

In the name of Allāh, Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

Parents and Elders as Role Models for their Children in Establishing a Happy Islamic Home

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All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds. May the peace, blessings and salutations of Allāh be upon our noble Messenger, Muhammad, and upon his family, his Companions and his true followers.

A must-read for anyone seeking direction and guidance about raising a family according to the way of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions (صَحَّابَةِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ).

Chapter One: The Messenger of Allāh is Our Role Model, and Parents Should be Fine Examples for their Children.

Young children usually cannot attend the Masjid because they have not learned the manners of conduct expected of them, and end up causing disruption and disturbance to worshippers. Therefore, the *tarbiyah* (cultivation) begins at home by emulating one's parents in prayer (and in other matters). The fact that women pray at home and men establish the optional prayers there gives younger children the opportunity to watch and learn.

They notice that there is silence during the prayers; the worshipper does not move around, eat, or drink; instead, they are focused—the

mother wears her hijāb—and children notice that their parents pay little or no attention to their surroundings. Children pick up on these things and quickly learn how to pray and how to behave around those who are praying. So, by the time they are ready to attend the masjid (after 7 years of age), they already know the manners expected from them in the houses of Allāh.

There is for you in the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) an Excellent Role Model:

The Qur'an emphasises the importance of following an exemplary, righteous example. So parents should be excellent role models to their offspring—and avoid showing evil manners and sinful behaviour.

Allāh, the Exalted, stated: **“Certainly, there is for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent example to follow for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day and who remembers Allāh often.”** (Al-Ahzāb, 21)

This verse shows us the best example to follow and the most essential and obligatory model to emulate. Just as the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is a guide by way of his speech, he is also a guide by way of action. So, we are obligated to emulate his outward actions of worship as in his (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying: **“Pray just as you have seen me praying.”** (al-Bukhārī, no. 631)

Furthermore, we are obligated to follow his manners, behaviour and conduct—and when we (in turn) display these manners, our children

will follow us, and be a source of pride and happiness for us. Allāh, the High and Exalted, stated: **“And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character.”** (Al-Qalam: 4)

We see much wisdom in the words of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). For example, he said: **“Offer some of your prayers (nawāfil) at home, and do not turn your houses into graves.”** (Bukhāri no. 432; Muslim no. 777)

There are benefits in this Hadīth and goals that become apparent when we ponder. The house should never be devoid of prayer; the women are rewarded more for praying in their homes than for praying in the masājid. Abu Dawūd reports (no. 567) from Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“Do not prevent your womenfolk from the Mosques, though their homes are better for them.”** (Authenticated by Al-Albāni in Al-Irwā, no. 515)

So, be parents and guardians who are fine examples—and make your children mirrors of your fine character—Bārakallāhu feekum.

Chapter Two:

Do Not Act Contrary to your Speech.

The role-model is warned by Allāh from acting contrary to his speech:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَمْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَفْتَأِعُونَ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

“O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allāh that you say that which you do not

do.” (As-Saff: 2-3) Parents must always be careful to behave well and follow the proper guidance, especially in front of children. That is because children see the contradictions and notice how their elders and parents break principles. “They tell me to do something and do the opposite themselves. So what kind of example are they?!”

Ibn Al-Jawzi (رحمه الله) said in his book, *Talbees Iblees*, “**How can the advice of a person to another be correct when he does not take the advice himself?**”

Let’s look at the example in this Hadīth:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَامِرٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ دَعَتْنِي أُمِّي يَوْمًا وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَاعِدًا فِي بَيْتِنَا فَقَالَتْ هَا تَعَالَى أُعْطِيَكَ فَقَالَ لَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَا أَرَدْتِ أَنْ تُعْطِيَهِ قَالَتْ أُعْطِيَهِ تَمْرًا فَقَالَ لَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَا إِنَّكِ لَوْلَمْ تُعْطِيَهِ شَيْئًا كُنْبَتْ عَلَيْكِ كِدْبَةٌ

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Āmir narrated: My mother called me one day when the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was sitting in our house. She said to me, “**Come here, and I will give you something (in reward).**” The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) asked her: “**What did you intend to give him?**” She replied: “**I intended to give him some dates.**” The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “**If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you.**” (Abu Dawood, no. 4991, declared hasan by Al-Albāni)

This prohibition warns against setting a poor example for one’s children: a mother promises something to her child and then does not

keep her promise. A child may grow up thinking that lying or deception is acceptable behaviour in the adult world.

