

Wonder-full Islam:

How to preserve our Sense of wonder



A child: a sense of wonder

Wonder (definition):

**The feeling that accompanies something
extremely surprising or strange;
An overwhelming feeling of wonder or admiration**

Waqf Sunni Book

<http://www.ummah.com/islam/taqwapalace>



Written and illustrated

by

Soumy Ana

Rabee Al-Thanee 1425 -- June 2004

"You can understand and relate to most people better if you look at them --no matter how old or impressive they may be -- as if they are children. For most of us never really grow up or mature all that much -- we simply grow taller. O, to be sure, we laugh less and play less and wear uncomfortable disguises like adults, but beneath the costume is the child we always are, whose needs are simple, whose daily life is still best described by fairy tales."

- Leo Rosten

All picture are courtesy: www.clipart.com©2004

How to start a wonder-full life: milestones of children education:

“Picture a little child, just born into the world; his new, soft organs prepared in a gentle, watery place, ready to be formed and finished by whatever he encounters in the first few years of his life.

Every little child is a picture of perfect openness, joy and trust. He's at one with the world, full of love for it and he trusts everyone and everything. He is permeated with 'natural piety'.”
A Sense of Wonder By Amanda Bell

Piety means 'devotion', which includes 'humility' and also 'wonder' A prerequisite for all of these is that we accept the existence of something greater than ourselves and that a feeling of awe arises in us when we stand before it.

Most people would still accept that piety, or reverence, is quite natural in small children.

We, adults, set about eliminating that piety in our children as soon as we possibly can. Sometimes, we are not even aware of it. When a child says 'look at the lovely rainbow!', we reply 'yes ! And do you know that it's the rays of light from the sun being bent by the little drops of rain that makes those colors?' The child says 'The moon is shining!' and we say 'Actually, the moon doesn't shine, it only reflects the light from the sun'

No magic there then.



We are trying to tell the truth to someone who has no understanding of such abstract concepts.

We think it is cute when children say grown up things, but actually the child did not digest all of this knowledge.

We think that by demystifying the world we will save him the trouble of finding out for himself, so he will be ahead of his classmates. Actually, we are teaching them that there is nothing greater than man himself if man knows everything.

We marvel as new discoveries are made, but what we really admire is how man is clever enough to discover all this.

We think that the child is a blank page on which we must write everything we think he should know.



We are so eager to load them with what we want for them to have that we forget that they are already having amazing and joyful experiences through the things we take for granted.

And that's enough for now!

They are fascinated with the everyday world, and we are not.

They don't need microscopes and telescopes to find amazing things, just take them for a walk in the next park or in the street.

The world they live in is good and beautiful and they are very much part of it. When we rationalize things for them, they start looking at the world as a chaotic, arbitrary and frightening place, a place where they do not want to be part of.

How can they be open and trusting when there are 'bad people' anywhere hurting others and especially children?

We are teaching them not to trust their own experience of the world or senses. We are teaching them to lose their innocence.

If a child has really learned to do this before age nine, he will find hard to approach things with an open mind. He will not be able to look at the stars or the moon as a poetic or enchanting vision, but as a crude realistic thing.

He will not experience this second sense of wonder when he will discover a new way at seeing the world. He will not open his mouth in awe when the teacher will unveil the physical laws of life if he has not imagined it first to be different. He will not accept that Allaah has made the earth beautiful for human beings to live in harmony; he might not even be

interested in God because he will rationalize everything. He might not be able to dream pure dreams anymore!

When he will think of the sun, he will think, 'Oh yes, it's ninety million miles away and one day it's going to explode - I know all about it.' Then he may stop listening and will not accept anything new.

If children are not open to being surprised, intrigued, moved or amused by what they learn, if their feelings cannot be touched in some way they will have lost their ability to love and admire the world.



Children are taught through pictures and stories so that what they learn lives in their imagination and can grow with them. They reach layers of deeper understanding slowly as they grow up. What they learn should be age appropriate!

Children should be first invited to observe and become aware of what they see, hear, smell, feel or taste.

Between 9 and 12, children are more skeptics; they are eager to find things out, to look at things in a new angle. If we bear in mind the age of the child and what he is ready to receive, and we present it in a way that can really move him, that is more likely to foster interest in the world, in

the mystery of the world and feelings of love for Allaah, for a being they are slowly learning more about.

Their world is full of magic and religion is also a magic world where everything can happen and where we never feel alone. Children feel trusting in this world and confident. If they do not have time to form this world in them, they will probably feel fearful, confused, even aggressive and resentful about what surrounds them.

One should not wound the feelings of a child and let him be disappointed with life and feel bored with it. If a child is taught that there is nothing wonderful about the world, it will feel childish and humiliating to be amazed.

Children who watch TV too much have this feeling of being able to explain everything and they refuse to try to discover by themselves since it is all offered to them done.

However, there is hope. Children are children and it is almost impossible to kill completely their sense of wonder because there are so many things they have not experienced yet.

It is impossible for adults to experience everything either. Who wants to keep his sense of wonder throughout his entire life should be careful to leave his senses open. One should listen careful to what is around him like the birds songs, languages, etc., and be ready to learn something new every time he ears them: 'O! This little bird was here yesterday I recognize his singing', or 'I do not understand what these people are saying bur they sound so beautiful and, listen, they seem to be talking about this or that.'

One should appreciate his food, savor it, smell it, also take time to prepare it and experience new ingredients. One should look at the world in a way he concentrates more on what impression this world makes on him.

Thinking of others as 'me' is one of the greatest discoveries children make. Maybe adults tend to forget that others are like them, feel like them, desire maybe the same things and are moved by the same things, and hurt, and love. Adults tend to put people in category without preliminary research: 'this person is bad because he belongs to this or that group', 'I do not want to have anything to do with people of such or such a race, of such or such background because only bad comes from meeting

them', etc Think of blacks (for whites)-whites (for the black community), Muslims (for the non-Muslims)-Kafirs (for the Muslims), rich (for not rich people)-low income (for the richer), etc. All depends from which group we look. We are not giving the other people a chance because we made too many generalizations and assumptions and we close our mind.



Think of this poem, "Everyone is a me":

Everyone is a "me" ____
Each person In my family is a "me."
Every one of my friends is a "me."
Of course, all those "me's" are people.
So they are all alike in many ways.
All people have human bodies.
All people come into the world in the same way.
All people have someone, or a few very special people, they love.
All people laugh and cry, feel happy and sad and angry and afraid, do
good things and bad things and brave things and kind things

(Everyone Is a Me by Sophia Etsweiler, Vantage Press, Incorporated)

It is important to teach children what they feel, other people feel it too, in order to foster feelings of compassion and altruistic behaviors. They should learn that:

- People are alike in many ways.
- They are so because we are human beings
- Human beings have feelings
- Feelings means they can laugh, cry, feel happy or sad, angry or afraid
- Good things produce pleasant feelings like happiness, joy, love, etc., while bad things produce unpleasant feelings
- Parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, presidents, etc., are also human beings as well as prophets (may Allaah be pleased with them all) and people of faith
- We can relate even to people in the noble Qur'aan, what they experienced and what their feelings were, and we take advice still from the Qur'aan and Sunnah old from the Middle Ages.
- The Noble Qur'aan is first of all a book about humans, about people
- Islam was spread by people who followed the Qur'aan. Even kings were impressed by it and decided to follow it.

Islam is a Wonder-full religion:

Examples that show why people have found islam wonderful:

It is believed that Islam began in China during the Caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan, the third Caliph of Islam.

The Caliph sent a deputation to China in 29 AH (650 CE, eighteen years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The delegation was headed by Sa'ad ibn Waqqas a maternal uncle of the Prophet. Sa'ad Ibn Waaqas invited the Chinese Emperor (Yung-Wei) to embrace Islam.

To show his admiration for Islam the Emperor ordered the establishment of China's first Mosque. The magnificent Canton Mosque is known to this day as the "memorial mosque" and it still stands after fourteen centuries.

Kings are not very different from every day people, they just have more responsibilities, and this is why Islam also addresses them.

Non-muslims are also people and can be touched by the light of Islam as some kings were in the past. This is why Islam is a religion that does not know time or space or culture. Islam is for everyone, that is really and truly wonderful.

How I Embraced Islam: Twelve Hours Muslim

““What am I doing down here?” I wonder, my nose and forehead pressed to the floor as I kneel in prayer. My knee-caps ache, my arm muscles strain as I try to keep the pressure off my forehead.

I listen to strange utterings of the person praying next to me. It's Arabic, and they understand what they are saying, even if I don't. So, I make up my own words, hoping God will be kind to me, a Muslim only twelve hours old.

"God, I converted to Islam because I believe in you, and because Islam makes sense to me." Did I really just say that? I quietly burst into tears.

What would my friends say if they saw me like this, kneeling, nose pressed to the floor? They'd laugh at me," Have you lost your mind?" They'd ask, "You can't seriously tell me you are religious."

Religious... I was once a happy 'speculative atheist', how did I change into this whirlwind tour through my journey.

Where did it begin? Maybe it started when I first met practicing Muslims. That was in 1991, at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. I was an open minded, tolerant, liberal woman. 24 years old. I saw Muslim

women walking around the international centre and felt sorry for them. I knew they were oppressed. When I asked them why they cover their hair, why they wore long sleeves in summer, my sorrow increased when they told me, that they wore the veil, and they dressed so, because God asked them to. Poor things. What about their treatment in Muslim countries? "That's culture," they would reply. I knew they were deluded, socialized, brainwashed from an early age into believing in this wicked way of treating women. But I noticed how happy they were, how friendly they were, how solid they were, how solid they seemed. I saw Muslim men walking around the International Center. There was even a man from Libya - the land of terrorists. I trembled when I saw them, lest they do something to me in the Name of God.

I remembered on television images of masses of rampaging Arab men burning effigies of President Bush, all in the Name of God. What a God they must have, I thought. Poor things that they even believed in God, I added, secure in the truth that God was an anthropomorphic projection of us weak human beings who needed a crutch. But I noticed how helpful these men were. I perceived an aura of calmness. What a belief they must have, I thought. But it puzzled me."

[...] I carefully examined my life's events and I saw that coincidences and luck were

God's blessings for me, and I'd never noticed, or said thanks. **I am amazed** God was so Kind and Persistent while I was disloyal.

My ears and feet tingle pleasantly from the washing I have just given them; a washing which cleanses me and allows me to approach God in prayer. **God, an Awesome Deity. I feel awe, wonder and peace.** Please show me the path. "But surely you can see that the world is too complex, too beautiful, too harmonious to be an accident? To be the blind result of evolutionary forces? Don't you know that science is returning to a belief in God? Don't you know that science never contradicted Islam anyway?"

[...]

I learned how the Qu'ran did not contradict science in the same way the Bible did. I wanted to read the Biblical stories literally, and discovered I could not. Scientific fact contradicted Biblical account. But scientific fact did not contradict Qur'anic account, science even sometimes explained a hitherto inexplicable Qur'anic verse. **This was stunning.**

[...] The priests told me to leave reason behind when contemplating God. **The Trinity did not make sense, nor was it supposed to.**

[...]

I learned more. I discovered that Easter was instituted a couple of hundreds of years after Jesus' death, that Jesus never called himself God incarnate, and more often said he was the Son of Man; that the doctrine of the Trinity was established some 300 odd years after Christ had died; that the Nicene Creed which I had faithfully recited every week, focusing; on each word, was written by MEN and at a political meeting to confirm the minority position that Jesus was the Son of God, and the majority viewpoint that Jesus was God's Messenger was expunged forever. **I was so angry! Why hadn't the Church taught me these thing?**

[...]

Islam asked me to use my intelligence to contemplate God. It encouraged me to seek knowledge, it told me that those who believed in one God (Jews/ Christians/ Muslims/ whomever) would get rewards, **it seemed a very encompassing religion...."**

The Islamic Bulletin

P.O. Box 410186, San Francisco, CA 94141-0186

800-643-4748, Fax 415-643-8445, info@islamicbulletin.org

Hercules

Arabia, during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s), was a country without any central authority. It was a country far from the civilised nations of those days.

At the time Prophet Muhammad (s) was spreading Islam; asking people to turn away from worshipping idols to worshipping Allah, the Almighty, the All-Knower, the Master.

The Prophet sent letters of invitation to Kings and Rulers of various countries in the world, inviting them to embrace Islam. Many of the letters were met with a favourable response whilst others were rejected. In many cases, the messengers of the Prophet were badly treated and abused. But the Prophet was not worried by these setbacks. He was inviting people to the right path and a few setbacks could not deter him from propagating Islam.

Abu Sufyan a leader of the tribe of Quraish and the arch enemy of the Prophet was in Constantinople on a business trip, when the Prophet's

letter of invitation reached Hercules, the Byzantine emperor of Eastern Roman Empire. Hercules, at the time was in his court at Constantinople celebrating his victory over the Persians.

Hercules read the letter through an interpreter and then asked the people in his court, to find out if there was someone in the city, who knew the Prophet. Abu Sufyan with his companions was brought into the court. The emperor asked Abu Sufyan, "What kind of family does Muhammad belong to?"

"Noble", replied Abu Sufyan

"Has there been a king in his family?" Hercules asked.

"No," said Abu Sufyan

"Are the people who have accepted his religion poor or rich?", Hercules questioned again.

"They are poor", replied Abu Sufyan.

Hercules was now becoming more and more interested and he went on asking questions.

His next question was, "Are his followers on the increase or decrease?"

"Increasing", Abu Sufyan replied shortly.

"Have you known him to tell lies"? asked Hercules.

"No", admitted Abu Sufyan.

"Does he ever go against his convents?", Hercules once again asked.

"Not so far. But we have to see whether he carries out the new agreement made between us and him", Abu Sufyan answered lengthily for a change.

"Have you ever fought him in wars?" Hercules questioned.

"Yes", answered Abu Sufyan

"What has been the result?" Hercules asked, getting more and more interested.

"Sometimes we have won, sometimes he", replied Abu Sufyan.

"What does he teach?" asked Hercules

"Worship One God, join no partners with Him, carry out your prayers, be chaste, speak the truth and keep union with your relatives", answered Abu Sufyan, even surprised at his own answer as it sounded like he was preaching Islam.

