

## HELPING PARENTS COME CLOSER TO ALLAH A GUIDE FOR YOUNG MUSLIMS IN THEIR 'SUPER-MUSLIM' PHASE

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"I have spent several sleepless nights praying to Allah to guide my parents," wrote Karima, 15.

"My parents are so corrupt that I just hope they can make it to Paradise!" is vented Tariq, 19, in his frustration over his parents' un-Islamic practices.

Perhaps in every Muslim home today, there is a Karima or Tariq, a youth who is concerned about their parents' moral condition. This phenomenon involves a youth whom, perhaps not so long ago, Allah has blessed with Guidance, and who is struggling to revolutionize their lifestyle in the light of their new-found faith.

In this energetic 'Super-Muslim' phase of our journey to Islam, we find two types of youth:

A) The model of Karima, who is constantly seeking Allah's help in making her parents understand and live Islam; humble and sincere, but simply overwhelmed.

B) The example of Tariq, who is sincere in his relationship with Allah, striving to change himself for the better. In the process, however, he has become a bit arrogant; even though he desires his parents to change and reach Jannah (Paradise), he is often frustrated and confrontational with his parents.

The stress and grief a concerned Muslim youth's experiences at the spiritual and moral state of their parents is only natural. Inviting our culturally-oriented parents or elder siblings closer to Allah is perhaps the most painstaking and distressing task a young Muslim would have to undertake.

How could we rest in peace? They have, after all, spent their whole life caring for us at times when we were too young to even recognize and appreciate their compassion towards us. At the same time, we can only do so much to help our parents change their lifestyle. It is Allah who is ultimate changer of the hearts.

Before we embark on a crusade to save our parents from the clutches of Hellfire, let's consider the following tips:

1. Before anything else, Thank Allah to have guided you and empowered you with the beautiful message of His Deen! Ask yourself: "What and where would I be today, had Allah not blessed me with His Message and Mercy? What makes me feel that I am the only chosen one?"

2. Your Task: Simply Convey the Message of Islam through your actions and counselling, while expressing your sincere love, obedience, care, and wisdom. It is ultimately their decision to choose to come closer to Allah. Help them realize their 'opportunities for improvement' through non-verbal, and non-confrontational means.

3. Adopt Flexibility, Give up Rigidity, because Change comes Gradually: Using wisdom means doing the right thing, at the right place, the right time. In our desire for the well-being of our parents, we become stubborn and fail to realize who we are speaking to. We disregard respect in the name of establishing the Truth. How often do we come across young Muslims making a great fuss over their parents celebrating birthdays (which is often part of family custom) to

the extent that emotions run high, the party is boycotted, and parents/elders are branded 'ignorant', 'corrupt', 'people of innovations', and so on?

While such celebrations are not considered Islamic, we need to evaluate and set our priorities straight. What would you gain by using such offensive language and by boycotting a function that is so dear to them? The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once advised his companions: "Make Islam and its affairs easy for people, and do not create hardships for them (through your behaviour). Spread the glad tidings, and do not make people run away" (Bukhari). Often, it is better to remain silent in the heat of the moment and discuss the Islamic perspective in greater detail at a later stage.

4. Help them Distinguish between "Islam" and "Their Culture": It is very challenging for parents who grew up in a certain Muslim culture, to realize the difference between Islamic values and their cultural practices. It is not necessarily the fault of parents; it's the way they were brought up and were taught Islam.

5. Fulfilling your Parent's Dreams: How often do we hear our parents say, especially to those children showing signs of religious-orientation, "The only thing I want for you is good career and education."

While you may consider such wishes as insignificant, it is extremely essential to pay due attention to your parents' genuine desires, especially if you desire their reform.

Learn to show some gratitude and concern. You cannot always fulfil their academic dreams for you by becoming either a doctor or engineer, but you can certainly excel in a professional field that you are passionate about and can specialize in.

6. Maintain a Light Sense of Humour: A pleasant environment and good sense of humour win many hearts and develop a healthy dialog. The Prophet (pbuh) was big on light, decent jokes that made others feel special and closer to him.

7. Spend Quality Time with Parents: So many practicing Muslim brothers and sisters hang out at Islamic events, or simply chat over the phone with friends for hours, yet have no time to spare for parents. Ever wonder why your parents don't feel the need to listen to you and your message any more? Such an attitude reminds us of the reality of Prophet's (pbuh) statement about the coming of the Day of Judgement: "A time will come when people will greet their friends warmly, and approach their parents with cold attitude," (Bukhari).

8. Biggest Mistake: Attacking your Parents in front of Other Family Members! Very often, we lose our credibility by simply ridiculing, or even politely pointing out, the mistakes of our parents in front of others. It only makes matters worse for your Dawah, and it generates tension in the family.

