



Original Article

## Safeguarding Children: An All Encompassing Alternative

Oluwaseun S. Saidu<sup>a\*</sup> & Mulkat A. Oguntola<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The University of Manchester, United Kingdom

<sup>b</sup> University of Salford, United Kingdom

\* Corresponding author, email; [sulaimanibnsaidu@alumni.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sulaimanibnsaidu@alumni.manchester.ac.uk)

### ABSTRACT

There is a clamour world over for the need to safeguard children from abuse, neglect cum other forms of maltreatment and to promote their welfare. The advocates of this notion believe that this need arises because children are vulnerable, need care and support and their welfare is paramount especially in the early years of life because events in those years go a long way in shaping their future. While the authors agree with this proposition, they disconcur with the widely accepted approach to safeguarding which considers such causes as largely exogenous, curative, and largely independent of spiritual underpinnings but more or full of a physical exercise. Employing incisive “theoretic” and analysing revealing case studies, the study tries to educate the parental as well as filial audience by presenting the true idea of safeguarding from an Islamic perspective perhaps it will go a long way in shaping the prevalent notion of safeguarding which is fast gaining grounds amongst Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

**Keywords:** Safeguarding children; welfare; UNICEF; Islamic perspective

### Introduction

International organisations such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) continually invest time, finance and physical efforts in activities that can help safeguard and promote the welfare of children across the globe. In an attempt to ensure that children are safe from abuse and are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care, the government of developed countries, for example the UK and USA, put in place extensive legislations, polices and structural foundations on safeguarding and child protection.

In recent years, there has been a shift in focus of safeguarding and child protection from being remedial (seeking to resolve crisis and regain stability of mind and health to an abused person who survives death) towards a more proactive and preventative measure that curbs abuse from occurring in the first instance. Such preventative services are usually provided through early intervention. Early intervention services are thought to be crucial in providing adequate support as well as an enabling environment for children and young people to

overcome their challenges and experience good outcomes<sup>1</sup>. It is also believed that such interventions help to ward off the negative effects that socio-economic circumstances might have on the child and make it easier for parents to access advice and support at the start of the problem<sup>2</sup>. Such early intervention services according to Munro<sup>3</sup> should be provided by local authorities and their statutory partners to secure early help for children and their families in a manner that leads to identification of other specific and direct needs and support young children and their families whose needs do not meet the criteria to be eligible for children's social care services.

While people who live in developing countries blame child deaths that occur as a result of non-accidental injuries and abuse on the inadequacy of legislation, policies, information and structures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children<sup>4</sup>, the existence of such extensive legislation and policies in developed countries is yet to put an end to the occurrence of child deaths as a result of abuse and non-accidental injuries. Evidence from research however indicates that there is a reduction in the rate of abuse reported by young adults in the UK (children between the ages of 18 and 24) when the figures of 2009 were compared with that of 1998<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, an estimated two to four children die in the UK each week due to abuse and neglect, while many others who survive death live with adverse life-long effects<sup>6</sup> and a significant number of younger children experience severe maltreatment that arise as a result of parental problems such as mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic violence, poor emotional wellbeing, self-harm, suicidal ideation and delinquent behaviour<sup>7</sup>. The "precariousness" of this situation is further made clear or obviated when one comes to know that in England for example, about 85% of child (sexual) abuse cases go unreported<sup>8</sup>.

Islam, the submission to the Supreme Being, ALLAH is an encompassing system of belief which was revealed to all the prophets of ALLAH including the final prophet, Muhammed (PBUH). (Being the final message to mankind), it leaves no stones unturned in providing guidance to humanity on all facets of life<sup>9</sup>. This invariable includes guidance on child protection and safeguarding. Indeed, the primary revealed sources of the Quran and Sunnah provides a comprehensive approach to safeguarding and protecting children. Against this backdrop, the study would expose the meaning of safeguarding, highlight the prevalent steps involved in safeguarding (today), enunciate the safeguarding processes in Islam and proceed to conduct an

---

<sup>1</sup> Field, F. *The Foundation years: Preventing Poor Children becoming Poor Adults. The Report for The Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances.* (London; Stationary Office, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Munro, E. *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report A Child-centred System.* (London; Crown copyright, 2011)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Onyango, P. and Lynch, M. *Implementing the Right to Child Protection: a Challenge for Developing Countries. The Lancet, Volume 367, (2006), Issue 9511, Pp 693 - 694, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(06)68269-X*Cite or Link Using DOI

<sup>5</sup> Radford, L., et al. *Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK Today. National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). 2011.*

<sup>6</sup> Barker, J. and Hodes, D. *The Child in Mind: A Child Protection Handbook (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition).* (London; Routledge, 2007)

<sup>7</sup> Radford, L., et al. *Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK Today. National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). 2011.* Munro, E. *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report A Child-centred System.* (London; Crown copyright, 2011)

<sup>8</sup> Office of Children's Commissioner (OCC) England, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Quran 16 verse 89

analysis of selected case studies on safeguarding and child protection. The study concludes with thoughts on safe guarding in Islam vis-à-vis the prevalent approach to safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding; the meaning**

Narrowly defined, safeguarding is child protection. Child protection refers to efforts made to prevent, respond to and fight against specific acts of violence, exploitation and abuse against children. It includes but is not limited to preventing and responding to issues of child trafficking, child labour, harmful traditional practices and commercial sexual exploitation<sup>10</sup>. It has to do with guarding against 'the portion of harm to children that results from human action that is proscribed, proximate and preventable'<sup>11</sup>. The definition aims to distinguish child abuse from other forms of harm that children suffer, some of which arise not out of the intent to harm and are sometimes not preventable. This would include harm as a result of natural causes, socio-economic situations or health issues. Some issues that will result in the need for child protection identified by<sup>12</sup> include parental child battering, selective neglect and sexual abuse. Child protection is an aspect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It has to do with the specific actions to be taken where there are concerns that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm<sup>13</sup>. Therefore the phenomenon of harm necessitates child protection.

Harm has been defined under The Children Act 1989 Section 13(9)<sup>14</sup> as 'ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another'. Development here refers to physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, while health refers to physical or mental health. The level at which harm can be declared significant is however not defined but will be decided by the local authority after due consideration of certain factors. Some of these factors include the severity of ill treatment, extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse, impact of the abuse on the child's health and development as well as the child's development within the context of their family and the wider environment among others<sup>15</sup>.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is 'the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully',<sup>16</sup>. Hence, Safeguarding is a broader action than child protection as it caters not only for children suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, but looks at promoting the welfare of all children. Also, it borders not just on risk associated with child abuse, but on the general wellbeing of children and

---

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF. *Child Protection Information Sheet: Unite for Children*.2006. Accessed on 10.10.12 at [http://www.unicef.org/chinese/protection/files/What\\_is\\_Child\\_Protection.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/chinese/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Finkehlror, D. and Korbin, J. *Child Abuse as an International Issue*. Child Abuse & Neglect. Vol. 12. (1988).,PP. 3-23.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> National Society for Prevention of Cruelty against Children (NSPCC), (2010). Child Protection Factsheet: The Child Protection System in the UK. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Available at; <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<sup>14</sup> United Kingdom Children Act, 1989. Available at; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

<sup>15</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. HM Government. 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

young people. The terms safeguarding and child protection are sometimes used interchangeably.

One very important thing to be noted from the above definitional exposition is that they are devoid of (truthful) rationale i.e. safeguarding children is done purely for worldly purposes. Whereas safeguarding children should be done purely for the sake of ALLAH so that the children can effectively fulfil their rationale for existence<sup>17</sup> by acting righteously on the face of the earth in all works of life in good health free from spiritual and as well as physical harm.

### **Prevalent steps involved in safeguarding children**

The conventional safeguarding process usually starts with a referral and ends with an assessment cum action if deemed required or possible. In a nutshell, the process involves referring or reporting a case of actual or suspected abuse to the child social services department child protection services which can be done by the parent, teacher, health personnel, neighbour or any concerned person. The abused child, if capable, can also put a call through to the child protection/ services department to make a report. Such report will be investigated by child protection officers sometimes in collaboration with health personnel (doctor/nurse) and law enforcement cum criminal justice department as the case may necessitate. If the report is substantiated, the extent of danger to the health and development of the child will be assessed. Subsequently, the child is either left in the home with some monitoring or placed on child protection plan which involves removing the child from the home to a foster home, restricting contact with the abuser even if it is the parent and providing other forms of personal support that the child requires.

