

## Chapter 11: Raising Children

### 40 Akhlāq Points on Interacting with your Child

*Mostly derived from Rayhāneye Beheshtī, pg. 221-241*

1. Give gifts to your daughter(s) first.
2. Play with your children.<sup>1</sup> This has an important effect in the training and nurturing of your child. Our leaders in Islam have stressed the importance of this issue, and recommended it highly to Muslims.  
  
It is narrated from the Prophet (S): “The person who has a child, should behave like a child with him.”<sup>2</sup> It is also narrated from Imām ʿAlī (as): “Anybody who has a child, should, for his/her training, bring themselves down to their level of childhood.”<sup>3</sup>
3. Do not hit your child when they cry, because it is narrated from the Prophet (S): “Do not hit your babies since their crying has a meaning. The first 4 months of crying is professing the unity of Allāh (SwT), the second 4 months of crying is sending blessings upon the Prophet (S) and his family and the third 4 months of crying is the baby praying for the parents.”<sup>4</sup>
4. Kiss your child. It has been narrated from one of the Imāms that: “Kiss your children a great deal because for every kiss, you will be granted a Divine heavenly rank which would otherwise take 500 years to achieve!”<sup>5</sup>

It is also narrated that a man once came to the Prophet (S) and said: “I have never kissed my child.” The Prophet (S) said: “Surely a man like this will be a resident of the fire of hell.”

5. By saying Salām to your child, build their sense of personality and character. If youngsters say Salām, it is obligatory for elders to reply; however, it was a characteristic of the Prophet (S) to say Salām first, whether to elders or youngsters.<sup>6</sup>
6. Do not ridicule the actions of your child, nor call them silly.

7. Do not order or forbid your child too much, as this emboldens them and leads to rebellious behaviour when older.

8. Build your children's characters by respecting them. We read in traditions that the Prophet (S) ﷺ prolonged his sajdah until his grandson came down from his shoulders, and at other times he recited *al-Fatiḥah* al-Jam'at faster as he heard children of praying mothers crying. Likewise, Imam ḥAlī (a) used to ask his children questions about religious matters in the presence of others, and even passed on people's questions to them to answer.

When parents don't satisfy the natural urges and desires of the child, the child then resorts to wrong ways and means (often linked to sin) to try and give himself the necessary push to build his sense of self and importance. Personality, independence, will, self-trust, and likewise, weakness, baseness and lack of self-trust are all characteristics the foundations of which are in the lap of the father and bosom of the mother. A child who has not been treated like another human being or a valuable member of the family cannot be expected to have a well formed personality in adulthood.

9. Keep your promises. Keeping promises in Islam is a sign of one's faith, and Allāh (SwT) mentions it in the Qur'an.

﴿ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ﴾

“And fulfil the covenants; indeed all covenants are accountable.”<sup>7</sup>

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴾

“And those who keep their trusts and covenants.”<sup>8</sup>

Keeping promises is one of the pillars of the prosperity of mankind and one of the best qualities of one's Akhlāq, its base lying in one's raising and training. It is narrated from the Prophet (S) ﷺ: “Like your children and treat them with affection and kindness. When you make a promise to them, you must keep it, because children consider you their sustainer.”<sup>9</sup>

10. For the sexual training of children, the parents must first teach their children not to enter their bedroom without asking permission. Allāh (SwT) has pointed to this important point in Surat Nūr, Verse 58:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ

مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ ۗ

“O you who have faith! Let your permission be sought by your slaves and those of you who have not reached puberty three times: before the dawn prayer, and when you put off your garments at noon, and after the night prayer. These are three times of privacy for you.”

It is also recommended to keep a close watch and control over their actions with others and prevent those actions that increase one’s sexual instinct (e.g. going out in mixed gatherings). It is important to mention that their curiosity is very high in childhood. In addition, they are very sensitive to what they watch and see, and fearlessly want to put it into action and try it out for themselves, without knowing or thinking that what they are doing may not be right.

## Some useful points to be noted

- a. Mothers should be careful that when tending to the cleanliness of their children (e.g. giving them baths), even newborns, other children are not present, especially those who are of a different gender.
- b. From childhood, parents should not play with the child’s genital organs, or even their chest and thighs.
- c. Never leave children alone or in private for long periods of time and when they are going through an inquisitive phase. It is also not recommended to leave them unattended with someone else during this time, especially a brother or sister.
- d. Do not let girls of 6 years sit on a non-maḥram man’s lap or be kissed by non-maḥram men.
- e. Do not let girls be naked in front of others. In particular, their chests and thighs should be covered.
- f. Create love for ḥalāl in your child, as Allāh (SwT) clearly states in the Noble Qur`an that ḥalāl makes one far from ugly acts.

