
The assumption of toxic parenting in the hadith about the command to strike a child

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Abstract: The extremist textualist group understands the hadith of the command to hit a ten year old child in order to perform prayers textually. Understand it as the final sharia. The terminology of dharaba is understood in its essentials, the minimum being a physical blow that does not leave a mark (*dharban ghairu mubarrih*), and the maximum being a *ta'zir* punishment which has a deterrent effect. Even for those who are over ten years old but still refuse to pray, punishment is added beyond just a beating, and there are those who think the death penalty if they continue to resist. This research uses a descriptive analysis method, by presenting data from literature reviews, books, journals, articles related to the issue of toxic parenting and the hadith on the command to hit children, then conclusions are drawn. The results of this research provide a comprehensive contextual analysis and conclude four things; 1). This hadith is related to a very important Islamic principle, namely the obligation to pray, so the Prophet gave a firm solution in straightforward language. 2). This hadith is an integrative unit with the Prophet's family education pattern which prioritized rewards before punishment. The Prophet never hit his children and grandchildren. 3). The Prophet educated the family with gentleness and affection, carrying and kissing his grandchildren. Very contradictory to the jahiliyah culture which hates girls and buries them alive. 4). The term dharaba means essence or majazi, some understand it as a metaphorical language style which means firmness and discipline in teaching prayer, and some understand it as a physical blow that does not hurt.

Keywords: *Toxic parenting; hadith commands to hit children; textual; contextual.*

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Introduction

Some scholars interpret the hadith that allows striking a child to encourage them to perform prayer at the age of ten in a textual manner (Al-Sajistani, 2009). This refers to a light physical punishment that does not cause harm, either physically or psychologically. Ibn Abbas provided an example of using a miswak stick, commonly used for oral hygiene, as a means of physical discipline (Al-Alusi, n.d.).

Beyond this, there exists an extreme textual interpretation of this hadith, justifying physical punishment as a deterrent measure, considering it the last form of punishment when previous efforts have been ineffective. A misinterpretation occurs when the legal ruling that a Muslim who neglects prayer can be punished with *ta'zir* (disciplinary punishment) and, if unrepentant, may even be sentenced to death. Abu Salman al-Khattabi, in *Ma'alim al-Sunan*, mentioned an opinion regarding the punishment for children who neglect prayer. The command to strike a ten-year-old child for neglecting prayer is viewed as a form of disciplinary enforcement. If, after reaching puberty, they deliberately abandon prayer, they may be subjected to a harsher punishment beyond mere physical discipline, with execution being the severest penalty (Al-Khattabi, 1932).

More extremely, this hadith has been examined by Western Orientalists as a means to criticize Islam, arguing that Islamic law promotes violence against children who have not yet reached puberty.

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Many non-Muslim Orientalist scholars interpret this hadith in a strictly literal sense, using it as justification for claims of violence in Islamic teachings. They study these hadiths solely to highlight controversial and negative aspects of Islam without conducting a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis (Iqbal, 2024).

From another perspective, educational psychology experts have strongly criticized this hadith. At first glance, it suggests that Islam prioritizes punishment over rewards in education, whereas rewards should ideally take precedence. Textually, this hadith seems to indicate that Islam employs a harsh approach in education, despite the existence of numerous hadiths that advocate for compassion in teaching (Handayani, 2015).

Extreme textual interpretations of this hadith appear to justify the notion that Islamic law promotes violence in education. At first glance, these authentic hadiths seem to contradict modern educational theories and suggest elements of toxic parenting. Toxic parenting is a psychological term referring to a dysfunctional parent-child relationship. It describes harmful parenting styles that negatively impact a child's physical and psychological development, making them more vulnerable to developing negative behavioral patterns later in life.

Rianti and Ahmad Dahlan analyzed that every parent naturally desires to provide the best education for their child and has their own methods of parenting. However, the method they believe is best may not necessarily have a positive impact. This could be due to a lack of knowledge about proper and effective parenting, known as parenting science. Parental upbringing significantly influences the behavior and character formation of children from an early age through adulthood (Rianti & Ahmad Dahlan, 2022).

Qurrata Ayun highlights the phenomenon of poor parenting, referred to in modern psychology as toxic parenting. This parenting style has severely detrimental effects on child development, influencing their growth and making them prone to developing negative character traits. Characteristics of toxic parenting include selfish parents who prioritize their own interests, engage in physical and verbal violence, and fail to respect their child's privacy (Ayun, 2017). Furthermore, such parents refuse to consult their children, hesitate to apologize, and exhibit bad temperaments, such as verbal abuse or even physical violence like hitting and harming the child.

