

Muslim Youth: Followers or Leaders?

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Contents

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Translation of the Qur'an

It should be clear that the Qur'an is only authentic in its original language, Arabic. Since perfect translation of the Qur'an is impossible, we have used the translation of the meaning of the Qur'an throughout the book.

Qur'anic *ayat* and transliterated words have been *italicised*.

Ahadith appear in **bold**.

ﷻ - subhanahu wa ta'ala

ﷺ - sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam

ﷻ - radhi allaho anha/anho

AH - After Hijrah

CE - Christian Era

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Introduction

Muslim youth growing up in the West face a variety of problems, issues and dilemma's. Many deal with them by simply 'going with the flow' or by 'following the crowd'. Often Muslims follow the youth in wider society despite the fact that they possess the true belief, Islam. The belief of Islam makes us different and worthy to be leaders of humanity rather than followers of people whose favourite pastime is getting drunk or high on a Friday night.

This book is a collection of articles relevant to Muslim youth in the West. It aims to provoke thinking to enable Muslim youth to realise their true identity as slaves of Allah ﷻ and not slaves to pop stars, sports personalities, movie celebrities or any human being.

Drawing from my own experiences as a Muslim growing up in the West. I have addressed specific subjects of importance that *insha'Allah* will contribute towards aiding the youth to turn back to Islam. Issues such as differentiating between tradition and Islam, men-women relationships, friendship, self-justification, dilemma's of Muslim students and who we should take as role models. The list of subjects is by no means comprehensive – they are only a selection from a wide pool of problems that the youth face.

Often Islam is presented to the youth in a manner which they feel is stale, repetitive and not addressing the issues that they feel. Taking this into account I aimed to address subjects in a manner that touch the reality of the youth by linking contemporary examples to the Islamic concepts and rules.

Islam is not just a set of rituals, a set of limited do's and don'ts that have no connection with real life. On the contrary, Islam is the most

powerful force the world has ever seen. It is a complete way of life that gives us solutions for all the problems we face, as a youth growing up or as an elder with grandchildren. The Muslim youth of the past embodied this understanding and became scholars, commanders of armies, pious rulers, carriers of Islam and leaders of humanity.

Whilst we are young we have the potential to follow Islam by advancing our understanding and carrying Islam to others. Youth doesn't last forever, we must make good use of it before it is gone. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((اغتنم خمسا قبل خمس: حياتك قبل موتك، وصحتك قبل

سقمك، وفراغك قبل شغلك، وشبابك قبل هرمك، وغناك

قبل فقرك))

“Value five things before five other things: Youth before old age; health before sickness; affluence before poverty; leisure before becoming too busy; and life before death.” [Tirmidhi]

Abdul-Hamid Jassat

Sunday 7th July 2003 CE

9th Jumada I, 1424 AH

Differentiating between tradition and Islam

Muslim youth growing up in the West face many problems which some associate with Islam, but have nothing to do with it and everything to do with backward traditions that totally contradict the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Many have grown up being smacked unnecessarily by their parents at home and by the 'Maulana' at the mosque. Some have been forced to marry from amongst their relatives or tribe. Not knowing whether this comes from Islam or from tradition. Technology and anything modern is seen as anti-Islamic and the image of a good Muslim is portrayed as someone who denies the world and sits in the mosque all day.

Incorrectly associating things to Islam leads to distorting it completely, to the extent that people turn away from Islam thinking it is something that it isn't. Therefore it is vital for us to separate between tradition and Islam clearly.

'BEATS' AT THE MOSQUE

A common reality that many face whilst growing up is going to the 'Madrassah' routinely every day for two hours in the evening. Often instead of being a productive two hours where minds are filled with clear understanding and the powerful culture of Islam, for many it is something that they dread – two hours of memorization and being beaten for a variety of reasons, ranging from making a mistake to talking to friends.

In later years friends often laugh about their painful days at the 'Madrassah' and compare the various methods of punishment the 'Maulana' would inflict, the most famous being the 'Murjee' or

‘chicken’ position.

It’s common practice for the people who teach children in the Madrassah’s not to be acquainted with the reality of children growing up in the West and the issues they face and not to be fluent in the English language. Many are employed merely as a convenience rather than due to their ability to build Islamic personalities.

This reality completely contradicts Islam and originates from backward traditions and ignorance. Islam does not allow the beating of children like some receive in the mosques today. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never beat his children or his grandchildren. He was known to be the one who would love his children and grandchildren, in fact he was so soft to his two grandchildren Hasan ؑ and Hussain ؑ that they would play on his back whilst he was doing *sajda* (prostration) for *salah* (prayer) and he would not tell them off.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((أكرموا أولادكم، وأحسنوا آدابهم))

“Honour your children and bring them up well. Verily, your children are a gift for you.” [Ibn Majah]

Islam is about loving each other, not breeding hatred. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده))

“A Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe.” [Bukhari]

Islam recognises the importance of education of children. Ibn Majah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((علموا صبياتكم العلوم))

“Teach your children and teach them properly.”

The purpose of education is to form the Islamic personality in thought and behaviour. This cannot be achieved by merely forcing people to memorize. Rather it requires building an understanding of the basics of Islam and how to live life according to it. People cannot be changed by the stick but only by truly being convinced of the Islamic concepts.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not make the mosques a place where you did not want to go. In his time the mosques were the centre of learning, not beating. The doors of the mosque were open to youth to sit and discuss rather than being closed properties controlled by committee’s as we find today.

FORCED MARRIAGES

‘When are you going to get married?’ ‘Are you going to get married from back home?’. These are questions that many have been asked at some time or another. Some parents and families are still forcing their children to marry from their relatives or tribe.

Many times the person has been reserved since their childhood. Unfortunately some marriages are based on this philosophy, ‘You’re single, they’re single, you have a British passport and they don’t’. When it is argued to one’s parents that they don’t want to marry someone they don’t know at all, they automatically assume that you want a ‘Love marriage’ and the barrage of arguments begins.

‘Love marriage? You want a love marriage? Have you heard of so and so who did a love marriage and now they are divorced!?’ The examples never end. You are offered two options, either you marry who they say, or you have a love marriage which will be doomed to failure.

Neither of these two options is necessarily Islamic. We do not marry somebody because they are relatives and they need residency in the West. At the same time we do not ‘date’ then get married like the *Kuffar*. We do not act like animals.

Islam is different. Marriage is about finding a partner your

compatible with and can find tranquillity in. This person might be from 'back home' or they might not be. The correct way to find out is to inquire about their personality in a *halal* (permissible) way.

You can ask friends and family to find out about them, send your relatives to visit their family, and speak to them face to face in the presence of a *Mabram* (un-marriable relative of the women, e.g. brother, nephew, uncle, etc). These are some ways you find out about people before marriage. Islam does not at all allow boyfriend-girlfriend relationships even if the purpose is marriage. Unfortunately, sometimes people resort to this because a *halal* option has not been presented to them.

ISLAM DESCRIBES MARRIAGE AS A SOURCE OF LOVE AND COMFORT

﴿ وَمَنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.” [TMQ Al-Rum: 21]

Marriage is not only about making you happy, or your parents happy. Marriage is a responsibility and a chance to gain tranquillity with a partner.

Ibn Masud narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((يا معشر الشباب من استطاع منكم الباءة فليتزوج فإنه أغض للبصر وأحصن للفرج، ومن لم يستطع فعليه بالصوم فإنه له وجاء))

“Oh you youngsters. Whoever amongst you who can afford to marry should marry, because it will help him more to lower his gaze, and guard his modesty [i.e. private parts from unlawful sex]. And whoever is not able to marry he should fast, because it will be protection for him.” [Muslim]

Marriage is a contract in Islam and no contract is valid, if it is forced. ‘Abdullah ibn Burayda ؓ narrates on the authority of his father that a young girl came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, ‘my father married me off to his nephew in order to raise his lowly status.’ So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave her the right to nullify the marriage. She replied, ‘I accept what my father has done, but I wanted to inform the [other] women that fathers do not have any authority to give their daughters in marriage against their wishes.’

Marriage is based on consent from both the woman and the man. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained to us that we are allowed to seek certain things in marriage and informed us that the best quality to look for is the Islamic personality.

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((تنكح المرأة لأربع لمالها وحسبها وجمالها ودينها فاظفر

بذات الدين تربت يداك))

“A woman is married for four things, her wealth, lineage, beauty and Islamic character (*deen*). So gain success with the one who possesses a good character (*deen*).”

NATIONALISM & TRIBALISM

Nationalism and tribalism is another part of backward tradition which some people associate to Islam. In some communities we have several mosques often separated on tribal or ethnic grounds such as Pathan, Gujarati, Pakistani, Jat, Gujar, Bengali and so on.

Amongst some, each community is stereotyped and joked about. They don't allow anyone from their family to even consider another

Muslim from other than their own nationality or tribe.

This is not from Islam. The clearest and simplest example to give is the example of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was from the tribe of Quraish, who were thought of as an upper class tribe. However he himself gave his cousin Zaynab ibn Jahsha ؓ who was also from the exalted people of the Quraish, to Zayd ibn Haritha ؓ who used to be a slave.

Abu Hatim al-Muzani reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إذا جاءكم من ترضون دينه وخلقه فأنكحوه إلا تفعلوه تكن فتنة في الأرض وفساد كبير. قالوا: يا رسول الله، وإن كان فيه؟ قال: (إذا جاءكم من ترضون دينه وخلقه فأنكحوه) ثلاث مرات))

“When someone whose character and morals are agreeable to you approaches you for marriage give your daughter to him in marriage. If you do not then there will be tribulation and immense corruption in the earth.” They said **“Oh Messenger of Allah, even if he has some deficiency?”** He said, **“when someone comes whose character and morals are agreeable to you approaches you for marriage give your daughter to him in marriage.”** He said this three times.

So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told us what matters is character not colour, morals and tribe. What tribe they are from does not matter at all. It is narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((ليس منا من دعا إلى عصبية، وليس منا من قاتل على عصبية وليس منا من مات على عصبية))

“He is not one of us who calls for asabiyyah, (tribalism, nationalism) or who fights for ‘asabiyyah or who dies for

‘asabiyyah.’ [Abu Dawud]

And in another hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ referring to tribalism said:

((دعوها فإنها منتنة))

“Leave it, it is rotten.” [Muslim and Bukhari]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((مثل المؤمنين في توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم مثل الجسد إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالسهر والحمى))

“The Believers in their mutual love, are like one body, if his eye becomes sore then the whole (body) feels pain, and if his head is in pain then his whole (body) feels the pain”, meaning that the Muslims, whether we are Pakistani, Bengali, White, Pink or Purple, are one Ummah and we cannot be separated from each other. No tribal ties should ever break our unity.

ISLAM AND TECHNOLOGY

Modern technology and Islam are sometimes seen as two opposites. Being Islamic is wrongly thought to mean that we can't drive good cars, live in nice houses and use computers. What does Islam have to do with In-vitro fertilisation, the dynamics of nuclear technology, cloning and Star Trek style military technology?

Islam is not a religion like that of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and the like, who don't have any solutions for the various problems of life. Allah ﷻ has given us rules for all the problems that we face whether in the 21st century CE or in the future, as He ﷻ is the all knowing and the Qur'an is for all time until the Day of Judgement. Allah ﷻ says,

﴿ وَزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى ﴾

وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

“And we have sent down the book as an explanation for everything, a guidance, a mercy and glad tidings for those who submitted themselves to Islam.” [TMQ An-Nahl: 89]

Allah ﷻ allowed for us to use various types of technology as long as it is in a *halal* way.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا﴾

“He it is Who created for you all that is on earth.” [TMQ Al-Baqarah: 29]

This includes cars, mobile phones, the Internet, satellites, missiles and DVD’s. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ utilized the various technologies at his time, he even used the style of digging a trench which taken from Persians, in the Battle of the Ditch. Technology can be used for *halal* or *haram*, it is not the thing which is *haram* it is what you do with it. As an example, the Internet and DVD’s can be used for *haram* such as promoting indecency or can be used in a *halal* way to promote Islam.

Islam demands that we become leaders in science; we will have to run the Islamic State which must lead the world, economically, militarily and politically. This is why we find that in Islamic history the Muslims were the most advanced in the fields of science including optometry, biology and mathematics.

During the time of Khaleefah Haroon al-Rashid [169-194 AH] the Islamic State developed mobile clinics and hospitals and many schools of pharmacy and chemists were established. In 318 AH [931CE] Baghdad alone had 860 registered physicians.

Zakariya Razi is a great name in mediaeval chemical science. Born in 850 C.E, he is known as one of the greatest physicians of all times. He wrote *Kitab al-Asrar* a chemistry book dealing with the preparation of chemical substances and their application.

Abu Yusuf ibn Ishaq, known as al-Kindi was born in Kufa in the

middle of the 9th Century. He is one of the greatest scholars of physics. Over and above this, he was an astrologer, alchemist and optician. He wrote more than 265 books, of these fifteen are on meteorology, several on specific weight, on tides, on optics and on reflection of light. He wrote several books on iron and steel.

‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn al-Baytar, was the greatest botanist and pharmacist of Spain. He travelled the world in search of plants and herbs, from Spain to Syria. He wrote books described more than 1400 medical drugs and compared them with the records of more than 150 ancient and Arabian authors.

