

A Free Chapter From The Weight of Your Words

*A Companion to Raising Children the Prophetic Way /
A Darul Hikmah Bonus*

Chapter 15 of this book, "Correction Without Condemnation," introduced a distinction worth sitting with a little longer. That is, the difference between correcting what a child *did* and pronouncing what a child *is*. That single distinction is the subject of an entire companion book “*The Weight of Your Words: An Islamic Guide to Raising Children Without Labels That Break Them.*”

Here is its opening chapter, in full, as a gift.

Chapter 1: The Trust You Didn't Know You Held

A Word You Don't Remember Saying

You have probably said something to your child this week that you don't remember saying.

Maybe it was in the middle of a long day.

Maybe it was in front of guests, when you needed them to behave and they weren't behaving.

Maybe it slipped out in frustration; "you're so stubborn," "why are you always like this," "see your mate." You said it, moved on, and forgot it within the hour.

Your child did not forget it. Children rarely forget the words their parents say about them, especially the words said repeatedly, or said in

front of others, or said with heat. Long after you've forgotten the moment, they are still carrying the sentence.

Picture an ordinary evening. A mother, tired from work, finds her seven-year-old has spilled a bowl of soup across the floor for the second time that week. "Ah, this child; she's always so careless, she'll never be organised in life," she says, already reaching for a cloth, already thinking about what's next for dinner. She has moved on to the next task within seconds. Her daughter has not moved on. She is standing very still, absorbing a sentence that will still be with her at twenty-five, long after her mother has forgotten a Tuesday evening and a bowl of soup.

This book is about that gap: the gap between how lightly we speak to our children and how heavily they receive what we say. Before we get

to the specific labels, the fiqh, the practical alternatives, we need to understand *why* this matters as much as it does in Islam. And that starts with a word many of us only associate with money, property, or secrets: **amānah**, trust.

What Amānah Actually Means

Most of us learned the word amānah in a narrow context and that is returning a borrowed item, keeping someone's confidence, not touching what isn't yours. That's correct, but it's only a fraction of what the term covers.

Allah describes amānah as something so weighty that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains refused to carry it, and only the human being, despite being, as the verse says, prone to wrong and heedless accepted it (Sūrah

al-Aḥzāb, 33:72). This is not describing a wallet someone asked you to hold. It is describing the entire weight of moral responsibility that comes with being human: what you do with your body, your time, your authority, and your tongue.

Allah also commands directly that trusts be given to those they are due (Sūrah an-Nisā, 4:58). Scholars across the madhabs have consistently expanded the scope of amānah beyond property to include *everything placed under a person's care*. It could be a position of authority, a secret, a responsibility, and the scholars are explicit about this, a child.

A child is not simply "yours." A child is something Allah has placed in your hands, temporarily, for you to protect, shape, and

eventually return to Him in the best condition you were capable of. That is not a metaphor. It is the plain meaning of amānah applied to parenthood, and it's the frame this entire book is built on.

The Shepherd and the Flock

There is a hadith so widely known that many Muslims can recite part of it without knowing where it comes from. The Prophet ﷺ said that every one of us is a shepherd, and every one of us is responsible for what is under our care and he specifically named the man as a shepherd over his household, and the woman as a shepherd over her husband's house and children, each of them answerable for that flock (agreed upon, Bukhārī and Muslim).

Read that hadith again, slowly, as a parent. A shepherd does not own the flock. A shepherd is *trusted* with the flock, by someone who will ask for an account of how it was kept. A shepherd who is careless, who lets the flock wander into danger, who feeds it poorly, who leaves it exposed has failed the amānah even if he never intended harm.

This is the lens the coming chapters will keep returning to. When we discuss the words we say to our children, we are not asking "was that a nice thing to say?" We are asking a heavier question: "did I guard what I was trusted with, or did I let it wander into harm because I wasn't paying attention?"

Why the Tongue Specifically

If amānah covers everything under our care, why does this book focus so narrowly on speech?

Because the tongue is the part of the amānah we guard the least, precisely because it costs us nothing in the moment to misuse it. We would never physically strike a child in front of guests to make a point about their behaviour. Most of us have that boundary firmly in place. But many of us will say something in front of those same guests that cuts deeper and lasts longer than a smack, and walk away from it without a second thought, because it didn't leave a mark we could see.

The Prophet ﷺ was explicit that the tongue carries this kind of danger. He said that

whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent (Bukhārī and Muslim). This is a standard, notably, with no exception carved out for speaking to one's own children when frustrated. He also described the believer, in another well-known hadith, as one whose tongue does not taunt, curse, use obscenity, or bring shame (Tirmidhī). These instructions were not given only for how we speak to strangers or enemies. They apply with *more* weight, not less, to the people we have the most power over and the least accountability with and no one fits that description more than a child in our own home.

This is the uncomfortable truth this chapter is building toward. The same tongue we are

commanded to guard around every believer is often the one we guard least around the people Allah entrusted most directly to us.

What This Book Is Not Saying

Before we go further, it's worth being precise about what this book is *not* claiming, because it would be easy to read the coming chapters and feel accused rather than equipped.

This is not a claim that every stern word to a child is sinful, or that correction and discipline have no place in Islamic parenting. They clearly do, and later chapters deal directly with how the Prophet ﷺ corrected children and companions without resorting to the kind of language this book is concerned with nor is this a claim that a parent who has used harsh labels in the past is a failure beyond repair. A full

chapter ahead is dedicated specifically to undoing that damage, because tawbah applies here exactly as it applies everywhere else in a Muslim's life.

What this book *is* saying is narrower and, I think, more useful: that many of us are treating our speech to our children as a private, consequence-free space, when in reality it is one of the clearest expressions of the amānah we were given the day that child was born. Once that is understood, the specific words like "stubborn," "lazy," "useless," "you'll never learn" stop being minor parenting quirks and start looking like exactly what they are: a trust being handled carelessly.

Continue Reading

The Weight of Your Words goes on to cover what the Qur'an, Sunnah, and all four madhabs actually say about harmful speech to children, the everyday labels almost every Nigerian Muslim household has used, what happens when a child starts to believe a label, how the Prophet ﷺ corrected without condemning, sibling comparisons, grandparents and teachers, undoing damage already done, and a chapter written specifically for adults still carrying a label from their own childhood.

Get the complete book at the special price available to readers of *Raising Children the Prophetic Way*.

©*Darul Hikmah — Rooted in Knowledge.*

Relevant to Life.