

DISAGREEMENT ON PARENTING AND CHILD DISCIPLINE

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INTRODUCTION

Family is the primary institution responsible for shaping children's character, behaviour, and moral values. In Islam, both parents share the responsibility of raising children with wisdom, mercy, and proper guidance. However, disagreements between parents regarding parenting styles and child discipline frequently occur in modern families. Some parents may prefer a strict approach involving punishment and firmness, while others prefer a softer and more compassionate method. If not managed properly, these disagreements may lead to tension within the family and negatively affect children's emotional and psychological development.

Islam provides comprehensive guidance in addressing family disputes, including issues related to parenting and discipline. Through *fiqh* principles and *Maqasid Shariah*, Islam emphasizes balance, justice, mercy, and the protection of family welfare. Therefore, this article aims to analyse disagreements on parenting and child discipline from the perspective of *fiqh* and *Maqasid Shariah*, as well as propose Islamic solutions to resolve such conflicts.

ISSUE ON DISAGREEMENT ON PARENTING AND CHILD DISCIPLINE

Parenting disagreements occur when parents have different opinions regarding methods of educating, disciplining, and guiding their children. Some common issues that often cause conflict include the level of strictness in discipline, children's education, social activities, as well as children's involvement and responsibilities in daily life. Arguments about how to discipline children can be about whether there is too much or too little discipline. Sometimes, one of the parents may feel that their child is taking advantage of them, leading them to adopt a stricter form of discipline, while the other parent may oppose this, believing that more discipline will only create unnecessary conflict and may affect the child's emotional well-being. In terms of education, issues arise when parents focus more on academic education while neglecting religious education, or vice versa. In such situations, disagreements often occur when choosing a school, whether it is a religious school, a national school, or a private school.

Regarding social activities, issues that often arise in parenting include differences in parents' views on what types of activities are suitable for their children. Some parents are more willing to allow their children to take part in outdoor activities such as sports, school programs, or socialising freely with friends to build confidence and social skills. However, other parents are more cautious and tend to limit their children's social activities due to concerns about peer influence, safety, or unhealthy friendships. Then, issues related to children's involvement and daily responsibilities often arise when parents have different expectations about how much responsibility children should take at home. Some parents encourage children to do chores, manage their routines, and take care of their belongings to build discipline and independence, while others are more lenient and focus mainly on their children's studies and comfort. These conflicts not only affect the harmony between couples but also have an impact on the child's emotional well-being. Ongoing tension can create an unstable home environment, making the child feel confused and insecure.

Then, issues related to children's involvement and daily responsibilities often arise when parents have different expectations about how much responsibility children should take at home. Some parents encourage children to do chores, manage their routines, and take care of their belongings to build discipline and independence, while others are more lenient and focus mainly on their children's studies and comfort. These conflicts not only affect the harmony between couples but also have an impact on the child's emotional well-being. Ongoing tension can create an unstable home environment, making the child feel confused and insecure.

This issue arises from several main factors. One of the key factors is the difference in background and life experiences. Parents often bring with them the parenting styles they were exposed to in previous generations. Some parents tend to be stricter because they were raised in a more disciplined and rigid environment, while others who were brought up in a more gentle and affectionate way are more likely to adopt a similar soft approach in raising their own children. In addition, a lack of knowledge about child upbringing according to Islamic teachings also contributes to conflicts in parenting. Some parents do not fully understand that Islam emphasizes the principles of mercy, wisdom, and balance in educating children. Furthermore, modern societal pressures also play a role. The influence of social media and Western values often clashes with Islamic values, which may cause confusion among parents in setting appropriate disciplinary boundaries for their children.

In reality, parents certainly want the best for their children's growth and development. Therefore, parents should share the same understanding and approach to avoid prolonged conflicts. However, it is important that this is based on what is right, as a wrong understanding, even if agreed upon, can still affect both the children and the parents in the future. Therefore, Islamic guidance should be the primary reference in educating and raising children.

FIQH PRINCIPAL

The differences between husband and wife are natural, marriage is a learning process for both parties. These differences can be managed through the correct concept of *Sharia*, which needs to be referred to in guiding the household of Muslim families.

It is appropriate to follow the principles of *fiqh*, legislation, and the objectives of *Sharia* that have been provided by Islam. Among the principles that can be explained are:

1 *Fiqh al-ikhtilaf*

In Islam, husbands and wives who want to get married must have the intention of educating and raising the successors of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

This will encourage parents to educate their children correctly and according to Islamic law. Therefore, it is the responsibility of parents to seek knowledge in educating their children in the correct way.

Childcare is not only the responsibility of mothers but also the responsibility of fathers. This is because children are influenced by their parents in education, as stated by Abu Huraira, who narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"Every child is born with a true faith (i.e., to worship none but Allah Alone), but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity, or Magianism"** (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 1358).

Therefore, it is up to parents how to manage and educate their children differently.