Below we delve more into each stage of referral and assessment cum action. The discussion here follows that of the United Kingdom arguably being the most bogus representation of child protection advocacy in the world. Other countries most especially the so-called developed ones such as United States which advocate for safeguarding do not necessarily have different processes although slight variations does exist in country modalities and institutions.

### **Referral**

It is the duty of the Local Authority's (LA) children services to collect detailed information given by the referrer about the circumstances that brought about the referral and ensure that a qualified social worker and his line manager make decision about what actions to be taken in response to the referral within one working day. The referral should be in writing. Among the relevant information that the LA children's services is required to collect when accepting referral are: full name, gender and date of birth of all the children in the concerned household; family address as well as the address of the school or nursery attended by the child(ren); identity if the individuals having parental responsibility for the child(ren); names and date of birth of all the members of

---

<sup>17</sup> Man's ultimate role here on earth is to worship ALLAH (Quran 51 verse 56). All actions so long as they are done and intended for his sake (as He and his Prophet (PBUH) has prescribed and commanded) , seeking his face alone can be "converted" to worship. ALLAH says; "Say indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).

the household; the child's National Health Service (NHS) and education Unique pupil Numbers<sup>18</sup> (UPN) numbers; ethnicity, first language and religion of the child/ parents; any significant recent or past event in the life of the child or any other family member; any known special needs of the child or parents; specific details of why the referral/ report is being made such as specific allegations, time and location of the occurrence; the current location of the child as well as his physical and emotional condition(s); the immediate protection needs of the child; personal details of the alleged perpetrator of the abuse; the relationship between the referee and the child and his knowledge about the child and the child's parents; whether or not the parents are aware of and give their consent for the referral to be made as well as the views and wishes of the child.

As part of this child protection step, the LA children's social care should (normally) make known to the referrer what actions would be taken, the timing of such actions and the specific social worker to whom the case is being assigned. It should also be made clear to the referrer if no further actions will be taken. Personal details of non-professional referrals cannot be disclosed to third parties without the referrers consent.

### **Assessment**

Assessment should (normally) be carried out in line with the protocol of the relevant local authority and the guidance stated in the policy document- Working Together to Safeguard Children<sup>19</sup> by a qualified social worker under the supervision of a qualified and experienced social work manager. The information contained in a previous assessment where such exist should also be updated and used in guiding the assessment. In addition, the child must be physically seen during the assessment. Furthermore, the assessment must (normally) be done within the least possible timeframe as determined by the responsible social worker and his manager, although such a timeframe should not exceed 45 working days from the day of the referral, an extension of which requires the manager to review the file, state the reason for the extension as well as his newly agreed timeframe.

The assessment should (normally) be focused on analyzing the needs of the child as well as whether or not the parents have the capacity to meet these needs. Thus, it is pertinent to answer two key questions viz: (a.) what events are likely to occur if the child's situation remains the same? and (b.) what possible consequences will the events turn out to be for the child? The answers to these questions will form the basis of decisions on how to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and to decide what form of support is needed by the parents to keep the child safe from harm. During assessment, the social care manager must ensure that: (a.) the child's views and wishes are identified through direct and physical communication with the child and his view are taken into consideration during service provision, (b.) all the children in the household have been physically seen and their need have been put into consideration (c.) the child's home address is being inspected especially his bedroom (d.) the views and wishes of the child's parents are obtained through direct physical communication and they are being taken

---

<sup>18</sup> a 13-character code that identifies each pupil in the local-authority-maintained school system

<sup>19</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. HM Government. 2015

into consideration (e.) background history of the child's parents or other relevant adult carer(s) is(are) given due consideration.

Consequently during assessment, it should (normally) become clear whether: (1.) The child is in need (of social work support or other kind of support) for which section 17 of the UK Children Act 1989<sup>20</sup> will be effected. (2.) There's a reason to believe that the child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm (requiring section 44 of the Children Act 1989<sup>21</sup>, (3.) The child is in need of accommodation (section 20 or section 31 of Children Act 1989)<sup>22</sup>. Further, hence, an assessment could yield either of the following results: (A.) No further action (B.) Need to develop a multi-agency plan to meet the needs of the child. (C.) Need for specialist assessment in other to gain more exhaustive knowledge about the child's situation and needs. (D.) Need for strategy meeting i.e. in compliance with or reference to section 47 child protection enquiry. (E.) Emergency action to protect the child.

It is lamentable that despite the efforts of social and medical personnel in safeguarding and protecting children from harm, including conducting Serious Case Reviews (SCR) to learn from past experiences and avoid reoccurrences, it appears little or nothing has been achieved in preventing the occurrence of abuse. One thing to be taken away from this prevalent approach to safe guarding is that the discretion of the social worker and the concerned line manager is paramount and plays a major role in such a process. The more reason why there is need for Islamic safeguarding approach because human discretion as well as desires and whims not guided by revelation is a recipe for disaster.

### **Safeguarding processes in Islam**

The need to present, clarify, islamize and remind the Muslims of the Islamic safeguarding or child protection process cannot be over emphasized as the encyclopaedia of policies being brandished has not availed much when we consider and examine the amount of child deaths<sup>23</sup> and the degree of harm suffered by those children who survive death. To iterate, Islam provides a detailed and practical way of keeping children safe from abuse and ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care. It is interesting to note that the Islamic approach to safe guarding is kick started even before the child is conceived.

The safeguarding process in Islam begins with the article of faith which is to believe that there is no god but ALLAH and that Muhammed (PBUH) is His Messenger. Having this at the back of our mind makes the first cardinal of child protection easy to absorb which is that ALLAH is the true Protector (Maula). This is mentioned in not less than eleven in places in the Quran. In Quran 8 verse 40, the Creator says; ... then know that Allah is your protector. Excellent is the protector..." It is further stated in Quran 3 verse 50 that "...But Allah is your protector...) It is also mentioned in Quran 22 verse 78 that "...He is your protector; and excellent is the protector....). The same message is repeated in the 47<sup>th</sup> chapter verse 11 that "...Allah is the protector of those

---

<sup>20</sup> United Kingdom Children Act, 1989. Available at; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> This is not to deny Allah's statement that; "And it is not [possible] for one to die except by permission of Allah at a decree determined i.e. at an appointed term" (Quran 3 verse 145) and similar truthful statements. Man must nevertheless be in strife with al-Qadar (the measure) and not conform to it as other truthful (ALLAH's) statement suggests.

who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector." A similar truism (truth) is conveyed in Quran 66 verse 2 that "And Allah is your protector, and He is the Knowing, the Wise." It is worth emphasizing that this stage borders on *Tawheed* which is to single out ALLAH for worship i.e. worshipping Allah alone without ascribing partners. It entails recognizing and acknowledging HIS oneness in lordship, worship and distinct attributes. This is the cornerstone of safeguarding because it guarantees the fruitfulness of efforts in this life and in the hereafter.

The next step in the Islamic safeguarding process is the picking of the spouse to be. ALLAH instructs in the Quran in chapter 2 verse 221 that " ... do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission. And He makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember. Furthermore, the Prophet is reported to have said "Women are married for four things: their wealth, their nobility, their beauty and their religious commitment. Choose the one who is religiously committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust i.e. so that you will be successful"<sup>24</sup>. Therefore picking a righteous spouse is quite important and second in the process because the onus of raising the child lies in the parents especially the wife as she naturally spends more time with the children whilst the father is out looking for the family's daily bread<sup>25</sup>. The woman is thus responsible for her flock, a woman is a shepherdess in charge of her husband's house and children and she is responsible for them<sup>26</sup>. The men must know that "This world is all temporary conveniences, and the best temporary convenience of this world is a righteous woman."<sup>27</sup>. However, there is an important caveat for prospective spouses in that while they strive to keep the commandments of not marrying unbelievers as well as having a preference for religious commitment cum religiosity of spouses, they have to themselves be good or righteous as a condition to get good or righteous spouses. This Allah puts clearly in Quran 24 verse 26 that "Bad women are for bad men and bad men are for bad women. Good women are for good men and good men are for good women". Once this is done, the minimum conditions have been met and the stage is set for a quasi hitch-free safe guarding process.

