

Stages of the Human Development

In the Light of Islamic Education

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Preface

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of ourselves and from the consequences of our actions. Whoever Allah guides, no one can misguide, and whoever He allows to go astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, alone without any partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

To proceed:

The attention given to the stages of human growth, and the characteristics of each stage, is not a result of modern or Western studies, as some may think. Rather, the Quranic verses and the Prophetic traditions have elucidated the phases that the fetus goes through in the womb and the stages after birth, such as childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and the gradual decline towards weakness, reaching the stage of extreme old age.

There are Islamic directives in the Quran and Sunnah guiding these stages to what is beneficial and protective against deviation and misguidance. Additionally, there are scholarly efforts in the works of some early scholars, like Ibn al-Jawzi, who authored a valuable treatise on this subject named 'Tambih al-Na'im al-Ghamr 'ala Mawasim al-Umr' (An Awakening for the Negligent about the stages of Life). In it, he divides the stages of human life into five segments: childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, and senility. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, in his book 'Tuhfat al-Mawdud,' also pointed out some stages of life.

This study aims to affirm that the Islamic directives have given meticulous attention to guiding humans through each stage of life, aligning with the characteristics of that particular stage. In general, humans require it in all stages of their lives. A person undergoes initial stages of formation in the womb of their mother through several phases until they attain the shape and form that

Allah, the Exalted, has intended for them. This is a manifestation of His tremendous power, and it stands as a miraculous evidence of His Lordship and Divinity. Allah, in His glory, is capable of restoring this creature to its original form after its body has mixed with the dust, resembling particles of sand. Glorified is Allah, the Almighty, whose power is evident in His creations. He creates the sperm from a humble fluid, then it becomes a clinging clot, and then the clot turns into a lump. He says:

{وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ}

[And indeed, We created humankind from an extract of clay]

{ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ}

[then placed each 'human' as a sperm-drop¹ in a secure place]

{ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۗ
فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ}

[then We developed the drop into a clinging clot, then developed the clot into a lump 'of flesh', then developed the lump into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, then We brought it into being as a new creation. So Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators] 23:12-14

He also says:

{هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا ۗ
وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُتَوَفَّىٰ مِنْ قَبْلِ ۖ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّىٰ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ}

[He is the One Who created you¹ from dust, then from a sperm-drop,² then 'developed you into' a clinging clot,³ then He brings you forth as infants, so that you may reach your prime, and become old—though some of you 'may' die sooner—reaching an appointed time, so perhaps you may understand 'Allah's power'.] 40:67

{يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن تُّرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ ۚ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ آجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِنَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ وَمِنكُم مَّن يُتَوَفَّىٰ وَمِنكُم مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ۚ وَتَرَىٰ الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَّتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ}

[O humanity! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then 'know that' We did create you¹ from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then 'developed you into' a clinging clot,³ then a lump of flesh⁴—fully formed or unformed—in order to demonstrate 'Our power' to you. 'Then' We settle whatever 'embryo' We will in the womb for an appointed term, then bring you forth as infants, so that you may reach your prime. Some of you 'may' die 'young', while others are left to reach the most feeble stage of life so that they may know nothing after having known much. And you see the earth lifeless, but as soon as We send down rain upon it, it begins to stir 'to life' and swell, producing every type of pleasant plant.] 22:05

{اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّن ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً ۚ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ}

[It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, then developed 'your' weakness into strength, then developed 'your' strength into weakness and old age.¹ He creates whatever He wills. For He is the All-Knowing, Most Capable.] 30:54

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says: "The creation of you (humans) is gathered in the form of semen in the womb of your mother for forty days, then it becomes a clinging thing in similar (period), then it becomes a lump of flesh like that, then Allah sends an angel who breathes the life into it; and (the angel) is commanded to record four things about it: Its provision, its term of life (in this world), its conduct; and whether it will be happy or miserable. ¹

The Quranic verses have elucidated the stages through which a fetus goes through within the mother's womb, transitioning after birth to the phase of childhood, then to the robust period of youth and strength. Subsequently, it gracefully progresses towards the realm of frailty, eventually donning the mantle of old age – unless Allah decrees otherwise. This progression is designed to shield one from the ignorance that may cloak their knowledge, understanding, counsel, and guidance after knowledge.

Experts have taken keen interest in the phases of human growth from childhood to old age. They seek to understand the distinct characteristics of each stage – physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, and educational – to harness this understanding in developing curricula tailored to the unique attributes, nature, and inclinations of each phase. Knowing the essence of a thing facilitates the process of dealing with it.

We will now elucidate the stages that individuals traverse from birth to old age, namely:

1. The Stage of Breastfeeding.
2. The Nurturing Stage.
3. The Stage of Differentiation.
4. The Stage of Adolescence.

¹ (Bukhari 2/424) *Kitab Badi' al-Khalq*, 59, *Bab Dhikr al-Mala'ika* 6, *Hadith Number (3208)*, and Muslim (2036/4) *Kitab: Al-Qadr* 46, *Bab Kayfiyya al-Khalq al-Insani fi Batn Ummihi* 1, *Hadith Number (1) (2643)*, *Wal-lafz lahu*.

5. The Peak of Maturity - Youth.
6. The Stage of Old Age.

May Allah grant me success in this endeavor.

Dr. Khaled Al-Hazmi

First: The Breastfeeding stage:

Understanding the Breastfeeding Stage:

This stage is when a child relies on its mother's milk for nourishment, commencing from the date of the fetus's birth until the end of its second year. In other words, it spans two years, as Allah says: 'Mothers shall breastfeed their children for two complete years for those who desire to complete the nursing.' (Quran 2:233)

Characteristics of this Stage:

This stage holds pivotal importance as the infant separates from the womb's embrace, entering a world uncharted. The familial influence shapes their early experiences – from sustenance to care, affection, and cautious interaction. As their roots are intertwined with the family tree, they stand resilient against the winds of change. However, once detached, vulnerability ensues, akin to a tree branch detached and vulnerable to the slightest breeze, susceptible to harm until uprooted. ²

As the fetus departs the womb, it moves away from the familiar environment it has known in all its conditions all at once. This transition is more abrupt than a gradual progression. ³

The significant factors influencing a child's acquisition of moral aspects in this stage are primarily linked to breastfeeding. Scholars emphasize that a child is affected by the milk of the nursing mother and her moral character through her milk. ⁴ This implies the crucial choice of a woman with upright character, a kind

² *"Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya Tuhfat al-Mawdood bi Ahkam al-Mawlood, Tahqiq Bashir Muhammad 'Ayyoushah, Dar al-Bayan, al-Mu'ayyad, edition 2, year 1407 H, Damascus al-Ta'if, Page (171)*

³ The previous reference

⁴ Miqdad Al-Jinn, At-Tarbiyah Al-Akhlaqiyyah Al-Islamiyyah

origin, and a devout nature. Ibn Qudamah remarked: Abu Abdullah detests breastfeeding from the milk of impurity and polytheism. Omar bin Al-Khattab and Omar bin Abdul Aziz advised against taking milk from a Jew, Christian, or a woman involved in sinful acts. Even the feelings of these women are not considered because the milk of a corrupt woman may lead to a resemblance with the nursing mother in corruption, making her a mother to the child who is adversely affected morally. Breastfeeding from a polytheist woman grants her the status of a mother alongside her polytheism. It might create affection towards her due to her religion. Avoiding the milk of foolish women is discouraged to prevent the child from resembling them in foolishness. It is said that breastfeeding alters one's disposition. Allah knows best.⁵

Care should be taken to avoid the infant consuming forbidden milk, whether its purchase is from unlawful sources or the nursing mother does not refrain from consuming forbidden food. Al-Ghazali asserts that there is no blessing in milk obtained from forbidden sources. If a child consumes such milk, his essence becomes impure, inclining his nature towards what suits impurities.⁶

Just as detrimental breastfeeding has a negative impact, positive breastfeeding has a favorable influence on the infant's behavior. The caring and righteous mother provides her child with emotional reassurance when she embraces him and with nutritious sustenance when she nurses him.⁷ The act of breastfeeding becomes a means of connection between the child and his mother, where he feels warmth, security, nestled in her embrace, and between her caring arms.

Nourishing the infant isn't merely about satisfying its physical hunger; it's about feeding its thirsty soul with tenderness and its longing self with love and

⁵ Ibn Qudamah Al-Maqdisi, Vol. 9, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah (n.d.), Beirut, p. 228.

⁶ Al-Ghazali, Ihya' Ulum al-Din, Vol. 3, p. 71.

⁷ At the culmination of pregnancy and the onset of delivery, the breast secretes a fluid, initially white, gradually tinted with a touch of yellow. Remarkably, Allah's creation manifests in this fluid as a concoction of soluble chemicals, shielding the newborn from potential infections. On the following day of birth, the transformation into milk commences. Initially, it resembles a watery substance with a hint of starch and sugars. As time progresses, its composition intensifies, with an increasing proportion of starch, sugars, and fats. For more refer to "Fi Dhilalil Qur'an" by Sayyad Qutub.

protection.⁸ This brings about a sense of tranquility and emotional comfort, making the child emotionally balanced and less susceptible to negative influences resulting from the deprivation of breastfeeding and its subsequent emotional nourishment.

In this stage, the infant struggles to express its feelings and pains through verbal communication, relying instead on crying, gestures, or placing its hand or thumb on the discomforting area.⁹ Notably, the rapid influence of frightening scenes and disturbing movements characterizes this phase, potentially impacting the child's intellectual development.

Due to the proximity of the infant's connection with its mother's womb, there's a fragility in its physical state. Therefore, it's advisable not to rush the child into walking prematurely, considering the risk of leg deformities. Also, it's recommended not to make them circumambulate before three months.

One distinctive feature of this stage is the frequent crying and screaming of the child, especially when hungry. It's crucial for parents not to be distressed by the child's crying and screaming, as it serves as a valuable mechanism for their well-being. It aids in regulating their intestines, expanding their chest, warming their brain, protecting their organs, and promoting a favorable mood. Additionally, crying helps clear the brain of mucus and other waste.

An interesting aspect of this stage is the difficulty in weaning the child abruptly. Gradual weaning is recommended, aligning with the child's nature.¹⁰ Unexpected changes may lead the child to resort to alternative comforts, such as sucking its finger.

Islamic guidance during this stage:

Islamic guidance during this stage emphasizes the significance of the call to prayer (Adhan) at the newborn's ear, marking the initiation of ethical upbringing.

⁸ Muhammad Al-Sayed Al-Zabalawi, *Al-Umamah fi al-Quran wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*, Markaz Al-Risalah, 4th edition, year 1409 H (1988 AD), Beirut, page (150).

⁹ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-Mawdud*, page: 170 - 171.

¹⁰ The previous reference, page: 140-142

It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) performed this act for his grandson, Hassan ibn Ali, upon his birth, instilling the words of monotheism into the child's heart, even if not consciously felt and reinforcing the child's connection with Islamic teachings. Abu Rafi' told that he saw God's messenger uttering the call to prayer in the ear of al-Hasan b. 'Ali when Fatima gave birth to him.¹¹

Ibn Qayyim illustrates the significance of Adhan at the the newborn's ear in the following words:

“The impact of Adhan to one’s heart cannot be denied even if he does not feel that. This act is considered a means of warding off the influence of Satan.”¹²

***Tahnik* (Rubbing newborn’s palate with dates):**

It is recommended to perform *Tahnik* for the Newborn.

Abu Musa reported: A child was born in my house and I brought him to Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) and he gave him the name of Ibrahim and he rubbed his palate with dates.¹³

Tahneek is chewing a substance and placing it in the infant's mouth, then massaging the palate with it. This is done with a sweet substance to train the baby in the act of eating and strengthen them for it. The preference is for dates, but if dates are not available, then moistened bread; otherwise, any sweet thing, and honey from bees is better than others.¹⁴

And perhaps the wisdom behind that action is to strengthen the muscles of the mouth through movement with the jaws, so that the newborn is prepared for the breastfeeding process.¹⁵

¹¹ *Abu Dawood* (333/5) *Kitab al-Adab*, 35 *Bab fi al-Sabi yuladu fayu'aththinu fi udhunihi* 116, no: (1405) *wal-lafdih lahu, wal-Tirmidhi* (824) *Kitab al-Adabi* 20, *Bab al-Adhan fi udhni al-mawlud* 17, no: (1514) *waqala hadith hasan sahih, waqala al-Albani hasan sahih Sunan Abi Dawood*, no: (4258 - 5105)

¹² *Ibn Qayyim, Tuhfatul Mawdud*, Page: 22

¹³ *Al-Bukhari* (449/3) *Kitab al-'Aqiqah*, 71 *Bab Tasmiyat al-Mawlood Ghadan Yawlad* 1, no: (5467), and *Muslim* (3/1960) *Kitab: al-Adab*, 28 *Bab Istihbab Tahneek al-Mawlood* 5, no: (24) - (2145), and the wording is his.

