real reason behind the great problems and social depression of individuals and societies? When we say *silat al-rahim* with Allah, we mean believing in His existence and oneness, and later on performing the necessities of this faith. *Silat al-Rahim* in this way is the strongest *silat al-rahim* ever. Such strong bond is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as, "So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it."¹⁰

There are serious warnings in our Holy Book to those who break the bonds that need to be established and sustained

throughout life, *silat al-rahim* with Allah being in the first place.

It is obvious that not only loneliness and hopelessness in this world but also regret and disappointment in the Hereafter are waiting for them: “*Those who break the covenant of Allah*



after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth. It is those who are the losers.”¹¹

In brief, the core of *silat al-rahim* consists of servitude to Allah or the tie of faith in Him (swt). Those who leave their faith (*iman*) are the ones who cut the tie of *silat al-rahim* with Allah.

The Lifetimes that Increase with *Silat al-Rahim*

Time grinds our lives like a mill. Young or old, everyone whose time is up faces death. The most important thing is not the length of our lives but how we spent it. Human should chase for the blessed moments, and learn how to invite blessings to his/her life.

One of the ways of inviting is to invest in relative relations. Sustaining strong and sincere relative relations, and supporting each other both materially and immaterially open the doors of grace and mercy. Could the following hadith of our Prophet (saw) be a clue given to us? “*Whoever wishes that he be granted more wealth and that his lease of life be prolonged, then he should keep good relations with his kith and kin.*”¹²



It is a fact that the lifetime Allah destined for us either gets shorter or longer. Some good tidings of our Prophet, which inform us that some worships and good deeds will make our life longer, have deeper meanings than the increase of months or years. Allah the Exalted (swt) knows the worships and good deeds of people from pre-eternity and destines some people's life longer for these good deeds. Also, those who take care of their relatives spend their lives effectively, healthily and in peace. Undoubtedly, such a blessed life is more valuable and meaningful than a long but quarrelsome and unhappy life.

The Quality of Relative Relations

It is pointed out in the Holy Qur'an by the following verse that relatives, who are close to each other by ties of blood, also care and protect each other more than other people according to the degree of their relationship: *"But those of [blood] relationship are more entitled [to inheritance] in the decree of Allah."*¹³ Biological and sociological factors such as the ties of womb, blood, and family make people closer to each other. Briefly, helping someone close to you is the necessity of human nature. This point is mentioned in another verse as follows: *"And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully."*¹⁴ The fact that relatives are mentioned first in the verse reminds us the priority of kinship.

Sensitivity towards relatives should not be confused with making bloodline a reason for pride and arrogance. In fact, such a passion is a falsehood that has been ongoing since the Jahiliyyah (the age of ignorance before Islam), and Islam has been insistently fighting against it. Supporting and protecting the members of one's own clan, tribe and family even when they are wrong is completely against the principle of justice in our religion. On the contrary, we should consider our



relations with relatives from the perspective of not benefit but for mercy, love, and mutual rights and responsibilities. Because everyone is responsible for being honest in witnessing and judgment even if their relatives. *“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives.”*¹⁵

When We Cut Relations with Our Relatives...

Our ancestors say: “Enmity between relatives is like a fire in the forest.” The fire growing out of control will burn everyone, make everyone’s life miserable, and destroy the hearts. Therefore, there are many Divine warnings and threats in our religion to those who cut relations with relatives: *“But those who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and spread corruption on earth –for them is the curse, and they will have the worst home.”*¹⁶

Relative relations are like a compass. One’s relations with others take shape according to his or her relations with relatives. How can a person establish good relations with others while he or she cannot do that with their relatives? How can a person be the constituent of a peaceful society while he or she doesn’t like themselves, their family and relatives, and who doesn’t share happiness with people around them? The corruption of love and solidarity ties starts from family, then spreads among neighbors and others and in the end, harmony in the society is destroyed. Therefore, making efforts to strengthen family ties also means making efforts to strengthen the society.

Our Prophet (saw) says: *“There is no sin more deserving of having punishment meted out by Allah to its perpetrator in advance in this world than oppression and severing family ties.”*¹⁷



Relative relations are such an important thing that even our relatives are not Muslims, we Muslims are still responsible for behaving our relatives well. In other words, relative relations are important regardless of religion. Although it is forbidden to obey our parents in situations which exceed the limits of Allah, Muslims are still recommended to sustain healthy relations with their family: *“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness Then to Me will be your return.”*¹⁸

This warning of the Holy Qur’an reflects on the behaviors of our Prophet (saw). He (saw) wanted his uncle Abu Talib, who helped him so much, to be a Muslim, and continued good relations with him until Abu Talib’s last breath, even though he did not embrace Islam. Similarly, when Asma, Abu Bakr’s daughter, asked our Prophet (saw) about how to behave when her polytheist mother comes, he (saw) said: *“Take care of your mother, offer food to her.”*¹⁹

In Order not to be Forgotten, Do not Forget.

We have many precious and important traditions and activities that contribute to *silat al-rahim* and strengthening relative ties. Undoubtedly, *eids* (festivals) are the leading of them. We can say that as long as the main sense of *eid* lasts, *eids* will always be a period of time in which coalescence and cooperation among individuals in the society will become evident. Visits in *eid* soften the hearts and contribute to share happiness.

Eids spread the peace, which is felt individually, in a massive way like waves. But unavoidably the question of if

eids are comprehended in this spirit or not comes to our mind. We are passing through times in which relationships are built upon the basis of benefits, people are mostly interested in those who can benefit them, and attempt to define others before knowing themselves. We live in an era which sensitivity



related to beliefs and morality decreased, and as a result, living in a neighborhood unaware of each other, the ties among families and relatives are weakened and strong walls are built between generations.

The importance of *silat al-rahim* cannot be denied in removing these negativities or decreasing them to minimum. In this sense, *eids* must be the moments for us of getting closer rather than escaping from each other. It is emphasized in the Holy Qur'an in different occasions that those who forget Allah

will be forgotten by Him. For instance, *“And it will be said, ‘Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.’”*²⁰ This verse expresses that Allah (swt) will forget those who forgot Him in the day which people will need His help most, in order words, He will not help them. This applies to people as well. It is obvious that people will be forgotten by those that they forgot in the first place. Those who don't help others in difficult times will not find anyone in their hard times.



Therefore, we shouldn't forget our parents, families, relatives and friends if we don't want to be forgotten. We should keep in mind that our relatives have rights of *silat al-rahim* on us in addition to the brotherhood rights of Muslims on each other. In fact, *silat al-rahim* is like a rope that gathers beads all together. Cutting this rope will cause people to disperse to different corners like beads and fall into a meaningless void.

The worst hatred is the one felt towards relatives. We should behave them gently and not let anything cause resentment between us even if they don't behave well to us in return. There may be some people in our relatives who may hurt our family if we continue our close relationship. We must develop a relationship which will include being with them in turning point events such as birth, death, or wedding—by not stop speaking with them or praying for them. We need to know that behaviors like refusing each other, getting them out of our life, and cursing will not only exhaust us but also be a serious barrier for us to reach the mercy of Allah (swt). There is not bargain in relative relations. We should remember the warning of our Prophet (saw) saying, *“Al-Wasil (the one who performs silat al-rahim) is not the one who recompenses the good done to him by his relatives, but the one who keeps good relations with his relatives who had severed the bond of kinship with him.”*²¹

Our Prophet, who lost his parents, was raised up by his relatives. He was always loyal to them when he grew up, and was never ungrateful. Khadijah expressed this situation when he received the first revelation as prophet and came trembling and asking her to cover him as follows: *“Do not be afraid! You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the*

deserving calamity-afflicted ones.”²² Our Prophet (saw) invited his relatives to Islam afirst, and made efforts for their peace and happiness. We can say that *silat al-rahim* is the life model of our Prophet; it is a *sunnah*, and a part of the Prophet’s morality.

Events in social life may not proceed as we aim or want. Unpleasant incidents may happen between relatives because of various reasons from time to time. Even if our relatives leave us, do not want to keep in touch and do not have friendly attitude towards us, we should still keep in touch with them as a conscious Muslim. We should establish our relations with relatives upon affection and mercy as a manifestation of al-Rahman attribute of Allah (swt).

Realize that your family does not exist of mother, father and children only. Take care of your relatives and introduce your relatives to your children.

Do not leave your relatives alone and be with them together with your children both in good days such as birth and wedding and sad days such as illnesses and funerals.

Remember that breaking connections makes us alone!

We shouldn’t underestimate visiting relatives and friends. We should consider *silat al-rahim* as a step that will lead us to the countenance of Allah (swt) and strengthen our social unity. We should provide financial support to our relatives in need if we can afford. We should visit our old relatives from



time to time and receive their *dua*, and benefit from their experiences.

We should be soft-spoken, cheerful, patient and tolerant to our relatives, and solve the small problems and disagreements between us without turning them into greater conflicts. We shouldn't stop speaking with them, and always wish the good things we want for ourselves for them as well. And we should always keep in mind that breaking connections with relatives and misbehaving them is one of the major sins. And we should give ear to the warning of the Holy Qur'an: *"So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision. Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?"*²³

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 42. | 13 Anfal, 8:75. |
| 2 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 16. | 14 Isra, 17:26. |
| 3 Nisa, 4:36. | 15 Nisa, 4:135. |
| 4 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 28. | 16 Ra'd, 13:25. |
| 5 Tirmidhi, Birr, 6. | 17 Abu Dawud, Adab, 43. |
| 6 Tirmidhi, Birr, 6. | 18 Luqman, 31:14-15. |
| 7 Nasai, Zakah, 82. | 19 Bukhari, Adab, 8. |
| 8 Bukhari, Jihad, 128. | 20 Jathiyah, 45:34. |
| 9 Baqarah, 2:263-264. | 21 Bukhari, Adab, 15. |
| 10 Baqarah, 2:256. | 22 Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1. |
| 11 Baqarah, 2:27. | 23 Muhammad, 47:22-24. |
| 12 Bukhari, Adab, 12. | |

There were different tones of life at the Prophet's home like any other home. Sadness, happiness, anger, and love... Sometimes they woke up to the new day with peace, and sometimes with patience; but the communication in the family would continue honestly and respectfully whatever happened. Family members of our Prophet (saw) would not hesitate to express their opinions in front of him and did not need to hide their feelings from him. Our Prophet (saw), who was not disturbed by this situation, once told his wife Aisha, *"I know when you are pleased with me or angry with me."* When Aisha asked how he knew it, he (saw) said, *"When you are pleased with me, you say, 'No, by the Lord of Muhammad.' but when you are angry with me, then you say, 'No, by the Lord of Abraham.' Aisha's respond to this was an indicator that her love towards him never decreased in heart even though her mention of His name decreased, "Yes (you are right), but by Allah, O Allah's Messenger (saw), I leave nothing but your name."¹*



communication
language of my family

Hüseyin ÖRESİN



Our Prophet (saw) said,
*“The believer is gracious, for there is no
goodness in one who is neither kind nor
friendly.”*

(Ibn Hanbal, II, 400)



When we say “Intra-Family Communication”...

Being one and unique pertains to Allah only. We all need a spouse, a home, the feeling of trust and commitment. We all need support and sharing, affection and attention, peace and compassion; shortly we need a family.

Family is a holy institution that cannot be described with the words that are superficial and worthless such as relationship, togetherness, etc.

Family is a complete, profound and rich unity which cannot be described with simple qualities such as extended. Parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, relatives and neighbors are the inevitable components of this unity.

With the expression of our beloved Prophet (saw), family is an education center in which our character, beliefs and life style are shaped.²

With the excellent expression of our Lord (swt), being a family is *“to be clothing for each other.”*³

It means,

- ❖ Covering like clothes,
- ❖ Protecting like clothes,
- ❖ Beautifying like clothes,
- ❖ Being harmonious like clothes.

Therefore, family is not a field of relationship only, but a field of multidirectional communication.

Then, What is Communication?

Communication is a process between two creatures to convey and understand information. Making life meaningful, sharing what we discover with others, transmitting our problems, feelings, thoughts, needs and expectations is what we call communication. Doing all of these without hurting or being hurt is called correct or healthy communication.

People communicate with each other sometimes verbally; by speaking, discussing, sharing, or shouting... And sometimes they communicate non-verbally; with an attitude, a look, a smile, or a scowl... Sometimes we embrace each other without speaking, and sometimes we turn back on people. We can communicate and express ourselves with body language even if we don't speak. In conclusion, we give hundreds of negative or positive verbal or non-verbal messages to people around us every day.

What is Intra-Family Communication?

Intra-family communication consists of connection of the young, the old, the woman, the man, and everyone, and the messages they send each other through this connection. If a healthy intra-family communication is embraced, family members can meet their demands and needs without hurting each other. They can solve their problems by talking before they turn into a deadlock. They can search for solutions without falling into despair in case of a conflict knowing that such problems might occur during communication.

Everyone respects each other in a family which uses a healthy communication language. Everyone comprehends



the fact that every person has different thoughts, tastes, wishes, goals, and plans; accepts that everyone as a human being has some weaknesses and mistakes; and makes effort to communicate without breaking, destroying or hurting.