Young Muslims should be taught very early on that the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is the most beautiful example to be followed. And even if adults make mistakes, then that can happen as we are human, and Allāh “created humans with weaknesses”. So we try to rectify ourselves, move on and avoid repeating mistakes.

However, the standard that we measure people by, and we aim for ourselves, is the character of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), as he said in an authentic Hadīth to a man who had his garments below his ankles, “**Do you not have in Allāh’s Messenger a fine example?**” (Shamā’il of At-Tirmidhi). After the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the ones we emulate first and foremost are Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, as the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

اقْتَدُوا بِاللَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَ‘Umar

“Follow these two after me: Abu Bakr and ‘Umar.” (Tirmidhi, 3662. Authenticated by Ibn Hibbān, 6902, and Al-Albāni)

He said this because they were the best two men who walked the earth after the Prophets. Then after these two, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī, and then the rest of the Companions (رضيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ). The Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) left for us examples to be followed after him, such as righteous scholars who follow the Sunnah and those who are steadfast upon the Deen.

Chapter Three:

The Effect of the Behaviour of Parents and Teachers on Young Muslims.

The behaviour of parents, educators, teachers, du’āt and sheikhs has a tremendous effect on the tarbiyah (cultivation) of young people. So, they must pay attention and set good examples that affect the hearts of young people. Cultivators and home-builders should be righteous, pious, earnest, kind, generous, humble, avoiding boastful behaviour, and people who seek knowledge and go out of their way to help others. This is rooted in their worship of Allāh, because that is the first thing that rectifies the hearts and the limbs. Look at this example set by Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that remained with a young Companion till the day that he died. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) was still a boy, and he visited his maternal aunt. He said:

بِثُّ عِنْدَ حَالَتِي مَيْمُونَةَ لَيْلَةً فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا كَانَ فِي بَعْضِ اللَّيْلِ
قَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَوَضَّأَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ مُعْلَقٍ وُضُوءًا حَفِيْقًا ثُمَّ قَامَ يُصَلِّي
فَقُمْتُ فَتَوَضَّأْتُ نَحْوًا مِمَّا تَوَضَّأَ ثُمَّ جِئْتُ فَقُمْتُ عَنْ يَسَارِهِ فَحَوَّلَنِي فَجَعَلَنِي عَنْ
بَيْنِنِي ثُمَّ صَلَّى مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ

“I stayed overnight in the house of my aunt, Maimunah. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) slept for a part of the night, and then, late in the night, he got up and performed ablution from a hanging water skin, and it was a light ablution, and then he stood up for the prayer. I, too [following him], performed a similar ablution, and then I went and stood on his left. However, he took hold of me,

moved me to his right, and then prayed as much as Allāh willed. After that, he lay down and slept until his breathing could be heard. Later on, the Mu’adhin came to him and informed him that it was time for Prayer...” (Al-Bukhāri, 138; Muslim, 763)

Ibn ‘Abbās shared this experience as a young boy with the one whom he loved and respected. He saw the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) get up, make wudū, and begin praying. So, what did he do? The same thing that every young person does for the one he respects, loves and admires. He watched him, followed him and joined him such that he even said, **“I, too, performed a similar ablution.”**

The importance of setting a good example and avoiding being an evil one in the sight of young people should not be underestimated, alongside the immense reward for the one who sets a good example that others follow. Take this narration of Jareer ibn ‘Abdillāh (رَجُلَ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ) who said: **“While we were with the Messenger of Allāh in the early hours of the morning, some people came who were barely dressed and barefoot, with their swords hung around their necks. Most of them belonged to the tribe of Mudar. The face of the Messenger of Allāh changed when he saw them in such abject poverty.”** After the prayer, he stood and addressed the people, so he recited:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَنْتَرُنَفْسُ مَا قَدَّمْتُ لِغَدِ ۝ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

‘O you who believe! Fear Allāh and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for tomorrow, and fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is All-Aware of what you do.’ (al-Hashr: 18)

تَصَدَّقَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ دِيَنَارِهِ مِنْ دِرْهَمِهِ مِنْ ثُوْبِهِ مِنْ صَاعِ بُرْيَهِ مِنْ صَاعِ شَمْرِهِ حَتَّىٰ قَالَ وَلَوْ
بِشْقِ تَمْرَةٍ قَالَ جَرِيرٌ فَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنَ الْأَنْصَارِ بِصُرَّةَ كَادَتْ كُفَّهُ تَعْجِزُ عَنْهَا بَلْ قَدْ
عَجَرَتْ قَالَ ثُمَّ تَتَابَعَ النَّاسُ حَتَّىٰ رَأَيْتُ كَوْمِينِ مِنْ طَعَامٍ وَثِيَابٍ حَتَّىٰ رَأَيْتُ وَجْهَهُ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَهَلَّلُ كَأَنَّهُ مُذْهَبَةٌ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةَ حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ مِنْ عَيْرٍ أَنْ
يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةَ سَيِّئَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهَا وَوِرْزُ مَنْ
عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ عَيْرٍ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أُوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ

“Then they gave in charity, some giving a Dinar, others a Dirham, or a garment, or a sā‘ (four cupped handfuls or 2.5kg) of wheat or a sā‘ of dates, until the Messenger said: ‘Even half a date.’ A man from among the Ansār came with a bag of money which his hands could hardly lift. The people followed one another in giving charity until I saw two heaps of food and clothing, and the face of the Messenger of Allāh shone like gold with joy. Then the Messenger of Allāh said: **‘Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam, he will have the reward for that, and the reward of those who acted in accordance with it, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest. And whoever sets an evil precedent in Islam, he will have a burden of sin for that, and the burden of those who acted in**

accordance with it, without that detracting from their burden in the slightest.” (An-Nasā’i no. 2554, Muslim no. 1017)

Chapter Four:

The Natural Instinct of Children is to Follow their Parents and Elders.

Emulation of others is an instinct, innate to humans, placed within us by Allāh. We are born upon a fitrah that, if it is not polluted, acknowledges the one Lord and Creator and worships Him alone, and the innate nature rejects idolatry and polytheism. Alongside that, we are born ignorant of our surroundings and unable to fend for ourselves. So, we are created to learn through seeing and following step-by-step. A baby is like a seed in uncultivated soil that is in need of water, and that is why you see young children watching the conduct and actions of adults intently, and then they mimic them.

Every parent, every right-minded child psychologist, and every teacher knows that copying the behaviour of adults is the first school of learning. This is seen in a child when he (or she) first learn to speak; he repeats what he hears regardless of whether he understands its meaning. He blindly follows his father and mother, feeling safe under their care, and likewise whoever is older than him, such as his brothers or sisters — the baby will parrot their movements, signals and speech.

However, this trait is not restricted to young children. Adults, too, have an innate mechanism that inclines them to imitate and follow.

Ibn Al-Jawzi (ابن جوزي) said in Talbees Iblees:

الظَّبْعُ يَسْرِقُ مِنْ خَصَالِ الْمُخَالَطِينَ

“The character of a person steals the traits and behaviour from those it mixes with.”

Sometimes, a person will behave like those he mixes with and spends time with without even realising, solely because of intermingling with them. So, this is the nature of children and people (i.e., their fitrah) that Allāh has created them with: they are affected more by the example and behaviour of others than by what they read and hear, especially in emulating actions.

Chapter Five: Noble Attributes that Youth will Follow and Coping with Life in the West.

We must recognise the traits that attract people to emulate and follow others, so that we can inculcate in ourselves a particular type of behaviour, sincerely for Allāh, and become excellent role models for our children.

Firstly, love.

People emulate those they love, and this love is measured by how closely they follow them. In the Qur'an, Allāh tests the people who claim to love Him:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبِّبُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ

رَحِيمٌ

“Say (O Muhammad): If you truly love Allāh, then follow me, and then Allāh will surely love you, and He will forgive your sins. And Allāh is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Āli ‘Imrān: 31)

Secondly, virtue and excellence.

This means that a person believes in the virtue and excellence of the one he is following. So, Muslims follow the Sahābah because we genuinely believe they were noble, excellent and virtuous role models. Allāh said about them and those who followed them:

كُنْتُمْ حَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجْتُ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوُنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ حَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“You are the best nation raised [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them.” (Āli ‘Imrān: 110)

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۚ وَإِنْ تَوَلُّوْ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكُفِّرُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“So, if they believe in the likes of that which you believe, then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition. So, Allāh will suffice you against them. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.” (Al-Baqarah: 137)

Thirdly, the dominant culture.

