

The education of children in an Islamic family based on the Holy Qur'an



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Education has been acknowledged as the key factor contributing to personality development and identity formation. To ensure appropriate education, it is thus of utmost importance to reflect on the power of the educational content. As a result, respecting Islamic values from a major authentic source, like the Holy Qur'an, paves the ground to fulfil this goal. On the contrary, the first and foremost educators to convey these values are the family, because each person mainly spends the time of one's education in this small, primary social institution. Above and beyond, the building block of a society and the starting point of a culture, a civilisation and human history is the family. As a noble book of guidance for the human beings, the Holy Qur'an has accordingly shed light on the role of the family. Against this background, this study, adopting a descriptive analytical approach, aimed to investigate the Islamic family from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an with an emphasis on the education of children. Accordingly, the Holy Qur'an reveals that the main purposes of creating a family are inner peace, generational survival and expansion of the faith and monotheism. A healthy family environment can thus have a profound impact on cultivating moral character and virtues. In view of the Holy Qur'an, the family is the first place to seek relief and perform the acts of worship. No divine religions have also given as much value to the family as Islam, which implies its comprehensiveness. Despite much attention to the family in most societies, it receives special importance in the Qur'anic teachings. This article is a review study that dealt with Qur'anic concepts related to education in the family. Therefore, after categorising different Qur'anic verses, analyses have been presented in each category.

Contribution: Islam has set many specific programmes and educational instructions from childbirth and then delegated their implementation to the family. Accordingly, this noble religion offers many guidelines for picking a perfect name, breastfeeding and weaning, loving, observing justice and fulfilling promises in relation to children.

Keywords: family; Islam; Holy Qur'an; education; child.

Introduction

Certainly, education is the most urgent, valuable and important duty assumed by an individual. The highest, honoured, influential people, namely the prophets and their descendants, have been accordingly appointed for their missions and have always struggled to find the sources of true happiness and salvation of the humans in this field (Hojjati 2006). Further, at all times, education and its determinants have been a main concern facing humans, because knowing about the factors effective in education and exploring their impact can be of assistance to those involved in this field in order to plan for appropriate education and assign a special place for each factor in the education process (Arafi 1989). Besides, education deals with numerous issues, such as the modes of education, educational content, educational resources and so forth. In this respect, values can form the vital content and programme of the education system, in which the key educational institution, that is, the family, is in a direct relationship with them and is highly influenced by them (Mirzaei et al. 2018). As a result, it is required to keep an eye on values and their determinants, such as the effective factors in the acquisition and transfer of values. In the Holy Qur'an, God also says:

O Believers! Obey Allah and the Messenger, and those from among you who are invested with authority; and then if you were to dispute among yourselves about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you indeed believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and more commendable in the end. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 59)

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The family is the first and foremost environment in which children receive education and acquire their own ideas and beliefs. This has always been respected by Islam and its religious leaders. The primary social institution of education is the family, wherein values are directly or indirectly conveyed to individuals through their parents and other adults (Samadi & Rezaei 2011). Accordingly, the family has an important place in Islam. This small but godly institution is thus deemed the foundation for human ascension and perfection and even the setting for nurturing the seedlings of nature and fostering the talents of future generations. In this line, the family is the uppermost pillar of the development and evolution of a society, which can significantly contribute to progress and development in a society if it is on the right path of the Islamic education and within the framework of the programmes provided by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah (viz. the traditions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him [pbuh]) (Gholami & Marivani 2021).

Consequently, appropriate education is received by individuals, and then many values are instilled if the Qur'anic teachings and recommendations are taken into consideration. In various Ayats [verses] of the Holy Qur'an, much attention has been drawn to the family and its educational role both directly and indirectly, including:

As for the good land, vegetation comes forth in abundance by the command of Allah, whereas from the bad land, only poor vegetation comes forth. Thus do We expound Our signs in diverse ways for a people who are grateful. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, Ayat 58)

In this sense, the family is assumed as the most fundamental factor in the transmission of values.