This study provides a more comprehensive analysis of the hadith regarding striking a child who refuses to perform prayer at the age of ten. It broadens the perspective on this hadith, which some consider indicative of *toxic parenting*. By exploring it more deeply, the research aims to develop a more holistic and contextual understanding while offering solutions for contemporary parenting challenges that remain consistent with Islamic principles.

Method

This journal research uses the library research method, analyzing various books, journals, and articles relevant to the themes of toxic parenting and the hadith about parental tolerance in striking children. The data collection technique is through documentation and observation. The data analysis follows several steps: data collection, data reduction, data display, and finally data verification, ensuring accuracy and validation of information, followed by a general conclusion (Sugiyono, 2014).

Results and Discussion

Toxic parenting

Parenting is the method of nurturing children by parents, how parents educate, guide, discipline, and protect their children from early childhood to adulthood by instilling good morals and behaviors according to family and societal norms and values. Parental upbringing plays a significant role in the development and educational quality of the child as well as in the child's personality. A child begins to

grow and develop in the arms of their parents and then starts to recognize the surrounding world because parents are the first educators for the child. Parents play a crucial role in shaping the child's personality and emotions. In managing the child's emotions, parents can help by providing love and support. Parenting includes raising children through wise approaches, attitudes, and actions of parents in educating their children's character (Casmini, 2007).

The challenges of parents fulfilling their role as caregivers are dynamic, and many parents are inadequately prepared. An incorrect parenting style can have a negative impact on the child's physical and mental development. This includes harsh treatment, egoistic parents who impose their will, and a lack of respect for the child's opinions. The parent-child relationship may become disturbed or unhealthy, and when parents fail to treat their children as unique individuals, this parenting style is considered toxic parenting (Riza Khairani Harahap & Daulay, 2023).

Toxic parents are those who fail to treat their children well and show little respect for them as individuals. They use various forms of violence against their children, which can lead to psychological or mental health issues. Toxic parents tend to be uncompromising and often refuse to apologize to their children. These are usually parents who themselves suffer from mental disorders (Sitepu L & Nurmala Y, 2022).

Nurul Padilah explains that the term "toxic parents" refers to parents who have a harmful parenting style that leads to emotional or even physical problems for their children. Therefore, toxic parenting is the parenting style applied by such parents (Padilah & Septiani, 2023).

According to Forward, every parent is prone to making mistakes, but it depends on the frequency and intensity of certain interactions that determine whether they are toxic parents. The degree of toxicity in parenting varies depending on factors such as exposure level, repetition, purpose, and the sensitivity of the victim. Continuous negative interaction patterns affect the child's psychology, and the impact varies depending on how often and intensely these patterns occur. Therefore, the level of toxicity in an incorrect parenting style can be influenced by various factors from both the parent's and the child's side (Bugi et al., 2023).

Elza Sri Aprilia highlights Dunham and Dermer's opinion on three main aspects that characterize the wrong actions in toxic parenting: "*Pageant parents, dismissive parents, and contemptuous parents who are insulting.*" These are parents who are egoistic, ignore the child's wishes, frequently belittle the child's abilities, and insult and humiliate them (Aprilia et al., 2023).

According to Indrawati, toxic parenting can have long-term negative effects on children, causing psychological trauma that may lead to the continuation of wrong parenting patterns in future generations. The most vulnerable victims are the children, as they grow up in such an environment. The dominant psychological effects are hypersensitivity, excessive feelings of guilt, fear, pressure to comply with parents, trauma, mood disorders, slow thinking ability, unstable emotional control, loneliness, difficulty expressing emotions, and feelings of worthlessness. If these issues remain unresolved, they pose a significant threat to mental health (Indrawati, 2023).

Oktariani analyzes the psychological impact of toxic parenting, stating that children raised in a toxic parenting environment experience deviant psychological conditions. Children who are more compliant may try to show their goodness in front of their parents and will feel freer when outside parental control. On the other hand, children who are rebellious will openly defy and resist their parents (Oktariani, 2021).

In the Islamic perspective, toxic parenting falls within the discourse of *tarbiyatul aulad* (children's education). Every parent has the responsibility to educate their children according to Islamic teachings. Moreover, children are essentially a great gift and trust from Allah to be protected and nurtured, free from negative influences, so they remain in their natural state. Parents also play a role in being role models within their families, and parents who fail to provide good examples are categorized as practicing toxic parenting. Their words, actions, and overall morals that do not reflect

the Islamic teachings of good character are considered part of toxic parenting (Padilah & Septiani, 2023).