People tend to follow dominant culture, especially if their own heritage is belittled and marginalised. And this is seen in Western (and Eurocentric) societies, where non-European culture, custom and behaviour are seen as backward. So, the West raises a vanguard to defend, spread and enforce Western liberal thought and laws on all nations, and especially on the minority communities living in the West. It is therefore essential that young Muslims are taught about Islam and Islamic heritage so that they know and understand the dominance of Islam in terms of its beliefs, its practices and its laws. And we should teach them about migrating to Muslim lands as an obligation, not a matter of choice.

Parents cannot expect their children to emulate the life of the Prophet ﷺ and understand who he and his Companions really were without exposing them to the Seerah (biography) of the Prophet ﷺ. Parents must take an authentic Seerah book and study it with their children. But it's not as easy as it seems because the works of Seerah require simplifying for younger children and explaining for older children. Nevertheless, this is a must.

Parents should teach children to be proud of their Religion, their faith and practice. Islam has a powerful and rich history, and its intellectual, spiritual and political dominance is a matter of record. Still, many parents and educators fail to convey this part of Islam to their children.

Additionally, living in non-Muslim lands and learning history based upon Western interpretations that are further skewed by prevalent liberal ideas and thoughts can only lead to turmoil in the young Muslim minds and a progressively greater sense of inadequacy. This, in part, explains the recent rise in teenage Muslims opting to leave Islam in favour of atheism. Young people are ‘learning’ through state schooling, media, film and government propaganda that Islam is not fit for this society because it does not accept radical feminism, homosexuality and gender fluidity, it does not accept evolution as a scientific truth, nor does it believe that the earth orbits the Sun!

These ideas deceive many Muslim youth, and they cause them to question their Islam because they are not equipped to deal with these doubts. As parents and educators, we should have a roadmap ahead for our families and children, and plan our futures (while completely trusting in our Lord, the best planner). So, look at their education, environment, upbringing, holidays, free time, etc. Plan out where you all should be in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years and beyond. Do a risk assessment of the possible dangers of state-schooling, further education and remaining in societies where Islamic culture is not dominant and is even belittled and attacked. Think about migration to a Muslim land, and I have spoken of this often, and much of that is recorded and available (here and here)

Fourthly, encouragement.

Encouragement to compete in good deeds to earn rewards is an essential aspect of cultivation. Look again at the hadīth of Jareer ibn

‘Abdillāh (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) in the previous section, where the people were vying with each other and hastening to help the needy and poverty-stricken. Allāh, the Most High and Exalted, said:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أَعْدَتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.” (Āli ‘Imrān: 133). To whom has Allāh promised this?

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Who spend [in the cause of Allāh] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people. Allāh loves the doers of good.” (Āli ‘Imrān: 134)

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاجْحَشَّهُ أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ
الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصْرُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“And those who, when they have committed immoral sexual acts or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allāh and ask forgiveness for their sins; and none can forgive sins but Allāh – then they do not persist in the wrong they have done, while they [now] know.” (Āli ‘Imrān: 135)

Fifthly, start while they are young.

The formative years of a child’s cultivation are very important. Teach them early, and they will hold on to what they learn, and

they will not let it go, *inshā'-Allāh*. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) obligated parents to command their children to pray from the age of seven. Just think how many things a parent must teach the child so that he or she can establish the Prayer: ablution (*wudū*), Qiblah direction, covering the ‘awrah, verses of the Qur'an, supplications in prayer, praying in *Jamā'ah*, submissiveness before Allāh, focus on utterances, and so on. All of this from the age of seven. This cultivation should extend to learning the Islamic belief, the Pillars of Islam and *Imān*, and the Seerah. This early education builds a firm foundation for the future.

All of this cultivation can be achieved by setting good examples in the Muslim home, through planning and working together as a family and as a community. To reiterate: parents must be loving to their children and the children must feel that love in speech and action; parents must be excellent and virtuous examples; start while your children are young; children must feel a sense of pride for Islam and study the life of the Prophet and his Companions so they can emulate that and defend their Religion; parents need to realise that wherever Islam is maligned, misinterpreted, marginalised and given a lowly position, other cultures will challenge its place in the hearts of the people and they will fall prey to un-Islamic ideologies as we are seeing in our time. And Allāh's aid is sought.

Chapter Six:

Leading by Example is Powerful and Engenders Respect.