Hercules stood up and said, "If all you said is true, then I am sure that this Prophet's Kingdom will reach here where I am standing. I was certain that a Prophet was coming, but I didn't know that he would be born in Arabia. If I were to go there, I would embrace Islam and wash the Prophet's feet with my own hands."

This was the way in which the Prophet spread Islam. He impressed them

by his truthfulness, honesty, noble character and dedication in the service of Allah. He did not compel people to accept Islam under threat of waging wars, nor did he compel people to accept Islam by the force of the sword. He fought only in defense and only when the enemies waged war on him.

What kills the sense of wonder in children? 12 points that should be carefully considered.



1) Socialization:

Eda LeShan: *Becoming responsible adults is no longer a matter of whether children hang up their pajamas or put dirty towels in the hamper, but whether they care about themselves and others -- and whether they see everyday chores as related to how we treat this planet.*

Jane Nelson: *Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?*

Annie Sullivan: *Children require guidance and sympathy far more than instruction.*

The difficulty and the strive the child puts into adjusting or into fitting in may hinder his desire to discover.

One should strive to make a kind and accepting group for the child to strive and keep his sense of wonder intact.

At home, parents should lovingly held and cuddle their children to the point of being addicted to it. The child should feel secure and meet his needs of love and attention in his parents.



If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

Life in a group?

I know I do not belong.

I do not feel they like me or they want to share anything with me.

I am lonely; this world is lonely

Why I cannot touch the phone when you speak into it? Why I cannot twist my hair when I feel like it?

Why I cannot taste what you are eating in front of me? Why I cannot have a part in your life?

Why so many things are a no no?

I do not like to go to school. Each time we do something, there is a voice behind that says: wipe your feet, do not make noises, do not do this, do not do that.

I'd like for once I do something right and good.

They say I look different. What does that mean, in my country or in my community, I look just like everyone else.

I do not fit in.

Mum dad can you change how I look?

Why I have to go to school if they do not want me

One day, we did face painting, and we used all kinds of colors, nobody was alike

I was like everyone else

They looked like me

We knew who was who the way we behave: some were generous and offered to help those who could not arrange their paints well, others teased us, and some others just left to run to the drinks and sandwiches before all of us had finished

The way you treat me will probably be the way I treat others...



Wonder is music heard in the heart, is voiceless.-
-Rosemary Dobson ("Wonder")

*The world is full of wonders and miracles but man takes his little hand
and covers his eyes and sees nothing.-*
-Israel Baal Shem



Because Muslim practicing children look and think differently from the children around them, even in Muslims countries, parents tend to allow their children to ape *kufar* activities in order that their children find friends and feel integrated in the common culture. Children would do whatever they can to be part of the group they live in; they have a natural tendency to blend in. The role of the Muslim parents is to teach their children they are different and they should feel proud and happy of this difference. Parents should inform the teachers that if their children cast down their eyes it is by respect to the teacher, not because they are lying. They should find a way for their children to explain who they are to the peer group by introducing themselves. Books depicting different cultures are useful, as well as presentations. To teach Muslim children early why they must do *wudoo*, pray, fast, or simply say *du'as* or not mix with children of the other sex or why their parents dress or speak differently will assure they do not feel bad about their differences but regards them as positive. This way, they can teach other children about who they are and be accepted the way they are. If they have an accent or cannot speak the local language well, it should be an opportunity for other children to learn some of the foreign words or to help your child with his

pronunciation. Children like to learn new languages, it's fun; and they would gladly help and feel useful, it is also a way to learn responsibility. Yes, it looks like I cannot fit in because I am very different from you, but God made us different so that we can meet and teach each other about our diverging ways and we can learn then to be patient and be better people. To choose a religiously oriented group for our children, whatever the religion taught, can help ease this integration at the condition it is occasional since we do not want our children to get imprinted by other beliefs. The difference should be for the others a way to experience their sense of wonder. What!, you are fasting? That's so interesting! I'd like to try to. How does it feel? Is it hard? You know, in your culture, some people fast too. Really? Tell us more! Etc. Parents should teach their children to draw lines between their own culture and the culture they live in so that they may see connections, things in common that do appear at first very different. Peers may not realize other people speak like your child; they may think there is something wrong with your child, therefore they will tease him/her.

Yes, I speak funny, but babies also speak funny. They have their own words and culture in babyland. We cannot understand what they are saying, still they express their wants and they like to do things we do not like such as putting food all over their face or pull hair.

SAND AND STONE:

Author Unknown

Two friends Ismail and Ibrahim were walking through the desert, as the sun was beating down on their heads, and they were thirsty for water they began to argue. The argument got more and more heated and eventually Ismail struck Ibrahim across the face. Ibrahim felt hurt inside, but without anything to say, he wrote in the sand: "Today, my best friend slapped me in the face."

They kept on walking, until eventually they came across an oasis, where they decided to stop and bathe. Ibrahim jumped in and began to wash, while Ismail sat back and relaxed. Suddenly Ibrahim began to scream and shout, he had developed a cramp and was having difficulty keeping his head above water, he was drowning.

Ismail dived in after him, and brought him gently to shore. When Ibrahim recovered from the shock, he scratched a message on a nearby stone: "Today, my best friend saved my life"

Ismail who had saved and slapped his best friend Ibrahim, asked him, "Why, after I hurt you, you wrote in the sand, and now you write on a stone?"

Ibrahim, smiled and replied:

"When a friend hurts us, we should write his deeds in the sand, where the winds of forgiveness can blow it away, and when a friend does something good, we should engrave it in stone, where it shall remain for eternity."

"Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant (i.e. don't punish them). If a suggestion from Satan assails your mind, seek refuge with Allah; for He heareth and knoweth (all things)" [Surah al-A'raf 7:199-200]





2) Standardize:

Bill Vaughn: *A three-year-old child is a being who gets almost as much fun out of a fifty-six dollar set of swings as it does out of finding a small green worm.*

Superficiality: Thinking things people are cute is putting all senses of wonders into one big fuzzy glow; it is to stop to focus on what creates the moment of awe.

To teach children all clouds are just clouds does not invite them to use their imagination. On the contrary, you can teach them how different a cloud is from another. Cumulus or elephant clouds that travel in packs announce nice weather. See the book *Cloudy with a chance of meatballs* by Judi and Ron Barrett for further references.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

Mummy says in the Zoo, look the little monkey is cute, look the birdie is so cute, watch the giraffe how cute she appears, and the ducks are cute too.

Mom, is there another word for cute?

Yes, there is cunning, precious, but they all mean the same, right?

I am bored of everything so nice and pretty.

Yep, this next one will be cute too, I bet...

I would remember how they are different if we could invent names for them like the monkey with a broom on the head or the one that has a bottom like a snow heart, etc.

Why you never ask me why I like this one and why I would like to cuddle that one? And how does it feel to hold the birdie, and what I imagine when I see the bear swimming on his back?

Well, I do not think I added much vocabulary to my list this week.

I do not even remember well what we have seen.

I did not even add the word wonderful to my diary!

I was too angry with you. You spoiled it all!

Do you say in your sermons Allaah is cute? Islam is nice, dot!

And the angels, they are cute too?

So what?

I am bored even though I know you mean well.



*Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn,
whatever state I may be in, therein to be content.-*
-Helen Keller (*The Story of My Life*)

*The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting for our wits to
grow sharper.-*
-Eden Phillpots (in *The World within the World* by Barrow)



To tell children to be good and Allaah will be happy with you is not enough.

Parents should stress to children why Allaah is happy when you do this and that, what kind of rewards they will get if they perform *salat* properly, if they help their peers in the right path, if they keep their room tidy and keep themselves clean, etc.

Children should learn with admiration how far goes the compassion of Allaah.

Parents should tell them the stories of the murderer who was forgiven because of his strong desire to find Allaah, and the prostitute who showed compassion for a dog when that was hard for her to feel that way because of intense thirst. They should not tell children that white is white and black is black, but that there are so many degrees of lightness and darkness, many shades of grey.

Islam should not appear to children as a vague religion of good and bad, of rewards and punishments, but as a beautiful logic that makes the mind at ease.

Children like to see things with new eyes; they like to be amazed, so there is a point to teach them things from the point of view of the Qur'an.

Children should see the world not only as it appears, but also through the perspective of Islam. For instance, spiders are dark creatures with long

legs, but they also are creatures with many different colors to blend with their surroundings. They are creatures of the wild, but they are also obedient servants of Allaah. We cannot kill them because one of them, thanks to Allaah, saved the Prophet (SAAS) from a certain death. Ants are tiny creatures that are very busy, yes, but they also live in societies and have their own language. One of them once told his companions to hide unless Suleiman (AS) and his army would kill them without knowing it by walking over them.

Here is another beautiful example that children can draw or envision in their mind with delight or even impress others with.

The word "impress" means "to have an emotional or cognitive impact upon", which means children can create a sense of wonder in other children, and what a beautiful sharing gift.

'AZAAN' - AN AMAZING DISCOVERY

Azaan: An incredible medium for the proclamation of Tawheed of Almighty Allah and Risaalat of Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam, the sound of which constantly echoes around the globe.

Amazing though it sounds, but fortunately for the Muslims of the world, it is an established fact. Have a look at a map of the world and you will find Indonesia (an Islamic country) right on the eastern side of the earth's central landmass. Indonesia consists of numerous small islands, the principle ones amongst them being Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Saibil, all of which are well known. It is the largest country in the world, with 180 million inhabitants. The number of non-muslims here is negligible.

As soon as dawn breaks on the eastern side of Saibil, at approximately 5:30 am local time, Fajar *Azaan* begins. Thousands of Mu'azzins in eastern Indonesia commence proclaiming the Tawheed (oneness) of the Almighty, Omnipotent and Omniscient Allah and Risaalat (Universal Apostleship) of the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam. The process then continues and advances towards the Western Islands of Indonesia. The time difference between the eastern and western islands of Indonesia is one and a half hours. Hence, one and a half hours after the *Azaan* has been completed in Saibil, it echoes in Jakarta on Java island. Sumatra then follows suit and before this auspicious process of calling *Azaan* ends in Indonesia, it has already begun in Malaysia. Burma is next in line, and within an hour of its commencement in Jakarta, it reaches

Dacca, the capital city of Bangladesh. No sooner the calling of *Azaan* ends in Bangladesh, it has already prevailed in western India, from Calcutta to Srinagar. It then advances towards Bombay and the environment of entire India resounds with this august proclamation. Srinagar and Sialkot (a city in north Pakistan) have the same timing for *Azaan*. The time difference between Sialkot, Kota, Karachi and Gowadar (a city in Baluchistan, a province of Pakistan) is forty minutes, and within this time, Fajar *Azaan* is heard throughout Pakistan. Before it ends there, however, it has already begun in Afghanistan and Muscat. The time difference between Muscat and Baghdad is one hour. *Azaan* resounds during this one hour in the environments of Hijaaz-e-Muqaddas (Holy cities of Makkah and Madinah), Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq.

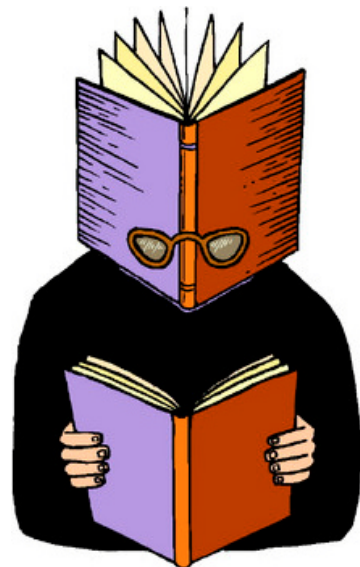
The time difference between Baghdad and Alexandria in Egypt is again one hour. *Azaan* continues to resound in Syria, Egypt, Somalia and Sudan during this hour. Alexandria and Istanbul are situated on the same geographical longitude. The time difference between eastern and western Turkey is one and a half hours, and during this time it is echoed with the call to prayer.

Alexandria and Tripoli (capital of Libya) are located at an hour's difference from one another. The process of calling *Azaan* thus continues throughout the whole of Africa. Therefore, the proclamation of the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam that had begun in the eastern islands of Indonesia reaches the Eastern Shore of the Atlantic ocean after nine and a half hours.

Prior to the *Azaan* reaching the shores of the Atlantic, the process of Zohar *Azaan* has already commenced in eastern Indonesia, and before it reaches Dacca, Asar *Azaan* has started. This has hardly reached Jakarta one and half hours later, then the time of Maghrib becomes due, and no sooner has Maghrib time reached Sumatra, then the time for calling Isha *Azaan* has commenced in Saibil! When the Muazzins of Indonesia are calling out Fajar *Azaan*, the Muazzins in Africa are calling out the *Azaan* for Isha.

If we were to ponder over this phenomenon seriously and studiously, we would conclude the amazing fact that: ***'There is not a single moment when thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Muazzins around the world are not proclaiming the Oneness of Almighty Allah and the Apostleship of the noble Prophet Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam on the surface of this earth!'*** Insha-Allah, this universal and continuous calling

of the *Azaan* shall not cease until the Day of Judgement, and we should all make *du`a* for the same, **AMEEN**.
(Translated from Tameer-e-Hayaat)



Side by Side

They lie on the table side by side
The Holy Quran and the T.V. Guide.
One is well worn and cherished with pride.
Not the Quran, but the T.V. Guide.
One is used daily to help folks decide.
Not the Quran, but the T.V. Guide.
As the pages are turned, what shall they see?
Oh, what does it matter, turn on the T.V.
So they open the book in which they confide.
No, not the Quran, but the T.V. Guide.
The Word of Allah is seldom read.
Maybe a verse before they fall into bed.
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be.
Not from reading the Quran, from watching T.V.
So then back to the table side by side,

Lie the Holy Quran and the T.V. Guide.
No time for prayer, no time for the Word,
The plan of Istiqama is seldom heard.
But forgiveness of sin, so full and free,
Is found in the Quran, not on T.V.