Hadith critique on the command to strike a child

Hadith critique (*takhrij hadith*) is a method used to trace a hadith from authoritative sources, namely the original hadith books, as the primary references. This science aims to identify whether a hadith is authentic (*shahih*), weak (*dha'if*), or fabricated (*maudhu'*). The methods of *takhrij hadith* include: tracing the content of the hadith through its wording, examining the chain of narrators (*sanad*) who transmitted the hadith from the Prophet to us, and identifying the theme of the hadith in relation to the chapters in hadith collections (Hamid, 2000).

1. Hadith text

The hadith about the command to educate children to perform prayer includes several variations in wording, but the core meaning remains the same. Below are some of the narrations and their wordings:

The hadith narrated by Imam Abu Dawood in the chapter on when children are instructed to perform prayer includes the phrase *مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ* (command your children), as follows.

عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ، وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا، وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ عَشْرِ وَفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ.

From Amru bin Syu'aib, may Allah have mercy on him, who narrated from his grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "*Command your children to perform prayer when they reach seven years old, and strike them in education when they reach ten years old, and separate their beds.*" (Al-Sajistani, 2009).

The hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal in his Musnad, with the phrase *صَبِّيَانَكُمْ مُرُوا* (command your children), as follows:

عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " مُرُوا صَبِيَّانَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ إِذَا بَلَغُوا سَبْعًا، وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِذَا بَلَغُوا عَشْرًا، وَفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ

From Amru bin Syu'aib, it was narrated from his father, and then from his grandfather, that the Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "*Command your children to perform prayer when they reach seven years old, and strike them in education when they reach ten years old, and separate their beds.*" (I. A. bin Hambal, 2001).

The hadith narrated by Imam Hakim in his book *Al-Mustadrak 'Ala As-Sahihain* with the phrase *يَا صَدِّقَ عَلِّمُوا* (teach your children), as follows:

عَنْ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ بْنِ الرَّبِيعِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «عَلِّمُوا الصَّبِيَّ الصَّلَاةَ ابْنَ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ، وَاضْرِبُوهُ عَلَيْهَا ابْنَ عَشْرِ». «هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ عَلَى شَرْطِ مُسْلِمٍ، وَلَمْ يُخَرِّجَاهُ»

From Abul Malik bin al-Rabi' from his father, he reported that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "*Teach your children to perform prayer when they reach the age of seven, and strike them for education when they reach ten years old.*" This hadith is authentic according to the standards of Sahih Muslim, but it is not included in Sahih Muslim. (Hakim, 1990).

2. Sanad and theme of the hadith

This noble hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is authentic and valid. The first hadith was narrated by Abu Dawud bin Sulaiman al-Sajistani (d. 270 H) from his grandfather Amru bin Syu'aib RA. with the phrase "*Command the auladakum* (command your children)" to perform prayer, found in *Sunan Abu Dawud*, chapter *mata yu'maru al-ghulam bisholati* (when children are commanded to pray), volume 1, page 133. This book was verified by Muhammad Muhyidin Abdul Hamid (d. 1392 H) and published by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

The second hadith was narrated by Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (d. 241 H) from his grandfather Amru bin Syu'aib RA. with the phrase "*Muru shibyanakum* (command your children)" in his Musnad, published by Muassasah al-Risalah, Beirut, and verified by Syuab al-Arna'ut (d. 1438 H), volume 11, page 284.

The third hadith was narrated by the companion of the Prophet, the grandfather Abdul Malik bin al-Rabi'. This hadith uses the phrase "*Allimu al-shabiy* (teach the children)" in *Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihain* by Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Hakim al-Nisaiburi. It was verified by Mushtofa Abdul Qadir 'Atha and published by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st edition, 1990, volume 1, page 389.

According to Imam Ahmad bin Hambal's narration, this hadith is considered hasan. Syuab al-Arna'ut and 'Adil Mursyid stated that the sanad of this hadith is hasan. Ibn Ma'in reported that one of the narrators, Dawud bin Siwar, should be corrected to Siwar bin Dawud, also known as Abu Hamzah al-Bashri, and Imam Ahmad confirmed he is a trustworthy narrator. (I. A. bin Hambal, 2001, p. Vol.11, page 284.).

According to Imam al-Hakim, the status of this hadith is sahih, as per the name of his book *Al-Mustadrak*, a collection of hadiths considered sahih according to Imam al-Hakim's standards, even though they were not included in Sahih Muslim. (Al-Naisaburi, 1990, p. volume 1, page 389.)

