

FROM THE MINBAR

AMANAH – TRUST: A BASIC ELEMENT OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP IN ISLAM

Khutbah delivered by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic at SNMC on October 21st, 2011 corresponding to Zul Qa'adah 23rd, 1432 H.

BACKGROUND

Indeed all praise is for God, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of God be upon Muhammad (S), his family, Khulafai Rashidin, all his Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day. All praise is for God! We praise Him. We seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek God's refuge from evils of ourselves and from our evil actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except God, alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam ~ *As Salamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu.*

INTRODUCTION

As Canadian Muslim parents in this post-modern age, we have become pioneers in a great and challenging new adventure – raising modern-21st century-young-generation of Western Muslims..

We are the ones uniquely placed in history to demonstrate and prove -- to ourselves, our descendants, and to the world around us - that our faith of Islam, with its holistic approach to life, is as viable and relevant today as it was in the seventh century.

No wonder some of us might feel like reluctant or overwhelmed adventurers, for the task facing us requires radically different approaches from those we were comfortable with "back home."

In order to raise our children as sound and secure Muslims within the Canadian context as Canadian Muslims - and is this not the hope of every Muslim parent? -- we cannot passively follow the same methods by which our parents brought us up in a variety of native lands. On the other hand, we cannot afford to blindly or uncritically buy into the prevailing social trends around us either.

OUR CHILDREN: AMANAH

As Canadian Muslim parents and mentors, we adults are obliged to provide sufficient and caring emotional, moral, and spiritual support to our children and youth.

We already know how much easier it is here in Canada to fulfill their material and educational needs. But many Muslim families and communities in the West have failed in the far more important area of providing them with the "intangibles" of life - those internal resources that cannot be quantified in terms of price or measurement.

Allah has placed on shoulders of parents the sacred duty of Amanah to help our children develop an Islamic identity, self-worth, and self-esteem.



The lack of any of these vital qualities can create an identity crisis, leading to destructive behavior that costs us all dearly. Youth who lack roots and a sense of belonging are the ones most likely to reject Islamic values and end up as dysfunctional members of both our community and Canadian society.

GOALS OF MUSLIM FAMILY

As a parent myself, I have given much thought to some core goals and issues that we should focus on in our families so that our children can learn, both by example and nurture, how to channel their developing energies towards God-consciousness, love for humanity, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of their faith in the here-and-now.

Here I am presenting some goals that Canadian Muslim families should have in mind when bringing up their children in these challenging times:

1. Create an Islamic Atmosphere in our homes:

As parents, we should maintain as much as possible a pure Islamic atmosphere in our homes. If children see their parents neglecting required Islamic obligations such as Salat (prayer), Siyam (fasting) or Akhlaq (noble behavior), they will inevitably experience serious problems in trying to reconcile their traditional faith practices with societal norms in a predominantly secular "outside" world.

Consequently, they will come to believe one of two things: that Islam itself has no meaning, or that their parents are hypocrites. After all, they can hardly be expected to mature as practicing Muslims if their parents do not set a positive example.

It is both unrealistic and unfair to send children to Islamic schools where they will learn about their spiritual obligations in the classroom and mosque, only to go home and find that their parents do not encourage them and do not practice their faith traditions themselves.

Nor is it enough for parents to simply follow Islamic obligations as mechanical rituals imported from their places of origin. If, however, they approach their Islamic obligations wholly in the spirit of faith, children come to understand from a very young age that Islam is a very serious matter to them.

As they grow up, they absorb their parents' Islamic attitudes concerning food, money, clothes, manners, leisure-time activities, entertainment and associates; it becomes an essential part of their life-experience that basic Islamic principles are woven into the fabric of daily family dynamics.

2. Model to our children one standard: The standard of truth and justice: Our duty, therefore, is to model for our children in every way we can that God's standards are unquestionably above our own human standards and constructs.

If children see that their parents approach the people and events around them in reference to this higher divine standard, they will mature into the same mode of Islamic behavior. They will realize that the criteria for proper conduct comes not only from their parents, but is filtered through standards of their Creator.

Children who come to know their accountability to Allah understand that even if their parents sometimes make a mistake, the standards they live by have not changed, nor are they at fault.

This understanding builds a very solid anchor for youth who are developing a sense of direction - an internal moral compass - to guide them in doing what is right.

This Issue 'From The Minbar' presents



**AMANAH -- TRUST:
Parent-Child Relationship in
Islam**



In next issue: 'Family in Islam'

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Children brought up in a holistic faith atmosphere do not need to worry about whether they "fit in" or what others may think about them for being "different."

They will have developed the self-confidence to speak up about their faith, take a firm stand on matters of truth, honesty, justice and compassion, etc., no matter whose company they are in or where they may be.

3. Establish the atmosphere of respect in our homes: It is up to parents to establish an atmosphere of sound Muslim family life at home, by living in scrupulous uprightness, showing respect and consideration for one another, and by conferring together on all major decisions in an Islamic spirit.

In this way, children can learn that even if their parents do not think alike on all matters (and how many parents really do?), they discuss their opinions and ideas openly and respectfully, reaching agreement between themselves in a God-loving manner without resorting to physical or verbal abuse.

As we all know, children idealize their parents and regard them as their role models in all walks of life. For that reason, Muslim parents must be morally conscious and straightforward in their behavior, providing to the best of their ability a living pattern of faith-in-practice.

4. Make our homes the first station where children would come to talk on any topic: Children should be able to talk to their parents, before anyone else, about anything that concerns them. And it starts with parents maintaining an atmosphere of open and trusting communication with their children, so that all members of a Muslim family can confidently and supportively discuss relevant issues and other topics within an ethical framework and according to acceptable limitations.

When they are old enough, children should be included in discussions related to solving family problems and be taught through example that their family is a micro-society of which they are integral part.

A vitally important topic that parents should teach their children about concerns the changes that puberty will bring to their bodies and emotions.

As young teenagers they will need to understand about what is Halal (OK) and what is Haram (not-OK); and about the reasons and consequences of various choices of behavior. This kind of education should begin at home. Parents must not forget that they are the first "school" from which children graduate.

It is the right and responsibility of Muslim parents to impart wholesome attitudes and accurate information to their physically maturing children within the framework of our Din - holistic way of living.

Thus a mother, a female Muslim teacher, or a female physician is most appropriate to teach a daughter, while a father, a male Muslim teacher, or male physician, is most suitable to teach a son at an early age.

At this impressionable stage of life, we cannot

afford to leave our children to the mercy of any sources of information, which could contaminate their minds with vulgar, foul or incorrect attitudes; this is all too common these days, because parents did not fulfill their responsibilities.

5. Become a positive filter of all pressures children face while growing: As Muslim parents, we must be diligent in our role as a positive filter between our growing children and the pressures of modern times; it is up to us to set clear directives for them, backed up by the authority of religious intellectual tradition and healthy logic.

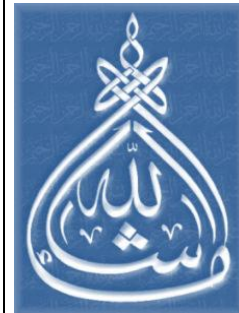
Young children perceive their parents as superior beings and strive to please them. If parents fulfill their roles properly, respect will be engraved on their children's hearts and as they become older, more aware and more assertive, that foundation of respect will hold; they will have the strength to honor the wishes of their parents, no matter how much they may be tempted in the opposite direction by peer pressure.



6. Regulate wisely all children activities and their free time: Parents must regulate the activities, especially leisure-time activities, of their children. If we find that a given activity or recreational habit is harmful, it is up to us, not merely to forbid or deprive our children, but rather help them to find wholesome and suitable alternative interests; it is unrealistic to expect children to know what activities are best for them.

As parents, our role is to guide them in a loving and caring way, helping them to understand Allah's standards and the consequences of becoming forgetful of our religious traditions.

7. Bring children in regular contact with other young Muslims:



Parents should ensure that their children have regular contact with other Muslim children whenever possible, so as to reinforce in them a sense of reassurance and solidarity.

Such collective experiences help

children realize that there are others like themselves growing up in Canadian society; others who have the same beliefs and who experience the same challenges and still cool young people.

8. Help our children in the process of constructive integration into Canadian society:

On the other hand, parents must also encourage their children to integrate constructively into Canadian society -- which is their society and homeland. They should not be segregated from the outside world as if it is a uniformly fearful and dangerous place.

Part of the foundational wisdom of Islam is to live in a balance of tradition and modernity. If we as parents do our best to engage with this adventure, we can be proud of ourselves and our achievements, knowing that we have helped to create a worthy foundation of life for the next generation of Canadian Muslims.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me state that by the light of God's guidance, we may fashion our lives and the lives of our children along the path of Islam using methods and approaches which reflect our Canadian context within the framework of Islamic principles and behavior.

As Muslim parents in the Western hemisphere, we have God-given abilities to show our children and all Canadians - through our thoughts, words and deeds -- that Islam is as compatible and valuable today as it has been for the past 15 centuries.

We also pray that the Almighty helps us in guiding our children towards understanding of this great concept so that they too may live their faith fully -- faithfully.

Allahumma Amin!

AN ACTION ITEM

If YOU like this Khutbah and what we, at your SNMC, do, PLEASE:

Support our activities & projects

Please Donate ONE Prayer Spot for \$2,500 and be the ONE who will build the Masjid and the Center so that it could help us and our children maintain Islamic Identity and build strong Canadian National Identity, Insha Allah.



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