The Nikkah is the next Islamic step in safe guarding. The nikkah makes the spouses lawful for each other. The Nikkah must be done according to the Islamic shari'ah. There must be an offer and acceptance, the *mahr* given to the lady by the man, (prescribed number of ) witnesses present and the marriage should not be concealed. Least money possible should be spent on the wedding as well as the ceremony (*walimat*) and all forms of sinful cultural practices of unnecessary intermingling of sexes, partying, wearing aura-revealing dresses and so on should not be entertained so that the angels of mercy can attend such Islamic gathering. It should be realised that the nikkah is a spiritual gathering and not just a social gathering. On the night of the nikkah, there is an important ritual that has to be done. The Prophet is reported to have said that; "When anyone of you gets a new wife, a servant, or an animal, let him take hold of the forelock and say: Allahumma inni as'aluka min khayriha wa khayri ma jubilat 'alaihi, wa 'audhu bika min sharriha wa sharri ma jubilat `alaih (O Allah, I ask You for the goodness within her and

---

<sup>24</sup> Sunan an-Nasa'i 3230 : Book 26, Hadith 35

<sup>25</sup> Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. (Quran 4 verse 34).

<sup>26</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 2928 Book 20, Hadith 1

<sup>27</sup> Sunan an-Nasa'i 3232 : Book 26, Hadith 37

the goodness that she is inclined towards, and I seek refuge with you from the evil to which she is inclined)."<sup>28</sup>

Among the safeguarding steps in Islam is a very important step that goes a long way in the protection of the child. This step is done at(in) the nick of intercourse time. Narrated Ibn `Abbas, The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) is reported to have said; "If anyone of you on having sexual relations with his wife said (and he must say it before starting) 'In the name of Allah. O Allah! Protect us from Satan and also protect what you bestow upon us (i.e. the coming offspring) from Satan, and if it is destined that they should have a child then, Satan will never be able to harm that offspring."<sup>29</sup>. Undisputably this is a very irrefutable stronghold and fortification for a new born since most of the (negative) problems afflicting a child will come from satanic afflictions, therefore parents who have done this supplication each time they have sexual intercourse would have done such a child and themselves a good service and would have completed a major step in the safeguarding process of a child. Inclusive in this step is the safeguarding step to be taken during the pregnancy, which is to supplicate for the incoming progeny. We know that the baby's crying when it is delivered is due to nothing but satan's poking<sup>30</sup>. In fact, the Prophet (PBUH) said; 'No child is born but that, Satan touches it when it is born whereupon it starts crying loudly because of being touched by Satan, except Mary and her son.' Abu Huraira then said, "Recite, if you wish: "And I seek Refuge with You (Allah) for her and her offspring from Satan, the outcast."<sup>31</sup>. The verse quoted by Abu Hurairah and the preceding verse in the *Surah al-Imran*, informs us of a worthy supplication especially from a righteous mother for the child by way of dedicating the forthcoming child in the womb to ALLAH, the Creator. Allah informs us that the "...wife of 'Imraan said: 'O my Lord! I have vowed to You what (the child that) is in my womb to be dedicated for Your services (free from all worldly work; to serve Your place of worship), so accept this from me. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knowing.' Then when she gave birth to her [child Maryam (Mary)], she said: 'O my Lord! I have given birth to a female child,' — and Allaah knew better what she brought forth, — 'And the male is not like the female, and I have named her Maryam (Mary), and I seek refuge with You (Allaah) for her and for her offspring from Shaytaan (Satan), the outcast."<sup>32</sup>

Also pertinent for safeguarding children at his stage is for the parent particularly the mother to ensure that she eats only *halal* and *tayyib* foods during pregnancy and beyond, such that will ensure that the baby grows from halal provisions and thus be eligible for ALLAH's help through answered supplications<sup>33</sup>. She should not commit excesses in food and drink<sup>34</sup>. And if she must eat to the full and respond to "pregnancy cravings", she must be mindful of the hadith narrated by Miqdam bin Madikarib wherein the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is heard to have said; 'A human being fills no worse vessel than his stomach. It is sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his spine straight. But if he must (fill it), then one third of food, one third for drink and one third for air."<sup>35</sup>. Also relevant for the baby during delivery is for the baby to

<sup>28</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah Book 9, Hadith 1993. It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr and also reported in sahih al-bukhari, musanaf ibn abi shaybah with slight variations

<sup>29</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 5165: Book 67, Hadith 100

<sup>30</sup> Sahih Muslim 2367: Book 43, Hadith 194. Also narrated in Sahih Muslim 2366 b : Book 43, Hadith 192 on the authority of Shu'aib Zuhri with slight differences in wording.

<sup>31</sup> Quran 3 verse 36, Sahih al-Bukhari; Book 65, Hadith 4548

<sup>32</sup> Quran 3 verses 35-36

<sup>33</sup> Quran 2 verse 268, Sahih Muslim 1015; Book 12, Hadith 83

<sup>34</sup> Quran 7 verse 31

<sup>35</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah; Book 29, Hadith 3474



be delivered in a room free of images or pictures, non-mahram men as much as possible including the health care personnel, not videotaping the labour and delivery and covering the awrah of the woman during the delivery as much as possible, revealing just what is needed to be laid open or bare. Furthermore, immediately the child is born, the Tahnik should be done. The Tahnik effectively means the putting some edibles (preferably dates or sweet food) by a righteous person in the mouth of a newborn baby who would then suck or lick it. It is a confirmed Sunnah because Anas narrated that; "When Um Sulaim gave birth to a child. she said to me, "O Anas! Watch this boy carefully and do not give him anything to eat or drink until you have taken him to the Prophet (PBUH) tomorrow morning for the Tahnik." So the next morning I took the child to the Prophet (PBUH) .....<sup>36</sup>. It was also narrated by Asma' bint Abu Bakr that she conceived `Abdullah bin AzZubair at Mecca and went out (of Mecca) while she was about to give birth. She said she came to Medina and encamped at Quba', and gave birth at Quba'. Then she brought the child to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) and placed the child (on his lap). He asked for a date, chewed it, and put his saliva in the mouth of the child..... i.e. the Prophet (PBUH) did the Tahnik with a date, and invoked Allah to bless him.....<sup>37</sup>. Further confirming the sunnahcity of the Tahnik is the hadith narrated by Abu Musa wherein he said: A son was born to me and I took him to the Prophet (PBUH) who named him Ibrahim, did Tahnik for him with a date, invoked Allah to bless him and returned him to me<sup>38</sup>.

Showing gratitude to ALLAH for giving the parents the child is also a step in the safeguarding process. This gratitude is however an ongoing "exercise" which is to be done continuously till one goes to meet his Lord, ALLAH. The most important act showing gratitude to HIM for the child gift is to obey ALLAH in all matters concerning or not concerning the child and not disobey HIM in any way. Particularly the parent should not allow the child to deter them from remembering ALLAH in any way as ALLAH has said ; O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that - then those are the losers<sup>39</sup>. Among the practical ways in showing gratitude to ALLAH is a much forgotten Sunnah of sujud al-shukrat i.e. the thank you prostration. It was narrated from Abu Bakrah that when the Prophet (PBUH) heard news that made him happy, or for which one should be happy, he would fall down and prostrate in gratitude to Allah, the Blessed and Exalted.<sup>40</sup>. Other ways of showing gratitude is to make direct thank you supplications and to revere and fear ALLAH as he has commanded in chapter 26 verses 132-133 of the glorious Quran; "And fear He who provided you with that which you know; Provided you with grazing livestock and children....The parents must know that ALLAH rewards gratefulness and punishes ungratefulness"<sup>41</sup>.

The next step is naming the child. In addition to naming the child between the first and seventh day of birth<sup>42</sup> and ascribing the baby to the biological father (except in cases of adultery progenies, illegitimate children or where a woman who has a new husband in which case a different ruling will apply depending on the circumstance), the baby should be given good names with real meanings. Specifically, names signifying servitude to ALLAH such as 'Abd ALLAH

---

<sup>36</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 5824: Book 77, Hadith 41

<sup>37</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 5469: Book 71, Hadith 3

<sup>38</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 5467: Book 71, Hadith 1

<sup>39</sup> Quran 63 verse 9

<sup>40</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah Book 5, Hadith 1458

<sup>41</sup> Quran 14 verse 7 and Quran 34 verse 11

<sup>42</sup> Jami` at-Tirmidhi Book 43, Hadith 3066, Sahih Muslim 2315: Book 43, Hadith 83

and 'Abd al-Rahman, the names of the Prophet (PBUH) except his Kunya<sup>43</sup>, names of other Prophets as well as names of "established" seemingly righteous persons are desirable. To this extent, names which imply servitude to other than ALLAH, names connoting attributes specific to ALLAH, names of enemies of ALLAH such as disbelievers or oppressive rulers/tyrants, names disliked by the Prophet such as those connoting praises to the bearer or with negative/unpleasant meanings, names belonging to bad role models such as musicians and open sinners, names of non-Muslims or names peculiar to them, names with seductive meanings e.g. Fatin (meaning temptress or someone who tempts) , names of angels or quranic chapters, combined names which connotes excessive praise e.g. Sayf ud-din meaning sword of the religion, Taqiyy ud-din meaning pious in religion, Nasir-ud-din meaning the victory of religion and so on as well as names in any cultures which fall into this categories mentioned are not to be used in naming a child. Parents should be aware that although the "disapproved" names mentioned above are not expressly prohibited by the Prophet they are not recommended. It is better to stay away from such names so as not to be disobedient to Prophetic recommendations as this might have dire or grave consequences. It was reported by Al-Musaiyab that his father (Hazn bin Wahb) went to the Prophet (PBUH) and the Prophet (PBUH) asked (him), "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Hazn (meaning sadness or roughness)." The Prophet (PBUH) said, "You are Sahl (meaning easy or field)." Hazn said, "I will not change the name with which my father has named me." Ibn Al-Musaiyab added: We have had roughness in our family ever since or since then.<sup>44</sup>

The sacrifice (aqiqah) is the next step in child protection in Islam. It is prescribed to offer two sheeps for males and one sheep for females<sup>45</sup> because Samurah ibn Jundub narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "every child is in pledge<sup>46</sup> for his Aqiqah, he Sacrifice should be made for him on the seventh day, his head should be shaved and he/she should be given a name<sup>47</sup>. Similarly, the whole of the child's head is to be shaved on the seventh day and charity equal to the weight of the shaved hair in silver should be given out<sup>48</sup>. Relatedly, circumcision of the child is also one of the steps in safeguarding the child. Amongst other narrations, circumcision is part of the five things that are of the fitrah<sup>49</sup>. It was the practice of all the Prophets including the Prophet (PBUH). In fact, the Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said that Prophet Ibrahim was circumcised with an axe when he was eight years old<sup>50</sup>. Circumcision is recommended for both male and female. It should however be noted that the female circumcision should not be excessive as is the case with the pharaonic circumcision. This is because Umm Atiyyah al-Ansariyyah reported that the Prophet (PBUH) instructed a circumciser of women in Medina to trim or cut slightly and not severely the clitoris during circumcision as this is better for a woman and more desirable for her husband<sup>51</sup>.

---

<sup>43</sup> A form of name preponderant in the Arabian peninsula which features the addition of Abu meaning father as a prefix to another name. The Prophet's kunya is Abu al-Qasim

<sup>44</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 61: Book 78, Hadith 214

<sup>45</sup> Sunan an-Nasa'i 4217: Book 40, Hadith 6

<sup>46</sup> In an impending or potential harm from Satan i.e. might exposed to potential satanic affliction. For detailed explanation see Ibn Qayyim's book; Tuhfat ul-Mawdud

<sup>47</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 2838 : Book 16, Hadith 51

<sup>48</sup> Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1519: Book 19, Hadith 31

<sup>49</sup> Jami` at-Tirmidhi; Book 43, Hadith 2981

<sup>50</sup> Al-Adab Al-Mufrad; Book 1, Hadith 1244

<sup>51</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 5271: Book 43, Hadith 499

The next step in child protection in Islam is the breastfeeding of the baby. Allah has mandated the breastfeeding of the baby for two whole years for those who want to do the right thing<sup>52</sup>. The father is to ensure this by making all necessary resources available for the breastfeeding mother as Allah has instructed<sup>53</sup>. The immense benefits of breastfeeding the child extensively is well known even amongst the non-Muslims. The mother should be aware of the consequences that await her in the grave and in the hereafter for not breastfeeding the child effectively from the following Hadith. The Prophet (PBUH) says; while I was sleeping<sup>54</sup> two men (angels) came to me, held my upper arms, and took me to a rocky mountain. They said, "Climb", I said, I am unable to climb, they said, we will make it easy for you. So I ascended until I reached a high place in the mountain. I heard fierce cries and enquired what those cries were? They answered, that is the loud cry of the people of the fire....we moved on until I saw women with snakes biting their breasts. I asked "what is the matter with these? They answered, these are the women who deprive their children of their breast milk<sup>55</sup>.

The next step in safeguarding is teaching the child the knowledge of the religion. This is obligatory and it is the responsibility of both parents. It should be started quite early as children learn consciously or unconsciously. Basic understanding of purification in Islam, prayer in Islam,, principles of faith/*eeman* and *tawheed* (oneness of ALLAH), hadith knowledge, nullifiers of Islam, Islamic history, the Arabic language have to be taught to the child. The parent must know that "This world is cursed and cursed is what is in it, except for the remembrance of Allah Almighty and what brings one near to Him (i.e. what is conducive to that) or one who has knowledge or who acquires knowledge<sup>56</sup>.

Disciplining the child is another important step in safeguarding the child, when the child errs or fails to do what is required of him by ALLAH and His messenger, he/she should be corrected or warned and whipped if need be. Punitive disciplinary measures could be deployed. For example; it was narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: Command your children to pray when they become seven years old, and beat them for it when they become ten years old; and arrange their beds (to sleep) separately<sup>57</sup>. Similarly the Prophet advised Mu'aadh ibn Jabal to "Spend on his family from what he can afford and not to lift his stick from them so as to discipline them."<sup>58</sup>. In using such measures, lashes should be restricted to ten at one go and hitting the face should be avoided. This is because the Prophet (PBUH) said: "No one should be given more than ten lashes except in the case of one of the hadd (set) punishments prescribed by Allaah."<sup>59</sup>. He further said; When one of you inflicts a beating, he should avoid striking the face<sup>60</sup>. Also preventive disciplinary measures could be used. It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbaas that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Hang up the whip where the people of the household can see it, for it will discipline them."<sup>61</sup>.

A fundamental safeguarding point is the creating of an enabling (Islamic) environment for the child suitable for his spiritual and normative growth and development. The parents must ensure

---

<sup>52</sup> Quran 2 verse 233

<sup>53</sup> Quran 2 verse 233

<sup>54</sup> Sahih Ibn Hibban, 7491. The Prophet's dreams are true i.e. *wahy* or revelation.

<sup>55</sup> Also reported in full in Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah, 1986 and Sunan al-Kubraa 2/234.

<sup>56</sup> Sunan Abu Dawood; Book 37, Hadith 4251

<sup>57</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 495: Book 2, Hadith 105

<sup>58</sup> Musnad Ahmad; 5/238

<sup>59</sup> Sahih Muslim 1708 : Book 29, Hadith 63 and Sahih al-Bukhari 6850 : Book 86, Hadith 73

<sup>60</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 4493 : Book 40, Hadith 143

<sup>61</sup> al-Musannaf 'Abd al-Razzaaq 11/133. Also reported in al-Mu'jam al-Kabir (10/284) by al-Tabaraani

that the home and room of the child is itself an Islamic ambience. All forms of images, pictures, dogs should not be in the home. This is because the Prophet (PBUH) said "Angels (of Mercy) do not enter a house wherein there is a dog or a picture of a living creature (a human being or an animal).<sup>62</sup> Also, television watching should not be allowed in the home as much as possible. An easy way out is not to install a television in the house at all. Nevertheless, if it "must" be watched or if television "must" be in the home, it must be highly regulated and the child should only watch Islamically certified channels. This falls into the duty of the (Muslim) parents in enjoining what is good and forbidding evil<sup>63</sup>. It has been documented that a child on average spends 3-4 hours a day on the television. In other words, in a lifespan of sixty years<sup>64</sup>, a television watcher will spend 10 years in watching television i.e. a greater part of childhood depending on when he/she attains puberty. This implies that the child spends an ample amount of time in the unreal world, in a virtual world. This is clearly spiritually and of course intellectually and psychologically harmful to the child considering what he/ she is exposed to. Little wonder, some national academy of paediatricians as well as psychology experts and other social scientists warn(s) that children under 24 months of age should not watch any television at all. Furthermore, the house environment should be fortified with divine prescriptions i.e. sayings and actions which debar evil "companions" from coming around the home. Practical steps like constant remembrance of ALLAH, reading the Quran regularly, prescribed supplications for doing specific daily tasks or routine should be regularly done.