ۗ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ

“Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs.”<sup>10</sup>

11. Spoiling a child creates weakness, and a lack of will and determination. These types of children trouble their parents in their childhood, and make them encounter many problems.

## The spoilt children themselves face two types of problems

a. They have expectations that the rest of society will, like their parents, comfort and respect them no matter what, and carry out their wishes without any questions. When they realise that people will not only not do this, but will also ridicule these expectations, they become upset and feel humiliated and debased.

b. Such experiences form the base of contempt and make them angry, aggressive, lacking patience and weak. They become the type of people who think low of others and treat them with harsh words and actions.

12. Nothing silences the sense of self-trust in a child more than forcing him to do things they may not have the capability of doing. This is especially the case when, if the child is unsuccessful, it is followed by belittling statements like: “Don’t bother trying, you can’t, you don’t have the capability.”

13. Pray for your children, both during pregnancy and afterwards.<sup>11</sup>

14. Reminders and requests should be given with gentleness and softness so as not to create a barrier between parents and child. One day, Imam Husain called his children and his brother’s children together and said to them: “All of you are the children of today’s society and, it is hoped, the leaders of tomorrow’s society.

So learn and make efforts in the acquisition of knowledge, and whoever does not have a good memory and cannot memorise the subjects taught by the teacher in teaching sessions, (should) write them down and keep them at home.” Thus we see that the Imam created the love of acquiring knowledge in them without using techniques like scaring or forcing them, but by making them understand that knowledge is the path to honour and esteem.

15. If your child is respected, he/she is less likely to rebel against the rules of the house. Respect and good interaction between parent and child are the bases in forming the child’s character. It is narrated from the Prophet (S): “Respect your children and talk to them with (good) manners and a likeable method.”

16. A good role model is someone who adjusts their children’s desires wisely and with the correct techniques.

17. Foster the faith of your child. Children that have been raised from the beginning with faith in Allah (SwT) have a strong will and powerful soul and from their early years are mature and courageous; this is easily observed by their actions and words. The readiness of the soul of a child to learn faith and Akhlaq is like fertile ground in which any type of seed can grow. Therefore, parents should teach their child love for Allah (SwT) and the Ahlul Bayt (as) and leaders of Islam from the earliest opportunities.

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (as): “Teach traditions to your children as soon as possible, before opposers (to your beliefs) reach them before you do.”<sup>12</sup>

In traditions, parents who do not take the future life (aakhirat) of their children into consideration are reproached. It is narrated that the Prophet (S)'s gaze fell on some children and he said: "Woe upon the children of the end of time (before the coming of the 12th Imām) because of the disliked methods of their fathers."

It was asked of him: "Oh Prophet (S) of Allāh (SwT)! Because of their polytheistic fathers?" He replied, "No, because of their Muslim fathers who didn't teach their children any religious duties. They were content with worthless material things for them. I am weary and exempt of such people..."<sup>13</sup>

It is said that in communist Russia, they used to eliminate the existence of God from the ground roots level; for example, when a child was hungry or thirsty their parents would let them cry and say to them, "Ask God to provide for you." When the children would do this, and still remain hungry and thirsty, they used to say to them, "See, you cried to God he gave you nothing!

Now ask Lenin (the Russian leader) to provide for you!" When the children would do this, then only would they give them food and drink. The effect of this was that it was instilled in the children from childhood that God doesn't exist through this very deluded manner. This same concept is condemned in Surat Yūṣuf, Verse 47:

قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُ مَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

"The faithless say to the faithful, "Shall we feed (someone) whom Allāh (SwT) would have fed, had He wished? You are only in manifest error."

However, this is a wonderful lesson to us as to how Allāh (SwT) should be introduced to a child from young age. Whenever a child gets to that age that he understands that whenever they desire something they need to ask their parents, their parents should ask them first to ask from Allāh (SwT). Then when they provide the desired object, they should stress that it reached them through the blessings of Allāh (SwT). Thus, as they grow up, they will be able to see Allāh (SwT) as the underlying principal behind every action.