¹⁴ *Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari*, Vol. 9, page (588).

¹⁵ *Abdullah Allwan, Qissat al-Huda*, Vol. 1, Dar al-Salam, year 1400 H - 1980 CE, Beirut, (425). *Wa dawr al-umm fi al-tarbiyah*, Khayriya Hasan, (57-58).

The 'Aqiqah': It is recommended to perform the 'Aqiqah for the child, as an expression of joy and happiness for their arrival. Aisha, the Mother of the Believers, asked the Messenger of Allah about 'Aqiqah, and he replied: "Two sheep are to be sacrificed for a boy and one for a girl, but it does you no harm whether they are male or female."¹⁶

As for removing harm from the newborn, it is among the Islamic etiquettes to shave the head on the seventh day. Aisha, the Mother of the Believers, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did 'Aqiqah for Hasan and Husain on the seventh day, and ordered that harm be removed from their heads.¹⁷

Naming, and among the ethical warmth bestowed upon the child is the choice of a name for them. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "A boy was born to me last night, so I named him with the name of my father, Hassan Ibrahim."¹⁸ And he said: "Indeed, the most beloved of your names to Allah are 'Abdullah and 'Abdur-Rahman."¹⁹

Since names carry meanings and symbolize them, wisdom dictates that there should be a connection and harmony between them. Indeed, names have an influence on those named, and they possess the characteristics and traits of their names in terms of beauty, heaviness, lightness, delicacy, and density.

A good name was preferable to the Prophet (PBUH).²⁰

¹⁶ Abu Dawood (258/3) *Kitab al-Adahi, Bab fi al-'Aqiqah, 21 biraqam (2836), and al-Tirmidhi (4) (83) Kitab: al-Adahi, 20 Bab al-Adhan fi udhni al-mawlud 17, biraqam (1516) wal-lafdih lahu, waqala hadith hasan sahih, wa rawahu Ibn Majah (1056/2) Kitab al-Dhaba'ih 27, Bab: al-'Aqiqah 1, biraqam (3162), and al-Nasai (1657) Kitab: al-'Aqiqah 40, Bab: Kam ya'uqu 'an al-jariyah 4, biraqam (4218). Waqala al-Albani sahih Sunan Abi Dawood biraqam (2461) - (2836).*

¹⁷ *Al-Hakim (237/4) waqala hadha hadith sahih al-isnad walam yukhrijahu bi-hadhihi al-siyagha, wa wafqa-hu al-Dhababi fi al-talikhis, wa qala al-Albani sahih al-irwaa', biraqam (1164).*

¹⁸ Muslim (1807/4): *Kitab al-Fada'il, 43, Bab Rahmatih al-Sibyan wal-'Iyal wa Tawadu'uh wa Fadli Thalik, 15, no: (2315/62).*

¹⁹ Muslim (1682/3), *Kitab al-Adab, 38, Bab al-Nahi 'an al-Takni bi-Abi al-Qasim 1, no: (2132/2).*

²⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zad al-Ma'ad 2, page (326).*

As for the timing of naming, there are narrations indicating that the Prophet (peace be upon him) named some infants on the morning of their birth, while others suggest naming on the seventh day. Imam al-Bukhari included a chapter about naming the newborn on the day of their birth for those who choose not to perform 'Aqiqah and Tahneek. This is a subtle compilation; if one does not intend to perform 'Aqiqah for the child, the naming can be delayed until the seventh day, and if one wishes to perform 'Aqiqah, the naming can be postponed until that day.²¹ Ibn al-Qayyim said: It is permissible to define the name on the day of birth, or delay it up to three days, or even until the day of 'Aqiqah.²²

Circumcision: To perform circumcision is an essential aspect and necessary for the moral upliftment of the child. The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Al-Fitra (natural disposition) includes five things: circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, trimming the mustache, cutting the nails, and plucking the armpit hair.”²³

It is obligatory for the guardian to circumcise the boy before reaching puberty, as this is essential for fulfilling a religious duty. Circumcision brings purity, cleanliness, adornment, improvement of character, and moderation of desire. If left unchecked, desires could lead a person to act like animals or, if suppressed completely, could cause them to behave like inanimate objects. Circumcision rectifies this, and that is why you find most men and women inclined towards excessive sexual activities without gratification.²⁴ This might influence the individual's sexual behavior, preventing their domination over it and leading to a lack of desire for marriage, thereby avoiding excess or deficiency. This helps in maintaining a balanced mood and rational handling of matters that influences the individual's behavior. Allah knows best.

In this stage, it becomes evident the Islamic care for the etiquettes influencing the child's character, including breastfeeding, Tahneek, 'Aqiqah, naming, Adhan,

²¹ Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Vol. 9, page 587-588.

²² Tuhfat al-Mawdud, page (71).

²³ Al-Bukhari (72/4) Kitab al-Libas, 77, Bab: Taqleem al-Azafir 64, biraqam (5891) wal-lafdh lahu, and Muslim (222/1) Kitab al-Taharah, 2, Bab: Khasal al-Fitrah 16, no: (50 - 257).

²⁴ Tuhfat al-Mawdud, page (14-115)

and circumcision. These are among the characteristics of Islamic education that distinguish it from others in shaping the Muslim's personality.

Educational Applications:

- Giving attention to applying the Prophet's Sunnah in the *Tahneek* of the newborn, calling Adhan in their right ear, and performing 'Aqiqah on the seventh day if it's a male (two animals) or one if it's a female. Circumcision should be done before reaching puberty. Also, emphasizing the importance of breastfeeding from the mother's breast and avoiding resorting to dried milk except in case of necessity and the absence of alternatives. This is because the nutritional components in breast milk are uniquely integrated that comprise of the elements not found elsewhere.

- Selecting a righteous and virtuous nurse if the responsibility of breastfeeding is entrusted to someone other than the mother.

- These matters are likely to have an impact on the child's physical development, as a healthy body contributes to a sound mind, which significantly influences a person's behavior and actions.
 - Social guidance methods should also play their educational role in this regard.

Second: The Stage of *Hadhanah* (Toddlerhood)

In the linguistic sense, Ibn Manzur describes "حضان" as a bird embracing its eggs under its wings, and similarly, a woman embracing her child. It is termed "حضانة" because the caregiver and guardian embrace the child.²⁵

Reformative connotation of *Hadhanah*:

In the reformative sense, it involves primarily safeguarding the child from harm and attending to their needs, such as washing their head, clothing, applying oil, putting kohl, tying them in the cradle, and other actions that benefit them.²⁶ Al-Jurjani stated that it is the upbringing of the child. This implies that, during this stage, the child predominantly needs the embrace of their mother more than any other place. The term is associated with the name of the stage the child is going through.²⁷ This stage begins at the start of the third year and continues until the end of the sixth year.²⁸

Characteristics of this stage:

During this stage, the child's abilities in perception, understanding, and acquiring social habits become prominent, and their linguistic proficiency increases. In this phase, the child mimics those around them, especially family members, getting influenced by their behavior, thoughts, language, religion,

²⁵ Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 12, Maaddah: "حضان" (Hadan), page: 123

²⁶ Ibn Dhaubaaan, Manarussubul, Volume: Page: 279

²⁷ Refer "Al-Mughni" by Ibn Qudamah, Volume 9, page 298 where he explains that the mother has a greater right to the upbringing of the child if the necessary conditions for it are fulfilled.

²⁸ Through defining the stage of *Hadhanah*, it becomes clear that the breastfeeding stage is encompassed within it and is not separate from it, as is traditionally established in jurisprudential books. However, this distinction is pedagogical, as the breastfeeding stage has acquired specific characteristics. The particular stage mentioned in this book has acquired distinct features. I must note that I drew upon and employed this terminology from Islamic jurisprudence.

ethics, and embodying their personalities. Therefore, this stage is of great importance in the process of moral upbringing, where the family plays a significant role in influencing the child's nature. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Every newborn is born on the fitrah (natural disposition), then his parents make him Jewish, Christian, or Magian, just as animals produce offspring with complete limbs. Do you find any deficiency in them?"²⁹ And he (peace be upon him) also said: "Every newborn is born upon the fitrah."³⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah stated: "This explicitly indicates that he is born on the religion of Islam."³¹ This emphasizes the importance of the family's role in the child's religious and moral orientation. The child's understanding of good and evil differs from that of an adult. For a young child, good is defined by things that bring them joy, while evil encompasses actions disapproved by adults, particularly actions that displease their mother.³²

The connection of parents with the child has the greatest impact on his behavior. The farther they are from him, the more he feels a lack of care, and experiences fear. Hence, when there is distance and avoidance, we often hear the emotional question, "Do you love me?" to ensure affection. Therefore, "the moral growth of the child depends on the extent of his relationship with his mother, father, and family, and his social environment (directly)"³³. This emphasizes the danger of relying entirely on servants unless they meet the conditions of righteousness, ensuring the soundness of their emotions and compassion for the children. Those who do not show compassion for children generally do not care about them and may spoil their behavior rather than correcting it.

²⁹ Al-Bukhari (424/1), Kitab al-Jana'iz, Chapter 23, regarding what is said about the children of polytheists, number 92, (1385). And Muslim (2048/4), Kitab al-Qadr, Chapter: The meaning of every newborn is born on the fitrah, 6, number (23) - (2658).

³⁰ And Muslim (2048/4), Kitab al-Qadr, Chapter: The meaning of every newborn is born on the fitrah, 6, number: r (22/ 6258).

³¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, "Dar'u' Taa'arudh al-Aql wal-Naql," Vol. 8, page (266).

³² Muhammad al-Sayyid al-Zu'blawi, "Al-Umumah fi al-Kitab wal-Sunnah," page (28).

³³ Fuad al-Bahi, al-Sayyid, al-Asas al-Nafsiah liNI-Numoo, page. 423.

Islamic guidance for this stage:

Islamic guidance for this stage has been of great concern. Ensuring the child's care and custody is obligatory because negligence can lead to his destruction, and he must be protected from harm. Spending on the child is also mandatory. The right to bring up the child is forfeited for those who are sinful or mentally unstable because they cannot be trusted to fulfill the duty of due care. If the mother is not qualified for this, she is considered as if she doesn't exist, and this right is transferred to the next qualified person. If both parents are not qualified, the right passes to the next in line, and it is considered as if they are non-existent.³⁴ The caretaker of the child must be fit for his duty to protect him from deviance.

In this stage, the child needs emotional development by showing love through playfulness and care. This establishes a foundation for acceptance and allows the child to accept guidance from those who love him.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, showed affection towards children by greeting them and expressing his love for them.

Ya'la ibn Murra said, "We went out with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and we were invited to eat. Husayn was playing in the road and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, raced the people and then spread out his arms. The boy began to run this way and that and the Prophet made him laugh until he caught hold of him. He put one of his hands under his chin and the other on his head and then embraced him. Then the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn. Allah loves anyone who loves al-Hasan and al-Husayn. They are two of my distinguished descendants.'"³⁵

³⁴ Ibn Qudamah, al-Mughni, vol. 7, page. 229-297

³⁵ At-Tirmidhi (617/5) Kitab al-Manaqib ة، Bab Manaqib al-Hasan wal-Husayn, with number (3775). He said the hadith is hasan, and it is also narrated by Ibn Majah (ة\/) in the Introduction, Bab Fada'il Ashab Rasul Allah (SAW), with number (644). Al-Bukhari, Al-Adab al-Mufrad, Bab: Mu'anakah, with number (364), and the

Abu Huraira (RA) reported that al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) kissing Hasan. He said: I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them, whereupon Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him.³⁶

This Prophet's affection was not confined solely to the two grandsons; rather, it extended to other children as well. A'isha, the wife of the Apostle (ﷺ) said: Babies were brought to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and he blessed them, and after having chewed (something, e. g. dates or any other sweet thing) he rubbed there with their soft palates. A baby was brought to him and he passed water over him (over his garment), so he asked water to be brought and sprinkled it, but he did not wash it.³⁷

Such care fosters a child's love for their parents and those who show them affection, making them more receptive to guidance with enthusiasm and averse to disobedience. It seems like the foundation upon which Islamic guidance for ethical upbringing is built.

As the child's capacity for understanding and perception enables them to accept guidance, it becomes possible for them to memorize certain chapters of the Quran in accordance with their abilities. The Quran serves as a moral guide, and the child's ability to memorize becomes evident in contemporary times, where many children under seven have memorized portions of the Quran. Scholars like Al-Shafi'i and Sahl ibn Abdullah attest to having memorized the Quran at a young age. Hence, the great Imam Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him, said,

wording is his. Al-Albani said it's hasan, sahih according to the standards of Ibn Majah with the number (170) in As-Sab' (144-4118).

