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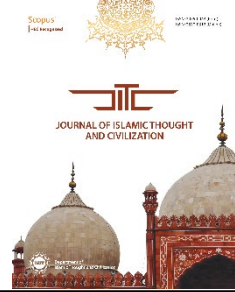
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**Title:** Muslim Parents' Communication Approach to Adolescents according to *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah* by 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār (B. 1951)

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# Muslim Parents' Communication Approach to Adolescents according to *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah* by 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār (B. 1951)

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## Abstract

The current study attempted to define and examine the concept of family in the Islamic context. Specifically, it addressed the issues and challenges related to parental communication in the modern day based on the strategies and suggestions proposed by 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār in his book *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah (Successful Family Upbringing)*. This book is a guide to cultivating and nurturing a Muslim family in order to achieve the best outcomes through effective communication. The ultimate aim is to fortify the familial bonds. The current study used content analysis to examine and interpret the data extracted from the fourth volume of series entitled *Al-Murāhiq (The Adolescents)*. This volume was the study's main reference as it is set against the background of contemporary Muslim family issues along with suggested solutions by the author who identified certain strategies to enhance family ties and bonds. These strategies include kindness to relatives, effective interaction, listening, respecting, non-domination, and not pressurizing the children. Moreover, avoiding provocation of anger, paying attention to their problems as well as being polite to them are also among the strategies to enhance familial ties. The findings highlight the effectiveness of these strategies in bringing about positive parenting. Muslim parents therefore, can use 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār's communication strategies to enhance their children's moral, physical, mental, and spiritual development.

**Keywords:** 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār, adolescent, *al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*, communication, Muslim family

## Introduction

Good communication skills within the family undoubtedly play an important role for the overall societal well-being and harmony.<sup>1</sup> A good emotional bond and relationship between parents

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<sup>1</sup>Asamenew Demessie Bireda, and Jace Pillay, "Perceived Parent-Child Communication and Well-Being among Ethiopian Adolescents," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 109-17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2017.1299016>.

and their adolescent children has been well documented to be effective in creating a stable society.<sup>2</sup>

Communication is more than just exchanging messages or information. Parents need to adopt different approaches and strategies while communicating with their teens since the adolescence phase differs from that of childhood. Visible physical and psychological changes can be seen as children approach their teenage phase.<sup>3</sup> Hence, failure to communicate effectively and adequately with adolescents may impact family connections, adolescent behaviour, and their trust in parents. It may result in mental and emotional turmoil as well as hampering the social interactions.<sup>4</sup> Communication issues therefore, should not be regarded lightly.<sup>5</sup>

The current study focused on 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār's book *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah* which is used as a primary source to study the challenges faced by modern Muslim families, especially pertaining to parental communication with their teenagers. This book is set against the background of contemporary Muslim family issues along with suggested solutions by the author.

*Arḥām* or *usrah* is an Arabic word meaning love.<sup>6</sup> A happy family does not engage in hostility or verbal abuse. A family is a place to relax where an individual finds serenity and peace. According to the Islamic viewpoint, a prosperous family upholds a link with Allah and bases its family life on divine values.<sup>7</sup> In a hadīth narrated by Abī 'Īsā Muhammad bin 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), from 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "Allah, Most Blessed and Most High, said: "I am Allah, and I am Al-Raḥmān. I created the *rahīm* (womb) and named it after My Name. So whoever keeps good relations with it, I keep good relation with him, and whoever severs it, I am finished with him".<sup>8</sup>

Qur'ān also emphasises maintaining good relationships and engaging in good deeds with family members in Al-Nisa' [4] verse 1. An Andalusian Qur'ānic expert, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, opined that *ṣilah Al-Rahīm* (family ties)

<sup>2</sup>Sabina Kapetanovic, and Therése Skoog, "The Role of the Family's Emotional Climate in the Links between Parent-Adolescent Communication and Adolescent Psychosocial Functioning," *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology* 49, no. 2 (February 22, 2021): 141-54, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-020-00705-9>.

<sup>3</sup>Katrina L. Pariera, and Jeanine W. Turner, "Invitational Rhetoric between Parents and Adolescents: Strategies for Successful Communication," *Journal of Family Communication* 20, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 175-88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2020.1729157>.

<sup>4</sup>Alan Sillars, Daniel J. Canary, and Melissa Tafoya, "Communication, Conflict, and the Quality of Family Relationships," in *The Routledge Handbook of Family Communication*, ed. Anita L. Vangelisti and Anita L. Vangelisti (Routledge, 2003), 437-70, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410609564>.

<sup>5</sup>Bonita F Stanton et al., "Parental Underestimates of Adolescent Risk Behavior: A Randomized, Controlled Trial of a Parental Monitoring Intervention," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 26, no. 1 (January 2000): 18-26, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1054-139X\(99\)00022-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1054-139X(99)00022-1).

<sup>6</sup>Soraya Altorki, *Women in Saudi Arabia: Ideology and Behavior among the Elite* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986); Nabisah Ibrahim, Siti Rozaina Kamsani, and Julia Champe, "Understanding the Islamic Concept of *Usrah* and Its Application to Group Work," *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work* 40, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 163-86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01933922.2015.1017067>.

<sup>7</sup>M. H. Islam et al., "Breastfeeding and Career Care: Is There Any Conflict of Interest? An Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 8, no. 11 (December 30, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v8-i11/4965>.