The idea of being a role-model that leads by example is powerful because it engenders respect and gathers together many outward righteous acts: calling the adhān and iqāmah, and then leading the family in Prayer; performing wudoo in front of the children; the mother putting her hijab on in front of her daughters; the father giving charity to the poor; the parents sitting down and eating together out of one tray, etc. The Hadīth proves the effectiveness of this method of leading by example:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَرَجَ عَامَ الْفُتْحِ إِلَى مَكَّةَ فِي رَمَضَانَ حَتَّىٰ بَلَغَ كُرَاعَ الْغَمَامِ فَصَامَ النَّاسُ ثُمَّ دَعَا بِقَدْحٍ مِّنْ مَاءٍ فَرَقَعَهُ حَتَّىٰ نَظَرَ النَّاسُ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ شَرِبُوا

Jābir ibn ‘Abdillah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) went out to Makkah in Ramadān in the Year of Conquest; he and the people fasted till he came to Kurā’ Al-Ghameem, and the people also fasted. He then called for a cup of water, raised it until the people saw it, and then drank. (Muslim, 1114) This occurred when the people were uncertain whether to break their fast, even though they were suffering from thirst during the journey, so the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) led by example, and the people followed.

Likewise, with our children, the parents must lead by example; make haste with good deeds and be foremost in studying the religion; putting to one side tiredness and sleep for the good of the children; side-

lining the purchase of goods that are non-essential so the money is better spent on the children’s Islamic schooling, family ‘Umrahs, conferences, classes, and and Islamic library. Your children will remember this model and pass it on to their own children. Bad conduct is also duplicated, so beware of negligence, laziness, being late to pray, avoiding gatherings of knowledge, eating what is harām, listening to what is harām, watching what is harām, and earning from what is harām, because the children will follow you in that.

I touched on this earlier, but I’ll mention it again here. Parents should be leaders in goodness and be dynamic so that children are enthused and do not see contradictions. It should never be a case of “do as I say and not as I do”! It would not be right that parents command their child to pray, and they themselves are lazy with the Prayer and delay it until they nearly miss it. Or that the father forbids his son from smoking, yet he himself smokes. Or that the mother commands her daughter with truthfulness, yet she herself lies. Or that the parents teach their children to be kind and dutiful to them as parents, yet they see their grandparents being neglected. All of this is reproachful behaviour. Usāmah ibn Zaid (رضي الله عنهما) said that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

يُجَاهُ بِالرَّجُلِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُلْهَى فِي النَّارِ فَتَنْدَلِقُ أَقْتَابُهُ فِي النَّارِ فَيَدُورُ كَمَا يَدُورُ الْحِمَارُ
بِرَحَاهُ فَيَجْتَمِعُ أَهْلُ النَّارِ عَلَيْهِ فَيَقُولُونَ أَئِ فُلَانُ مَا شَأْنُكَ أَلَيْسَ كُنْتَ تَأْمُرُنَا
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ قَالَ كُنْتُ أَمْرُكُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَا آتَيْهُ وَأَنَّهَا كُمْ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَآتَيْهُ

“A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown in the Fire so that his intestines will come out, and he will go around as a donkey goes around a millstone. The people of Hell will gather around him and say: ‘O so-and-so! What has happened to you? Did you not order us to do good deeds and forbid us to do bad deeds?’ He will reply: ‘Yes, I used to order you to do good deeds, but I did not do them myself, and I used to forbid you to do bad deeds, yet I used to do them myself.’” (Al-Bukhārī no. 3267)

In essence, the parents' actions and example are key indicators to children of what is allowed and tolerated and what is disallowed. So, the cultivation through example quite often has a greater effect than preaching, encouraging and warning. A child seeing someone that he loves, honours and respects, behaving in a noble manner, following the Qur'an and Sunnah, being truthful at all times, kind and charitable, uncompromisingly avoiding bid'ah and misguidance, and displaying bravery and courage has an immense effect on their upbringing and their capacity to be a good parent himself in the future.

Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, did not send the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to teach and guide the people until Allāh had already prepared him for the task, such that he was already an example even before he was inspired with the Revelation. He was known for virtuous manners, truthfulness, good character and feeding the poor. When he received Revelation for the first time, he came to his wife Khadeejah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) and said, **“Khadeejah, I don't know what's happening. I am afraid**

for myself.” Then he informed her about what had taken place. She said: “**By Allāh! Allāh will not forsake you. You tie the bonds of kinship, you speak the truth, and you help those in difficulty.**”

Sa’d ibn Hishām ibn ‘Āmir entered Madinah and went to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and asked her, “O mother of the believers! Will you inform me of the manners (*khuluq*) of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)??”