Abu’l ‘Ali al-Husayn ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Sina, called Avicenna in the West, was one of the greatest scientists in history. At the age of 21 he wrote a twenty volume book on science called *Kitab al-Hasil wa’l-Habsul* dealing with all sciences. He also wrote *Kitab al-Majmu’* on mathematics.

TRUE ISLAM

We should never confuse tradition and Islam. It is Islam that we must follow, not traditions that contradict it and often emanate from Hinduism and other religions. We should never assume that something is Islamic because it is commonly practiced. We should always question and find out – where practices originate from and if they based on evidence from the Qur’an and Sunnah.

Islam is an ideology which demands creative thinkers. People who are sharp, intelligent and quick on their feet. Most of the Messenger of Allah’s ﷺ companions were young, intelligent, brave and committed. They rejected the corrupt traditions of their forefathers and carried Islam with frankness, courage, strength and thought. Let us take them as our role models.

Are you ready to die tomorrow?

We think in detail about certain matters, typically about things that interest us or which we are directly facing. So football fanatics spend time in following up the latest football news, whose playing who, whose been bought by which team, etc. People into music know about the latest chart hits, the top ten and new bands on the scene. Movie buffs ponder about the latest movies, upcoming releases, the latest awards and the like.

Despite expending effort and applying thought upon these trivial issues, people in Western society often pay little attention to a vital topic, that of death. It has even become a taboo subject to the extent that people attempt to change the discussion when it is mentioned.

It is completely irrational to avoid thinking about death as it is the most definite thing in life. To turn away from it is avoiding the inevitable. No one lives forever. All of us know of people who have died whether within our families, community, friends or colleagues. The reason as to why many avoid the topic is fear. Fear of the unknown and fear of leaving this life. In fact Western society pushes people into all forms of escapism, they attempt to escape reality by drowning themselves in music, movies, sport, and popular culture.

All of us will face death one day. Our hearts will stop, our brain activity will cease and our bodies will decompose. However as Muslims we know that death is not the end. Allah ﷻ has informed us that there is life after death, that we will be accounted for every action we performed and will be either sent to *Jannah* (Paradise) or *Jahannam* (Hell) according to our deeds.

For a Muslim reminding oneself of death strengthens our realisation of the afterlife and commitment to Islam.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((الكيس من دان نفسه وعمل لما بعد الموت. والفاجر من أتبع نفسه هواها وتمنى على الله))

“The clever one is he who disciplined himself and worked for what is after death, and the feeble one is he who followed his desires, then made (vain) prayers to Allah.”

No matter how ‘hard’ or ‘cool’ people think they are, one day they will die and will stand in front of Allah ﷻ.

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالَمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

“Say: The Death from which you flee will truly overtake you: then will you be sent back to the Knower of all things secret and open: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did!” [TMQ Al-Jumu’a: 8]

It will be too late to change after you have died, you cannot go back and change things and live life in a better way. There is no coming back for the *salah* you have missed or to make right the wrongs you committed.

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ * لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ * فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ * فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ * وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ

خَالِدُونَ

“Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: ‘O my Lord! Send me back (to life), in order that I may do good in that which I have left behind!’ - No! It is but a word that he speaks; and behind them is a Partition until the Day they are raised up. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more kinship among them that day, nor will they ask of one another! Then those whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy, they are the successful. And those whose scales (of good deeds) are light, they are those who lose their own selves; in Hell will they abide.” [TMQ Al-Mu’minun: 99-103]

Thinking about death should make us correct our lives, perform our obligations and stay away from *haram*. Whilst we are alive it is not too late to change. In fact one of the pious Muslims in the past Al-Rabee’ ibn Khaytham had dug a grave in his house, so that if he found hardness within his heart, he would enter it and lay down for as long as Allah wished and read: “O my Lord! Send me back (to life) in order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected” repeating it, then he would reply to himself saying: “Oh, Rabee’, here, you have been returned, so work.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((أَكثَرُوا ذَكَرَ هَاذِمِ اللَّذَاتِ))

“Increase the remembrance of that which destroys all desires.” [Al Tirmidhi]

And he ﷺ said,

((لَوْ تَعَلَّمَ الْبَهَائِمُ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ مَا يَعْلَمُ بَنُو آدَمَ مَا أَكَلْتُمْ مِنْهَا))

((سَمِينَا))

“If animals knew what the sons of Adam knew of death, you would not have found any fat on them to eat.” [Al-Baihaqi in ‘Al Sha’ab’]

Thinking about death should not have only a temporary affect on us,

so that if someone who is close to us dies, we get ill or have a near death experience, we go to the mosque for a while and start following Islam. However when some time has passed the affect wears off and we are back to our old ways. On the contrary, death should be at the forefront of our minds and should affect us in a permanent way.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ؓ,

((إِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلَا تَحْدِثْ نَفْسَكَ بِالْمَسَاءِ وَإِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلَا))

تَحْدِثْ نَفْسَكَ بِالصَّبَاحِ وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ لِسَقْمِكَ وَمِنْ

حَيَاتِكَ لِمَوْتِكَ فَإِنَّهُ لَا تَدْرِي مَا اسْمُكَ غَدًا))

“If you awoke in the morning, do not speak to yourself of the evening, and if you reach the evening, do not speak to yourself of the morning. Take from your life for your death, and from your health for your illness, as you do not know what your name will be tomorrow.” [Bukhari]

We shouldn’t think that by temporarily following Islam and repenting to Allah ﷻ and then going back to being negligent in our duties and entering into sin, that our repentance will count. Allah ﷻ informs us,

﴿ وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴾

“Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds, until death faces one of them, and he says: ‘Now I repent’ nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them have we prepared a painful torment.” [TMQ An-Nisa: 18]

Pondering about death should make us prepare for it, so that we

treat this life as a journey and a test not as a time to be obsessed with enjoying ourselves disregarding the limits that Allah ﷻ has placed on us. Allah ﷻ says,

﴿اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ وَزِينَةٌ﴾

“And the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment.” [TMQ al-Hadid: 20]

Ibn ‘Umar ؓ said,

((عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: أتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عاشر عشرة، فقام رجل من الأنصار فقال: يا نبي الله! من أكيس الناس وأحزم الناس؟ قال: أكثرهم ذكراً للموت، وأكثرهم استعداداً للموت، أولئك الأكياس، ذهبوا بشرف الدنيا وكرامة الآخرة))

“I came to the Prophet ﷺ, and I was the tenth of ten men, when a man from the Ansar asked: Who is the most clever and the most honourable of people, Oh Prophet of Allah? He ﷺ replied: “Those who remember death the most and work the hardest to prepare for it; they are the clever ones. They have left with the honour of this world and the dignity of the *Akhirah*” [Ibn Majah].

Death reminds us of the *Akhirah* (afterlife), and there is no better reminder.

There are specific actions that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ encouraged us to undertake to remind ourselves about death.

Abi Tharr ؓ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((زر القبور تذكر بها الآخرة، واغسل الموتى فإن معالجة

جسد خاوي موعظة بليغة، وصل على الجنائز، لعل ذلك

يحزنك، فإن الحزين في ظل الله يوم القيامة))

“Visit the graves, as it will be a reminder of the *Akhirah*, and wash the dead, as taking care of an empty body is an outstanding admonition, and pray over the *Jana'iz* (funerals), as it may sadden you, for the sad one is in the shade of Allah on the Day of Judgement.” [Ibn Abi Al Dunya and Al Haakim]

And Ibn Abi Mulaykah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

((زوروا موتاكم وصلوا عليهم وسلموا عليهم فان لكم فيها عبرة))

“Visit your dead and pray for peace upon them, for there is an admonition for you in it.” [Ibn Abi Al Dunya]

And Al-Dhaahik said that a man once asked “Oh, Messenger of Allah, who is the most *zaahid* (abstinent) of people?” He ﷺ said,

((أزهد الناس من لم ينس القبر والبلاء، وترك أفضل زينة الدنيا، و آثر ما يبقى على ما يفنى، ولم يعد غدا من أيامه، وعد نفسه في الموتى))

“He who does not forget the grave and abandoned the luxuries of life, seeking that which lasts above that which ends, not counting yesterday as one of his days, and counted himself amongst the people of the graves.”

It is easy to leave the thought of death at the back of your mind and believe that you have a long life left. The angel of death leaves no one, whether young or old when their time has come.

In fact the remembrance is not crying and wailing and blaming one's self when one is on the brink of death, or attending a funeral or visiting graves alone. Rather, remembrance of death is when a believer imagines that he will meet his Lord at any moment, and his actions will be cut off, as will his ability for repentance. So he will be aware of himself, careful to obey Allah ﷻ, wary of his Lord every second of his life.

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“Say: My life, my death and acts of worship are all for the Lord of the mankind (Rabil alamin).” [TMQ Al-An'am: 162]

Avoiding the temptations of Western society

For Muslim youth growing up in Western society it can be difficult to remain strong and avoid being led astray by the temptations that the society bombards them with. The temptations are of various types, including drugs, alcohol, crime and clubbing. However one of the main areas of temptation is undoubtedly the *haram* relationships between men and women.

For anyone who lives in the West it is obvious that the society promotes free mixing and illicit relationships between the sexes. Sex is promoted everywhere, from billboards, advertising commercials, magazines, and songs to television programmes. It is no wonder that the estimates of how many times people think about the subject are so high.

Through primary, secondary education and beyond, boyfriend-girlfriend relationships are normalised to the extent that it is seen as strange if someone isn't 'going out' with a member of the opposite sex. Sex education in schools promotes this by explaining to the students the various forms of contraception instead of giving them the correct values related to the subject.

Walking through the centre of any major city on a Friday night makes one realise that Western society has become similar to a herd of wild animals that can't control their desires. The West promotes notions of 'finding true love' or 'following your heart'; in reality what people in Western society follow is their lust. The stark reality of 'single parent' mothers left by their partners to fend for themselves and the high rate of adulterous relationships is evidence for this.

A Muslim living in this type of environment needs to make sure that he or she has a strong linkage to the Islamic belief and the Islamic

Shari'ah.

REALISING THE MAGNITUDE OF THE HARAM ACTIONS

A Muslim must link his actions directly to the consequences: the rewards and punishments in the hereafter. He should visualise these even when thinking about performing any prohibited action. This consciousness of Allah ﷻ and the afterlife should be a shield to protect us from sin and should encourage us to earn reward.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has warned both men and women of the consequences of their actions.

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إذا زنى العبد خرج منه الإيمان فكان فوق رأسه كالظلة،
فإذا خرج من ذلك العمل عاد اليه الإيمان))

“When a person commits fornication there goes out of him the Iman (belief) and it hovers like a canopy over his head and when he quits this act the Iman reverts to him again.” [Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud]

Shakl ibn Humayd went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, “Apostle of Allah, teach me a supplication (*du'a*).” He ﷺ replied,

((قل اللهم إني أعوذ بك من شر سمعي، ومن شر بصري،
ومن شر لساني، ومن شر قلبي، ومن شر مني))

“Say: O Allah, I seek refuge in you from the evil of what I hear, from the evil of what I see, from the evil of what I speak, from the evil of what I think, and from the evil of my semen.” [Abu Dawud]

‘Ubadah ibn al-Samit narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((اضمنوا لي ستا من أنفسكم أضمن لكم الجنة، اصدقوا إذا

حدثتم، وأوفوا إذا وعدتم، وأدوا إذا ائتمتم، واحفظوا

فروجكم، وغضوا أبصاركم، وكفوا أيديكم))

“If you guarantee me six things on your part I shall guarantee you Paradise. Speak the truth when you talk, keep a promise when you make it, when you are trusted with something fulfil your trust, avoid sexual immorality, lower your eyes, and restrain your hands from injustice.” [Ahmad and Baihaqi in Shu’ab al-Iman]

In Western societies it is common for men to look with lust at women who they are not married to. Islam has forbidden this. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((من الزنى أدرك ذلك لا محالة فرنى العينين النظر وزنى
اللسان النطق والنفس تمنى وتشتهي والفرج يصدق ذلك أو
يكذبه))

“The adultery of the eyes is the sight, the adultery of the tongue is the talk, and the inner self wishes, desires and the private parts testify all this or deny it.” [Bukhari]

Allah ﷻ said,

﴿ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ
ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ * وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ ﴾

“Tell the believing men to lower from their gaze and to protect their private parts. That is better for them, Allah knows the details of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower from their gaze and protect their private parts.” [TMQ Al-Nur: 30-31]

Unlike in the West where it is abnormal for women to step out of their homes without layers of make-up, lipstick and wearing revealing clothes, Islam forbade this, for its impact on society is devastating in spreading immorality.