According to Imam Tirmidhi (d. 279 H), this hadith is hasan sahih, narrated by Sabrah bin Ma'bad al-Juhani in the chapter *ma ja'a mata yu'maru al-shabiiyyu bishshalah*. This hadith is followed by some scholars. If a child neglects prayer after reaching ten years old, they should make up for it (Al-Tirmidhi, 2009, p. volume 1, page 141.).

According to Imam al-Albani, the status of this hadith is sahih in his book *Irwa al-Ghalil*, with a hasan sanad from Amru bin Syu'aib, a trustworthy narrator (*tsiqah*), as narrated from Ayyub from Nafi' from Ibn Umar RA. (Al-Albani, 1985, p. volume 1, page 266.)

Contextualization of the hadith on the command to strike children

Textually, there are many hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. that instruct parents to strike their children when they reach the age of ten to ensure they perform their prayers. These hadiths were narrated by Amru bin Syu'aib and Abdul Malik bin al-Rabi' from their grandfathers, with the wording, "*Command your children to perform prayer when they reach the age of seven, and strike them for discipline when they reach ten, and separate their beds.*" (Al-Sajistani, 2009, p. 1/133).

Some scholars understand this hadith textually, meaning a light physical strike that does not cause harm, either physically or psychologically. For children who are not responsive to advice and motivation, parents are allowed to strike them as a punishment to encourage them to perform prayers. Similarly, in the case of a wife who is rebellious (*nusyuz*), after being advised with love, the husband may separate the bed, and then, in accordance with Islamic law, can lightly strike her, ensuring the strike is filled with love and does not harm her physically or psychologically. Ibn Abbas gave an example of a tool for striking such as a siwak stick, traditionally used for cleaning the teeth. (Al-Alusi, n.d., p. Vol.3, p.25)

However, there is an extreme textual understanding of this hadith, which involves acts of violence, using punishment that causes harm to both the body and the mind. This includes using tools

such as a cane, a stick, or even a baton typically used for criminals. A wrong understanding of the punishment for a Muslim who leaves prayer might lead to extreme measures, such as death, as mentioned in the book *Ma'alim Sunan* concerning the punishment of a child who neglects prayer. The command to strike a ten-year-old child for neglecting prayer can be viewed as a harsh punishment, and after reaching adulthood, deliberately leaving prayer could warrant a punishment harsher than a strike, even up to death, as some scholars opine. (Al-Khathabi, 1932, p. Vol.1, p.150)

When understanding a hadith, one should not rely solely on a textual approach but must consider the socio-cultural context, the background, and the situation in which the hadith was delivered. The context of the time when this hadith was spoken, the reasons for its revelation (*asbab al-wurud*), and the varying circumstances of the companions at that time, as well as the Prophet's position when delivering the message, should be considered. Was the Prophet delivering this hadith as a military leader, a husband, or a father in the presence of his daughters? Therefore, the hadith of the Prophet cannot be separated from its context; when, where, and for what purpose it was delivered must be understood. Integrating the understanding of a text with its context is the correct approach and safeguards against extremist interpretations. (Mahmud Syaltut, 1996)

Historically, this hadith of the Prophet emerged during a time of moral degradation in Arab society during the era of Jahiliyah. The social system was dominated by patriarchy, where women's rights were violated, and they were often oppressed and mistreated. Practices such as *wa'dulbanat* (the burial of female infants alive) prevailed because girls were considered a source of misfortune. Women were treated as slaves and were not allowed to receive education. The culture of physical violence, such as striking, was rampant, and killing was easily justified for trivial reasons. Contextually, this hadith reflects how children lacked their rights in that era. The Prophet sought to show the proper way to educate children - through love, free from the violence that dominated that period. (Mu'id, 2024)

To strengthen this contextual method, it is necessary to apply the method of *al-jam'u*, which involves gathering many hadiths with the same meaning but different wordings. These hadiths should be analyzed contextually, not just textually. After compiling various hadiths related to the command to strike children, they should be analyzed in context, not as isolated texts, but as part of a larger framework in different contexts. Al-Qardhawi proposes an integrative method in understanding the Sunnah, which does not rely solely on *takhrij* and *tashih* as the only methods of hadith research.