“*Lisan, lafiz, kalam, dil* and *laf*” are some terms used while describing “speaking” in daily life in different languages. In Arabic, the word “*lisan*” has the meaning of “sharpening”, *lafiz* has “throwing”, and “*kalam*” has “hurting”. The word “*dil*” is of Persian origin, and it means “heart” while another Persian word “*laf*” means “empty words, nonsense”.

From this point of view, we can say that intra-familial communication means estimating the possible harms that are caused by “sharpened” and “thrown” words.

Intra-familial communication first of all means “language”; using language in the correct way and not needing an eraser for wrong words.

Allah the Almighty (swt) states, “*And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, satan induces [dissension] among them. Indeed satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy.*”⁴ He wants us to watch out our words and reminds us that every word getting out from our mouth is recorded.⁵ Our Prophet (saw) warns us as follows, “*Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quiet.*”⁶ Therefore, intra-family communication means speaking without giving a chance to the mischief-making of satan, speaking of good and truth, and sustaining inner-peace.

A peaceful family does not refer to a family who does not face any problem or trouble, or does not witness any discussion or tension. A peaceful family is the one which can solve the problems and troubles humanely by establishing a healthy communication wire.

This book establishes the process of intra-family communication on six languages which are heart language, value language, thanking language, apologizing language, praying language, and silence language; and aims to contribute to knowledge and skills of intra-family communication and to the development of the skill of reflecting the beauty of our essence to our words and eyes.

Heart Language

The Qur'an puts the words of *mawaddah* and *rahmah* to the basis of family.⁷ The dictionary of heart language exists of these two words in fact. *Mawaddah* is love and affection. And *rahmah* is mercy, compassion, and kindness. Uttering the *mawaddah* and reflecting the warmth of *rahmah* in heart depends on making heart language rule. Domestic violence is out of question in a family which is under the rule of heart language. Because both inside and outside of such a family is full of mercy.



We learn how to use heart language in the family from our Prophet (saw). Never having bad speaking manners such as insulting or cursing, the Prophet of Mercy (saw) says: *“The best of you is the one who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family.”*⁸ Contrarily, compassion

and tolerance enliven in his speeches. With the expression of Aisha (ra), *“He was not rude, nor uttering rude words, nor screaming in the markets. He would not return an evil with an evil, but rather he was pardoning and forgiving.”*⁹



We find the heart language in the attitude of our Prophet (saw) during the event of *Ifk*, in other words, slander to Aisha (ra). Our Prophet (saw) shows us the best example of heart language by behaving in patience and determination and never breaking communication with his wife in her hardest time. Far from hurting or oppressing, he did not even mention the event by considering the illness of his wife those days. Aisha (ra) learned that some people slandered to her chastity from her maid after a month.¹⁰

A prophet who would start speaking with children around him as “my child” or “my dear son”, and call a Madinan child who would serve him as “Little Anas” and have never reprehend him even once... Just the way a wise man, Luqman’s (peace be upon him) calling his child as “my dear son”¹¹, and the way our ancestor, the Prophet Abraham’s (as) calling his father as “my dear father”...¹²

- ❖ Mercy speaks and violence stops in a family that has adopted heart language.
- ❖ Love speaks and hatred stops in a family that has adopted heart language.
- ❖ Friends speak and enemies stop in a family that has adopted heart language.
- ❖ Not the power of muscles but the power of heart speaks in a family that has adopted heart language.

Value Language

Family is both a value itself and a source of value. Many common values of humanity such as honesty, justice and mercy are transferred to new generations through families.

Then, our family is where we should be most generous in using value language and compliments.

The word “*maskan*” is used for home in Arabic language. “*Maskan*” means “the place in which tranquility rules over and peace is found”. As it is not possible to find peace in a place where we are not respected and valued, making our homes “*maskan*”, the sources of peace, depends on keeping value language alive reciprocally.

Value language is also the basis of the sense of belonging. People feel the sense of belonging in the places where they are respected and appreciated. If their words, opinions and behaviors are belittled and undervalued, they want to be away from that environment. Then, developing people’s consciousness of family depends on instilling in them the use of value language. Let’s see how this language concretizes in the life of our Prophet (saw):

Our Prophet (saw) would make compliment to his wife Khadijah (ra), who was with him in his hardest times, as “one of the most valuable women”.¹³ Even many years after her death, she had a special place in our Prophet’s heart. He would remember her in loyalty and send gifts to her friends. His wife Aisha (ra) would feel jealous of her sometimes and say, “As if there is no other woman in the world than Khadijah!”¹⁴, He (saw) would answer as, “*She believed in me when no one else did; she accepted Islam when people rejected me; and she helped and comforted me when there was no one else to lend me a helping hand.*”¹⁵

We see that this value and appreciation language is mutual in the Prophet’s family. Khadijah (ra) supported her husband with these unique words when he (saw) was surprised and afraid upon the revelation of the first verses, “*Do not be afraid! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations*



with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."¹⁶

Many years later, we witness how a child in her father's eyes turns into a value in the example of our Prophet (saw) who said, "*Fatima is part of me, whoever upsets her upsets me.*"¹⁷ Our Prophet loved his children like any other father, but the remarkable point is that he did not hesitate to express his love. Just like when he embraced his grandchild Hasan and said, "*O Allah, I love them, so love them.*"¹⁸

Fatima (ra) teaches us the value of a father in his child's eyes with her words while expressing her sorrow upon her beloved father's demise, "O Father! Who has responded to the call of the Lord Who has invited him! O Father, whose dwelling place is the Garden of Paradise (i.e. al-Firdaws)! O Father! Whom we entrusted to Jibreel."¹⁹

Value language requires to leave using the word "you", but instead using "we" and getting used to it. Contrary to the language of "you", with which emerges the feeling of worthlessness, inadequacy and guilt, while the language of "we" strengthens the cooperation, trust, and loyalty. It emphasizes the importance of abandoning the habit of "picking a side" as when this language is used, there is no more "your mother" but there is "our mother" and not "your brother/sister" but "our brother/sister".

- ❖ In a family which the value language exists, there is no excluding with the word "you", but there is inclusiveness and embracing with the word "we".
- ❖ In a family which the value language exists, there is no shameful discrimination between male and female.

- ❖ In a family which the value language exists, everyone is beautiful; everyone sees beautiful, and beautifies everything.
- ❖ Briefly, if there is value language, there is no rivalry but accompaniment.

Thanking Language

Being sparing with even thanking people is the biggest stinginess ever! That's why our Prophet (saw) said the following words: *"He who does not thank people is not thankful to Allah."*²⁰

Our Prophet (saw) shows another aspect of thanking and gratitude to us when Aisha (ra) said "There is no condiment except for vinegar." with his reply as *"What a good condiment is vinegar."*²¹, which indicates the importance of experiencing the taste of what we have instead of longing for what we do not have...

But, who deserves thanking among people the most?

Our parents take the first place. Because they are the apple of our eyes.

Then comes our spouse. Because they are with us a lifetime.

And then our children. Because they are like healing for us.

Language of thanking means realizing the value of every single favor and goodness, help and support that come from our parents, spouse, and children, and not refraining from thanking them. We think that they will be spoiled when we thank, make compliment or appreciate them. But our Prophet (saw) warns us as, *"Whoever is given a gift, then if*



he finds something let him reciprocate. If he has nothing, then let him mention some praise. For whoever has mentioned some praise, then he has expressed his gratitude. And whoever refrains (from doing so) then he has shown ingratitude.”²²

Placing thanking language in the family requires us to realize what we have instead of what others have. We need to comprehend that the greatest treasure is existing and what we have. In addition, by the recommendation of our Prophet (saw), we should get the ungrateful thoughts out of our mind by not looking at wealth always but looking at poverty as well.²³ Because, being ungrateful is the most dangerous blindness.

- ❖ If there is thanking language in a family, there is no poverty but abundance.
- ❖ If there is thanking language in a family, there is no sorrow but happiness.
- ❖ If there is thanking language in a family, there is no fault but proud.

Apologizing Language

“Human” means “mistake”. Imagine that you are not allowed to make any mistakes and you are to be punished in the worst way at your first mistake. What would happen in such a situation is explained by Allah the Almighty in the Holy Qur’an as follows: *“And if Allah were to impose blame on the people for*



what they have earned, He would not leave upon the earth any creature.”²⁴

In this case, what is the responsibility of humans at this point? The Qur’an answers this question as follows: *“The repentance accepted by Allah is only for those who do wrong in ignorance [or carelessness] and then repent soon after.”²⁵*

It is unavoidable that we make no mistakes and faults to each other as well. We have to beg each other for forgiveness just as we have to repent to Allah as soon as possible when we make mistakes.

Yes, not asking but begging for forgiveness... We need to be brave while repenting and begging for forgiveness as much as we are while making mistakes. Especially if we made the mistake at home, our family members are the ones who deserve apology most.

Apologizing saves us from a bigger mistake like defending our mistakes. Apologizing makes us to spend time on repairing what we have broken instead of using this effort to defend what we have made.

Apologizing prevents resentment from getting longer, does not allow it to occupy our hearts and to break the family relations.

Apologizing is not weakness, and it is virtuous to not consider the apologizing person weak and to respond to apology with forgiveness. As expressed by our Prophet (saw), *“a mistake in forgiving would be better than making mistake in punishment.”²⁶*

We should pay attention to not blaming our spouse, children and relatives while using apologizing language. Because, the apologies that blame the other side while asking forgiveness are deficient and they don’t not serve for



the repairing of relations but the destruction of them. For a healthy apology, the person must confess the mistake he made, express his regret and say that he is determined not to repeat the same mistake.

- ❖ If apologizing language dominates in a family, nobody wastes time with shames or losses.
- ❖ If apologizing language dominates in a family, not excuses but skills are produced.
- ❖ If apologizing language dominates in a family, faux pax is forgiven.
- ❖ If apologizing language dominates in a family, not the discussions but the hand of reconciliation is extended.

Praying Language

Moments of praying are our most private and special moments. And we are not so generous to our family in these valuable moments. Whereas, the Qur'an often reminds us the duas of prophets for their families.

The Prophet Abraham prayed to Allah his family and descendants to become Muslims while he was building the Ka'bah.²⁷ *“My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication.”*²⁸ The Prophet Zakaria prayed Allah to have pure descendants.²⁹

The servants of *Al-Rahman* pray as, *“Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous.”*³⁰ When a person reaches the age of forty, he prays for himself, his parents and children as follows, *“My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which*

You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring.”³¹

It is taught in the Qur’an that we must communicate with our family not by grunting but by using *dua* language: “My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.”³² And our Prophet (saw) wants our parents to know that they have a quite valuable praying treasure: “Three supplications are accepted, there is no doubt in them (about them being accepted): The supplication of the oppressed, the supplication of the traveler, and the supplication of parents for their children.”³³

Our families are not forgotten even in the *duas* of angels: “Our Lord, admit them to gardens of perpetual residence which You have promised them and whoever was righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring.”³⁴

Our Prophet used the praying language for his family as well. For example, we mention the family of our Prophet gratefully in the *duas* of *tashahhud* (*Allahumma Salli & Barik*) at every prayer.³⁵ We have a Prophet who does not forget his family even in his *dua* while performing prayers! And he (saw) prays in a prayer as follows: “O Allah, forgive me my sins, and expand for me my abode, and bless for me that which You have provided me.”³⁶

And these *duas* are uttered by our beloved Prophet (saw), who was attentive not to leave his family alone: “O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything! Make me sincere to Thee, and my family too at every moment, in this world and in the Hereafter, O Possessor of glory and honour!”³⁷

There is no need to wait for a special day or moment for *dua*. We must always speak with *dua* language while eating,



before sleeping, leaving home, seeing our children or wife off. For example, our Prophet (saw) wishes the following in his *dua* before setting off a journey: *“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the difficulty of traveling, finding harm when I return, and unhappiness in what I see coming to my family and property.”*³⁸

Sometimes when we get angry, the words of curse gets out from our mouth against our spouse or children. We must be aware that curse that gets out from our mouth may return as a disaster to ourselves. The warning of our beloved Prophet (saw) is highly important at this point: *“Don’t curse your own selves, nor your children, nor your belongings. There is the possibility that your curse may synchronies with the time when Allah is about to confer upon you what you demand and thus your prayer may be readily responded.”*³⁹

Language of *dua* must come to the fore in our families in angry and sad moments just as it is in happy and peaceful moments.

- ❖ At homes in which *dua* language is settled, there is no cursing but always *dua*.
- ❖ At homes in which *dua* language is settled, there is no damnation but inviting.
- ❖ At homes in which *dua* language is settled, there is no shouting but calling.
- ❖ At homes in which *dua* language is settled, there is no complaining but invoking.
- ❖ Shortly, at homes which are not lacking in *dua*, there is continuous mercy from Allah.

Language Of Silence

It may at first glance seem contradictory to talk about the language of silence. But sometimes, silence gives the best message to the one who gives an ear as the poet says: “Listen to the pulse of silence in my hand/Listen, listen then earn my heart!” Because eyes utter the best words. That’s why the language of silence must be spoken in the family for a healthy communication if the other five languages cannot be applied. Just like the advice of our Prophet (saw): *“Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quiet.”*⁴⁰

Our Prophet (saw) recommends to stop speaking in angry moments that one loses control.⁴¹ Instead of using the words which may cause regret or harm our family peace, keeping silent and waiting for the right time to speak is the most logical behavior. It is admonished in the Qur’an that in situations which cannot be solved inside the family through speaking, wise relatives should step in as peace makers.⁴² Therefore, if we cannot speak about a problem, then we should stay silent and watch for the best time to speak, or find people who can speak on behalf of us.