Part of keeping an Islamic environment for the child is for the parents to ensure that the friends of the family and by extension the child must be righteous as well as conscious Muslims as Allah has commanded in the glorious Quran, chapter 18 verse 28 that " ...keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e. your companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, etc., and other righteous deeds, etc.) morning and afternoon, seeking His Face or countenance, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world i.e. adornments of the worldly life; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost"<sup>65</sup>. Still on an enabling Islamic environment, the parent must also ensure that they try as much as possible to live in an Islamic neighbourhood, if living in an "Islamic country" is not visible or achievable. It is compulsory for parents and their family to live in an Islamic political arrangement as the prophet has said; I am not responsible (or I disown every Muslim) for any Muslim who stays among polytheists. They asked: Why, Messenger of Allah? He said: Their fires should not be visible to one another.<sup>66</sup> . If it is not possible to achieve such an environment, such that the spiritual health of the child is guaranteed, then Hijra becomes mandatory as Allah says; indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination<sup>67</sup>. Similarly Mu'awiyah narrated that he heard that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "migration

---

<sup>62</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 3225: Book 59, Hadith 36

<sup>63</sup> Quran 3 verse 103

<sup>64</sup> The ages of (the people in) my nation i.e. the Muslims will be between sixty and seventy, and few of them will exceed that." (Sunan ibn Majah, Book 37, Hadith 4377).

<sup>65</sup> In a similar message, Abu Sa'eed narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Do not accompany except a believer, and do not serve your food except to one with *Taqwa* (one who is pious)."

<sup>66</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 2645: Book 15, Hadith 169

<sup>67</sup> Quran 4 verse 97

will not end until repentance ends, and repentance will not end until the sun rises in the west<sup>68</sup>. The parents must know that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: Anyone who associates with a polytheist and lives with him is like him<sup>69</sup>. It must be noted that the tendency for people to leave for Mushrik lands nowadays for “greener” pastures is impermissible and it is a factor that inhibits the safeguarding process for a child.

An important step in the safeguarding process is for the parents to compulsorily live by example so that the child can effectively absorb the teachings the parent pass across thereby making the safeguarding process effective. Allah says; “O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do.<sup>70</sup> He further says; do you order Al-Birr (righteousness of the people/piety and each and every act of obedience) to Allah and forget (to practise it) yourselves.....Have you then no sense?<sup>71</sup>. To this end, the wife must be obedient to the father unless he orders her in sin<sup>72</sup>, the father should not have overbearing conduct on the wife and children amongst other positive actions which are impactful on the child and which guarantees Allah’s help.

The Islamic state has a role in ensuring that children are protected by implementing divine laws of ALLAH which ensures safety and security in the land. In other words, if after implementing all these processes highlighted stated above and there is a child abuse or related cases (which is unlikely because (true) Islamic message is for the perfection of morals or character)<sup>73</sup>, then, the divine heavenly system of Islamic law<sup>74</sup> takes its course and rectification is instituted. The state using its authority will remove the evil with its “hands”.<sup>75</sup>. In the absence of a thorough Islamic state which is the case or reality nowadays, the Muslim must implement the Islamic “state” in his house as much as he can as doing this would serve as a step towards realizing a full-fledged Islamic state. Finally, the parent must constantly seek Allah’s help in safeguarding or protecting their children as it is ALLAH which is the ultimate protector.

### Analyses of case studies

In this section we examine some selected case studies on safeguarding. The approach here is to present a summary of the case studies and analyse them collectively Islamically in a bid to diagnose the problems or fiascos as much as possible and to offer therapeutic prescriptions or solution. This will further bring to term the Islamic safe guarding process as a foolproof one.

---

<sup>68</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 2479 : Book 15, Hadith 3

<sup>69</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 2787: Book 15, Hadith 311

<sup>70</sup> Quran 61 verse 2-3

<sup>71</sup> Quran 2 verse 44

<sup>72</sup> "There is no obedience if it involves disobedience toward Allah. Rather obedience is only (required) in that which is good." (Sunan an-Nasa'i 4205; Book 39, Hadith 57). In a slightly different wording it reads; There is no submission in matters involving God's disobedience or displeasure. Submission is obligatory only in what is good (Sahih Muslim 1840 a; Book 33, Hadith 63). Also reported with slight variations in Sunan Abi Dawud 2625; Book 15, Hadith 149.

<sup>73</sup> Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "I was sent to perfect good character." (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad; Book 1, Hadith 273)

<sup>74</sup> The purpose of this article is not to delve deeply into the nitty-gritty of the Islamic law and its divinely ordained and regulated punishments

<sup>75</sup> Sunan an-Nasa'i 5008: Book 47, Hadith 24

#### Case 1

In the case reported by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) United Kingdom, on behalf of an unnamed local safeguarding board, a baby of 150 days was found “unresponsive” on a sofa by mother while the duo were in a house belonging to the child mother’s friend. It was reported that the mother and child had together slept on the sofa which made the enforcement agency effect an arrest of the mother for “not” deliberately rolling on the child. She was under alcohol influence at the time of incidence cum arrest. Little or more or less nothing is known about the child’s father, the child’s mother in question has an extensive criminal past, she was herself under the care of the local authority with no parental care from the age of ten till she was 18. In particular, she had offensive history of; chronic neglect, disrupted placements; significant alcohol and drug misuse, domestic abuse predating the birth of the child in question (with respect to his sibling) and offending.<sup>76</sup>

#### Case 2

The case centres on the death of a 60 days old boy who was at death suffering from bacterial pneumonia infection alongside dehydration, failure to thrive, norovirus and cerebral palsy. It was gathered that the child having being born prematurely suffered from lungs disease, hole in the heart, haemorrhage in the brain, bad vision and hearing all of which necessitated adequate parental care. Despite the fact that child k and his sibling had been under (a) state protection for about 31 days owing to neglect before the incidence, the mother only received a police caution for cruelty against the child, for an action which should normally attract a jail sentence of six to ten years or a fine of 400 pounds depending whether it is a summary conviction or conviction on indictment under the UK children and young person’s act. The child’s mother in question was herself said to have a history of ; child abuse, growing up under a local authority care, self-harm, offending and homelessness. Similarly, the father also had a child abuse history and also grew up under the care of the local authority.<sup>77</sup>

#### Case 3

In this case the child was said to have died of poisoning by a substance called Methadone. This was confirmed via an autopsy and examination of the child’s feeding cup. Mother confessed and was held to be guilty for manslaughter while the father was tried and a pronouncement cum verdict of manslaughter and child cruelty was passed on him. It was revealed that the child’s parents were drug addicts and were being treated. The father had a history of offending and issues associated with financial management. The family was known to child safeguarding authorities, the father was not receptive to social caring and was seldom available when carers visited their homes. It was also on record that the deceased’s siblings had already being subjected to child protection plans prior to the incidence.<sup>78</sup>

#### Case 4

Here, a case of chronic neglect and emotional abuse was established. It involved three children of the same mother. Despite authorities uncovering the first case of neglect and abuse in 1998, it was not until 2009, that the children were removed from the mother’s “care” to their grandparent’s care and in 2013, the said children were removed from grandparent care to be placed under the care of the local authority. It was revealed that he children had been placed

---

<sup>76</sup> Extracted from a publication of a United Kingdom safeguarding Board, 2015

<sup>77</sup> Extracted from a publication of a United Kingdom safeguarding Board, 2015

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

under a child in need status as well as child protection plan in the past owing to parental neglect issues.<sup>79</sup>

#### Case 5

A pathetic case of the death of a baby of about 49 days old. The child had lived with the mother and her half-brother before her death. The child was discovered to have died as a result of being pressed up against the back of a settee or upholstery sofa on which her mother had slept. She was reported to have been drunk before sleeping. Prior to this incidence which occurred in 2012, the child's mother had earlier been arrested in 2011 for heavy drinking whilst in the possession and care of a child which led to her other son being placed in the foster care at that time. The son was however returned to her after a wrong judgement that there was no need for a social work role. Mother had a history of hospitalization due to an unstable health condition which is aggravated by alcohol ingestion, abstinence from which have been earlier advised by doctors, domestic abuse, alcohol misuse and referral to children's services with respect to her elder son.<sup>80</sup>

#### Case 6

This is a case of sexual and physical abuse. Here, serious or fatal injuries deliberately inflicted on a 20-weeks old child. The father admitted and was convicted of child neglect and thus received a community service sentence. A month prior to this incidence in 2013, a multiplicity of injuries on the child had been seen by care givers. The child in question had been under the care of his father since he was 16 weeks old after he had been in foster care since he was 2 days old. This father had a history of mental problems, domestic abuse, depression, offending with convictions drugs and alcohol use, alleged antisocial or inappropriate sexual behaviour. The mother also had two other children who were also under foster care before the child in question was born, indicating serious and previous signs of child neglect, abuse or related offences on the part of the mother.<sup>81</sup>

#### Case 7

A case involving two children of the same family and mother, one dead and one starved. The cause of the death is not exactly known according to the coroner's statement. The mother of the said children had seven other children including a daughter from another man who was living with the family and who had been earlier raped by the step father, the mother's husband. The parents of the two children in question have a record of child abandonment and neglect, lack of care for a child with special need and cruelty to wards. The parents having turned themselves at the police station, the father was charged with child abuse and evidence concealing while the mother was charged with child abuse only. The remaining children are said to be in good health and now in "protective" custody while the raped girl has been removed to juvenile detention<sup>82</sup>.

#### Case 8

Reported as the worst case of child abuse ever seen by a doctor who had examined over 15000 victims (within the age range of the child in question) of child abuse over the years. The case is that of a four year old boy who was diagnosed to be; brain dead, bleeding internally,

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Extracted from American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) news of 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2015; 8:26 am

fractured in the skull with every two-inch of the body with bruises before he finally succumbed to death. The father who lives with his girlfriend had said that the boy had fallen down thirty stairs but the doctors who examined the child had said the established diagnoses did not fit into the father's alleged account of the event leading to the child's predicament. The child was placed under the care of the father who had a history of domestic violence, alcoholism, prohibited offences and misdemeanour battery by the private agency contracted to run the state foster care system after he had been removed from his mother's care owing to concerns such as the boy being seen in a grocery store unaccompanied. This was done without informing the state department of children and families. At a time before being finally moved to the custody of the father, the child briefly stayed with the grandmother who was herself a licensed foster parent for four months where he reportedly had significant contact with the father. The mother is now seeking a redress in court against the responsible agencies alleging negligence and shortcomings. The father of the child in questions was prosecuted for murder and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment while the girlfriend's punishment is yet to be in public domain. An employee of the department of children and families has since been sacked from work while the agency responsible for the foster care system had its contract terminated but however still functions as a subcontractor in the sector.<sup>83</sup>

#### Case 9

In this case, a six years old boy (now deceased) was seen and reported to have severe bruises, puncture wounds, head, arm, neck and nose related blunt trauma, bloody rectum cum other ailments. The parents had denied doing any harm to the child but only said the injuries must have been a result of a chemical burn to the child in the past from which he had been treated. In a series of later confessions coupled with an autopsy conducted on child as well as a police search on the deceased's family home, a child abuse case was established and confirmed. Both parents are now in law enforcement/security agencies custody with no option of bail.<sup>84</sup>

#### Identified inferable issues and panaceas

From the cases above, there are inferable, obvious cum addressable issues which are reoccurring and common to them. Such identified issues include; use of intoxicants; inappropriate sexual mannerism cum behaviour, negligence of the parents/insensitivity to the plight of child, immaturity of parents; not being able to take care of themselves let alone their children. Failure of state; faulty assessment and support systems, inadequate safety nets for child and so on. Faulty family structure; half parents, no fatherly role, absent father, breakdown of communication between father and child etcetera. Inability to deal with past; depression, spiritual emptiness; lack of *eeman, tawheed* translating into unable to deal with depression, imprudent financial management, non-adherence to Islamic ethos, covering up evil of abusive behaviours, not enjoining good and forbidding evil etcetera.

These issues that protrude from the cases are easily resolvable, preventable or could have been averted under the Islamic safeguarding process and guidelines. For example, a person should not have anything to do with drugs and alcohol as Allah says 'O you who believe! Intoxicants (and all kinds of alcoholic drinks), gambling, arrows for seeking luck are an abomination of satan's handiwork. So avoid strictly all that abomination that you may be

---

<sup>83</sup> Extracted from the Topeka-Capita Journal news of February 17, 2015

<sup>84</sup> Extracted from the 5news online news of April 7, 2015.



successful<sup>85</sup>. The prophet (PBUH) was also reported to have said to Abu Darda' in Sunan Ibn Majah; book 30, hadith 3496 that; 'Do not drink wine for it is the key to all evils'.<sup>86</sup> Evident from all the cases reviewed is the presence of intoxicants which makes a person loose his mind and hence do things that he would ordinarily not have done.

Similarly, inappropriate sexual behaviour such as homosexuality, adultery, paedophilia and other forms of sexual perversions and shameful deeds are strictly prohibited in Islam because of the danger it poses to the society as Allah says in Quran 17 verse 32 among several other verses, such as Quran 4 verse 25; 11verses 82-83; 26 verses 165-166; 21 verse 74; 42 verse 37 'And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily it is a shameful deed and an evil, opening the road to other evils. Following the Islamically prescribed manner of setting up a family such as picking a pious spouse, consummating the *nikkah* Islamically and so on (as already discussed) will help to guard against illicit sex and also prevent a break down in the family structure which leaves children without adequate fatherly or motherly care and in the hands of only either of the parents who are themselves immature, unable to take good care of themselves let alone a child.

Further, the inability of parents to take care of themselves, deal with their pasts, depression and managing financial difficulties is as a result of lack of *tawheed*, poor understanding of the purpose of life and the concept of predestination alongside lack of *taqwa* which empowers man to deal with such life eventualities as well as "problems". The Messenger of ALLAH says; "Wonderment is (what best describes) the affair of the believer, for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (ALLAH), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it"<sup>87</sup>. Ibn 'Abbas also reported that: 'I (He) was behind the Prophet (PBUH) one day when he said: 'O boy! I will teach you a statement: Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah, and when you seek aid, seek Allah's aid. Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do something to benefit you- you would never get any benefit except that Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you- you would never be harmed except that Allah had written for you. The pens are lifted and the pages are dried'<sup>88</sup>. In a society where people have the understanding expressed in this hadiths, safe guarding fiascos will not arise as Allah has said; "... if only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allah, We would have opened upon them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they denied (the messenger) so We seized them for what they were earning"<sup>89</sup>.

Finally, Allah commanded good to all and sundry irrespective of whether such persons are close or distant, adult or child and He spells out clearly the reward for doing good in several places in the glorious Quran including Quran 6 verse 160, 45 verse 15, 16 verse 97, 41 verse 46, 68 verse 35, 38 verse 28 and 45 verse 21. Specifically, He says in Quran 4 verse 36 'Worship Allah and join non with Him in worship and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the

---

<sup>85</sup> Quran 5 verse 90

<sup>86</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah; book 30, hadith 3496

<sup>87</sup> Sahih Muslim 2999 : Book 55, Hadith 82

<sup>88</sup> Jami at-Tirmidhi; Book 37 Hadith 2706

<sup>89</sup> Quran 7 verse 96

wayfarer you meet and those slaves whom your right hand possess. Verily, Allah does not like those as are proud and boastful'.

The importance of doing good to people is stressed in the above verse by virtue of it being associated with the worship of Allah. If it is so crucial to do good to all those mentioned in the above verse, what then about one's offspring/ children who are gifts from Allah, who depend on the parents for their daily needs of feeding and security and for whom the parents are directly accountable.

It is thus quite evident that in the midst of all of these, seeking of (Islamic) and beneficial knowledge is central to man and (by extension) institutions being able to fulfill their role (invariably including parental role in the safe guarding of children) effectively here on earth in preparation for the hereafter. "Corroboratingly", Allah has ordained seeking knowledge and tells of its potency and how to seek it. Allah says; "...Are those who know equal to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember i.e. take heed or get a lesson from Allah's signs and verses<sup>90</sup>. HE further says; "Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge"<sup>91</sup>. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) said; "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim"<sup>92</sup> and also said; "Ask Allah for beneficial knowledge and seek refuge with Allah from knowledge that is of no benefit"<sup>93</sup>.

### **Concluding thoughts**

By and large, the authors have exposed what they consider, the basic safeguarding process in Islam. Though not exhaustive, an attempt has been made to concisely extract and present a model for child protection in Islam from a vast amount of divine prescriptions in the Quran and Sunnah. We have exposed the prevalent safe guarding process vis-à-vis the Islamic one and we have come to the conclusion that conventional safeguarding process relies on the state or government for child protection, it is largely "curative" and sees or conceptualizes protection as exogenously driven and devoid of spirituality while the Islamic safeguarding process focuses on the individual more<sup>94</sup>, it is largely preventive, proactive, practical, universally applicable, endogenously driven and spiritually filled. It relies heavily on revelation with sparse reasoning which makes it ALLAH driven if the creation submits and obeys the Creator. The state only really comes into the picture where the individual fails to do the needful.