It has been narrated by Abu Musa al-Ashari that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((أيما امرأة استعطرت ثم خرجت فمرت على قوم ليجدوا

ريحها فهي زانية، وكل عين زانية))

“Any women that uses perfume and walks past men in order for them to smell her fragrance; she is a fornicator.” [Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud]

He ﷺ also said,

((صنفان من أهل النار لم أرهما. قوم معهم سياط كأذناب

البقر يضربون بها الناس. ونساء كاسيات عاريات، مميلات

مائلات، رؤسهن كأسنمة البخت المائلة، لا يدخلن الجنة،

ولا يجدن ريحها. وإن ريحها ليوجد من مسيرة كذا وكذا))

“Two categories of people I have not seen them (yet): some people who hold whips like the tails of the cows by which they lash the people. And women who wear (clothes) but (are) half-naked, bending (their bodies) and bending the sight of the men to them. Their heads are like the tilted humps of the camels. These women will not enter the paradise nor will they experience its smell (odour), though its odour is felt at a distance of so and so (days).” [Muslim]

The Shari’ah prevents *kebulwa* (mixing privately) between men and women. The reality of *kebulwa* is that it makes the man and woman more sexually agitated. By prohibiting this private mixing a cause of

corruption is eliminated, because the *kebulwa* is one of the direct means to corruption.

Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فلا يخلون بامرأة ليس

معها ذو محرم منها فإن ثالثهما الشيطان))

“Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day let him not be alone with a woman who has not a *mahram* (male relative who she cannot marry) with her. Indeed, the third (person) is Shaytan!” [Ahmad]

AVOIDING UNNECESSARY AGITATION

It is important to stay away from watching movies, TV programmes, listening to music and reading magazines that encourage fornication and the actions that lead to it, as these are *haram* according to the Shari’ah principle, “The means to *haram* is itself *haram*”. These activities build corrupt inclinations within people to the extent that a woman is seen as an object rather than a person whose honour must be maintained. How can our feelings be more attached to corrupt films and TV programmes than to the Qur’an, which is the source of guidance for the whole of humankind? Don’t people feel ashamed whilst they watch sex scenes or listen to lewd songs whilst Allah ﷻ, the Creator of the universe is watching them? On the Day of Judgement even the limbs of our bodies will bear testimony to the actions that we performed.

Allah ﷻ says,

﴿الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ

بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾

“That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to Us and their feet bear witness to all that they did.” [TMQ Ya-Sin: 65]

STAYING IN THE CORRECT ATMOSPHERE

Maintaining a correct atmosphere is vital for a Muslim to be able to avoid the temptations. The type of atmosphere that exists amongst some of the youth is very corrupt, where the topic of discussion revolves around the opposite sex and ‘showing off’ to each other. This type of atmosphere only serves to agitate the instincts of people and potentially leads them further away from Islam.

Abu Musa narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إنما مثل الجليس الصالح وجليس السوء كحامل المسك ونافخ الكير. فحامل المسك: إما أن يحذيك، وإما أن تبتاع منه، وإما أن تجد منه ريحاً طيبة. ونافخ الكير: إما أن يحرق ثيابك، وإما أن تجد منه ريحاً منتنة))

“The example of a good companion in comparison with a bad one, is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith’s bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof.” [Bukhari]

MARRIAGE

An obvious solution that aids in avoiding temptation from the opposite sex is to marry according to Islam. Islam doesn’t deny the natural instincts of human beings; rather it channels them according to the rules revealed by Allah ﷻ. It is encouraged to marry in Islam, and encouragement is given to those who are unable.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

((يا معشر الشباب من استطاع منكم الباءة فليتزوج فإنه

أغض للبصر وأحصن للفرج، ومن لم يستطع فعليه بالصوم فإنه له وجاء))

“Oh you youngsters. Whoever amongst you who can afford to marry should marry, because it will help him more to lower his gaze, and guard his modesty [i.e. private parts from unlawful sex]. And whoever is not able to marry he should fast, because it will be protection for him.” [Muslim]

The recommendation to fast is not to suppress the procreation instinct but to build a reminder as to man’s objective in life, which is to worship Allah ﷻ.

Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((ثلاثة حق على الله أن يعينهم: المجاهد في سبيل الله، والناكح يريد أن يستعف، والمكاتب يريد الأداء))

“Three (persons) have a right from Allah to be helped: the mujahid in the way of Allah, the seeker for marriage who wishes to guard his chastity and the slave who seeks funds to free oneself.”

Allah ﷻ says,

﴿وَلْيَسْتَغْفِرِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُعْثِرَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

“And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah enriches them of His Bounty.” [TMQ Al-Nur: 33]

Marriage is based on companionship in Islam, unlike in Western society where it is based on competition. Companionship is where one finds repose and tranquillity in the other - Allah ﷻ has made marriage a source of tranquillity for both spouses.

He ﷻ said,

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا﴾

“It is He Who has created you from a single person, and He has created from him his wife, in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her.” [TMQ Al-Araf: 189]

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between both of you affection and mercy.” [TMQ Al-Rum: 21]

Self-Justification: the Whispers of Shaytan

A Muslim who grows up in Western society learns how to think and act in a way alien to Islam. Although often brought up in a Muslim household some Muslim youth are unfortunately swayed by the rotten fruits of Western society including drugs, alcohol and illicit relationships. They are tempted by these rotten fruits and end up in a downward spiral growing further away from Islam every day.

Initially the *salah* is performed now and again, then restricted to Friday and then only to ‘Eid. The degrees to which people go into committing *haram* differ and everyone knows someone who they perceive as worse than themselves and better than themselves. One of the worst intellectual diseases that people have is that of self-justification, it is one of the key issues that allows people to drift away from Islam justifying this to themselves every step of the way. Initially they may have the occasional joint, then it becomes a regular habit and they move on to harder substances to increase the high. Even though Muslims feel guilty when committing overtly *haram* actions like drinking alcohol, taking drugs or engaging in *haram* relationships with the opposite sex, eventually the guilt wears off and they begin to justify these actions to themselves.

We must realise that self-justifying an action will not make it *halal* and doesn’t remove the inevitable reality of standing in front of Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgement, with nothing except our deeds. It is the Western concept of individualism that breeds the mentality of pure greed and selfishness where people even steal and backstab their own families to achieve their sick version of enjoyment.

TYPES OF SELF-JUSTIFICATION

There are different types of excuses or self-justifications which individuals carry. People normally carry a combination of them. Some of the most common types of self-justifications that people hold are the following:

- “At least I’m better than others”
- “I will change in the future”
- “I’m not ready for it yet, its too difficult to change”
- “As long as I’m pure inside, Allah will forgive me”

“AT LEAST I’M BETTER THAN OTHERS”

The individual who holds this idea looks at the extreme actions of people which they consider as ‘bad’ such as stealing from Muslims, rape or eating pork and compare their own actions to them. They feel reassured that they are better than those who undertake those actions. When they commit *haram* or neglect the Islamic duties (*fara’id*) they think to themselves that at least they are not like others, at least they perform some actions of Islam. If they take drugs they say, “at least I don’t drink alcohol”. If they have *haram* relations with the opposite sex they say, “at least I have the intention of marriage”. When involving in *haram* contracts they say, “at least I don’t steal”. If they miss the obligatory *salah* they justify it to themselves by thinking, ‘at least I pray on Friday’.

By extending their logic you could say, ‘at least a homosexual isn’t a rapist’ and ‘at least an alcoholic doesn’t eat pork’. The problem with this argument is, who defines what type of behaviour is bad and what is good? Allah ﷻ is the one who defines the good actions from the bad actions. Allah ﷻ views the *halal* actions as good and all the *haram* actions as evil. So in the sight of Allah ﷻ missing *salah*, being rebellious to your parents, eating pork, rape, socialising with non-related members of the opposite sex, homosexuality, taking intoxicating drugs, drinking alcohol and adultery are all *haram* and

from the *munkaraat* (evil) actions that lead to the hellfire.

“I WILL CHANGE IN THE FUTURE”

This notion is commonly held by many youth. They believe that they will change in the future when they become older, they will settle down, get married, have children, go to Hajj and begin practising Islam. This excuse allows them to justify the *haram* to themselves.

If it was as simple as that, everyone can act as they please with the hope of changing someday in the future. How many of us know of young people who have died? How many of us know of cases where boyfriend and girlfriend have died in car accidents?

Muslims and non-Muslims alike can agree that the most definite thing in life is death. If this is the case, how can we act as if we are going to live forever?

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ؓ,

((إذا أمسيت فلا تنتظر الصباح وإذا أصبحت فلا تنتظر

المساء، وخذ من صحتك لمرضك ومن حياتك لموتك))

“If you awoke in the morning, do not speak to yourself of the evening, and if you reach the evening, do not speak to yourself of the morning. Take from your life for your death, and from your health for your illness, as you do not know what your name will be tomorrow.” [Bukhari]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((الكيس من دان لنفسه وعمل لما بعد الموت والعاجز من

أتبع نفسه هواها وتمنى على الله الأماني))

“The clever one is he who disciplined himself and worked for what is after death, and the feeble one is he who followed his desires, then made (vain) prayers to Allah.”

Allah ﷻ said,

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ
إِلَىٰ عَالَمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

“Say: The death from which you flee will truly overtake you: then will you be sent back to the Knower of all things secret and open: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did!” [TMQ Al-Jumu’a: 8]

Besides the inevitable reality of death, do we believe that Allah ﷻ will accept our good deeds in the future whilst we committed *haram* during our youth? Do we think that performing *salah* and avoiding the evil temptations in our old age when it is easier to do so will grant us *Jannah*?

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ * لَعَلِّي
أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمَنْ
وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ * فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ
بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ * فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ * وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ
فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ ﴾

“Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: ‘O my Lord! Send me back (to life), in order that I may do good in that which I have left behind!’ - No! It is but a word that he speaks; and behind them is a Partition until the Day they are raised up. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more kinship among them that day, nor will they ask of one another! Then those whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy, they are the successful. And those whose scales (of good deeds) are light, they are those who lose their own selves; in Hell will they abide.” [TMQ Al-Mu’minun: 99-103]

“I’M NOT READY FOR IT YET, IT’S TOO DIFFICULT TO CHANGE”

The true meaning behind this excuse is that people don’t want to leave the *haram* they’re committing. They have got so used to their lifestyle that they can’t perceive it any other way. The thought of waking up for *fajr salah*, having to continuously study Islam or not ‘chilling’ with the opposite sex is too much for them. There are obvious contradictions in their behaviour; many of them will spend a lot of time on things they enjoy whether its playing computer games, physical training, sports or ‘looking good’. In reality these people are lazy when it comes to Islam, they may spend so much effort in fitting in with the crowd and keeping up with the latest trend yet they are not willing to spend effort in staying away from the fire of hell and attempting to gain *Jannah* and the pleasure of Allah ﷻ.

We need to realise that in order to become Islamic personalities we have to live our life according to the objective that Allah ﷻ has set for us. Why is it that many work hard when it comes to their exams, yet pay little attention to the true exam of life? Allah ﷻ didn’t create us for play.

Life is not all about ease and acting like spoilt teenagers who have everything done for them. All of us have the capacity to become Islamic personalities. Islam wasn’t revealed for angels, it was revealed for human beings. Allah ﷻ says,

“Allah does not place a burden upon a person except that which he is capable

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

of.” [TMQ al-Baqarah: 282]

How can one then argue that following Islam is too difficult? Whoever believes this should look at the example of converts to Islam who completely transform their behaviour and may even face hardship from their families. If they can change why can’t we? If we look to the example of many of the Sahabah ﷺ they used to be the worst of people and then became the best. Take the example of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ. He was a man that wanted to kill the Messenger of Allah

ﷺ and who had even buried his two daughters alive. When he embraced Islam he became the best of people.

‘Umar ؓ was neither a prophet nor angel; he was a person like us. This type of complete transformation of personalities is not restricted to the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. There are many examples from Muslims in our own communities in the West who used to be notorious criminals, drug dealers and alcoholics and who became active Islamic personalities working for the return of Islam when they received the Islamic *da'wah* (call).

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((خياركم في الجاهلية خياركم في الإسلام إذا فقهوا))

“People are like mines of silver and gold; the best of them in the days of Ignorance (jahilliyah) are the best of them in Islam when they attain knowledge.” [Muslim]

This hadith means that no matter how far away from Islam we are, we all have the potential to change and become the best of people.

“AS LONG AS I’M PURE FROM INSIDE, ALLAH WILL FORGIVE ME”

The fact that someone has this delusion proves that they are not pure from inside because they carry this corrupt notion, which contradicts Islam. Being ‘pure inside’ not only means believing in Islam, it also means practising it. What is the point of the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ if Allah ﷻ is going to enter everyone into *Jannah* without accounting them for their deeds? Believing in this idea allows people to gamble their life away. It will be too late to change on the Day of Judgement, when everyone will be worried about themselves to the extent that even the Prophets of Allah like Adam (as), Musa (as) and ‘Isa (as) will be worried about themselves. When the earth will narrate the actions that we performed on it and our own body will speak to Allah ﷻ about what we did whilst alive. Every single action small or large will be accounted on that day.

﴿ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ * وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴾

“So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it.” [TMQ Al-Zalzalah: 7]

The forgiveness of Allah ﷻ is not achieved with false prayers, whilst continuing to disobey His commands. Allah ﷻ says,

﴿ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ يَتَّبِعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيُخْرِجَهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِذَا كَفَرُوا فَكَانَ اللَّهُ مُخْرِجَهُمْ مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ السُّعُورِ أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَجْرَ كِبَارٍ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ وَإِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴾

“Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds, until death faces one of them, and he says: ‘Now I repent’ nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them have we prepared a painful torment.” [TMQ Al-Nisa: 18]

SELF-JUSTIFICATIONS: WHISPERS OF SHAYTAN

Even though many don’t realise it, using self-justifications to follow our own desires instead of following the commands of Allah ﷻ is directly following the footsteps of Shaytan. As Allah ﷻ said,

﴿ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ ﴾

“Did I not enjoin on you O you children of Adam that you should not worship Shaytan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?” [TMQ Ya-Seen: 60]

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ

خَطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴿﴾

“O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of the Shaytan (devil).” [TMQ Al-Nur: 21]

How can we be believers in Islam if we abandon its rules and follow the Shaytan instead?