- ❖ In a family which language of silence is used, people do not speak nonsense but they speak nicely.
- ❖ In a family which language of silence is used; anger is not spilled out but silence is preferred.
- ❖ In a family which language of silence is used, everything that comes to mind does not go out from mouth right away.



The common point of the communication languages for the provision of the peace and healthy communication of family is mercy. Therefore, it must be especially emphasized that there must be no place for violence or hatred in any statements and actions of a moral person. In this respect, our Prophet (saw) states while warning Aisha (ra), *“Allah loves being calm, i.e. being kind and lenient in all matters.”*⁴³

We should also remember the following hadith: *“The one who does not have understanding and fairness will be deprived of all beauties.”*⁴⁴ Briefly, if we want to develop a perfect language in our family, we should use;

- ❖ THE LANGUAGE OF HEART for deep-rooted communication,
- ❖ THE VALUE LANGUAGE for healthy communication,
- ❖ THANKING LANGUAGE for continuous communication,
- ❖ APOLOGIZING LANGUAGE for re-establishing communication,
- ❖ PRAYING LANGUAGE for transcendent communication,
- ❖ THE LANGUAGE OF SILENCE for a communication despite everything.



O Allah!

Grant us to speak with the beauty of our heart at our home.

Protect us and our tongues from dishonoring each others' values.

Give us the consciousness of being grateful to You and thankful for what we have.

Protect us all from being apologizing-challenged.

Grant our *duas* to settle in our homes and on our tongues.

Give us the awareness of being silent when we cannot speak humanely.

Ameen!



- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Bukhari, Nikah, 109. | 23 Bukhari, Riqaq, 30. |
| 2 Bukhari, Janaiz, 92. | 24 Fatir, 35:45. |
| 3 Baqarah, 2:187. | 25 Nisa, 4:17. |
| 4 Isra, 17:53. | 26 Tirmidhi, Hudud, 2. |
| 5 Qaf, 50:18. | 27 Baqarah, 2:128. |
| 6 Bukhari, Adab, 31. | 28 Ibrahim, 14:40. |
| 7 Rum, 30:21. | 29 Al-i Imran, 3:38. |
| 8 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63. | 30 Furqan, 25:74. |
| 9 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 69. | 31 Ahqaf, 46:15. |
| 10 Bukhari, Shahadat, 15. | 32 Isra, 17:24. |
| 11 Luqman, 31:13-19. | 33 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 7. |
| 12 Maryam, 19:42-48. | 34 Ghafir, 40:8. |
| 13 Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, | 35 Bukhari, Anbiya, 10. |
| 14 Bukhari, Nikah, 108. | 36 Ibn Hanbal, IV/63. |
| 15 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118. | 37 Abu Dawud, Witir, 25. |
| 16 Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1. | 38 Muslim, Hajj, 425. |
| 17 Bukhari, Nikah, 109. | 39 Abu Dawud, Witir, 27. |
| 18 Muslim, Fadhail al-Sahaba, | 40 Bukhari, Adab, 31. |
| 19 Bukhari, Maghazi, 83. | 41 Ibn Hanbal, I/239. |
| 20 Abu Dawud, Adab, 11. | 42 Nisa, 4:35. |
| 21 Muslim, Ashribah, 166. | 43 Bukhari, Adab, 35. |
| 22 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 87. | 44 Abu Dawud, Adab, 10. |



OUR PROPHET (SAW) SAID,

“The feet of the slave of Allah shall not move [on the Day of Judgement] until he is asked about his life and what he did with it, about his knowledge and what he did with it, about his wealth and how he earned it and where he spent it on, about his body and for what did he wear it out.”¹

“The wise man is the one who holds himself accountable and performs good deeds for what comes after death. The foolish man is the one who subdues himself to his desires and then seeks forgiveness from Allah.”²

It is enough sin for a man to withhold from those who are dependent upon him.”³



*i use technology
consciously*

Mehmet DİNÇ



Our Prophet (saw) said,
*“There are two blessings which many
people lose: (They are) Health and free
time.”*

(Bukhari, Riqaq, 1)



*W*e live in a new world. More precisely, we live in a world that renews itself each passing moment. We see a new invention, study, research and practice every single day. And technology is the leading one among the basic elements of this new world. Surrounding every moment and place of our life, technology undoubtedly affects our both individual and social life. This effect can be both positive and negative. It completely depends on how healthily we sustain our relation with technology!

We should benefit from technology without ignoring or exaggerating its importance. We need to learn and then teach especially our family members how to establish a conscious and controlled relation with technology to be protected from its harms. Because not facing with the tragic results of technology addiction is possible only through awareness.

When We Say Addiction...

We first need to know what addiction is while starting to scrutinize the relation of our family with technology. And before defining “addiction”, we need to draw attention to two main issues related to the percept of addiction in our society:

The first issue is that drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and volatile substances occur in our minds when we say addiction. However, addiction is divided into two as “chemical” and “verbal”. Chemical addiction is those mentioned above while verbal addiction is gambling, shopping, and technology addiction.

While seriously fearing and immediately searching for treatment when it comes to chemical addictions, we consider verbal addictions as bad habits only and that it will get better itself in time. For instance, while alcohol addiction of a young person freaks out his/her parents, internet addiction can be ignored and perceived as a fad. But there is no difference between chemical and verbal addiction in terms of being a psychological disorder and harming one’s life in many ways. Therefore, we should beware of verbal addiction as much as chemical addiction and avoid from it.

The second issue is the frequent misuse of the concept of addiction in daily life. We often hear that extreme fondness to an existence or behavior is defined as addiction. However, addiction is a medical diagnosis. If addiction is mentioned, there is an illness for sure and it requires treatment. Using the word addiction randomly without considering its meaning of illness means putting addiction into daily life, which changes the perception of addiction in the eyes of people and cause them not to take addiction seriously.



What is Addiction?

Addiction is losing control over an object people use or an act they do; and not being able to continue their life without it. In addiction, this usage or act occupies a huge part of people's life and they spend all of their time and physical energy in the addictive except the vital things to do and necessary relations.

How is an Addiction Realized?

Addiction is not a problem that appears suddenly, it develops in process. Therefore, realizing the process leading to addiction is of vital importance in preventing the addiction or applying for treatment at an earlier period. For this reason, we should not miss out the indications below in order to understand if someone is in the clutches of addiction or not, or if going towards addiction:

- ❖ Increase in the use of a substance or in the time spent on a specific behavior.
- ❖ Appearance of some symptoms like anxiousness, insomnia, inappetence or anger in case of decreasing or stopping the amount of substance or frequency of behavior.
- ❖ Continuing to use the substance or the specific behavior although it affects one's psychological, physical, social or judicial problems, in other words, affecting one's life negatively.
- ❖ Losing the control over using the substance or behavior, and using the substance or doing a behavior more than they plan.
- ❖ Spending most of their time physically or mentally with the substance or behavior.

- ❖ A substance and behavior's preventing one from carrying our individual and social responsibilities such as business, school and family life, and even making them forget personal hygiene.

Technology Addiction and Our Family

When we think about technology with its ups and downs, it is quite normal to fall into dilemma in terms of using technological opportunities or letting our children to use it as their parents. Is it possible to avoid from technological products such as the internet, TV, mobile phone, and computers, which has infiltrated into every part of our life? Should we purify our family from technology for escaping the slavery of this net? Or should we open our doors to technology to the maximum for the easiness and benefits it provides?

Instead of viewing the issue from one perspective only and seeing either positive or negative side, trying to evaluate the issue from both sides with full knowledge is the most logical attitude. As we can never think cutting the finger of a kid who

sucks it as a solution, we should not consider completely getting it out of our life as a solution as well. On the other side, letting technology occupy our life without boundaries means to be exposed to its harms more than its benefits. Then, we should think over how to use or not use technology, and how





to make our family use and not use it, and we should develop alternatives.

The group of people to be paid attention most when it comes to technology is surely children. It is a fact that they use more often and better this field than adults as they were born into a time when technological tools are more common and easier to reach. But they still have a long distance to cover due to their age in terms of distinguishing between the right and the wrong. For this reason, families need to be aware about technology addiction and direct their children to the right path.

How does technology affect the three basic fields related to your child's development?

Does it support or prevent your children

- 1) to be beneficial members of the society,
- 2) to prepare for their own future individually,
- 3) to use their time well?

Technology must be used as long as it supports these three features.

Step by Step towards Technology Addiction...

There is no doubt that people don't reach the level of technology addiction at once while using TV, mobile phones and especially the internet. It progresses step by step. These steps are serious and important signs of the addiction's progression. Therefore, watching and controlling these signs is vitally important to prevent the addiction before it starts. By going with the example of the internet, these steps can be explained as follows:

First Step: Experimental Usage

One hears about a website, a game, or an application on the internet somehow, and it arouses their curiosity. He/she enters that website, plays that game or uses that application to satisfy his/her curiosity. This first step does not pose a problem, it is tried and then ended, and the curiosity is satisfied.

Second Step: Social Usage

If there is a group of people around a person who play a specific game or enter a website or use an application constantly and regularly, that person enters that website, plays that game or uses that application to be able to join or stay in that group. Because that person will be out of that group's order if he/she shows a different behavior than this. Especially young people continue using social networks even unwillingly in order to adapt their friend circle. This step is mainly the one that starts and continues the addiction.

Third Step: Operational Usage

It is a goal-oriented usage. One of these goals is enjoying and having good time. People who cannot find meaningful activities to do in their free times, do not have an active social



life or who have trouble in establishing real relations with people choose the internet as it is the cheapest and easily-accessible means of getting out of boredom. Whenever they have free time and feel bored, they use the internet without trying to find any alternative.

Another goal-oriented usage is escaping from the problems. People who cannot or do not want to solve their problems in their life arising from their work, school or themselves, tend to use the internet to forget their problems even for a while. During the time they use the internet, they forget their problems and exist in a new world without problems. Although the problems seem to be solved in the short term, on the contrary they still exist and continue in the long term. Even if they are not unsettling in the short term, they don't remain as they are but become greater and more complex.

Fourth Step: Addictive Usage

People do not need any more reasons after this step. Whether they wonder or not; whether their social environment forces them or not; whether they have problems or not, they will use the internet in any case. They will search and find something to wonder even if they don't have; they will join a new social circle consisting of internet users even if their social circle does not use; they will not get bored as they will spend all of their time on the internet; and their usage will not be the result but the reason of the problems. Because they have become addicted already...

We should not forget that the steps towards addiction is not only about the internet, but they are the same with any kind of electronic devices such as TV, mobile phones, or game consoles. The duty of us as parents is to observe carefully how our children develop their relationship with technology from infancy to puberty and then youth; and to realize the risk on time and guide them with right decisions.

Use of Technology Affects Children Physically and Psychologically

Technological devices sometimes cause children to face some inappropriate information and experiences for their development despite the fact that they contribute to their education and provide endless possibilities for their learning.



Children and the youth may get wrong information about sexuality, watch videos related to violence, acquire bad habits such as drinking alcohol, smoking and gambling, and adopt unhealthy nutrition. Above all, if they are not rightly-guided on how to benefit from the treasure of time, they may waste their hours, days, and months under the shadow of technology.

The physical and psychological effects of technology on children may be deep which may force parents to deal with a range of problems. Especially spending long time with the computer causes children to have physical problems depending on wrong sitting positions, vision problems, regression in language skills, epileptic attacks in some children, lower academic achievements and problems in brain development. On the other hand, internet and some other habits negatively affect the success of children in the social life and their self-confidence. The problems such as the lack of effort and initiative, concentration disorders, lack of tolerability, flightiness, getting bored quickly, impatience and demanding requests to be satisfied immediately are the results of being children in the age of technology.

Internet Normalizes Badness

The fact that the internet is used by children generally for playing online games, and that these games are mostly based on violence is the main problem by itself. As images of violence take part on TV and on the internet immoderately and represented as a matter of entertainment, violence and evil enter the life of children sneakily. Critically-wounded people, murderers and corpses become a part of children's daily life and bloodbaths or horror scenes start not terrifying them. Later on, humanely feelings such as compassion and



mercy become indistinct in children and they start watching violence without any tremor, even start being indifferent to it.

On the other hand, an enemy world is created in children's minds with these games and images, and the concepts such as solving the problems peacefully, empathizing, or showing respect to human dignity are pushed aside. What comes to the forefront is the brute force and an understanding of justice that justifies oneself right all the time. It is inevitable for children who are exposed to all of these not to use violence for solving any single discussion or disagreement.

Children Acquire the Habit of Using Technology in the Family

One of the most important points on the relation of children with technology is that the habit of using technology is acquired in the family. For sure, it does not mean that “children learn how to use the internet from their parents”. We mean that children learn from their parents or their actions about how much time they will spend on technological devices, for what reasons they will use them, and if they can hide their usage areas from their parents or not. Isn't it hard for a child to acquire a good habit while his/



her mother is watching TV all the day and his/her father never leaves the internet whole night? Aren't the parents expected to educate their children that mobile phones are not the toys produced for them to play, how much distance there needs to be between TV and them, and many other details? Doesn't our beloved Prophet (saw) mean the education that is to be given about acquiring good habits and avoiding bad habits by saying: *"There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners."*⁴

Suggestions to Parents about Using Technology

While benefiting from the advantages of the internet, which spreads more every passing day, we need to be on the alert for not letting the occurrence of problems threatening both the present and the future of our children. We need to pay uttermost attention to the points below to prevent the occurrence of technology addiction on our children due to our wrong attitudes:

Learn Internet Language.

To protect your children from the bad and guide them to the right, you need to know the language and content of internet. Join the conferences, seminars and training activities of non-governmental organizations aiming the establishment of healthy relations of families with technology. Follow legal regulations related to this issue. Obtain information about the websites and internet cafes, and report the illegal activities to the relevant authorities. Be in collaboration with your children's school and teachers.

Prepare Protection Mechanisms while Setting Up Internet.

Download the programs to be protected from harmful websites as soon as you buy a computer and internet subscription. Receive support regarding the technical precautions and applications for ensuring the healthy internet usage of your child.

Teach Safe Use of the Internet.

It is not possible to control every behavior of your children. Therefore, teach them how to control themselves, in other words, how to use the internet safely. Warn them against sharing their private information and photographs on social media, which can be accessed by everyone. Remind them that they must not save their e-mail address and password in any computer in case they need to use internet out of home, and not share their passwords with anyone. Teach them that they must not give their personal information to anyone they met online whom they have never met in real life. Inform them about internet cafes and help them to choose good cafes running in the correct way both legally and morally.

Explain that Internet Usage has Rules.

Tell your children that the wrong actions in normal life against ethics and morals also apply to the usage of technological devices. Inform them that they should not write down on the internet or send as an sms the things they cannot say in real life. Teach them that any kind of bad places we would feel ashamed to go or see in our cities, or behaviors are illegal in cyber world as well. Show them with examples that not everything written on the internet or shown on TV are correct.



Make a “User Agreement”.

After explaining to your children that using internet has rules and conditions, you can prepare a “Internet Usage Agreement” for the correct usage of it. Organizing a family meeting and allowing everyone to contribute while preparing the agreement will enrich the agreement and ensure that every family member follows the rules. The agreement must be valid for every child at home but there must be specific articles suitable for the age of every child. Sanctions to be applied in terms of breaking the rules must be determined, too. After finalizing the agreement text and making everyone sign it, you can hang the rules near the computer to ease it for everyone to remember.

Always Know Where Your Children are.

You have to know what your children are doing on computer, which websites they are entering, which games they are playing, and what they are watching on TV just as you know where your child goes outside. First, tell them that they have to be careful about using the internet and inform that you will control them. Remind them that this is your duty as parents. Then, control their internet usage in a way which will not cause distrust or offend them.

Be Careful about the Influence of Friends.

Although the precautions you take at home are efficient up to some extent, it is not possible to be successful without considering your children’s circle of friends. Especially during school-age years, your children may be obliged to keep up with the agenda of the internet, cinema and TV in order to not to feel embarrassed to their circle of friends although it doesn’t attract their interest or even they need to conflict with

you. A circle of friends that spares time to sports, joins social activities, and shares the same interests will affect your child's healthy internet usage positively.

Set Up Time Limits.

Set up some limits on their using the internet and watching TV, and do not let them to exceed the limits except acceptable reasons such as doing homework or preparing a project. The period of time for using technological devices may change according to family structure, the order of home, and alternative opportunities. But as a general principle, it is not right for children under 2 years old to deal with the internet, computer, or TV.

For preschoolers, you need to be careful not to exceed 30 minutes per day for internet usage and you must accompany them during that period. And during primary education, it must not exceed 45 minutes except homework preparation. For a teenager at high school, 2-hours usage is enough. Because they reached the age to learn the recommendations of our beloved Prophet (saw) as, *“appreciating youth before death comes”*⁵ and *“will be brought to account about how they spent their time.”*⁶

Don't Use the Internet as a Baby-Sitter.

Some parents use the internet or TV to make the child silent at home in order to set aside time for themselves. Although it works for that moment, you must consider the long-term harms of looking at screen and must not use electronic devices as baby-sitters.



Internet should be Settled in Communal Area.

Setting computer and internet in your children's room will make your control harder, or even impossible. For this reason, try to place your computer with internet connection into a room like living room or another communal area, and turn the screen towards the entrance of the room.

Share the Internet with Your Children.

Using internet together with your children from time to time will ensure you to learn about your children's knowledge store and transmit your knowledge and experiences to them. By this way, both the time you spend together will increase and your relationship will deepen.

Do not Serve near the Internet.

Attach importance to spending time together with your family. Instead of serving to your children while using the internet or watching TV during dinner or tea time, make them join you.

Spare Time to Listen to Your Children.

Children who do not get attention, who are not listened or played with, start to take cyber world into the center of their life and start expressing all details of their life by sharing with people on the internet. But, establishing healthy relations with your children as parents since childhood, sharing life with





positive and supportive attitudes, spending time with them regularly and effectively will prevent them from applying chat rooms to express themselves.

Be Careful about the Reasons.

Being aware of the psychological problems that cause addiction in the future, and starting treatment have vital importance in preventing addiction. For instance, researches indicate that ignoring the treatment of a child with ADD (attention deficit disorder) and hyperactivity will result in internet addiction.

Do not Prohibit, Keep them Busy.

It is hard to prevent your child from watching TV, using the internet or mobile phones even you forbid unless you have better alternatives. In that case, they may start deceiving you or having bad feelings towards you. You should give them permission and opportunities for other activities they like at home or outdoors, and keep them away from the internet by this way.

Offer them Different Alternatives.

Parents must find some alternatives their children might like for saving them from the danger of technology addiction. This alternative can be joining cultural, artistic or sport activities, or spending cheerful time at home. The points to be considered is if children enjoy from the activity or not. Finding alternatives before punishments and restrictions will bring long term peace.



So, What are Your Alternatives?

It is necessary to establish some different and helpful alternatives for ourselves as well while advising alternative activities for our children instead of the internet. Because actions are more important than words for children, and the influence of actions are bigger than words.

You should be exemplary in producing alternative activities instead of technology to make your words influential and permanent. Because the best step to protect your children from harmful usage of technology is setting a good example.

Start Before It is too Late

All of the suggestions listed in this book are the necessary preparations to be done before facing technology addiction. If any addiction arises in your family members, you must definitely take an expert's support.

- 1 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 1.
- 2 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 25.
- 3 Abu Dawud, Zakat, 45.
- 4 Tirmidhi, Birr wa Sila, 33.
- 5 Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 341.
- 6 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 1.



OUR PROPHET (SAW) SAID,


“There are two blessings the benefits of which most people are deceived about: Health and free time.”¹

“Every intoxicant is khamr and every khamr is forbidden.”²*

“If much of something is intoxicating, a little bit of it is also prohibited (haram)”³

“Your body has a right over you.”⁴

* Khamr: The drinks that are prohibited in Islam.





*i protect my family
from addiction*


| İsmail ÖZGÖREN



*“O you who believe, protect yourselves
and your families from a Fire whose fuel is
people and stones.”*

(Tahrim, 66/6)



ne of the most serious problems today which grab people of the earth by their throat and threaten not just individuals but also the families is substance addiction. Substance addiction is a case of disease which arises depending on frequent use of marijuana, heroin, addictive illegal drug, thinner, cigarette, and alcohol in a person at any age.

The age for use of alcohol and addictive drugs decreases each passing day and the interest in these substances rapidly increases among the youth and adults. In front of this heartbreaking view, erosion in moral and cultural values, increase in crime rates, and above all damage in family ties are inevitable. Would you like to strengthen the unity of your family and protect each member of your family from harmful habits? Then, you should gain awareness about fighting against substance addiction, and acquire information about it.



The Risky Period: Puberty

We all know that puberty is an unsteady and difficult period which involves a transition from childhood to youth. One of the several developmental periods on the lifeline, puberty is actually a struggle to attain physical, sensual and social maturity. The brave and energetic children, who take a step to puberty at their 13, from now on, would like to be treated as adults and try to go all out to prove themselves. They generally act in an egocentric manner, think that they are strong and independent, and feel a contumacious excitement to make the people around them accept this. They do not care about their parents' rules, society's expectations, or customary codes. According to them, people should try new and different things in the world.

This mood can establish an environment quite convenient for use of alcohol, drugs, and especially cigarette. The young ones, who get angry, weary and are saddened by the restrictions they come across at school or home, fall into the trap of substance addiction. They trust their friends most in this period; they share their feelings and opinions with their friends. When desire and curiosity are added to emotional fluctuations, danger grows apace. Hence, our children in the period of puberty pass through a risky and sensitive period so they should never be deprived of their parents' interest and understanding.

What is Addiction and How is It Discovered?

Addiction is one's losing control over use of a substance or an act, putting it in the center of his/her life, and becoming unable to live without it. As it arises towards cigarette, alcohol and drugs, it may also arise towards some acts like gambling or technological devices like internet and TV. If someone;



- devotes his whole time, energy, money, or interest (apart from his obligatory works and compulsory relationships) to a substance, a being or a behavior,
 - shows indications like unrest, sleeplessness, lack of appetite or anger unless he can obtain that thing,
 - keeps on using a substance or doing a certain act even though it poses mental, physical, social, or legal problems,
 - addicts to a substance or an act so much that he disrupts his school life, business life and family life, ignores his responsibilities, and even forgets his essential needs like eating, drinking and cleaning;
- he is addicted, and should be treated.

What are the Reasons for Substance Addiction?

Life is a test, and test means difficulty, distress, struggle, endeavor, and patience. Human beings sometimes cannot be as strong as they expect against many problems they face throughout their life. They may have weakness of faith and will, and may be overwhelmed with the problems which turn into an avalanche in their mind although they are in fact as small as a snowball. In such a case, they need help. Unless the faithful voice and support of their parents accompany him, they will search for other shelters. Especially in this period they densely desire to be recognized by the people around them, therefore, negative attitudes of the family will cause sensual problems in them. The pubescents who escape from these problems may choose the hazardous substances as a shelter for themselves. And they may face with the risk of sinking into the problem more instead of getting rid of it.

Thereafter, an adversity waits for them. Embarrassment, lack of money, split from the family, isolating themselves

from the society, solitude, breakdown in business life and school life, moral deviations, depression, having malignant diseases, transmitting them to others, suicide, etc...

Considering the reasons that push them towards this difficult journey, it can be seen that curiosity and friendship are considerably efficient besides personal issues and family problems. We had better touch the reasons of substance addiction briefly here.

Curiosity

Curiosity and emulation take the first place among the reasons why young people start smoking and using other harmful substances. The opinion of “a one-time thing” may cause people fall into the trap of addiction.

Circle of Friends

The second most important reason which pushes people to substance use is friendship. It is also among the warnings of our religion that evil is transmitted by means of friends just as goodness. Our beloved Prophet (saw) says: *“The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one (iron-smith) blowing bellows, and the owner of musk would either offer you free of charge or you would buy it from him or you would smell its pleasant odor, and so far as one who blows the bellows is concerned, he would either burn your clothes or you shall have to smell its repugnant smell.”*⁵

Especially during the period of puberty, while the influence of parents on child gradually decreases, persuasion power of friend groups increases. The young who trust their friends more than their parents hardly withstand their friends’ insistence. They might have to try some substances



like cigarette, alcohol and drugs to be included in a group, not to be alienated and not to be lonely.

Let us ensure that our children be watchful against the offers and threats which lead them up to meet cigarette, alcohol and drugs!

“It is a one-time thing.”

“It does not cause addiction, take this.”

“You do not lose anything by just trying.”

“Please, just once, for my sake...”

“You are mama’s boy...”

“If you try this I will introduce you to the boy you asked.”

“If you go, this place will be boring without you.”

“If you go, I will never talk to you again.”

“There is no escape from us.”

“If you don’t take this, we will tell your faults to your father!”

Exemplary Character of Family Members

If any one of the family members is a smoker, addicted to alcohol or other substances, as an undesired result, it may cause the children to take him/her as an example. Exhibition of negative behavior models by parents is more effective than their verbal warnings; children follow parents’ behaviors instead of their warnings no matter how much they tell.

Psychological Problems

When the young are sad, distressed or angry, and when they cannot deal with their problems about their family or school, they may consider using a substance as a remedy. In fact, the problematic situation in their life grows and becomes more complicated after they fall prey to harmful substances.

Influence of Social Environment

Substance addiction is not a fact growing based on economical and psychological conditions only. Tendency of people is also influenced by the social fabric and environmental conditions. For example, the places where drugs can be most easily sold are the areas where use of substance is more common. The places with the potential to attract more customers are the quarters where people who shut their eyes to substance addiction, and probably do not put any resistance to its sale live.

Who is under Greater Risk?