She replied: “Do you not read the Qur’ān?” He replied: “Yes.” She said: “**Indeed, the character (*khuluq*) of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was the Qur’ān.**” (Muslim, 746) In another report, she said: “O my son, do you not read the Qur’ān? Allāh (تَعَالَى وَجَلَّ) stated:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

‘And verily, you, O Muhammad, are on an exalted standard of character.’ So, the character and manners of Muhammad were the Qur’ān.” (Abu Ya’lā, 8/275, with a *saheeh* chain of narration).

Ibn Rajab (رحمه الله) stated: “Meaning that his manners were the manners expressed in the Qur’ān, and his etiquette was the etiquette expressed in the Qur’ān. He was pleased with whatever was praised in the Qur’ān, and whatever affair was disparaged in the Qur’ān, then that same affair would anger him. And there occurs in a narration from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), ‘**His character was the Qur’ān. He was pleased with whatever was pleasing (to Allāh) in it, and he was angered with whatever angered (Allāh) in it.**’” (*Jāmi‘ al-‘Uloom wal-Hikam*, 9/148)

A teacher, a parent, a shaikh and an advisor should be a righteous and pious example in their speech and actions. Nothing should be apparent from him except piety and righteous behaviour; nothing should be uttered from his mouth except the truth. Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

دَعْ مَا يَرِيُّكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيُّكَ فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ ظَانِيَّةٌ وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ رَيْبٌ

“Leave what makes you in doubt for what does not make you in doubt. Indeed, the truth brings tranquillity while falsehood sows doubt.” (At-Tirmidhi, no. 2518, *saheeh*)

Chapter Seven: Understanding Today’s Reality is Crucial.

The condition of many Muslims at home and school is a cause for great concern and lamentation. Households are filled with sins such as music, free mixing, and movies—we have too many absent-minded and careless fathers and mothers. Girls and their mothers leave the home uncovered (without *hijāb*). Men pay little attention to their duties as heads of the household, and their sons are left to the cultivation of the streets and street gangs.

As for school, state schools in the West across Europe and North America teach young children that they can change gender regardless of their sex at the time of birth. So, a boy at a young age can identify as a girl and a girl can identify as a boy; same-sex relationships and intimacy are treated as normal and even encouraged. Recently, a school in Brighton began to teach 12-year-olds that boys can

menstruate. How is that? Because some girls started to identify as boys, but since they are biologically and physiologically females, they began to menstruate. So the law states that ‘she’ is now a ‘he’, therefore it follows that ‘he’ has started menstruating! All common sense, biological and human norms have been cast aside!

These schools teach children that humans evolved from apes (as a fact), and parents do not have the ability or knowledge to respond. Muslim children attend state schools well into adolescence and do not pray their daily prayers or attend Jumu’ah for months on end. In Ramadan, they are encouraged not to fast. Promiscuity is encouraged between the sexes and even with the same sex. Young children are encouraged in some English writing classes to write pretend love letters proposing marriage to persons of the same sex. All of this is reported and documented.

Islam based on the Qur’ān and Sunnah is treated as backward, outdated and in “need of reform”. There is a small but growing community of ex-Muslims who are working hard to recruit weak-willed, gullible, sinful, and ignorant Muslims to their cause.

Our youth are duped because they are ill-equipped to deal with the doubts and misrepresentations of Islam that are thrown at them, and they are too uneducated to answer the pseudo-science that proounds the theories of Darwinism and the beginnings of the universe.

All this and more are taking place under our noses, yet thousands of parents remain oblivious and ignorant (some deliberately) to the real challenges facing Muslim communities. It is time that Muslim parents made an effort to learn and teach their youth; to offer a counter-narrative and counter-arguments through developed and reasoned refutations that educated and learned Salafis, people of Sunnah and Hadīth, have compiled (and continue to compile) in order to keep our beliefs and our Islamic heritage safe from those who fight against it and wish to see it disappear from future generations of Muslims. This is why I made the point earlier, and through several lectures, about the importance of investing in Muslim heritage countries and finding ways to support their economies and build your homes in those lands, with a view to resettling in friendly, more accommodating Muslim societies.

Read my article: *‘A question about Hijrah from the Non-Muslim Countries to the Lands of Islam —And the reality of life in the West for Muslims once you remove the rose-tinted glasses’*

We ask Allāh to guide us to that which is best for our children and us and to grant us success in our endeavours to safeguard ourselves and our families.

All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds. May the peace, blessings and salutations of Allāh be upon our noble Messenger, Muhammad, and upon his family, his Companions and his true followers.

Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid.