50731 - Smacking and Pinching a One-Year Old Child

the question

for wealth and offspring. Allaah has blessed me with a beautiful child, but I have strange feelings towards this child. When he cries, I lose control and I smack him, pinch him etc, then afterwards I feel physically and mentally shaken. I love him dearly and when people pick him up he laughs and plays with them, but when he sees me he cries and screams. My son is one year old. Please note that I pray and fast.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This manner of treating your son is very strange. There follows some advice, perhaps Allaah will cause you to benefit from it:

1 – A small child needs food, drink, sleep and air, and love and compassion are among the best kinds of food that the parents can give their child. Giving physical food without this emotional nourishment is neglect of the child's natural need for both.

2 – Showing compassion to the child brings positive results. Hence we are advised to breastfeed the child naturally so that the goodness of food and drink will be combined with the goodness of being in the proper place, which is his mother's lap. Hence modern science has discovered the great effects that mother's milk has on the physical and emotional development of the child and – conversely – the negative effects of depriving the child of his mother's milk and care. Societies in which violence towards children is widespread have become societies in which crime and evildoing has become widespread.

Some sociologists have stated that the parent's ongoing smacking and rebuking of their children leads to psychological complexes in the child and increases family violence. This leads to a problem which is difficult to confront, because violence in the home leads to violence in society,

which becomes widespread, and the victims of this violence in turn inflict psychological terrorism on individuals, which threatens the security of the society.

3 – The one who is harsh towards his children is going against sound human nature (fitrah) and sharee'ah (Islamic law). Allaah has created people with love for their children. Hence Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not enjoin parents to care for their children in this manner (because it is innate). On the contrary, Islam enjoins children to care for their fathers and mothers, and warns them against disobeying them.

As for going against sharee'ah: smacking children and not showing compassion towards them is indicative of a lack of mercy in the heart of the one who does that, which is a sign of being deprived of the mercy of Allaah, may He be exalted.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) kissed al-Hasan ibn 'Ali when al-Aqra' ibn Haabis al-Tameemi was sitting with him. Al-Aqra' said: I have ten children and I have never kissed one of them. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5651) and Muslim (2318).

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: Do you kiss children? We do not kiss them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "What can I do for you if Allaah has removed mercy from your heart?" Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5652).

Our Prophet's compassion towards children was so great that he would shorten the prayer because of their crying, out of compassion towards them and their mothers.

It was narrated from Anas ibn Maalik that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I start to pray intending to make it long, then I hear the crying of a child, so I make it short because of his mother's distress."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (677) and Muslim (470).

4 – You should understand that you are falling short in raising your child by doing this, and you may see the evil consequences of it in this world before the Hereafter. How can such treatment produce a good upbringing and a sound, righteous child?

5 – You should understand that a child's crying does not happen for no reason, rather every kind of crying has its cause. So you should feel compassion towards him when he is crying, so that you will be motivated to find the cause, such as sickness or hunger. You should not be quick to smack him or pinch him or mistreat him, lest you add another reason, which is crying because of pain.

A psychologist said: Psychologists think that crying, like other behaviour, is usually a means of relieving tension. So crying, screaming, yelling, breaking toys and possessions and fidgeting are all ways of expressing tension that is connected to anger or grief, because the frustration that the child is faced with may create aggressiveness in him, so crying is a way to expressing this aggression and getting rid of it. Not crying may be indicative of suppression of this aggression, which may then move to the subconscious where the child may forget it, but it will not be hidden completely and it may manifest itself when he grows older in the form of sickness, anxiety, and aggression whenever the child finds an opportunity.

6 – You should also note that shaking a child may cause mental or physical disability, so how about if he is smacked?

American researchers have warned that shaking children may cause death or severe mental disability. Researchers have explained that destruction of the brain may occur when a child is shaken violently. It may cause them to die or may cause nerve damage and mental disability, such as learning disabilities, mental paralysis, blindness, convulsions, difficulty in reading, attention deficit disorder and other educational problems.

One female specialist said: Infants' crying is annoying and disturbing, but it is their only way to express their needs, so first of all we need to find out the reason why the infant is crying and hasten to tend to it, instead of shaking him. She emphasized that boys are more likely to be

harmed than girls, as 57% of victims are male.

Researchers noted that shaking a child violently when he cries or throwing him up in the air and catching him, or shaking him violently on one's knees or jogging with him are all factors that may lead to brain damage, as the result of the brain being knocked against the skull, which causes blood vessels to break and leads to haemorrhaging in the brain. Experts have pointed out that nursing infants and newborns are the most likely to suffer disability resulting from shaking, in comparison to older children.

Conclusion: You have to fear Allaah and not go against the fitrah (sound human nature) or the laws of Allaah. You should be compassionate towards your beautiful child and do not cause him to be lost or disabled, then you would have to live your whole life with this mistake. Look at the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions, and let them be a good example for you.

Strive to make du’aa’ (supplication) and recite ruqyah (incantations) for yourself, your family and your child, lest you be afflicted by the evil eye or witchcraft. Ruqyah is beneficial in all cases.

We hope that you will be guided aright and that your child will be safe from harm. We ask Allaah to help you to raise him soundly.

And Allaah knows best.