

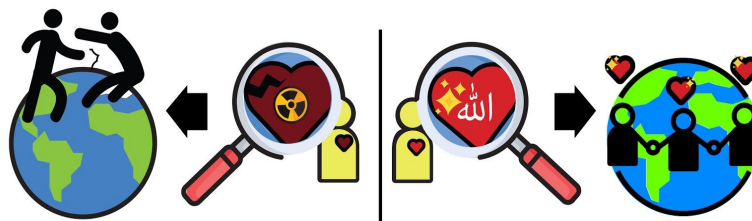
Nurturing Believers

Parenting Advice for Muslim Mothers

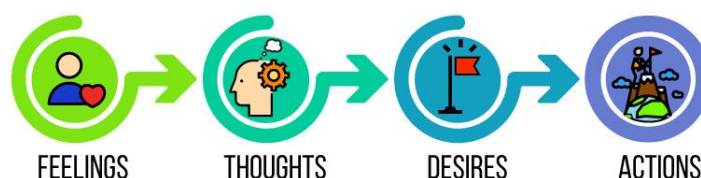
Part 3 - Why is *Tarbiyah* Important? (Continued from Part 2)

While we have different points of view about many matters, we all share deep concern regarding the state of the Muslim Ummah today, in fact the state of humanity at large. At every level, starting from the nuclear family to the national and international levels, our affairs are characterized by selfishness and greed, dishonesty and corruption, abuse and exploitation, aggression and cruelty. Since families, communities, societies, and nations are made up of individuals, at the root of all this evil is **corrupted individuals**. And the cause of the havoc wreaked by these individuals is the **diseased hearts** that they house in their healthy bodies, for the Prophet ﷺ told us, “**Indeed in the body of the offspring of Adam ﷺ is a piece of flesh. If it is rectified then (the actions of) the entire body will be praiseworthy. And if it is corrupted then (the actions of) the entire body will be blameworthy. Know that this piece of flesh is the heart!**”

Hence the problems in the world today are created by corrupted individuals, and what causes the corruption of individuals is their corrupted hearts.



This is because it is the **feelings** in the heart that determine our **thoughts** and **desires**, and hence our **actions**. A person who has love of wealth in his heart, for example, will always be thinking about it, and will desire more and more of it. Hence his actions will be geared towards acquiring wealth, through whatever means necessary. Similarly, someone who has love for Allah ﷻ in his heart will always be thinking of Him, and will want to earn His pleasure and love, and his actions will be subservient to His Will.





If we hope for the *Ummah* of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ to live up to the ideals that he ﷺ established, and for a world in which human life and dignity is valued, and peace and justice prevail, we must begin by rectifying the state of our hearts, and the hearts of those whom we are most able to influence, i.e. our children.





Doing *tarbiyah* of our children means **nurturing positive feelings, thoughts and desires** in them, so that their actions will accordingly be a source of benefit to themselves and others. And conversely *tarbiyah* also means curbing the negative feelings, thoughts, and desires in our children, so that that they do not inflict harm to themselves or others.

For example, consider the following scenario: **Your child has a fight with a child in school. He comes homes and says, “I hate that boy! He hit me so hard.”**

Usually, parents react in one of two ways, both of which impact negatively on the child:

 “It’s not a big deal!”	 “He’s a bad boy, don’t play with him again”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child feels like his hurt and humiliation is not being taken seriously; this creates resentment in his heart for his parents - He gets the message that hitting and hurting others is “not a big deal” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child begins to look down at the boy who hit him and harbors a grudge against him in his heart.

Both these reactions sow the seeds of negative feelings, thoughts, desires, and inappropriate behavior in your child. Instead, if parents react in the following way, **the negative impact of the unpleasant event is minimized, and instead positive feelings are created.**

YOUR REACTION	IMPACT
Validate the child’s hurt and humiliation. Say, e.g. “I’m sure that must have hurt,” “I’m sure that made you feel really bad,” “I’m sure you are feeling really angry about this.”	 We console our child and ease his hurt and give him the joy and comfort and confidence of knowing that we understand and care about him
Point out the unacceptability of the other boy’s behavior. Say, e.g. “Hitting is very wrong,” “Hitting is never acceptable,” “What he did was very bad.”	 We drive home the abhorrence of the act of hitting and hurting others
Make excuses for the boy himself. Say, e.g. “Maybe he doesn’t understand that hitting is wrong,” “Maybe no one has taught him that hitting is wrong,” “Maybe someone has hurt him, so he is taking it out in this way.”	 We can teach him to make excuses for others, as per the Prophetic injunction to do so We teach him to hate the sin, not the sinner, as per the teachings of our Beloved Messenger (saws)
Turn your child’s anger into sympathy. Say, e.g. “You are so fortunate to know the difference between right and wrong, make <i>dua</i> for that boy, that Allah (swt) guides him like He has guided you.”	 We turn his negativity into positivity, and teach him to have sympathy for others



REMEMBER!!!

A good person is one with a good heart, and a good society is one that is made up of good people—this alone is the recipe for a better world and a more promising future. Hence, doing *tarbiyah* of our children is not only important because we will personally be held accountable for it in the Hereafter (as discussed in our earlier post), it is the only hope we have to improve the state of the *Ummah* and make the world a more liveable place.