Tamyiz baina al-wasilah al-mutaghayyirah da al-hadaf al-tsabit means distinguishing between what is an instrument that can change and what is a fixed goal. This method of understanding a text is based on the classification between the instrumental (*wasilah*) and the goal (*ghayah*). The instrumental aspects are contextual, instruments that change with time, while the goal is textual and remains unchanged. There are three categories of hadith that can be understood using this method: first, those with instrumental elements; second, those with fixed goals; and third, the development and change of media and methods that always evolve (Zulfikar, 2009).

In understanding the hadith about striking children, it is crucial to analyze what is the goal (*ghayah*) that remains unchanged and what is the method (*wasilah*) that should adapt to the current era and culture. Striking could be seen as a method to achieve the goal of ensuring that children perform prayer (Yusuf al-Qardhawi, 2013, p. 179).

An important next step is to analyze the etymological meaning of the word *dharaba* (to strike). Is it meant literally - physical striking that could cause harm? Or is it metaphorical, meaning firmness in education, creating habits of discipline that will be ingrained in the child? A metaphorical meaning can only be understood with the appropriate context and indicators (*qarīnah*), which may be textual or contextual.

1. Synergy between the qur'an and hadith in the education of prayer

The Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic teachings, revealed by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, while the hadith serves as an explanation. The Qur'an is global and is explained in

detail through the hadith. Both are like two parallel rails and should never contradict each other. Therefore, the meaning of the hadith and its contextual significance must not contradict the teachings of the Qur'an. (Yusuf al-Qardhawi, 2013, p. 113)

The Qur'an contains many verses that encourage parents to educate their children to establish prayer. One of the most notable examples is the story of Luqman al-Hakim, who advised his son to establish prayer in Surah Luqman (31:17):

"O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, this is of the matter of determination."

Ibn Kathir explains this advice of Luqman as teaching the essence and wisdom behind prayer, its obligatory nature, the times for prayer, the necessary conditions, the pillars, and the sunnah that complete it. He also emphasizes enjoining good and forbidding evil, which should be done according to one's ability and patience, as these actions will undoubtedly face obstacles that require extra patience. (Katsir, 1420, p. Vol.6, p. 338)

The Qur'an also commands heads of families to ensure their families perform prayer. Allah uses the imperative verb in Surah Taha (20:132), instructing, *"And command your family to pray, and be patient in doing so."* Imam al-Tabari interprets this verse as a command to all heads of families to protect their families from the punishment of Allah by ensuring they establish prayer and be patient in educating them to do so. This command is not exclusive to the Prophet but applies to all Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad SAW, when faced with challenges in his family life, would remind them to pray and recite this verse: *"And command your family to establish prayer."* (Tobari, n.d.-b, p. Vol.16, p.308)

Imam Ibn Kathir further clarifies the significance of this verse, linking it to saving one's family from the punishment of the Day of Judgment. He also shares a story where Umar bin al-Khattab RA, when his father Zaid bin Aslam stayed at his home, would wake up for the night prayer and afterward, would wake up his family, quoting this verse, *"And command your family to establish prayer."* (Katsir, 1420, p. Vol.5, p.319)

Imam As-Sa'di emphasized that this verse refers to teaching both obligatory and voluntary prayers to children. This includes teaching the fiqh of prayer, its conditions, pillars, and actions that affect its validity. (Sulaiman bin Abdulullah, 2002)

Imam Abu Ja'far interprets Surah At-Tahrim (66:6) as instructing those who believe in Allah and His Messenger to protect themselves and their families from the hellfire by teaching them the religion, fulfilling the acts of worship, and avoiding disobedience. (Tobari, n.d.-a, p. Vol.23, p.103)

In educating his family, the Prophet SAW always emphasized good character, being gentle in speech, and never being harsh or rude to anyone. Allah teaches this in Surah Al-Imran (3:159):

"So by mercy from Allah, you were lenient with them. And had you been rude, harsh-hearted, they would have disbanded from about you. So forgive them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter."

The term *fazan ghalidzan* in this verse refers to harsh speech or words that hurt others. Allah teaches the Prophet to always use gentle words and actions, especially when educating his family, in order to attract them.

2. Persuasion, reward, and punishment of the prophet in educating the family

In children's education, a method is needed to motivate students to increase their enthusiasm. Persuasion is an approach method in education by providing prospective reasons to convince, encourage, and urge children to do something willingly. The effort to influence ideas, attitudes, and actions of someone through intensive interaction in order to do something important. Reward and punishment are effective tools to increase students' motivation and improve their psychomotor skills, even improving their identity in the future. Rewards should come before punishment, giving motivation and appreciation, such as praise, symbolic gifts, or direct rewards (Ayun, 2017).

