

Educating Children in Ramadan

from "Fasting in Ramadan"

Children (who have not reached puberty) are not commanded to fast. However, they are strongly encouraged to fast even a few days so that they get used to it and they grow up knowing the worship of fasting. In fact this was the practise of the first women of Islam who were living around the Prophet, (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him). An example of that is Ar-Rubayya' bint Mu' awiyyah who reported that: "The Messenger of Allah, (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him), sent a man on the morning of the day of 'Ashurah, to the residences of the Ansar, saying:

"Whoever has spent the morning fasting is to complete his fast.

Whoever has not spent this morning fasting should voluntary fast for the remainder of the day.' We fasted after that announcement, as did our young children. f.# would go to the mosque and make toys stuffed with cotton for them to play with. If one of them started crying due to hunger, we would give them a toy to play with until it was time to eat." (Bukhari and Muslim.)



There are many ways to educate your children about Ramadan, the best and most important of which is to set the good example by fasting properly and behaving according to the Prophetic teachings. This is what your children will take from you first. When you are fulfilling this you can very easily [and they will accept it and practise it easily as well] teach them what you want. Here are few guidelines that you can use with your children [you can think of others as well]:

1. Depending on their age encourage them to fast a number of days up to every other day or more for those who are almost at the age of puberty. For those who are still young let them fast a day or two.
2. Take your children to the Masjid for Maghrib prayer and break the fast with the larger Muslim community to make them feel the greatness of fasting and the unity of Muslims in worshipping Allah.
3. If your children cannot fast let them eat with you at the time of Maghrib and teach them that you are breaking the fast even if they ate before.
4. Teach your children the supplication of breaking the fast.
5. Take your children to the Taraweeh prayer so that they get used to it and know about it from an early age.
6. Teach them to recite the Qur'an regularly and inform them that the Prophet (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) used to do that in Ramadan.
7. Correct them if they misbehave or say unacceptable words and remind them that they are fasting and this may alter their reward.
8. Wake them up for Suhoor [even if they don't fast] and Fajr prayer.
9. Teach them to feed people who are fasting and tell them about the reward for that.
10. Dress them in the best clothes, give them a bath and take them with you to the Eid Prayer. Teach them that this is our celebration.

And remember that the Prophet (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) said:

"One who is given the responsibility of bringing up Daughters and treats them well will be shielded from Hell. (Bukhari and Muslim)