## 355 - Children's Character

### the question

Many people are concerned about their childrens unstable characters and the effects of luxury on their personalities. How can we introduce strength and honour into our childrens characters?

### Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The issue referred to in the question is one of the most serious problems in raising children nowadays. Some of the Islamic solutions to this problem and ways of instilling strength and honour in our childrens character are listed below:

Takniyyah (using the kunya or patronymic in addressing children)

Calling a young boy "Abu Foolaan" ("Father of so-and-so) or a young girl "Umm Foolaan" ("Mother of so-and-so") will make the child feel more responsible and grown up, so he will become more mature and will feel above normal childishness. The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) used to give kunyas to children. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) was the best of people in attitude and manners. I had a brother whom people used to call Abu Umayr. I think he was just past the age of weaning, and whenever he came along the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) would say to him, O Abu Umayr, what did the nughayr do (Ya Abaa Umayr ma faala al-nuhgayr)?" (The nughayr was a small bird with which he used to play). (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 5735).

Umm Khaalid bint Khaalid reported that the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) was given some clothes, among which was a small black garment made of silk, known as a khameesah. He said, "Who do you think I should give this to?" The people were silent, then he said, "Bring me Umm Khaalid" and she was carried to him (which indicates that she was very

young). He picked up the garment and put it on her, saying, "Enjoy it until it wears out." There was a green or yellow spot on it, and he said, "O Umm Khaalid, this is sanaah" sanaah means "beautiful" in Ethiopian. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 5375).

According to another report also narrated by al-Bukhaari: "He looked at the khameesah and pointed to it, saying, O Umm Khaalid, this is sanaa, O Umm Khaalid, this is sanaa." Sanaa in Ethiopian means beautiful. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 5397).

Taking them to gatherings and letting them sit with grown-ups

This will increase their understanding and wisdom, and make them try to imitate adults, as well as keeping them from spending too much time on games and entertainment. The Sahaabah used to bring their children with them when they went and sat with the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him). One of the stories that describe this was narrated by Muaawiyah ibn Qurrah from his father, who said: "The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) used to sit with a group of his Companions. One man had his little son with him; he would bring him from behind and make him sit in front of him" (Reported by al-Nisaai and classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Ahkaam al-Janaaiz).

Talking to them about the heroic deeds of earlier and subsequent generations, Islamic battles and Muslim victories

This will encourage them to be brave, which is one of the most important parts of being strong and honourable. Al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam had two children, one of whom was present at some of the battles, and the other of whom used to play with the old battle scars on his fathers shoulder. This was reported by Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, who said that the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) said to al-Zubayr on the day of Yarmook, "Will you go and attack, and we will go with you?" He said, "If I attacked, you would be lying." They said, "No, we will do (as we promised)." So he launched an attack (against the Romans), penetrating their ranks and passing straight through, but no one was with him. Then he turned around and came back, and the Romans seized the reins of his horse and wounded him twice in the shoulder.

Between these two new wounds was a scar from a wound he had received at Badr. Urwah said, "When I was little, I used to play by putting my fingers in those scars." Urwah said, " Abdullaah ibn al-Zubayr was with him on that day. He was ten years old. He (al-Zubayr) put him on a horse and entrusted him to the care of another man." (Reported by al-Bukhari, 3678).

Commenting on this hadith, Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Al-Zubayr felt that his son Abdullaah was brave and chivalrous, so he put him on a horse, but he feared that he might attempt to do more than he was able, so he put another man with him so that he could feel that he was safe from the attacks of the Romans should he become distracted by the fighting." Ibn al-Mubaarak reported from Hishaam ibn Urwah from his father from Abdullaah ibn al-Zubayr that he was with his father on the day of Yarmook, and when the mushrikoon (pagans)ran away, he attacked and started killing their wounded, i.e., he finished off every wounded soldier whom he found. This indicates that he was strong and brave from childhood.

Teaching them good manners

Among the manners that should be taught are those described in the hadith (prophetic narration) narrated by Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him): "The young should greet the old, the passerby should greet one who is sitting, and the small group should greet the larger group." (Al-Bukhaari, 5736).

Giving them the praise and respect they deserve in front of others

This is made clear by the following hadith: Sahl ibn Sad (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) was brought a cup and he drank from it. There was a boy, the youngest of all the people, on his right and some elders on his left. He said, "O young boy, will you allow me to give this to these elders?" The boy said, "I will not give away my share of your blessings to anyone, O Messenger of Allah," so he gave the cup to him. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 2180)

Teaching them manly sports

-such as archery, swimming and horse riding.

Avoiding humilating them, especially in front of others

Never belittling their ideas, and encouraging them to take part

Consulting them and asking for their opinions

Giving them responsibilities in accordance with their age and abilities

Teaching them to be brave as appropriate including how to speak in public

Making sure their clothes are modest and protecting them from inappropriate clothing, hairstyles, movements and ways of walking

Making sure that boys do not wear silk, as this is only for women

Avoiding extravagance, luxury, laziness and idleness

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Get used to a rough life, for luxury does not last forever".

Avoiding entertainment or pastime gatherings, singing, music and other wastes of time, because these go against strength, honour and seriousness

These are some of the ways and means which will increase strength and honour, and protect our children.

Allah is the One Who guides to the Straight Path