18. Stay away from wrist-grabbing and bossy behaviour with children.

19. One of the duties of parents is to foster the innate nature of telling the truth in children. Their behaviour in the house should be such that this becomes a habit. However, this is one of the more difficult areas of raising a child and attention to knowledge and action is very important.

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S): "May Allāh (SwT) have mercy on the person that helps his child in (doing) good." The narrator of the tradition asked: "How?" In his reply, the Prophet (S) gave 4

instructions:

- a. Whatever the child has in his power and has carried out, accept it.
- b. Don't expect that which is hard for him.
- c. Prevent him from sin.
- d. Don't lie to him, or do silly things.

20. Do not use fear as a method of raising your child, as this causes damage to their personality and leads to psychological problems. In particular, excess punishment by the mother weakens the relationship and value that the child has for his mother in his heart. Often a look or silence can be more effective in making the child understand their mistake than hitting them or scaring them.

21. Cuddling and kissing a child is one of their soul-foods, and it is necessary that enough of this is given to them. One of the reasons that a child is crying may be that they are thirsty for this expression of love. Children who grow up with plenty of love have confident personalities which are not swayed by the difficulties that crop up in life.

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (as): "Certainly Allah (SwT) shows mercy upon His servants who have strong love for their offspring."<sup>14</sup> It is also narrated from the Imam: "Prophet (S) Musa said the following to Allah (SwT) when he was on the mountain of Tur: "O Allah (SwT)! Which act is the best one according to you?" Allah (SwT) replied: "Loving children is the best act."<sup>15</sup>

22. Parents have a responsibility to make their children understand the indecency of sin and create an aversion for people who partake in this, and likewise, to reproach the bad and encourage the child's good actions. However, reproach and admiration has its time and place and should not be overdone as this itself can corrupt a child.

23. The beds of children of 6 years and above should be separated from each other, even if they are both daughters or both sons.<sup>15</sup>

24. As well as the natural characteristics that the child inherits from his parents, the environment and Nurture of the child have a profound effect. It is highly unlikely that in a family that does not function properly, a normal and natural child is raised.

In particular, the instructions of parents only have an effect if the parents lead by example. The first step of raising children is the Nurture of the self. Somebody who does not possess good Akhlaq cannot guide another to this, and similarly, hot-tempered parents cannot usually raise a calm and patient child.

Children need to be taught that characteristics such as lying, back-biting, bad language, etc. are disliked, and naturally, the child will refrain from such when the parents themselves have set such

examples.

25. There should be a difference in the order and expectations of the behaviour of a child inside the home, and out. At home, allow the child to play freely.

26. Always bear the unexpected behaviour of your child to a limit and do not always take the mistakes of your child to be unforgivable, so that you are not always compelled to punish. Patience, coping and forgiveness are a must when raising children. If your child has a quality that you do not like, it should be corrected in a wise manner without displaying contempt of the child, and the correct manner of doing things should be shown at the same time as stopping him/her from old ways.

When parents constantly tell the child off, they are belittling the child and not only are they not going to be successful in reforming the child, but are also going to create stubbornness in them. It is narrated from Imam °Alī (as): “Excess reproach fuels the fire of stubbornness.”<sup>16</sup>

27. When instructing your child, don't mention the names of other children constantly, or compare them with others.

28. Stories are a useful and important method of encouraging good qualities and characteristics, and discouraging bad ones, such as the rights of friends, faith, etc. The Noble Qur`an uses this method to do the same as mentioned in Surat Yusuf, Verse 111:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

***“There is certainly a moral in their accounts for those who possess intellect.”***

It is important to keep the following in mind when selecting stories:

- They should mention Allāh (SwT) in some form or the other, and be narrated with the intention of Nurturing the personality and characteristics of your child.
- Attention should be paid to the child's age, intelligence and mental state when choosing a story.
- There shouldn't be extremes, or lies or rumours far from the truth in the stories.
- They should contain answers to the questions of the child.
- The best stories should be chosen, just as Allāh (SwT) has stated in Surat Yusuf, Verse 3:

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ

***“We will recount to you the best of narratives.”***

f. Truth and righteousness should always prevail in the stories.

g. The main character (who is the role model) of the stories should not possess deviations or bad characteristics.

h. The stories should not be too lengthy or tiring for the child.