Perhaps we do it thinking that our parents may decide to rectify themselves due to the embarrassment. Exactly the opposite happens! The last thing your parents would want to do is admit to their young ones that they were wrong and sinful! Refer to a book "Prophet's

(pbuh) Method of Correcting Peoples' Mistakes" by Shaykh Saalih Al-Munajjid for further assistance.

9. Give a Gift: When was the last time you presented a sincere gift to your parents? Are you aware of the Prophet Muhammad's words, "Exchange gifts to reinforce love and intimacy"? If your parents like reading books, give them a thought-provoking and appealing book on Islam or on the purpose of life. If they like watching or listening, there are numerous tapes available from the Islamic media today to assist you.

10. Have your Meals Together as a Family Whenever Possible: Sharing food together brings people's hearts together, coupled with receiving Allah's blessings. It's a proven way of effective communication and of increasing affection.

11. Involve Parents in Decision-Making: When was the last time you consulted your parents regarding your academic goals? Did you ever update them on school grades (apart from the reason that the grades may be floating

below the C level)? Do you discuss with them the Islamic criteria that you wish to use in selecting your marriage partner? Simple acts of mutual consultation or 'Shura', gives everyone opportunity to 'open up', share, and listen.

12. Do not Stress Yourself out: We know even the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was warned by Allah in the Qur'an to not to be so distressed over the state of his beloved uncle, Abu Talib, after the Prophet (pbuh) had exhausted all the efforts to remind him about Allah's message, promises, and punishment. Allah says, "Perhaps, you would kill yourself (O Muhammad) in grief (and concern) over their footsteps (for their turning away from Allah), because they do not believe in this narration (Quran)." [18:6]

13. Don't Give up the Du'a! Sincere Du'a (supplication) to Allah can change many things. Therefore, make Du'a as your primary tool in helping your parents come closer to Allah.

## What is YM?

OUR INVITATION . . .

In the vast and wonderful scheme of the universe, the countless living beings, the sky, the sun, the moon, and the innumerable planets and stars function with precision. There is no disruption in the organization and the laws that govern them. This is indeed a marvel that baffles the mind and staggers the imagination. Such a vast and organized universe can only come into existence by a wise, powerful creator, possessing vast knowledge and unrivalled power of performance. Everything in the universe follows the guidance from the Creator, Allah. That is why we see peace, unity, and discipline in the creations of Allah except in the lives of Humans.

The problem is that we forget! We forget about where we are going, who we are, and why we are here. Instead we slide into a pit of endless repetition.

Worst of all, we forget that we have a friend - Allah -, Who knows us, cares for us, and yearns for us to approach Him. Moreover, we forget that we have an enemy - Satan. This enemy hates us (he thinks that he is better than us), and dislikes our friendships. He wants to divide us! He wants to divide us among ourselves, especially in a society that heavily pushes the idea of 'individualism' in every aspect of our lives. In addition, Satan desires to weaken our bond with and love for our parents, our spouses, and the humanity at large. Worst of all, he wants to cut our relationship and connection with Allah, Who is our Creator and Sustainer!

However, the Merciful and Gracious Creator who sustains us has devised a way for our salvation. He has sent guidance that brings us closer to Him. His guidance is Islam. His last messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) has brought this guidance to us. Muhammad (pbuh) has completed the guidance of Allah. Allah says, "I have perfected your way of life for you, and completed My favour towards you, and have granted you Islam as the only way of life." (Al-Quran 5 : 3)

If we want to have peace and tranquility in our lives, like other creations of Allah, we need to re-orient our lives and to make a commitment to follow Islam in its true sense. It is our duty to learn more about Islam, to read and practice the Quran and Hadith, to strive in Allah's way, to enjoin good and prevent evil, and to stay away from evil and diseases of this society. But all of this cannot be accomplished alone. An organized effort is needed for it.

Keeping these concerns in mind, we, the Canadian Muslim youth, have formed "YOUNG MUSLIMS CANADA". Our Goal and Objectives reflect this realization.

Our membership is open to any Muslim who agrees with our goal and program and lives in Canada. We do not demand from our members anything more than what Islam demands from them.

Our Goal is to seek the pleasure of Allah by following His guidance in our everyday life so that we may become the winners of this world and the life hereafter.

To achieve our goal we propose the following program:

- 1) Invitation: To convey the message of Islam to the youth and to inspire them to practice Islam in everyday life.
- 2) Organization: To organize the Muslim youth who are willing to lead and participate in the struggle for the establishment of Islamic way of life within the fold of this organization.
- 3) Training: To take appropriate steps in empowering the Muslim youth with the knowledge and message of Islam, in order to produce young Muslims, who are people of character and are capable of facing the challenges of this society.

**Come let us work together to be the winners of both worlds!**