The Prophet Muhammad SAW never imposed sanctions or punishments in educating his children and family. The Prophet never used corporal punishment, neither to his wives, servants, nor even animals. Imam Nawawi concluded that although, in fiqh, physical punishment is allowed under certain conditions, the Prophet never practiced it because educating with rewards is preferable. If praise is sufficient, there is no need for a reprimand; if a gift is enough, there is no need for a threat; if affection is enough, there is no need for punishment, especially physical punishment that could harm the body or psyche (Hajjaj, n.d., Vol. 15, p. 84).

The reason why corporal punishment should be avoided is that it can harm both the physical and mental well-being of a child. Acts of physical or verbal violence can create trauma that remains with the child into adulthood, not only affecting physical condition but also disturbing their mental health. Therefore, Islamic education should avoid methods of punishment, including physical punishment. It is recommended to choose reward methods, whether through words or actions.

The hadith that permits physical punishment for children in education is, in fact, a form of punishment, which is a teaching method using punishment to increase learning motivation. If we analyze the example of the Prophet in educating, we find that the Prophet rarely used punishment methods but mostly employed reward methods, such as motivating students with rewards like verbal praise, non-verbal gestures, symbolic gifts, or direct rewards (Budiningsih, 2005, p. 20).

According to Noraini Ahmad, a child education expert, instilling discipline cannot be achieved through punishment. Discipline and punishment are two different things. Punishment only causes physical or psychological harm to students, undermining and humiliating them. In contrast, forming habits of discipline succeeds through affection and gentleness (Ahmad, 2002).

Some argue that punishing children by hitting them encourages fear and discipline, but in the child's subconscious, it just plants fear and creates a tendency to lie to avoid punishment. Instructing children through role models is far better than physical punishment, which does not necessarily lead to self-awareness (Endang, 2099).

Reward and punishment should go hand in hand because, by nature, humans are inclined toward good rewards and fear bad consequences. However, since punishment in the form of physical hitting is not an effective method, a different formula should be sought by increasing motivation and rewards. Especially for young children, they will be more motivated to perform good deeds, especially prayer, which is a key principle that should be instilled with joy and enthusiasm (Baydhawi, 1993, p. 1).

Reward, as an approach to children in education, has various forms: verbal praise, such as calling a child who has done good a "*pious child*"; non-verbal reward, such as applause or a thumbs-up; symbolic rewards, such as stickers; or financial rewards, such as money or allowance (Tti, 2002).

Rewards in this context do not always have to be financial gifts or presents. Anything that makes the child happy and motivates them to continue their enthusiasm in performing good deeds, such as prayer, is the essence of reward. With Allah's permission, when parents understand this concept, there is no need to look for punishment to enforce discipline; instead, they should motivate their children through strong encouragement to stay on track.

As the Prophet did in motivating his companions, giving special titles and honors, including methods of reward. He called his beloved wife Aisha "*Humaira*," his close friend Abu Bakr "*Ash-Siddiq*," and his companion Umar "*Al-Faruq*." "*Humaira*," meaning the woman with a beautiful red face, was a special title for Aisha. When Aisha asked about three things that could not be denied when requested water, salt, and fire she understood that water could not be prohibited for anyone, but what about salt and fire? The Prophet responded, "*O Humaira, whoever donates fire has donated with every food it has cooked. Whoever donates salt has donated with the food it has seasoned*" (Al-Rib'i, 2014, p. 530).

This title is not just a reward from the Prophet, but also a title granted by Allah through revelation to His Prophet. As narrated in the hadith of Abdullah bin Abbas RA., the Prophet said: "*In*

Paradise, there is a tree with leaves inscribed with the names of Abu Bakr Ashiddiq, Umar Al-Faruq, and Uthman Dhun-Nurayn" (A. bin Hambal, 1983, Vol. 1, p. 423).

The hadith that permits corporal punishment for children in education is essentially a form of punishment. This method of teaching uses the imposition of punishment to increase learning motivation. Analyzing the Prophet's role in education, it is clear that the Prophet rarely used punishment methods but more often employed rewards, such as motivating students by giving praise, non-verbal gestures, symbolic gifts, or direct rewards (Budiningsih, 2005, p. 20).

Many scholars agree that the Prophet never hit anyone in education. For example, Aisha, *Ummul Mukminin*, testified that the Prophet never struck anyone, whether a servant, wife, or daughter, except in the case of jihad in the path of Allah. He never retaliated against any wrongdoing unless the boundaries set by Allah were violated (Al-Nisaiburi, 1955, Vol. 4, p. 1814).

