

Chapter 65: Children's Quarrels

One matter of some concern is the differences and fights between children at homes. When a family has more than one child, there is likelihood of fights. One thinks that the other is usurping his privileges and has unnecessarily come to share things with him. They push each other around and grab toys from each other.

When they start going to school they dirty each other's note-books and other things. They make fun of each other. When one tries to concentrate on his school assignment, the other makes noises to disturb him. Every child knows the pranks that he can play on his brothers and sisters.

In this situation the parents are the helpless spectators. The complaints about the fights reach them. The difficulty comes for them when sometimes the parents get involved to arbitrate in the quarrels of the children. The mother tells the father that he doesn't give attention to the upbringing of the children. They don't fear you. It is your careless attitude that the house is literally an arena for fights.

The father complains to the mother that if she were a careful person, the children wouldn't have turned so naughty as they are. It is her support that encourages the children to misbehave.

Here the parents should remember that the children are, after all, children. They cannot be expected to sit quietly in a corner like old persons. You must accept the fact that children's fights are a natural phenomenon. Even the elders sometimes do fight. How can the children be expected to sit quietly all the while. Children are generally mischievous. Playing pranks at one another they might fight. But soon they get together and forget the differences. They cannot remain away from each other carrying long faces. One psychologist says:

"This is an important matter that we should never think that in a house where there are many children there prevails perpetual peace amongst them; the children live amicably, never fight for once. Whichever child we have talked to, said that Mom and Dad expect them to live amicably without fighting with one another. But if you give a serious thought to the matter, the trend of the children fighting with one another is not such a big problem."¹

We should also know that the habit of the children fighting with one another would disappear as they

grow in age. If the parents accept the fights between children as a temporary and natural phase, then they would not worry about it so much.

Another psychologist says:

“Lots of activities of the children like playing pranks on one another, fighting and wrestling with one another will taper off with passage of time. ”[2](#)

Yes, it is right that most parents cannot completely eliminate the fights between their children. But with tact and clever handling they can reduce their frequency and intensity. The careful parents never remain spectators when the children fight. They intervene tactfully and ensure that the children don't cause bodily harm to each other during fights.

They have first to investigate the cause of the fight and try to eliminate it. One main cause of the differences between the children is the feeling of jealousy. It is necessary that the reason for the jealousy springing up in the child is detected and a remedy found.

A child wants all the attention for himself. He doesn't like to share the affections of the parents with other children. The first born is generally pampered by the parents. But when the second arrives, the conditions are changed. Naturally the parents have to divide their attention and have to give the major share to the smaller child. Now the elder child starts getting the feeling of insecurity. He starts feeling neglected.

He feels the new arrival is an uninvited guest who is holding the attention and care of his beloved parents. He becomes envious of the baby, but knows that he has to tolerate him because the parents are showering love on him. In such situations the elder child sometimes malingers, pretending illness, to keep the attention of the parents concentrated on him. Sometimes he may fall on the floor, refuse to eat food, cry and try other pretences to attract the parents' attention.

Such a child considers himself deprived and develops a sort of hatred for his other siblings. He awaits an opportunity to wreak revenge on them. The parents have to discreetly avoid such situations arising. They should prepare the children to receive the new arrival before he is born. They must tell the children that their little sibling is expected soon. When it will grow up, it will play with them and love them. When they prepare something for the new-born, they should give some gifts to the elder children too, so that they don't feel neglected.

When the mother gets admitted to a maternity home for delivery, the father should give some gifts to the children at home so that their minds are diverted and they don't miss the mother. The father should tell them on the occasion that the gifts are given to them to celebrate the arrival of the little one. He should ask them that when the little one came home, they should not make much noise. The parents should not praise the baby too much in the presence of the other children. They should give a little more attention to the older children to give them the feeling of assurance that the new one is not come to deprive them of

their parents attention.

‘Ali, The Commander of the Faithful, says:

“Justice removes differences and promotes friendship.”³

“Just treatment is always the best strategy.”⁴

It is always possible that some of the children might have special qualities that become the darlings of the parents. Some children may be more intelligent, some more pretty and some other more polite to deserve special attention of the parents. One child might perform excellently at school and attract lot of praise from the parents.

These extraordinary expressions of love because of some special quality in a child will not be anything out of the ordinary. But excessive repetition of such praises is not advisable.

Some parents, as a strategy to promote competition between their children, talk about the good qualities of one to the other(s). For example, they may say, ‘Hasan Work hard at studies that you get high grades in your examinations as did Abbas!’ They say, ‘Zainab, you must help your mother for his household chores as Zahra’ is so nicely doing!’ ‘Ridha’, observe good table manners like your brother, ‘Ali. What a polite and courteous boy he is!’

This attitude of the parents is not right. It might not bring about positive and desirable results. To the contrary, it might create hard feelings and jealousy between brothers and sisters. They may become revengeful and might themselves indulge in unnecessary comparisons between each other.

Another very important reason for the fights between the children is the high expectations of the parents from them. The child wants to play with the toys of his sibling; the parents prohibit him from doing it. This gives rise to the fight between the two. At this juncture the parents intervene. First they quietly try to convince the children to become quiet. If the quarrel still persists, they ask the other child to give its toy to the one who wants to borrow it for playing. They tell him that it is they who have brought the toy for him. The toy is not his property. If he still refused to give the toy to his brother, they would not love him nor bring any more toys for him.

The child becomes helpless and parts with his toy. But he starts thinking that the parents are tyrannical and the brother is bad. He develops hatred in his heart for both. He will express this hatred whenever there is an opportunity. This is quite natural that the child was thinking that the toys were his own and that none other had a right to play with them.

Without his consent. He thinks that he is the victim of the tyranny of his parents and the other brother. In the circumstance, the child is right. Because, in the first instance they don’t permit the other siblings to play with the toys they had given to him. The thoughtful parents try to create a spirit of co-operation between their children. They must have an amicable atmosphere that they share all their toys and

games with each other.

Sometimes the reason for differences cropping up between the children is that the parents entrust one task to a particular child and leave the others with nothing to do. This situation can give rise to fights. To avoid such situations the parents should try to make the children busy with something or other. Then they will not have a feeling of neglect.

Sometimes even fights between the parents encourage the children to follow suit. When the innocent children see that the parents are compulsive fighters, they start thinking that fights are a way of life. In emulation of the parents they start looking for reasons to commence fighting.

Therefore, the parents who are fed up of the constant fights between their children, should do introspection and reform themselves. Then they must turn their attention to set the children right. There will hardly be any family that has no difference of opinion amongst its members. But if the parents take care not to air their differences in the presence of the children, the children will not be encouraged to argue and fight. But, even then if there are some minor fights between the children, the parents must discreetly intervene and sort out the matter to the satisfaction of all.

In the end we would like to caution you that in spite of observing all the cautions, your family may not be totally free of fights between the children. After all children are human, and the instinct to fight is there in every individual. In fact the children are generally hyperactive and fighting can be a way of dissipating some of their energy. The parents must exercise care that when the children fight, they don't cause bodily harm to one another and the property around them. They should not worry too much if some children have more inclination to fight. This is a transient habit and it tapers off with time.

[1.](#) Ruwan shinasi kudak, p. 286.

[2.](#) Ruwan shinasi kudak, p. 286

[3.](#) Gharar al hukm, p. 64

[4.](#) Gharar al hukm, p. 64

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/principles-upbringing-children-ibrahim-amini/chapter-65-childrens-quarrels#comment-0>