First of all, let us remember that children who witness use of substance in their family tend to try harmful substances beginning from the adolescence. The existence of the members in family or among close relatives who smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs creates familiarity in children, and this situation makes it difficult to protect them from harmful substances. In the families who cannot develop their relations based on love and compassion but violence and unrest prevail instead, the risk of children's inclining towards a substance addiction is greater. Children of unbalanced and hesitant parents who apply their children either excessive pressure under the name of discipline or show them excessive tolerance without any limitation, and who behave in an excessively protective way



that will prevent children's development of self-respect and self-confidence are inclined to substance addiction as well.

On the other hand, in a broken or divorced family or in case of loss of the parents, children are more likely to search for love and care outside, or in use of substances.

Agression, behavioral disorders, opposition, rebellion against anyone in any situation or contrarily inwardness and excessive obedience, lack of self-expression, or excessive impression by the words of other people can be cited among the common features of the adolescents in the risk group. So, as the parents who are responsible for the protection of the family, following closely the characteristics, tendencies, interests, and needs of our children and caring about them are our duty.

What Kind of Things should You Get Suspicious about?

It is not easy to realize many of drugs at early stages of use other than some substances which can be recognized by their smell such as cigarette or alcohol. There are some drug addicts who have lived for many years without being realized. However, substance addiction might manifest itself by some physical indications and behavioral changes. Since young people generally have unsteady psychology, the parents who think that unbalanced manners of their children are because of their age may sometimes fail to notice "the warning signs". In fact, knowing these signs is of vital importance for an early diagnosis.

Physical Symptoms

There might be some changes in the dresses and hairstyle of the young who use substance. Some indications like burnt parts and holes on their clothes, injuries and cuts on their

body, changes in their nutritional habits and excessive weight loss, speech disorders or stammering, glassy looks, problems of concentration and perception, hyperactivity and energy explosion might mean that the young person uses substance.

Physical signs such as shaky hands, sudden perspiring, sleeplessness, unrest, anger, constant sleeplessness, frequent nausea, and lack of appetite or sense of fullness, anemia and intoxication should never be ignored.

Behavioral Changes

Unstable actions, inconsistent words and indecisive behaviors, reactivity and tension, drawing away from their family and school environment, lack of future dreams and plans, or starting to lie might mean that they are the addict of a harmful substance.

Besides, disappearance of some objects from home, returning home late, staying in the bathroom for a long time, existence of some matters which resemble powder or drugs in their room or bag whose content is unknown by the family, sudden appearance of unexpected money or debts must be considered as worrisome clues. Parents must not overlook sudden changes in their circle of friends, loss of interest in their hobbies, wearing long-sleeved clothes to cover needle marks on their arms and feet, drunk appearance, helpless, and reluctant behaviors.

In addition to all these symptoms, the most certain way to understand whether the young uses drugs or not is hair test, urine test and blood test.

Family-Young Relationship on Substance Addiction

Family is the name of the unique togetherness that embraces human with affection and compassion, and that



has the greatest role in the formation of his/her belief and morality. Children learn the rules about life, values and behavioral models in the family by watching their parents and listening to them. Hence, being parents means taking responsibility to bring up a good person. Our Prophet (saw) describes this responsibility to us as follows: *“Every one of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is the guardian of his family and responsible for it; a lady is also a guardian of her house and is responsible for it.”*⁶

Would anyone want their child to have an unhealthy and incompatible personality? Undoubtedly, all of us wish to bring up good people by making correct decisions and acting in a meaningful manner. We never hesitate to make sacrifices for the sake of their education and improvement. However, a child needs more than just feeding and clothing to be a person who is at peace with his Lord and the society.

Our children need to be loved, cared, and understood at any age; they need tolerant parents who listen to them and respect their personality. How can we ensure that our children share their problems with us if we act in an unaffectionate, intolerant, and bossy manner? How can we expect a young who is afraid of us, feels uneasy when we are around him, and feels a stranger closer to himself than us and pours out his heart to them to hold our hand?

It is the family who can help the young in the best way as there is nobody else who knows him better. The parents who occasionally give constructive advices to their children, give a chance to them for fixing their mistakes, have an exchange of ideas and develop a friendly relationship with them are the most powerful protection system against substance addiction!

Never say: “My child is safe. Addictive substances do not concern our family; this is the problem of others.” Do not forget that drug addicts and those who died of drugs or some diseases caused by cigarette and alcohol are, contrary to what is assumed, not outsiders or crazy characters. Many people coming from any kind of families and from various professions and statuses become a substance addict since they cannot say “No!”. Hold the hands of your family members before some poisonous hands do!



Some Suggestions to Parents about Substance Addiction

Our Prophet (saw) recommends: *“He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he is not strong enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he is not strong enough to do it, then he should*



at least abhor it from his heart, and that is the least of faith.”⁷

It is a human task to say “Stop!” to evil and struggle against it. We cannot neglect the destruction of harmful substances on us, our family, and our society. Then, we should be careful about the points below:

Set a Good Example.

Are your words and acts consistent? Do your advices or rules have validity in your own life as well? The most important thing that the parents should do to develop a conscious attitude in their children is to set a good example with their actions. If the attitude of the family elders against problems is to be consoled by a chemical, children are more likely to take refuge in the substances when they have a problem.

Develop a Qualified Relationship.

Do you know your children? Do you know their tastes, dreams, plans, worries, and problems? Developing a qualified relationship with children is the most effective way for parents to protect them from evil. Spare time to know your children better, and spend time together. Do not forget that they need your friendship particularly to get over the unsteady years of youth and to take a step in life as a healthy adult. Do not hesitate to express your appreciation and love to them. Do not let them fill the space of your love and care with a poison.

Another clue parents need to know about harmful habits is the importance of being “a good listener”. You should make sure that your children can tell their problems to you. Even if it requires great patience, listen to what they tell, do not interrupt them, and try to understand how they feel. Never overreact even if they tell you shocking and terrifying things. Keep calm and never engage in violence. If you don’t control

your anger, they are more likely to keep quiet, and you might lose the opportunity to be informed of a danger very close to them!

Teach Them Our Values and Strengthen Their Spirituality.

If a young knows our cultural, religious and moral values, it will be easier for them to find rational reasons to say “no” to

addictive substances. Their spiritual power protects them against being dispersed in space, and provides them to stand behind their decisions resolutely.

For this reason, we as parents should care about our children’s not only physical development but also mental development, and satisfy their

spiritual needs as well as the material ones. Speak to your children on some virtues such as honesty, loyalty, faithfulness, and responsibility; and instill in them the consciousness of halal-haram (lawful-unlawful). Teach them that their body is one of the most precious blessings entrusted to them by Allah, and remind them of our beloved Prophet’s (saw) warning: *“Your body has a right on you!”*⁸





Establish Household Rules.

Young people are inexperienced in life. They need to learn the limits in order to decide where and how to act, which offers to accept and which ones to reject. So, as parents, determine some clear rules; tell them clearly that you are against cigarette, alcohol, and drugs. Do not permit the use of cigarette and other substances, and obey this rule yourselves as well. Explain them the necessary rules to protect them from drifting towards substance addiction, and the enforcements he would come across in case of violating the rule. Take calm and wise steps instead of unrealistic threats or violent and insulting reactions.

Raise Your Children's Awareness of Substance Addiction.

Explain the damages of the addictive substances on mental and physical health; make them realize its negative results in terms of family ties and social relations. Discuss with them about the methods and tactics about how to say “no” to substance offers. If you think that you are not able to inform them enough, ensure that they speak to a specialist.

Do not be afraid, informing them properly about substance and results of substance use do not increase their interest. On the contrary, exaggerated and false information will arouse their interest unless they are provided with correct information.

Do not Arouse Their Curiosity.

Nobody should speak about the pleasurable effects of addictive substances near children and young people. In case they listen to motivating speeches around them, or watch some advertising scenes about substances, it is primarily the responsibility of their family to direct the young towards the

right path. Tell them that these substances amuse first, but then kill.

Know Their Friends.

Do you know that each one of two addict children starts use of drugs because of their friends? Likewise, each one of two young people starts smoking under the age of eighteen, and show their friend circle as their reason. The survey data remind us of these words of our Prophet (saw): *“A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.”*⁹

Introducing these substances to young people at least once is the greatest success for those who gain money from a dirty business like drug sale. At first, addictive substances are generally given “for free” and “by means of a friend”. As parents, therefore, you should watch out for where and with whom your child spends their spare time. You should meet their friends and families of their friends. By this means, you will have the opportunity to explore the environment which he is in an interaction with, and minimize the negative effects.

Help Them to Develop an Internal Discipline.

While children are learning about life, such factors as the authority of parents, setting limits, and establishing discipline based on love are of high importance. However, children need some space where they stay alone and act without their parents in order to feel confident and develop an independent personality. At this point, training children about what kind of things they should be careful while they are away from them is the responsibility of parents.

Since it is not possible to get a young person under control by external discipline all the time, you should teach them



some ways to control themselves, which is called the internal discipline. As our Prophet (saw) said: *“Goodness is what relieves and satisfies you; evil is what disturbs your heart and puts a doubt inside you even if people give fatwa (permission) about them.”*¹⁰ Your children will stand on their own feet by self-evaluation, self-control, listening to the voice of their conscience, setting some goals, competing with themselves and by self-belief.

Explore the Reasons and Find Some Alternatives.

Pay attention to the details your child’s life and do not overlook any person or situation which may cause your child to take refuge in addictive substances. Enable them to spend their time with healthy activities by establishing some alternatives like activities of sports, science, culture, and art.

If You Find out that They Use a Substance...

Do not speak with them until you feel ready. Do not try to speak when they are under the influence of alcohol or addictive drugs. Emphasize that you love them, that your aim is to support them, and you will stand by them under any circumstances.

Try to understand their problems and fears by empathizing. Keep away from wrong attitudes which may break off your relation such as complaint, curse, labelling, damnation, disowning, or beating.

You should be the first to believe that “addiction has a cure”, and you should consult a specialist.

1 Bukhari, Riqaq, 1.

2 Muslim, Ashribah, 74.

3 Tirmidhi, Ashribah, 3.

4 Muslim, Siyam, 182.

5 Muslim, Birr wa Sila, 146.

6 Bukhari, Istikrad, 20.

7 Muslim, Iman, 78.

8 Muslim, Siyam, 182.

9 Abu Dawud, Adab, 16.

10 Darimi, Buyu’, 2.

He was strong, powerful and his possessor. He raised and lowered his whip, raised and lowered again; he was beating his slave. He suddenly heard a voice behind: “*O Abu Mas’ud! Know that...*” He turned back and saw the Messenger of Allah (saw). He continued: “*O Abu Mas’ud! Know that the power of Allah upon you is more than your power upon this slave.*” What a striking warning for a person who had thought himself to be the only one who had power and felt himself the only one who had right!

The Madinan Companion Abu Mas’ud immediately left his whip. While narrating this effective warning of the Prophet, he said that he never beat any of his slaves since that day and freed that slave for the sake of Allah.¹ Because, from then on, he knew that the power of Allah who is the Owner of the earths and the skies is much greater than him... Allah, the only Sovereign of the universe, is at the same time “the Most Merciful” ... He expects not violence but mercy from his servants...



*i want mercy in
my family*

Dr. Elif ARSLAN



Our Prophet (saw) said,
*“The best of you is the one who is best to
his family, and I am the best of you to my
family.”*

(Ibn Majah, Nikah, 50)



When We Speak of Violence...

Violence with its damaging and humiliating effect is a matter of fact as early as the history of humanity. When one of the sons of Adam (as) killed the other, the earth has witnessed the first domestic violence. The poisonous breath of violence has spread among the humanity without boundaries of time or space. Regardless of age and gender, it has made millions of people shed tears, and experience pain and sorrow. It has injured not only their bodies but also their souls, inner worlds and spirituality. And it caused new acts of violence in each insult, each punch, and each bullet.

Some servants of Allah chose violence while He (swt) says, “*Verily My Mercy overcomes My Anger.*”² While the messengers of Allah have invited humanity to mercy and justice for ages, some of them tenaciously preferred cruelty. While the message of the Last Prophet (saw) who has been “sent as a mercy to the worlds”³ is spreading around the world, violence still cannot be wiped away from our lives even today.



Violence is walking around the world. Beginning from the physical and emotional violence committed by the person against himself, it leaps up to the family. Then violence reaches out neighborhood relations and kinship relations; it penetrates into the fabric of cities, and finally reaches to an international dimension. We need to begin with our immediate family to say “stop” to violence. Interiorizing mercy with both our body and soul, and making compassion and justice prevail in our family are gaining importance day by day. Because, each soul who escapes from the suffering of violence and destroying storm of anger deserves to find peace and trust under the compassionate roof of home.

Is It Violence?

When we speak of violence, physical violence, in other words, beating comes to the mind first. Could the most important reason for this be that it is “physical”, meaning visible?

What if violence is invisible? What if invisible bats hit the qualification of “being human”, for instance, what if it damages his honor? What if it silently crushes him and injures his self-respect? What if it slaps with glances, kicks with words, pulls the strings of his soul one by one with humiliations? What if it jails him by strangling his will without locking the doors behind him and without tying his hands or feet? Can we say then, there is no violence? Can we say that a person, regardless of gender, who is insulted, rebuked, humiliated by their spouse and whose efforts are not appreciated but on the contrary, continuously criticized, is not exposed to violence? Isn't a little child who witnesses beating at home the victim of violence even if himself is not beaten?



The coast might look clear when violence is not physical. Even the person who is exposed to violence might have difficulty in naming what they experience and how they are treated. They may not be able to understand the situation which suffocates them inside, leads them to trouble, distresses them and gives them complicated feelings. What they experience is violence in fact.

Let's think; how can we describe an act of slander other than violence? Aren't people crushed by abusive expressions, curses and bad nicknames? While our Lord (swt) has made spouses a cover for each other, how can we call one's telling the private cases of their spouse to others and misusing their trust, if not violence? Isn't a woman exposed to violence when she is not allowed to meet her family, relatives, and neighbors? How can we explain the worry and pain of a child who hears the threat of "If you don't do what I want from you I will not be your mother anymore"? Isn't a grandmother whose salary was taken by force, a young who was employed under compulsion, or a child who was abused in the grip of violence? Then, violence is a serious problem threatening our family not only with its visible dimensions but also with financial, psychological, sexual, and social dimensions.

Let No One in My Family Be Subjected to Violence!

The worst phrase constructed with the word "violence" is formed when it comes along with the word "family": "Family violence..." What a miserable expression! Indeed, violence is a word which should not be uttered accompanied by the word "family", isn't it? Because, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, we start a family to find tranquility in each other,⁴ to be clothing for each other,⁵ to enjoin each other what is right and forbid what is wrong.⁶ Let us protect each other from



material and spiritual harms like clothes, support each other without expecting anything in return, complete and cover each other's faults... Let our children, our pearl drops, the comfort of our eyes and our source of joy in this world be our fund in the Hereafter... Let us taste happiness, trust, and affection together...

We start our families with such feelings and thoughts. How can violence take place under such a roof founded with love and respect? Especially when the Prophet (saw) whose words are dear to us said: *"Those who will suffer with the most severe torment on the Day of Judgment are those who have tortured people!"*⁷ Torture does not mean only excessive and systematic torment. Any kind of attack against human body or personality might turn into a torture in time. Is it possible to deny that violations of right and acts of violence that appear to be insignificant make life unlivable, and they turn into torture over time?

When it comes to family violence, the first thing to occur in mind is violence of husband against his wife, however this is one kind of violence only. Children might be the center of violence in the family as well. Moreover, children might be subjected to violence by all the adults in the family even by their close relatives like uncles. And the elders... They also might be subjected to violence in the last stage of their lives by their children whom they have brought up with great effort and suffering, or by their grandsons. Probably the last person in the family who comes to mind as to violence is man, but we might confront some situations in which man is subjected to violence with oral, psychological or financial pressure. We do not want any kind of violence in our family, against anyone...



Let Women not Be Subjected to Violence in My Family

We call our spouse as “life partner”. What a lovely expression to warmly manifest the ties in marriage! Partner is the one to whom a person lays his back against loneliness, dangers and any attacks, and secures themselves. When it comes to life partner, these features gain further importance. A partnership to protect and support each other and be the comfort of the eyes for one another so long as Allah grants life to them...

Our beloved Prophet (saw) said: *“Woman and man are two halves of a whole.”*⁸ But if the relationship between spouses turns into a power relationship instead of a partnership which completes each other, the trust will be damaged. Spouses will feel lonely and alienated. They turn into people who do not see the good aspects of each other nor appreciate them. For this reason, our Prophet (saw) says, *“A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.”*⁹, and recommends us to focus on the good and the favorable sides.

Marriage should be not a burden on shoulders but a gleam in the eyes. We should be not the rival of our life partners but a confidant and cover for them. Created physically weaker compared to man, woman should not be seen as an opportunity for man to prove their power. We should always be aware that wife is not a person who “is under husband’s possession”; rather, she is a heart which is “entrusted” to him. As a warning to those who act roughly and use violence against their life partners, isn’t the following hadith of our Prophet (saw) sufficient: *“Fear Allah concerning women (do not forget that you will be questioned by Allah)! Verily you have taken them as the trust of Allah, and they have been made lawful unto you by the word of Allah (marriage).”*¹⁰

If a Woman is Exposed to Violence...

The Messenger of Allah (saw), who brought the message of Islam to a society in which violence against woman had been common, prohibited violence in family in a certain way: *“Do not beat the woman servants of Allah... They (those who beat their wives) are not the best among you!”*¹¹ As he stated, the best Muslim is the one who behaves in the best manner to his family.

Besides recommending being merciful to his ummah, our Prophet (saw) himself also developed an empathetic, tolerant, gentle and compassionate relationship with his wives. With

the expression of Aisha (ra), *“He (saw) has never beaten anyone, neither a woman nor a servant.”*¹² He has never forgiven mercilessness, and never condoned violence against women. If reconciliation is not possible in case of a conflict, he has gone towards divorce; for instance, he did not tolerate the Companion Thabit b. Qais who had broken his wife’s arm. When Thabit’s wife Jamilah, who declared that she wanted to finish her marriage about which she had complaints for a long time, the Prophet (saw) called Thabit and asked him to divorce his wife.¹³ What a





great dilemma that the ummah of such a prophet remains insensitive to violence saying “what happens in the house stays in the house”, or thinking “he is my husband, he both loves and hits”!

Threatening her, forcing her to work, taking her money against her will, assaulting or disregarding her at home... A woman who is subjected to violence in any way feels loneliness, despair, and inadequacy. She loses her self-confidence, feels anger and shame. She loses her sleep; her health worsens, and she loses the joy of living. Violence reflects badly on her relationship with even her children. All these mean “to be hurt by those whom they trust most under the same roof”. However, our Prophet (saw) said, *“Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands other people are safe.”*¹⁴

Is “Murder in the Name of Honor” Acceptable?

One of the most painful examples of family violence is honor killing. The traces of a misconception which regards men responsible for the honor of women in the family go back till the Jahiliyyah. The Holy Qur’an, however, states that this understanding is not true; both men and women are responsible for their own honor pursuant to their self-respect and consciousness of taqwa (piety). Is it not obvious that Allah, who has ordered *“And tell the believing women to reduce their vision and guard their private parts...”*¹⁵ right after the order *“Tell the believing men to reduce their vision and guard their private parts...”*¹⁶ expects the same sensibility from both genders?

The ruthless violence called honor killing is considered to be based on some reasons like a woman’s seeking divorce; a girl’s rejecting to marry to a person whom her family chose for her, or probability of adultery. In fact, which behaviors to name as “honor-shame” is a mystery! In the end, the merciless

pressure put on woman under the cover of honor starts to disregard her existence and personal dignity.

It is normal for men to care about the security of the women in their family and protect them. However, punishing a woman without allowing her to even defend herself does not comply with Islam. Those who commit a murder in the name of restoring so-called honor of the women, and consequently the family honor, exceed the boundaries of our religion, and become killers. Yet, even if a person has a mistake in regard to chastity, she should be punished through legal means and no one has the right to such an execution including her closest relatives. Honor killing is a major crime which is shared by the murderer, those who encourage him to murder, and the family elders who sit back and watch this act.

Let Children not Be Subjected to Violence in My Family

Children...The purest state of human. While looking at our children we say “If only they remained this pure forever...” While we look forward to their growing on the one hand, on the other we think that “If only they did not grow”; “If only they remained child!” But time will go by, and children will grow up... Each new day will bring him to the world of adults. Being parents actually means preparing children for that world in the best and the most correct way. For this reason, parents attach great importance to their children’s education. However, unfortunately some mistakes might mix up with the efforts made for education.





Is Beating Necessary for Educating Children?

The excuse of child violence is generally “education”. It is supposed that, “beating is heaven-sent”, “spare the rod and spoil the child”. A slap, an insult or clenching the fist while educating children is not deemed violence! Whereas humiliation leaves deep traces in the young hearts... Shouting makes them experience severe feelings of revenge, grudge, and hatred...

Appealing to violence during education is not a necessity; rather, it is a consequence of adults’ anger, impetuosity, ignorance in education methods and spiritual world of the children, and failure in communicating with the child. Making the child see his mistakes to teach them what is correct, kindly warning him, and allowing him to retry are the methods of the Prophet (saw).

The incident which occurred between a little boy who threw stones at the palm-trees and the Prophet of Mercy is the best example indicating that a child does not deserve violence even if it is to educate (!) him. People caught that boy and brought him to the Prophet (saw) for punishment, but our Prophet (saw) asked him, “O my son, why do you throw stones at the palm-trees?” instead of reprimanding him. He said: “Because I am hungry.” The Prophet (saw) said: *“Do not throw stones at the palm trees, but eat what falls beneath them.”* and taught him the correct behavior. He neither got angry nor beat him; on the contrary, he wiped his head and said: *“O Allah, fulfill his hunger.”*¹⁷

It is necessary to think on this attitude which is to learn the reason for the child’s act before accusing him and then to offer an alternative to him. We can do mind exercises to make our relationship with our children healthier and more positive by sparing only ten minutes every day. We can find some ways of education without hurting them by reading (articles) and consulting to specialists.



Is Excessive Anger an Excuse for Violence?

Children may sometimes be subjected to violence since they put their parents out of temper (!). Sometimes adults try to explain the excuse of their violence saying “he made me mad insomuch that I could not control myself”. Mind is lost when anger comes! Is this the real reason for hurting the child’s feelings? Let’s see the case from this point: Would you react in the same way if a man stronger than you displayed the same behavior with your child that made you angry? Or if your best friend made the same mistake, would you insult him, too? Forget about the same reaction; would you get angry at the same level? Or would you be in a humble attitude, be patient and forgive?

Let us think about this contradiction more: Are we not able to prevent anger or don’t we make sufficient effort in order to prevent it? Might the reason for turning our anger into violence be the feeling of being stronger than the person in front of us? Or is it because we see ourselves as the owner of our children?

Indeed, one of the most important reasons for child violence is that parents see themselves as “the owner of the children”. However, children deserve respect since they are the most precious being on Earth; they are human. Children are “entrusted to us by Allah”. A unique blessing, a precious gift... Parents should not forget that they do not have a right of full ownership over the child, and that one day they will give account to the real Owner of what is entrusted to them.

An effective way to not hurt the feelings of our family members when we are tired, distressed and angry can be remaining silent. Our beloved Prophet (saw) said: *“If one of you get angry while standing let him sit down, if anger does not go away then let him lie down.”*¹⁸ Instead of cutting the nose to spite the face, we can adopt this method which can be called “inertia” in our domestic relationships when we are angry. A



kind speech after calming down would be more effective in the family.

If a Child is Exposed to Violence...

Sometimes, there is neither a slap nor a kick but an invisible hand grabs the child's collar. S/he might be severely reprimanded, threatened, humiliated, compared with his/her friends or siblings, or ridiculed. S/he might be forced to take a stand in domestic conflicts, witness one of family members being subjected to violence, or be chosen a confidant by his/her mother or father and be overwhelmed by insolvable problems.

All these different sights of violence turn the emotional world of the child upside-down and destroy their mental health. It not only impairs their self-confidence but also weakens their relations with parents. It causes them to feel guilty and helpless, and believe that they are inadequate and unsuccessful. The worst part is that he witnesses violence and learns it as a behavior model, and put it into practice against others. They might even intend to take revenge for the painful days, beats, and insults, and might raise their hands to their parents one day.

Let us not make them experience such hard times! Let us pay strict attention to protect them from any kind of violence in order to bring them up as honorable, virtuous, bodily and mentally healthy and happy human beings. Of course, first of all, by protecting them from our own violence we commit deliberately or not. Let us think once again if our behaviors, words, looks and decisions involve mercy or violence. Let us make efforts to change our words and behaviors that injure our family.

We can establish a good relationship with our children, who try to learn the life by making mistakes by the way of

trial and error and by struggling, only if we behave them in a patient, merciful, and tolerant way. At this point, let us give ear to what Anas b. Malik, who spent his childhood with the Prophet (saw), stayed with him (saw) and served him for years: *“I have served the Rasul Allah for ten years, and, by Allah, he never said to me even ‘uff! (an expression of boredom)’; and he never such things as ‘Why did you do this?’ or ‘Why didn’t you do this another way!’ He has never condemned or reprehended me for what I had done.”*¹⁹

Would our children make such good sentences about us as well? Would they testify for us in the same way?

Let Elders not Be Subjected to Violence in My Family

A poet describes elderliness as “the last moments of life, the evening of life”... Coming along with maturity and wisdom of the years, elderliness also brings some difficulties. Some problems like depending on others while fulfilling their needs, illness, detachment from social life, mental regression accompany eldership. This period is, in a sense, a return to childhood. The roles are changed; the arms that used to embrace their children mercifully now expect their mercy. The eyes that look at their children with love and affection and protect them even from themselves need the light of care and the glow of love in their children’s eyes now.

A change of the balances also occur at this station of life journey. Now, parents have more rights while children have more responsibilities. Our Lord (swt) explains this responsibility as: *“And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age (while) with you, say not to them (so much as), ‘uff, and do not repel them but speak to them*



a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up (when I was) small.'"²⁰ It is clear that, after such a ruling, let alone committing physical violence against elderly parents, we do not have any valid excuse for rephending them or even for saying "uff" to them wearily.

