

Hitting children

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Question: "The teacher may sometimes turn to hitting in order to discipline his student. Firstly, is it permissible to hit the student? Secondly, is it permissible to hit him in the face?"

Answer: "As far as hitting in the face, this is not permissible due to the statement of the Prophet, (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam),

"Do not hit the face and do not defigure."

Regarding the second part, is it permissible to hit the student in general as a means of discipline; the answer must make mention of the statement of the Prophet,

"Command your children to pray when they reach the age of seven and hit them if they leave it off when they reach the age of ten and separate them from each other in the beds."

"In this hadeeth is a proof that for the student, rather the child, whether he is a student or not, it is not permissible for the one in charge of him to hit him due to his deficiency in obeying the commands until he reaches the age of ten. Command your children to pray when they reach the age of seven and hit them if they leave it off when they reach the age of ten and separate them from each other in the beds. Without a doubt, the Hukm (ruling) or Ahimiyah (importance) of whatever knowledge any teacher wants to present to his students will not be equal to the importance of prayer. Therefore, if the Prophet himself prohibits the father from hitting his child due to not praying, until he reaches the age of ten, then with all the more reason, it is not permissible for other than the father (from those in charge) to hit the children for something other than leaving off the salah (prayer) until he reaches the age of ten.

Thus, it is not permissible for the teacher to hit the child even if he did not obey him regarding the salah. What else exists from the other affairs that are as important as the Salah. "In this connection, I would like to also add that the age of puberty for girls and boys differs tremendously from country to country. I know that in general, in countries of warm climate, the hormones may mature at a faster rate; thus the age of takleef (duty: obligation to observe precepts of religion) would be reached at an earlier age than it would in a colder climate. Then this rule should not be taken in a general way but rather each country should study the children or it should be done in a more detailed way. For example one would find out whether this particular child reached the age of puberty or is he still in childhood? So whatever seems to predominate from this study, the hukm (ruling) would be decided."

He was then asked: "With regards to hitting, if the child had bad banners and hit.." Sheikh Al-Albaani began saying:

"There is no hitting, no hitting at all. Rather there is directing, advising and speech. Sometimes words have a greater affect on people than hitting. In addition, hitting with some people does not help at all, rather it makes them continue on what their upon more and more. What is important is that the best of all guidance is the guidance of Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him. Thus the child is not to be hit so long that he did not reach the age of puberty.

"On this note, I understand from the gradual teaching of the Prophet that was previously mentioned in the hadith, 'Command your children to pray' to the end of the hadeeth, I understand from this hadeeth that it is wrong what I see take place with many fathers. He commands his child to pray before reaching the age of seven. This is opposition to the commandment of the Prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him. 'Command your children to pray when they reach the age of seven.' That is why it is not appropriate for the Muslim to put the commandment in effect before what the Prophet defined initially. It is ok for the father to permit his child to come along with him to pray with him in the masjid. But as far as him telling him, "Come here, get up, go make wudoo' and pray." and the child has not yet reached the age of seven, this is opposition to this hadith, so I just wanted to remind you all of that."

He was also asked: "Sheikh, regarding hitting, sometimes you find students leave their houses and have no manners, even good advice does not benefit them, so does hitting them fall into necessity?"

Sheikh Al-Albaani replied:

"There is no necessity, where is the necessity here. Can you comprehend that hitting would benefit when the One who created him said, do not hit him until he reaches the age of seven."

Excerpt taken from an audio cassette lecture titled: "La Qushoor fil Islam." by: Sheikh Al-Albaani