The righteous and faithful family can thus give birth to children who hold fast to principles and values, and the outcome is a virtuous society, because hoping for such a society without reforming the family is often against the truth. As stated in the Holy Qur'an:

O Believers, guard yourselves and your kindred against a fire whose fuel is the human beings and stones, a fire held in the charge of fierce and stern angels who never disobey what He has commanded them, and always do what they are bidden. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah At-Tahrim, Ayat 6)

Keeping oneself from falling into sins and not submitting to unruly lusts, directing the family towards education, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and above all providing a healthy environment free of any impurities should be accordingly followed from the time when the building blocks of the family are established, that is, from the preparations before marriage, then the first moment of childbirth and finally, maintained at all stages with proper planning and utmost care. In other words, it is the right of the family members to feed their souls and consequently apply the principles of appropriate education (Alizadeh 2021). In the Holy Qur'an, Surah Maryam, Ayats 27 and 28, the importance of the family is cited from another point of view:

Then she brought Jesus to her people, carrying him. They said, O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. At length, she brought him to her people, carrying him in her arm; O sister of Aaron! Your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Maryam, Ayat 28)

People accordingly compare Maryam [pbuh] with her brother and parents. So a young girl who has an honourable and chaste family cannot leave the path of chastity. Comparing a child with their family proves that a good child is expected from a good family, demonstrating the effective role of the family in education.

In today's world, the power and influence of the family have dwindled to some extent because of moving away from traditional society and approaching the industrial and modern one. Notwithstanding, nowadays, the position of the family in the education of children has redoubled, and the family's duty in this way has become much more arduous than ever before. Islam and the Holy Qur'an lay emphasis on the family, but there are unfortunately abnormalities in this small social institution, even in Islamic nations (Naimipour, Azimi Gorgani & Pourmanocheri 2020), such as emotional divorce, single-parent families, childless families (i.e. those that do not like to have children), the increasing number of single people, educational problems in families and parents' weaknesses in educating their children. Against this background, this study aimed to investigate the Islamic family from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an and its role in the education of children. Undoubtedly, Islam and the Holy Qur'an, as well as the Hadiths (viz. the words, actions and the silent approval of the Prophet Muhammad, as transmitted through chains of narrators), recorded by religious scholars can contribute in this respect. Considering the importance of education based on Islamic teachings, it is necessary for families to educate their children by relying on the teachings of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. It is only in this way that perhaps the correct education will be accepted by Islam, which will ultimately bring personal and social happiness. Because of the importance of the subject, this study aims to study the education of children in an Islamic family based on the Holy Qur'an.

The concept of family

The family is a small social institution, comprised of a man, a woman, children and their relationships. There are many duties in the family, which are often different with regard to each member, and each member must thus perform their duties well in order to strengthen the family bonds. The family has been originally formed by the creation of Adam [pbuh] and his wife, so that the humans can achieve peace and develop love and chastity. To help the human race survive, and achieve the valuable benefits of the family, God has accordingly encouraged them to form a family and has further set appropriate rules so that following them can have many blessings, including reaching worldly happiness and, above all, eternal life in the hereafter (Maleki et al. 2018).

In human societies, the family refers to a group of people who are related to each other through consanguinity, causal affinity or their common place of residence. In most societies, the family is also the main institution for the socialisation of children (Kian 2014). One of the most important risks in contemporary society is the split-up and coldness in the positive and sweet relationships of the family life, leading to different desires, attitudes and needs in men and women over time and, as a result, drifting away from each other (Fatehizadeh, Barbazasfahani & Prachm 2015).

Notably, humans are social beings in need of family more than anything else, just as they must communicate with others to realise their growth and development. The human baby also depends on parents and their support more than any other creature and fails to continue living alone, although other living beings can meet their basic needs to a degree after birth. Accordingly, the Islamic family is a group consisting of two main pillars, a man and a woman, next to each other under the shadow of a legitimate and divine rule, and as a result of a bond, they gain a social, legal, spiritual and civil personality (Rezaei et al. 2012).

