



Childhood is generally regarded to be the period of innocence and purity. A young, blameless child, as yet uncorrupted and untainted, sees the world around him in clear black and white. For such a child, there is no diplomacy and tact, no skirting around the topic, beating around the bush, indirect references, indications and insinuations. Rather, the child says it as it is or at least how he knows it, without any qualms and reservations whatsoever.

In the initial stages of childhood, the child may even unintentionally cause the parents embarrassment. Such was the case with a mother who threatened her daughter saying, “If you don’t listen to me, I will send a message to your Moulana and tell him that you are being naughty!” To the mother’s mortification and embarrassment, the daughter replied, “If you tell Moulana about me, then I will tell Moulana... about you!” As this was mentioned in the presence of others, who were unaware of the mother’s weakness and bad habit mentioned by the daughter, she was seized by embarrassment and was dumbstruck.

At times, the child may speak out of turn and mention the private affairs of the home before outsiders, thus spilling the proverbial beans. For instance, the child may tell the entire madrasah class, in complete detail, how his parents were angry and fought with one another!

As time passes, the parents will coach the children and teach them about etiquette, good manners and tact. They will teach them that there is a time and place for everything, that everything is not suitable content for a conversation, and that everything should not be stated bluntly and in a straightforward manner. For instance, they will teach them that when referring to a person’s demise, then instead of saying “he died”, one should rather say “passed away” or use some other similar euphemism.

However, at times, the blunt, unbiased, direct approach of the child is a blessing and is exactly what we need. How many a young, innocent child, returns home from madrasah with the following questions:

“Mummy! We learnt in madrasah that women have to wear purdah, so how come you don't wear purdah?”

“Daddy! Moulana told us that strange men and women must not mix or talk to each other, so why do you talk to mummy's friends?”

Music being haraam... The impermissibility of men wearing shorts with the knees being exposed and women wearing revealing, tight-fitting clothing... All these and more are questions that will one day surface in the mind of the child and will probably be voiced by the child who, in his innocence, is simply asking why there is a glaring inconsistency between the Islam taught in the madrasah and the kitaabs, and the “Islam” practiced at home.

When the harsh glare of the merciless spotlight is cast on our weaknesses in this manner, by none other than our own child, then the question is, “How do we respond?”

Unfortunately, this is the point at which many parents will corrupt their children. They will choose to teach the child a warped, distorted version of Islam in order to justify and legitimize their own sins and weaknesses.

Such parents will say, “That's only for pious people!” or, “That's not compulsory! It's only if you want to do it!” If the child has to counter this response saying, “But Moulana said...” then the parent will even discredit the Moulana and break the child's confidence in the man who only wishes to ensure his safe passage to paradise.

Rather than damaging the child's Deen to salvage our reputation, we should realize that the words of our child are a message from Allah Ta'ala. We should tell our children that the Moulana is right, but we are weak. What we are doing is wrong. We must make istighfaar and must try to be better Muslims.

In this manner, by acknowledging our weaknesses and continuing to feel remorseful over our

sins, insha-Allah we will one day be blessed to change our lives and reform our ways.

*May Allah Ta'ala bless us all with pious children, assist us to raise them correctly and give us the courage to admit and acknowledge our wrongdoings.*