The Prophet's method of using reward in educating his family is abundant, both in terms of praise or gifts. There are many stories about how the Prophet motivated children to do good deeds. For example, the Prophet gave rewards to young companions, as narrated by Ahmad bin Hambal. Abdullah bin al-Harith narrates that the Prophet organized a race for some children, including Abdullah, Ubaidillah, and others from the Bani al-Abbas, saying, "*Whoever reaches me first will receive this reward.*" They raced towards the Prophet, some climbing on his back, while others were embraced by him, and the Prophet kissed and mingled with them (HR. Ahmad) (I. A. bin Hambal, 2001, Vol. 3, p. 35).

This story about the Prophet with the children shows how gentle and affectionate his character was. He always used a persuasive approach, communicating kindly to motivate children to join him by offering a reward for the first one to reach him, demonstrating there was no distance between them despite the age difference.

Fitzhugh Dodson, a renowned child psychologist, stated in his book *Disciplining Children with Love* that an effective strategy for instilling discipline in children is through the affection of the parents, by offering rewards, praise, motivation, and encouragement to children who exhibit good behavior. Children are more impressed and will always remember the care and love of their parents rather than parents showing authority through anger or using physical or psychological violence in front of them (Dodson, 2006, p. 2).

In a narration from Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, from Abu Hurairah, it is mentioned that the Prophet performed the Isha prayer in congregation when suddenly Hasan and Husain climbed onto his back. When he rose from sujud, he took them with affection and seated them. When he returned to sujud, they repeated their actions, and after finishing the prayer, the Prophet held them in his arms. Imam Asyaukani explained that this hadith indicates that it is permissible to bring children to the mosque to habituate them to love the mosque from an early age (Al-Syaukani, 1993, Vol. 2, p. 144).

Muhammad Zallat emphasized this hadith, illustrating the Prophet's example in educating young children, instilling in them love for the mosque, and even carrying and showing affection for them, not forbidding them from playing as long as they did not disturb the prayer. Letting them act according to their age playing, being carried, climbing onto the Prophet's back during sujud was part of their interaction with Allah. As the child grows older, they will learn what is permissible and what is not (Al-Qasybi, n.d.).

Not only Hasan and Husain were brought to the mosque, but also the first granddaughter of Zaynab was carried to the mosque as a baby. When she was standing, she was carried, and when the Prophet was about to prostrate, she was laid on the floor, then carried again when he rose. Imam Muslim narrated this in his Sahih, stating that it is permissible to carry babies during prayer (Al-Nisaiburi, 1955, Vol. 2, p. 73).

From the Prophet's example in accompanying his grandchildren, Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, a child education expert, derived an important principle in early childhood education: to avoid anger, refrain

from using bad words, humiliating or belittling children, as this can disturb their psychology and affect them throughout their lives (Ulwan, 1981, p. 1/351).

3. The Prophet's kiss for Hasan and Husain

Among the forms of affection in educating the family, the Prophet Muhammad SAW showed love and affection for his grandchildren by kissing Hasan and Husain in front of the companions. At that time, the culture of the Jahiliyyah period dominated the Arab society, where it was uncommon for fathers to show affection to their children. A testimony from Aqra' bin Habis, who witnessed this scene, reveals that although he had ten children, he had never kissed any of them. Abu Hurairah preserved this story in an authentic narration.

From Abu Hurairah R.A., he said: *"The Prophet SAW kissed Hasan bin Ali (RA), and at that time, there was a companion, Aqra' bin Habis, who said, 'I have ten children, but I have never kissed any of them.' The Prophet SAW looked at him and said, 'Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.'* (HR. Mutafaq Alaihi). (Battal, 2003, Vol. 4, p. 481)

This display of affection from the Prophet kissing his grandson Hasan bin Ali is one example of educating children with love and tenderness. Educating with kindness is better than using punishment and threats; children will feel comfortable and close to their parents. Such an intimate and strong relationship will be hard to forget, as it will remain ingrained in their memory and psychology, helping to form a child full of affection, just as they experience it within their family. The Prophet demonstrated this tender affection in a culture that often treated children harshly, especially girls, who were sometimes considered a disgrace and buried alive (Azmi, 2007).