29. The mischievousness of your child in the early years is a sign of increased intelligence in the older years, so you shouldn't be too worried or punish it too much.

30. Make your children perform **Ṣalāt** from 7 years, and fast from 9 years, either half day or more or less, depending on their abilities.

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (as): “When our children reach 5 years of age, we tell them to pray **Ṣalāt**, so you tell your children to do this when they reach 7 years of age; and we tell our children at the age of 7 years to fast however much they have the ability to, half a day, or more, or less, and to break their fast when they become hungry or thirsty so that they get used to fasting and develop the ability for it, so you tell your children at the age of 9 years to fast however much they have the ability for, and when thirst overcomes them, to break their fast.”<sup>17</sup> and <sup>18</sup>

It is also narrated in a tradition: “We command our children to (do) the tasbeeh of Haṭrat Fāṭima, just like we command them to (pray) **Ṣalāt**.”<sup>19</sup>

It is important to remember that in acts of worship, just like everything else, there should be moderation. It is narrated from the Prophet (S): “Islam is the firm religion of Allāh (SwT). Go forth with moderateness and don't do something that will make your heart pessimistic to the worship of Allāh (SwT).”<sup>20</sup>

31. Do not be quick to accuse your children of lying because until 5 years, real lying or lying out of self-interest is rare; rather it is due to their active imagination, related to playing or creating astonishment in others, or to the child's exploration of the self.

32. Do not condemn a child who has tired you with their questions, as this weakens their sense of curiosity.

33. Try not to quarrel, especially in front of the child, as this troubles them greatly and affects their personality.

34. Children have a particular fear of the word death, especially death of their mother or father.

Therefore, where it is not necessary, don't speak constantly of your death, or the like. However, do teach your child the truth about death, clearly and calmly and without eliciting fear.

35. Find out about your child's talents and develop these as much as possible.



36. In terms of wordly aspects, do not over-saturate your child so that they go on the wrong path, nor under do it, as both these methods are dangerous.

37. The single most important cause of the happiness of the child is the kindness of the parents. No other quality can create happiness and calmness in a child-like love, and likewise, no other quality can disturb and trouble a child like the lack of affection from the parents.

Children of parents who are successful in this area try their best to please their parents and stay away from actions that will displease and trouble them, both in their childhood and when they are older. Therefore, love and affection not only satisfies the needs of the child but ensures their obedience.

Allāh (SwT) has referred to this impact of kindness in the Noble Qur`an, in Surat ʿAlī-’ Imrān, Verse 159:

﴿ فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ﴾

***“It is by Allāh (SwT)’s mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hardhearted, surely they would have scattered from around you.”***

It is important to note that there should not be extremes; too much love, just like too little, is destructive to the child; therefore practise the middle path and raise your child in such a manner that they are able to stand on their own two feet when older.

It is narrated from Imām as-ʿAdīq (as): “The worst fathers are those who, in their goodness and love towards their child, go over the limits and incline to excesses.”<sup>21</sup>

38. It is important that the parents give freedom and independence to their children according to their capabilities, so that they develop their initiative, innate independence and self-trust. At the same time, one must be careful not to exceed the limits so that children bring harm to themselves.

Some parents, either to free themselves of their responsibilities or because of misplaced love, leave their children completely to their own devices; however, before long, the child grows up without knowing anything of their responsibilities in the house, or otherwise. It is at this point parents try to instil this in their children, not surprisingly without any effect.

Other parents however, do the opposite and do not give their children enough opportunities to lead their own activities, constantly interfering in what their children are doing and how. Both are wrong and have negative consequences.

39. Raising your child properly is one of the responsibilities of a parent, and lack of attention to this responsibility is a cause of reproach of the Imāms.<sup>22</sup> One should try their best through various ways to create the love of Allāh (SwT) and the Ahlul Bayt (as), so that the child follows the right path. Insofar as

the requisite of love is acquaintance and knowledge, one should try their best to instil this in their children.<sup>23</sup>

40. Teach your children the Qur`an. Recitation of Qur`an in the home spreads the superior words of the truth and reality of Islam. Being in an environment where one is familiar with the Noble Qur`an, listens to the recitation of the Noble Qur`an and acts upon the instructions of the Noble Qur`an, has a strong effect on the child's life.

Every time parents recite Qur`an, children are encouraged to do the same and follow them in this habit. In particular, those children who have a naturally strong memory and are talented can easily memorise the Qur`an, which will benefit them forever. <sup>24</sup>

## 14 Ways to Instil the Love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) in your Children

*Mostly derived from Rayaneh Behesht, pg. 244-247*

1. Conception, the pregnancy period and the mentality of the parents all have an effect on the child in this area. As well as following the recommendations mentioned in this manual, the following things are emphasized: eating the tabarruk (blessed food) of the Imams, going to majalis and listening to lectures, being careful of what one sees or hears, listening to the Noble Qur`an, Nauhas and Qasidas when breastfeeding, etc.
2. Use Euphrates water and Khake Shaf (dirt from around the grave of Imam Husayn (as) in Kerbal).
3. Develop love and emotional attachment. Teach your children that love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) leads to them being loved by both Allah (SwT) and the Ahlul Bayt, and that the love of Allah (SwT) and the Ahlul Bayt (as) go hand in hand.
4. Pay attention to the Ahlul Bayt's (as) favour to their Sh'as. It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (as): "We know our Sh'as the same way one knows their family." It is also narrated that on the Day of Judgement, the Sh'as of Imam Al (as) will be satiated, saved and successful.
5. Relay the benefits of friendship with the Ahlul Bayt (as), such as: "Know that whoever dies with the love of the family of Muhammad is a martyr," and "Know that whoever dies with the love of the family of Muhammad, two doors to heaven will open from his grave."

The value of a person is according to how much love is in their hearts. The more valuable the object of love is, the more valuable is the one that loves.

6. Relay the need of this love. People usually are attracted to those things that satisfy their needs, and we are indeed extremely needy of the Ahlul Bayt (as). It is narrated from the Prophet (S): "Love of me and love of my Ahlul Bayt benefit one in 7 places where there is a lot of agitation: At the time of death, in

the grave, at the time of being raised from the grave, at the time of getting the book of deeds, at the time of accounting, at the time of the weighing of deeds, and at the time of (crossing the bridge of) **قيرق**.”<sup>25</sup>

7. Show your appreciation, and encouragement of certain acts, so as to make an example of those acts for the future. It is narrated that the Prophet (S) gave an Arab a piece of gold that had been gifted to him, because the Arab had presented himself humbly to All<sup>h</sup> (SwT) in his meaningful and sincere **قالت**. The Prophet (S) said: “I have given this gold to you because in the presence of All<sup>h</sup> (SwT), you praised him with goodness and deservingly.” However, it is important that encouragement should not be in the form of a bribe.

8. Practice what you preach, as the state of being and actions of the parent are indirect but important teachers of the child.

9. Celebrate and mourn the wiladats and wafats (birth and death anniversaries) of the Ahlul Bayt (as), such as Mu<sup>arram</sup>, °Eid al-Ghad<sup>r</sup>, the wiladat of the 12th Im<sup>m</sup>, etc. This includes not only going to mosque, but programs at home, madrasa, etc. There should be ties between the happiness of the child’s life and the lives of the Im<sup>ms</sup>, for example, making their wiladats a happy experience in the child’s memory by having a party, giving sweets, gifts, and thus indirectly having a beneficial effect on the child.

10. The child’s desire for growing up and reaching perfection is highest in the teenage years and early adulthood, and this causes them to automatically look for role models in life. This innate desire must be utilised well and the vacuum filled by the Ahlul Bayt (as).

Indeed, the Ahlul Bayt (as) are the manifestation of perfection of beauty of All<sup>h</sup> (SwT). Relaying their bravery, virtues, miracles, generosity, ability to cure people and solve difficulties and their station of intercession with All<sup>h</sup> (SwT) all have a beneficial effect in creating an attachment between the child and them.

One of the Qur`anic methods of Nurturing human beings is also by the use of good role models to guide one to the right path, as mentioned in Surat al-A<sup>z</sup>ib, Verse 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ  
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

***“In the Apostle of All<sup>h</sup> (SwT) there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to All<sup>h</sup> (SwT) and the Last Day, and remember All<sup>h</sup> (SwT) greatly.”***

11. Stay away from those acts that remove love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) from the child; this goes side by side with those actions that incite love. For example, if the many majalis that take place in the first 10 days of Mu<sup>arram</sup> are tiring and make the child weary, or the atmosphere is not good for the children in

that they are not treated well, or the child is forced to do lots of worship, these all can create obstacles to a close and loving relationship with the Ahlul Bayt (as).

12. Create a spiritual and meaningful atmosphere. Even if children are left mostly to their own devices and not pulled in this direction or that, if they are systematically placed in such an atmosphere, the attraction to the Ahlul Bayt (as) will automatically arise. Cultural and Islamic camps, ziyarats, going to the **ḥaram**, meetings with meaningful personalities, constantly being with friends of the Ahlul Bayt (as), community activities and participation in majalis, can all contribute to creating such an atmosphere.

13. Acquaint your child with books, articles, paintings and poems relating to the Ahlul Bayt (as). This can take place in a number of ways such as competitions, discussions, studying, writing of articles, exchanging opinions, etc.

14. Encourage the formation of youth groups specifically to commemorate events in the lives of the Ahlul Bayt (as), including activities such as azadari, plays, speeches, etc.

## Memorisation of the Noble Qur`an

*Mostly derived from Rayḥaneh Beheshtī, pg. 235-238*

Below are some points to help both parents and children memorise the Qur`an, so that this honourable act will provide continuous benefits forever, inshAllḥ (SwT).

1. Start memorisation of the Noble Qur`an with children at a young age, as it is said that what is learnt in the early years is never forgotten.

Indeed, it is narrated from Imām °Alī (as): “The hearts of youngsters are like uncultivated ground, it accepts whatever is strewn on it.”<sup>26</sup> It is also narrated from the Prophet (S): “Knowledge in childhood is like engraving on a stone.”

2. Memorise the Noble Qur`an with sincerity. All actions should be for seeking nearness and closeness to Allḥ (SwT) alone. As this is not something easily conveyed to children, they must be observed to see what their motivation for memorising the Noble Qur`an is. There is no harm in giving the child gifts to encourage them in the beginning, and then, as they get older, gradually and suitably making them aware of the true goal behind their actions.

3. Memorize each verse, section or Surat with the intention of a Maḥḥimīn (as) or a martyr, and gift that individual the reward upon memorising it. Not only does doing this increase one’s reward but these individuals will also become our intercessors. Thus one will insha-Allḥ (SwT) become the recipient of the increased mercy, blessings and tawfiq of Allḥ (SwT) and the verses will be memorised faster and better.

4. Trust in the eternal power of Allāh (SwT).

5. Never underestimate the power of prayer. For Allāh (SwT) says in Surat Furqan, Verse 77:

﴿ قُلْ مَا يَعْجَبُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ ﴾

**“Say: What store my Lord would set by you were it not for your supplication?”**

6. Have resolution, aspiration, perseverance and hope. To realise this goal, as well as desire and enthusiasm, struggle and determination is a must.

7. Eat simple, **halal** and pure foods as these are most effective in preparing the mind and memory.

8. Have a precise timetable. Without a good timetable, it will be a lengthy and difficult process, and maybe even impossible, to reach this noble goal. For memorisation, specify a certain time every day, a certain time-period as well as a certain amount (e.g. a number of pages per day). Do not wait for opportunities to come, rather actively create the necessary conditions required, and try not to skip even a day of carrying out the timetable.

9. Use a Qur`an that is simple, has a clear script, is easy to read and has tajwid rules in it. If you are not familiar with the translation of the Noble Qur`an, it is better to use one that has the translation under the script (or on the side), which is fluent and easy to read, as reading the translation as well will help memorisation. It is important that the numbering of the verses in the Qur`an is correct and reliable. The background of the pages should not be completely white, as this leads to tiredness of the eyes.

10. Correct your pronunciation by learning under the supervision of a competent reciter, or listening to a good reciter. The use of audio and video tapes and CDs is helpful for this as well.<sup>27</sup>

11. Repeat what you have learnt, melodiously and often. Don't move to a new set of verses/Surat until the previous set has been perfected. Recite it to others to correct and test the memorisation, and constantly return to what has been memorised in order to maintain it.

12. At the time of memorisation, have complete concentration and free the mind from all types of thoughts. This is one of the main factors leading to successful memorisation. Removal of all types of distractions, such as hunger, thirst, agitation, tiredness is necessary, as is the choosing of a suitable time and place.

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (as): “The recitor of the Noble Qur`an needs three things: a humble heart, a free body (from disturbances) and a private place.”

13. Be in Wuquf when memorising the Noble Qur`an, and as much as possible, face the Qibla.

14. Encourage participation in memorisation and recitation competitions and programs.

15. Recite the following Du<sup>o</sup> before beginning:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي بِتَرْكِ مَعَاصِيكَ أَبَدًا مَا أَبْقَيْتَنِي وَارْحَمْنِي مِنْ تَكْلُفٍ مَا لَا يُعْنِينِي وَارْزُقْنِي حُسْنَ الْمَنْظَرِ فِيمَا يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّي وَالْزِمْ قَلْبِي حِفْظَ كِتَابِكَ كَمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي وَارْزُقْنِي أَنْ أَتْلُوهُ عَلَى النَّحْوِ الَّذِي يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّي اللَّهُمَّ نَوِّرْ بَكِتَابِكَ بَصْرِي وَاشْرَحْ بِهِ صَدْرِي وَفَرِّحْ بِهِ قَلْبِي وَأَطْلِقْ بِهِ لِسَانِي وَاسْتَعْمِلْ بِهِ بَدَنِي وَقَوِّنِي عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَاعْنِي عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ لَا مُعِينَ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ.

“O All<sup>h</sup> (SwT)! Have mercy on me by enabling me to abandon acts of disobedience to You forever as long as You keep me alive, and have mercy on me by (keeping me from) burdening myself with that which does not concern me. And grant me that I may have a good opinion of all that I must do to make You pleased with me. And make my heart adhere to memorizing Your Book as You have taught me, and grant that I may recite it in the manner that makes You pleased with me. O All<sup>h</sup> (SwT)! Through Your Book, enlighten my sight, expand my breast, gladden my heart, make my tongue expressive and my body active. Make me strong for it (the Book), assist me therein. Verily there is no assistant for it save You; there is no god but You.”<sup>28</sup>

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1. Mustadrak al-Was<sup>il</sup>, vol. 15, pg. 171

2. Was<sup>il</sup> ash-Sh<sup>ah</sup>-a, vol. 21, pg. 386, no. 27659

3. Ibid., vol. 21, pg. 386, no. 27658

4. Bi<sup>gh</sup> al-Anw<sup>ar</sup>, vol. 60, pg. 381

5. Raw<sup>at</sup>ul W<sup>aidh</sup>n

6. Mustadrak al-Was<sup>il</sup>, vol. 2, pg. 69

7. S<sup>urat</sup> al-Isra, Verse 34

8. S<sup>urat</sup> al-Mu'min<sup>n</sup>, Verse 8

9. al-K<sup>af</sup>, vol. 6, pg. 49

10. S<sup>urat</sup> al-Ankab<sup>ut</sup>, Verse 45

11. Recommended supplications for a righteous child have been covered in more depth in Chapter 6: Pregnancy, Recommended Supplications.

12. al-K<sup>af</sup>, vol. 6, pg. 47

13. Mustadrak al-Was<sup>il</sup>, vol. 2, pg. 625

14. Bi<sup>gh</sup> al-Anw<sup>ar</sup>, vol. 103, pg. 7

15. Mustadrak al-Was<sup>il</sup>, vol. 2, pg. 558

16. Tu<sup>af</sup> al-Uq<sup>ul</sup>, pg. 84

17. al-K<sup>af</sup>, vol. 3, pg. 409, no. 1

18. This tradition specifically refers to boys; the general implication, however, is that children should be trained to pray and fast a few years before they reach buloogh, so that they develop the ability for it.

19. al-Kifāyah, vol. 3, pg. 343, no. 13
20. Ibid., vol. 2, pg. 86–87
21. Tarikh Ya-qubayb, vol. 3, pg. 53
22. Mustadrak al-Wasīl, vol. 15, pg. 164
23. This is covered in more depth in 14 Ways to Instil the Love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) in your Children in this chapter.
24. This is covered in more depth in Memorisation of the Qur`an in this chapter.
25. Mizān al-`ikmah, vol. 2, pg. 237
26. Nahjul Balagha, Letter 31
27. Recommended reciters include Mu`ammad Siddiq Menshawi, Khaleel Hussari, Muhammed Jibrail, Abu Bakr Shaatri. These and others can be found at: <http://www.hidayahonline.org/?page=audio> [1].
28. al-Kifāyah, vol. 2, pg. 577

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[1] <http://www.hidayahonline.org/?page=audio>