

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Parent-Child Bond

Most human beings have been on one or both ends of a parent-child relationship. Each and every one of us has been affected by this relationship, whether strong healthy bonding was established with both our true parents or we lack parent-child bonding with anyone. Even the elderly still carry much of the learning that took place during their early childhood.

The learning that takes place during our early development becomes so much a part of our psychological makeup that it is difficult to distinguish which behaviors are within our nature (instinctive) and which are behaviors learned as a result of our nurturing process.

Children are impressionable

Bonding begins as soon as we are born. We begin seeking comfort and avoiding uncomfortable situations. As babies, we begin learning and bonding with those that give care and provide for us on a regular basis. Therefore, it is possible to bond with a parental figure, instead of a true parent. The process of learning begins at this time while we are barely aware of the

world around us. That may be the reason why some of our learning extends so deep into our subconscious.

Actions speak louder than words

Children begin learning from the actions of their parental figures before they can communicate. Even after language acquisition, we continue to observe our parents' behavior and learn more from that behavior than from what we are told.

There is a saying "Do as I say, not as I do." The act of admonishing a child while continuing in the same bad behavior not only conveys the message that the bad behavior is acceptable, but that hypocrisy is admissible as well. As parents, we should not do anything we would not want our children doing. We have a responsibility entrusted to us, by God, to be good examples for our children as well as teaching them right and wrong (31:12-19).

Learning during the nurturing process

We learn most of our survival and socialization skills from whomever

we establish this parental bonding with. General attitudes, fears, values, eating habits, communication skills, and how we relate to other people (including generosity or stinginess) are some of the behaviors we first learn from our parents. We also learn attention-getting mechanisms and self-esteem from our interaction within our family. This learning takes place as we observe the adults closest to us, often within our family, during our early childhood.

Learning from our parents continues into our childhood, but on more than just a perceptual level. More complex reasoning patterns emerge, but we lack the social maturity to inquire very much outside the security of our family. As we develop in childhood, other sources begin to provide information; we come in contact with more adults and we are better equipped to interact with our environment. However, if new information received contradicts what has been learned from our parents, it is easily rejected. "Because my mommy told me" is valid reasoning. Socialization skills can be tested as we interact more with others.

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As we move into adolescence, some of the ideas learned from our parents start to be called into question and modified as peers have an influence in our lives. However, many of the learned behaviors and ideas go unquestioned because they are so ingrained in us at this point.

Learning from outside sources

With independence, social maturity and greater reasoning comes another type of learning. We take in more knowledge from other sources as we interact more with others and the environment outside the family. This knowledge we can choose to accept or refuse. We can experiment and test concepts to gain information.

As we develop into adolescents, this learning plays a greater role in our lives. This is the learning we try to use to surpass our parents. We use this learning to modify and change the bad habits that were learned from our parents.

Each generation thinks it can be better than the one before by using this knowledge. A simple example would be replacing nonstandard speech patterns learned in childhood, by more widely acceptable speech patterns for better communication.

Under stress we revert to old ways

However, when we become angry, we revert easily to our earliest learned speech patterns. Likewise, no matter how hard we try to be better parents than our parents, when under stress we go back to the way our parents raised us. Therefore, an abused child often becomes an abusive parent and it takes much work to overcome this cycle.

Frequently, when we are sick we resort to mother's old home remedies for what ails us. The learning from parent to child runs deep.

Learning about God

Many of our ideas about God begin with our parent-child bond. Unlike other concepts learned during that time, thoughts on God are not directly relevant to our physical well being or our relations with other people. Religious ideas deal with a relationship between us and an unseen, intangible entity. How can we question and test them in adolescence?

We can only take in new information from others and refuse it based on what we have been taught by our parents or modify our beliefs based on others' beliefs. Yet as adolescents, we are still with our parents and generally continue the same religious practices even if we may not fully believe as they do. If a parental figure's value system has spiritual well being as a low priority, a child may neglect or reject religion entirely in lieu of materialistic goals.

It is not until young adulthood that we really get the opportunity to practice what we as individuals believe. Some may give up their parents' religious beliefs to share the beliefs of the people that they identify with as they move out of the "nest." Still, most adhere strictly to what their parents believe, without question, because their parents' beliefs have become part of their inherent nature.