To teach the Qur'aan to children, one has to be specific. Not only that, one has also to show children how wonderful the Quran is and why. Generalities will never get us there. On the contrary, be specific and never underestimate the children's ability to understand things when they are enounced simply and clearly. Gary Miller in his article *The amazing Quran*, explains:

"Basically it [The Qur'an] states, "If this book is not what it claims to be, then all you have to do is this or this or this to prove that it is false." Of course, in 1400 years no one has been able to do "This or this or this," and thus it is still considered true and authentic. I suggest to you that the next time you get into dispute with someone about Islam and he claims that he has the truth and that you are in darkness, you leave all other arguments at first and make this suggestion. Ask him, "Is there any falsification test in your religion? Is there anything in your religion that would prove you are wrong if I could prove to you that it exists - anything?" Well, I can promise right now that people will not have anything - no test, no proof, nothing! This is because they do not carry around the idea that they should not only present what they believe but should also offer others a chance to prove they're wrong. However, Islam does that. A perfect example of how Islam provides man with a chance to verify its authenticity and "prove it wrong" occurs in the 4th chapter. And quiet honestly, I was surprised when I first discovered this challenge. It states:

"Do they not consider the Qur'an? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy." [...]
Yet in every age there have been Muslims who have followed the advice of the Qur'an and made surprising discoveries. If one looks to the works of Muslim scientists if many centuries ago, one will find them full of

quotations from the Qur'an. These works state that they did research in such a place, looking for something. And they affirm that the reason they looked in such and such a place was that the Qur'an pointed them in that direction.

[...] A few years ago, a group of men in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia collected all if the verses in the Qur'an which discuss embryology - the growth of the human being in the womb. They said, "Here is what the Qur'an says. Is it the truth?" In essence, they took the advice of the Qur'an: "Ask the men who know." They chose, as it happened, a non-Muslim who is a professor of embryology at the University of Toronto. His name is Keith Moore, and he is the author of textbooks on embryology - a world expert on the subject. They invited him to Riyadh and said, "This is what the Qur'an says about your subject. Is it true? What can you tell us?" While he was in Riyadh, they gave him all of the help that he needed in translation and all of the cooperation for which he asked. And he was so surprised at what he found that he changed his textbooks. In fact, in the second edition of one of his books, called *Before we are born...* in the second edition about the history of embryology, he included some material that was not in the first edition because of what he found in the Qur'an. Truly this illustrates that the Qur'an was ahead of its time and that those who believe in the Qur'an know what other people do not know.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Keith Moore for a television presentation, and we talked a great deal about this - it was illustrated by slides and so on. He mentioned that some of the things that the Qur'an states about the growth of the human being were not known until thirty years ago. In fact, he said that one item in particular - the Qur'an's description of the human being as a "leech-like clot" ('alaqah) at one stage - was new to him; but when he checked on it, he found that it was true, and so he added it to his book. He said, "I never thought of that before," and he went to the zoology department and asked for a picture of a leech. When he found that it looked just like the human embryo, he decided to include both pictures in one of his textbooks. [...]

As a matter of fact, one newspaper reporter asked Professor Moore, "Don't you think That maybe the Arabs might have known about these things - the description of the embryo, its appearance and how it changes and grows? Maybe there were not scientists, but maybe they did something crude dissections on their own - carved up people and examined these things."

The professor immediately pointed out to him that he [i.e., the reporter] had missed a very important point - all of the slides of the embryo that

had been shown and had been projected in the film had come from pictures taken through a microscope. He said, "It does not matter if someone had tried to discover embryology fourteen centuries ago, they could not have seen it!". [...]

One of Professor Moore's colleagues, Marshall Johnson, deals extensively with geology at the University of Toronto.

He became very interested in the fact that the Qur'an's statements about embryology are accurate, and so he asked Muslims to collect everything contained in the Qur'an which deals with his specialty. Again people were very surprised at the findings. [...]

...the Bible discusses ancient history, it states that this king lived here, this one fought in a certain battle, another one had so many sons, etc. Yet it always stipulates that if you want more information, then you should read the book of so and so because that is where the information came from. In contrast to this concept, the Qur'an provides the reader with information and states that this information is something new. Of course, there always exists the advice to research the information provided and verify its authenticity. It is interesting that such a concept was never challenged by non-Muslims fourteen centuries ago. Indeed, the Makkans who hated the Muslims, and time and time again they heard such revelations claiming to bring new information; yet, they never spoke up and said, "This is not new. We know where Muhammad got this information. We learned this at school."

They could never challenge its authenticity because it really was new! In concurrence with the advice given in the Qur'an to research information (even if it is new), when 'Umar was caliph, he chose a group of men and sent them to find the wall of Dhul-Qarnayn. Before the Qur'anic revelation, the Arabs had never heard of such a wall, but because the Qur'an described it, they were able to discover it. As a matter of fact, it is now located in what is called Durbend in the Soviet Union."





3) Too serious:

Chinese proverb: *One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.*

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: *Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories.*

Sir Thomas Browne: *All the wonders you seek are within yourself.*

Seriousness: If the children are not allowed to be silly, they will not be able to be themselves; there is no charm or surprise in life anymore and children lose their imagination. They become too serious because they believe this is how they are supposed and expected to be.

Children should safely be allowed to playfully enact the stories in their imaginations. They should be able to give way to their creativity in a controlled way.

To feel a sense of wonder and happiness, children should notice that their parents let themselves get lost in the fun and creativity of play.

Parents should be able to turn their mind around and accept that some of their children's mistakes are good and necessary for them to learn and grow. They should be flexible enough to postpone plans and let their children play in the barn or take time to pick flowers on the way back to school.

They should encourage their children to voice their emotions and to talk about their hurts and fears. They should be open and feel for them and be responsive.

Also, parents should never say "my child, you are silly", but instead "you play the silly one."

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

Mom, can I be silly sometimes?

I'd like to pretend sometimes that I am a fairy, that I can fly, that I can do magic. For this, I need to cut the cardboard of the kitchen, it is so perfect!

Sometimes I'd like to play I am Buraq, the wing horse of the prophet (SAAS) or that I am the spider that built its nest to save his life.

I'd like to open the faucet and splash water all over playing Musa parting the seas (AS).

And climb the table and roll on it

I'd like you to play with me

Why can't daddy be my horse sometimes and tell me stories of horses we can enact, like the horse whisperer?

Dad is too tired to come play with us

And mom feels too silly

You were kids once, weren't you?

Listen.

The grandsons of the prophet (SAAS) used to play with the Prophet (SAAS), and he would play like a child; they even mounted on his back when he was performing *Salaat!* Our prophet (SAAS) had always time for little kids and never ignored them...



The moment one gives a close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world unto itself.-

-Henry Miller

Wonder is from surprise, and surprise stops with experience.-

-Robert South



When life appears too serious to children and they fail to form dreams and use their imagination, this is what can happen:

PAID IN FULL:



A little boy came up to his mother in the kitchen one evening while she was fixing supper, and he handed her a piece of paper that he had been writing on. After his mom dried her hands on an apron, she read it, and this is what it said:

For cutting the grass: \$5.00

For cleaning up my room this week: \$1.00

For going to the store for you: \$.50

Baby-sitting my kid brother while you went shopping: \$.25

Taking out the garbage: \$1.00

For getting a good report card: \$5.00

For cleaning up and raking the yard: \$2.00

Total owed: \$14.75

Well, his mother looked at him standing there, and the boy could see the memories flashing through her mind. She picked up the pen, turned over the paper he'd written on, and this is what she wrote:

For the nine months I carried you while you were growing inside me: No Charge.

For all the nights that I've sat up with you, doctored and prayed for you: No Charge.

For all the trying times, and all the tears that you've caused through the years: No Charge.

For all the nights filled with dread, and for the worries I knew were ahead: No Charge.

For the toys, food, clothes, and even wiping your nose: No Charge, Son.

When you add it up, the cost of my love is: No Charge.

When the boy finished reading what his mother had written, there were big tears in his eyes, and he looked straight up at his mother and said, "Mom, I sure do love you." And then he took the pen and in great big letters he wrote: "PAID IN FULL."



Children should learn that being Muslim does not mean being serious all the time. They should be aware that our prophet (SAAS) and his companions (may Allaah be pleased with them all) had a great sense of humor and would play like kids when they were around kids. How many times do we see parents who do not enjoy the company of children, they are far too serious.. We know the accounts of Prophet Muhammad playing with children, we know how Prophet Muhammad would give piggy-back rides to kids, on one occasion he even gave a ride from outside the city limits to the center of the city to children on his shoulders, arms and around him, maybe even clinging to his leg.

LIKE A CHILD:

Gabalah Ibn Saheem related that he entered the company of Muawiya Ibn Abu Sufian during his rule. He had a rope around his neck which was drawn by a child (i.e. similar to a cowboy playing with a lasso). Gabbalah exclaimed 'You do that! Prince of the Fidels!?!'. His statement was supposed to be a reprimand i.e. he was criticizing the Caliph for playing with the kid. To this, Muawiya said to him, 'Bequiet fool! I have heard Allah's Messenger saying, "Whoso has got a child, should behave with him as if he were a child too"'.
 10

[Ref: Daleel al-Saliheen, p. 77]

And so we see that the Muslim who understand his faith realizes that playing and entertaining a child is just as important as ruling a nation, or their household. Life is about balance, far too often we hear people saying 'be Islamic' - what the criticizer fails to realize is that playing with children they ARE 'being Islamic'. We should not allow the character and beauty of Islam be removed from it, otherwise we will simply be left with a series of mechanical actions.





4) Unattractive:

Franklin P. Jones: *You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.*

Tasha Tudor *Life isn't long enough to do all you could accomplish. And what a privilege even to be alive.*

In spite of all the pollutions and horrors, how beautiful this world is.

Supposing you only saw the stars once every year. Think what you would think. The wonder of it!

Ralph Waldo Emerson *Men love to wonder, and that is the seed of our science.-- ("Works and Days" Society and Solitude)*

Blandness: If parents are lacking any distinctive or interesting taste, children will be like them.

Why we chose a book should have meaning for us and for our children. We should want to open that book because we connect it to what we heard or saw. Books must be appropriate and beautiful to attract interest. Children should also see and hear their parents become engaged and enlivened by what they read. Parents should not read systematically as for

closing a daily task. They should be vibrant beings and believe in what they are doing.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:



Mommy, daddy, I do not want to read a book because it is on your bed or because our neighbor is having the same. I want to read what attracts me, what makes my heart flutter, what I find beautiful. Please, next time, let me choose this book I dream about in the library!

I bet when you were children, you bought a book because it had nice colors or pretty pictures, or because you were attracted by bikes and you wanted to read more about bikes or else...

I'd like so much to see pictures of Muslims in the world, kids like me, and the Kaaba, and I'd like you to tell me for the hundredth time how Hajj was like.

For me, the Qur'aan is just a bland old book with tiny inscriptions How can I become interested?

You read from it every night, but I understand almost nothing of what you are saying even though I try hard to understand I'd love to know more about Islam with beautiful books and activities If I can read these books, then maybe I can explain many things to my toys too!

And I'd love to sing them *nasheeds* as well...

When parents fail to teach in an attractive way, children do not dig meaningful behavior in others and they may lack depth when they look at life or enjoy their relationships. They do not see farther than their own self.

Which of the Favors of Your Lord Will You Deny?

A young man was getting ready to graduate college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation his father called him into his private study.

His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disappointed the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Holy Qur'an.

Angrily, he raised his voice at his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Holy Qur'an?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the holy book. He never contacted his father again for a long time.

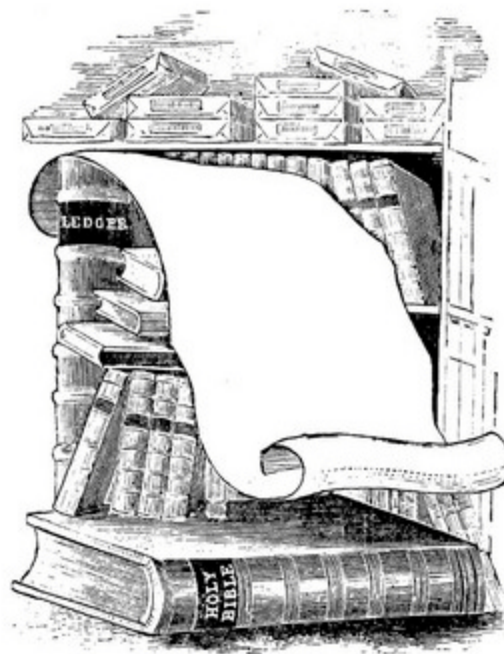
Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day.

Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things. When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search his father's important papers and saw the still new Holy Qur'an, just as he had left it years ago.

With tears, he opened the Holy Qur'an and began to turn the pages. As he read those words, a car key dropped from an envelope taped behind the Holy Qur'an. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words PAID IN FULL.

How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not packaged as we expected? "Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny??"

www.muslimteens.org



The grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never dried all at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls.-

-John Muir

To be matter of fact about the world is to blunder into fantasy--and dull fantasy at that--as the real world is strange and wonderful.-

-Robert A. Heinlein



THE WISE WOMAN

A wise woman who was traveling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream.

The next day she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him.

She did so without hesitation.

The traveler left rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But, a few days later, he came back to return the stone to the wise woman.

"I've been thinking," he said.

"I know how valuable this stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. **Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me this stone.**"



“Calling the Qur'an amazing is not something done only by Muslims, who have an appreciation for the book and who are pleased with it; it has been labeled amazing by non-Muslims as well. In fact, even people who hate Islam very much have still called it amazing.

One thing which surprises non-Muslims who are examining the book very closely is that the Qur'an does not appear to them to be what they expected. What they assume is that they have an old book which came

fourteen centuries ago from the Arabian desert; and they expect that the book should look something like that - an old book from the desert. And then they find out that it does not resemble what they expected at all. Additionally, one of the first things that some people assume is that because it is an old book which comes from the desert, it should talk about the desert. Well the Qur'an does talk about the desert - some of its imagery describes the desert; but it also talks about the sea - what it's like to be in a storm on the sea.

Some years ago, the story came to us in Toronto about a man who was in the merchant marine and made his living on the sea. A Muslim gave him a translation of the Qur'an to read. The merchant marine knew nothing about the history of Islam but was interested in reading the Qur'an. When he finished reading it, he brought it back to the Muslim and asked, "This Muhammed, was he a sailor?" He was impressed at how accurately the Qur'an describes a storm on a sea. When he was told, "No as a matter of fact, Muhammed lived in the desert," that was enough for him. He embraced Islam on the spot. He was so impressed with the Qur'an's description because he had been in a storm on the sea, and he knew that whoever had written that description had also been in a storm on the sea. The description of "a wave, over it a wave, over it clouds" was not what someone imagining a storm on a sea to be like would have written [...]. Certain encyclopedias and various books claim that the Qur'an was the product of hallucinations that Muhammed underwent. If these claims are true - if it indeed originated from some psychological problems in Muhammed's mind - then evidence of this would be apparent in the Qur'an. Is there such evidence? In order to determine whether or not there is, one must first identify what things would have been going on in his mind at that time and then search for these thoughts and reflections in the Qur'an.

It is common knowledge that Muhammed had a very difficult life. [...] The Qur'an does not mention any of these things - not the death of his children, not the death of his beloved companion and wife, not his fear of the initial revelations, which he so beautifully shared with his wife - nothing; yet, these topics must have hurt him, bothered him, and caused him pain and grief during periods of his psychological reflections, then these subjects, as well as others, would be prevalent or at least mentioned throughout.”

Reference:

Gary Miller *The amazing Quran*



5) Over schooling:

Colette: *It is not a bad thing that children should occasionally, and politely, put parents in their place.*

John J. Plomp: *You know children are growing up when they start asking questions that have answers.*

Roger Lewin: *Too often we give our children answers to remember rather than problems to solve.*



Systematic instructions : Wonder comes from a child's search and discovery, not from our dutiful prodding. Ask children questions so that they can search for answers, do not ask them what color, how many, etc, but ask what the monkey makes him think of. Once two children were looking at a salamander. Their mother asked them the name of the animal; they suddenly burst without hesitation: "O, the old granny!" When you

looked at it, you could not but agree with them because it looked like a toothless old woman. The mom shrugged and pulled them away. Sensitive parents react in a prompt, responsible, and satisfying way to what they children are saying or feeling; they show their pleasure and delight at the children discoveries. Novelty should not be disdained because it does not fit what we expect, on the contrary, novelty introduces changes from what otherwise would be life's daily mundane chores and routines.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

Mom, look at the elephants!

Please, do not ask me again to count them and to describe them. I am through with this.

Instead, ask me what I imagine they can do or say

They might remember their ancestors

They might know the birds sending them stones when our prophet

(SAAS) was small. This is why maybe they let them on their back

I always wondered how a battlefield filled with elephants would be

Maybe they would help with their trunks, picking people on the top of other elephants as if they were flowers

Maybe the purpose of the battle would be lost

Maybe they would behave the way people would not expect because, as we know, elephants are temperamental

Why each outing is an occasion of learning what I already know?

Let's have fun, mom! Will you?

When the religion is taught with the heart, and not as in a book, children keep a very positive feeling about it. To pray is not a duty but a conversation with God. To give in charity is not reducing one's chances of buying this new toy, but a way to build a beautiful castle in Paradise. To fast is not fighting with anger, but a way of redeeming one's sins and do what grown ups do.

To ask children what they think about an aspect of the religion and help them discover why they have to pray, fast, etc. to please Allaah, is to give them a chance to grasp the meaning of it all and to put these practices

somewhere safe in their heart. Children who see Islam positively through a beautiful color glass will keep this feeling of safety and happiness when they will go to *masjid*, listen to Qur'aan, etc.

See the books of: <http://www.harunyahya.com/kids/index.html>

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said: *"The value of the world in comparison to the Hereafter is like a droplet in the ocean."*

Here is how a Muslim describes him: "Despite all the hardships he went through, despite all the verbal and physical torture he was inclined to, despite all his sufferings --- he kept a warm smile on his face. He [peace be upon him] restrained from anger and he respected those around him. One man, Anas (one of the prophet's companions), said : "I served the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) for ten years, and he never said to me 'UFF!' . If I did something. He never said, "Why did you do that?", and if I did not do something, he never said , "Why did you not do such-and-such?". (agreed upon) Only kind and meaningful words came from the Prophet's tongue. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never used foul language, never cursed, or swore. He (peace be upon him) was shy [towards other people and towards Allah (SWT)], polite, gentle, and sensitive to the feelings of others. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was humorous with his close ones. However, he used his sense of humor only when appropriate--without going to extremes. Similarly, whenever he was serious, he did not go to extremes of harshness and strictness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was greatly trusted and fulfilled his promises. He was entrusted with people's belongings -- Muslims' and non-muslims' alike. He (peace be upon him) was compassionate, merciful, and sincere; he always spread a greeting of peace to those around him; he was modest, generous, and wise. This man was extremely God-conscious--he was just and fair to the people and animals around him ; he treated his wives equally, his daughters equally, and his companions equally. This man had many beautiful qualities."

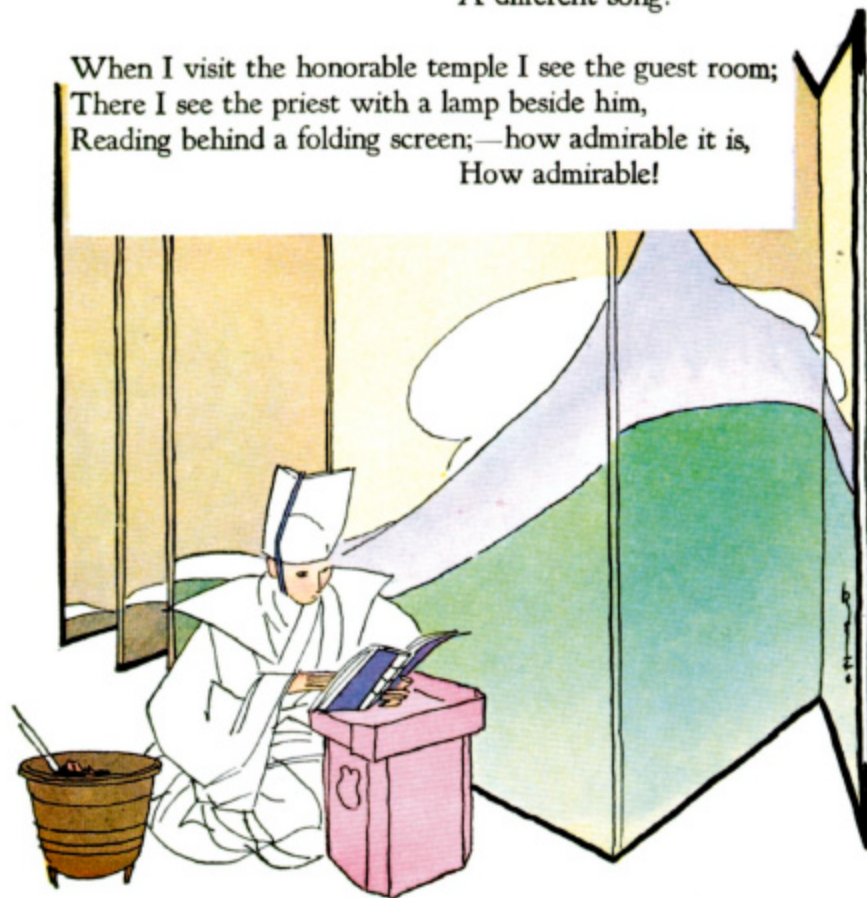
Reference:

http://www.geocities.com/islamicwayz/following_the_footsteps_.htm

When I visit the honorable temple I see the water tank;
I see little flowers of many colors set all about it,
Each one having a different color,
A different color!

When I visit the honorable temple I see the parlor room;
I find many kinds of little birds gathered all together,
Each one singing a different song,
A different song!

When I visit the honorable temple I see the guest room;
There I see the priest with a lamp beside him,
Reading behind a folding screen;—how admirable it is,
How admirable!



The job of a teacher is to excite in the young a boundless sense of curiosity about life, so that the growing child shall come to apprehend it with an excitement tempered by awe and wonder. -

-John Garrett

Without wonder and insight, acting is just a trade. With it, it becomes creation. -

-Bette Davis (*The Lonely Life*)



THE FROGS AND THE TOWER:



There once was a bunch of tiny frogs, ...
... who arranged a running competition.
The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower.
A big crowd had gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on the contestants...

The race began...

Honestly: No one in crowd really believed that the tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower.

You heard statements such as:

"Oh, WAY too difficult!!"

"They will NEVER make it to the top."

or: "Not a chance that they will succeed. The tower is too high!"

The tiny frogs began collapsing. One by one...

... Except for those, who in a fresh tempo, were climbing higher and higher...

The crowd continued to yell,

"It is too difficult!!! No one will make it!"

More tiny frogs got tired and gave up...

...But ONE continued higher and higher and higher...

This one wouldn't give up!

At the end everyone else had given up climbing the tower. Except for the one tiny frog who, after a big effort, was the only one who reached the top!

THEN all of the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it?

A contestant asked the tiny frog how he had found the strength to succeed and reach the goal?

It turned out...

That the winner was DEAF!!!!

The wisdom of this story is:

Never listen to other people's tendencies to be negative or pessimistic...:no:

...because they take your most wonderful dreams and wishes away from you -- **the ones you have in your heart!:**wub:

Always think of the power words have.

Because everything you hear and read will affect your actions!

Therefore:

ALWAYS be...

POSITIVE!

And above all:

Be DEAF when people tell **YOU that you can not fulfill your dreams!**

Always think:

God And I Can Do This!



6) False information:

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: *If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much.*

James Baldwin: *Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.*

Lying or **giving a false image** destroys the wonder because children lose the trust in adults and stop relying in them.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

**Mom, dad, I feel awful tonight
I told everyone in class that wild animals do *salaat* like us
That was wrong
They pray in a way we do not understand, they do not pray like us!
My teacher said
Everyone now look at me like a silly
They trusted me, now they do not even listen to what I say
All because of you!**

Well, all because of me, I guess, I should not have listen to you in the first place.

I was so proud my parents knew everything

Our prophet (SAAS0 never lied at anytime, even when he was joking, and uncle often jokes that if we go out at night, the *jinn*s will get us

But the *hadith* says that it is only one hour since Maghreb, and not all night!

Why don't you tell us why you do not want us outside?

It is better than remembering false beliefs about our religion!



Stuff your eyes with wonder ... live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world. It's more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in factories.-

-Ray Bradbury (Fahrenheit 451)

Wonder rather than doubt is the root of knowledge.-

-Abraham Joshua Heschel



Muslim children's rights over their parents is that they MUST be brought up with DEEN and the knowledge of the religion. The children have to have role models around them so that they can internalize and practice upon the knowledge gained. Depriving one's child of a deeni upbringing and education will condemn the parents to Allah Ta'ala's displeasure. Many parents send their children to madrassa but that is where the deeni knowledge and practice starts and ends. When the children get home, another set of rules and culture prevails. The 'aalim/'aalima teaches the child about what is loved and disliked, what is acceptable / not acceptable, what is allowed and what is forbidden by Allah Ta'ala. However, the child finds that at home what is disliked, unacceptable and forbidden by Allah Ta'ala, prevails in his/her home. Conflicting messages are being given to the child. This creates not only confusion and dissonance in the child's mind, but the child begins to mistrust his environment as some adults have to be lying and others telling them the truth, but who?

DROP A PEBBLE IN THE WEATER:

Author Unknown

Drop a pebble in the water: just a splash, and it is gone; But there's a half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on, Spreading, spreading from the center, flowing on out to the sea. And there is no way of telling where the end is going to be.

Drop a pebble in the water: in a minute you forget, But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's ripples circling yet, And those little waves a-flowing to a great big wave have grown; You've disturbed a mighty river

just by dropping in a stone.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute it is gone But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and in. They keep spreading, spreading, spreading from the centers as they go, And there is no way to stop them, once you've started them to flow.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: In a minute you forget; But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's ripples circling yet, And perhaps in some sad heart a mighty wave of tears you've stirred, And disturbed a life that was happy where you dropped that unkind word.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: just a splash and it is gone; But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on, Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each splashing, dashing wave. Till you wouldn't believe the volume of the one kind word you gave.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: in a minute you forget; But there's gladness still a-swelling, and there's joy a-circling yet. And you've rolled a wave of comfort whose sweet music can be heard. Over miles and miles of water just by dropping one kind word. :hug:

www.themodernreligion.com



A.



False statement: research and review the facts:

In one particular Qur'anic verse which I have always seen mistranslated into English, Allah mentions a man who heard the truth explained to him. It states that he was derelict in his duty because after he heard the information, he left without checking the verity of what he had heard. In other words, one is guilty if he hears something and does not research it and check to see whether it is true. One is supposed to process all information and decide what is garbage to be thrown out and what is worthwhile information to be kept and benefited from at a later date. One cannot just let it rattle around in his head. It must be put in the proper categories and approached from that point of view.

[...]

The real certainty about the truthfulness of the Qur'an is evident in the confidence which is prevalent throughout it; and this confidence comes from a different approach - "Exhausting the Alternatives." In essence, the Qur'an states, "This book is a divine revelation; if you do not believe that, then what is it?" In other words, the reader is challenged to come up with some other explanation. Here is a book made of paper and ink. Where did it come from? It says it is a divine revelation; if it is not, then what is its source?

[...]

On one hand, there exists a large group of people who have researched the Qur'an for hundreds of years and who claim, "One thing we know for sure - that man, Muhammad, thought he was a prophet. He was crazy!" They are convinced that Muhammad (SAW) was fooled somehow. Then on the other hand, there is another group which alleges, "Because of this evidence, one thing we know for sure is that that man, Muhammad, was a liar!" Ironically, these two groups never seem to get together without contradicting. In fact, many references on Islam usually claim both theories. They start out by saying that Muhammad (SAW) was crazy and then end by saying that he was a liar. They never seem to realize that he could not have been both!

For example, if one is deluded and really thinks that he is a prophet, then he does not sit up late at night planning, "How will I fool the people tomorrow so that they think I am a prophet?" He truly believes that he is a prophet, and he trusts that the answer will be given to him by revelation. [...] "If Muhammad was a liar, where did he get his confidence? Why did he tell some people out right to their face what others could never say?"

Such confidence depends completely upon being convinced that one has a true divine revelation.

Another example of the confidence which Muhammad (SAW) had in his own prophethood and consequently in the divine protection of himself and his message is when he left Makkah and hid in a cave with Abu Bakr during their emigration to Madeenah. The two clearly saw people coming to kill them, and Abu Bakr was afraid. Certainly, if Muhammad (SAW) was a liar, a forger and one who was trying to fool the people into believing that he was a prophet, one would have expected him to say in such a circumstance to his friend, "Hey, Abu Bakr, see if you can find a back way out of this cave." Or "Squat down in that corner over there and keep quiet." Yet, in fact, what he said to Abu Bakr clearly illustrated his confidence. He told him, "Relax! Allah is with us, and Allah will save us!"

Now, if one knows that he is fooling the people, where does one get this kind of attitude?

[...]

Basically, these people propose that Muhammad was insane, and as a result of his delusion, he lied to and misled people. There is a name for this in psychology. It is referred to as mythomania. It means simply that one tells lies and then believes them. This is what the non-Muslims say Muhammad (SAW) suffered from. But the only problem with this proposal is that one suffering from mythomania absolutely cannot deal with facts, and yet the whole Qur'an is based entirely upon facts. Everything contained in it can be researched and established as true. Since facts are such a problem for a mythomaniac, when a psychologist tries to treat one suffering from that condition, he continually confronts him with facts.

For example, if one is mentally ill and claims, "I am the king of England," a psychologist does not say to him "No you aren't. You are crazy!" He just does not do that. Rather, he confronts him with facts and says, "O.K., you say you are the king of England. So tell me where the queen is today. And where is your prime minister? And where are your guards?" Now, when the man has trouble trying to deal with these questions, he tries to make excuses, saying "Uh... the queen... she has gone to her mother's. Uh... the prime minister... well he died." And eventually he is cured because he cannot deal with the facts. If the psychologist continues confronting him with enough facts, finally he faces the reality and says, "I guess I am not the king of England."

[...]

In an article under the subject of the Qur'an, the Catholic Church states, "Over the centuries, many theories have been offered as to the origin of the Qur'an... Today no sensible man accepts any of these theories."!! Now here is the age-old Catholic Church, which has been around for so many centuries, denying these futile attempts to explain away the Qur'an. Indeed, the Qur'an is a problem for the Catholic Church. It states that it is revelation, so they study it.

[...]

Recently, the leading intellectual in the Catholic Church - a man by the name of Hans - studied the Qur'an and gave his opinion of what he had read. This man has been around for some time, and he is highly respected in the Catholic Church, and after careful scrutiny, he reported his findings, concluding, "God has spoken to man through the man, Muhammad." Again this is a conclusion arrived at by a non-Muslim source - the very leading intellectual of the Catholic Church himself! I do not think that the Pope agrees with him, but nonetheless, the opinion of such a noted, repute public figure must carry some weight in defense of the Muslim position. He must be applauded for facing the reality that the Qur'an is not something which can be easily pushed aside and that, in fact God is the source of these words. As is evident from the aforementioned information, all of the possibilities have been exhausted, so the chance of finding another possibility of dismissing the Qur'an is nonexistent. For if the book is not a revelation, then it is a deception; and if it is a deception, one must ask, "What is its origin" And where does it deceive us?" Indeed, the true answers to these questions shed light on the Qur'an's authenticity and silence the bitter unsubstantiated claims of the unbelievers. Certainly, if people are going to insist that the Qur'an is a deception, then they must bring forth evidence to support such a claim.

The burden of proof is on them, not us! One is never supposed to advance a theory without sufficient corroborating facts; so I say to them, "Show me one deception! Show me where the Qur'an deceives me! Show me, otherwise, don't say that it is a deception!" An interesting characteristic of the Qur'an is how it deals with surprising phenomena which relate not only to the past but to modern times as well. [...]

one verse in the Qur'an reads;

"Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder, and made from water every living thing? Will they not then believe?"

Ironically, this very information is exactly what they awarded the 1973 Noble Prize for - to a couple of unbelievers. The Qur'an reveals the origin

of the universe - how it began from one piece - and mankind continues to verify this revelation, even up to now. Additionally, the fact that all life originated from water would not have been an easy thing to convince people of fourteen centuries ago. Indeed, if 1400 years ago you had stood in the desert and told someone, "All of this, you see (pointing to yourself), is made up of mostly water," no one would have believed you. Proof of that was not available until the invention of the microscope. They had to wait to find out that cytoplasm, the basic substance of the cell, is made-up of 80% water. Nonetheless, the evidence did come, and once again the Qur'an stood the test of time.

[...]

Now applying this example to the situations in the Qur'an, if one draws up a list of all of the subjects about which the Qur'an has made correct statements, it becomes very clear that it is highly unlikely that they were all just correct blind guesses. Indeed, the subjects discussed in the Qur'an are numerous, and thus the odds of someone just making lucky guesses about all of them become practically nil. If there are a million ways for the Qur'an to be wrong, yet each time it is right, then it is unlikely that someone was guessing. The following three examples of subjects about which the Qur'an has made correct statements collectively illustrate how the Qur'an continues to beat the odds.

In the 16th chapter the Qur'an mentions that the female bee leaves its home to gather food.¹² Now, a person might guess on that, saying, "The bee that you see flying around - it could be male, or it could be female. I think I will guess female." Certainly, he has a one in two chance of being right. So it happens that the Qur'an is right. But it also happens that that was not what most people believed at the time when the Qur'an was revealed. Can you tell the difference between a male and a female bee? Well, it takes a specialist to do that, but it has been discovered that the male bee never leaves his home to gather food. However, in Shakespeare's play, Henry the Fourth, some of the characters discuss bees and mention that the bees are soldiers and have a king. That is what people thought in Shakespeare's time - that the bees that one sees flying around are male bees and that they go home and answer to a king. However, that is not true at all. The fact is that they are females, and they answer to a queen. Yet it took modern scientific investigations in the last 300 years to discover that this is the case.

So, back to the list of good guesses, concerning the topic of bees, the Qur'an had a 50/50 chance of being right, and the odds were one in two.

In addition to the subject of bees, the Qur'an also discusses the sun and the manner in which it travels through space. Again, a person can guess on that subject. When the sun moves through space, there are two options: it can travel just as a stone would travel if one threw it, or it can move on its own accord. The Qur'an states the latter - that it moves as a result of its own motion.³ To do such, the Qur'an uses a form of the word *sabaha* to describe the sun's movement through space. In order to properly provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the implications of this Arabic verb, the following example is given. If a man is in water and the verb *sabaha* is applied in reference to his movement, it can be understood that he is swimming, moving of his own accord and not as a result of a direct force applied to him. Thus when this verb is used in reference to the sun's movement through space, it in no way implies that the sun is flying uncontrollably through space as a result of being hurled or the like. It simply means that the sun is turning and rotating as it travels. Now, this is what the Qur'an affirms, but was it an easy thing to discover? Can any common man tell that the sun is turning? Only in modern times was the equipment made available to project the image of the sun onto a tabletop so that one could look at it without being blinded. And through this process it was discovered that not only are there three spots on the sun but that these spots move once every 25 days. This movement is referred to as the rotation of the sun around its axis and conclusively proves that, as the Qur'an stated 1400 years ago, the sun does, indeed turn as it travels through space.

And returning once again to the subject of good guess, the odds of guessing correctly about both subjects - the sex of bees and the movement of the sun - are one in four!

Seeing as back fourteen centuries ago people probably did not understand much about time zones, the Quran's statements about this subject are considerably surprising. The concept that one family is having breakfast as the sun comes up while another family is enjoying the brisk night air is truly something to be marveled at, even in modern time. Indeed, fourteen centuries ago, a man could not travel more than thirty miles in one day, and thus it took him literally months to travel from India to Morocco, for example. And probably, when he was having supper in Morocco, he thought to himself, "Back home in India they are having supper right now." This is because he did not realize that, in the process of traveling, he moved across a time zone. Yet, because it is the words of Allah, the All-Knowing, the Qur'an recognizes and acknowledges such a phenomenon. In an interesting verse it states that when history comes to

an end and the Day of Judgment arrives, it will all occurring an instant; and this very instant will catch some people in the daytime and some people at night. This clearly illustrates Allah's divine wisdom and His previous knowledge of the existence of time zones, even though such a discovery was non-existent back fourteen centuries ago. Certainly, this phenomenon is not something which is obvious to one's eyes or a result of one's experience, and this fact, in itself, suffices as proof of the Qur'an's authenticity.

Returning one final time to the subject of good guesses for the purpose of the present example, the odds that someone guessed correctly about all three of the aforementioned subjects - the sex of bees, the movement of the sun and the existence of time zones - are one in eight!

Certainly, one could continue on and on with this example, drawing up longer and longer list of good guesses; and of course, the odds would become higher and higher with each increase of subjects about which one could guess. But what no one can deny is the following; the odds that Mohammed an illiterate, guessed correctly about thousands and thousands of subjects, never once making a mistake, are so high that any theory of his authorship of the Qur'an must be completely dismissed - even by the most hostile enemies of Islam!

Indeed, the Qur'an expects this kind of challenge. Undoubtedly, if one said to someone upon entering a foreign land, "I know your father. I have met him," probably the man from that land would doubt the newcomer's word, saying, "You have just come here. How could you know my father?" As a result, he would question him, "Tell me, is my father tall, short, dark, fair? What is he like?" Of course, if the visitor continued answering all of the questions correctly, the skeptic would have no choice but to say, "I guess you do know my father. I don't know how you know him, but I guess you do!" The situation is the same with the Qur'an. It states that it originates from the One who created everything. So everyone has the right to say, "Convince me! If the author of this book really originated life and everything in the heavens and on the earth, then He should know about this, about that, and so on." And inevitably, after researching the Qur'an, everyone will discover the same truths.

Additionally, we all know something for sure: we do not all have to be experts to verify what the Qur'an affirms. One's iman (faith) grows as one continues to check and confirm the truths contained in the Qur'an. And one is supposed to do so all of his life.

May God (Allah) guide everyone close to the truth.



Supplement

An engineer at the University of Toronto who was interested in psychology and who had read something on it, conducted research and wrote a thesis on Efficiency of Group Discussions. The purpose of his research was to find out how much people accomplish when they get together to talk in groups of two, three, ten, etc. The graph of his findings: people accomplish most when they talk in groups of two. Of course, this discovery was entirely beyond his expectations, but it is very old advice given in the Qur'an:

Additionally, the 89th chapter of the Qur'an mentions a certain city by the name of 'Iram (a city of pillars), which was not known in ancient history and which was non-existent as far as historians were concerned. However, the December 1978 edition of National Geographic introduced interesting information which mentioned that in 1973, the city of Elba was excavated in Syria. The city was discovered to be 43 centuries old, but that is not the most amazing part. Researchers found in the library of Elba a record of all of the cities with which Elba had done business. Believe or not, there on

the list was the name of the city of 'Iram. The people of Elba had done business with the people of 'Iram!

"Say, 'I exhort you to one thing - that you stand for Allah, [assessing the truth] by twos and singly, and then reflect....' In conclusion I ask you to consider with care the following:

"And they say, 'Why are not signs sent down to him from his Lord?' Say, 'Indeed, the signs are with Allah, and I am but a clear warner.' But is sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book [i.e. Qur'an] which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in that is mercy and a reminder to people who believe."

Gary Miller
The amazing Quran



7) Indifference:

Mark Twain - attributed in error: *When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.*

Rachel Carson: (The Sense of Wonder): *If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.*

Marian Wright Edelman: *If you as parents cut corners, your children will too. If you lie, they will too. If you spend all your money on yourselves and tithed no portion of it for charities, colleges, churches, synagogues, and civic causes, your children won't either. And if parents snicker at racial and gender jokes, another generation will pass on the poison adults still have not had the courage to snuff out.*

False engagement. When parents do not participate in their child's wonder or do it against their will, children disengage from them. The child needs a companion to feel wonder is shared and to be able to share more wonders.

Parents and other adults are models for the child. They should show their surprise, interest, and attraction to the natural world and its happenings;

they should exclaim from time to time: "look how the dog wags its tail!", "this little worm looks like a lasso, don't you think?", "let's pop bubbles in a bath!". Etc.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

**Mom, dad, I would like to say one day that you are my heroes.
Yes!
AlHamdulillaah, your humor and joy make me happy
You always find something amusing or interesting to talk about
or to look at
I look up at you as if you were I
I would like to be just like you when I grow up
Sub'anallah, I know why Allaah ask us to respect our parents
They are worth a million stars
My parents, they are my precious little wonder lands
Where they blink lights upon lights
And make my life as good as a fairy tale with what is real and
concrete
Shukrulillaah**



Every moment of this strange and lovely life from dawn to dusk, is a miracle. Somewhere, always a rose is opening its petals to the dawn. Somewhere, always, a flower is fading in the dusk.-
-Beverly Nichols (The Fool Hath Said)

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.-
-Albert Einstein



There are many ways Muslim parents can share their awe for Islam. There is the beauty of the Noble Qur'aan and many ways to introduce children to it. Parents can stress the rhythm in the *suraat* or just recite the Qur'an in a beautiful voice and ask children to follow along or recite every other verse. With several children, a game can be made when children take turns. Parents can talk about the animals Islam talks about and show how much Muslims care for their environment. Parents should never try to change the message of the Qur'aan under the pretext children are too young to understand; on the contrary, they should explain things as they are and make an effort to rely their explanations to something children know and can understand.

WHEN YOU THOUGHT I WASN'T LOOKING:

By a Child

"When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.
When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.
When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favourite cake for me and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.
When you thought I wasn't looking I heard you say a prayer, and I

knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in Allah.



When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me good night and I felt loved and safe.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your

responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.
When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.
When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.
When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.
When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, "Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking."



8) Too much, too inappropriate to appreciate:

Garrison Keillor: *Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.*

Michael Levine: *Having children makes you no more a parent than having a piano makes you a pianist.*

Confucius: *I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."*

Keats: *"Nothing ever becomes real 'til it is experienced."*

Disorder makes of beauty a blur. Spoiling the moment by cutting it short because we do not have the time. Confusing the children. Making the discovery too complicated frightens. Wonder should be easy to grasp.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

I wish you knew, mom, dad, that yesterday we wanted to have time to write the letter A before you lifted your eyebrows and said we were too young. I loved to learn to write. If only you could be more patient. We are just learning how to handle a pencil. Not easy if you ask me. And the pieces of chalk, we liked them so much, we just wanted to explore them before trying your big ideas. Nobody wasted time, you know. We only waste when we get too fast, too high, too rash...



*Ultimately magic finds you, if you let it.-
-Tony Wheeler (Fast Company)*

*Mystery creates wonder and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand.-
-Neil Armstrong*



FOUR SEASONS OF A TREE:

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away. The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what

they had seen. The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted. The second son said no--it was covered with green buds and full of promise. The third son disagreed, he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen. The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but **ONLY** one season in the tree's life. He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are--and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life--can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, fulfillment of your fall. Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult patches and better times are sure to come some time or later.





9) Fear:

Dorothy Parker: *The best way to keep children home is to make the home atmosphere pleasant -- and let the air out of the tires.*

Pamela Glenconner: *Bitter are the tears of a child: Sweeten them.*

Deep are the thoughts of a child: Quiet them.

Sharp is the grief of a child: Take it from him.

Soft is the heart of a child: Do not harden it.

Fear spoils the wonder when parents are afraid children will tear their clothes, will put mud all over themselves, may fall. Accidents are part of life and part of the wonders of discovery. A child who is afraid to discover like climbing a tree to see a nest, etc., will have little left to discover and wonder about.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

I wonder why you never let me climb a tree or pull a branch full of snow.

I wonder why I never can sit on the ground.

If I pull on my ribbons and get them loose, why are you mad at me?

I cannot use the trampoline O so attractive, because I might break?

**I feel like a little doll. You know, I am tougher than you think
I cannot even hold my little brother unless we fall.
I wonder if you ever got a bruise in your life. Sigh.
I can give this very good water to my little sister, you know.
I know how the well works, don't you know?
Put your trust in Allaah, my dear parents, let us take some risks.
Who never tries never gets anything, right?**

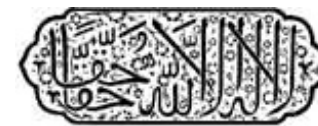


The longer I live, the more my mind dwells upon the beauty and the wonder of the world.-

-John Burroughs

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I would ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life.-

-Rachel Carson



Parents are the tree that children use in order to rise in life. Parents give birth to the child, then they feed him and take care of him whatever the way he behaves, then parents give him advice and protect him from the others and sometimes from himself, then parents open their arms to the fruits of their children too.

For this reason, for all their caring, parents are afraid children will get hurt and they are afraid to lose them. This is why parents tend to be restrictive, and some parents more than others. If parents give all they have to children, they want in return that children be safe and healthy. Muslim parents know that children are entrusted to them and if they do not give to all their children equally, even a piece of fruit, they will be judged for that.

It is easy to keep children overprotected for this reason.

However, life is not lived without pains and bruises. Every child has to fall many times from a bicycle to learn how to ride one, so is life.

The more parents will give permission to children to wander and discover by themselves, the more likely will they be able to feel admiration for what they discover and for their parents too! Of course, in the limits of Islam.

If children want to try to collect money for charity and parents stop them because people will talk, how will children be able to know how it feels to do things freely for the love of others? How will they feel proud of being useful? How will they respect their parents? How will they be able to see how wonderful their own parents are? Parents will look wonderful to them if they let them discover who they are and take responsibilities in a safe way.

If parents are always afraid their children will fall into sin or their behavior will cause them problems, the child will not be able to grow and bloom. More than that, researchers have noticed that the child's brain stops growing in the first three years of life when they are restricted, when they do not interact or are not loved in a consistent and predictable manner.

When parents do things for children instead of letting them do it by themselves, like playing with toys or puzzles, etc. When parents follow children everywhere and do not let them learn to be independent early in life, they create future problems for the children. Those children will probably have a hard time going to school or live away from home or even interact with others when they go to kindergarten.

The nurture of early brain development

“Infants and toddlers learn about themselves and their world during interactions with others. Brain connections that lead to later success grow out of nurturant, supportive and predictable care. This type of caregiving fosters child curiosity, creativity and self-confidence. Young children need safety, love, conversation and a stimulating environment to develop and keep important synapses in the brain.

Caring for infants and toddlers is mostly about building relationships and making the most of everyday routines and experiences. *The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers* (Dombro, Colker and Dodge, 1997) says that during the first 3 years of life, infants and toddlers look to caregivers for answers to these questions:

Do people respond to me? / Can I depend on other people when I need them? / Am I important to others? / Am I competent? / How should I behave? / Do people enjoy being with me? / What should I be afraid of? Is it safe for me to show how I feel? / What things interest me?”

Reference:

http://www.classbrain.com/artread/publish/article_30.shtml

“Touch, talking, and things an infant sees and smells all build connections if done with continuity in a loving, consistent, and predictable manner. These connections die if not maintained. If there are no experiences, the connections are pruned back and the brain remains small.

Children raised in environmentally deprived facilities (such as the Romanian orphanages) experience fewer sounds, colors, pictures, interactions and sights. Their brains are smaller than those of children who grow up in sensually rich environments within meaningful relationships. When doctors have studied the brains of children from deprived environments, there is a strong resemblance to brains of Alzheimer's patients. Animals raised in zoos have brains that are 20-30% smaller than animals raised in the wild.

Studies done on over 1,000 abused and neglected children found that children who were rarely touched or spoken to and who had little opportunity to explore and experiment with toys, had brains that were 20-30% smaller than most children their age. In over half of these cases, parts of the brains appeared to have literally wasted away. (There was no allowance in this study for the possibility that these children were affected by F.A.S.) (Ounce of Prevention, 1996).”

Reference: <http://www.educarer.com/brain.htm>

The video, "Ten Things Every Child Needs" discusses what the children need in order to help the brain grow. They are:

#1 Interaction

Newborns can interact and they are full human beings who feel, see hear and hurt. Children are learning from the time there are in the womb. Some dedicated parents teach their fetus to kick around the belly and a few other things too!

Dr. Brazelton has demonstrated how a baby can stick his tongue out to imitate his caregiver.

#2 Touch

Touch is how a child knows he is wanted and reassured. Each time you touch your child and smile to him, his brain makes new connections. Infant massage help premature babies to thrive and helps infants to acquire mobility faster, sleep more soundly and have less colic.

#3 Stable relationship

Dr. Spitz found in the 1940's that infants need a loving, trusting adult to find meaning in life. It is like being in a foreign country and not having an interpreter to help you make sense of what people are telling you.

Recent studies done at the University of Minnesota by Dr. Megan Gunnar showed that high levels of the stress hormone (CORTISOL) affects the body and the ability to think. He found that a loving, consistent relationship can offset even the most stressful situation. Without it, growth can be stunted both mentally and physically. When we think that a child's brain works seven times harder than normal when he encounters new situations like walking, starting to crawl, etc., we understand why a sensitive caregiver should help the child all the way in his progress. Frequent overdose of cortisol (stress) may affect a loss in memory, foster negative motions and attention deficiency.

A sense of control and predictability moderate the push of cortisol.

#4 Safe, healthy environment

Exposure to lead is called "the silent epidemic" because the symptoms do not appear until ages six, seven and eight years. Some symptoms of lead poisoning are learning difficulties and even delinquency. It is found in old houses, lead painted toys, window sills, wall painting and even dust and cooking pots. It is treatable is caught early by a simple blood test.

#5 Self esteem

It takes one and a half years for children to learn how to control their feelings. The way children think of themselves depends entirely on the caretaker and his/her nurturing capacity. Dr. Brazelton has said that he can recognize by eight months which kids expect themselves to succeed

and which do not. Children are like sponges; they mirror their environment.

#6 Quality care

Today, the professional organization of prison wardens correlates the need for investing money in the first three years of life as a prevention to crimes and anti-social behaviors.(Karr-Morse and Wiley, 1997).

Childcare should aim at learning about others, about oneself, and how to control and use one's environment and not just be a drop out.

The Carnegie Report of 1995 estimated that forty percent of all infants and toddlers are in care that is actually destructive to them, and ten million children are in some form of childcare. Childcare programs will increase by 50% in the next ten years.

Caregivers should want to interact with children and should be no more than 1:3 for infants and 1:4 for toddlers.

#7 Communication

By six months of age a child can duplicate the sounds he hears. All the circuits of language are in place; they just need to be connected.

The more words the infant hears, the more connections are made, but the quality of exchanges must be more than just talking to the child. He must respond too. (LaMorelle, 2001)

#8 Play

In children, everything is learned through play. By playing, they duplicate the world around them as well as their experiences, this is why a very young child does not have any problem to pretend.

It is the experience, NOT the toy, that aids growth in the brain. This is why children who do best on tests are those whose parents play with them.

#9 Music

Children are very sensitive to music, but they need to be involved in music by moving around, not just listen to it. Music helps children to connect different learning experiences together, physical coordination, a sense of timing, uses memory, imagination and language, help build self-confidence, connect parents to children is an unique way.

#10 Reading

Reading to children make a lot of connections in the brain. To read the same book over and over gain help the child make a connection between the written page and the spoken word and fosters love for reading.

There is a strong correlation between the amount of sleep a child gets and normal brain development. It is necessary for the brain to have a period of deep, uninterrupted, physiological rest in order to process all it has

experienced during the day. Children until age twelve who do not receive enough sleep do poorly on extended performance testing, creativity and higher-level problem solving. They are also hyperactive. (Pat Moffett, 2001).

A HUGE APPLE TREE



A long time ago, there was a huge apple tree. A little boy loved to come and play around it everyday. He climbed to the tree top, ate the apples, took a nap under the shadow... He loved the tree and the tree loved to play with him.

Time went by... the little boy had grown up and he no longer played around the tree everyday.

One day, the boy came back to the tree and he looked sad.

"Come and play with me," the tree asked the boy.

"I am no longer a kid, I don't play around trees anymore." The boy replied, "I want toys. I need money to buy them."

"Sorry, but I don't have money...but you can pick all my apples and sell them. Then you will have money."

The boy was so excited. He grabbed all the apples on the tree and left

happily. The boy never came back after he picked the apples. The tree was sad.

One day, the boy returned and the tree was so excited.

"Come and play with me" the tree said.

"I don't have time to play. I have to work for my family. We need a house for shelter. Can you help me?"

"Sorry, but I don't have a house. But you can chop off my branches to build your house."

So the boy cut all the branches of the tree and left happily. The tree was glad to see him happy but the boy never came back since then. The tree was again lonely and sad.

One hot summer day, the boy returned and the tree was delighted.

"Come and play with me!" the tree said.

"I am sad and getting old. I want to go sailing to relax myself. Can you give me a boat?"

"Use my trunk to build your boat. You can sail far away and be happy."

So the boy cut the tree trunk to make a boat. He went sailing and never showed up for a long time.

Finally, the boy returned after he left for so many years.

"Sorry, my boy. But I don't have anything for you anymore. No more apples for you..." the tree said.

"I don't have teeth to bite" the boy replied.

"No more trunk for you to climb on"

"I am too old for that now" the boy said.

"I really can't give you anything ... the only thing left is my dying roots" the tree said with tears.

"I don't need much now, just a place to rest. I am tired after all these years." The boy replied.

"Good! Old tree roots is the best place to lean on and rest." said the tree.

"Come, Come sit down with me and rest." The boy sat down and the tree was glad and smiled with tears.....

This is a story for everyone. The tree is our parents. When we were young, we loved to play with Mom and Dad... When we grew up, we left them... only come to them when we need something or when we are in trouble. No matter what, parents will always be there and give everything they can to make you happy. You may think the boy is cruel to the tree but that is how all of us are treating our parents. .



10) Personal convictions kill imagining:

George Washington Carver: *How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.*

James Baldwin: *For nothing is fixed, forever and forever and forever, it is not fixed; the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock. Generations do not cease to be born, and we are responsible to them because we are the only witnesses they have. The sea rises, the light fails, lovers cling to each other, and children cling to us. The moment we cease to hold each other, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.*

Rabbinical saying: *Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time.*

Limit or shutting down imagination because of **personal convictions**. To wonder is to imagine and pretend, is to explore the world of “what if”. It is to try imaginary weapons and witches and fairies. There is nothing wrong imagining monsters if we link those monsters to something that exist in our ideologies. Angels can be fairies that sit on our shoulders or protect us from the outside world, and *jinn*s the good or bad monsters that whisper in our ears.

A child thrives if he is regularly encouraged and prized. Children’s sense of wonder is damaged and grows weak if his efforts are often met by adult corrections and criticism.

Wonder becomes possible when children can risk being themselves without there being any risk at all.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

I know dragons do not exist, but I’d love to be one just one day, for the beauty of it.

I know we are supposed to believe in more than one god, but let me try to talk to them one day like I saw on TV. How I am supposed to know if they are right or wrong?

How am I going to learn how it feels and people customs?

I know you detest TV sets, but if only once in a while I could see what it is...



Miracles, in the sense of phenomena we cannot explain, surround us on every hand: life itself is the miracle of miracles.-

-George Bernard Shaw (preface to *Androcles and the Lion*)

Wherever life takes us, there are always moments of wonder.-

-Jimmy Carter (*An Outdoor Journal: Adventures and Reflections*)

“The search for meaning is not limited to science: it is constant and continuous--all of us engage in it during all our waking hours the search continues even in our dreams. There are many ways of finding meaning, and there are no absolute boundaries separating them. One can find meaning in poetry as well as in science in the contemplation of a flower as well as in the grasp of an equation. We can be filled with wonder as we stand under the majestic dome of the night sky and see the myriad lights that twinkle and shine in its seemingly infinite depths. We can also be filled with awe as we behold the meaning of the formulae that define the propagation of light in space, the formation of galaxies, the synthesis of chemical elements, and the relation of energy, mass and velocity in the physical universe. The mystical perception of oneness and the religious

intuition of a Divine intelligence are as much a construction of meaning as the postulation of the universal law of gravitation.”-

-Ervin Laszlo



Our convictions should not prevent children in finding a sense of wonder in what surrounds them, but our convictions they should carry them and be their pillar.



As parents we need to teach our children to LOVE Allah Ta'ala. This love can be developed from infancy if the home is filled with suitable role models. If the child's socialization process centers around the teachings of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam) and around Allah Ta'ala's commandments, the child will learn to love Allah Ta'ala and be prepared to obey HIS commandments. Our children need to learn that Islam is not just a part of a Muslim's life but a complete way of life. A true Muslim believes that his/her salvation is through the guidance from Allah Ta'ala. To attain this salvation, parents need to teach their children that faith and action have to be combined. Faith without (correct deed) action is of no value and action without faith is of no value to a Muslim either.

A child's formative years are most important as the child is really an "open slate." What the parents inscribe on that slate is what will be reflected in the child's later years. It is stated in a Hadith of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam), *"What is learned in childhood is like something engraved on a stone."*

Imam Ghazali (ra) states that the stone may break up but the engraving will not be obliterated. As Muslims, each one of us have been taught from infancy the kalimah professing "that there is no GOD but Allah Ta'ala and that Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam) is HIS messenger. Parents have to become aware of temptations in life which divert their attention and interest away from why Allah Ta'ala created us. The world has been created for our pleasure and use. We have been created for one reason only: To worship Allah Ta'ala.

Islam demands sound conviction and opposes blind imitation. We are enjoined by Islam to employ our faculties to the fullest extent when exercising our freedom of choice. Along with this freedom of choice Allah Ta'ala demands that we fulfill our responsibilities with regards to our children's moral and spiritual upbringing.

Instead of responding to the adhaan, the child is busy rehearsing on the drum, flute, recorder or synthesizer or whatever musical instrument. A great amount of time, energy and money is spent by the parents to make sure their child is well prepared for any of these activities. My question is, are they prepared to make an equal investment on the child's Deeni education and upbringing?

The parents who allow their children to participate in these activities also allow the viewing of television and movies in the same "democratic" manner. The children also read magazines and books which promote the same culture of innovation. Research in western countries has revealed that these leave a lasting impression on the minds of children. These alien western values and culture which are contrary to Allah Ta'ala's commands take over the children's lives and mold their minds. The children slowly but surely develop antipathy towards Islamic laws and practices because they begin to find these restrictive, old-fashioned and unacceptable to their newfound culture. Negative peer pressure is an added insult to the Muslim child's mind. Parents start crying tears of blood when these same children become defiant and go on to bring into the home more alien practices. The parents then find that they have no control over their children who are openly defiant and dismissive of their Islamic identity.

Parents may often say, *"He/she is still small, there is no harm in letting them learn this or that. When they grow up they take life more seriously and do what is necessary."* If you have allowed your child to beat up, bully and steal from an early age, if you have not stopped the child, if you

have aided and abetted the wrong behavior, is your child going to give it all up when he/she reaches a maturity? Allah Ta'ala does not misguide anybody. One who has gone astray will not find the right path until she/he makes the choice to find it once again. However, if the child has not been taught to value and desire the right path, will the child really want to find it, belong to it and treasure it?

Remember, what the child has learned, especially when paid for and encouraged by the parents, is engraved in stone.

There are many secular extra curricular activities which are acceptable and beneficial for our children. For instance, swimming, martial arts, athletics, debating, speech training, Math, Science, Quranic, Hadith, Fiqh etc. competitions. Older boys and girls should participate in them separately to maintain modesty and thereby observe Allah Ta'ala's commandments of "Hijaab." It is also important to teach the children to stop when salaah becomes due, perform salaah and then resume their activity.

Gary Miller *The amazing Quran*



Parents should be aware that children cannot always do the way they want things done. They should realize children are different people with different ideas and ways of doing things.

Children will admire people who do not merit being admired or they will love in an excessive way. Never mind, as long as someone teach them where they are making the mistakes and guide them towards true Islam.

A CALL TO PRAYERS ON A COLD WINTRY MORNING

It is said that one day by chance 'Ibn Sina' was standing at a baker and loaf-seller shop. His attention was drawn to a very smart young boy who was displaying signs of much intelligence. The boy was saying to the baker: "My mother is requesting for a little fire." The baker responded: "Have you brought any pot to carry the fire?" "No! But I know how to carry it", replied the boy instantly. So saying he applied some ash over his palm and stretched his hand to the baker who placed a piece of burning firewood over his palm. Without any hesitation, the boy took it and went home.

'Ibn Sina' was rather amazed to see the intelligence and courage of this boy. He thought of having him for special training and education under his personal care. The proposal was communicated to the parents who agreed and entrusted the boy to his full care. Thus 'Bahman Yar' since then was staying at no other place except at the house of his tutor and care-taker, 'Ibn Sina'. They were all the time to be seen together. The boy being highly intelligent derived the best of the knowledge that his tutor could impart.

Years passed and 'Bahman Yar' grew up not only in age but also in knowledge and understanding under the patronage of his tutor. The learned tutor was also very proud of this most capable student.

It was one of the coldest nights of the wintry season. Midnight had passed and the snow-falling was very heavy. Both 'Ibn Sina' and 'Bahman Yar' were sleeping in one room under warm thick blankets. The light in the room was already extinguished but the student was still asking intricate questions on some deep subjects. The tutor was replying in his usual impressive manner. Fascinated by the supreme knowledge and deep philosophy of his tutor, he again made the suggestion which he had made before:

"Oh my learned tutor!" he pleaded, "with all this high status of knowledge

that you enjoy and being master of all the sciences, why not declare yourself a prophet? Sir! Don't you think that you even excel some of the previous prophets in knowledge and your status today is unparalleled in the world! Should you decide to claim prophethood, no one would dare challenge you. Let me assure you that I shall be the first to offer my allegiance and would serve you with full faith."

Since 'Bahman Yar' was still young and immature, his above proposal to his tutor was rather emotional than logical. 'Ibn Sina' smiled but did not give any reply.

That night the cold weather had become extreme and there was heavy snow-falling. Both were already fast asleep. It was past midnight and suddenly 'Ibn Sina' woke up and raised his head out of the warm blanket. Incidentally he was very thirsty and the water-mug in the room was empty. So he decided to wake up his student to go out and bring him some water.

"Oh 'Bahman Yar'! My son 'Bahman Yar'! Please wake up and bring me some drinking water from outside", he said repeatedly.

"Why is there no water in the water-mug near your goodself, Sir?" asked 'Bahman Yar.'

"No!" replied 'Ibn Sina.'

'Bahman Yar' raised his head and saw heavy snowfall outside. The thrilling sound of the strong cold wind also made him nervous to go out. Again 'Ibn Sina' grumbled:

"Oh 'Bahman Yar'! Why the delay? Bring me some water, I am too thirsty."

'Bahman Yar' dared not come out of the warm blankets to face the cold weather outside the room. He was, therefore, putting forward lame excuses to his tutor.

"Oh my respected tutor! It is harmful for you to drink water now that you have just come out of the warmth of thick blankets. It is better you go to sleep again till the early morning which is not far off", said 'Bahman Yar'.

"My son! Bring me water, I am too thirsty. I myself am a medical expert and know better what is harmful than you do. I am unable to sleep, please bring me some water from outside", again appealed 'Ibn Sina'

In response 'Bahman Yar' again put forward excuses and argued that he would catch cold and fall sick if he were to go out in that extreme cold weather. So saying he went back to sleep.

There was dead silence everywhere and no sound of anything was to be heard. Outside it was still pitch dark except the first light of Subhe Sadiq (true dawn) in the eastern horizon had commenced to appear. Suddenly

the silence broke with a melodious voice of a muezzin - caller to prayer from the top of a minaret at the nearby Masjid. After reciting some verses of the, Holy Qur'an, the muezzin in a loud voice said, "Allaho Akber" - Allah is the Greatest. "Ash-hado an la ilaha illallah" - I bear witness that there is no God except Allah.

Both the tutor and his student quietly listened to the melodious voice of the muezzin. The call to prayers then proceeded to the words "Ash-hado anna Muhammadan Rasoolullah" - I bear witness that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah. On hearing this, 'Ibn Sina' thought of taking the opportunity of responding to the repeated proposal made to him by 'Bahman Yar'. He said:

"Listen to me, oh my son 'Bahman Yar'. Now I wish to reply to your repeated suggestion". The student sat up to hear attentively of what his learned tutor abruptly wanted to say. 'Ibn Sina' then proceeded:

"You have been suggesting to me several times to claim prophethood, that people would put full faith in me and that you would be the first one to do so. Now look, you have been my close student for several years and benefited from me a great deal, yet you did not think it prudent to obey me by coming out of your warm bed for a moment and bring me water that I badly needed to quench my thirst. Instead you chose to put forward lame excuses."

"But think of this man who is now calling to prayers at the top of the minaret after coming out in the coldest weather and making ablution with cold water in the early hour of this morning. It is for no other purpose but in obedience to and respect for the command of Allah as conveyed by His apostle Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (s) some four hundred years ago.

"What a great difference there is between me and that Prophet sent by Allah!"



11) Lack of liberty:

African proverb: *It takes a village to raise a child.*

Hodding Carter: *There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots; the other, wings.*

Lack of liberty: A child who wants to wonder needs: space (go outside a lot or take over the whole house), be messy, be alone or still, move around as he pleases, take his time, be noisy or ask for quiet, do his thing without anyone's help or meddling, ask what he should discover and get an answer or a hint.

Parents encourage children to freely experiment, taste, feel, hear, see, explore, jump, climb, and get into things that are interesting and safe.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:



Oh, I want so much run into the mud puddles today, please let me go?!

I'll have the rain for a hat. What do you care. I will burst if I stay one more day locked up in this house!

Why can't I touch the closets in the kitchen, they are full of jolly chikiti bangbang

If I cannot climb furniture, have a pillow fight, soil my clothe with the green herb or get all wet, what's life worth? Auntie always said she had kids to laugh, at least she lets us put our food on our face and hands, she likes us more like that, why don't you? How will I know how it feels and tastes on my fingers and how it is hard to remove it from hair? Let me try and be sorry if I must. I promise I won't hurt anyone. It's safe too!

Please, stop doing the puzzles for me under the pretext you are helping me

How am I going to know I can do it if I can never try once by myself?

There is nothing that God hath established in a constant course of nature, and which therefore is done every day, but would seem a Miracle, and exercise our admiration, if it were done but once.-

-John Donne

You know you're old when you've lost all your marvels.-

-Merry Browne



Parents should be around their children to lift them if they need or to guide them when they forget. They should be a backup, not a drag or a cage where children are carefully examined. Parents should remind their children to pray or to be good or not to say bad words or backbite because that displeases Allaah. But at the same time, parents should let children take risks and do things on their own. No one is responsible of others mistakes. Parents should exert in being the best teachers they can, then let go of children; they will pull away anyway when they will get married or even go to college, so what?

Parents should relax a little bit around children to let them explore and love the world in all its aspects.

If their dress gets all muddy, never mind, as long as it is not *najasah* and does not prevent them from praying.

If they want to run, let them run until they drop, but in a place where they can do it safely. If they want to run in the mosque and it disturbs people, find ways to canalize their energy and redirect it.

Discipline children, but do not punish them.

By disciplining, you are teaching children positive alternatives rather than saying NO all the time; you show them how their action affect others; you reward them for what they are doing right; and you make up rules that are absolutely necessary and are simple and easy to follow. You impress the fear of Allaah in their heart instead of the fear of human beings; you give a good example of the Muslim community; they learn to share and cooperate; they feel successful and in control of themselves.

By punishing them, you humiliate them before others; you control them by instilling a feeling of fear in them; you give them bribe and teach them to behave to avoid punishment without them really understanding what they are doing or feeling bad for what they are doing wrong; you do not tell them what they should do to improve so they never get a chance to please you or to please Allaah. They might then hide their mistakes and lie as a result or be angry or aggressive with you. Their feelings are not respected; they experience fear and force as the base of their relationships.

Parents should carry their children, not bury them.

Footprints In The Sand



One night a man had a dream.

He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord.

Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed that many times along the path of his life, there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. but I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints in the sand, it was then that I carried you."

What is Islam for me?



Islam is for the uninitiated like the pearl in an oyster...

if you don't open the oyster you will never get hold of the pearl...

When you first crack the oyster you will be blinded by its brightness...

the more you open the oyster the more it will enlighten everything around you...

At the end you get the pearl and it becomes the apple of your eye...

And This Is Islam...

Islam is not just a word for being something, it's also an expression of livinghood...

a part of you and you part of it...

indivisible from your body, personality and mind...

Islam is like the air for your lungs...like the water for your thirst...

like the sun for the plant...

Islam is your eyes to see with...

your ears to hear...

your tongue to speak...

your hands to support...

your feet to guide you on your path...

it's always there in your heart beating at the same time with it as it gives it strength and refreshment...

pulsating in your blood...

your spirit in mind...

your call as a human...

the peace for your life...

the life of life...

The shine and glory of Islam is as evident as the four seasons of the year...

as there is always a day after the night...

as the earth circulates in its orbit...

Islam is The soil and foundation beneath your feet...

Unshakeable and unyielding like the mountains...

Resolute as the blowing wind...

Extensive as the ocean...

Infinite and for ever and ever as universe...

Islam is the pearl of the dawn every new morning in your life



12) Another person:

Anne Frank: *Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands.*

Harry S Truman: *I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it.*

Pearl S. Buck: *I love people. I love my family, my children . . . but inside myself is a place where I live all alone and that's where you renew your springs that never dry up.*

Failure to see the child as a complete different person. Children standards or interests of the moment may not be yours. A child can think fantastic a new outfit she dreamed of and think about it while you are trying to make her interested in the new frogs. You might want to catch the right time to introduce the frogs. Also, parents need to be open and see that their children are other people too who do not think that all that you think wonderful is indeed wonderful.

Children can choose play activities based on their own feelings of interest and boredom and not the decisions of another person.

If children close to lose their sense of wonder could talk, they would say:

Mom, dad, when I go with you to the shops, I love watching the birds flying overhead; I do not care about the toys, even if you think that's what I like. I like so much more hearing the birds singing and looking at them steal from the racks. That's so much fun!