Family from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an

The family is a social institution whose purpose of formation, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, is to provide mental health in couples, parents and children. As well, it aims to prepare individuals to cope with social phenomena. In this respect, it is said in the Holy Qur'an that: 'O Allah, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous' (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 74). This further refers to the importance of the family in the establishment of the model human society, as it introduces healthy family bonds as the ideals of the pious. As mentioned in another ayat in the Holy Qur'an:

Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect, and of His signs is that He created for you spouses from yourselves that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum, Ayat 21)

As another example:

So Noah began to build the Ark, and whenever some chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, if you laugh at us, we will soon laugh at you similarly; You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment in this life and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment in the next; And when Our command came and the oven burst with water, We said to Noah, take into the Ark a pair from every species along with your family – except those against whom the decree to drown has already been passed – and those who believe. But none believed with him except for a few. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Hud, Ayats 38–40)

Moreover:

We ask you not for provision, We provide for you, and the best outcome is for those of righteousness. Enjoin prayer on your people, and be constant therein. We ask you not to provide

sustenance. We provide it for you. But the fruit of the Hereafter is for righteousness. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Ta ha Ayat 132)

Family and education of children according to Islam

The family is one of the vital factors in education and mainly created to nurture a new generation and guide it towards high educational goals. Social psychologists consider the family to be one of the guardians of civilisations and cultures of different human societies. The role of parents on the subject of children can be thus examined in several ways. Therefore, the Islamic worldview is at odds with the materialistic one, which imprisons a person in the dark room of nurture and nature and plans education accordingly. In contrast, the Islamic worldview is based on monotheism and the origin of creation. It means that the world came into being from a wise will, rooted in goodness and mercy, to bring beings to the perfection they deserve. The centre of this worldview is the divine essence, from whom the world begins and ends. From this attitude, the human has special dignity and honour among creatures; the world is assumed as a university wherein the human is educated, and God rewards all in harmony with their intentions and the right efforts they make. Accordingly, this evolutionary movement continues until the end of existence (Herati et al. 2019).

Having children is closely related to human emotions and feelings, and a large part of human needs are met in this way. Showing love and affection to children is as much a test for them as it is a response to human emotions and feelings. Humans are sometimes caught in the trap of this test in various ways, and they simply fail to come out of it proudly. In the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty says that some people are proud of their children (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 34–39), and they merely consider more children as the mines of pride and greatness, so they are arrogant over others and blow their own horn (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Maryam, Ayat 77; Surah Saba, Ayats 34–35). This boasting and selfishness detaches them from themselves and God and causes them to commit polytheism, show disbelief and deny the Resurrection (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 34, 36, 37, 42). By all means, some children become the cause of human error in other ways and fall into the trap of eternal loss (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Nuh, Ayat 21). Among these people is the child who was killed by Khidr [pbuh], because he could provide the grounds for disbelief and misguidance of one's parents. In the Holy Qur'an, God enlightens the enmity of some children towards their faithful fathers in relation to religion. As revealed in one ayat:

O you who believe! Verily, among your wives and your children there are enemies for you; therefore, beware of them! But if you pardon them and overlook, and forgive, then verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah At-Taghabun, Ayat 14)

On the whole, one of the divine testing methods is via blessings, which includes testing humans with their children (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 28; Surah

At-Taghabun, Ayats 14–15). Then, in ayats from the Holy Qur'an, God warns against testing the believers through their children, so that they need to be mentally and physically prepared for this demanding test, which has various forms, such as the death of children (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 155). In Surah Sad, Ayat 34, God also sees the throwing of the dead body of Solomon's son on his throne as a means of testing him, and in Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 83–106, Abraham [pbuh] is commissioned to slaughter his son to pass a divine test. Of course, according to the Holy Qur'an, children are assumed to be valued if they are evaluated on the path of excellence and perfection, rather than being a hindrance. While children are counted as valuable and divine blessings, they are limited and insignificant as compared to the remnants of virtues, such as charity, dedication and love for God and the divine saints (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 46).

In other words, hoping for a child is quite trivial when compared to expecting divine rewards. Therefore, individuals should pay much more attention to other remnants of virtues and then make the best use of them to save for the hereafter and achieve perfection. Considering the importance of education, it has been highly emphasised in the Holy Qur'an; for example:

Believers, guard yourselves and your kindred against a fire whose fuel is human beings and stones, a fire held in the charge of fierce and stern angels who never disobey what He has commanded them, and always do what they are bidden. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah At-Tahrim, Ayat 6)

One of the privileges and characteristics of the Holy Qur'an as a noble educational book is that all its ayats are directly and indirectly aimed at educating people in different age groups, from young to old. This chief duty has sometimes been articulated directly and indirectly. In this regard, one of the most important parts of education is that of children. The Holy Qur'an has thus informed believers about the education of children in numerous surahs by telling the stories of the prophets and their children (e.g. Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Yusuf).

Furthermore, Islam considers the future personality of children to be dependent on the education and care provided by parents, by setting specific instructions and regulations for all moments of a person's life. One of the issues raised in Islam is the parents' duties in educating their children, which has a special place in the Holy Qur'an. In Surah Al-Furqan, God Almighty considers it one of the qualities of true servants to attend to the education of their children and families, to the point where they feel a great responsibility towards them, as he says:

They are those who pray, Our Lord! Bless us with pious spouses and offspring, who will be the joy of our hearts, and make us models for the righteous. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 74)

Certainly, such people do not give up what they have in their power in educating their children and spouses, as well as familiarising them with the principles and branches of Islam

and the ways of truth and justice, and where they cannot reach, they try to pray for God's grace. In addition, in Ayat 6 of Surah At-Tahrim, benevolence towards family members and their religious education is an obligatory duty on the believers, who are addressed and given guidelines about the education of one's wife, children and family. This is a programme that should start from the establishment of the building blocks of the family, that is, from the preparations for marriage and then the first moment of childbirth, and maintained at all stages with proper planning and utmost care. In other words, the rights of women and children are not realised only by providing the costs of living, housing and feeding, but it is more important to feed their souls and apply the principles of appropriate education. Accordingly, a man has a much heavier responsibility towards his wife and children than towards others, and he is obliged to try as much as he can to educate them, prevent them from falling into sin and invite them to good deeds, but not feel satisfied only with feeding their bodies.

Islamic modes of education

It is impractical to provide education for children without paying attention to creating a healthy and peaceful environment (Beheshti 2011). The Holy Qur'an accordingly emphasises this point by highlighting the creation of a healthy and peaceful family and says:

Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect, and of His signs is that He created for you spouses from yourselves that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum, Ayat 21)

Family dysfunction, disagreements and conflicts between parents, as well as a lack of intimate relationships between family members (especially parents) as a result of inadequate security and peace in the family, can thus threaten the appropriate education of children. God further asserts in Surah Luqman, 'Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction, O my son! Join not in worshipping others with Allah, for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing' (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Luqman, Ayat 13). Among the other ayats associated with the religious guidance of children, Ayats 132 and 133 of Surah Al-Baqarah, which mention the will and order of Abraham [pbuh] and Jacob [pbuh] to their children to be monotheistic and avoid polytheism, can be mentioned. It is worthy of note that Jacob [pbuh] did not neglect the practice of religious guidance and supervision of his children's heavenly beliefs, even when he was very ill and likely to die (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 132–133). In addition, respecting and honouring the human personality is one of the modes of education in the life-giving religion of Islam, and the Qur'anic teachings are based on the principles of respect for human beings and their dignity (Hojjati 2006). In the Holy Qur'an, God honours and praises humans, saying:

And indeed We have honored the children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with the best of the best, and have preferred them above many of

those whom We have created with a marked preferment. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 70)

According to Islam, children and teenagers also deserve dignity and respect, so their feelings should be valued. Indeed, Islam and the Holy Qur'an want people to be educated from the beginning to this point. All the natural and unnatural factors that God has provided for humans are to bear the fruit of an evolved and educated individual. All the unceasing efforts of the prophets are to facilitate the human education. Education in the tradition of the divine prophets is a kind of exit from darkness to the light, and the noble books of the prophets, especially the Holy Qur'an, are the ones for education and guidance in this respect. God Almighty additionally says in the Holy Qur'an that:

This is a Book which We have revealed unto you in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness into light by their Lord's leave to the path of the Almighty, the Praised. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 1)

The best mode of education is thus introduced as the revelation and the Sunnah of the Prophet and his successors [pbuh]:

Verily, this Book guides to that which is most just and right and gives good news to those who believe, those who do righteous deeds, that they will have a great reward, Paradise. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 9)

Consider, O Prophet, the day We will call against every faith-community a witness of their own. And We will call you to be a witness against these people of yours. We have revealed to you the Book as an explanation of all things, a guide, a mercy, and good news for those who fully submit. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 89)

Discussion

The study findings demonstrated that the family is the first and foremost social institution in educating the human being, and it further plays a more effective role in educating a faithful and moral person than other institutions, such as schools. A person is also born in the family, grows up there and needs to live in the family even after maturity, with the difference that there is a movement from one family to another. In the Islamic family, education has a central role, because righteous children cause their parents happiness or sadness even after their deaths, according to the Islamic records. In fact, if the children are delinquent, their parents will also be offended and feel upset, both in this world and the hereafter. So the Islamic family should be empowered to educate good and faithful people. According to the Holy Qur'an, the ultimate goals of creating a family from the perspective of Islam are inner peace, the possibility of generational survival and the development of a centre for tranquillity in life, kindness and mercy, moral and social construction, as well as expansion of the faith and monotheism. Forming a family should thus aim to raise peace and build a safe haven for perfection to achieve worldly and hereafter happiness. If the above-mentioned

goals are met, children also grow up in a safe and healthy environment, receive education by their parents, and finally enjoy healthy and faithful families and society. In the end, the family, from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an, is the first place to seek relief, the place wherein one can perform the acts of worship and a hub for godly relationships to preserve the privacy of the home and family, so useful children are educated. Such children can be faithful and God-seeking people who walk on the path of perfection, knowledge and happiness.

Of note, all children are born like a blank template, so parents can increase and sustain this purity with appropriate education or even make it difficult with inappropriate practices, because God created all humans based on a divine nature. The family is further obliged to become the basis for the growth and prosperity of this divine nature and not to let this blessing suffer from pestilence. The main questions raised are accordingly about the time when the education of children should be started, and then parents prepare themselves for doing so, whether starting education from the onset of puberty or adolescence, in childhood or infancy or all through pregnancy or conception. To address these questions, it should be declared that the education of children begins many years earlier, before childbirth; this means that all the behaviours of parents and grandparents are effective in the education and mentality of children, and any of the events before childbirth that occur in parents' lives can contribute. In this way, individuals' actions and behaviours should be managed in the years before marriage if they want to have healthy children. In the supplication of Ahl al-Bayt (viz. the family of Prophet Muhammad), they had pure fathers and mothers free of polytheism in their previous generations. This indicates that the education of children is also affected by the behaviours of great-great-grandparents, and this is interpreted as the law of inheritance. Islam has also laid the foundations for this law and the education of children. That is, there are instructions for education, even before conception. Therefore, men and women should educate themselves and persist in their self-refinement and reformation as two human beings before getting married and accepting the responsibilities of educating another person, so that they can fulfil their roles with respect to their children and perform well after being together.

Conclusion

At the outset, a Muslim is responsible for reforming himself or herself, and then others, because an individual cannot truly succeed in reforming others unless he or she has reformed himself or herself. God Almighty also says in the Holy Qur'an that: 'O believers! You are accountable only for yourselves. It will not harm you if someone chooses to deviate as long as you are rightly guided' (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah, Ayat 105). He also adds:

Enjoin you piety and righteousness and every act of obedience to Allah on the people and you forget to practice it yourselves, while you recite the Scripture! You then have no sense of the

condemnation of commanding others to observe righteousness, while ignoring it. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 44)

These two ayats are evidence for the importance of self-monitoring. During self-refinement, an individual should thus attend to factors such as ensuring halal (i.e. permissible) sustenance, being in healthy family and living environments and choosing good role models and supervisors. Considering that this research is a review study, it has only studied and categorised the verses of the Holy Qur'an related to education. Therefore, there has been no field study of Muslim families and attention to their educational methods. Future studies can take advantage of the results of this research, conduct field studies in the community and improve the findings of this research.

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The authors have declared that no competing interest exists

Authors' contributions

S.I.S.A.-H. was responsible for the conceptualisation of the study. T.K. was responsible for the supervision of the study. H.P. contributed to the writing (original draft). S.H.A. contributed to the methodology. H.A.N.M.A.-T. contributed to the visualisation. I.M. contributed to the validation. N.S. contributed to the investigation.

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