Further, it could be clearly easily seen that no solution appears in end for the problems of child protection by following the prevalent safe guarding process as can be deduced from the case studies. Helplessness and ineffectiveness are the words that best describe such a safe guarding process. It is quite evident that to protect/safeguard a child from harm, the parents themselves (ought to) have been protected. This can only be guaranteed by the Islamic safeguarding ethos process which must be followed by the Muslim. Once a particular generation of Muslims have been adequately safeguarded, it becomes intergenerational as they will then be able to protect their offspring or progenies such that (ALLAH willing) the Ummah will be safeguarded from harm. It follows that the tendency for some to regard the Islamic safeguarding

---

<sup>90</sup> Quran 39 verse 9

<sup>91</sup> Quran 35 verse 28

<sup>92</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah; Book 1, Hadith 229

<sup>93</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah 3843; Book 34, Hadith 17

<sup>94</sup> (as Allah is going to ask each matured accountable individual to account for his deed i.e. Islam boils down to individual accountability to ALLAH)

process as ritualistic or mere rituals should be abated or dropped. It must be realized that this world and all that is in it including divine prescription were not created uselessly, without purpose or in play or jest<sup>95</sup>.

Thus the article is sermonic as it increasingly seems that the Muslims who have the divine revelation with them have abandoned it as ALLAH has revealed; "... indeed my people have taken this Qur'an as [a thing] abandoned."<sup>96</sup> , "... then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?<sup>97</sup>. We have to be reminded<sup>98</sup> that we are responsible for our flock and would be called to account on how well we tended the flock as ALLAH has decreed through His messenger that "Surely! everyone of you is a guardian and is responsible for his charges: The Imam (ruler) of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; a man is the guardian of his family (household) and is responsible for his subjects; a woman is the guardian of her husband's home and of his children and is responsible for them; and the slave of a man is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. Surely, everyone of you is a guardian and responsible for his charges." <sup>99</sup>.

## References

- Abbot, P. and Sapsford, R. *Research into Practice: A Reader for Nurses and Health Care Professionals*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) Buckingham; Open University Press, 1997.
- Abd al-Razzaq. S. Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq. Beirut; DKI, n.d.
- Al-Bayhaqi. Al-Sunan al-Kubra. Cairo; Dar Hajr, n.d.
- Al-Bukhari, M. Sahih al-Bukhari. English-Arabic. Translated to English by M.M. Khan. Saudi Arabia. Darussalam. 1997.
- Al-Bukhari, M. Al-Adab al-Mufrad English-Arabic. Translated to English by R. Abdur Rahman. Lebanon; Dar Al-Kotob Al-limiyah. 2011.
- Al-Tabrani, S. A. Al-Mu 'jam al-Kabir. *Cairo: Maktabah bin al-Taymiyyah*, 1994.
- Allen, G. Early Intervention: *The Next Steps: An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government*. Cabinet Office, London. 2011.
- An-Nasa'i. H.A. *Sunan an-Nasai*. English-Arabic. Translated to English by Al-Khattab N. Saudi Arabia; Darussalam, 2007.
- An-Nasa'i. H.A. *Sunan al-Kubra*. Beirut; Muassasah al-Risalah. n.d.
- Appleton, J. V. *The Role of Health Visitors in Identifying and Working with Vulnerable Families in Relation to Child Protection: a Review of the literature*. Journal of Advanced Nursing vol. 20, (1994): 167-175
- Appleton, J. V. *The Concept of Vulnerability in Relation to Child Protection: health visitors' Perceptions*. Journal Of Advanced Nursing. Vol. 20, (1994): 1132-1140

---

<sup>95</sup> Quran 23 verse 115, Quran 21 verse 16

<sup>96</sup> Quran 25 verse 30

<sup>97</sup> Quran 47 verse 24

<sup>98</sup> ALLAH says; "And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers" (Quran 51 verse 55).

<sup>99</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 7138; Book 93, Hadith 2

- Appleton, J. V. *Working With Vulnerable Families: a Health Visiting Perspective*. Journal Of Advanced Nursing. Vol. 23, (1996): 912-918
- Appleton, J. V. *Safeguarding and protecting children: where is health visiting now?* Community Practitioner, 84(11): (2011): 21-25.
- Appleton, J., Harris, M., Oates, J and Kelly, C. *Evaluating Health Visitor Assessments Of Mother-Infant Interactions: A Mixed Methods Study*. International Journal of Nursing Studies vol. 50, (2013): 5–15
- At-Tirmidhi, H. M. Jami at-Tirmidhi. English-Arabic. Translated to English by Abu Khaliyi. Saudi Arabia; Darussalam. 2007.
- Aveyard, H. *Doing a Literature Review in Health And Social Care*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Berkshire ; Open University Press, 2010.
- Barker, J. and Hodes, D. *The Child in Mind: A Child Protection Handbook* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). London; Routledge, 2007
- Barlow, J., Davis, H., McIntosh, E., Patricia, J., Mockford, C., and Stewart-Brown, S. *Role of Home Visiting in Improving Parenting and health in Families at Risk of Abuse and Neglect: results of a multicentre randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation*. Archive of Disease in Childhood, Vol. 92, (2007); 229–233. doi: 10.1136/adc.2006.095117
- Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board. Serious case review in the case of Child BT: overview report. Blackpool: Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board. 2015.
- Booth, A., Papaioannu, D. and Sutton, A. *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review*, London; SAGE. 2012.
- Cowley, S., Caan, W., Dowling, S. and Weir, H.. *What do Health Visitors do? A National Survey of Activities And Service Organisation*. Public Health, vol 121 (2007); 869-879
- Cowley, S., Whittaker, K., Grigulis, A., Malone, M., Donetto, S., Wood, H., Morrow, E. and Maben, J. *Why Health Visiting? A Review of the Literature about Key Health Visitor Interventions, Processes and Outcomes for Children and Families*. Kings College London. 2013.
- Dawud, A. S. Sunan Abu Dawud. English-Arabic. Translated to English by Yaser Qadhi Saudi Arabia; Darussalam. 2008.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. HM Government. 2010.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. HM Government. 2015.
- Duggan, A. Caldera, D., Rodriguez, K, Burel, I., Rhode, C. and Crowne, S. *Impact of A Statewide Home Visiting Program to Prevent Child Abuse*. Child Abuse and Neglect, vol. 31, (2007); 801-827
- Eckenrode, J., Ganzel, B., Henderson, C., Smith, E., Olds, D., Powers, J., Cole, R., Kitzman, H. and Sidora, K. *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect with a Program of Nurse Home Visitation*. The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Vol. 284 (1), (2000); 1355-1391
- Edmond, A., Pollock, J., Deave, T., Bonnell, S., Peters, T. and Harvey, I. *An Evaluation of First parent Health Visitor Scheme*. Archives of Disease in Childhood, vol. 86, (2002); 150–157

- Field, F. *The Foundation years: Preventing Poor Children becoming Poor Adults. The Report for The Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances*. Stationary Office, London. 2010.
- Finkehlor, D. and Korbin, J. *Child Abuse as An International Issue*. Child Abuse & Neglect. Vol. 12. (1988); 3-23.
- Fraser, J., Amstrong, K., Morris, J. and Dadds, M. *Home Visiting Intervention for Vulnerable Families with New-born: Follow-up of a Randomised Controlled Trial*. Child Abuse and Neglect, vol. 24 (11), (2000); 1399-1429
- Gallagher, F. and Jasper, M. *Health Visitors' Experiences of Family Group Conferences in Relation to Child Protection Planning: a Phenomenological Study*. Journal of Nursing Management, vol. 11 (2003); 377-386
- Gomby, D. *The Promise and Limitations of Home Visiting: Implementing Effective Programs*. Child Abuse & Neglect vol. 31, (2007); 793–799
- Graham, H. *Women's' Attitude to the Child Health Services*. Health Visitor, vol. 52, (1979); 175-178
- Hambal, A. B. Al Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal. *Beirut: Daar al Fikr*.1981.
- Hamill, C. and Sinclair, H. *Bracketing – Practical Considerations in Husserlian Phenomenological Research*. Nurse Researcher, Vol. 17, (2010), issue 2.
- Hastrup K. Writing ethnography: state of the art. In Oakley J. & Gallaway H. (Eds.) *Anthropology And Autobiography*. ASA Monographs 29, Routledge, London. 1992.
- Health Visitors Association (HVA). *Protecting The Child-An HVA Guide to Practice and Procedures*. HVA, London.1994.
- Ibn Abi Shaybah. *al-Musannaf fil-Ahadith wal Athar Lil Hafiz*. Dar Al Fikr. 2008.
- Ibn Hibban, B.M. *Sahih ibn Hibban*. Beirut. Dar Al-Kotob Al Ilmiyyah, n.d.
- Ibn Khuzaymah. *Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah*. Beirut. Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.
- Ibn Qayyim. *Tuhfat al-Mowdud bi Ahkam al-Mowlud*. Beirut. Al-Maktaba Al-Assrya, n.d.
- Johnston, G. Independent overview report: Child J. Peterborough: Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board. 2015.
- Kendrick, D., Pritchard, A., Cloke, J. and Barley, M. *Randomised Controlled Trial Assessing the Impact of Increasing Information to Health Visitors about Children's Injuries*. Archives of Disease in Childhood vol. 85, (2001); 366–370
- Kirkpatrick, S., Barlow, J., Stewart-Brown, S. and Davis, H. *Working In Partnership: User Perceptions of Intensive Home Visiting*. Child Abuse Review, vol. 16, (2007); 32-46
- Knott, M. and Latter, S. *Help or Hindrance? Single Unsupported Mothers' Perception of Health Visiting*. Journal of Advanced Nursing, vol. 30(3), (1999); 580-588
- Laming, H. *The Protection of Children in England: a Progress Report*. Stationary Office, London. 2009.
- Ling, M. and Luker, K. *Protecting Children: Intuition and Awareness in the Work of Health Visitors*. Journal of advanced Nursing, vol. 32 (3), (2000); 572-579

- Longfield, A. "Only 1 in 8 children who are sexually abused are identified by professionals". Office of the Children's Commissioner, England. 2015. <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/news/only-1-8-children-who-are-sexually-abused-are-identified-professionals>
- Lupton, C., North, N. and Khan, P. *Working Together or Pulling Apart? The National Health Service and Child Protection Networks*. The Policy Press, Bristol. 2001.
- Machen, I. *The Relevance of Health Visiting Policy to Contemporary Mothers*. Journal of Advanced Nursing, vol. 24, (1996); 350-356
- Majah, M. A. Sunan ibn Majah. English-Arabic. Translated by Al-Khattab N. Saudi Arabia. Darussalam. 2007.
- Munro, E. *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report A Child-centred System*. Crown copyright. 2011.
- Muslim, H. N. Sahih Muslim. English-Arabic. Translated to English by N. Khattab. Saudi Arabia. Darussalam. 2007.
- National Clearing House on Child Abuse and Neglect Information/National Adoption Information Clearing House. *In Focus: Understanding the Effects of Maltreatment on Early Brain Development*. 2001. Accessed on 03.04.2013 at <http://www.nmaimh.org/earlybrain.pdf>
- National Society for Prevention of Cruelty against Children (NSPCC). Child Protection Factsheet: The Child Protection System in the UK. 2010. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Available at; <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- Onyango, P. and Lynch, M. *Implementing the Right to Child Protection: a Challenge for Developing Countries*. The Lancet, Volume 367, Issue 9511, (2006); 693 - 694, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(06)68269-XCite or Link Using DOI
- Onzawa,K., Glover, V., Adams, D., Modi, N., and Kumar, R. *Infant massage improves mother–infant interaction for mothers with postnatal depression*. Journal of Affective Disorders 63, (2001): 201–207.
- Peacock, S., Konrad, S., Watson, E., Nickel, D., Muhajarine, N. *Effectiveness of Home Visiting Programs on Child Outcomes: A Systematic Review*. BMC Public Health, vol. (2013); 13-17 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/17>
- Peckover, S. *Supporting and Policing Mothers: Analysis of the Disciplinary Practices of Health Visiting*. Journal of Advanced Nursing, vol. 38 (4), 2002.
- Peckover, S. *From 'public health' to 'safeguarding children': British health visiting in policy, practice and research*. Children & Society volume 27, (2013); 116–126. DOI:10.1111/j.1099-0860.2011.00370.x
- Radford, L., Corral, S., Bradley, C., Fisher, H., Bassett, C., Howat, N., and Collishaw, S. *Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK Today*. National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), n.d.
- Raynor,P., Rudolf, M., Cooper, K., Marchant, P. and Cottrel, D. *A Randomised Controlled Trial of Specialist Health Visitor Intervention for Failure to Thrive*. Archives of Disease in Childhood vol. 80, (1999); 500–506

- Reeves, S., Kuper, A. and Hodges, B. *Qualitative Research Methodologies: Ethnography*. BMJ;(2008); 337:a1020 doi:10.1136/bmj.a1020
- Saias, T., Lerner, E., Greacen, T et al. *Evaluating Fidelity in Home Visiting Programs: a Qualitative Analysis of 1058 Home Visit Case Notes from 105 Families*. Public Library of Science (PLoS ONE) vol. 7 issue 5. 2012.
- Scannell, J. Serious case review into the death of Child K: overview report. Cambridgeshire: Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board. 2015.
- Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J. F., & Silverman, D. (Eds.). *Qualitative research practice*. UK. Sage. 2004.
- [Shorman](#), J. Documents: Hospital personnel describe abuse to 4-year-old Mekhi Boone as 'the worst ever seen'. The Topeka Capital-Journal. 2015. <http://cjonline.com/news/2015-02-17/court-documents-show-dcf-contractor-missed-signs-abuse-beating-death-boy>
- Simpson, C., Simpson, R., Power, K, Salter, A. and Williams, G. *GPs and Health Visitors' Participation in Child Protection Case Conferences*. Child Abuse Review, vol. 3, (1994); 211-230
- [Sitek](#), Z. "Bella Vista Boy's Death Caused By Rape And Chronic Child Abuse, Prosecutor Says". KFSM. 2015. <http://5news.com/2015/04/07/bella-vista-boys-death-caused-by-rape-and-chronic-child-abuse-prosecutor-says/>
- Staal, I. I. E., Hermannsc Jo, M. A., Schrijversb, A. J. P. and Stel, H. F. V. *Risk assessment of Parents' Concerns at 18 Months in Preventive child Health care Predicted Child Abuse and Neglect*. Child Abuse & Neglect. 2013. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2012.12.002>
- Stanton, J. "Couple arrested after child's corpse is discovered hidden in broken-down Mercedes and malnourished baby is found in house". Mail Online. 2015. Available at ; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3032102/Couple-arrested-child-s-corpse-discovered-hidden-broken-Mercedes-malnourished-baby-house.html>
- Taylor S & James D. *Children at Risk the Changing Role of the Health Visitor*. Health Visitor 10(60), (1987); 329-330
- Taylor, J., Lauuder, W., Moy, M. and Corlett, J. *Practitioner Assessments of 'Good Enough' Parenting: Factorial Survey*. Journal of Clinical Survey, vol. 18, (2009);1180-1189
- The Quran. Muhsin Khan Translation. Riyadh; Muktaba Darusslam.1996.
- The Quran. Saheeh International Translation. Riyadh: Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust. 2012.
- UNICEF. *Child Protection Information Sheet: Unite for Children*. 2006. Accessed on 10.10.12 at [http://www.unicef.org/chinese/protection/files/What\\_is\\_Child\\_Protection.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/chinese/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf)
- Unite/CPHVA Health Visiting Forum. *The Distinctive Contribution of Health Visiting to Public Health and Wellbeing Addressing public health priorities using the Principles of Health Visiting*. Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA). 2007.
- United Kingdom Children Act, 1989; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
- United Kingdom Children and Young Persons Act, 1933; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/23-24/12>

Unnamed local safeguarding children board and Lock, R. Re Subject Child: born February 12: died May 12 [full overview report]. [S.l.]: NSPCC on behalf of an unnamed local safeguarding children board, 2015.

Unnamed local safeguarding children board. A serious case review into the circumstances surrounding Child F. [S.l.]: NSPCC on behalf of an unnamed local safeguarding children board, 2015.

Wiffin, J. and Harrington, K. Child Y, Child X and Child W: serious case review overview report. Havering: Havering Local Safeguarding Children Board. 2015.