And, please forgive me, but I do not care about the flowers blooming in the garden, not just yet. Granny promised to buy me a dress with pop sleeves today, like my doll. Oh! I just cannot wait. I am all excited.

But I'll try to pick some of your flower in the collar as soon as we come back.

That's promise...

Oh, let me pull the pussy cat's tails. I am experimenting here...

Oh let me bath them.

Oh let me feed the big one from my cup. She looks like she needs it.



We carry within us the wonders we seek without us.--Sir Thomas Browne (Religio Medici)

People travel to wonder at the height of the mountains, at the huge waves of the seas, at the long course of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars, and yet they pass by themselves without wondering.--St. Augustine



There are many ways to live one's Islam even if the creed is the same for everyone.

Your children might be into *dawah* or, on the contrary, internalize their feelings for Islam. Whatever the way they choose to express their faith, acknowledge their unique identity as different from yours.

They might not be impressed by the same things you are impressed by in Islam, and that's OK, they will still find another aspect of the religion wonderful.

Parents should be open and take their children as they are, and eventually learn from them.

A father once said: "I did not educate my children. My children educated me", and he knew what he was talking about since he had raised six children.

Muslim parents should leave this door open for children where they can wander and choose what is more appropriate for themselves.

When new tribes converted to Islam, the prophet (SAAS) would not go there and impose his ways, he would just send one of his companions who knew the basics of Islam, and he would teach the new converts what he knew of the religion. This means that non-Arabs did not have to become Arabs to be Muslims; they could still keep their own ways intact as long as these ways did not contradict the revelation. Affairs of a country were always given to the care of local people because these people knew their own people and no stranger could understand really what was going on unless he belonged there.

That was the wisdom of Islam.

Islam says that Allaah created differences in people so that they may meet and learn from each other. Being different is a blessing and a way to find Islam more wonderful.

If children want to dress like Malays or live like Africans in order to feel more Muslims, let them! These new experiences may carry them to a deeper faith, this may help them understand things they cannot grasp otherwise; this may help them be themselves after they passed the period where they need to imitate others.

One of the ways to wake up a sense of wonder in children is to let them mimic people who appear different from them, this is why they like to dress up and pretend; this is how they grow.

Brain development in early childhood:

“Critical periods and sensitive periods: What's the difference?”

Brain development research distinguishes between **sensitive periods** and **critical periods** of development. Understanding the difference is very important for recognizing what infants and toddlers need early in life. The information presented in this guide centers mostly on sensitive periods.

Critical periods represent a narrow window of time during which a specific part of the body is most vulnerable to the absence of stimulation or to environmental influences. Vision is a good example: Unless an infant sees light during the first 6 months, the nerves leading from the eye to the visual cortex of the brain that processes those signals will degenerate and die.

Prenatal development, the period before a baby is born, also includes critical periods. Remember the drug thalidomide and its effects on prenatal development? Women who took the drug between the 38th and 46th days of pregnancy gave birth to infants with deformed arms, or no arms, Women who took the drug between the 40th and 46th days of pregnancy gave birth to infants with deformed legs or no legs. Women who took the drug after the 50th day of pregnancy gave birth to babies with no birth defects or problems.

Sensitive periods are the broad windows of opportunity for certain types of learning. Sensitive periods represent a less precise and often longer period of time when skills, such as acquiring a second language, are influenced. But, if the opportunity for learning does not arise, these potential new skills are not lost forever. Individuals learn new languages at many different times in their lives.

The skills acquired during sensitive periods are those that some people are better at than others. They include the social, emotional and mental characteristics that make us interesting people. Individuals who work with children need to be aware of the sensitive period concept so that they can provide learning opportunities that benefit children in many ways. The early brain research highlights birth through age 3 as a sensitive period for development and learning in all areas.”

Reference:

http://www.classbrain.com/artread/publish/article_30.shtml



PERFECT HEART

One day a young man was standing in the middle of the town proclaiming that he had the most beautiful heart in the whole valley. A large crowd gathered and they all admired his heart for it was perfect. There was not a mark or a flaw in it. Yes, they all agreed it truly was the most beautiful heart they had ever seen. The young man was very proud and boasted more loudly about his beautiful heart.

Suddenly, an old man appeared at the front of the crowd and said, "Why your heart is not nearly as beautiful as mine." The crowd and the young man looked at the old man's heart. It was beating strongly, but full of scars, it had places where pieces had been removed and other pieces put in, but they didn't fit quite right and there were several jagged edges. In fact, in some places there were deep gouges where whole pieces were

missing. The people stared -- how can he say his heart is more beautiful, they thought?

The young man looked at the old man's heart and saw its state and laughed. "You must be joking," he said. "Compare your heart with mine, mine is perfect and yours is a mess of scars and tears." "Yes," said the old man, "yours is perfect looking but I would never trade with you. You see, every scar represents a person to whom I have given my love - I tear out a piece of my heart and give it to them, and often they give me a piece of their heart which fits into the empty place in my heart, but because the pieces aren't exact, I have some rough edges, which I cherish, because they remind me of the love we shared.

Sometimes I have given pieces of my heart away, and the other person hasn't returned a piece of his heart to me. These are the empty gouges -- giving love is taking a chance. Although these gouges are painful, they stay open, reminding me of the love I have for these people too, and I hope someday they may return and fill the space I have waiting. So now do you see what true beauty is?"

The young man stood silently with tears running down his cheeks. He walked up to the old man, reached into his perfect young and beautiful heart, and ripped a piece out. He offered it to the old man with trembling hands. The old man took his offering, placed it in his heart and then took a piece from his old scarred heart and placed it in the wound in the young man's heart. It fit, but not perfectly, as there were some jagged edges. The young man looked at his heart, not perfect anymore but more beautiful than ever, since love from the old man's heart flowed into his. They embraced and walked away side by side.

What is a wonder-full life?

My heart leaps up when I behold A rainbow in the sky. So was it when my life began; So is it now I am a man; So shall it be when I am old Or let me die! The child is father to the man And I should wish my days to be Bound each to each in natural piety. -

William Wordsworth

Here is a few tips to make sure our lives are full with wonders.

Make friends:

If we ever doubt how close to nature we are, just look at the light in a child's eyes as it gradually explores the world of living things: squatting down low to be near the flowers; pressing its face against the window to watch the dancing raindrops; delighting in all animals and insects, in water, and playing with the earth. A child is a freewheeler, always ready to respond and ready to discover the world around it. It identifies with earth, sea, sky, sun and stars and makes friends with them, even name them.



Adults may not be as enthusiastic about nature, but they cannot help being touched by it. Look at the look of a father or a mother looking at their newborn or a bunch of kittens. That is pure wonder!

Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life--learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.--
Robert Fulghum (All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten)

- _ Dad, yesterday we met an old friend of yours.
- _ Is that so? Who is it?
- _ I do not know his name, but Granddaddy said you can tell me his name. It is like a secret name.
- _ Oh?! And, how does he look like?
- _ He is all wrinkled, he always was, but his heart beats strong, granddaddy said.
- _ Well, I do not see, son.
- _ Granddaddy said you used to tell him all your secrets.
- _ Really?
- _ He also said, you would come close like this, and you would whisper: I love you... like I always do.
- _ I wonder how grandfather would know that...
- _ He said you spend many hours in his arms. You sang, you hummed to him "little star" and such.
- _ Is that so? How could I forget then?
- _ He also said you liked to come cry in his arms every time you had a fight. When you married mommy, you didn't need him anymore because mommy did the same he did for you. So you did forget about him. But him, he did not move; he is still at the same place.
- _ Well, what a riddle... Our neighbors did more a long time ago.
- _ Except for one. Granddaddy said friends change. He said himself had many friends at one time: the stars, the flowers, the little kittens of his auntie, the birdies that made their nest on top of the shelter in your garden. Now he has God for friend. And you, daddy, what was your best friend when you were my age?
- _ I do not remember anything about him.
- _ We can see him from here, daad.
- Dad thought for a moment, then suddenly a light came across his face, and his mouth became very wide with a grin.
- _ But if you mean that kind of friend, yes, I did have one dear to me. It was a tree, that tree behind the boulders. There is little left of him, though.
- _ Yes, it was your hickory tree. Will you tell me his name?
- _ I called him daddy Kory.



Empathy: Sharing feelings:

In his book, *Sharing Nature with Children*, Joseph Cornell explains what the sense of wonder is for children. He gives the example of a dwarfed mountain hickory tree: over two hundred years old and only eight feet high, it has struggled to remain alive between two huge boulders, its branches twisted by severe winter winds. Finding scant soil and nourishment it sent its roots down deep and suffered from lack of water.

The children at once identified with this tree as a living being, and their compassion was aroused. They treated it like a friend in such a way that on their hikes they went out of their way to empty their canteens on its roots, and ran to see it each year when they returned to camp.

_ Daad?

_ yes.

_ Granddaddy said Daddy Kory is getting one inch every year in his love handles, 'like all the rest of us'. What does that mean?

Dad laughs.

_ This tree has more years than all the people in this neighboring gathered. One day someone will cut him down and yes we will know how old he is because it shows on the rings of its trunk.

_ Oh! You mean daddy, that trees grow like us. He is like me when I cannot wear my trousers from last year because I am taller now and my waist is bigger?

_ That's it.

He ponders a few minutes over this, thinking in awe what would happen if someone would cut him in two.

_ See, his heart beats strong since it grows all the time. But now it is harder for him to survive. The weather has changed these last few years. In winter, the water is frozen, so he cannot drink much, and in summer, it doesn't rain much so it gets thirsty.

The child looks sad. He feels empathy.

_ I am going to fetch some water in the kitchen, daddy.

_ Ok, son.

And Khaleel runs over the boulders to empty a glass of water over the tree's roots.

He talks to the tree:

_ You need get well, Daddy Kory, because daddy still needs a friend.

_ Khaleel! Warns mommy. Come get your bath.

Khaleel smiles.

_ Tomorrow, you too, I will get you a bath, Insha Allaah.

Knowledge: learning something new everyday:

The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.--
Ralph W. Sockman

Why does learning bring about wonderful feelings? Because it follows this equation:

Positive experiences through senses = warm feelings (fulfillment) = wonder /learning/ happiness /

¹ negative experiences through senses = bad feelings (loss, guilt, anger, feeling of injustice) = stress /anxiety / depression.

To explore is satisfying in itself; it also means that we are waiting for more to come or more to do. The sense of wonder comes from this expectancy: with what I know, I will do more, I will know more, a new horizon is open for me to explore further. My curiosity is picked.

For instance, the baby is delighted when, after discovering his hands for the first time, he sees them reappear in his line of vision. He knows that something mysterious is about to uncover and new possibilities are opened. The mystery is exciting.

Experience in childhood is never abstract. When he questions, he grasps, he reaches for it. It is all hands on. As we grow older, our sense of wonder becomes more refined. We are attracted by different things and amazed by different things. However, even animals are delighted by the sun going down or the reflect of the sun over the water; there are things that create a sense of wonder indefinitely for any living creature... It catches us unaware; it surprises us and makes us richer.



To be one with the world:

Nature for the child is sheer sensory experience.

Children like animals play in order to discover, and pretend to be fighting, not to look, etc. However, an animal never tries to become a horse, a train, a bird, or a tree. A child does.

*There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he looked upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years. The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning glories, and white and red clover,
and the song of the phoebe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf.-*
(Untermeyer, Louis (ed.), *The Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, Simon and Schuster, 1949)

The reason why children can identify so completely with what they are looking at is that they are uninhibited. They are as much attracted by soft voices than by noise, by cleanliness than by dirt.

'The noisy brood of the barnyard' and *"the mire by the roadside"* appeal to them too.

Their enjoyment of the muck and mire of life help them to understand what is around them and accept things as they are.





Childhood is the world of miracle and wonder; as if creation rose, bathed in the light, out of the darkness, utterly new and fresh and astonishing.

The end of childhood is when things cease to astonish us.-

-Eugene Ionesco

Bernard Berenson writes in his autobiography:

As I look back on fully seventy years of awareness and recall the moments of greatest happiness, they were for the most part, moments when I lost myself all but completely in some instant of perfect harmony. In consciousness this was due not to me but to the not-me, of which I was scarcely more than the subject in the grammatical sense....In childhood and boyhood this ecstasy overtook me when I was happy out of doors. Was I five or six? Certainly not seven. It was a morning in early summer. A silver haze shimmered and trembled over the lime trees. The air was laden with their fragrance. The temperature was like a caress. I remember—I need not recall—that I climbed up a tree stump and felt suddenly immersed in Itness. I did not call it by that name. I had no need for words. It and I were one. (Sketch for a Self-Portrait, Pantheon Books,

1949)

“Surely most children are like that,” he remarks, but continues, “I have retained that faculty through the years and can still melt into a good story, into its character, its events, its tempo to such a degree that my diaphragm loses its flexibility.”



Berenson notes that in later life he has *“never enjoyed to the utmost a work of art of any kind, whether verbal, musical, or visual, never enjoyed a landscape, without sinking my identity into that work of art, without becoming it.”*





**Mom, dad,
Come see the toads, leap and leap on the mud pads
I pretend I am one of them and jump from a tree branch into the pool
I do not mind getting loud when I splash
And the birds on that tree, one day I want to be one to fly away
I don't mind the crow either
Even if its songs are bad
That's how the things are
Thank you Allaah for how the things are
Shukrulillaah
I would not want to change a bit of it**

Bibliography:

Carson, Rachel. *The Sense of Wonder*. New York: Harper & Row, 1956.
Published by HarperCollins (May 1998)
ISBN 006757520X

Grath, Mc, Alister. *The Re-enchantment of Nature: Science, Religion & the Human Sense of Wonder*.
Published by Hodder & Stoughton Religious Division (February 2003)
ISBN 0340861460

Hudson Tiner, John. *Exploring Earth*.
Published by Word Publishing (September 1997)
ISBN 0890511780

Locker, Thomas & Bruchac, Joseph. *Rachel Carson: Preserving a Sense of Wonder*.
Published by Fulcrum Pub (April 2004)
ISBN 1555914829

Steiner, Rudolf. *The Renewal of Education*.

Website:
www.harunyahya.com/