<sup>8</sup>Muhammad b Esa al-Tirmidhī, *Bāb Mā jā'a Fī Qaṭiati al-Rahīmi, Abwāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah*, no. 1907.

must be fulfilled and breaking it is illegal. Prophet Muhammad, also instructs family members to maintain their *silah Al-Rahīm* despite their religious differences.<sup>9</sup>

One of the challenges facing Muslim parents in fulfilling Allah's command to educate their children is managing their adolescent children. Adolescents typically reject their parents' guidance and more often than not, resort to arguments when criticised by them.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is important that Muslim families must adopt appropriate techniques in accordance with Islamic beliefs to guide their children to the right path.

Physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological education for adolescents is necessary as they navigate through life and its challenges.<sup>11</sup> The emotional development of adolescents is important for them to feel safe and secure and protect them against both founded and unfounded fears.<sup>12</sup> It is the duty of parents therefore, to ensure the satisfaction of their children in their life.<sup>13</sup> Parents can achieve this goal by developing and inculcating strong values in their children during their adolescence.<sup>14</sup> A healthy home environment can also be created through this which would aid in the development of adolescents' personalities. Studies have suggested that an unhealthy home environment can lead to a moral breakdown.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, healthy communication between family members increases the quality of parent-children relationship which hence, contributes to the well-being of the child.<sup>16</sup> Good communication further allows the adolescents to express their views and opinions freely and without any fear or embarrassment. This creates a feeling of reassurance among them, elevates their level of confidence, and decreases their feeling of loneliness. Parental encouragement and support

<sup>9</sup>A. A. al-Qurtubī, *Tafsīr Al-Qurtubī* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2009).

<sup>10</sup>A. K. Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah: Al-Murāhiq [Successful Family Upbringing Series: The Adolescents]*. (Riyadh, KSA: Mu'assasah al-Islām al-Yawm., 2011).

<sup>11</sup>Ezihe Loretta Ahanonu, and Karien Jooste, "Adolescents' Interpretation of the Concept of Wellness: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of Caring Sciences* 5, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 337-45, <https://doi.org/10.15171/jcs.2016.035>; Massoumeh Mangeli et al., "Exploring the Challenges of Adolescent Mothers From their Life Experiences in the Transition to Motherhood: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of Family and Reproductive Health* 11, no. 3 (September 2017): 165-73.

<sup>12</sup>Carolyn Bartick-Ericson, "Attachment Security and the School Experience for Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents in Special Education," *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* 11, no. 1 (March 2006): 49-60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632750500393326>.

<sup>13</sup>Mauricio Salgado, Luis González, and Alejandra Yáñez, "Parental Involvement and Life Satisfaction in Early Adolescence," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (February 17, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.628720>.

<sup>14</sup>Sara L. Bryson et al., "Parents, Peers, and Low Self-Control: Exploring the Impact of Time Varying Factors Associated with Deviance in Early- and Middle-Adolescence," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 84 (January 2023): 102029, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2022.102029>.

<sup>15</sup>Margareta Karlsson et al., "Community Nurses' Experiences of Ethical Problems in End-of-life Care in the Patient's Own Home," *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 27, no. 4 (December 15, 2013): 831-38, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6712.2012.01087.x>.

<sup>16</sup>Bireda and Pillay, "Perceived Parent-Child Communication and Well-Being among Ethiopian Adolescents.," Xinwen Bi and Shuqiong Wang, "Parent-Adolescent Communication Quality and Life Satisfaction: The Mediating Roles of Autonomy and Future Orientation," *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* Volume 14 (July 2021): 1091-99, <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S317389>.

can further boost the feeling of reliability.<sup>17</sup> Developing children's religious understanding and knowledge is crucial which includes broadening their perspectives by combining worldly concerns with the hereafter (*ukhrawī*). Exercising leadership, showing love and affection, and offering undivided attention to children are additional skills that parents must possess which are described in detail in the *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah*.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. Methodology

Qualitative and content analysis approaches were adopted to study the research questions and to achieve the objectives. Qualitative content analysis is one of the several qualitative methods currently available which analyse the data and interprets its meaning.<sup>19</sup> According to Downe-Wamboldt,<sup>20</sup> content analysis is a methodical and objective way to reach a conclusion using oral, visual, or written evidence to explain and measure the events. As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying the phenomena. For the prerequisite and successful content analysis, the data of the current study was reduced to concepts that described the research phenomenon by creating categories, concepts, a model, conceptual system, or conceptual map. At the same time, the current study used the types and sources of secondary data obtained from results, articles, and reference books that discussed topics related to research theme.<sup>21</sup>

The researchers used 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār's fourth volume, *The Adolescents*, to extract the data and achieve the study objectives. The current study observed three limitations. Firstly, it only focused on Muslim parents' communication with their adolescent children. Secondly, it used qualitative method of content analysis without involving study participants. Thirdly, it did not focus on a specific place or time period.

## 3. 'Abd al-Karīm Bakkār – An Introduction of the Author

'Abd al-Karīm bin Muḥammad al-Ḥasan Bakkār was born in 1951 (1370 H) in Homs, Syria. He received his Bachelor's degree in 1973 at Faculty of Arabic, al-Azhar University, Egypt. Afterwards, he completed his Master's degree in 1975 and Doctorate of Philosophy in 1979 from the same University in the field of *Uṣūl Lughah*. Moreover, he also served as an instructor in language and education at Islamic University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud in al-Qasim in 1976. Afterwards, he moved to King Khalid University in Abha in 1989 and became a professor in 1992. In 2002, he resigned from his post to focus on writing and actively developed Muslim thought and

<sup>17</sup>Yan R. Xia et al., "Chinese Adolescents' Decision-Making, Parent-Adolescent Communication and Relationships," *Marriage and Family Review* 36, no. 1-2 (March 15, 2004): 119–45, [https://doi.org/10.1300/J002v36n01\\_06](https://doi.org/10.1300/J002v36n01_06).

<sup>18</sup>Adam Dinham, and Martha Shaw, "Religious Literacy through Religious Education: The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief," *Religions* 8, no. 7 (June 28, 2017): 119, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8070119>.

<sup>19</sup>M. Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012).

<sup>20</sup>Barbara Downe-Wamboldt, "Content Analysis: Method, Applications, and Issues," *Health Care for Women International* 13, no. 3 (January 1992): 313-21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07399339209516006>.

<sup>21</sup>Abur Hamdi Usman, Umar Muhammad Noor, and Azwar, "The Relevance of al-Kay's Treatment according to the Perspective of Prophetic Hadith," *Al-Irsyad: Journal of Islamic and Contemporary Issues* 8, no. 2 (December 2023): 1119-1131. <https://doi.org/10.53840/alirsyad.v8i2.389>.

its civilisation.<sup>22</sup>

He wrote about 40 books and published more than 150 scientific articles in Arabic newspapers and magazines on education and Islamic thought. His writings cover Islamic civilisation, emerging issues, thoughts, and education. He also engaged in preaching certain activities. Some of Bakkār's writings have been translated into several languages.<sup>23</sup> He also wrote for Al-Bayan magazines based in London, that is, *Al-Islām Al-Yawm*, and *Mahaarati* magazines. Additionally, for the past 20 years, he has been regularly contributing articles to *Islamtoday* website. Moreover, he has also been contributing hundreds of scientific forums in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, Sudan, Uganda, and Indonesia.<sup>24</sup>

His writings include *Chapters in Objective Thinking, Towards A Deeper Understanding of The Islamic Reality, For A Comprehensive Civilized, An Introduction to Integrated Development, Living in Difficult Times, Pauses for The Mind and Soul, Renewing Awareness, Teamwork Achievement, A Step Towards Right Thinking, Charitable Work Culture, The New Muslim, The New Rules, Pages in Education and Personal Advancement, Successful Family Upbringing Series, To My Sons and Daughters* and others.<sup>25</sup>

Bakkār also ran a live podcast which notched over a hundred hours.<sup>26</sup> He frequently delivered general and specialised lectures at various colleges and cultural institutions. Additionally, he also hosted radio and television programmes on Saudi TV, Saudi Radio, Al-Majd Satellite Channel, and Bursa Broadcasting (Turkey). He founded the Council of Muslim World League's International Organization of Islamic Media and serves in the advisory board of Islam Today group.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. Synopsis of *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah* (Successful Family Upbringing Series)

Bakkār is the author of *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah* published in 2009. The first volume is called *Masār Al-Ushrah* (Home Trajectory), followed by *Al-Qawā'id Al-'Ashr* (Child Upbringing), *Al-Tawāṣul Al-Asrī* (Family Interactions), *Al-Murāhiq* (The Adolescents), *Mushkilāt Al-Atfāl* (Children's Problems), and *Ṭiflun Yaqra'* (A Child Reads). These all volumes were not released at once and the most recent was released in 2010. All these books have been reprinted up to their third edition and have also been translated into Indonesian and English languages under the titles *Serial Membina Keluarga Islam* (*Building a Muslim Family Series*) and *Successful Family Upbringing Series*, respectively. These translations are available in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and The Philippines among other countries.<sup>28</sup>

This book provides an essential guide to raising and nurturing a successful Muslim family. Moreover, it also suggests methods to improve family communication and strengthen familial relationship. The first volume, *Masār Al-Ushrah* (Home Trajectory), outlines the key ideas, guidelines, and concepts to educate children and suggest ways to handle potentially challenging family issues. In *Al-Qawā'id al-'Ashr* (Child Upbringing), the second volume, the author discusses ten key principles that underpin a child's education. *Al-Tawāṣul Al-Asr* (Family Interactions), the

<sup>22</sup>A. K. Bakkār, *Mengasah Pola Pikir Anak [Establishing a Child's Mindset]*. (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2021).

<sup>23</sup>A. K. Bakkār, "Al-Sīrah al-Dhātiyah," [Curriculum Vitae] <https://www.alukah.net/web/bakkar/cv/>, 2002.

<sup>24</sup>Bakkār, *Mengasah Pola Pikir Anak*.

<sup>25</sup>Bakkār, "Al-Sīrah al-Dhātiyah."

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Bakkār, *Mengasah Pola Pikir Anak*.

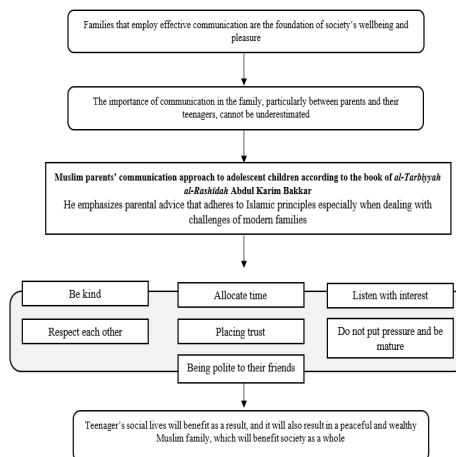
<sup>28</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah: Al-Murāhiq*.

third volume, discusses various approaches and communication techniques to create a harmonious relationship within the family. *Al-Murāhiq* (The Adolescents), the fourth volume and the primary source for the current study, addresses the issue of parental communication with their teenagers. This is because majority of the parents are unable to comprehend emotional challenges faced by their children in transitioning from childhood to adolescence. The fifth volume discusses ten most important challenges that children typically encounter. Additionally, it also teaches them how to recognise and handle these challenges. In the most recent sixth volume, the author strongly urges parents to encourage their children to read and appreciate books.<sup>29</sup>

The fourth volume, *Al-Murāhiq* (The Adolescents), is divided into five subtopics. The first topic discusses the teenage phase and its characteristics faced by teenagers. The second and third subtopics delve into the relationship between parents and their teenaged children along with guidance and suggestions from the author. These two subtopics have been referenced in this research to discuss about certain methods that parents should adopt while communicating with their teenaged children. The fourth and fifth subtopics discuss effective ways through which parents may deal with the challenges of raising their teenaged children. Therefore, this book is considered suitable to be used as a reference to discuss the topic of family communication.<sup>30</sup>

## 5. Findings

The main theme of *Al-Tarbiyyah Al-Rashīdah* is family communication which has been discussed according to the child's developmental stage. In each different stage, possible difficulties are explored accompanied with suggested solutions. The study emphasised parental counselling that adheres to Islamic principles and teachings, especially among modern families. According to Bakkār,<sup>31</sup> parents must make time for their children, listen to them with interest and curiosity, respect them, trust them, avoid pressurising them, and act maturely and politely towards them. All the above mentioned characteristics play a key role to an effective communication strategy. Figure 1 describes the findings.



**Figure 1.** Communication Approach to Manage the Challenges to deal with Adolescents

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

### 5.1 Be Kind to Fellow Believers

Bakkār suggests that the relationship between parents and adolescents is just like that of a Muslim brother and sister which needs to be prioritised more than anything else. More importantly, parents must accept the fact that it is their responsibility to treat their children in line with Sharia principles which emphasize the qualities of friendliness, love, forgiveness, gratefulness, patience, and generosity. Parents, at the same time, need to be aware that their teens can mimic their behaviour, such as raising their voice, talking back, and behaving rudely. Creating a calm and polite environment, therefore, is vital in fostering communication.<sup>32</sup>

In Qur'ān, chapter Luqman [31] verse 19, Allah instructs His people to speak politely and not be given to shouting or screaming. A terrible voice is described as akin to a donkey's as the latter is said to enjoy criticising and cursing.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, parents' abusive language can adversely affect their adolescents' mental health. The rectification of this behaviour is important as it can be both preventive and curative as well.<sup>34</sup>

People closest to us are our family members. A family filled with love and affection for one another is born from the strong bond created in the family. It affects all facets of life including the development of soul and morals. An adolescent's mental health is therefore, negatively impacted if they are at the receiving end of their parents' psychological abuse.<sup>35</sup> According to Rizvi and Najam,<sup>36</sup> adolescents who experience this mistreatment would feel burdened, unappreciated, and unwanted.

Showing kindness to family members is a fundamental principle in Islam. No one suffers by being kind. Therefore, *mawaddah wa rahmah* (pursuit of love and affection), described in the Qur'ān, also refers to being kind to one's family members<sup>37</sup> to create familial happiness.<sup>38</sup> In Islam,

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<sup>32</sup>Yan Hendra, and Ribut Pribadi, "Family Communication Model in Forming Pious Children," *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (February 12, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v2i1.145>.

<sup>33</sup>al-Qurtubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī*.

<sup>34</sup>William Bernet, Marianne Z. Wamboldt, and William E. Narrow, "Child Affected by Parental Relationship Distress," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 55, no. 7 (July 2016): 571-79, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2016.04.018>.

<sup>35</sup>Chris Hoeboer et al., "The Effect of Parental Emotional Abuse on the Severity and Treatment of PTSD Symptoms in Children and Adolescents," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 111 (January 2021): 104775, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104775>; Syeda Fariha Iram Rizvi, and Najma Najam, "Parental Psychological Abuse toward Children and Mental Health Problems in Adolescence," *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences* 30, no. 2 (March 2014): 256-60; Je-Yeon Yun, Geumsook Shim, and Bumseok Jeong, "Verbal Abuse Related to Self-Esteem Damage and Unjust Blame Harms Mental Health and Social Interaction in College Population," *Scientific Reports* 9, no. 1 (April 4, 2019): 5655, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-42199-6>.

<sup>36</sup>Iram Rizvi, and Najam, "Parental Psychological Abuse toward Children and Mental Health Problems in Adolescence."

<sup>37</sup>Dini Farhana Baharudin et al., "Loving Like I Was Loved: Mother-Child Relationship from the Malay Muslims' Perspective," in *International Handbook of Love: Transcultural and Transdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Claude-Hélène Mayer and Elisabeth Vanderheiden (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 333-49, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45996-3\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45996-3_18).

<sup>38</sup>Ing-Mari Söderström, Eva Benzein, and Britt-Inger Saveman, "Nurses' Experiences of Interactions with Family Members in Intensive Care Units," *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 17, no. 2 (June 13, 2003): 185-92, <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1471-6712.2003.00222.x>.



loving one's family is even more important than loving one's self. This is in line with the hadīth, "One of you is not truly a believer until he loves his brother as he loves himself."<sup>39</sup>

## 5.2 Allocate Time

Good parents prioritise their children and this translates into allocating time to engage in activities together. In order to transfer positive values in adolescents, Bakkār urges parents to spend quality time with their children and indulge in their interests. The invisible wall between the old and young can be broken by engaging in games and participating in daily household activities. Here, parents must take the lead and, in that process, make attempts to understand their children's physical, emotional, and social needs.

Mothers, in particular, play an important role. They can engage in participatory decision-making with their teens by eliciting their opinions on household matters, for instance, on furniture arrangements, choosing a cuisine to cook together, and sharing personal stories with them. This situation would make teenagers more at ease to share their problems and future plans with their parents. One such example of successful communication is when adolescents start talking about "sensitive" issues, such as, crimes, sex, and morally questionable acts. Many newspapers have reported how parents get shocked when they learn that their children have committed petty crimes or have been engaged in immoral activities. The likely explanation is that they were absent when their children needed them and were seeking help or solace from external parties.<sup>40</sup>

A good two-way communication can also help adolescents develop a better personality, identify their place in the family, and learn empathy. Additionally, it aids in developing social skills linked to resilience, self-confidence, and social support.<sup>41</sup> Self-confidence, good academic performance, decrease in depressive episodes, and non-indulgence in using illegal substances act as a product of sound communication between parents and children. It has been reported that a child's self-confidence increases with the effective father-child interaction, greater than that of mother-child interaction.<sup>42</sup> Lack of communication between parents and adolescents, on the other hand, has been shown to increase the severity of depressive symptoms in adolescents.<sup>43</sup> This may result in lower life satisfaction leading to misunderstandings and disputes with their parents.<sup>44</sup> It also increases their risk of engaging in pre-marital sex.<sup>45</sup>

The above discussion highlights as to how communication shapes adolescents' behaviours and personalities. Working parents can still allocate time to communicate with their adolescents by initiating efforts to ensure that communication is a part of family's daily routine. A good communication is judged by the effectiveness and quality of a discourse rather than by the amount of time spent.

<sup>39</sup>M. I. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Damascus, Syria: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002).

<sup>40</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*.

<sup>41</sup>Rosemary A Thompson, *Nurturing Future Generations: Promoting Resilience in Children and Adolescents through Social, Emotional and Cognitive Skills* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>42</sup>Bireda and Pillay, "Perceived Parent-Child Communication and Well-Being among Ethiopian Adolescents."

<sup>43</sup>Qiongwen Zhang et al., "Parent-Adolescent Communication and Early Adolescent Depressive Symptoms: The Roles of Gender and Adolescents' Age," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (May 10, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.647596>.

<sup>44</sup>Bi and Wang, "Parent-Adolescent Communication Quality and Life Satisfaction: The Mediating Roles of Autonomy and Future Orientation."

<sup>45</sup>Adam A. Rogers et al., "Quality of Parent-Adolescent Conversations about Sex and Adolescent Sexual Behavior: An Observational Study," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 57, no. 2 (August 2015): 174–78, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2015.04.010>.

### 5.3 Listen with Interest

It is important for parents to listen to their adolescent children, especially if they are having trouble in expressing themselves. A common mistake that parents commit is discussing issues and talking to their children while engaged in other activities, such as while cleaning the house, cooking or reading the newspaper. This typically leads to adolescents feeling that their parents do not care enough to listen to them patiently. It is quite important for parents to listen to their children carefully as to what they are trying to convey. This is a key to maintain an open line of communication between them. This also aids in the maturation and growth processes of their children.<sup>46</sup>

Listening is an important component of a two-way communication.<sup>47</sup> Studies have shown that adolescents listen to and follow their parents' instructions if the latter show genuine interest to understand them and are willing to help them solve their problems.<sup>48</sup> Parents, therefore, must show willingness to listen to the concerns of their teenage children and treat them with respect, demonstrate practical listening skills, and watch their body language.<sup>49</sup> Parents who "listen" understand that this is a first crucial step in a conversation which allows teens to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs honestly.<sup>50</sup> In short, adolescents' opinions should be heard and valued. However, this does not imply that parents must concur with every opinion expressed by their children. Rather, it indicates their willingness to attempt to comprehend their teens' inner thoughts.<sup>51</sup> A two-way communication will not occur if parents turn a deaf ear to their teen's problems. Persistence of this will eventually lead to the teens seeking out a third party, such as their friends, when in trouble or in dilemma and who may not be able to offer a wise solution to their problems. Hence, it is imperative parents make genuine efforts to listen to their children and help them navigate through life's challenges.

### 5.4 Respect Each Other

A person who treats people with respect would earn the respect of others. Exercising a good leadership and modelling respect for other family members is the duty of a parent. Bakkār<sup>52</sup> asserts that a father should express his love, respect, and appreciation for his teen's viewpoints who, in turn, would likely reciprocate. A respectable parent should also refrain from yelling, ignoring, or making fun of his teenage children as the latter may often mimic this undesirable behaviour. Moreover, a parent may come to accept and forgive their children's mistakes if they keep their good traits in mind, such as praying regularly, studying, forgiving, and being trustworthy among others. Additionally, when prioritising their adolescents' interests, such as by attending their

<sup>46</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*.

<sup>47</sup>Julie A. Fischer et al., "Development of Guidelines for Adults on How to Communicate with Adolescents about Mental Health Problems and Other Sensitive Topics," *SAGE Open* 3, no. 4 (January 1, 2013): 215824401351676, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013516769>.

<sup>48</sup>Warunee Fongkaew et al., "Do Thai Parents Really Know about the Sexual Risk Taking of Their Children? A Qualitative Study in Bangkok," *Nursing and Health Sciences* 14, no. 3 (September 6, 2012): 391–97, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-2018.2012.00703.x>.

<sup>49</sup>Fischer et al., "Development of Guidelines for Adults on How to Communicate with Adolescents about Mental Health Problems and Other Sensitive Topics."

<sup>50</sup>Sura Hart, and Victoria Kindle Hodson, *Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids: 7 Keys to Turn Family Conflict into Co-Operation* (California, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2006).

<sup>51</sup>María Verónica Svetaz, Diego Garcia-Huidobro, and Michele Allen, "Parents and Family Matter," *Primary Care: Clinics in Office Practice* 41, no. 3 (September 2014): 489-506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pop.2014.05.004>.

<sup>52</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*.

graduation ceremony and other important events despite their busy schedule, indicate parental respect and acknowledgement.<sup>53</sup>

The behaviour of adolescents often changes in tandem with that of their parents.<sup>54</sup> Trustworthy parents who remain steadfast in their moral principles are a source of inspiration to their children.<sup>55</sup> Adults may foster respect among their family members by cooperating with their teens, equitably valuing their own and the children's needs along with reviewing and discarding their preconceived notions about children.<sup>56</sup> Islam prioritises respect in the context of *ḥabl min al-nās* (relationship between humans). Human beings must respect and value the good behaviours of others by showing them respect.<sup>57</sup>

Respect should also be the foundation of all interactions between parents and adolescents. The adolescent stage is considered as a transitional period into adulthood where teens demand to be treated as adults. The respect shown by parents also demonstrates their willingness to lower their position in the familial hierarchy to meet their adolescents' needs leading them to respect and value their parents even more.

### 5.5 Putting Trust

Parents sometimes view and treat their teens in the same manner as a 10-year-old is treated which usually leads to problems. It is important for parents to learn to curb their tendency to be domineering to their teens and give them the freedom to handle their problems themselves. It is necessary for parents to have faith in their teens' ability to manage themselves, respect their feelings, and treat them with dignity. Moreover, they should be allowed to make their own choices and parents must listen to them whenever they have problems by providing them counselling.<sup>58</sup>

Severe psychological control is a contributing factor to behavioural and social issues, according to Qian et al.<sup>59</sup> authors have explained that strict fathers often produce delinquent teens,<sup>60</sup> while strict mothers produce the opposite effect.<sup>61</sup> It highlights the necessity for a balance

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Svetaz, Garcia-Huidobro, and Allen, "Parents and Family Matter"; Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson, *Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids: 7 Keys to Turn Family Conflict into Co-Operation*.

<sup>55</sup>Sura Hart, and Victoria Kindle Hodson, *Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids: 7 Keys to Turn Family Conflict into Co-Operation*.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Bayram Tay, "Prospective Teachers' Views Concerning the Values to Teach in the Course of Social Sciences," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2009): 1187-91, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.214>.

<sup>58</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*.

<sup>59</sup>Guoying Qian et al., "Parental Psychological Control and Adolescent Social Problems: The Mediating Effect of Emotion Regulation," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 13 (October 25, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.995211>.

<sup>60</sup>Gregory S. Pettit et al., "Antecedents and Behavior-Problem Outcomes of Parental Monitoring and Psychological Control in Early Adolescence," *Child Development* 72, no. 2 (March 2001): 583-98, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00298>.

<sup>61</sup>Ronald L. Simons et al., "A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Link between Corporal Punishment and Adolescent Antisocial Behavior," *Criminology* 38, no. 1 (February 7, 2000): 47-80, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2000.tb00883.x>.

between parents exercising their power and how that power should be exercised is dependent on each parent's hierarchical position.<sup>62</sup>

Parents who exercise strict psychological control over their children would feel disappointed when they behave differently than predicted. They may accuse them of wrongdoing and may resort to ignoring or shaming them, leading to their teens feeling inadequate, frustrated, helpless and dejected. It prevents them from developing good cognitive and emotional skills as well as positive emotions. Fearful of expressing their feelings or opinions and unable to communicate with others, they are likely to engage in destructive deeds.<sup>63</sup> Studies have shown that authoritative parenting style is more suitable and effective in instilling discipline and good behaviour among children.<sup>64</sup>

From the foregoing, it is clear that parents must show faith in decision-making abilities of their teenage children. Additionally, they can take advantage of their maturity and experience as an adult to offer guidance and advice to their teens. They can, for instance, explain to their teens the advantages and disadvantages of a particular proposed action allowing their teens to make their own decisions wisely. Additionally, the guidance should not take the form of directives that require the child to abide solely by their parents' preferences. However, it is important that the actions are not outside the bounds of Sharia laws and principles. This would teach them to be accountable for this world and the hereafter.<sup>65</sup>

#### 5.6 Avoid Pressure and be Mature

Even with the slightest provocation, adolescents can lose their composure. The teenage phase is marked by significant physical and psychological changes which makes it difficult for them to manage their mood and deal with challenging situations. Therefore, parents play an important role in guiding, monitoring, and controlling their adolescents' emotions. They must exercise wisdom which means using their hearts as well as their minds, according to Bakkār. If all other methods prove to be unsuccessful, punishment may be administered. Adolescents have the right to express their feelings and a two-way dialogue can often lead towards a just outcome and both parties must refrain from using harsh language.<sup>66</sup> Some parents interfere in their adolescents' lives unnecessarily by imposing their will without due consideration to their children's feelings and opinions and state of mind. The outcome may not be favourable to parents as children may begin to view their parents as strangers, uninterested in their issues, and consequently feel powerless to interact with them. Therefore, the relationship between parents and adolescents would be further strained if the youngster is reprimanded heavily, or undue pressure is mounted on them. There is every likelihood that these situations can give rise to a decline in parental influence on their teens.

Some parents discipline their adolescents harshly even if they commit a minor mistake while refraining from complimenting them when they do well. This creates rage in them, and over time,

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<sup>62</sup>Qian Wang, Hoi-Wing Chan, and Li Lin, "Antecedents of Chinese Parents' Autonomy Support and Psychological Control: The Interplay between Parents' Self-Development Socialization Goals and Adolescents' School Performance," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 41, no. 11 (November 31, 2012): 1442-54, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9760-0>.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Hamid Masud, Ramayah Thurasamy, and Muhammad Shakil Ahmad, "Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement of Young Adolescents: A Systematic Literature Review," *Quality and Quantity* 49, no. 6 (November 30, 2015): 2411-33, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-014-0120-x>.

<sup>65</sup>Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Marriage among Educated Javanese Youth," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (October 8, 2005): 441-59, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002246340500024X>.

<sup>66</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*.

they would express this anger by arguing or being rude towards their parents.<sup>67</sup> Generally, adolescents are more sensitive to unfavourable comments as compared to younger children or adults.<sup>68</sup> It disrupts their mental development as they are frequently pressurized due to their academic and psychological environments with parents usually having high expectations on their adolescents.<sup>69</sup> Relationships, based solely on academic success, place undue pressure on adolescents, leading towards disagreements with their parents and deviant behaviour.<sup>70</sup> These, in turn, would provoke anger and withdrawal of affection from their parents.<sup>71</sup>

Parents who frequently criticise their children, especially in public, tend to damage their children's self-esteem. Toxic parents frequently blame their children, lack empathy, have untamed egos, and do not value their children's efforts.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, parents must adopt a simple approach and be neither harsh nor overly gentle when dealing with adolescents. An effective communication is one where the outcome is fair and parties feel respected without feeling strained.

All of the above is part of the process of raising children. The Holy Qur'an states that children are a test on this earth. Therefore, parents must be patient and mature when dealing with adolescents as they are still learning about life. Wise Muslim parents would adhere to the words of the Prophet Muhammad, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk about what is good or keep quiet."<sup>73</sup> Therefore, Muslim parents must refrain from uttering harsh words to their children, must not put undue pressure on them, and be mature while dealing with them.

### 5.7 Being Polite to Adolescent's Friends

It is not an understatement that parents who are kind and courteous to their children's friends would generate respect. An important reason for this is that during this stage, teenagers prioritize friendships to a great extent. Parents who communicate well with their adolescents are typically familiar with their friends.<sup>74</sup> According to Haag et al.,<sup>75</sup> parents and peers are adolescents' top

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Yun Zhuang, Wenfeng Feng, and Yu Liao, "Want More? Learn Less: Motivation Affects Adolescents Learning from Negative Feedback," *Frontiers in Psychology* 08 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00076>.

<sup>69</sup>Bakkār, *Al-Tarbiyyah al-Rashīdah*; Semih Kaynak, Seda Sevgili Koçak, and Ümre Kaynak, "Measuring Adolescents' Perceived Parental Academic Pressure: A Scale Development Study," *Current Psychology* 42, no. 2 (January 4, 2023): 1477-89, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01347-w>; Mao-min Jiang et al., "The Influence of Academic Pressure on Adolescents' Problem Behavior: Chain Mediating Effects of Self-Control, Parent-Child Conflict, and Subjective Well-Being," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (September 21, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.954330>.

<sup>70</sup>Kaynak, Sevgili Koçak, and Kaynak, "Measuring Adolescents' Perceived Parental Academic Pressure: A Scale Development Study."

<sup>71</sup>Janis M. Shaw and William A. Scott, "Influence of Parent Discipline Style on Delinquent Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Control Orientation," *Australian Journal of Psychology* 43, no. 2 (August 1, 1991): 61-67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049539108259101>.

<sup>72</sup>Jeanne Walsh Pierce, and Jane Wardle, "Self-esteem, Parental Appraisal and Body Size in Children," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 34, no. 7 (October 7, 1993): 1125-36, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1993.tb01778.x>.

<sup>73</sup>Muhammad b Ismail al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book of Good Manners and Form, chapter: To honor Guest and to Serve him, Hadith no, 6136.

<sup>74</sup>Parimala Raghavendra et al., "School Participation and Social Networks of Children with Complex Communication Needs, Physical Disabilities, and Typically Developing Peers," *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* 28, no. 1 (March 24, 2012): 33-43,

sources of moral support. Teenage girls, in particular, form closer friendships as compared to their male counterparts.<sup>76</sup> Their peers also influence their emotional IQ. Maintaining good relationships with children's friends is important. This is because parents may be able to monitor their activities and to weed out any bad influence, if any. Good friends can also shape the behaviour of their peers to produce a positive outcome.<sup>77</sup> In order to prevent adolescents from being exposed to bad influences, parents must establish a good communication platform which also offers a safe space to both to air their views. Additionally, parents need to be watchful over the type of friends their teens are making and ensure they always remain their reference point. This also means they are approachable to their teens who can divulge to them about any uncertainties they face. This points to a healthy family communication and which can have a positive effect on other family members and an example to the community.