The Prophet's example in educating children was not only recorded and preserved by his family but was also witnessed by his companions and has been passed down to us all. As Anas bin Malik, who spent decades with the Prophet, testified, he had never heard the Prophet reprimanding his actions, asking why he did this or why he didn't do that. He testified: *"I have never seen anyone more affectionate toward their family than the Prophet SAW."* Imam Muslim narrated this in his Sahih with the theme of the Prophet's love for children and his family. (Al-Nisaiburi, 1955, Vol. 7, p. 76)

4. Dharaba hakiki and majazi

The scholars disagree on the etymological meaning of the word "*dharaba*" in this hadith. Some interpret it as a literal physical strike, while others argue that it is figurative, meaning it is not a physical blow. Abu al-Thayyib believed that "*dharaba*" means to strike physically, referring to a light physical punishment, which would not harm the child's body or psyche. The Prophet Muhammad SAW allowed this punishment for children who neglected prayer at the age of ten, as this is a critical age when children begin to reach puberty, the age at which they are obligated to pray. (Syams, 1410)

Another opinion suggests that "*dharaba*" does not refer to a literal blow. Muhammad Abduh, in his Tafsir Al-Manar, stated that the term "*strike*" here is metaphorical, meaning to educate or teach a lesson. This interpretation is supported by hadiths that prohibit physical punishment. (Ridha, 1990)

There is also the hadith where the Prophet SAW prohibited striking a wife as one would strike a horse. From Abdullah bin Zam'ah R.A., he narrated: *"The Prophet SAW forbade mocking someone else's actions and then said: 'How could you strike your wife as you would strike your horse and then embrace her afterward?'"* (Khalaf, 2003, Vol. 5, p. 2246)

Muhammad Rasyid Ridha used this hadith as a strong argument to refute the idea that Islam oppresses women by permitting physical punishment of wives. He emphasized that the kind of strike allowed in Islamic law is a light, non-harmful punishment, which is only permitted as a last resort if previous efforts were ineffective. In the context of a wife's nusuz (disobedience), a husband should not strike his wife but should treat her kindly, following the example of the Prophet, who never struck or hurt his wives. If a husband can no longer live with his wife, he may divorce her in a good manner. (Ridha, 1990, Vol. 5, p. 75)

Thus, the scholars interpret the word "dharaba" to have two meanings: the literal meaning refers to a physical strike as a last resort, while the figurative meaning refers to educating with a strong, firm, and sincere approach. Parents should educate their children to build good habits, such as prayer from an early age, as exemplified by the Prophet. Al-Qardhawi supported this interpretation, emphasizing that "dharaba" in its figurative sense means educating with strong motivation, in line with the Prophet's approach to raising his family. (Yusuf al-Qardhawi, 2013, p. 197).

Conclusion

The authentic hadith that grants tolerance for parents to strike their child as a means of education in order to perform prayer at the age of ten has been understood by some groups in a textual, extreme, or even ultra-extreme manner. Textualists consider physical punishment as a divine, static, and final method that cannot be changed. At a minimum, they interpret it as a light physical strike that does not harm the body or psyche, such as using a siwak stick or a pen. At most, they view it as a physical punishment (*ta'zir*) meant to serve as a deterrent, such as a rattan whip that causes physical and psychological pain. This punishment is seen as a strict disciplinary measure, with the belief that once a child reaches puberty and still neglects prayer, they should face harsher penalties beyond physical punishment, with the most extreme being the death penalty.

The ultra-extreme interpretation of this hadith sees it as an indication of toxic parenting, a justification for violence in education, and as proof that Islam teaches violence toward children who have not yet reached puberty by commanding physical punishment and coercion.

To address this discourse, this study analyzes the hadith in a more comprehensive and contextual manner, taking into account social conditions, cultural background, and the *asbabul wurud* (circumstances of revelation) of the hadith. First, this hadith relates to the fundamental command of Islamic law regarding prayer. The Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet explicitly and firmly mandate prayer. Parents are obligated to teach their family members to be committed to performing prayers and to exercise extra patience in educating them. Second, this hadith aligns with the parenting style of the Prophet's household. In raising his family, the Prophet prioritized persuasion and rewards before punishment. In fact, the Prophet never resorted to physical punishment he never struck any child or grandchild. Instead, he consistently provided motivation and rewards, both verbally and nonverbally.

Third, the Prophet always set the best example for his family and companions by showing affection and love for his grandchildren. He educated his family with gentleness and compassion to counter the pre-Islamic *jahiliyyah* tradition, which devalued the birth of daughters and even buried them alive. Fourth, the term *dharaba* remains a subject of scholarly debate whether its meaning is literal or figurative. Some interpret it literally, meaning a light strike that does not harm the body or psyche. Others interpret it figuratively, meaning that the command is not to physically strike but to educate children with seriousness, discipline, and firmness, in alignment with the essence of the literal meaning.

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