³⁶ (r) Al-Bukhari (91/4) Kitab al-Adab 78, Bab Rahmat al-Walad wa Taqbeelih wa Mu'anqatih 18, with number (5997), and the wording is his. And Muslim (1897/4 - 1809) Kitab al-Fada'il 43, Bab: Rahmatuhu bissibyan wal-'ayyal wa Tawadu'ih wa Fadl dhalik 15, with number (2318-65).

³⁷ (4) Al-Bukhari (163/4) Kitab al-Du'at 80, Bab al-Du'a lil-Sibyan bi al-Barakah wa Masah Ru'usihim 21, with number (6355). And Muslim (237/1): Kitab al-Taharah 2, Bab Hukm Bawl al-Tifl al-Radi' wa Kayfiyya Ghaslih 31, with number (286/101), and the wording is his.

"I memorized the Quran when I was seven years old and memorized Al-Muwatta' when I was ten."³⁸ Sahl ibn Abdullah Al-Tustari mentioned, "So, I went to study the Book of Allah, learned the Quran, and memorized it when I was about six or seven years old."³⁹

While it is crucial to focus on training children to memorize the Quran, it is equally important not to overemphasize the educational aspect during this stage. The child's inclination towards play should be considered, as excessively restricting play and imposing a continuous learning routine can stifle their hearts, diminish their intelligence, and mar their joy in living, pushing them to seek escape strategies.⁴⁰

In the beginning of this stage, it is essential to focus on memorizing the testimony "La ilaha illallah, Muhammadur Rasulallah" (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

One should instill in the child the values of cleanliness, purity, and good habits from an early age. Ibn al-Jawzi suggests that parents should strive with their children to ensure cleanliness, teach proper manners, and focus on memorization when the child turns five. This includes teaching them good speech, table manners, respecting elders, and observing the sanctity of homes. All of this is in response to the Quranic injunction:

{وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا
أُفًّا وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا}

³⁸Al-Suyuti, Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz, Edited by Ali Muhammad 'Umar Maktaba, Wahba 1st Edition, 1393 AH - 1973 CE, Cairo, p. 154.

³⁹ Al-Ghazali, Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, Edited by Muhammad Nūr Suyyid, p. 73. And refer to Minhāj al-Tarbiyah al-Nabawiyah lil-Ṭifl (The Educational Approach of the Prophet for Children), by Muhammad Nūr Suyyid,

⁴⁰ The previous reference, Vol. 3, p. 73.

[For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them 'even' 'ugh,' nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully]. 17:23

{وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا}

[And be humble with them out of mercy, and pray, "My Lord! Be merciful to them as they raised me when I was young."] 17:24

The word "kibar" in Arabic conveys the sense of attaining superannuation or simply becoming old enough, and the word "Indaka" in the verse conveys the idea of seeking refuge or shelter during moments of difficulty and weakness. The verse "And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy" (Quran, 17:24) signifies an expression of humility and giving refuge to the parents in times of difficulty or weakness. It emphasizes the importance of humility, respect, and providing protection to parents.

The verse "And say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small'" (Quran, 17:24) symbolizes the tender memories of childhood, the weak and dependent stage that requires care and affection from parents. Parents, who are currently in a similar phase of vulnerability and need care, will receive the same level of care and compassion from their child if they were raised with the values embedded in this verse.⁴¹

It is crucial to note that the child, when brought up with the essence of this Quranic verse, becomes dutiful to their parents in childhood and throughout their life, with the grace and guidance of Allah. Another etiquette that enhances the child's character is their respectful behavior towards elders. Teaching the child to offer seats to elders, serve them first in meals and drinks, and speak respectfully are important aspects of good manners.

⁴¹ Sayyid Qutb, Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an, Vol. 4, p. (2221 - 2222).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) demonstrated the importance of humility and respect for elders. 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It was shown to me in my dream that I was cleaning my teeth with a Miswak and two men came to me, one being older than the other. I gave the Miswak to the younger one, but I was asked to give it to the older, which I did".⁴²

It is narrated in Sahihain that Abdullah b. Sahl b. Zaid and Muhayyisa b. Mas'ud b. Zaid went out and as they reached Khaibar they were separated. Then Muhayyisa found 'Abdullah b. Sahl having been killed. He buried him, and then came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). They were Huwayyisa b. Mas'ud and 'Abd al-Rahman b. Sahl, and he (the latter one) was the youngest of the people (those three who had come to seek an interview with the Holy Prophet) began to talk before his Companions (had spoken). Thereupon Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: The eldest one (eldest in regard to age should speak). So he kept quiet, and his companions (Muhayyisa and Huwayyisa) began to speak.⁴³

The child should be accustomed to the love of his siblings, stirring their interest in him, respecting them, showing affection, and embracing everything that strengthens the bonds of brotherhood. They should avoid anything that disturbs or undermines these relationships. Muslim narrated in his Sahih from Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever points to his brother with a piece of iron, the angels will curse him, even if his brother is his real brother or not".⁴⁴

It is inappropriate for a child to get used to eating with his left hand and allowing his hand to wander on the dining table. This can harm those who eat with him, causing them discomfort due to his careless movements, messing up

⁴² Muslim (2298/4, Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq 53, Bab: Manawalat al-Akbar 15, Hadith number (70/(3003).

⁴³ Al-Bukhari (117/4) in the Book of Manners, Chapter 78: "Honoring the Elderly," and it starts with the elderly person initiating conversation and asking, number 89 (6142). And Muslim (1291/3) in the Book of Division, Chapter 28: "Division," number 1 (1669).

⁴⁴ Muslim (4/2020) Kitab: Al-Birr wal Silah wal Adab 45, Bab: Al-Nahi 'An Al-Isharat Bil-Silah Ila Al-Muslim 35, No: (2616/125).

their clothes. It is a disgusting manner, especially if the child is not clean. Islam provides guidance and discipline in this regard. Narrated by Umar bin Salama, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said: "I was a boy in the company of the Prophet ﷺ, and my hand used to go around the dish. The Prophet ﷺ said to me, 'O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat of the dish what is nearer to you.'" ⁴⁵

Ibn Hajar commented on this hadith, stating that the right hand, which is praised linguistically and religiously, is superior to the left. If the right hand is stable and sound, it is appropriate for those with noble manners and a good character to use the right hand for noble actions and clean situations. Therefore, when eating different types of food, everyone takes from what is nearest to them. If one takes from another's portion without permission, it is considered a violation, and the soul is repulsed by the intrusion into what others possess. This reflects a lack of concern for cleanliness and proper manners. ⁴⁶

This explanation illustrates some of the Islamic ethical guidelines that families should instill in their children during this stage. It is of utmost importance because the poor behavior of children often stems from the family's neglect of these teachings and other Islamic etiquettes. Without attention to such guidance during childhood, the child may develop bad habits. Once he reaches adolescence, correcting these misguided tendencies becomes challenging for those responsible for his upbringing.

⁴⁵ Al-Bukhari (431/3), Kitab: Al-At`amah 70, Bab: Al-Tasmiah `ala Al-Ta`am wal-Akl bil-Yameen, no: (5376), and Muslim (1599/3), Kitab: Al-Ashriba 36, Bab: Adab Al-Ta`am wal-Sharab wa-Ahkamoha 13, no: (1022/108).

⁴⁶ Ibn Hajar, Fat'hul Baari, Vol: 9, Page: (523)

Educational Applications:

In the realm of education, the following insights can be derived from the preceding discussion for this developmental stage:

1. The child, at this juncture, needs an abundant dose of love and appreciation. Expressing this through kisses, gentle head pats, and playful interactions is crucial. However, it's essential to strike a balance, ensuring not to overindulge to a degree that might lead to spoiling the child. This delicate equilibrium aims to elicit a responsive behavior in the child and safeguard against any ethical imbalances.
2. Instilling faith in Allah is of paramount importance during this stage. Teaching the child the profound meaning of "La ilaha illallah, Muhammadur Rasulullah," fostering love for Allah and His Messenger, and narrating stories that exemplify the Prophet's (PBUH) affection for children contribute to cultivating a love that will guide the child's behavior.
3. Encouraging the child to memorize portions of the Quran, which serves as the moral compass, is beneficial.
4. Training the child in etiquette, emphasizing seeking permission, respecting elders, and offering assistance.
5. Familiarizing the child with table manners when it comes to mealtime, instilling this habit so that it becomes second nature.

6. Introducing the child to the rituals of ablution and cleanliness, fostering a connection between these practices and faith and refining ethical conduct.

Third: The Stage of Differentiation

Concept of the Differentiation Stage:

This stage begins around the age of seven and continues until the onset of adolescence.⁴⁷ Ibn Manzur defined "mayz" as distinguishing between things, you can say, for instance, "I differentiated one thing from another; I made it distinct."⁴⁸

This implies separating and categorizing, isolating and discerning. In this phase, a child begins to grasp the nuances between things, distinguishing right from wrong, and good from bad, within the limits of their mental and chronological capacity.

Characteristics of this Stage:

Cooperation: This stage is characterized by children's love for helping and collaborating with others. This not only brings them joy but also instills a sense of self-importance.⁴⁹ Their eagerness to please adults stems from a desire for rewards, which aids in refining their behavior.⁵⁰ Utilizing these traits, educators can guide them towards performing acts of kindness, seeking rewards from Allah.

⁴⁷ Wizārat al-Awqāf wal-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyya, *Al-Mawsū'ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, Vol. 7, Ed. 2, Year 1406 AH - 1986 CE. Kuwait, p. 155.

⁴⁸ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, Vol. 5, Root word "ميز," p. 412.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Jameel Youssef and Farouk Abdul Salam, "Al-Namoo Ta'hama," Vol. 1, 1401 AH / 1980 AD, Jeddah, p. 411.

⁵⁰ Hamed Zahran, "Ilm Nafs Al-Namoo," *Alam Al-Kutub*, 4th edition, 1977 AD, Cairo, p. 268.

Children exhibit a keen desire for movement and action during this stage. Parents should encourage them to avoid laziness and idleness, guiding them toward productive activities. Laziness and idleness have negative consequences, leading to regret, while hard work brings about positive outcomes.

Religious Awareness: The child observes religious practices within his family and the community, and he is influenced by them. This influence strengthens the religious upbringing from the previous stage, emphasizing that, in this phase, the educator must teach the child and emphasize the connection between prayer responsiveness and maintaining religious rituals. This is especially crucial as the child aspires to excel academically, progressing from one level to another. He learns that honesty, trustworthiness, sincerity, modesty, and prayer are acts of worship, serving as a path to prayer response and success. Thus, the child begins to understand the correlation between prayer, action, and how prayer becomes a means to transform behavior, making it acceptable and answered.⁵¹

Moral Awareness: In this stage, the child acquires the morals of the family and society gradually in line with his chronological age. He feels a sense of belonging to them and has a desire to align his actions with the community's ethics. This means that the child tends to prefer the community's standards when in it, aiming to preserve his position within it.⁵² As the child approaches the end of the childhood stage, his ethical understanding draws closer to that of adults with whom he is connected.⁵³ His ethical sense of right and wrong is aided by the growth of moral awareness, allowing him to comprehend the meanings of injustice, justice, right, wrong, good, and evil.

Linguistic Development: This stage is considered the phase of lengthy compound sentences, where the child can distinguish synonyms and discover antonyms.⁵⁴ This underscores the importance of completing the memorization of

⁵¹ Fuad al-Bahi al-Sayyid al-Asas al-Nafsiyah lil-Numoo, page: 249

⁵² Muhammad Jameel Youssef and Farouk Abdul Salam, Al-Numoo, p. (412).

⁵³ Previous reference: P. (412)

⁵⁴ Hamed Zahran, "Ilm Nafs Al-Namoo," P: (221-222)

the Quran and prophetic traditions, teaching the child virtuous words, and discouraging the use of vulgar language. This ensures that the child's language, when expressing thoughts or communicating with others, embodies noble virtues from a linguistic standpoint.

The Islamic directives for this stage: Islamic directives for upbringing are rich with prophetic instances that uplift and refine the child's moral development, aligning with the stages they go through. Here are some influential Islamic directives in this regard:

Guidance on Religious Awareness: The religious dimension serves as the primary sustenance for moral development, steering it towards goodness. Islamic directives place significant emphasis on this dimension during this stage. Commencing early, children are taught the importance of prayer, which discourages indecency and wrongdoing. By the age of ten, corrective action is taken if a child falls short in its performance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised, "Command your children to pray when they are seven years old, and discipline them for it (prayer) when they are ten, and separate them in their sleeping arrangements".⁵⁵

The companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were meticulous in teaching their children the practice of fasting and getting them accustomed to it. Fasting instills patience in the face of hunger and thirst, fostering empathy for the less fortunate. This nurtures a sense of compassion for others and humility before Allah. Al-Bukhari narrated from Rabi'ah bint Muawwidh: "The Prophet (ﷺ) sent a messenger to the village of the Ansar in the morning of the day of 'Ashura' (10th of Muharram) to announce: 'Whoever has eaten something should not eat but complete the fast, and whoever is observing the fast should complete it.' "She further said, "Since then we used to fast on that day regularly and also make our boys fast. We used to make toys of wool for the boys and if anyone of

⁵⁵ Abu Dawood (1/334), Book of Prayer, Chapter: When is a Boy Commanded to Pray 26, Hadith Number (495). Al-Albani said: Good, authentic, authentic according to the conditions of Al-Bukhari and Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith Number: (466-495)

them cried for, he was given those toys till it was the time of the breaking of the fast."⁵⁶

Behavioral Etiquette: In this developmental stage, there are various behavioral etiquettes that a child should acquire. One notable example is the cultivation of virtues such as trustworthiness and the discretion to keep confidential matters, which some may overlook in the upbringing of their children or even within themselves.

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated: "I arrived in Medina at the age of seven, and Umm Sulaim took me to the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, this is my son Anas; let him serve you.' I served the Prophet, peace be upon him, for nine years. He never asked me about anything I did, 'Why did you do this?' nor did he ask about anything I did not do, 'Why didn't you do that?' One day, while I was playing with other boys, or as he mentioned, 'children,' the Prophet, peace be upon him, greeted us, invited me, and sent me on an errand. When I returned, he said, 'Do not disclose this matter to anyone.' I kept it a secret. Upon returning to my mother, she asked, 'My son, what held you back?' I replied, 'The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent me on an errand, and he instructed me not to disclose it to anyone.' She said, 'My son, keep the secret of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.'"⁵⁷

Thus, a mother's guidance is evident in teaching her son not to indulge in the curiosity of others' secrets, avoiding any encouragement for the child to disclose confidential information. This approach safeguards the child's integrity, preventing a habit of dishonesty and averting situations where the child's tongue might inadvertently reveal secrets.

⁵⁶ Al-Bukhari (48/2), Book of Fasting, Chapter: Fasting of Children 47, Hadith Number (1960), and the wording is his. And Muslim (798/2) - (799), Book of Fasting 13, Chapter: Whoever Eats on Ashura Should Complete His Day's Fast 21, Hadith Number (1136/136).

⁵⁷ (1) Al-Bukhari (98/4) Kitab al-Adab, 78, Bab Hasan al-Khulq, wa al-Sakhā', wa mā Yukrah min al-Bukhl, 39, with number (6038). And Muslim (1804/4) Kitab al-Fada'il, 43, Bab: Kana Rasul Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم Ahsan al-Nas Khulqan, 13, with number (2309/51), and Ahmad (174/3), and the wording is his.

Islamic ethics also emphasize instilling the habit of Islamic greetings in children. Elders initiating the Islamic greeting creates a familiarity that brings comfort to the children's souls. As a result, they naturally reciprocate the greeting, establishing a connection with the elders. The Prophet, peace be upon him, exemplified this practice by offering greetings to children, as evidenced in the earlier hadith when Anas reported, "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, arrived and greeted the children."

Cooperation: In the realm of cooperation, as previously clarified, the child, at this stage, enjoys collaboration to earn the affection of his community and establish his position among them. It is essential to seize this opportunity and nurture him in the spirit of cooperation because Islam encourages it. Allah says:

{وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ}

[And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression] 5:2

The methods that instill cooperation in children involve encouraging them to help others and involve them in charitable activities. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "There was a man who used to lend money to the people, and whenever his debtor was in straitened circumstances, he would say to his children: Forgive him so that Allah may forgive us, and they used to forgive him."⁵⁸

A child raised in a household where cooperation is valued will naturally grow up to be someone who collaborates with others, and this positively influences their behavior and interactions with others.

⁵⁸ Al-Bukhari (82/2) Kitab al-Buyu', 34, Bab Man 'Anzara Ma'sran, 18, Hadith number (2078). Muslim (1196/2) Kitab al-Musaqah, 22, Bab Fadl 'Inzari al-Ma'sar 6, Hadith number (1562/31).

Refining Sexual Drive:

In this stage, the child is approaching the age of adolescence, and preparation for it is essential from the beginning of this phase. After teaching them the modesty of gaze, distinguishing between sleeping arrangements, commanding them to seek permission, and keeping them away from anything that might lead to inappropriate behavior, it is a response to Islamic ethics that instills respect in the home and prevents sudden glances at attractive stimuli.

It is crucial to teach the child at this stage the importance of seeking permission, which some Muslim families neglect in our era, except for those who have received mercy from the Almighty. Allah says:

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ ۚ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهْرِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ۚ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ ۚ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَ هُنَّ ۚ طَوْفُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ}

[O believers! Let those 'bondpeople' in your possession and those of you who are still under age ask for your permission 'to come in' at three times: before dawn prayer, when you take off your 'outer' clothes at noon, and after the late evening prayer. 'These are' three times of privacy for you. Other than these times, there is no blame on you or them to move freely, attending to one another. This is how Allah makes the revelations clear to you, for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.] 24:58

The meaning of the verse is that during these times, it is not appropriate for servants and children to enter without seeking permission. You must discipline them to seek permission if they want to enter during your moments of privacy in one of these three times.⁵⁹ As for times other than these three, there is no sin on

⁵⁹ Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, Tafsir Surah al-Nur, Dar al-Saudiya lil-Nashr, 2nd edition, 1407 AH / 1987 CE, Jeddah, p. 219.

you, guardians, if they enter without seeking permission.⁶⁰ The necessity for this leniency is clarified by the Prophet's hadith, narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in their authentic collections, where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Permission was only made necessary for the sake of the gaze."⁶¹

It is necessary to instill in children the distinction in sleeping arrangements during this stage. As the Prophet said, "Command your children to pray when they are seven years old, and spank them for it when they are ten, and separate them in their beds."⁶² This separation is due to the boys reaching the age of distinction and understanding, fearing that if they share a bed in adolescence or its equivalent, they might see each other's private parts during sleep or wakefulness, leading to sexual arousal or moral corruption.

Additionally, it is important to dress children in loose-fitting clothes and avoid yellowish colors in boys' clothing. Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw two yellowish garments on him and asked, "Did your mother order you to wear these?" I replied, "No." He said, "[Then] either wash them or burn them."⁶³ It should be ingrained in the child to prefer white clothing and to be cautious of clothes resembling those of women. The child should understand that such clothing is for women, and men should refrain from it, and this understanding should be reiterated.⁶⁴ Emphasizing this point is necessary because it can prevent him from developing feminine tendencies. Exposing him to softness can corrupt his character, inclining him toward femininity and distancing him from the rugged qualities inherent in manhood.

⁶⁰ Muhammad al-Amin al-Shanqiti, *Tafsir Surah al-Nur*, p. 195.

⁶¹ Al-Bukhari (4/138, Book of Seeking Permission, Hadith 6241), and Muslim (1698/3, Book of Manners, Hadith 2156).

⁶² The reference was mentioned previously.

⁶³ Muslim (16473), *Book of Clothing and Adornments*, Chapter: Prohibition of Men Wearing Saffron-Colored Garments, Hadith 2077/28.

⁶⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, Vol. 3, p. 72

Furthermore, children should be prevented from listening to prohibited songs because they are among the melodies of Satan and a means of calling towards temptation and moral decay, given their potential to stimulate desires.

Educational and Moral Applications:

From the foregoing, the following moral and educational guidelines can be derived in this stage:

1. Implanting the religious and worshipful aspect by teaching them prayer, fasting, and other acts of worship. The religious and worshipful aspect is fundamental to Islamic morals, and it instills in them the fear of Allah, knowing that Allah watches them, aware of their secret and public actions, and that all their actions are for the sake of Allah.

2. Continuing to instill various moral habits in the child, not relying solely on what the child learned in the previous stage. This includes teaching them to seek permission, lower their gaze, respect their parents, show kindness to the elderly, and develop sincerity in speech and action. The mentor should exemplify Islamic morals first to serve as a role model for the child, and then train and nurture the child in these morals through various educational methods.

3. During this period, the child demonstrates a love for participation and cooperation with members of society. Hence, the child should be encouraged to cooperate with neighbors, assist them during events, connect this cooperation with sincerity to Allah, and encourage them to help the poor and needy. The child should be encouraged to give something to those in need and be asked to deliver it to them, instilling the habit of giving for the sake of Allah. This is part of the noble Islamic ethics.

4. To preserve their sexual instincts, they should be taught to lower their gaze, and their clothing should be modest, especially for males. They should be taught

not to play with the opposite gender, avoid contact with them, and refrain from looking at them. The parents should model modesty and dignity in their clothing, ensuring that these ethical values are transferred to their children. Additionally, they should encourage reading Islamic books that promote chastity and modesty, cautioning against exposure to corrupt publications that showcase the charms of both men and women. The educator at home and school should strictly prohibit such materials.

Fourth: The Stage of puberty

The stage of puberty is considered highly significant in an individual's life due to the essential changes it encompasses in physical, sexual, mental, and emotional growth. This stage marks the onset of responsibility and the feeling of approaching adulthood, often associated with the period of adolescence.

The Concept of Adolescence and Puberty:

- Adolescence: Refers to a young person who has reached the age of puberty. A girl in adolescence is called "Jariyah Raahiqah," and a boy is called "Ghulam Raahiq." It is used to describe individuals aged ten to thirteen.⁶⁵ "Adolescent" signifies a boy reaching puberty and experiencing nocturnal emission, and similarly, a girl reaches adolescence when she experiences puberty, and both become adults.⁶⁶

- Puberty: In psychological terminology, both puberty and adolescence are interrelated and synonymous from the onset of puberty until complete reproductive maturity. Adolescence is defined as "the period extending from puberty to full reproductive maturity".⁶⁷ Some argue that it starts with the appearance of menstruation in girls and nocturnal emission in boys, continuing from twelve to eighteen. Others define it as the stage beginning with puberty and ending with maturity.⁶⁸

These definitions are likely influenced by examining the characteristics of this stage concerning physical, mental, and emotional development. Special attention is given to studying and analyzing these intertwined aspects. This stage is

⁶⁵ Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 1, Root Word "Rahq," p. (130).

⁶⁶ The previous reference, p. (131).

⁶⁷ Muhammad Jameel Muhammad, Yusuf Farouk Sayyid Abdul Salam Al-Nomu, p. (451).

⁶⁸ Ma'ruf, Zariq Khafaya Al-Murahaqah, Dar Al-Fikr, Vol. 2, 1406 AH (1986 AD), Damascus, p. (17)

challenging to pinpoint with a specific age due to variations in the onset of puberty between females and males and even within the same gender. Such variations result from factors like diet, where a high protein intake accelerates puberty, while a high carbohydrate diet delays it. Additionally, inadequate nutrition delays puberty and affects an individual's sexual activity.⁶⁹ Climate also plays a role, with adolescence occurring earlier in warmer regions than in colder ones. Individual and genetic differences also contribute to the variability.⁷⁰ Therefore, it can be approximately defined to include both males and females from the age of ten to around sixteen.

Characteristics of Puberty:

- Desire for Marriage: Adolescents undergo organic and bodily changes they haven't experienced before, leading to the arousal of sexual instincts. Religious teachings regulate these inclinations by imposing restrictions on sexual activity in a way that serves the individual and the community.⁷¹ This is achieved through lawful marriage, and adolescents are advised not to satisfy their sexual desires in a bestial manner, as occurs in non-believing societies.

- Imitation and Interest in Heroes: This stage is characterized by the excessive admiration of adolescents for their brave, strong, and intelligent peers who excel in their games and studies.⁷² This means that they tend to aspire and excel, seeking to satisfy this in various ways. Proper guidance is needed to help them achieve their goals; otherwise, these aspirations may be directed toward futile pursuits, such as imitating singers and athletes, or deviate into unhealthy methods like lying, arrogance, boasting, and misusing power to stand out, especially among their peers.

⁶⁹ The previous reference, page: 257

⁷⁰ Ma'ruf, Zariq Khafaya Al-Murahiqaq, page: 314

⁷¹ Hamdi Zahran, Ilmun Nafs, p (407)

⁷² Fu'aad Albahi As-Sayyid, Al-Usus Alnafsiyah Lin Numu, P: 314

- Inclination Towards Criticism and the Desire for Reform: Awareness increases during this stage, and individuals become more cognizant of matters and events. Their understanding of ethical values grows in tandem with their overall development, leading to heightened criticism of societal behavior and a desire to reform it. Specialists in this field note the growth of social awareness, the tendency towards criticism, and the desire for social reform. However, there is a need for guidance and assistance in approaching these issues with wisdom and sagacity rather than attempting radical changes without study, progression, and patience, as adults would do.⁷³

Emotional Growth: This stage is characterized by frequent emotions that do not correspond to their stimuli, emotional instability, and the fluctuation of adolescent behavior between love and hate, courage and fear, expansiveness and depression, enthusiasm and indifference. Adolescents also experience shyness, and all these emotional phenomena have a significant impact on their ethics and interactions with others.⁷⁴ For example, shyness in inappropriate situations may limit their positive behavior, fearing mistakes and the criticism of others. The fluctuation between love and hate, enthusiasm, and indifference may lead them away from decisiveness in their affairs, making them hesitant.

Daydreams: Adolescents sometimes exceed the limits of their capabilities with wandering imagination, where they envision aspirations, emotions, and solve problems for themselves in images that may be realistic, such as becoming a teacher, officer, preacher, or painting an unrealistic picture that they cannot achieve.⁷⁵ This imagination may lead them to deviate morally by seeking illegitimate means to fulfill their self-imagined desires. Here, the role of family and social institutions becomes crucial in guiding adolescents, aligning their aspirations with their abilities through counseling and sound guidance.

⁷³ Hamid Zahran, *Ilmun Nafs*, Page: 354

⁷⁴ The previous reference P (318), summarized.

⁷⁵ Hāmid, Zahrān, "Ilmu Nafs Al-Numu," p. 319, summarized with some modifications.

Social Inclinations: There is an increased inclination of individuals in this stage towards the society they live in, with their friends forming a significant part. They belong to this group and are influenced by them. Specialists emphasize the impact of peer groups during adolescence, affecting upbringing and normalization. Adolescents are more responsive to the influence of peers than to adults. If the companions exhibit good qualities and ethical virtues, their influence is reflected in the behavior of those associated with them. On the contrary, if they lack these qualities, the opposite effect occurs. This highlights the importance of choosing friends and companions wisely.

Islamic Guidance for this Stage:

Sexual Motivation: Sexual motivation is a natural drive in humans requiring fulfillment for reproduction and the preservation of the human species. Islam directs these motivations towards noble ethical principles, keeping individuals away from the traps of vices. Islam closes every door that may lead to the arousal of sexual motivation, such as forbidden glances or seclusion with a non-relative. This is to avoid falling into the temptations that the devil may exploit to create false pleasures.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “A man must not be alone with a woman, and a woman must travel only when accompanied by a man who is within the prohibited degrees.” A man said, “I have been enrolled for such an expedition, and my wife intends to go out to perform the pilgrimage.” He therefore told him to go and perform the pilgrimage along with his wife”.⁷⁶

Imam al-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on him, stated: "If an unrelated man is alone with an unrelated woman without a third person present, it is unanimously considered forbidden by scholars. Similarly, if there is someone with them, like

⁷⁶ Al-Bukhari (395/3 Kitab: Al-Nikah 67, Bab: La Yukhlun Rajul bi Amra'atin illa Dhu Mahram 11, Hadith number 5233), and Muslim (978/2 Kitab: Al-Hajj 15, Bab: Safar Al-Mar'ah ma'a Mahram ila Al-Hajj wa Ghayrih 74, Hadiths 424-1341).

a young boy who is too young to be ashamed, such as a two or three-year-old, then his presence is considered as if he is not there. Likewise, if a man is alone with an unrelated woman, it is also considered forbidden."⁷⁷ The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "Beware, no person should spend the night with a married woman, but only in case he is married to her or he is her Mahram."⁷⁸ The scholars specify the term "thayyib" (previously married woman) because it is more likely for intimate relations to occur. As for the virgin (bikr), she is preserved and naturally more distant from men, so there is no need to specifically mention her. This is also a reminder, as when people tend to be lax in avoiding the previously married women, it becomes more important to emphasize the necessity for protecting the virgin. Islam also warns the relatives of a husband against being alone with his wife to avoid temptation. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Beware of entering upon women." A man from the Ansar asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What about the in-laws?" The Prophet replied, "The in-law is death."⁷⁹ Islam also instructs women to observe hijab to prevent arousing desires in men and protect themselves from those who may harbor ill intentions.

Allah said:

{وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ}

[And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity, and not to reveal their adornments¹ except what normally appears.² Let them draw their veils over their chests.] 24:31

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّلزُوجِ كِ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِّن جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَن يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذِينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا}

⁷⁷ Al-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, vol. 9, p. 109.

⁷⁸ Muslim (4/1710 Kitab: Al-Salam, 29 Bab: Tahrim Al-Khalwah bi Al-Ajnabiyyah wa Al-Dukhul 'Alayha 8, Hadith number 2171/19).

⁷⁹ Al-Bukhari (395/3) Book of Marriage, Hadith 67, Chapter: A man should not be alone with a woman and entering upon a woman in seclusion (111), Number (5232). Muslim (1711/4) Book of Salam, Hadith 39, Chapter: The prohibition of seclusion with a stranger woman and entering upon her, Number (2172/20).

[O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way it is more likely that they will be recognized 'as virtuous' and not be harassed. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.] 33:59

The intended meaning is to cover and conceal the face, whether by wearing a headscarf or a face veil, or by any other appropriate means.⁸⁰ In order for a Muslim to maintain a high level of morality, Islam directs them to lower their gaze so as not to see those things that may arouse their instincts.

Allah also said:

{قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ }

[‘O Prophet!’ Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their chastity. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what they do.] 24:30

As part of the etiquettes of the road, it is also recommended to lower one's gaze, as mentioned in the authentic Hadiths, where the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: “Avoid sitting by the road side.” The people then said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), we cannot do without those meeting places in which we converse” So he said, “Well, if you insist (on that) give the road its due rights.” They asked, ‘What are the road’s due rights?’ He replied, “Lowering your gaze, abstaining from anything offensive, returning salutations, enjoining the right (Ma'ruf) and forbidding from evil deeds (Munkar).”⁸¹

Islam has prohibited women from using fragrance and then going out among men, so that they may not be tempted or aroused by her scent. The Messenger of

⁸⁰ Abul Ala Al-Mawdudi, Al-Hijaab, p (322)

⁸¹ Al-Bukhari (196/2), Book of Grievances, Hadith 46, Chapter: "Blocking the Path and Sitting in It," number (2465), and Muslim (16753), Book of Clothing and Adornments, Chapter 37: "Prohibition of Sitting in the Pathways," Hadith 32, number (2121/114), and the wording is his.

Allah, peace be upon him, said: “Any woman who puts on perfume then passes by people so that they can smell her fragrance then she is an adulteress.”⁸²

When adolescents, both boys and girls, as well as adults, adhere to these guidelines, their impact is reflected in the behavior of everyone in terms of refining sexual impulses.

Inclination towards imitation and interest in role models: Islam has directed this Ummah (community) to emulate the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as he represents the highest example and excellent role model, as mentioned in the Quran:

{لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا}

[Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often.] 33:21

This noble verse is a significant foundation for emulating the Messenger of Allah in his sayings, actions, and states. Therefore, blessed and exalted is He, who commands people to emulate the Prophet, peace be upon him, on the Day of the Confederates, in his patience, perseverance, steadfastness, struggle, and awaiting relief from his Lord, the Almighty.⁸³ His life serves as the highest and noblest example, where heroic virtues such as courage, patience, perseverance, and obedience are manifested. It represents the practical application of his life, providing youth, during their studies, with a good example and role model if they seek to emulate.

⁸² (1) Abu Dawood (400/4 - 401) in the book "Al-Rajul," Chapter 27, reported on women using fragrance before going out, with reference number (1473). Also, Al-Tirmidhi (98/5 - 99) in the book "Al-Adab," Chapter 44, reported on the dislike of a woman going out perfumed, with reference number (2786). Al-Nasai (153/8) in the book "Al-Zinah," Chapter 48, mentioned what is disliked for women in terms of fragrance, with reference number (5126). Al-Albani classified it as "Hasan Sahih" in Sunan al-Nasai, reference number (4737).

⁸³ Ibn Kathir, Tafsirul Qur'aan Al-Azeem, Vol 3, p (483)

Allah, the Almighty, further said:

{لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ ۖ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ}

[You certainly have an excellent example in them for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day. But whoever turns away, then surely Allah 'alone' is the Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy.] 60:6

Just as parents and educators play a significant role in the lives of adolescents, they serve as examples whom they observe day and night in times of difficulty and ease, in situations of good and evil, in acts of virtue and wrongdoing, and in beneficial and harmful deeds. Therefore, they must be exemplary models of good conduct at school, at home, and in the community. They embody Islamic ethics advocated by the approach of Islamic education.

- **Inclination Towards Criticism and the Desire for Reform:** When an individual reaches this stage, they aspire to contribute to the reform of others. Islamic legislation supports and encourages them to do so under the wise and eloquent guidance of the Almighty, the Wise, the Merciful, as mentioned in the Quran:

{وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ}

[Let there be a group among you who call 'others' to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil] 3:104

And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith".⁸⁴

⁸⁴ (3) Muslim (69/1): Kitab al-Iman, 1: Bab Kawn al-Nahi 'An al-Munkar Min al-Iman. 20, with number (49/78)

And the one who does not adhere to what the Messenger of Allah has conveyed and does not refrain from what he prohibited, he is liable to be criticized and advised by members of society, especially when awareness in the community is heightened. This Islamic guidance, in line with human nature, makes one feel his duty and masculinity, requiring training, guidance, and education to become accustomed to it. Here, the role of family, school, media, and the mosque is highlighted in teaching and guiding youth with the proper direction of enjoining good and forbidding evil, with conscious and correct practice.

Emotional Growth: Adolescents transition from childhood to a more mature stage, preparing them for adulthood. It is natural for them to experience a range of emotions such as love, hatred, courage, fear, expansiveness, and depression. These emotions serve as building blocks for proper guidance and the cultivation of virtuous ethics, promoting preference for these virtues, enthusiasm to practice them, and aversion to vices, fearing and avoiding them. Emotional inclination toward the love of goodness and ethical virtues, such as sincerity, honesty, loyalty, courage, and generosity, becomes achievable and adaptable. On the other hand, their emotions are stirred against evil, fostering a fear and avoidance of lying, backbiting, gossip, betrayal, cowardice, obscenity, and other vices.

As this stage witnesses the emergence of shyness, which can weaken innate determination if misplaced, it is directed to adopt modesty aligned with the modesty from Allah, accompanying the individual in private and public life. Modesty is considered one of the branches of faith, as stated: 'Faith consists of seventy and some branches, the highest of which is the saying: "La ilaha illallah," and the least of which is the removal of harmful objects from the road. And modesty is a branch of faith.'⁸⁵ Adolescents are directed to maintain their modesty as a divine modesty, both privately and publicly. This is a branch of the Islamic ethics emphasized by the educational approach.

⁸⁵ Al-Bukhari (1/20) Kitab al-Iman, Chapter 2: Matters of Faith, Number (9), and Muslim (63/1): Kitab al-Iman 1, Chapter: Explanation of the Number of Branches of Faith 12, Number (35/58), and the wording is his.

Social Inclinations: Humans, by nature, are social beings who seek companionship and avoid loneliness and isolation. This characteristic intensifies during this stage. Islam guides this inclination toward brotherhood for the sake of Allah, the sincere brotherhood of faith. When a family or a nation is saturated with this sincere brotherhood, it brings about a profound and far-reaching social revolution in its effects and results. Allah has blessed the believers by making them brothers who love one another, as He, the Almighty, mentioned in the Quran:

{وَأَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا}

[Remember Allah’s favour upon you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so you—by His grace—became brothers.] 3:103

Educational Applications:

Among the educational applications in this stage are the following:

- Families and various social institutions play a significant role in guiding adolescents, tailored to their characteristics. They are a solid building block for adaptation and guidance towards goodness, modesty, and avoidance of corruption. To achieve this, the following measures should be taken:

- Individuals in this stage should be directed towards social cooperation and integration with their peers, fostering emotional growth through various educational programs and activities.

- Highlighting ethical pitfalls and deviations to be avoided, issuing warnings to those who engage in them, and emphasizing their role in rectifying such behavior through enjoining good and forbidding evil.