Too many conflicting ideas

With so many existing religious ideas, is it any wonder so few people try to seek the truth? Anyone trying to examine other systems of belief opens himself or herself to be inundated with mounds of confusing information. We know from the scripture that Abraham examined belief in the idols, the moon, and the sun before he discovered the One who created all (6:76-79). On the other hand, we have access to much more information on religion to consider.

This makes the mathematical proof within the Quran, based on the number

19, a mercy from God for those few who open their minds to learn about Him (74:30-31). We are promised in the Quran that God guides those who seek the truth, but we must be willing to break with all the falsehood that we have already learned (5:16, 22:54, 24:46).

Choice must be made

A conscious choice must be made to learn about God and to read His scripture to attain knowledge. Children who have been fortunate enough to receive the truth about God from righteous parents have an advantage, but they too must examine their practices and beliefs (17:36).

Following parents blindly is never a substitute for belief, and is a form of idol worship (2:170, 7:28, 173, 37:70).

They found their parents astray. And they blindly followed in their footsteps. (37:69-70)

We also should be aware that even if we change our beliefs, it is so very easy to revert to our original practices when we are tested, just as we revert, under stressful situations, to what we first learned during our childhood. This may explain why God promises twice the reward to converts (28:54).

Honor your parents

"Honor your parents" is a commandment often found in the Quran after "Worship God alone" (2:83, 6:151, 17:23).

We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship except GOD. You shall honor your parents and regard the relatives, the orphans, and the poor. You shall treat the people amicably. You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat)...." (2:83)

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It is only after we become parents ourselves that we fully appreciate our own parents. Parents give their time, energy, provisions and independence to take care of a dependent child. They give their years to help in their children's lives even after they have left and had children of their own.

God is in full control of everything, including the family we were brought into, and we should appreciate Him for putting us with parents that would take care of us. However, if they advocate idol worship, we should not follow them, but continue to treat them amicably (6:74, 9:114, 17:23, 31:15).

If they try to force you to set up any idols beside Me, do not obey them. But continue to treat them amicably in this world. You shall follow only the path of those who have submitted to Me. Ultimately, you all return to Me, then I will inform you of everything you have done. (31:15)

As worshipers of God alone, we can be examples for our parents too. They may yet learn from our example.

Children are blessings

Parents should also realize that they do make mistakes, and always retain honest communication with their children. Children's frank questions often point out the fallacies in our complex thinking. Children are often included in the list of blessings (18:46, 71:12). Nevertheless, we must be conscious that children can also become idols (7:190, 63:9).

But when He gives them a good baby, they turn His gift into an idol that rivals Him. GOD be exalted, far above any partnership.(7:190)

So we must take care of our responsibilities to them as children, without neglecting our duties and worship of God. We know we can teach them the ways of righteousness and pray for

God to guide them (2:132). We can also set an example of virtuous behavior for them. The rest must remain between them and God.

The strongest bond

Choosing to make a bond with God and trusting in Him establishes a stronger bond than what we have with any parental figure. As parents or as children, we can take advantage of the closeness between family members in order to lead them to the same bond with God (31:22).

For most of us, our influence is greater on those closest to us and they are more likely to listen than others we give the message to.

For those who believed, and their children also followed them in belief, we will have their children join them. We never fail to reward them for any work. Every person is paid for what he did. (52:21)

Donna A.

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Calendar systems

In the beginning, God gave mankind from the early civilizations the knowledge to calculate the time of the new moon. He also taught the human beings, for example, how to start the earth day after sunset. The calibration of the new moon by the visibility of crescent somewhere in the sky became marred by several factors; including, weather conditions, the season, the amount of moisture in the atmosphere, the angular distance of the moon from the sun, the observer's situation and so on.

Thus, when the humans became civilized enough, God created some useful tools such as telescopes, computers and the knowledge of the Quran or science for them to determine the right timing and/or calendars. From the Quran and science,

we learn that our planet earth is set by God Almighty to travel around the sun in a path called an orbit. The shape of the earth's orbit is a closed curve called an ellipse.