Nevertheless, elders are getting affected by violence as much as other parts of the society; besides, elders are the most fragile group of people. Our elders are exposed to physical violence at times like beating, sometimes to verbal violence like rephending and reducing them to silence, and sometimes to financial violence like dispossessing. Our beloved Prophet (saw) says about them: *"He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders."*²¹ If those who have no respect to elders do not deserve being among the people of the Prophet (saw), what could we say about the situation of those who deem violence proper to them!

If Elders are Subjected to Violence...

During the test which starts with aging of the parents, before anything else, children must not forget the self-sacrifices their parents had made for them. While commanding us to behave our parents well, the Holy Qur'an reminds us their self-sacrifices: *"And We have enjoined upon man (care) for his parents. His mother carried him, (increasing her) in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the (final) destination."*²²

Elders are sometimes rephended in a trice when they ask something or express their opinions on a matter. However, their children would ask the same questions again and again during their childhood, and they would answer their



questions patiently and tirelessly, make up for their faults and carelessness, be patient against their inexperience, and put up with their stubborn acts. When children fell ill, they would wait for them to recover without sleeping till the morning. They should be treated with the same love and affection now. They might fall ill sometimes and act stubbornly because they need to feel love and hear it. They need to know that they are precious and beneficial, and that someone needs to hear their experiences.

Then, let us support our elders in any sense and not let them feel themselves as “a burden”. Let us not neglect them, and carry out their services of cleaning, eating and personal care when they are not self-sufficient and not able to meet their personal needs by themselves. Let us be tolerant if they are confused and forget something or if they drop something



to the floor and break it. Let us not seize their salary or possession on some grounds like “What is he going to do with money at this age? We take care of him! He lives on the fat of the land.” Let us not forget that our Prophet (saw) condemned those who see either one or both of their parents during their old age, but neither please nor serve them and miss the opportunity to gain the countenance of Allah (swt) by saying *“Let him be humbled into dust!”*²³



Let Our Family Be a Center of Mercy

Human tastes mercy on his mother's bosom. He grows up watching his parents, listening to their words and imitating their behaviors. He meets both mercy and violence since his early ages. It is time to repeat what we said at the beginning: The word of violence should never touch the family since Allah (swt) created love and mercy between the spouses as the building stone of family. If spouses develop a relationship which is purified of violence and based on love and mercy, this relationship will influence the whole family, and then spread in the society. But if the ties of affection are broken and the vessels of mercy are cut, the family decomposes in itself which weakens the society and shatters its peace.

In other respects, let us keep in mind that one of the most effective ways to be honored with the mercy of Allah is being merciful to other people as expressed by our Prophet (saw): *"Allah will not be merciful to those who are not merciful to people."*²⁴ And it is worse when these people are our spouses, children, or family elders...

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| 1 Muslim, Ayman, 34. | 13 Nasai, Talaq, 53. |
| 2 Bukhari, Tawhid, 22. | 14 Bukhari, Iman, 4. |
| 3 Anbiya, 21/107. | 15 Nur, 24/31. |
| 4 Rum, 30/21. | 16 Nur, 24/30. |
| 5 Baqarah, 2/187. | 17 Abu Dawud, Jihad, 85. |
| 6 Tawbah, 9/71. | 18 Musnad, V, 152. |
| 7 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 90. | 19 Muslim, Fadhail, 51-54. |
| 8 Abu Dawud, Taharah, 94. | 20 Isra, 17/23-24. |
| 9 Muslim, Rada', 61. | 21 Tirmidhi, Birr, 15. |
| 10 Muslim, Hajj, 147. | 22 Luqman, 31/14. |
| 11 Abu Dawud, Nikah, 41-42. | 23 Muslim, Birr, 9. |
| 12 Muslim, Fadhail, 79. | 24 Bukhari, Tawhid, 2. |

The Prophet of Mercy (saw) would always recommend mercy to the ummah. He would give the Companions tips about anger management, and set them an example with his deep patience and compassion. Thabit b. Qays, however, could not control his anger that day, and beat her while arguing. Being beaten not only broke Jamila's heart but also his arm. Moreover, it was not the first time. Jamila did not cover up this incident, and said that she had complaints about him for a long time, and did not want to sustain that marriage. Thereupon, our Prophet called Thabit, and told him to divorce his wife.¹ The Messenger of Allah did not tolerate violence, and did not forgive Thabit who did not take into consideration the warnings. He did not utter words like "what happens in the house stays in the house"...



*don't let my family
to break up*

Ayşenur ÖZKAN



Our Prophet (saw) said,
*“Of all the halal (lawful) acts, the most
detestable to Allah is divorce.”*

(Abu Dawud, Talaq, 3)



And They Lived Happily Ever After...

Building a peaceful home by getting married, and adding a healthy family to society is the desire of every person. Allah the Almighty, Who created us, wants us to actualize this desire. Every home is built with a new excitement and joy. A togetherness that will last lifelong, and children that will cheer our home up... The strong and long-running togetherness starting with marriage contract is also in conformity with the lifestyle recommended by our Prophet (saw). Our beloved Prophet advised family life instead of loneliness. He always encouraged single people about getting married while always hesitating and approaching cautiously to divorce. He never approved the separations occurring from simple reasons, and wanted people to use any means possible to protect the unity of family. We are advised in one of the unique *dua* verses of the Qur'an to supplicate as follows: *"Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous."*²

*"Women and men are like two halves that complete each other."*³ says our beloved Prophet (saw), and encourages

people to get married and be completed with a spouse as: *“Marriage is of my sunnah, and whoever does not follow my sunnah has nothing to do with me.”*⁴ Because marriage does not secure only two person, but also protects the society and generations and their peace.

Nobody gets married with the thought in their mind “I will divorce in the future anyway”. Establishing peaceful and trusty ties between one another is desired. However, love and relationships are sometimes consumed in time and shaken just as the objects that are used for a long time are worn down. Occurrence of some problems is inevitable in our relationship if we don't pay the necessary attention that we do for our objects, even more. Just like the couch grass that is not eradicated on time...

Couch grass doesn't need special care or watering. It grows up by itself and if you don't remove them at the right time, they destroy the beauty of your garden by time. Likewise in marriage, the problems that are not cared and postponed instead of solving soon turn into a great problem which is impossible to overcome. Briefly, every person who gets married and establishes a family is actually like a gardener. A gardener who is responsible for taking care of their garden, sparing time, showing their love, and protecting their flowers from harmful things...

It should not be forgotten that family is one of the most difficult trials of worldly life. We should all live with the awareness that we are not the owner of family members but they are only entrusted to us by Allah (swt); and shouldn't spread worry and fear among our children and spouses with whom we life under the same roof. We should also know that we will give account in the presence of Allah one day



about the people who are entrusted to us, and should behave accordingly.

It is obvious that marriage will not last by the efforts of one side only. The Messenger of Allah (saw) reminds the responsibilities of both sides saying, *“Be careful! Your wives have rights on you as much as you have rights on them.”*⁵ Spouses should be cognizant of their responsibilities as much as they demand their rights.

Our Prophet (saw) also said, *“O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah’s trust and with His permission.”*⁶ This warning is a serious reminder to men about beautifying their family life. Likewise, the effort of woman for lasting marriage is a condition. According to the statement of our Prophet (saw), a woman who requests divorcing without a valid reason cannot get even the smell of the Paradise.⁷

Is there a home without problems?

“A happy home” doesn’t mean that there is no problem in it. Although spouses try to do their best for their marriage, it is inevitable to not have conflicts between them due to the differences in thoughts and needs because different lives are tied to each other with marriage, and interests, tastes, ideals and habits are started to be shared under the same roof. What harms the marriage is not the problems but not being able to deal with them consciously and healthily.

The basis of a happy marriage is not built by the couples who try to hide the problems they go through and do not get angry with each other; it is found by the couples who can express their resentments, and turn their problems into discussions that are not destructive but constructive. The



problems can be overcome if the issues in the family aren't turned into fights that harm the marriage, if feelings are freely expressed in case of conflicts, and if couples cooperate in seeking solutions. This situation even enables the marriage to strengthen, spouses to deepen their relationship and trust each other more as expressed in the Holy Qur'an: *"And settlement is best. And present in [human] souls is stinginess. But if you do good and fear Allah - then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted."*⁸

And when it comes to the end of the marriages that start with hopes but end up in disappointment... Divorce is a reality of life as old as the history of humankind. Although it is started off for a lifetime happiness, sometimes the problems which are not solved on time become impassable, getting along well becomes impossible, and efforts are consumed. At such a breaking point, decision for a divorce is made, and people go their separate ways.

A painful truth of life is explained in the Qur'an as follows: *"O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."*⁹

Our husband, wife and children may not share the same feelings or world of thought with us all the time. Our closest people may sometimes even turn into our enemies far from love and mercy when the conflicts culminate. Our Lord (swt) wants us to protect ourselves from them and prefer to do good in response to the evil they did, and become forgiver. Which reward could be better than "being forgiven by Allah" for those who care about family ties and choose to forgive?



The Divorce Process

Divorce is a *halal* that Allah does not like. But it is a savior when home turns into hell and spouses turn into oppressors. Spouses who value each other so much as to get married may turn into the poles of hatred trying to destroy each other with the feelings of revenge during the process of divorce. The anger, nervousness and grudge of spouses play a big role in this process to be painful. The most important point to be paid attention by the couples who decided to divorce is to find the answer to the question “How can I end this process with minimum harm?”, and act accordingly. The related verses in the Qur’an is quite clear to end the process of divorce virtuously and politely: *“Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah - it is those who are the wrongdoers.*

And when you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself. And do not take the verses of Allah in jest. And remember the favor of Allah upon you and what has been revealed to you of the Book and wisdom by which He instructs you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Knowing of all things.”¹⁰

The word which we see most in the verses related to divorce is “*ma’ruf*”. Allah, Who leaves an open door for the part of family life which is open to change, for culture and traditions; He reminds their responsibilities towards Him in the beginning or end of the verses after explaining their social and legal rights. In the verses related to divorce, the words “*ihسان*” (goodness) and “*جامل*” (beauty) are often used together with the word “*ma’ruf*”. These verses have sensitive warnings for not admitting discussions and slandering during the divorce process.

Step by Step towards Divorce

Our beloved Prophet (saw) says: “*The afflictions caused for a man by his wife, money, children and neighbor are expiated by his prayers, fasting, charity and by enjoining (what is good) and forbidding (what is evil).*”¹¹ Family life has moments which tests the patience of people as well as the moments that give peace to their hearts peace and make them enjoy loving and being loved. Economical problems, relative interferences, illnesses, cheating, alcohol, gambling, internet addiction, differences in some habits such as dressing style or spending money, material and immaterial irresponsibilities, difference in beliefs and traditions, jealousy, and emotional upheavals harm the relation between spouses, and sometimes even cause the ties to be broken.

The crises which are not managed properly will surely leave traces on couples. Apologizing when the mistakes are realized, or presenting gifts may perhaps erase those traces, but sometimes a woman or a man considers such an effort which is needed in every marriage to be too much. When offenses increase and sadness are repressed, the anger start to be expressed without control. This point is the beginning of an emotional turning point. If the couples who cannot pass their



test continue feeding this stage by their negative attitudes and behaviors, the first stage which is called “emotional divorce” starts. This stage is at the same time the period in which hope is at its maximum.

Many marriages wait at this stage for years, because it is hard to ruin a family. Above all, if there are children, either one of the spouses or both of them make efforts to continue their marriage to the point they can tolerate. If the problems in marriage started to turn into a gangrene, and efforts cannot remove the dark clouds above them, then another solution must be found. Allah the Almighty allows divorce even though He does not like it as understood from the words of the Prophet (saw), *“Of all the lawful acts the most detestable to Allah is divorce.”*¹² This permission is not a simple solution to be applied in case of little troubles by anyone. The warning of our Prophet (saw) is quite clear: *“Three are serious when they are serious, and serious when they are in jest: Marriage, divorce, and return.”*¹³

If the couples cannot handle the stage of “emotional divorce”, then they end up with “legal divorce”. Legal divorce is ending officially the marriage, which already ended emotionally. At this stage, the relations between husband and wife come to an end, but if they have children, their relation

from this aspect has to continue. Because this is the divorce of spouses, not children! Divorced couples are still mother and father. It is their most important duty to save their children from the ruin with minimum harm even though their responsibilities towards each other as spouses ended.

The next stage after the legal divorce, which is called “social divorce”, awaits the couple. Relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues will hear the news somehow. Explaining the situation to the people around them suitably will cause a new sorrow in the tired hearts every time.

Every stage has its own hardships, sensitive points; and most importantly, their own rules and morals. Divorce is a right given to people when they cannot overcome the conflicts, but using this right by force and leading family members to unwanted results is oppression.

Couples need to know what they will face during the hard process of divorce, and they need to be ready for the moments which require control. This preparation will help them review their decision to divorce, or at least lead them to end their marriage with a properly-managed divorce process.

Before Getting Divorced!