- Showcasing Islamic heroism through the study of the Prophet's (PBUH) biography, the lives of the companions, and the righteous Muslims. This is to inspire emulation instead of imitating deviant role models like singers and actors, who have unfortunately become role models for some young men and women due to the neglect of social institutions in their proper educational role. The family's role goes beyond providing physical sustenance; it encompasses intellectual and spiritual nourishment, forming the foundation of their moral character.

Educational guidance does not end at this stage of a person's life; it continues into adulthood and old age, as evidenced by the following two stages.

Fifth: Stage of Maturity "Al-Ashudd Ash-Shabaab"

This stage represents mental, physical, and emotional maturity. It is a phase of development characterized by the ability to give, as well as the capacity to regulate emotions and behavior. This phase is referred to as the stage of maturity, strength, and youth, and can be further elucidated as follows:

Connotation of *Rushd*, *Ashudd*, and *Shabaab*:

***Rushd*:** *Rushd* is defined in the Arabic dictionary "Alqaamus Al-Muhit" as "being upright on the path of truth with steadfastness in it."⁸⁶ It is the opposite of misguidance. *Rushd* encompasses both maturity and righteousness as inferred from the Quran:

{وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ ءَانَسْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ رُّشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ۖ

[Test 'the competence of' the orphans until they reach a marriageable age. Then if you feel they are capable of sound judgment, return their wealth to them.] 4:6

The term "maturity" is defined in the comprehensive dictionary as "being upright on the path of truth with firmness in it." It is the opposite of misguidance. Maturity includes maturity and righteousness, as mentioned in the Quran: "And test the orphans [in their abilities] until they reach marriageable age. Then if you perceive in them sound judgment, release their property to them." (Quran, 4:6)

⁸⁶ Al-Fairuzabaadi, Al-Qamus Al-Muhit, Vol: 1, page: 294

Sa'id bin Jubair stated that it signifies righteousness in their faith and the protection of their wealth. Similarly, this viewpoint is narrated from Ibn Abbas, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, and several other Imams. According to the consensus of jurists, when a young man attains maturity in both his religious understanding and financial management, the restrictions on his wealth, previously under the control of his guardian, are lifted, and his assets are then handed over to him.⁸⁷

Al-Ashudd: According to Al-Fayruza Abadi, the term "Al-Ashudd" means reaching the age of strength, typically between eighteen and thirty years.⁸⁸ Ibn Manzur stated that "Al-Ashudd" refers to intensity, and intensity implies strength and firmness. Al-Zajjaj mentioned it as between seventeen and forty.⁸⁹ At times, it is described as between thirty and forty. The complete stage of strength is reached at the age of forty, as mentioned in the Quran:

{حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ }

[In time, when the child reaches their prime at the age of forty, they pray, “My Lord! Inspire me to ‘always’ be thankful for Your favours which You blessed me with] 46:15

He said: "When he reaches the peak of his physical strength, intellect, and judgment, with a minimum age of thirty-three or thirty, and completes forty years, he is considered in full maturity, which is the most common interpretation of 'Ashudd'.⁹⁰

Ibn Abbas stated that 'Ashudd' refers to wisdom, a view endorsed by Yahya bin Ya'mar and Al-Suddi. Mujahid reported from him an age of thirty-six, while another narration suggests thirty. Dhahhaak mentioned twenty years, and

⁸⁷ Inb Kathir, Tafsirul Qur'an Al-Azeem, Vol 1, P: 463

⁸⁸ Al-Fayruza Abadi, Al-Qamus Al-Muhit, Vol 1, page (305)

⁸⁹ Ibn Manzur, Lisanul Arab, Vol 3, root word: "شد", P (235).

⁹⁰ As-Suyuti, Tafsirul Jalalain, p (668)

Muqatil proposed eighteen. Al-Zuhri clarified the term, stating that reaching the state of 'Ashudd' occurs from the time a person attains adulthood until the age of forty. He further explained that 'Ashudd' marks the beginning of maturity, bounded by the age of forty, encompassing the period in between. The concept of 'Ashudd' is positioned between the onset of adulthood and the age of forty.⁹¹

As for the relationship between maturity ('Rushd') and 'Ashudd,' they are intertwined in meaning and purpose. We find that Allah, the Most Exalted, has linked the disbursement of an orphan's wealth at times to reaching the age of marriage and maturity, and at other times to reaching the state of 'Ashudd.' He, the Exalted, mentioned in Surah Al-An'am:

{وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ ۗ}

[And do not come near the wealth of the orphan—unless intending to enhance it—until they attain maturity.] 6:152

Al-Qurtubi mentioned that Allah, in the context, refers to both physical strength, which could be in the body, and knowledge gained through experience. The occurrence of 'Ashudd' here is absolute, as indicated by the specific conditions mentioned in Surah An-Nisa:

{وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ ءَانَسْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ رُّشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ۗ}

[Test 'the competence of' the orphans until they reach a marriageable age. Then if you feel they are capable of sound judgment, return their wealth to them.] 4:6

This combines physical strength, denoted by reaching adulthood, and intellectual strength, represented by attaining maturity.⁹²

⁹¹ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziya, Tuhfatul Mawdud, P (178).

⁹² Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jaame Li Ahkaamil Quran (7/78).

This indicates that 'Ashudd' encompasses both physical and intellectual strength, while 'Rushd' is associated with intellectual strength, and 'Bulugh' refers to physical strength. Thus, 'Rushd' becomes a part of 'Ashudd,' implying that 'Ashudd' and 'Rushd' are not two distinct stages but one unified stage.

Regarding the specific duration of this stage, I have chosen to interpret it as a minimum of seventeen and a maximum of forty, based on the following considerations:

1. The verses in Surah Al-An'am and Surah An-Nisa provide evidence.
2. The Quranic verse in Surah Al-Ahqaf indicates that the completion of 'Ashudd' is at forty.
3. Lexical sources in the Arabic language suggest a minimum of seventeen and a maximum of forty, as stated by Ibn Manzur citing Al-Zajjaj. This aligns with the connotation of strength and robustness, typically found in this age range.
4. 'Ashudd' signifies the peak of physical and intellectual strength, as indicated by Al-Qurtubi and Al-Suyuti. This can only be achieved by someone who has surpassed adolescence and likely reached the age of forty, as it is common for an individual's abilities to fully mature by then.

Therefore, the most plausible interpretation is that this stage ranges from seventeen to forty years.

As for the term "Shabab" (youth), Ibn Manzur defines it as the young man,⁹³ and Al-Nawawi adds that it refers to one who has reached but has not exceeded thirty years.⁹⁴ This aligns with the Shafi'i view. Al-Qurtubi further explains that a person may be called "Hadath" until sixteen, then "Shab" until thirty-two, followed by "Kahl" (mature adult). This aligns with the statement of Al-Zamahshari regarding youth extending from puberty to thirty-two. This

⁹³Ibn Manzur, *Lisaanul Arab*, Vol: 1, root word, "شباب", p: (480)

⁹⁴ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Vol: 9, p (173)

indicates that the youth stage is within the broader stage of maturity, continuing until the age of thirty-two or forty.⁹⁵

These clarifications suggest that the stages of maturity, 'Ashudd,' and youth are, in essence, a single phase and not multiple stages.

Characteristics of the Stage of *Rushd*:

Activity: This stage is marked by the individual reaching the peak of their productivity and attaining complete maturity. It is rightly considered a stage of giving, competition, and establishing the foundations of life.⁹⁶ However, it requires ethical guidance to refine this ability to give and competition towards goodness. The individual's intellectual capabilities become more receptive to learning and understanding, continuing to increase until reaching their maximum in the maturity stage. This reflects on their behavior and understanding of moral virtues.⁹⁷

Cognitive Abilities: Some studies suggest that the intelligence level of adults remains stable in this stage, with relative changes attributed to various factors including economic, social, and cognitive aspects. The more educated an adult is, the stronger their analytical and reasoning skills, and the more cautious they are about consequences. This is reflected in their behavior, and a socially educated and understanding environment also influences the thinking of adults.

Emotions: During the stage of maturity, the behavior of adults is characterized by overcoming the fears that troubled them in childhood, transitioning to more ethical concerns. Individuals fear failure and make efforts to maintain their social status.⁹⁸ Therefore, the importance of upbringing through encouragement

⁹⁵ Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, "Fath al-Bari," Vol. 9, p. (108), and quoted by Al-Shawkani in "Nail al-Awtar," Vol. 6, p. (102).

⁹⁶ Fuad Al-Bahi, Al-Sayyid, "Al-Asas Al-Nafsiyya Lil-Numoo," p. (341).

⁹⁷ The previous reference: P (335-336)

⁹⁸ Amal, Sadiq Fuad Abu Hatib, "Namoo Al-Insan Min Marhalat Al-Janin Ila Marhalat Al-Musnineen," Markaz Al-Tanmiyah Al-Bashariyya Wal-Ma'lumat, t. 1, 1988 AD, Cairo, p. (309).

and discipline is emphasized in this stage, aiming to instill in adults the fear of God before the fear of people. Modesty before God and the fear of the ultimate exposure on Judgment Day take precedence over the fear of societal shame. Emotional reactions transform into a sense of parenthood, reaching its peak in maturity. Their perspective on marriage widens, seeking not only to satisfy sexual motivations but also to fulfill the desires for parenthood and family extension.

Desire for Learning: A fundamental characteristic of mature individuals is the desire for learning and the need for accomplishment and reward. This goes beyond merely satisfying sexual motives; it extends to the feeling that one is performing their work in the desired manner.⁹⁹

The key characteristics of this stage include the following:¹⁰⁰

1. Heightened focus on future matters and an increased capacity for education and professionalism.
2. The youth's inclination towards material gain.
3. A tangible inclination towards engagement in social reform projects and public service after recognizing societal needs.
4. A significant inclination towards reading and seeking adventurous experiences.
5. The necessity for effective time management during leisure.

These characteristics can be appropriately guided in light of Islamic principles through:

⁹⁹ Amal, Sadiq Fuad Abu Hatib, *Namo Al-Insan Min Marhalat Al-Janin Ila Marhalat Al-Musannin* Markaz

¹⁰⁰ Muhammad Hassan, 'Alawi 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Riyadi, Dar al-Ma'arif, Vol. 6, 1987 AD, Cairo, pp. (151-152).

1. Instilling in them the desire for rewards in the Hereafter, while maintaining awareness of their worldly responsibilities.
2. Advising them to rectify their pursuit of financial gain in accordance with permissible actions permitted by Allah, cautioning against engaging in forbidden activities.
3. Channeling their aspirations for social reform through enjoining good, forbidding evil, aiding their brethren, and ensuring their actions are sincerely dedicated to Allah.
4. Directing them towards beneficial literature such as books on sound creed, jurisprudence, and those related to their professions, among other informative works.

Islamic Guidance for this Stage:

This stage marks the period of youth, encompassing sexual, mental, and emotional maturity. It is a phase during which young individuals typically have the capability to enter into marriage, a union that serves as a safeguard for modesty and a shield against falling into indecency. The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged the youth to marry when they are able to provide for the necessities of marriage, stating: “Whoever among you can afford to get married (*Al’ba’ah*)¹⁰¹, let him do so, and whoever cannot afford it should fast, for it will be a restraint (*Wija*)¹⁰² for him.”¹⁰³

In addition, marriage not only fulfills sexual and parental motivations but also provides tranquility to the soul and peace to the faculties. Allah, the Most Exalted, says:

{ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا }

[He is the One Who created you from a single soul, then from it made its spouse so he may find comfort in her.] 7:189

He also says:

¹⁰¹ The term "Baa'ah" here has two interpretations related to the same meaning. The more accurate of the two is that it refers to its linguistic meaning, which is intercourse. The intended implication is that whoever among you is capable of engaging in intercourse due to their ability to provide for the expenses of marriage, let them marry. And whoever is unable to engage in intercourse due to their incapacity to provide for the expenses, they should observe fasting to control their desires. This is mentioned by Imam al-Nawawi in his explanation of Sahih Muslim (p. 173), Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari, Vol. 9, p. 108, and al-Shawkani in Nayl al-Awtar, Vol. 10,626, p. 102.

¹⁰² "Al-Wajaa": The intended meaning is that fasting eliminates the desire for intercourse just as "al-Wajaa" does. (Al-Nihayah, 152/5).

¹⁰³ Al-Bukhari (3553) in the Book of Marriage, Chapter: "Whoever is Unable to Engage in Intercourse Should Fast," with number (5066). Muslim (1019/2) in the Book of Marriage, Chapter: "The Recommendation of Marriage for the One Whose Soul Desires It," with number (000/3), and the wording is his.

{وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ}

[And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.] 30:21

In establishing this bond, a dwelling place is created for the soul and nerves, bringing rest to the body and heart, stability to life and livelihood.¹⁰⁴ It renders one's temperament calm and the soul settled, undoubtedly reflecting positively on an individual's behavior and conduct.

Islam, with its guidance, prohibits reprehensible actions due to their detrimental impact on the moral conduct of both men and women. As the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, stated: Two are the types of the denizens of Hell whom I did not see: people having flogs like the tails of the ox with them and they would be beating people, and the women who would be dressed but appear to be naked, who would be inclined (to evil) and make their husbands incline towards it. Their heads would be like the humps of the bukht camel¹⁰⁵ inclined to one side. They will not enter Paradise and they would not smell its odour whereas its odour would be smelt from such and such distance.¹⁰⁶

Ibn Abbas said: The Prophet (ﷺ) cursed effeminate men (those men who are in the similitude (assume the manners of women) and those women who assume

¹⁰⁴ Sayyad Qutub, Fi Dhilaalil Quran, Vol: 5, P (2763)

¹⁰⁵ Imam al-Nawawi stated: "In this hadith, there is criticism of these two categories. It is said that the meaning is they are clothed with the blessings of Allah while being ungrateful for them. Others say the meaning is that they cover some parts of their bodies and expose others, displaying their state. Another interpretation is that they wear thin garments revealing the color of their bodies. As for the 'ma'ilat,' it is said to mean turning away from the obedience of Allah and neglecting what is obligatory to observe. 'Mumilat' is interpreted as having knowledge of inappropriate actions and inclining towards them. Some say 'mumilat' means walking in an arrogant manner, inclining due to their self-sufficiency. It is also said to mean combing with a slanting comb, the comb of those who allure others. They comb with that comb, and the meaning of 'their heads are like the humps of camels' is that they elevate and glorify them, wrapping them with turbans or bands or the like." (Sahih Muslim, Commentary by al-Nawawi, 110/14)

¹⁰⁶ (5) Muslim (3/1860) Kitab: Al-Libas wal Zeenah, 27, Bab: Al-Nisaa Al-Kasiat Al-Araayil Al-Ma'ilat Al-Mumilat 34, with number (2128/125).

the manners of men, and he said, "Turn them out of your houses ." The Prophet (ﷺ) turned out such-and-such man, and `Umar turned out such-and-such woman.¹⁰⁷

The Islamic teachings instill in the Muslim the virtue of modesty and discourage reaching out to people for assistance, especially during the stages of adolescence, maturity, and full adulthood. The individual is encouraged to be self-sufficient, capable of earning and giving, rather than taking and exploiting. Islam frowns upon engaging in the profession of begging, urging individuals to either give willingly or refrain from asking. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, "It is better for one among you to bring a load of firewood on his back and give charity out of it (and satisfy his own need) and be independent of people, than that he should beg from people, whether they give him anything or refuse him. Verily the upper hand is better than the lower hand, and begin (charity) with your dependents."¹⁰⁸

However, due to a lack of awareness among some Muslims regarding these Islamic guidelines, there are instances in Muslim countries where young people resort to begging, treating it as a legitimate profession. This reflects a deficiency in understanding the ethical principles of Islam, leading to a decline in their moral standards, which is incompatible with the dignity of a Muslim.

During the formative years of building a family and choosing a livelihood, an individual is responsible for the morals of their family. They should set a good example in their work and represent a role model for their family and community. The individual must embody noble values such as kindness towards family and those around them. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of forbearance, stating, "O Aisha, Allah is Forbearer

¹⁰⁷ Al-Bukhari (72/4) Kitab: Al-Libas, 77, Bab: Ikhraaj Al-Mutashabihin bin-Nisaa Min Al-Buyoot 62, number: (5886).

¹⁰⁸ Al-Bukhari (4566/01) Kitab: Al-Zakat, 24, Bab: Al-Isti'faaf An Al-Mas'alah 50, with number (1470), and Muslim (7212) Kitab: Al-Zakat, 12, Bab: Karahiyat Al-Mas'alah Lil-Naas 35, with number (1042/106), and the wording is his.

and He loves forbearance, and rewards for forbearance while He does not reward severity, and does not give for anything besides it (forbearance).”¹⁰⁹

The individual should refrain from arrogance, a trait commonly associated with youth who haven't been nurtured on Islamic guidance. While taking pride in physical, mental, and practical strength, Islam directs individuals towards humility and the beauty of character. As mentioned in a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), "He who has, in his heart, an ant's weight of arrogance will not enter Jannah." Someone said: "A man likes to wear beautiful clothes and shoes?" Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Allah is Beautiful, He loves beauty. Arrogance means ridiculing and rejecting the Truth and despising people."¹¹⁰

From this narration, it is understood that there is nothing wrong with an individual caring for the beauty and cleanliness of their attire without indulging in extravagance. This is a manifestation of good character and an acknowledgment of Allah's blessings, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, "Indeed, Allah loves to see the sign of His blessings on His servant."¹¹¹

Islam directs individuals to embrace good morals, strengthening the bonds of love and brotherhood within society. It discourages actions leading to division and hatred, such as suspicion, spying, envy, and competition. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against harboring ill thoughts, saying, “Beware of suspicion, for it is of the worst of false tales and don't look for the other's faults

¹⁰⁹ Al-Bukhari (95/4 - 96) Kitab: Al-Adab, 28, Bab: Al-Rifq Fi Al-Amr Kullihi 35, with number (6024), and Muslim (203/4 - 204) Kitab: Al-Birr wa Al-Silah wa Al-Adab 45, Bab: Fadl Al-Rifq 23, with number (2593/77).

¹¹⁰ Muslim (93/1) Kitab: Al-Iman, 1, Bab: Tahreem Al-Kibr wa Bayanuhu 39, with number (147-91).

¹¹¹ Al-Tirmidhi (114/5) Kitab: Al-Adab, 44, Bab: Ma Ja'a An Allah Ta'ala Yuhibbu An Yara Athar Ni'matihi Alaa 'Abdih 54, with number (2819), and he said the hadith is good and authentic, authentic in Sunan al-Tirmidhi, with numbers (2260-2985).

and don't spy and don't hate each other, and don't desert (cut your relations with) one another O Allah's slaves, be brothers.”¹¹²

And these qualities are not specific to this stage; rather, a Muslim should embody them from the early stages of growth. However, they hold greater importance in this phase, as the individual is closer to achieving mental maturity. Additionally, they have become a role model for their family and community. If one does not cultivate these qualities in this stage, then when should they do so?

Educational Applications:

Here are some educational applications that correspond to the characteristics of this stage:

1. Facilitating the financial aspects of marriage for young men and women to uphold modesty, preserve lineage, increase progeny, and maintain moral integrity. It is imperative for both mosques and media outlets to provide counsel, guidance, and direction in this aspect to promote virtuous ethical behavior in society and diminish immorality.
2. Working towards spreading general etiquette through universities and all Islamic community institutions.
3. Emphasizing the significance of work in the life of a Muslim, urging its pursuit, and guiding society to combat the phenomenon of begging among young people, which leads to unemployment and deviation.

¹¹² Al-Bukhari (103/4) Kitab: Al-Adab, 78, Bab: Ma Yuharru An Al-Tahasud wa Al-Tadabbur 57, with number (6064), and Muslim (4/1985) Kitab: Al-Birr wa Al-Silah wa Al-Adab 45, Bab: Tahreem Al-Zann wa Al-Tajassus, number: (28/2563).

4. Issuing warnings against the temptations that are spreading among some youth through various community institutions and combating them through diverse means.

Sixth: The stage of Old Age:

This stage holds profound importance in moral guidance for character development. Beyond that, it serves as a beacon for those in earlier stages, drawing from the wealth of life experiences, knowledge, and wisdom acquired by the individuals who attained this stage.

Linguistic and Terminological Insights:

In the language, "Sheikh" denotes one whose age has advanced, typically from fifty or fifty-one onwards until the twilight of life or till eighty.¹¹³

Ibn Manzur states about the term "Sheikh": it refers to one on whom the signs of aging have become apparent, and gray hair is visible. Some say it denotes a person from fifty until the end of their life, while others argue it encompasses the age range from fifty-one until the end of life. There's also an assertion that it spans from fifty to eighty.¹¹⁴

The Quran articulates this as follows:

{ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا }

[He is the One Who created you] from dust, then from a sperm-drop,² then 'developed you into' a clinging clot,³ then He brings you forth as infants, so that you may reach your prime, and become old.] 40:67

¹¹³ Al-Fairuza Baadi, Al-Qamusul Muhit, Vol:1, Root word "شيخ" P: (363)

¹¹⁴ Ibn Manzur, Lisanul Arab, Vol: 3, Root word: شيخ, p: (31)

Imam Al-Qurtubi mentioned: "A sheikh is someone who has surpassed the age of forty".¹¹⁵ From a psychological and terminological perspective, it's noted that some delay the stage of senility, placing it after the age of sixty, as evident in the following division:

1. Early maturity: 21-40 years.
2. Middle age: 40-60 years.
3. Senility: 60 until the end of life.¹¹⁶

It appears that this stage commences after the age of forty, as Al-Qurtubi highlighted, where signs of aging, such as graying hair, become apparent. The arrangement of this stage is mentioned in the Quran after the stage of intensity, completed at the age of forty, with its end coinciding with the conclusion of one's lifespan.

Characteristics of the old age stage:

The characteristics of this stage include mental and visual maturity, logical perception of matters, and the ability to analyze thoughts. This fosters commitment to ethical values, instilling dignity and humility. Notable features of this stage include:

- Gradual decline in physical strength, with Ibn al-Qayyim stating that after forty, the decline and weakening of physical strength occur gradually.¹¹⁷
- Learning capacity remains unaffected by age.
- The communication of older individuals is clearer than that of the younger ones, and this is evident in their understanding and analysis of various matters. This is not an absolute statement, as the length of their experience and their educational background significantly influences their behavior

¹¹⁵ Al-Qurtubi: Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. 15, p. (215).

¹¹⁶ Fuad al-Bahi: Al-Asas al-Nafsiyya lil-Namoo, p. (335)

¹¹⁷ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: Tuhfat al-Mawdud, p. (178).

and reasoning. Therefore, the method of educating adults should be clear and tailored to their abilities.

- Older individuals grasp the overall picture and directly analyze it into its main components.¹¹⁸
- The emotions of older individuals are broader, more intense than those of young people, yet they show less fluctuation.
- They possess the ability to control their emotions and contain them in challenging situations, as will it be further elaborated in Islamic guidelines.
- Older individuals tend to dislike criticism and may be more sensitive to it, exhibiting less emotional fluctuation compared to the youth.¹¹⁹
- They maintain a longer sense of hope and a love for life, as will be explained.
- Psychological harmony weakens in the later stages of this phase. The individual's perception of their status and presence in the social environment affects their psychological harmony, which, in turn, reflects in their behavior.¹²⁰ As the person advances in age, and the effects of aging become apparent, they may face significant challenges in maintaining their position in a rapidly changing society.

The social changes, material gains, and the preoccupation of those around an individual with their own matters create psychological reflections on the person, manifesting in their behavior. The difficulty of this stage becomes apparent in

¹¹⁸ Fouad al-Bahi al-Sayyid I-Usus, Al-Nafsiyya lil-Namoo, pg (377)

¹¹⁹ The previous reference, p (410)

¹²⁰ Abdullah al-Nafe', Abdul Hamid Sayyid Ahmad Mansour, Siqulujia al-Shaykhoocha fi Dau' al-Hadi al-Islami, pg (51)

non-Islamic societies, where attention to the elderly diminishes, and they are often placed in social care institutions, as the standard of appreciation and respect is built upon material benefit.

The elderly, in fact, are the ones who need compassion, pity, and appreciation the most, deserving it due to what they have contributed in the earlier stages leading up to late adulthood. Beyond being an Islamic duty, showing kindness to the elderly brings the servant closer to Allah. Therefore, Islamic guidance serves as the best direction and guardian of their dignity and status in society.

The most crucial element that fosters psychological well-being in an individual is having the correct belief system. Genuine faith enables the person to find contentment in reality and achieves psychological harmony between the individual and both the material and moral aspects of the surrounding environment. This, in turn, ensures the person's mental peace and regulates their interactions with others.

Additionally, a genuine belief system assists in accepting and being content with all the organic, psychological, and social changes that accompany the late old age phase.¹²¹

¹²¹ Abdullah al-Nafe', Abdul Hamid Sayyid Ahmad Mansour, *Siqulujia al-Shaykhoocha fi Dau' al-Hadi al-Islami*, pg (51)

Islamic guidance for this stage:

The Islamic guidance for this stage is a directed path aligning with the status and impact of individuals in their behavior towards others. Being responsible individuals, Islam emphasizes that those bearing responsibilities must possess qualities deserving of such responsibilities. Islam dignifies them by imposing an obligation on others to appreciate and respect them.

