

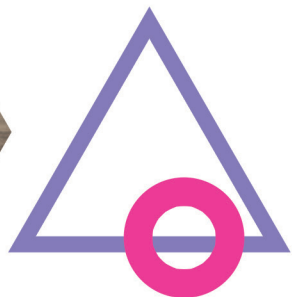
Misconceptions about daughters in Islam

A misconception about Muslims is that they do not treasure their daughters. In fact, Islam was revealed at a time when people wanted sons, and would bury female babies alive. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)* forbade this, and stated categorically that female children are a blessing and that raising them to be righteous believers is a source of great reward. In the Quran, Allah (God) naturally calls infanticide "evil".

"And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonour or bury her in the earth? **Certainly, evil is their decision.**" (Quran 16:58 & 59)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)* clearly showed that sons should not be preferred over daughters. The Prophet's wife, Aisha, narrated that he said: "Whoever raises daughters and he treats them generously (with benevolence) then these daughters will act as a shield for him from Hell-Fire."

"Be mindful of your obligation to Allah (God) and do justice between your children." - Saying Of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)*



*PBUH stands for 'peace be upon him'

Parenting

Raising children is a respected responsibility in Islam, of both mother and father, who aim to bring up their children to become the kind of humans God (Allah) intended: wise, kind, patient and just individuals, who are honest and trustworthy, hard-working, and positive in all situations.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)* once described the process of raising children in three stages: up to the age of 7, we should play with them; from 7 to 14, we should teach them, and after 14 we should befriend them. All children should be treated equally, without favouritism.



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Children

Our Present,
Our Future

"Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."

- Saying Of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)*





What is happening to children in our society?

Rich or poor, black, white or brown, children have the right to be loved, valued and protected from all forms of abuse. One of the saddest realities of our world is the existence of cruelty to children. This may come in the form of neglect, harm, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, or even imprisonment and torture.

Child poverty in the UK

According to the End Child Poverty Campaign, one third of children in the UK are currently living in poverty. Poverty here is defined as household income that is less than 60% of the average income in the UK.

In 2018, almost 50% of children in some London boroughs were living in poverty. This figure is devastating given the wealth of our nation.

Poverty can profoundly impact children, setting in motion a spiral of social exclusion and creating problems in education, employment, mental and physical health.

Child poverty around the world

Often vulnerability of children is caused by poor living conditions. Malnutrition and a lack of basic sanitation can lead to poor health, with many children dying of curable infections. Whether due to war, disasters, debt or trade injustice, women and children are often the first to suffer.



Lifestyles

In developed countries such as the UK, the most pressing issue in children's health is the adoption of unhealthy lifestyles. In 2013, UNICEF reported that the UK has the worst record in 21 rich countries for risks to health such as a bad diet, drugs, alcohol and unprotected sex at an early age.

Some drugs, including alcohol, may be socially acceptable, but can have a profoundly detrimental impact on our society, being a major factor in violence, road accidents and suicides - not to mention the break-up of relationships.

Family

It is a sad fact of modern day life that many children will not grow up in the traditional family unit, and have problems because of this. However, it is also true that many single and step-parents successfully raise happy, confident children.

The family is the basic unit of society and a child's first environment. If parents are respectful, loving and gentle towards each other, the child's personality will reflect these qualities.

What Islam says about children

All children are viewed as a blessing and a valued responsibility. All children are born innocent, without original sin, and they also have an innate sense of right and wrong. Children are a source of joy and happiness.

*"Anyone who does not have mercy for our young and respect for our old is not one of us." Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)**



The importance of family

In the Islamic tradition, the family unit is often extended to include grandparents, grandchildren, uncles and aunts. This is important because it means children are more likely to grow up in a caring and nurturing atmosphere, with even more support and warmth. The natural and continuous link between generations is preserved.

Extended family can also be a great help - children can be looked after while other members of the family, including women, pursue vocational goals or attend to other activities inside or outside the home.

Compassion and affection towards children in Islam is very important - Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)* valued showing his children how much he cared about them:

"A group of people asked the Prophet (PBUH): 'Do you kiss (show affection to) your children?' He answered 'Yes.' They said: 'We never kiss ours.' He said: 'What can I do if your hearts have been stripped of compassion?'"*