Is divorce a magical touch? Will all problems end when you divorce? Or will divorce leave the couples face to face with new problems? In fact, those who end their marriage with an emotional depression soon after realize that their problems do not end with the divorce. They face with new problems like material and nonmaterial depression, feeling of failure and unhappiness, mental and physical health problems, over worries related to growing their kids. Then, we need to be “realistic” before taking the decision of divorce.



Two individuals who started to live under the same roof by getting married cannot be expected to share the same opinions in everything while we have disagreements even with the people whom we have blood ties and with whom come from the same culture even they are our first-degree relatives such as our mother, father, and siblings. If the decision of divorce originates from perspective differences and communication problems, then it is better to give time to the relationship, give one more chance, and focus on the positive sides. This is what Allah (swt) expects from us: *“And live with them (i.e. your wives) in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.”*¹⁴

Did You Think Once Again?

Getting divorced... Getting rid of an unhappy marriage but at the same time approving the separation of a family... According to the data of Turkish Statistical Institute, while 592.775 couples got married in 2011, 120.117 couples got divorced. 40% of the divorced couples separated their ways from each other in the first five years, and 24% of them after 16 years. The most common one in Turkey is “high-conflict divorce”. Taking even small and simple mistakes under the title of “high-conflict”, and confusing patience with “learned helplessness” instead of considering it as a virtue speed up the separation of families.

“For both men and women, the most logical way is to think again about the decision to get divorced, and to remember the responsibilities as much as the rights.”

Have You Tried to Find the Real Reasons of Problems?

Divorce is a result. There may be many reasons leading the spouses to this result. Behind the problems that occur in human relations generally lie the feelings that are not confessed and kept inside. Not expressing the feelings in the right way leads people to get angry and blame the other side. When we face a problem, we immediately start searching for a guilty. However, we should analyze which feelings and thoughts are in the basis of what we have experienced instead of blaming or laying burden to someone else. Trying to understand the feelings of both ourselves and our spouse, then correcting our faults first and getting prepared for the things which can be changed may lead us to positive results we cannot even imagine.

Think one more time before getting divorced if you are ending; a marriage “full of unsolvable problems” or a marriage “which could be saved by efforts”!

Have You Consulted Wise People and Arbitrators?

The couples who start thinking that they cannot sustain their marriage get away from the positive thoughts about their spouses in time as they focus on negative sides of each other instead. They cannot see the full side of the glass and lose their ability to judge the events objectively. In such cases, it is recommended by Allah (swt) that they ask for help from wise people who have high skills of problem solving and communication, care about the power and importance of family unity, and who are accepted to be reliable by both sides. If these peacemakers make efforts to pacify the spouses



objectively with good intentions, it is expressed in the Holy Qur'an that a divine help will be bestowed as well: *“And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things].”*¹⁵

The Prophet of Mercy (saw) also arbitrated to end marital conflicts, listened to both sides, and made efforts to reconcile them. Isn't it an example for us that he supported his daughter's marriage as a father and helped them in troubled times? For instance, once our Prophet (saw) went to his daughter's house and asked when he couldn't find Ali at home: “Where is the son of my uncle?” His daughter Fatima told that they discussed and he left home, and that's why he did not stay with her during afternoon break. Thereupon, our Prophet started searching for Ali and went to the masjid upon learning that Ali was sleeping there. Ali was still sleeping in an absent-minded and disorganized manner. His clothes were messy with sand on his back... While wiping the sand off his clothes with his hands, our Prophet (saw) was also calming him down with his humble voice: “Stand up the father of sand, stand up!” When they turned home together, the problems were solved with the touch of such a merciful and lovely father.¹⁶

However, arbitration of wise people would not be enough to sustain the marriage sometimes. Because, for some marriages, ending would be a better decision than continuing. Abdullah ibn Umar tells us what happened to his cousin. The young girl got married with a well-known Companion, Uthman ibn Madh'un upon insistence. Having started with worries, she could not embrace this marriage in any way. She did not have either consent or peace in that marriage. Her search for a solution finally ended with our beloved Prophet.



Her mother explained her situation to our Prophet and asked him to arbitrate between them by saying “My daughter is not happy with this at all.” Our Prophet listened her problems, and understood that this marriage could not be sustained. Then, he called Uthman and asked him to divorce his wife.¹⁷

Have You Consulted a Family Counselor or a Divorce Therapist?

Marital discords are contagious; they affect not only one member of the family but all of them. The one who has problem with his or her spouse starts having problem with the teenager at home, or having difficulty in communicating with children. Therefore, the effort to overcome the troubles is a favor deserved by whole family, and it is a quite valuable step to have support for such a favor from a counselor who knows the intra-familial balance well.



In some cases, individuals can solve the issues by themselves through improving their awareness or having support from their family or friends. In some other situations, heavier and more complicated problems are experienced for which an expert support is needed. Taking a professional help in such situations may prevent ruining the family with the deception of “insolubility”.

An Expert

Offers new suggestions to solve relationship and communication problems between you.

—

Tries to create opportunities for you by focusing on the solution of problems to continue your marriage.

—

Offers different approaches to make you sure if you are taking the right decision or not by opening different windows.

—

Eases your adaptation to your new life if you decide to get divorced.

—

Helps you with the things you need to do to protect your children’s mental health if you took a divorce decision as a family with children.

Are You Sure that You Tried Every Way?

The spouses in incompatible relationships turn into individuals who give up searching for solutions, who cannot find happiness, and also do not accept to get divorced. This is a vicious circle in which the same discussions are made and the same results are taken. Family ties weaken, feelings are consumed, and relations lose their value. By this way, the beliefs that there is no way out increase.

Yet, our ancestors say that human is “like a house which has forty doors”. The doors we try to enter may sometimes be closed on our face. Instead of insisting on opening the closed door, the best way in such cases is to try another door and search for another way out.

Before deciding to get divorced, knowing that you have done everything you could do helps you to spend the divorce process and afterwards peacefully. You should try every way, and you should not give up not to say “I wish” in the future...

Children in the Divorce Process

The spouses are separated from each other with divorce; yet, the home of children is destroyed. Children are affected more than the spouses during divorce even if there are no discussions or a negative atmosphere. For this reason, the most important thing that spouses need to think first is not how to share the property or how much spousal support to be paid. Children who will have to live without their mother or father must be the priority.



As a big amount of divorces are in the first five years of marriage in Turkey, “infants” are the most harmed ones. The most important need for children in their first five years, in which the character is developed, is to grow up in an environment of trust and love with their family. However, the relation of parents-children, which is damaged at every stage of divorce, may cause irreparable harm in their minds.

The attitudes of parents are quite determinant in how much the kid will be affected by divorce. There will surely be difference for children, who see all process, between an end of marriage considering the law and respecting morals, and an end which is performed in enmity without honor or rules! Therefore, when it comes to divorce of spouses with children, it must be remembered that the parents will always have a tie between as the issues of children such as education, health, or marriage require to be handled and decided by parents together.

How is the Decision to Divorce Explained to Children?

While expressing your decision to divorce to your children, choose appropriate words according to children’s development stage. If the child is under the age of five, they will not be able to realize the situation precisely. Try to explain with simple and short sentences that you still love them a lot as parents, you will live at different homes from now on, and their room and toys will be still with them. Try to be careful not to bring up the topic to the agenda unless questions arise by them.

The children above five may ask more questions and ask for more detailed information. They may react in different ways such as becoming introverted or expressing their pain by anger. It is of high importance in this hard process for your children to tell your decision to divorce with your spouse



together, and to avoid blaming each other in front of them. Explain to them that you cannot get on well with each other despite your efforts, and that you cannot sustain a peaceful environment any more. While explaining the decision, avoid giving hope or telling lies that you may reunite.

School-age children may think that they are the reason why their parents are separated, and behave with the feeling of guilt. Therefore, they insistently try to reconcile their parents. In such cases, you should clearly state that this decision belongs to you, and that they don't have any responsibility or mistakes.

Does Every Child Go through Serious Psychological Problems after Divorce?

Of course not. Growing up with one of the parents in a peaceful environment instead of an atmosphere full of violence between parents is salvation for children as well. Besides, a sudden divorce decision in a marriage which seemed to be good on the outside, or the wrong attitudes of parents towards children during and after divorce will open door to the psychological problems. By considering the negative results of the research made on children from broken homes, it should be noted that these children must be behaved attentively and devotedly. The suggestions below may help you take right steps as parents:

*** Tell your children that you understand them.**

Remember the fact while struggling with your own feelings in divorce process that your children will have more difficulty in controlling their negative feelings. Tell them that you understand their feelings, that your divorce may make them unhappy for a while, even their success at school may



decrease. Explain to them that there is no decrease in your love towards them and that they must not feel guilty, incomplete, alone or embarrassed because of this unpleasant incident.

*** Don't indulge or scare them.**

Feeling pity for your children by thinking that they are seriously harmed because of the divorce, doing everything they want with the feeling of mercy, and tolerating their mistakes more than necessary may bring forth negative results. Yes, you must be understanding and patient towards them, but this attention of yours must not turn them into a

troublemaker and an unlovely character. On the other hand, don't threaten them to send to their mother or father or a faraway place when you get angry with them.

***Keep children out of your conflicts with your spouse.**

Children's feeling of trust that was damaged due to divorce may be recovered by seeing mother and father constantly at regular intervals instead of seeing them inconstantly and irregularly. Help your children to adopt one of the homes as their home and save them from dilemma. Don't put a damper on the time they spent with their mother or father. Don't let a kid or a young teenager with their all inexperience to interfere the process you have with your spouse and don't force them to take side among you.

***Postpone the changes.**

Changing the things which turned into habits throughout many years such as home, school, city or baby-sitter will cause children to be damaged more. Try to extend such changes over a period of time as much as you can.

***Don't deprive them of their mother or father.**

"Blood is thicker than water" says a proverb. The person you divorced will remain as your children's parent forever even though you don't want to be spouse with them anymore. Your children have the right to contact with their parents unless they are mentally or physically harmed by them. With an expert's statement, "Separating children from their mother or father is not a punishment for the spouse, but for the children." Our Prophet (saw) was sensitive in this point as well: "*Whoever causes separation between a mother and her child, then Allah will separate him from his beloved on the Day of Resurrection.*"¹⁸



What is Waiting for You after the Divorce?

A new and hard stage waits to be overcome after the divorce legally takes place. Then the days in which the words “we got divorced” are uttered come, relatives and friends are informed that marriage ended. It is not happy news like marriage. Even the couples who really need to get divorced feel sad inside while expressing it.

The two are not spouses any more, and they enter another stage called “social divorce”. This stage also has some features and rules that requires sensitivity. Ending a marriage officially means “reestablishing life”. After recovering from the first shock, the topics need to be solved are listed: Where the ex-spouses will live, the days to see children (if there are), and new financial problems... The negative meaning attributed to divorce, and the negative perspective towards divorced women in the society fans the flames of psychological problems along with financial problems. For women, even returning home of her family or living alone constitutes a problem.



At least some of these negativities are experienced after the divorce:

- ❖ Lovelessness
- ❖ Valuelessness
- ❖ Deprivation of Care
- ❖ Feeling like a loser
- ❖ Loneliness
- ❖ Rebellion
- ❖ Guiltiness
- ❖ Emptiness
- ❖ Increase of financial responsibilities
- ❖ Desperation
- ❖ Distrust
- ❖ Exclusion
- ❖ Anger and grudge
- ❖ Rivalry

While thinking that they will be relieved with the feeling of freedom after divorce, people struggle with the feeling of void inside while at the same time trying to overcome the new problems. They start slowly drawing away from the events of married friends that they used to join with their spouse, establish new friendships with divorced friends and start searching for a new social circle.

Private life between spouses are another realm that needs to be attentive. Spouses should not overshadow on their privacy after divorce just as they did during marriage. With the expression of our Prophet (saw), *“Verily, the most evil of*



people in front of Allah on the Day of Resurrection is a man who is intimate with his wife and then spreads her secrets.”¹⁹

On the other hand, the spouses do not have the right to intervene each other's new private life both legally and morally, which is also out of question in terms of religion. Especially, the belief of some men that they have a voice on their ex-wife represents the primitive mentality of the *Jabiliyya*.

If the necessary sensitivity is shown during the divorce process in accordance with the law and moral values, the marriage will be ended with minimum harm for both sides. Allah (swt) promises hope to the divorced people in such cases: *“But if they separate [by divorce], Allah will enrich each [of them] from His abundance. And ever is Allah Encompassing and Wise.”²⁰*

1 Nasai, Talaq, 53.

2 Furqan, 25:74.

3 Abu Dawud, Taharah, 94.

4 Ibn Majah, Nikah, 1.

5 Tirmidhi, Rada, 11.

6 Muslim, Hajj, 147.

7 Abu Dawud, Talaq, 17-18.

8 Nisa, 4:128.

9 Taghabun, 64:14.

10 Baqarah, 2:229-231.

11 Bukhari, Mawakit al-Salat, 4.

12 Abu Dawud, Talaq, 3.

13 Tirmidhi, Talaq, 9.

14 Nisa, 4:19.

15 Nisa, 4:35.

16 Muslim, Fadhail al-Sahaba, 38.

17 Hakim, Mustadrak, II, 381.

18 Tirmidhi, Buyu', 52.

19 Muslim, Nikah, 123.

20 Nisa, 4:130.