2 *Fiqh principle: "La darar wa la dirar"*

The *fiqh* principle of "do not harm and do not reciprocate harm" is widely applied in family issues. In the context of child education, studies on early childhood education from an Islamic perspective emphasize that educational methods must avoid causing physical and emotional harm to children.

Islam prohibits punishing individuals without a clear reason, as this may affect their well-being. Additionally, when parents argue in front of their children regarding discipline, such as through shouting or hurting each other emotionally, this can negatively affect children's emotions, their understanding of love, and their perception of family relationships.

Therefore, both parties need to restrain themselves and seek a *wasatiyyah* approach based on this principle, such as being open-minded, accepting each other's views, and following Islamic guidelines, as Islam emphasizes educating children according to their age and needs.

Furthermore, there needs to be a holistic balance in parenting, starting with parents themselves, as they become role models for their children.

3 Principles "*al-ihtirām wa al-syafaqah*" and "*al-Layyin wa al-Rifq*"

Words are also a big factor in the development of children, especially at a very young age. Therefore, the use of speech is very important in the formation of children, in order of age, with a clear Islamic education. The ability to produce a character that will arise through this education, because the sincerity of educating will bind the hearts of children, for example, children will love and understand their parents more.



Relevant Qur'anic Verse and Hadith

Qur'anic verse:

اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى قَالُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْكَرِيمِ:
{وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ} [الروم: 21]

Meaning: And it is among His signs that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has created love and kindness between you. Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect.

This verse highlights that marriage is based on love, mercy, and tranquility between spouses.

It emphasizes that family relationships should be built on compassion and mutual understanding to maintain harmony and peace.

Hadith:

النَّبِيُّ ﷺ قَالَ: كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ.
فَأَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ أَوْ نَصْرَانِيَةٍ أَوْ مَجَسَّانَةٍ

Meaning: "Every child is born upon fitrah, but it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian." (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Children are born in a state of *fitrah* (natural purity) without sin. When they are given a proper upbringing, they can grow into righteous and well-behaved individuals. However, if a child is raised in an environment where parents frequently argue or do not uphold Islamic moral values, the child may be influenced by such behaviour.

MAQASID SYARIAH



In the chapter on disagreements in educating children, it can be explained that each disciplinary approach must be evaluated from the perspective of preserving faith, life, intellect, lineage, and also the children's property. Therefore, disagreements between parents need to be resolved by determining which approach is closer to the *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Among the scholars who discussed this issue was Wahbah al-Zuhaili, who explained how the *Maqasid al-Shariah* can be applied.

Firstly, in religion (*hifz al-din*), disciplining children in a harsh manner can make them hate religion or associate religion with rudeness, which contradicts efforts to preserve faith. Therefore, parents need to be more careful in educating their children. For example, if a lesson relates to worldly matters, it should be taught according to the current times and way of life, not according to the parents' time, because differences over time can be seen in education, the economy, and other sectors. However, in matters of religion, parents need to be stricter and take them seriously because this will have an impact on their children's future after the parents are gone.

Secondly, in life and intellect (*hifz al-nafs* and *hifz al-'aql*), education through physical punishment is not the best way to educate children, it is also extreme and tends to affect their safety and, even worse, their mental health.

Imam al-Shafi'i Rahimahullah, in "*Al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab al-Nawawi*", said that it is the responsibility of parents to educate their children and teach them knowledge related to *taharah* and prayer, and to discipline them if they neglect prayer after they have reached the age of discernment (*mumayyiz*). Similarly, Imam al-Rafi'i Rahimahullah, in "*Al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab al-Nawawi*", said that these responsibilities begin when children reach the age of seven.

Therefore, a softer approach and religious education can help children think more sensibly based on Islamic teachings. This is because if conflict continues within the home, it can cause psychological stress and disturb children's emotions. Thirdly, in lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), when raising children, it is important to maintain a stable family atmosphere and care for the well-being of future generations. Therefore, when there is a serious disciplinary dispute, it can lead to prolonged conflict, arguments in front of the children, or divorce. This will affect the upbringing of the children and their development.

PROPOSED ISLAMIC SOLUTION

Parenting disagreements need to be dealt with when both parents stop trying to determine who is right or wrong, or who is winning the argument, and instead focus on how to please Allah SWT by fulfilling the trust He has placed upon them. Here are some ways to help bring peace to your home through Islamic principles that both of you can apply while working together:

1 Syura (Partnering Consultation)

When working together on parenting issues, discussions should take place at a time when both parents are not in the heat of the moment. If there are issues at home involving the discipline of the children, ideally both parents should go out and plan a time to sit down alone and consult one another on those issues through the shura method of problem-solving. Couples should utilize quiet, calm moments, such as weekends or during relaxed free time, to establish mutually agreed-upon household rules. Once a consensus is reached through this mutual consultation, both parties must remain strictly consistent in enforcing it.

2 Balanced Parenting Approach

The combined commitment offers parents a balanced way to raise their children according to Islam, since both extremes of being authoritarian and overly permissive are unacceptable for successful parenting based on Islamic teachings. Therefore, an effective means of discipline incorporates both strict control over children and the attributes of unconditional love, affection, gentleness, loyalty, friendship, and so on.