Following are some of the Islamic directives regarding this stage:

- The old age individuals have acquired the privilege of refraining from marriage, but their sexual inclination weakens in late adulthood. If they violate the sanctities of Allah, it exposes them to severe punishment from Him. The Prophet, peace be upon him, warned against sexual misconduct, especially in old age. Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "There are three (types of) people to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, nor look at them, and they will have a painful punishment. These are: An aged man who commits Zina (illicit sexual act), a ruler who lies, and a proud poor person."¹²² ¹²³

Imam al-Nawawi commented: Alqadhi said that the reason is that each of them committed the mentioned sins willingly without necessity, while not being compelled towards them, and weakened the justifications for doing so. Although no one is excused for sin, when there is no compelling need or justified cause for these sins and they indulge in them habitually, their approach to them becomes defiant and a trivialization of the rights of Allah. The elderly, with their

¹²² Al-Nawawi said: "The destitute person is the one lacking wealth. The reason for pride, arrogance, and looking down on others due to worldly wealth is its visibility in this life and the dependence of its people on it. So, if someone lacks these means, why would they be arrogant and scorn others? Their actions are akin to those of an elderly adulterer or an imam who lies, an act only done to belittle the rights of Allah, explained by al-Nawawi (11/1)."

¹²³ Muslim (102/1 - 103) Kitab al-Iman, Bab Bayan Ghalat Tahreem Isbaal al-Izaar 46, no: (172) - 107.

complete mental faculties and extensive knowledge gained over time, understand the weakening of the physical and emotional aspects. They are relieved of lawful desires in this context. How then about engaging in the forbidden act of adultery? The reasons for such behavior are typical of youth - heat of passion, lack of knowledge, and the dominance of desires due to immature intellect and young age.¹²⁴

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Allah excuses and grants forgiveness to a person until he attains the age of sixty years".¹²⁵

When the old individual becomes fond of the worldly life and wealth and, at the same time, gains more experience and understanding of matters than others, and has control over his desires and emotions, he should not let the world and wealth preoccupy his heart against the worship of Allah. Imam Muslim narrated in his Sahih: "Chapter on Disliking Eagerness for the World." He mentioned the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "The heart of an old man is enamored with two loves: the love of life and the love of wealth."¹²⁶ Al-Nawawi commented, saying that the heart of the old man is entirely filled with love for wealth, similar to how the strength of youth is harnessed during their youth. Engaging excessively in gathering wealth may also distract the elder from guiding and educating his children. He may neglect them, losing the reward of their upbringing and bearing the responsibility for their deviation. It is not in line with Islamic ethics for a father to neglect the care of his children. The older individuals should follow Islamic etiquette, changing the white and graying hair while avoiding blackening it excessively. Anas narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Change the white hair, but avoid blackening it."¹²⁷ ¹²⁸He should not pluck out the gray hair, as some people might do. The gray hair is a sign of dignity, and it is a light for the Muslim. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not pluck out the gray hair. For every Muslim who turns gray in Islam, he will have light on the Day of Resurrection.

¹²⁴ Al-Nawawi, Commentary to Sahih Muslim, Vol: 2, page: (117)

¹²⁵ Al-Bukhari (4/176) with number (6419).

¹²⁶ Muslim (2/724), Book of Zakat, Chapter: Disliking Eagerness for the World, Hadith 38.

¹²⁷ Al-Nawawi, Sahih Muslim with commentary by al-Nawawi, Vol. 7, page (138).

¹²⁸ Ahmad (3/247), and authenticated by Al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir, number (4169).

Allah will write a good deed for him and erase a sin."¹²⁹ Those entering this stage should adhere more to Islamic etiquette, even though it is required in all stages. However, in this stage, the individual is better equipped to exercise self-discipline in challenging situations. Abdullah bin Amr narrated that they were with the Prophet ﷺ when a young man came and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, may I approach my wife while fasting?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "No." Then, an old man came and asked the same question. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Approach and there is nothing wrong." Some of us looked at others, and the Prophet ﷺ said, "I know why you looked at each other. The old man has control over himself."¹³⁰ Abu Huraira narrated that a man asked the Prophet ﷺ about kissing while fasting, and he allowed him. Another man asked him and he forbade it. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The one who was permitted was an old man, and the one who was forbidden was a young man."¹³¹

From another perspective, we find that Islamic guidance gives this stage its due appreciation and respect. It directs the younger ones to respect the elderly and guides the children to care for their parents, support them, and show them compassion. The Islamic guidance for children towards their parents and elders includes the following:

- Islam encourages children to respect their elders because it preserves their rights due to their old age, making them feel valued and esteemed. This reflects the noble ethics and manners of Islam. Ibn Umar reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: ""It was shown to me in my dream that I was cleaning my teeth with a Miswak and two men came to me, one being older than the other. I gave the Miswak to the younger one, but I was asked to give it to the older, which I did".¹³²

¹²⁹ Abu Dawood (4/414), Book of Hairdressing, Chapter: Regarding Plucking White Hair, Hadith 17, with number (4204), and the wording is his. Ahmad (2/210). Al-Albani said it is Hasan Sahih in Sunan Abi Dawood with numbers (3539 - 4202).

¹³⁰) Ahmad (2/185) and narrated by Al-Haythami in Majma' al-Zawaid, and Ibn Luhay'ah commented on it, and his hadith is hasan. In it, there is a dispute, Majma' al-Zawaid (3/166).

¹³¹ Abu Dawood (2/780 - 781), Book of Fasting, Chapter: Disapproval for kissing for Young Men, Hadith 35, with number (2387). Al-Albani said: Hasan Sahih Sahih Sunan Abi Dawood with numbers (2090 - 2387).

¹³² Muslim (2298/4, Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq 53, Bab: Manawalat al-Akbar 15, Hadith number (70/(3003).

- Sahl b. Sa'd Sa'idi reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was given a drink, and he drank from that, and there was on his right side a boy. and on his left some old men. He said to the boy: Do you permit me to give it to them (the old men), but that boy said: by God. I will not give preference to your hand over me in my share. He (the narrator) said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) then gave it in his hand.¹³³

Regarding the first narration, Ibn Battal mentioned that it emphasizes the precedence of the older in using the tooth-stick, and this applies to other matters like food, drink, walking, and speaking. Al-Muhallab said, "This is valid as long as people are not sitting in an ordered arrangement. If they are in an ordered arrangement, then the Sunnah at that time is to give precedence to the right, and this is correct."¹³⁴

In the etiquette of conversation, the elder should speak before the younger. Al-Bukhari has a chapter entitled "Honoring the Elder," and he narrated that elders should start speaking and asking questions.¹³⁵

It is narrated that Abdullah b. Sahl b. Zaid and Muhayyisa b. Mas'ud b. Zaid went out and as they reached Khaibar they were separated. Then Muhayyisa found 'Abdullah b. Sahl having been killed. He buried him, and then came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). They were Huwayyisa b. Mas'ud and 'Abd al-Rahman b. Sahl, and he (the latter one) was the youngest of the people (those three who had come to seek an interview with the Holy Prophet) began to talk before his Companions (had spoken). Thereupon Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: The eldest

¹³³ Al-Bukhari (19/4) Book of Drinks, Chapter: "Does a man seek permission from his right to give the drink to the elder," 19 with number (5620).

¹³⁴ Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Vol: 1, page: (357)

¹³⁵ Al-Bukhari (4/117) Book of Manners, Chapter: 89.

one (eldest in regard to age should speak). So he kept quiet, and his companions (Muhayyisa and Huwayyisa) began to speak.¹³⁶

Islamic ethics dictate that the elderly should show compassion towards the young, and the young should recognize and respect the rights of the elderly, honoring and valuing them due to their age. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young ones and acknowledge the honor of our elders."¹³⁷ It is derived from these hadiths that Islamic ethics require the elderly to be compassionate and kind towards those younger than them, creating a sense of warmth and respect that encourages the younger ones to look up to them, follow their behavior, and heed their advice.

Furthermore, Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of mutual respect between generations. Elders should be respected and given precedence in speech, walking, and giving. The Prophet's guidance, as stated in the hadith, advises the younger generation to show kindness and respect to their parents, ensuring their well-being and expressing gratitude for their upbringing.

These Quranic verses from Surah Al-Isra (17:23) highlight this significance:

{وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا
أُفًّا وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا}

[For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them 'even' 'ugh,' nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully]. 17:23

¹³⁶ Al-Bukhari (117/4) in the Book of Manners, Chapter 78: "Honoring the Elderly," and it starts with the elderly person initiating conversation and asking, number 89 (6142). And Muslim (1291/3) in the Book of Division, Chapter 28: "Division," number 1 (1669).

¹³⁷ At-Tirmidhi (4/284, Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab, 28, Bab Ma Ja'a fi Rahmat al-Sibyan, 15, Hadith number 1920). Al-Albani declared the hadith as authentic and said: "Sahih, Sahih Sunan at-Tirmidhi, with numbers 1569-2002."

{وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا}

[And be humble with them out of mercy, and pray, “My Lord! Be merciful to them as they raised me when I was young.”] 17:24

It means that one should treat both his parents with utmost kindness, both in words and actions, as they are the reason for one's existence. Show them love, kindness, and proximity, as befitting their role as parents. This necessitates a firm commitment to fulfilling their rights.¹³⁸ Do not utter any unpleasant words in their presence, and avoid any form of impoliteness, which is considered the lowest form of improper speech.¹³⁹

Do not raise your voice in annoyance to them, nor should you ever dismiss or shake your hand at them.¹⁴⁰ Speak to them in a gentle and honorable manner, showing the utmost respect.¹⁴¹ Lower the wing of humility to them, demonstrating both humility and mercy, seeking reward from Allah.¹⁴² Say, 'O Lord, have mercy on them as they brought me up in my childhood.' Pray for them with mercy, both while they are alive and as a reward for their upbringing.¹⁴³

Educational applications:

Educational applications involve various social and educational institutions contributing to the development of faith-based lessons that bring the servant closer to his Lord and distance him from sins and vices. This includes emphasizing Islamic guidance that preserves the rights of the elderly, clarifying

¹³⁸ Abdul Rahman al-Saadi, Taysir al-Kareem al-Rahman, Vol. 3, p. 103.

¹³⁹ Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim, Vol. (2)

¹⁴⁰ Ibn al-Jawzi, Zad al-Masir, Vol. 5, p. (19)

¹⁴¹ The previous reference, Vol. 5, p. (4)

¹⁴² Abdul Rahman al-Saadi, Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman, Vol. 3, p. (103)

¹⁴³ The previous reference, Vol. 3, p. (104)

the etiquette of dealing with them, and stressing the importance of adhering to these principles.

It is essential for various guidance-oriented institutions in society to play a role in educating individuals in this stage of life about their ethical duties, ensuring they remain mindful of their responsibilities. They serve as role models for their children, and their responsibilities have multiplied. This can be achieved through various means such as media, seminars, and sermons.

Conclusion

Through studying the stages of human growth that individuals go through in their lives, it becomes apparent that these stages have specific characteristics and traits. Islam has directed these stages educationally, aligning them temporally with each phase's unique characteristics and features. This alignment is based on the compatibility with the nature of human disposition. Islam addressed these stages comprehensively, providing guidance that contemporary educational methods have struggled to reach or approximate.

From an ethical standpoint, Islam addressed each stage by promoting moral values and virtues, and from another perspective, it directed individuals to avoid moral vices that lead to corruption, disintegration, familial breakdown, and social decay. This situation mirrors the conditions in countries of disbelief, where moral vices are rampant, proper conduct is absent, and there is contempt for the elderly and the poor. Interactions are based on criteria of power, whether economic, physical, or intellectual. The value of a person and their dignity is determined by the material strength or social status they hold.

One of the most significant benefits of studying the stages of development is the knowledge it imparts to the educator about the characteristics of human development in the physical, cognitive, perceptual, and behavioral aspects. Additionally, it provides insight into the emotional and affective aspects that influence human behavior. With knowledge of these aspects, educators can guide, develop, and interact with people according to their diverse characteristics. Dealing with the elderly differs from dealing with the young and varies from interacting with the youth. Each interaction is based on their understanding, capabilities, and acceptance.

For instance, you can ask a younger person to help you with something, but you may hesitate to make the same request from someone older. Similarly, when seeking advice on a matter, you may approach an older person, while consulting a younger person may not be suitable due to their lack of experience. The approach in interactions, the use of directives and authority, varies based on age and individual characteristics.

This underscores the relationship between the characteristics of the development stages and the educational guidance process.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his companions."