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به))

“No one of has real Iman (belief) until his desires conform to what I came with.”

We must avoid the whispers of Shaytan. So every time we feel lazy in praying the *salah*, we should know that this is from the Shaytan. Every time we are about to answer back in a rebellious way to our parents, we should know this is from the Shaytan. Every time we get the temptation of committing *haram* with the opposite sex, we should know that this is from Shaytan. Every time we are about to neglect our duty to Allah ﷻ or perform an action that will anger Him ﷻ, we should know that this is from the Shaytan. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إن الشيطان يجري من ابن آدم مبلغ الدم))

“Shaytan reaches everywhere in the human body as blood reaches in it.”

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴾

“Shaytan only seeks to breed animosity and spite among you by means of intoxicants and gambling and to keep you from the remembrance of Allah and

from *salah* (prayer); will you not then desist?” [TMQ Al-Ma'idah: 91]

We should seek refuge from these whispers of Shaytan as Allah ﷻ taught us in the Qur'an,

﴿ قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ * مَلِكِ النَّاسِ * إِلَهِ النَّاسِ * مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ * الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ * مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ﴾

“Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of Mankind. The King of mankind. The God of mankind. From the evil of the sneaking whisperer. Who whispers in the breasts of mankind. From amongst the Jinn and the men.” [TMQ Al-Nas: 1-6]

Many of the youth would not undertake some of their *haram* actions in front of their parents due to embarrassment or fear, then how can they perform these actions whilst Allah ﷻ sees everything they do? We should fear Allah ﷻ and be embarrassed in front of Him ﷻ.

It was reported in *sahih* (authenticated) narrations that when Jibraeel (as) asked the Messenger ﷺ about *ihsan* (perfection), he ﷺ said,

((الإحسان أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه

يراك))

“To worship Allah as if you see him, and if you do not see him, then he surely sees you.”

BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

Self-justifications allow people to continue living their lives like animals, even though they know deep down that the path they are following is incorrect. Even after all the late night parties, relationships, drugs, fast cars, music and alcohol many feel an inevitable uneasiness or discontent. This feeling doesn't easily go away, some learn to live

with it while it eats away at their conscience while others decide to use their mind and start thinking about Islam; the only thinking man's belief that provides tranquillity.

Friendship in the West & Friendship in Islam

It is natural for people to form friendships with others whom they interact with on a regular basis. Friendships can be formed through growing up in the same neighbourhood, meeting at school, college, university, social gatherings and via a number of other activities.

Friendship is something common amongst people, however there are different conceptions of it. Some common conceptions include the following: friends will always stick by your side, you can always rely on a friend, you can speak freely to your friend and tell them your problems, friends like you for who you are, etc. When people have personal problems such as disputes with their family members or if they require advice they usually turn to their friends.

FRIENDSHIP IN THE WEST

Friendship in the West is based on benefit. Friends come together on the basis of mutual interest, so they will go to the cinema, parties and clubbing together. They talk about the opposite sex freely to each other and hide each others secrets even if they involve evil actions. They often gain comfort in backbiting and winging about other people who they don't like. Unfortunately some Muslims carry the Western notion of friendship as they follow the crowd rather than to looking to Islam for solutions.

Due to the fact that friendship is based on benefit in the West, it is easy for people to 'break out' with each other, have rows and even become enemies. This happens when their interests conflict and can be over petty things such as not going for a night out with them or larger things such as betrayal. In many cases people even talk negatively about some of their friends in front of others and even

betray them by having affairs with their wife, sisters or girlfriend.

Friends even become status symbols, so people long to 'hang out' with a particular crowd to look cool. Often crowds have leaders with egos, so staying on the right side of certain people is important if you want to be accepted. For some this means 'sucking up' to them, for others it means undertaking actions to make them think you're 'cool'.

Friendship in the West is based on using each other. The proof of this can be seen in the fact that when friends became unusable they drift apart. Typically, if someone's friend was to suddenly change and stop clubbing, partying and drooling over the opposite sex at every opportunity they would start treating them differently and normally fall out with them. Especially if this person begins to account them when they are wrong and advise them upon their actions repeatedly. As an example if someone begins to practise Islam and stops committing *haram* and advises his friends to do the same. Those with the Western concept of friendship would change their attitude towards them and they would be distanced and only occasionally spoken to. The reason for this is that if there is no more benefit in their eyes to keep a close relationship with them, in fact it completely contradicts their lust for pleasure as when the person speaks about Islam it is seen as an attack on their lifestyle.

Friendship in Western societies is normally false as the society is founded on greed, individualism and following lusts. Friendship in Islam is true as it is based on sincerity, trust and *taqwa* (piety).

FRIENDSHIP IN ISLAM

Islam recognises that a Muslim will naturally spend more time with certain people and be more comfortable with them in raising their personal problems and issues. This does not mean in any way that the rest of the Muslims are not their brothers and sisters whom they love, rather all that it means that they will be closer to certain people than others just as people are usually closer to their family than others.

Islam recognises that friends have a strong influence on people and

that their environment will affect the strength of their relationship with Allah ﷻ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((المرء على دين خليله فلينظر أحدكم من يخال))

“A person follows the *deen* (way of life) of his close friend; therefore let each of you look carefully at whom he chooses for friends.” [Tirmidhi]

A Muslim should choose friends that will advise him and remind him of Allah ﷻ rather than lure him to the path of Shaytan. It has also been narrated that our friends in the *dunya* (world) will be our friends in the *Akhirah* (afterlife). It is therefore vital for a Muslim to choose good friends.

The love between two Muslim friends is such that they would confide in each other, help each other in times of need and strengthen each other's commitment to the *deen* of Allah ﷻ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ encouraged for Muslims who have love for each other not to keep it to themselves.

It has been narrated by al-Bukhari in al-Adaabul-Mufrad (no. 191) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إذا أحب أحدكم أخاه فليخبره أنه يحب))

“If one of you loves his brother for Allah's sake, then let him tell him since it causes familiarity to endure and firmly establishes love.”

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا تدخلوا الجنة حتى تؤمنوا، ولا تؤمنوا حتى تحابوا. أفلا))

أنبئكم بشيء إذا فعلتموه تحاببتم؟ أفشوا السلام بينكم))

“You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not guide you to something which if you carry out you will love one another.”

Spread *salaam* amongst yourselves.” [Muslim]

Friendship in Islam is not based on using each other; on the contrary, helping each other to stay away from the *haram* is fundamental to it. How could someone watch his brother burn without doing anything to save him? A person who did that would be one's worst enemy rather than a friend. Therefore Muslims always warn and advise each other. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إن أحدكم مرآة أخيه، فإذا رأى به أذى فليمطه عنه))

“Each of you is the mirror of his brother, so if he sees any fault in him he should wipe it away from him.” [Tirmidhi]

This means the purpose of confiding secrets to each other wouldn't be as in the Western values where people confide their secrets to feel good knowing that they will not be a comeback. Rather in Islam we confide our secrets to our friends to seek their sincere advice and help. So a Muslim will ask his friends about issues relating to marriage, problems within his family, troubles he feels at work or fears that he has.

Friendship has rules in Islam unlike in the West - to visit them especially when they are ill, to inquire about their family, feeding them when they are hungry, attending to their needs, keeping their private affairs to yourself and sharing your wealth with them without hesitation. It is related that Ibn 'Umar ؓ was looking about from right to left in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who asked the reason for doing so. Ibn 'Umar replied, “There is someone dear to me and I am searching for him, but do not see him”. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then explained to him that if you love someone you should ask his name, his father's name and where he lives as well as visit him when he is sick and help him if he was busy.

'Umar ibn al-Khattab ؓ said, “Encountering your brothers lifts all grief. If Allah blesses you with good relations with another Muslim, hold fast to it.”

RULE OF FRIENDSHIP WITH NON-MUSLIMS

As Muslims living in the West we interact with non-Muslims on a daily basis whether at work, university, college or in society at large. It is incorrect for us to cut ourselves completely from them and live in isolation. We should aim at building relationships with them in order to give them *da'wah* to embrace Islam. Therefore we should have them as acquaintances, however this does not mean that we are allowed to have them as close friends, as Allah ﷻ says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ ﴾

“O you who believe, take not into intimacy those outside your ranks: they will not fail to corrupt you.” [TMQ Ale-Imran: 118]

Not taking them as close friends means that you don't share with them your innermost thoughts and feelings. For no matter how well you know them, they reject Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. The bond of *Iman* is even stronger than that of kinship. An example of this can be seen after the great battle of Badr, the Quraysh prisoners of war were brought to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who assigned them to the custody of individual Muslims. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Treat them well.” Amongst the prisoners was Abu 'Aziz ibn 'Umayr, the brother of Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr ؓ. Abu 'Aziz narrates what happened, “I was among a group of Ansaar... Whenever they had lunch or dinner they would give me bread and dates to eat in obedience to the Messenger of Allah's ﷺ instruction to them to treat us well. My brother, Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, passed by me and said to the man holding me prisoner, “Tie him firmly... His mother (i.e. Mus'ab's own mother) is a woman of great wealth and maybe she would ransom him for you.” Abu 'Aziz ibn 'Umayr could not believe his ears. Astonished, he turned to Mus'ab and asked: “My brother, is this your instruction concerning me?” Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr ؓ replied, “He is my brother, not you!” pointing to the Ansaari sahabi holding him, affirming that in the battle between the *Haq* (truth) and *Batil* (falsehood), the bonds of *Iman* are stronger than the ties of kinship.

PROHIBITION OF BACKBITING, SLANDER, ENVY, JEALOUSY & GRUDGES

The relationship of friendship is one of trust as a good Muslim is trustworthy and not deceitful, betraying or a backbiter. In reality this makes the love between friends in Islam stronger than friendship according to Western values as there is no constant thinking about whether your friend is speaking ill of you to other people or whether they are having a hidden relationship with your sister or wife.

Islam has prohibited backbiting and slander and thus removing the cause of suspicion and doubt amongst people. Allah ﷻ says:

﴿ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ
وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ
يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴾

“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicions, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother. You abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful.” [Al-Hujarat: 12]

It is narrated by Abu Dawud on the authority of Anas ؓ, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

((لما عرج بي مررت بقوم لهم أظفار من نحاس يخمشون
وجوههم وصدورهم فقلت من هؤلاء يا جبريل؟ قال هؤلاء
الذين يأكلون لحوم الناس ويقعون في أعراضهم))

“On the night of Isra I passed by some people who had copper nails and they were clawing their faces and chests with them. I asked Jibrael: Who are these persons? He said: These

are the people who eat the flesh of human beings and disgrace them.”

Islam also forbids envy and jealousy which are the common causes of problems amongst friends in Western societies. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا تباغضوا ولا تدابروا ولا تحاسدوا وكونوا عباد الله
إخوانا، ولا يحل لمسلم أن يهجر أخاه فوق ثلاث))

“Do not have malice against a Muslim; do not be envious of other Muslims; do not go against a Muslim and forsake him. O the slaves of Allah ﷻ! Be like brothers with each other. It is not violable for a Muslim to desert his brother for over three days.” [Sahih Muslim, Tirmithi]

Belittling each other is almost a pastime in the West. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((بحسب امرئ من الشر أن يحقر أخاه المسلم))

“The believer can do no worse than belittle his brother.” [Ihya ‘Uloom al-Deen]

A Muslim should not hold grudges against another Muslim even if they are differing personalities. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned against this when he said,

((ثم تفتح أبواب الجنة يوم الإثنين ويوم الخميس، فيغفر لكل
عبد لا يشرك بالله شيئاً إلا رجلاً كانت بينه وبين أخيه
شحناء. فيقال: انظروا هذين حتى يصطلحا، انظروا هذين
حتى يصطلحا، انظروا هذين حتى يصطلحا))

“The gates of Paradise will be open on Mondays and on

Thursdays, and every servant [of Allah] who associates nothing with Allah will be forgiven, except for the man who has a grudge against his brother. [About them] it will be said: Delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled.” [Muslim]

Friends should feel at ease with each other without feeling inferior or superior. Ego’s must be tamed according to Islam.

CONCEALING FAULTS

It is important to conceal a friend’s faults, this does not mean that we ignore them; it means that we advise them and help them overcome their shortcomings.

‘Uqbah ibn Amir narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

﴿ من ستر عورة مؤمن فكأنما استحيا موءودة من قبرها ﴾

“He who sees something which should be kept hidden and conceals it, it will be like the one who has brought to life a girl buried alive.” [Abu Dawud]

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah’s Apostle ﷺ said,

((من ستر مسلما ستره الله في الدنيا والآخرة، والله في عون العبد ما دام العبد في عون أخيه))

((العبد ما دام العبد في عون أخيه))

“He who conceals (the faults) of a Muslim, Allah would conceal his faults in the world and in the Hereafter. Allah is at the back of a servant so long as the servant is at the back of his brother.” [Muslim]

GENEROSITY & KINDNESS

Sharing wealth with others is greatly encouraged in Islam. This encourages trust and closeness amongst people. It is sometimes difficult for Muslims to grasp this principle especially when they are

affected by Western society which promotes greed and selfishness. Giving someone something without expecting anything in return is uncommon in the West even amongst friends. When the non-Muslims give each other presents such as on Birthday’s, Christmas, New Year’s or when someone leaves the work place it is done more out of tradition and knowing that they will get something in return rather than sincerity.

Imam Bukhari narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه))

“None amongst you believes (truly) till one likes for his brother, that which he loves for his himself.”

Examples of this perspective towards others can be clearly seen in the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

It is transmitted by Imam Ahmad, in Al-Bidayah, volume 3, page 228 that Anas ؓ narrated, “When ‘Abdur-Rahman ibn ‘Auf ؓ immigrated to Madinah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established brotherhood between him and Sa’d ibn al-Ansari ؓ. Afterwards Sa’d said to ‘Abdur-Rahman ibn ‘Auf, ‘O my brother! I am a wealthy person of Madinah. Look! Here is half of my wealth, take it! I have 2 wives. I will divorce one of them whom you like more so that you may marry her.’ ‘Abdur-Rahman ibn ‘Auf replied, ‘May Allah ﷻ prosper your family and wealth, just show me the way to the market so that I may make my fortune with my own hands.”

The Ansaar of Madinah were extremely generous to their brothers, the Muhajireen from Makkah. Abu Hurayrah ؓ reported that they once approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with the request that their orchards of palm trees should be distributed equally between the Muslims of Madinah and the Muslims of Makkah. But the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was reluctant to put this heavy burden upon them. It was, however, decided that the Muhajireen would work in the orchards along with the Ansaar and the yield would be divided equally amongst them.

Friends should have informality with each other so that they are not hesitant in asking for anything when in need. This can be seen from the example of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his dear friend Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had stayed at his house when after arriving into Madinah whilst he was waiting for the mosque to be built. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stayed in Abu Ayyub's house for almost seven months until his mosque was completed on the open space where his camel had stopped. He then moved to the roots which were built around the mosque for himself and his family. He thus became a neighbour of his friend Abu Ayyub.

Abu Ayyub continued to love the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with all his heart and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also loved him dearly. There was no formality between them. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ continued to regard Abu Ayyub's house as his own. The following anecdote tells a great deal about the relationship between them. Abu Bakr ؓ once left his house in the burning heat of the midday sun and went to the mosque. 'Umar ؓ saw him and asked, "Abu Bakr, what has brought you out at this hour?" Abu Bakr said he had left his house because he was terribly hungry and 'Umar said that he had left his house for the same reason. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came up to them and asked; "What has brought the two of you out at this hour?" They told him and he ﷺ said, "By Him in Whose hands is my soul, only hunger has caused me to come out also. But come with me." They went to the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. His wife opened the door and said, "Welcome to the Prophet and whoever is with him." "Where is Abu Ayyub?" asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Abu Ayyub, who was working in a nearby palm grove, heard the Messenger of Allah's ﷺ voice and came hurriedly. "Welcome to the Prophet and whoever is with him," he said and went on "O Prophet of God, this is not the time that you usually come." (Abu Ayyub used to keep some food for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ every day. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not come for it by a certain time, Abu Ayyub would give it to his family). "You are right," the Messenger of Allah ﷺ agreed. Abu Ayyub went out and cut a cluster of dates in which there were ripe and half ripe dates. "I did not want you to eat this", said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. "Could you not have brought only the ripe dates?" "O Rasulullah, please eat from both the ripe dates and the half ripe. I shall slaughter an animal for you also." "If you are going

to, then do not kill one that gives milk", cautioned the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Abu Ayyub killed a young goat, cooked half and grilled the other half. He also asked his wife to bake. When the food was ready, it was placed before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his two companions. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took a piece of meat and placed it in a loaf and said, "Abu Ayyub, take this to Fatimah. She has not tasted the like of this for days". When they had eaten and were satisfied, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said reflectively, "Bread and meat and busr and rutb!" Tears began to flow from his eyes as he continued,

((والذي نفسي بيده إن هذا هو النعيم الذي تسألون عنه

يوم القيامة ، فإذا أصبتم مثل هذا فقولوا : بسم الله . فإذا

شبعتم فقولوا : الحمد لله الذي هو أشبعنا وأنعم علينا فأفضل

فإن هذا كفاء بهذا))

"This is a bountiful blessing about which you will be asked on the Day of Judgment. If such comes your way, put your hands to it and say, Bismillah (In the name of God) and when you have finished say, Al hamdu lillah alladhee huwa ashbana wa anama alayna (Praise be to God Who has given us enough and Who has bestowed his bounty on us). This is best." [Ihya Uloom ad Deen]

In putting others first, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ demonstrated for us excellent examples. He ﷺ once entered a thicket with one of his companions and gathered two toothpicks, one of them crooked and the other straight. He gave the straight one to his companion, who said, "O Messenger of Allah, you are more entitled to the straight one than I!" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied,

((ما من صاحب يصحب صاحبا ولو ساعة من نهار إلا سئل

عن صحبته: هل أقام منها حق الله تعالى أم أضاعه))

"When a friend accompanies a friend, if only for one hour of

the day, he will be asked to account for his companionship, whether he fulfilled his duty to Allah therein or whether he neglected it.” [Ihya Uloom ad Deen]

On another occasion the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went out to a well in order to wash. Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman took a robe and stood screening the Messenger of Allah ﷺ whilst he washed. Then Hudhayfa ﷺ sat down to wash himself and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the robe and screened Hudhayfa ﷺ from view. Hudhayfa objected saying, “My father be your ransom, and my mother too! O Messenger of Allah, do not do it!” Yet he ﷺ insisted on holding the robe and said,

((ما تحاب اثنان في الله تعالى إلا كان أفضلهما أشدهما حبا))

((لصاحبه))

“Each time two people are in company together, the dearer to Allah is he who is kinder to his companion.” [Ihya Uloom ad Deen]

Giving of gifts has also been recommended by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he explained that it creates love between people.

It was reported by al-Bukhari in al-Adaabul-Mufrad (no. 594) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

((تمادوا تحابوا))

“Give gifts and you will love one another.”

Kindness to our friends, helping them in need and consoling them in times of grief should become natural to us for everyone needs help, a shoulder to cry on and someone to share their joy.

Ali ibn Abi Talib ﷺ said, “Pay attention to your brothers for they are your provision in this life and in the hereafter. Do you not listen to the cry of the people of the fire?”

﴿ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِينَ * وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ ﴾

“So we have no one to intercede for us nor any dear friend.” [TMQ Ash-Shu’araa: 100-101]

LOVING SOMEONE FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

In the West people love each other for the sake of material benefits whereas in Islam we are encouraged to love each other for the sake of Allah. This means that we would undertake actions with regards to each other that even contradict our personal interests in order aid a friend or further our relationship with them.

It was reported by Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إن رجلا زار أخا له في الله فأرصد الله له ملكا فقال: أين تريد؟ قال: أريد أن أزور أخي فلانا، فقال: لحاجة لك عنده؟ قال: لا، قال: لقراءة بينك وبينه؟ قال: لا، قال: فبنعمة له عندك؟ قال: لا، قال: فبم؟ قال: أحبه في الله قال: فإن الله أرسلني إليك يخبرك بأنه يحبك لحبك إياه وقد أوجب لك الجنة))

تريد؟ قال: أريد أن أزور أخي فلانا، فقال: لحاجة لك عنده؟

قال: لا، قال: لقراءة بينك وبينه؟ قال: لا، قال: فبنعمة له

عندك؟ قال: لا، قال: فبم؟ قال: أحبه في الله قال: فإن الله

أرسلني إليك يخبرك بأنه يحبك لحبك إياه وقد أوجب لك

الجنة))

“A man went to visit a brother of his in another town and Allah deputed an angel to await him on his way, so when he came to him he said, ‘Where are you going?’ He replied, ‘I am going to visit a brother of mine in this town.’ He said, ‘Have you done him some favour which you desire to be returned?’ He said, ‘No, it is just that I love him for Allah, the Mighty and Magnificent.’ He said, ‘Then I am a messenger sent by Allah to you (to inform you) that Allah loves you as you have loved him for Allah’s sake.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said,

((من سره أن يجد حلاوة الإيمان فليحب المرء لا يحبه إلا لله))

“Whoever would like to taste the sweetness of *Iman* (belief) then let him love a person only for Allah’s sake.” [Ahmad]

It was reported by Abu Dawud that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إن من عباد الله عبادا يغبطهم الأنبياء والشهداء. قيل: من

هم يا رسول الله، فلعلنا نحبهم؟ قال: هم قوم تحابوا في الله

من غير أموال ولا أنساب، وجوههم من نور، على منابر من

نور، لا يخافون إذا خاف الناس، ولا يحزنون إذا حزن الناس))

“Indeed from the servants of Allah there are some who are not Prophets, yet they will be envied by the Prophets and the martyrs.’ It was asked, ‘Who are they? That we may love them.’ He ﷺ said, ‘They are people who have mutual love through light from Allah, not due to kinship or ancestry, their faces will be enlightened, upon pillars of light, they will not fear when the people fear, or grieve when the people grieve.’”

Then he ﷺ recited,

﴿ أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴾

“No doubt! Verily, on the friends of Allah there is no fear nor shall they grieve.” [TMQ Yunus: 62]

In conclusion, it should be apparent that we can’t live in isolation and require company. Friendship provides a natural support structure the Muslim community. Therefore we should ensure that the company we keep helps us in remembering Allah ﷻ and strengthens our commitment to Islam. This is more important for us living in the West as the corrupt society continuously bombards us with its poisonous culture and attempts to catch us in its net.

Dilemmas of the Muslim student: Between Clubbing & the Qur’an

Muslims at University are faced with many problems, obstacles and challenges. Whether they are in their home cities or have moved, having left home for the first time. They prepare themselves for the problems of coping with the workload, organising their time, accommodation and coursework. Although these problems are real and cannot be overlooked they are just the tip of the iceberg.

Ironically in the first week at university the first problems they face will not be organising their time or coping with the workload. In the first weeks they’re likely to be invited to a party by their department, their colleagues will invite them to go clubbing and the Student Union will invite everyone to a pub-crawl. At the fresher’s fair every society will try and sign them up including the clubbing society with their promises of cheap beer and discounts at the clubs and the Asian society who will be promoting their “bhangra do’s” and parties.

This leaves Muslims with a real dilemma: should we go with the flow and compromise our identity or stick to our principles and risk being called “anti-social”. So how do Muslim students face this dilemma?

DIFFERING RESPONSES

Some people will accept everything from the *Kufr* society wholeheartedly and totally forget Islam. So they may not pray all year and when non-Muslims attack Islam they may even agree. This is seen as extreme; more commonly people choose to take the ‘middle ground’. So they enjoy the pubs and clubs but still pray on a Friday, they would indulge in drugs but would never touch a ham sandwich.

As term progresses, more and more Muslims forget Islam until this becomes normality. This is the natural consequence of taking the common ground. Surely the one who drinks but does not get drunk is compromising Islam.

Accepting compromise is the basic reason behind the identity crisis within Muslims at university. Compromise is what leads people to ‘relax’ some parts of Islam that don’t seem to fit in to their new lifestyle. This is why many Muslims limit Islam to something they do every Friday or when they return home for the holidays.

Many see nothing wrong with the ideas of “live life to the max” or “you only live once”, dreaming that after student life they will settle down and then think about Islam. Others may fully engage in their study, greeting fellow Muslims with complimentary ‘Assalam wa Alaikum’, but leave Islam on the shelf.

Muslims may even lose their emotion for Islam, becoming numb to the problems the Muslims are facing around the world, justifying to themselves that it doesn’t directly affect them or that they are only problems for the people of that nationality.

AN INVITATION TO THINK

As Muslims, we are always in danger of falling into the traps of society, of abandoning our beliefs or relegating Islam to “spiritual issues” alone. In fact we must question ourselves and ensure that we understand our life. We are taught not to question the basic yet most fundamental questions in life; “Why am I Muslim?”, “What is my purpose in life?”, “Is there anything after death?”

These questions, although basic, may be sidelined or ignored by us and often remain confused in our minds. Some of us may be dumbstruck with the question of, “Why are you Muslim?” Others may answer, “Because my parents are”, yet if posed with the same question about their choice of bank account or degree course they would reply with an elaborate answer.

Some of us when posed with this question may say, “Islam is the

truth” but when questioned further as to how to prove the truth of Islam they would give a vague reply.

We need to realise that Islam is the definite truth. Islam is not a belief like those of other religions and creeds, which resort to notions like, “I can feel Jesus in my heart that’s why I’m Christian”, or “Man is free to do as he pleases because he is good in nature”. Rather we know for sure that Allah ﷻ exists and that the Qur’an is the word of Allah ﷻ. The proof of Allah’s ﷻ existence is found in our surroundings, which leads to the fact that everything in the universe could not have resulted out of nothing as some may have us believe. Allah ﷻ has emphasised this in many places in the Qur’an. He ﷻ says,

﴿ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴾

“Verily, in the creation of heavens and earth, and in the difference between night and day are signs for those who have minds” [TMQ Ale-Imran: 190]

We should acquire the knowledge of our belief and our identity so that we have no doubts and can easily refute any of the erroneous arguments that the society bombards us with.

STICKING TO ISLAM

As Muslims having firm belief in Allah ﷻ and certainty in the fact that the Qur’an is guidance from Him, we can build our lives according to Islam and must shun the notions of freedom and “live life to the max” that create a society where rape is common on university campuses and where crime has become a norm which students attempt to protect their property from.

Applying Islam selectively in our lives is tantamount to burning the pages of the Qur’an. We should realise that restricting Islam to the mosque or merely *halal* food is compromising our position both in this life and in the hereafter. We are accountable for all our actions and upon this basis Allah ﷻ will assign to us *Jannah* or *Jabannam*.

﴿ أَفْتَوْمِنُونَ بَعْضَ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ
يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ ﴾

“So do you believe in some part of the Book and disbelieve in some. The penalty awaiting those who do this is nothing but humiliation in this life and the severest of punishment on the Day of Judgment.” [TMQ Al-Baqarah: 85]

Allah ﷻ has warned us about partaking in the evil gatherings that take place in nightclubs, raves, “bhangra do’s” and the like. Allah ﷻ says;

﴿ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَىٰ الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَىٰ الْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ ﴾

“Cooperate in righteousness and piety, and don’t cooperate in sin and transgression.” [TMQ Al-Ma’idah: 2]

A Muslim must take care to stay away from environments that are dominated by boyfriend-girlfriend relationships and pre-marital sex. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has encouraged us to control our lust and our speech.

Sahl ibn Sa’d ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((من يضمن لي ما بين لحييه وما بين رجله أضمن له الجنة))

“Whoever can guarantee what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs, I guarantee Paradise for him.” [Sahih Bukhari]

If we are tempted by intoxicants such as alcohol or drugs whether in large or small quantities, we should take heed of the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who said,

((كل مسكر حرام، وما أسكر منه الفرق فملاء الكف منه
حرام))

“All intoxicants are unlawful, of whatever thing a large quantity intoxicates; even a small quantity is prohibited.” [An-Nawawi]

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا يزني الزاني حين يزني وهو مؤمن ولا يشرب الخمر حين
يشرب وهو مؤمن ولا يسرق السارق حين يسرق وهو مؤمن))

“No fornicator commits fornication in the state of being a believer so long as he is busy in committing it. No thief commits theft in the state of being a believer so long as he commits this. No drunkard drinks in the state of being a believer so long as he is busy in drinking.” [Agreed upon]

This advice is not aimed at attacking Muslims who don’t follow Islam; rather it is an advice that is aimed at provoking thought in all of us to enable us to follow the truth.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((المؤمن مرآة أخيه، إذا رأى فيه عيباً أصلحه))

“Each of you is the mirror of his brother, so if he sees any fault in him he should wipe it away from him.” [Tirmidhi]

Whilst at university individuals spend hours of thought upon the topics of their courses and even their social lives. It would be hypocritical not to think about their belief and their way of life. The most definite thing in life is death, it would be irrational for us to ignore the inevitable and attempt to escape thinking about it as so many of the non-Muslims do.

If any of us haven't started to think about Islam seriously, now is as good a time as any. Those of us that are practicing Islam should ensure that we do not become complacent and should do our utmost to develop our Islamic personality and guide those around us.

It is important that whilst at university we keep an Islamic atmosphere amongst Muslim students, we should also support the Islamic activities taking place such as talks, seminars and debates. This atmosphere will help us to remain strong amidst the tide of *Kufr* at university.

Allah ﷻ says,

((الكيس من دان نفسه وعمل لما بعد الموت. والفاجر من
أتبع نفسه هواها وتمنى على الله))

"The good and the evil are not alike even if the evil looks like the good and is followed by the majority. So fear Allah, O you that understand; that (so) you may prosper." [TMQ Al-Ma'idah: 100]

Why should we obey our parents?

﴿ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴾

"And we have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents, in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning, (bear the command) show gratitude to Me and to your parents, to Me is (your final) Goal."
[TMQ Al-Rum: 14]

Allah ﷻ in this verse of the Qur'an is emphasising to us something that is not common in the society that we live in, something that unfortunately has become distant in the minds of many Muslims, especially some of the Muslim youth – the obedience and gratitude to parents.

When we look at the society around us, we can see how people treat their parents on all levels. When we look at the youth and teenagers – it's common for them to have repeated arguments with their parents, swear at them and talk about them behind their backs to their friends. I remember whilst I was at school other children would tell me how they hate their parents, that they can't wait to leave home, how their parents are so 'un-cool', some even told me how they used to steal from his parents.

Even 'grown-ups' in Western societies have this attitude towards their parents. So if we look at people in their twenties or even older, many see their parents as an embarrassment when they attain old age, they leave them in old peoples homes and neglect them, paying them a nominal visit on Christmas. It has become very common for people in this society to see their parents as a burden when they get old and

look down on old people in general.

Unfortunately they are also examples amongst Muslims of how they disrespect their parents. Although not many Muslims go to the extreme of completely cutting themselves off from their parents, many are rebellious to them in a way that contradicts Islam. This varies from people shouting at their parents, to neglecting to look after them to having hate of them.

We should be well aware of the Western culture and what it results in. Western society produces people who are totally individualistic with no regard to their family or parents and are totally driven by their own material benefit.

How can we allow the decadence and immorality of western culture to be a standard for us in the way that we deal with our parents? Their neglect, unkindness, scorn and abuse of parents is a grave crime that has torn father from son and mother from daughter.

It leaves the family structure discarded and in tatters as parental authority is undermined and ridiculed instead of being respected. It leaves parents agitated, resentful, heartbroken and detached from the love, kindness and support that their children should give them.

Such is the weight of fulfilling or neglecting one's parents that Allah ﷻ has mentioned it in connection to the prohibition and the grave sin of associating partners with Allah ﷻ. Therefore it could not be fitting nor characteristic for us who are striving to gain Allah ﷻ pleasure, to take this matter lightly. Rather, we must link this matter to the obedience and disobedience of Allah ﷻ and to the reward and the punishment.

Such understanding is clear for you and it is reported on the authority of Abu Umamah that a man approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and asked,

((أن رجلاً قال يا رسول الله، ما حق الوالدين على ولدهما؟

قال: هما جنتك ونارك))

“O Messenger of Allah, what are the rights of the parents over their children?” He ﷺ replied, “They are your Paradise and your Hell.”

Our devotion to Allah ﷻ and the example of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ compels us to obey your parents in those matters that they have a right over us and Islam has condemned those who show disobedience to them or cause them pain.

We should not be like the *Kuffar*. We must observe the rights of our parents without neglect and without expressing a dislike of executing their right, whether it is to go shopping for them, taking or accompanying them on a journey, cleaning the house, spending on them or looking after them during illness.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ cursed the man who did not attain his *Jannah* through his parents, Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ قِيلَ: مَنْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟

قال: مَنْ أَدْرَكَ وَالِدَيْهِ عِنْدَ الْكَبِيرِ أَحَدَهُمَا أَوْ كِلَيْهِمَا ثُمَّ لَمْ

يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ))

“May he be humiliated! May he be disgraced! May he be brought low!” The companions asked, **“Who?”** He ﷺ replied, **“The unfortunate person whose parents or any one of them attain old age in his lifetime and he does not earn Paradise.”** [Muslim]

He ﷺ has linked the pleasure of the father to the Pleasure of Allah ﷻ, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((رِضَا اللَّهِ فِي رِضَا الْوَالِدِ، وَسَخَطُ اللَّهِ فِي سَخَطِ الْوَالِدِ))

“In the good pleasure of the father lies the good pleasure of Allah and in his displeasure, the displeasure of Allah.” [Tirmidhi]

These rights that belong to our parents extend into the grave. It is narrated that whilst the Sahabah were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when a person from the tribe of Banu Salamah came and said to him ﷺ,

((يا رسول الله، هل بقي من برِّ أبيّ شيءٍ أبرُّهما به بعد

موتهما؟. قال: نعم، الصلاة عليهما والاستغفار لهما، وإنفاذ

عهدهما من بعدهما، وصلة الرحم التي لا توصل إلا بهما،

وإكرام صديقيهما))

“O Messenger of Allah, are there any rights of my parents on me which I have to fulfil even after they have died?” “Yes”, replied Muhammad ﷺ, “To pray for mercy and forgiveness on their behalf to fulfil the promises they may have, to pay due regard to the bonds of relationship that are from their side and to be respectful to their friends.” [Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah]

The Shari’ah has obliged us to show love, kindness and warmth to our parents.

‘Abdullah ibn Masood said,

((عن ابن مسعود قلت: يا رسول الله أيُّ العمل أفضل؟

قال: الصلاة على وقتها قلت: ثم أي؟ قال بر الوالدين قلت:

ثم أيُّ؟ قال: الجهاد في سبيل الله))

“I asked the Prophet ‘Which deed is the dearest to Allah?’ He replied, ‘To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times.’ I asked, ‘What is the next (in goodness)?’ He replied, ‘To be good and dutiful to your parents’ I again asked, ‘What is the next (in

goodness)?’ He replied, ‘To participate in Jihad in Allah’s cause.’ ‘Abdullah added, ‘I asked only that much and if I had asked more, the Prophet would have told me more.’”

Allah ﷻ has made even the slightest raising of voice to the parents a crime. He has ordered people to refer to their parents with the best of words, to look after them when they are old, to serve them and to not deny them any of their rights

Allah ﷻ says,

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا * وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا ﴾

“And do good to your parents. Should one of them, or both attain old age in your care, never say ‘oof’ to them or scold them, but always speak to them with reverent speech and spread over them humbly the wings of your tenderness and say, “O my Sustainer, bestow Your grace upon them, even as they cherished and raised me as a child.” [TMQ Al-Isra’: 23-24]

Mujahid, ﷺ one of the famous commentators of the Qur’an from the *tabi’een* (generation after the Sahaba), commented,

“If the parents grow old and end up urinating and answering the call of nature on themselves, do not feel disgusted or say: Uff to them. Rather remove the urine and faeces from them, just as they used to do when you were young without feeling disgust in doing that for you.”

Clearly the Shari’ah has enjoined upon us to show kindness, respect and warmth to our parents and has placed the duty upon us to house and look after them when they are in the greatest need of help as they grow old. These needs are just as great as those we had when we were very young in our parents arms.

This does not mean that we obey our parents even if they ask us to disobey Allah ﷻ. As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق))

“There is no obedience to the created in disobedience to the Creator.” However even the manner in which we disagree with them should be with respect and wisdom. We should do our best to explain to them the rules of Islam in the best manner possible if this were to occur. We are also not obliged to obey them in issues that are related to ourselves, however this is recommended (*mandub*) such as them asking us to marry a particular person or wear particular clothes. This is different to matters related to themselves such as if they require our help them with the housework, gardening, shopping and the like, this is obligatory (*fard*) for us to undertake.

It has been narrated that a man once asked Sa’id ibn Al-Musayyab رضي الله عنه, “I understand all of the *ayaat* (verses) about kindness and respect towards parents, apart from the phrase, “address them in terms of honour.” Sa’id replied, “It means that you should address them as a servant addresses his master.”

Allah ﷻ says,

﴿وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ﴾

“And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy.” [TMQ Al-Isra’: 24]

A child can never repay his debt to his parents. The Messenger ﷺ said,

((لا يجزي ولد عن والده إلا أن يجده مملوكاً فيشتره فيعتقه))

“No child can pay back his parents (favours), unless he finds that his father is a slave, so he buys him and sets him free.” [Muslim]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed clearly the fruits of our kindness to our parents, he ﷺ has linked it to our child’s kindness to us,

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((بروا آباءكم يبركم أبناءكم، وعفوا تعف نساءكم))

“Obey your parents and treat them with kindness. Your children will be kind and obedient to you and live with purity. Your wives will stay pure.”

Allah ﷻ also linked the kindness to parents to the ease at the time of death. Jabir reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((ثلاث من كن فيه ستر الله تعالى عليه كنفه وأدخله

جنته: رفق بالضعيف، وشفقة على الوالدين، والإحسان

إلى المملوك))

“Whosoever has got three things in him, Allah will make his death easy and will admit him in Paradise: mercy to the weak, kindness to parents and doing good to the slave.” [Tirmidhi]

Even the look of kindness has been linked to much reward. Ibn Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((ما من ولد بار ينظر إلى والديه نظرة رحمة، إلا كتب الله له

بكل نظرة حجة مبرورة قالوا: وإن نظر كل يوم مائة مرة؟

قال: نعم. الله أكبر وأطيب))

“No obedient son looks to his parents with a look of kindness but Allah writes for him one accepted pilgrimage for every look.” They enquired, “And if he looks a hundred times every

day?” “Yes”, said Muhammad ﷺ, “Allah is the most Great and most Beneficent.”

The dutiful child would seek to scrutinise every detail such that he does not fall into *uquq* (disrespect) of his parents. Hisham ibn Hassan said, “I said to al-Hasan ‘I learn the Qur’an, and my mother keeps waiting for me with dinner until I come back.’ Al-Hasan said, ‘It is better for you that you eat dinner with your mother, so that her heart is comforted, then to perform a voluntary Hajj.’”

It was the characters of the scholars of the past that they obeyed their parents and never showed signs of disrespect.

Allah ﷻ raised the mother above all when He ﷻ said,

﴿ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ قَائِمًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ ﴾

“...His mother bears him with hardship and gives birth to him with hardship. His bearing and weaning is thirty months until he attains full strength...” [TMQ Al-Ahqaf: 15]

Abu Hurayrah narrated that a man came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and asked,

((يا رسول الله، من أحق الناس بحسن صحابتي؟ قال: أمك قال: ثم من؟ قال: ثم أمك قال: ثم من؟ قال: ثم أمك قال: ثم من؟ قال: ثم أبوك))

“O RasulAllah, which of all people is best entitled to kind treatment and good companionship from me? He ﷺ answered, ‘your mother.’ The man asked, ‘Then who?’ He ﷺ said, ‘Your mother.’ ‘And after her?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘Your mother.’ ‘And after her?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘Your father.’” [Bukhari & Muslim]

Ibn ‘Umar ؓ saw a man carrying his mother and going around the Ka’bah in *tawaf*. He then asked Ibn ‘Umar ؓ, “Have I nullified my duty towards her?” Ibn ‘Umar replied, “Not even by one contraction! However, you have done good and Allah will reward you tremendously for the little that you could do.”

Islam has obliged the good relations with the parents, even if they were wrong on an issue. Islam sought to place the mother and father with the highest of respect such that they would feel the comfort and tranquillity around their children. Islam has made it a duty upon the child to not cause misery to the parents when it come to issues concerning them, whether it would be denying them time with their grand children, or not assisting them when they require help. Also Islam has asked that no one else is favoured above them and that their honour is not reduced when the child speaks. Furthermore Islam has asked of the dutiful child to be quick at responding to the parents and not drag their feet when asked to do something, as this is disobedience.

Anas al-Juhani said that his father narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إن لله عبادا لا يكلمهم الله يوم القيامة ولا يذكهم وهم عذاب أليم قيل من هم يا رسول الله قال متبرئ من والديه راغب عنهما ومتبرئ من ولده ورجل أنعم عليه قوم فكفر نعمتهم وتبرأ منهم))

“Verily, on the Day of Resurrection, Allah has slaves to whom He will neither speak nor purify nor look at.” He was asked, “Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?” He said, “He who disowns and abandons his parents, he who disowns his children and he who was granted a favour by a people, but he denied their favour and disowned them.” [Ahmad]

Do You Want to Drive a Ferrari?

This summer billboards across the country herald the arrival of the latest drivel from the Hollywood production line, the feature film “*2 Fast 2 Furious*”. Essentially, the film glorifies car crime yet the youth will gaze in admiration as their screen heroes tear around corners at breakneck speed, while performing dangerous stunts in the hottest sports cars.

Amongst some of the Muslim youth, we find an almost cult-like following of the fast and furious lifestyle. Friday nights are spent “cruising” around the neighbourhood with the roof down and rap music blaring to the extent that it shakes the car. Many a pointless journey is conducted up and down the same road in a somewhat bizarre ritual. This street racing and dangerous driving is a desperate attempt to be “cool”. For many of the youth, a fast car means independence and an opportunity to emulate the rich and famous. Many will compete with friends to have the biggest and meanest engine and ownership of such a car is viewed as a coming of age.

A fast car complete with the latest accessories; sub-woofer speakers, tinted windows and steel alloys deliver status and respect amongst peers. Unfortunately, there are other accessories which come as standard but are not advertised by the car companies; namely greed and pride (*takkabur*). The Muslim elders are not immune to these concepts of pride and arrogance either and we find similar behaviour in the community with respect being granted to those with expensive cars, such as a Mercedes S class or a BMW 5 series.

As a result, the car is viewed as a means to command respect and flaunt wealth. These concepts of arrogance and pride stem from individualism and are a repercussion of the capitalist creed. It is common for an individual in the West to spend his entire life

attempting to keep up appearances. People will cast envious looks at their neighbours who have the latest sports car gleaming in the driveway, much to the joy of the owner.

The fast car has fast become symbolic of success in Western society and the lack of such a commodity is associated with failure in life as well as leaving one open to ridicule from his social peers. The type of car an individual drives has even gone as far as defining what strata of society he can associate with or even belong to. A few years ago, if people were seen driving a Skoda or a Lada it would be difficult for them to sever the disdain of such a thing from their character. Image conscious youth would single them out in the road and make a mockery of them.

With such an intense pressure to appear something great before others the ideals of Western life will become numerous. Hence, the fastest and most fashionable car does not remain so for long, and soon after, a new image will be the one revered on the streets.

Clever advertising is beamed out through the Western media to tempt people to desire recognition and glorification in the neighbourhood. Recently, Toyota advertisements showed people lying to others, claiming that the Toyota was their car. One car advertisement boldly states; “the car might get you more respect than you think.” Many rap stars have incorporated expensive cars into their music videos and include semi-naked, scantily clad women sprawled over the car.

In the mind of the people especially the youth, this creates a desire to purchase these vehicles to recreate what the West deems to be the glamour lifestyle of women chasing you and people idolising you for your image. In addition to this, for those who are not old enough to drive, they are groomed from an early age as fast cars are common in computer games, granting them an opportunity to live out their fantasies and moonlight as get-away drivers for the Mob.

This need to play out ones’ fantasies and compete amongst peers for the most respected image is a natural consequence of a capitalist society based on benefit and individualism.

Islam does not prevent man from progressing materially and earning money. It is narrated that many of the Sahabah ﷺ such as Uthman ibn Affan ﷺ were wealthy. It is reported that Abu Hanifah ﷺ saw one of his companions wearing a poor garment, so he ordered him to wait until the assembly had departed. He told him, “lift the prayer mat and take what is under it.” The man lifted it and there were 1000 dirhams under it. He told him, “take these dirhams and change your state with them.” The man replied that he was wealthy and did not need the money. Abu Hanifah said, “have you not heard the hadith,

((إن الله يحب العبد التقي الغني الخفي))

‘Allah loves the trace of his blessing to appear on His servant?’

For this reason you must change your state so that your friend is not grieved by you.”

It is worth mentioning at this stage that Islam also does not prohibit the ownership of vehicles to transport people, whether they are “flashy” and expensive or not. After all, the car is a material object and is not specific to any civilisation and so it is not forbidden. However, the car can be used for different means, either to take the children to the masjid or to drive around the streets in an attempt to attract attention and envy.

In Islam, the concepts of pride and arrogance are shunned and indeed prohibited because they contradict the Islamic personality. On the authority of Abdullah ibn Masood, who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((لا يدخل الجنة مَنْ كان في قلبه مثقال ذرة

من كبر. قال رجل: إن الرجال يحب أن يكون

ثوبه حسناً، ونعله حسنة. قال: إن الله جميل

يحب الجمال، الكبر بطل الحق وغمط الناس.))

“One who has the slightest bit of arrogance in his heart, will

not be able to enter paradise. One of the companions said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Some people like nice clothes and shoes.’ The Holy Prophet said, ‘Allah is Elegant and Beautiful, and He likes elegance and beauty. Arrogance is rejecting faith and considering others lower than yourself.’” [Muslim]

Therefore, as the hadith demonstrates, arrogance does not necessarily stem from material wealth but rather from the concepts that the individual carries. It is possible for the Muslim to earn money until he is wealthy yet remain humble and in possession of the Islamic personality. However, if the purpose behind accruing wealth and driving an expensive car is to achieve status amongst people, this will inevitably lead to arrogance and pride. The Sahabah ﷺ used to fear excessive praise. Abu Bakr ﷺ said, “O Allah, you know me better than myself. And I know myself better than what they think of me! Pardon my sins and do not call me to account because of their undue praises.”

Muslims in the West should shun these capitalist values and seek to promote their own values. The youth should be encouraged to compete in the good deeds and the pursuit of Allah’s ﷻ pleasure. The role models for the Muslim youth should be the Sahabah ﷺ and not film stars in Ferraris.

It is narrated that Imam Ali ﷺ was once amongst a group of the Companions who said to him; “O Commander of the faithful, we have never seen a man who is more virtuous, more learned, more companionable, friendly, and God-fearing than ‘Abd Allah ibn Masood.” Ali said, “I beg you by Allah, is this true from your hearts?” They said, “yes.” Ali said, “O Allah, I testify in front of you that I say about him like what they said and more. He read the Qur’an and did what is lawful in it and avoided what is forbidden. He was knowledgeable in religion and scholarly in Sunnah.”

It must be understood that the Sahabah ﷺ and early generations will not become the reference point until the basis of this capitalist society is exposed and its fallacy made apparent. Living in the West provides the Muslims with many tests – the distractions are numerous and the Muslims must always be wary that they do not become complacent

or greedy.

Hence, respect in Islam is granted based on taqwa and possession of the Islamic personality. It is these qualities that the Sahabah ﷺ would compete upon, not material wealth.

Muslim Youth – Gang Leaders or World Leaders?

﴿ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ﴾

“You are the best of the nation raised up for mankind because you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong.” [TMQ Ale-Imran: 110]

Allah ﷻ tells us in this verse of the Qur’an that we are the best nation raised up from mankind. When many people look to the reality of the Muslims today and in particular the reality of the Muslim youth in the West, they think to themselves, ‘how can these people be the best people raised from mankind?’ When they see the Muslim youth involved in gang culture and drug culture, they can’t see the difference between them and the non-Muslim youth in society.

We need to look to how the Muslim youth in the past used to be leaders, not followers of the *Kuffar* as some of the youth have become today and understand how the Muslim youth have the potential to be the leaders of mankind again.

Some of the Muslim youth today have lost touch with their roots. They have lost touch with Islam and the Islamic history. Unfortunately they know more about Western personalities, and take them as role models to follow, than they know about the greatest people in history, the Sahabah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and our other great predecessors.

Various groupings or ‘crowds’ exist amongst the youth today. There are those who emulate hip-hop stars and are ‘wanna be gangsters’,

walking around with pride, using foul language, thinking its cool to take drugs and be involved in crime. Others are into the clubbing scene and act like wild animals as if they are not going to be accounted for what they do. Boyfriend-girlfriend relationships have become the norm where it is seen as odd if one is not ‘going out’ with the opposite sex or at least attempting to. Time wasting has become the favourite pursuit where music, computer games, movies and ‘chilling’ have become the normal pastimes. Rebelliousness to parents has reached new levels, where children are almost strangers to their own parents and feel more comfortable with their friends than with their own flesh and blood.

The Muslim youth living in Western societies learn how to think and act in a way alien to Islam as they are continuously bombarded with Western culture via the television, school and society at large.

Many of the youth glorify gangsters, pop stars, actors, sports personalities and even fictional characters. If we were to give two lists of people to some of the Muslim youth today and ask them what they know about the people mentioned in the list, think about what the response would be:

List 1: Dr. Dre, Tupac, Eminem, Snoop Doggy Dog, Notorious B.I.G, Puff Daddy, Mariah Carey, Michael Jackson, David Beckham, and Kylie Minogue.

List 2: Ja’far ibn Abi Talib, ‘Abdullah ibn Masoud, Mus’ab ibn ‘Umayr, Zubair ibn al-Awwam, Khalid ibn Walid, Asma bint Abu Bakr, Zaid ibn Thabit, ‘Usamah ibn Zaid, Muhammad al-Fatih and Tariq ibn Ziyad.

Unfortunately many of the youth would know much about the people mentioned in the first list and very little about those in the second list. Some would even look up to the people in first, even though they are *Kuffar* who follow the ways of the Shaytan and promote indecency.

The Muslim youth need to look up to the right people and must have the right role models. The youth should be acquainted with the

Muslims of the past who used to be the leaders of humanity.

There are many examples from young Muslims of the past to look to. In fact most of the early converts to Islam were young - most of them were under 30 years of age.

‘ALI IBN ABU TALIB ؑ

One of the earliest converts to Islam was ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib ؑ. He converted to Islam of his own accord when he was only eight years of age. When people think of eight year olds today they imagine children who spend their time thinking about WWE wrestling, Pokemon, computer games or the latest movie. Contrast this to the example of ‘Ali ؑ.

‘Ali ؑ embraced Islam even though his father, Abu Talib remained a non-Muslim. When he was asked, “Aren’t you going to ask the permission of your father to embrace Islam”, he answered confidently, “Allah didn’t ask the permission of my father when he created me, so why do I need my father’s permission to worship him?”

He stuck at the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the early days of the *da’wah* in Makkah, even when the numbers of Muslims were few and the society was hostile. He was a man of courage, even at a young age. In one incident there was a gathering of about forty leaders of the Quraish - these were the most notable people in the society, similar to the most prominent politicians and celebrities of today. In this gathering the Messenger of Allah ﷺ invited them to Islam, but they rejected his message. In this gathering ‘Ali ؑ stood up and looked at all of them in the face and said, “I believe in him and I stand behind him”.

Imam Ali ؑ went on to become one of the greatest of the Sahabah, he was known as the one of the most knowledgeable. He also became the fourth Khaleefah of the Muslims who ruled the people with Islam and carried Islam to the world.

‘ABDULLAH IBN MASOUD ﷺ

Those ‘Wanna be Gangsers’ who drive around in lowered cars blasting out satanic music who think that they are ‘hard men’ should look to the example of ‘Abdullah ibn Masoud ﷺ to see true bravery.

‘Abdullah embraced Islam when he was only 14 years of age. He used to roam the mountain trails of Makkah far away from people, tending the flocks of a Quraishi leader, Uqbah ibn Mu’ayt. He was also known by the *kunya* (nickname) of Ibn Umm ‘Abd.

The companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were together one day in Makkah. They were still few in number and oppressed. They said, “The Quraish have not yet heard the Qur’an being recited openly and loudly. Who is the man who could recite it for them?”

“I shall recite it to them,” volunteered ‘Abdullah ibn Masoud. “We are afraid for you,” they said. “We only want someone who has a clan who would protect him from their evil.”

“Let me,” ‘Abdullah ibn Masoud insisted, “Allah shall protect me and keep me away from their evil.” He then went out to the mosque until he reached Maqam Ibrahim (a few meters from the Ka’ba). It was dawn and the Quraish were sitting around the Ka’ba. ‘Abdullah stopped at the Maqam and began to recite,

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ * عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ * عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ *﴾

﴿الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ﴾

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Ar-Rahman (The Most Merciful). He has taught the Qur’an. He has created man and taught him the clear speech. The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses calculated with measured out stages for each...” [TMQ Al-Rahman: 1-5]

He went on reciting. The Quraish looked at him intently and some of them said, “What is Ibn Umm Abd saying? Damn him! He is reciting some of what Muhammad brought!”

They went up to him and began beating his face as he continued reciting. When he went back to his companions the blood was flowing from his face. “This is what we feared for you,” they said. “By Allah,” replied ‘Abdullah, “the enemies of Allah are not more comfortable than I at this moment. If you wish I shall go out tomorrow and do the same.” “You have done enough,” they said. “You have made them hear what they dislike.”

‘Abdullah ibn Masoud went on to become one of the best in reciting the Qur’an of whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((من سره أن يقرأ القرآن كما أنزل، فليقرأه على ابن أم عبد))

“Whoever wants to read the Qur’an as fresh as when it was revealed, then let him read according to the recitation of Ibn Umm Abd.”

He also became one of the most knowledgeable in the Qur’an and strove to gain the knowledge of Islam.

Zaid ibn Thabit ﷺ

Those youth who waste their time gaining useless information like that related to the lives of pop stars and engaging in shallow activities such as watching TV like zombies should take lessons from the life of Zaid ibn Thabit ﷺ.

In the second year of the Hijrah, Madinah, the city of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, was buzzing with activity as the Muslims were preparing for the long march southwards to Badr for Jihad.

The whole atmosphere in the society was based on Islam, not like today where the whole atmosphere is dominated by organised distractions like football, where the majority of discussion in the media and society surrounds a game where twenty-two people kick a leather ball around a pitch. Today the atmosphere in the non-Muslim and Muslim world is generated around shallow activities. Pop concerts, Olympics, football tournaments and the like are promoted in the media to the extent that people come to know every detail and strategy

as if they were studying a war.

In the past under the Islamic rule, under the Khilafah, the atmosphere was dominated by Islam, the major events of the society were not who is playing who in the next match, rather it was Jihad, which land are we going to bring under the authority of Islam next?

The noble Messenger of Allah ﷺ made a final inspection of the first army to be mobilized under his leadership to wage Jihad against those who had tormented the Muslims for many years and who were still bent on putting an end to his mission.

A youth, not yet thirteen, walked up to the ranks. He was confident and alert. He held a sword that was as long or possibly slightly longer than his own height. He went up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, “I dedicate myself to you, Messenger of Allah. Permit me to be with you and to fight the enemies of Allah under your banner.”

The noble Messenger of Allah ﷺ looked at him with admiration and patted his shoulder with loving tenderness. He commended him for his courage but refused to enlist him because he was still too young. The youth, Zaid ibn Thabit ؓ, turned and walked away, dejected and sad.

Zaid ibn Thabit ؓ knowing that he was too young to join the armed forces still wanted to aid the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and be close to him, so he turned his mind to gaining knowledge and memorising the Qur’an.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then set him a task that required intelligence, skill and persistence. “Zaid, learn the writing of the Jews for me.” instructed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. “At your command, Messenger of Allah,” replied Zaid who set about learning Hebrew with enthusiasm. He became quite proficient in the language and wrote it for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he wanted to communicate with the Jews. Zaid also read and translated from Hebrew when the Jews wrote to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ instructed him to learn Syriac also and this he did. Zaid thus came to perform the important function of an

interpreter for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his dealings with non-Arabic speaking peoples. Zaid’s enthusiasm and skill were obvious.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ felt confident of his faithfulness in the discharge of duties and the care, precision and understanding with which he carried out tasks, he entrusted Zaid with the weighty responsibility of recording the divine revelation and he became a scribe of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who used to write the verses of the Qur’an when they were revealed.

OTHER EXAMPLES

There are many other examples from the Sahabah of youth, men and women, who were leaders for Islam. Mus’ab ibn ‘Umayr ؓ was only 24 years old and was sent by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Madinah to spread Islam, ‘A’isha ؓ the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Asma bint Abu Bakr – the daughter of Abu Bakr Siddiq ؓ, al-Zubayr ibn Awwam who was only 12 when he embraced Islam, Sa’d ibn Abi-Waqqas who was 17, ‘Usamah ibn Zaid who was only 17 when he led the senior Sahabah like Abu Bakr ؓ and ‘Umar ؓ as the Amir of an army of Jihad, and Ja’far ibn Abi Talib who at the age of 20 was able to stand in the court of king Negus of Abyssinia and eloquently represent and defend the Muslims.

However we should realise that the great personalities from amongst the youth continued even after the time of the Sahabah.

Imam Shafi’i, one of the greatest scholars of this Ummah, memorised the Qur’an when he was 7, and was a mujtahid, a scholar, with the ability to derive solutions from the Qur’an and the Sunnah at the age of 14. Today it is difficult for people to imagine going to a 14 year old to ask him about Islamic law. Tariq ibn Ziyad conqueror of Spain and Muhammad al-Fateh, the conqueror of Constantinople (modern day Istanbul) were young men.

There are many other examples of Muslim youth who stood up for Islam and achieved great things for the sake of Allah ﷻ. The important thing to bear in mind is that in the past under the rule of Islam this was the norm for the youth.

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR THE YOUTH TO CHANGE

These practical steps are an advice for the Muslim youth. For those who do not practise Islam, *insha'Allah* it will help them to begin and those who are already practising, *insha'Allah* it will aid them to enhance our worship of Allah ﷻ.

1) EDUCATING YOURSELF ABOUT ISLAM

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم))

“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.”
[Ibn Majah]

All of us have to be continuously gaining knowledge about Islam, as it is the most important thing in life. So we have to know about the Islamic ‘Aqeedah (belief). Contrary to how some youth perceive Islam, it is not a belief that we are not allowed to question and merely based on blind following. Islam is the thinking man’s belief. Ibn ‘Abbas one of the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “the light of *Iman* (belief) is thinking.” Allah ﷻ says,

﴿ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ
كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

“Lo in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea with that which is of use to men, and the water which Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and in the ordinance of the

minds, and the clouds obedient between heaven and earth are signs (of Allah’s sovereignty) for people who have sense.” [TMQ Al-Baqarah: 164]

We need to believe with full conviction and understand how to prove that Allah ﷻ exists and that the Qur’an is the word of Allah ﷻ. We have to also know about the Shari’ah rules and our duties in life.

All over Britain there are many Islamic da’wa carriers, brothers and sisters, who are available to practically help you develop Islamic personalities. Islam is a *deen* of collectiveness and helping each other - therefore as Muslims we must seek help when we need it.

2) LINKING OUR ACTIONS TO THE CONSEQUENCES IN THE AKHIRAH (HEREAFTER)

A Muslim must link his actions directly to the consequences, the rewards and punishments in the hereafter. He should visualise these when even thinking about performing any prohibited action; this consciousness of Allah ﷻ and the afterlife should be a shield to protect us from sin and should encourage us to earn reward.

If we are about to act rebelliously to our parents in a *haram* way, we should know what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ mentioned about this.

It was narrated by Anas ؓ that Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about the most serious and detestable sins. He ﷺ replied,

((الشرك بالله، وقتل النفس، وعقوق الوالدين، وقال: ألا
أنبئكم بأكبر الكبائر؟ قلنا: بلى، قال: الإشراف بالله، وقول
الزور – أو شهادة الزور))

“To associate anyone with Allah, to disobey the parents and cause them pain or injury; to kill unlawfully and to give false evidence.” [Bukhari]

Also, Abi Bakrah Nufay ibn al-Harith said,

((قلنا: بلى يا رسول الله، قال: الإشراف بالله وعقوق

الوالدين))

“The Messenger of Allah asked us three times, shall I tell you the greatest sin?” We said, “Yes O Messenger of Allah.” He ﷺ replied, “Associating partners with Allah and disobeying ones parents.” [Agreed upon]

If we are about to miss the obligatory *salah* (prayers), we should remember that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ equated missing *salah* to disbelief. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((العهد الذي بيننا وبينهم الصلاة فمن تركها فقد كفر))

“The covenant between myself and yourself is the *salah*, whoever abandons the prayer commits an action of disbelief.” [Musnad Ahmad]

If we are tempted by intoxicants such as alcohol or drugs whether in large or small quantities, we should be warned by the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said,

((الخمر أم الخبائث، فمن شربها لم تقبل صلاته أربعين يوماً،

فإن مات وهي في بطنه مات ميتة جاهلية))

“An intoxicant is the mother of all vices. Whosoever drinks it; his prayers will not be accepted (by Allah) for forty days. If he died and there is wine in his stomach, he has died the death of *Jahilliyah* (ignorance).”

3) BEING IN A GOOD ENVIRONMENT

Remaining in a correct atmosphere is vital for a Muslim to be able to avoid the temptations that the Shaytan puts forward. The type of

atmosphere that exists amongst some of the youth today is very corrupt and is dominated by drugs, alcohol, lewd music and free mixing with the opposite sex. Often what is discussed is related to the opposite sex, music, television, movies, computer games and the like. It is very rare that serious discussions about life take place.

Abu Musa narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((إنما مثل الجليس الصالح وجليس السوء كحامل المسك

ونافخ الكير. فحامل المسك: إما أن يحذيك، وإما أن تبتاع

منه، وإما أن تجد منه ريحاً طيبة. ونافخ الكير: إما أن يحرق

ثيابك، وإما أن تجد منه ريحاً منتنة))

“The example of a good companion in comparison with a bad one, is I like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith’s bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof.” [Bukhari Volume 3, No 314]

We must realise that our friends in the *dunya* will be our friends in the *Akhirah* (hereafter). The true meaning of friendship is not to allow each other to get closer towards hellfire and to help each other in getting closer to *Jannah*. Sometimes what people perceive to be as their closest friends can be their worst enemies if they are making them earn the displeasure of Allah ﷻ.

4) CARRYING DA’WAH TO OTHERS

When studying Islam, we also need to carry it to others. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((بلغوا عني ولو آية))

“Even if you know one verse propagate it.”

Many of the Sahabah began calling to Islam as soon as they embraced Islam even though they had very little knowledge of it. Carrying Islam to others, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is an obligation and in reality makes us more conscious of our own actions.

We should know that we can never be perfect - we will make mistakes. Islam wasn't revealed for angels, it was revealed for human beings.

5) FOLLOWING ISLAM DOESN'T MEAN BECOMING ROBOTS

Some people have the misconception that following Islam means that you have to turn into robots or monks and are not allowed any relaxation. Islam allows relaxation and leisure but as long as it is according to the Shari'ah and does not distract us from obeying Allah ﷻ.

'A'isha ؓ, the mother of the believers, narrated,

((كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يعجبه من الدنيا

ثلاثة الطعام والنساء والطيب فأصاب ثنتين ولم يصب واحدة

أصاب النساء والطيب ولم يصب الطعام))

“Three worldly things used to give pleasure to Messenger of Allah ﷺ: food, women and perfume. He acquired two, but one he did not acquire. He acquired women and perfume, but not food.” [Musnad Ahmad]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would relax with his companions and his wives. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ even allowed various types of sports like target shooting. He ﷺ said, “You should practise target shooting for it is the best of your entertainment”.

However we should be careful not to become obsessed with entertainment and relaxation as the *Kuffar* do.

Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

((نعمتان مغبون فيهما كثير من الناس: الصحة والفراغ))

“There are two blessings which many people lose; (they are) health and free time for doing good.” [Bukhari]

VALUING YOUR YOUTH

Whilst we are young we have the potential to follow Islam by advancing our understanding and carrying Islam to others. Youth doesn't last forever so we must make good use of it before it is gone. We have to ensure that we follow the footsteps of the great Muslim youth of the past who used to be leaders of humanity. Remember the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who said,

((اغتتم خمسا قبل خمس: حياتك قبل موتك، وصحتك قبل

سقمك، وفراغك قبل شغلك، وشبابك قبل هرمك، وغناك

قبل فقرك))

“Value five things before five other things: Youth before old age; health before sickness; affluence before poverty; leisure before becoming too busy; and life before death.” [Tirmidhi]