3 Islamic Communication Ethics (*Adab Al-Hiwar*)

The basis for resolving any conflict for those involved is to strictly adhere to Islamic communication ethics. Many argumentative outbursts surrounding children stem from ineffective communication practices by both partners when communicating with each other. According to Islam, a Muslim couple should speak to one another in a kind manner, avoid using insults in their conversations with each other, and use methods to control their anger. Rather than verbally accusing your partner of doing something wrong, using an emotionally intelligent verbal response and a reflective statement about their behaviour would be more in line with Islamic communication values.

4 Prioritizing Child Welfare

In the end, the welfare of the child must always come before the parent's frustration when making decisions about discipline. The ultimate purpose of discipline is to protect the child's long-term well-being in terms of religion, life, and intellect, not to serve as an outlet for parents to express their frustration through discipline. Parents should continually stop and ask themselves whether a particular disciplinary action helps the child's soul and development or merely satisfies the parents' egos. When you put the needs of the child first, you must realize that your child has the right to exist in a peaceful home, have emotional stability, and have excellent moral role models guiding them instead of being a bystander in an argument between their parents.

CONCLUSION

In summary, today's debates concerning parenting styles and how to discipline children are no small matter rather, these issues represent an important reference point for how to interact with one another on a personal level and define the emotional and mental climate of an entire family. To address this problem, both parents must expand their focus from their current frustrations to their foundational obligation as Muslims the protection of their child as a trust (*amanah*) from Allah SWT. All methods of discipline and decision-making processes must conform to the purposes of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, so that the higher-order aims of preserving the child's faith, life, intellect, lineage, and psychological health remain intact. When both parents truly place the child's ultimate benefit (*maslahah*) above their own egos, the entire journey of education is based on *rahmah* (mercy) and *hikmah* (wisdom).

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Disagreement on Parenting and Child Discipline

Issues

Common issues

- the level of strictness in discipline
- children's education
- social activities
- children's involvement and responsibilities in daily life.



Factors

- Difference in background and life experiences
- Lack of knowledge of Islamic child upbringing
- Modern societal pressures



Fiqh Principles in Co-Parenting

1. Fiqh al-Ikhtilaf (Management of Differences)

- Intentional Parenting: Marriage is a learning process. Spouses must have a clear intention to educate and raise the successors of Prophet Muhammad SAW.
- Shared Responsibility: Childcare is a model for both parents, not just the mother.



2. "La darar wa la dirar" (Do Not Harm & Do Not Harm Each Other)

- Avoid Trauma: Discipline must avoid physical and emotional harm. Islam prohibits punishing without a clear reason.
- Avoid Conflict: Shouting or fighting in front of children damages their emotional welfare and view of family.

3. "Al-ihtirām wa al-syafaqah" & "Al-Layyin wa al-Rifq" (Respect, Compassion, Gentleness & Kindness)

- Power of Speech: Gentle, age-appropriate words are critical for a child's early development.
- Heart Connection: Sincere, kind education binds the hearts of children, building deep love and understanding.



Solution

1. Syura (Consultation) Parents should discuss parenting calmly, agree on rules, and apply them consistently.
2. Balanced Parenting Islam encourages balance between discipline and mercy, avoiding harshness or over-permissiveness.
3. Islamic Communication (Adab al-Hiwar) Use respectful communication, control anger, and avoid blame during disagreements.
4. Prioritize Child Welfare Discipline should protect the child's well-being, faith, and development—not express parental frustration.

Qur'an and Hadith

Qur'anic verse:

اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى قَالِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْكَرِيمِ: ﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾ [الروم: 21]

Meaning: And it is among His signs that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has created love and kindness between you. Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect.

hadith

النبي ﷺ قال: «كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ»

Meaning: "Every child is born upon fitrah, but it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian." (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Maqasid Shariah in Child Discipline

1. Hifz al-Din (Preservation of Religion)

- Hard or rude discipline can make children hate or detach from religion.
- Worldly education should adapt to modern times, not the parents' generation.
- Religious education requires stricter, serious guidance to secure the child's spiritual future.

2. Hifz al-Nafs & al-Aql (Preservation of Life & Intellect)

- Extreme physical punishment threatens physical safety and mental health.
- A softer approach guides children to think sensibly using religious methods.
- Scholarly Ruling: Imam al-Syafie and Imam al-Rafi'e, state it is obligatory for parents to teach taharah and prayer, applying disciplined beating only after the age of reason (mumayyiz) or seven years old if they abandon prayers.



3. Hifz al-Nasl (Preservation of Lineage)

- Raising children requires a stable, peaceful home environment.
- Serious disciplinary disputes, prolonged anger, or divorce disrupt the natural care, development, and stability of the offspring.

Conclusion

Parents should prioritize their child's welfare as an amanah from Allah SWT and apply discipline according to Maqasid al-Shariah. Parenting with rahmah (mercy) and hikmah (wisdom) helps build a peaceful and healthy family.