## 6. Discussion

Studies have indicated that majority of adolescents have minimal or zero interaction with their parents.<sup>78</sup> The answer to the question as to how can Muslim parents educate their children without establishing an effective communication platform or framework can be found in Islamic family principles, according to Bakkār. In fact, this is the key issue that Bakkār has attempted to answer in his series, particularly his volume on adolescents. He asserts that a solid and honest interaction between parents and teenagers is vital and needs to be strengthened from time to time in order to address various contemporary challenges. These challenges include mental health, social media, sexual harassment, teenage pregnancy, bullying, and others. He emphasized repeatedly in his book that Muslim parents are responsible for shaping their children's character and teaching them religious knowledge rooted in culture, Islamic law, and morality<sup>79</sup>. In short, Bakkār urges parents to urgently revert to an authentic Islamic framework as the challenges faced by teens are induced by the secular environment.<sup>80</sup>

In sum, the current study pointed towards *Successful Family Upbringing Series* as an effective reference for Muslim parents as to how to cultivate healthy communication style with their adolescent children. In this context, parents as the adult with life and religious experience, have to take the lead and show the way through kindness, setting aside time for communication, listening with interest, respecting, placing trust, avoiding pressure, and be encouraging and polite. The

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<https://doi.org/10.3109/07434618.2011.653604>; Bakkār, *Successful Family Upbringing Series: The Adolescents*.

<sup>75</sup>Katharina Haag et al., "The Journey Back to Normality: Support Systems and Posttrauma Needs Following Exposure to Single-incident Trauma among Children and Adolescents," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 36, no. 1 (February 2, 2023): 218–29, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22902>.

<sup>76</sup>Matteo Giletta et al., "Similarity in Depressive Symptoms in Adolescents' Friendship Dyads: Selection or Socialization?," *Developmental Psychology* 47, no. 6 (2011): 1804–14, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023872>.

<sup>77</sup>Carol Goodenow, and Kathleen E. Grady, "The Relationship of School Belonging and Friends' Values to Academic Motivation among Urban Adolescent Students," *The Journal of Experimental Education* 62, no. 1 (July 1993): 60–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1993.9943831>.

<sup>78</sup>Wisniewski, Pamela, Heng Xu, Mary Beth Rosson, and John M. Carroll, "Parents just don't understand: Why Teens Don't talk to Parents about their Online Risk Experiences," *In Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing*, (2017): 523–540.

<sup>79</sup>'Abdullah Nāṣiḥ 'Ulwān, *Tarbiyah al-Awlād fī al-Islām* (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Salām).

<sup>80</sup>Muhammad Nur Suwayd, *Raising Children in Islam* (Cairo, Egypt: Al-Falah Foundation, 2005).

findings therefore, confirm the suitability and conformity of Bakkār's communication strategy in line with the Islamic teachings as strategic communication methods. This is also in accordance with the directives of the Prophet Muhammad "The best of you are the best to their families, and I am the best to my family. When your companion dies, then do not abuse him"<sup>81</sup> In terms of practical implication for Muslim parents, it must be noted that teenagers tend to favour communication that is quick, enjoyable, expressive, collaborative, flexible, and responsive.<sup>82</sup> Communication can take place both physically and virtually, as today's teenagers excel and prefer online communication.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, parents must find time and space to communicate with their teenagers even if they are busy with their careers. For instance, they may communicate with them while driving or when they dine together at home or in restaurants, or when vacationing.

Communication is an active process which involves listening with kindness, being respectful, giving trust and avoiding undue pressure. Parents need to create a safe space for their children to openly express themselves regarding their concerns, opinions, and ideas. According to Ross et al. (2020), a safe space encompasses emotional and physical security, providing protection for adolescents from any forms of violence in various social contexts, both in physical and virtual environments.<sup>84</sup> The process by which parents mould their adolescents' personalities is crucial. An open communication style without pressure or expectation is important. This is because studies have shown that teenagers are liable to confusion due to simultaneous changes in their mental, physical, physiological, and psychological well-being. Muslim parents therefore, must set a positive example.

### 6.1. Conclusion

The current study therefore, pointed out that communication strategies outlined by Bakkār can help Muslim parents support their adolescents' moral, physical, mental, and spiritual development. These strategies would enable them to manage the challenges to deal with their teens. Additionally, these methods are in line with Islamic teachings which have a positive effect on parenting style. The outcome is a family that is contented and happy which would ultimately create a peaceful society.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

### Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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<sup>81</sup>Muhammad b Esa al-Tirmidhī, *Bāb Fī Faḍl Azwāj al-Nabī SAW*, no. 3895.

<sup>82</sup>Elza Venter, "Bridging the Communication Gap between Generation Y and the Baby Boomer Generation," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 22, no. 4 (2017): 497-507.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>David A Ross, Rachael Hinton, Meheret Melles-Brewer, Danielle Engel, Willibald Zeck, Lucy Fagan, Joanna Herat et al. "Adolescent well-being: a Definition and Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 67, no. 4 (2020): 472-476.

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