The force of gravitation between the sun and a planet is always pulling the planet toward the sun. We do not fall into the sun because of the centrifugal effect of the earth orbital motion around the sun. In other words, the earth is kept steady in its orbit, like any other planet or satellite, by two balancing forces, the gravitational pull of the sun, and the centrifugal force due to its own speed, following the design of God Almighty:

"God is the one who holds the heavens and the earth, lest they vanish. If anyone else is to hold them, they will most certainly vanish. He is Clement, Forgiving." (35:41)

The speed of the earth varies depending upon its location in relation to the sun. The earth orbits the Sun at a speed of about 19 mi/s (29.8 km/s) making one complete revolution around the sun in 365 earth days 5 hr 48 min 46 sec (365.25 rounded). As it revolves, it rotates on its axis once every 23 hours 56 minutes 4 seconds (24 hours rounded). The moon which is the natural satellite to the planet earth travels in a counter clockwise direction with an average orbital speed of about 2,160 mi/hr. (3,600 km/hr). The moon passes through its phases in about 29.5 days:

"They ask you about the phases of the moon! Say, "They provide a timing device for the people, and determine the time of hajj." It is not righteous to beat around the bush; righteousness is attained by upholding the commandments and by being straightforward. You shall observe God that you may succeed." (2:189)

The timing system in the scriptures

The timing system as revealed in the scriptures shows that when God created the universe, He created the lunar and solar calendric systems.

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The count of months, as far as God is concerned, is twelve. This has been God's law, since the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred.... (9:36)

In the first chapter of the Bible, the Story of Creation, it says:

Then God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and years."
(Genesis I: 14)

It took centuries following God's revelations before Copernicus (1473-1543) was inspired to come up with the notion that the sun and the moon are moving in a measurable orbit. He determined that the sun stood still, and that the earth was one of the heavenly bodies moving around it; and that as the earth moved in a measurable orbit around the sun, the moon travelled around the earth in its own measurable path (orbit). However, God already revealed the accurate astronomical information to mankind in the honorable Quran as follow:

"The sun sets into a specific location, according to the design of the Almighty, the Omniscient. The moon we designed to appear in stages, until it becomes like an old curved sheath. (36:38-39)

He is the One who rendered the sun radiant, and the moon a light, and He designed its phases that you may learn to count the years and to calculate.

God did not create all this, except for a specific purpose. He explains the revelations for people who know." (10:5)

The history of calendar

The history of calendar shows that the ancient Sumerians devised the first known lunar calendar about 5,000 years ago. Later Babylonians divided months into weeks and a week into 7 days. The Jews, once captive in Babylonia, used the Babylonian 7-day week, as did the sun-worshippers in Egypt, who developed a 52-week solar calendar based on 7-day week. Julius Caesar (circa 100-44 BC) tried to adjust the solar calendar so that it would repeat itself the same way every year. Then early Christians modified Caesar's calendar so that all years following year 1, when Jesus Christ was born, would be known as AD (Anno Domini).

Islamic Calendar

The Islamic calendar (Hijri) system is the purely lunar calendar with its year corresponding to about 354 earth days. The Islamic months are:

Muharram, Safar, Rabi I, Rabi II, Jumada I, Jumada II, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Zul-Qidah, and Zul-Hijjah. (The spelling of the names could vary).

Note that **AH**, After Hijra—the emigration of Prophet Muhammad and his followers to the city of Medina in 622—is used to indicate the Islamic year.

The solar and lunar calendar systems are confirmed uniquely in the Quran in verse 18:25; where 9 is the difference between 300 solar and (corresponding to 309) lunar years.

They stayed in their cave three hundred years, increased by nine. (18:25)

Appreciating the use of calendars

The primary practical use of a calendar is to identify days, to be informed about and/or to agree on a future event and to record an event that has happened. For example, a calendar provides a way to determine which days are religious or civil holidays, which days mark the beginning and end of business accounting periods, and which days have legal significance, such as the day taxes are due or a contract expires. Also a calendar may be use by identifying a day and provides other useful information about the day such as its season:

"At the crack of dawn, He causes the morning to emerge. He made the night still, and He rendered the sun and the moon to serve as calculation devices. Such is the design of the Almighty, the Omniscient." (9:96)

"And He is the One who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon; each floating in its own orbit." (21:33)

S. Adam