

# SURVIVAL GUIDE: Bringing up children

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## Problems faced in bringing up children

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- ◆ We Muslims in the West face many problems bringing up our children in western societies. We feel these problems when we notice different issues in our children's behaviour at home, when they return from school or at other times

We notice

- ◆ (i) Rowdy kids – Mum and dad are busy, and the children are very rowdy and boisterous. No one to keep them occupied
- ◆ (ii) when a child returns from school, we may notice that some become disobedient, use foul language, or say things we don't expect, what we didn't teach them

One 7 yr old Muslim boy said to his shocked mum

*"Mum, how can I get a girlfriend? At school, if you don't have a girlfriend, they say you are gay. I don't want to be gay"*

- ◆ (iii) kids want to be separate from parents, so stay in their room, change their clothes and eating habits, don't say where they are going, and become heavily influenced by their friends
- ◆ (iv) some kids get into drugs and gangs
- ◆ (v) some kids become reluctant to practice Islam, or identify with parents Islamic practices. So a parent may face a daughter who doesn't want to wear khimar and Jilbab.

These are some of the problems we parents face when bringing up our children in the west

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## Parents attempt to solve problems faced in bringing up kids

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- ◆ Why do these problems occur?
- ◆ How do parents try to solve these problems?
- ◆ Parents adopt different strategies. Let us look at some of them
- ◆ [a] PROBLEM : Rowdy children, busy parents.
- ◆ **SOLUTION: Put children in front of TV.**
- ◆ REALITY: Unaware of the message and ideas that the children are exposed. Are these harmless or harmful ideas? What is the effect of these ideas?

Sometimes this creates new problems.

- ◆ [b] PROBLEM : Misbehaving, disobedient child
- ◆ **SOLUTION: Send her to an Islamic school, it will sort her out.**

- ◆ REALITY: Some Islamic schools are good, some are average, some are no different too the public schools except that all children and teachers are Muslims.
- ◆ Some do not address the societal issues kids face. Issues such as the constant push that life is about acquiring the latest DVD, phone and clothes. That people should be free to do what they like. Instead, in some Islamic schools, Islam is taught as another religion of dos and don'ts. That Islam is about boys wearing a topee and girls in khimar. So the kids behaviour doesn't fundamentally change because of freedom which are been feed from the wider society are not tackled.

So at home, one girl who was sent to an Islamic school was about Islam by her father. She replied that "Islam is for school, now I want to chill" i.e. Islam is something we learn at school but now I am at home so we should do something differently. How is this different from the secularism that exists in society?

- ◆ [c] PROBLEM : Misbehaving, disobedient child

- ◆ **SOLUTION : Madrasa will teach Islam**

REALITY: Parents don't check how a particular Madrasa teaches Islam to their kids. Some Madrasa's actually turn kids off Islam because it's beaten into them without little explanation it. Therefore they produce kids who can read Qur'an but don't understand Islam. Kids who restrict the practice of Islam to the Masjid only, because that is what they see of the Imam. So they don't emulate the Imam because they see him as a holy man who they can't be like. This reinforces a perception that Islam is something that can be practised only in the Masjid.

- ◆ [d] PROBLEM : Misbehaving, disobedient child

- ◆ **SOLUTION: Freedom "let the kids be free"**. Let them do what they want, in the belief that the children will then come to decide what is right and wrong.

REALITY : This exposes children to the capitalist ideas of freedom which drove them to misbehave in the first place. It builds friends and society as source of ideas of right and wrong. Produces kids who go clubbing and who have girlfriends.

- ◆ [e] PROBLEM : Misbehaving, disobedient child

- ◆ **SOLUTION: No solution. Parents have given up.**

So for a son, they hope he will grow out of it.

For a daughter, they may stop her education, keep her at home, or send her to a Muslim country.

REALITY: It doesn't change the behaviour because it does not address the ideas which caused the child to misbehave in the first place

- ◆ [f] PROBLEM: Lack of role model. Some believe this is the problem.

- ◆ **SOLUTION: Give capitalist role models.** Paint vision that success is to have a career and to become wealthy. So become a lawyer, accountant, doctor. This is the goal in life. The most important goal.

REALITY: This sometimes produces kids who grow up worshipping their career, who put work above all else, just like many non-Muslims do. It produces people who don't attend Jummah salaah because it clashes with work. People, who have mortgages because it secures the bigger house, people who do haram willingly not fearing the anger of Allah (swt).

- ◆ Many of these solutions don't address the reason why some of our children misbehave or why some don't follow the rules of Islam.

REAL REASON is that some of our children become infected by the ideas which dominate capitalist societies.

- The idea that you should be free to live as you want. This is the idea that is pushed at school, on TV in Grange Hill, Home & Away, or in films and magazines. Live as you want. You want to swear, you want to rave, you don't want to pray? It's up to you.
- The idea that life is about enjoying yourself.
- The idea that Islam is just another religion which shouldn't interfere with how your life. You should make your own choices. Leave Islam to the Masjid and at home. So children do not refer to Islam because they can't see how it addresses the issues they face.

Our children have picked up these ideas from the wider society hence they behave like other kids in society.

Unless we refute these erroneous ideas of freedom and individualism we will continue to face problems raising our children

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### **Islam shows us how to raise Muslim children**

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Islam has shown us how to raise children. Rasullah (saw) raised children and is our example in this and other issues

*You have a good example in God's Messenger for whoever hopes for God and the Last Day, and remembers God oft.  
(al-Ahzab, 33.21)*

We must be clear. What do we want to build in our children?

- 1) Children who understand Islam as their Deen.
- 2) Children who practice Islam as a Deen.

[Az-Zariyat 51:56]

(51:56)

I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

1. **Parents are responsible for children's upbringing**– not school, or Imam, or State

- ◆ Allah (swt) , “O ye who believe, ward off yourselves and your families against a fire whose fuel is men and stones” [TMQ At-Tahrim 66 : 6 ]

Therefore, must protect children from kufr, must mould them with Islam.  
Children are a test as well as source of reward and pleasure.

- ◆ SAW was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what rights can parents demand from their children? He replied, “They are your paradise and your hell [Ibn Majjah]
- ◆ Allah (swt) , “And know that your possessions and your children are a test, and that with Allah is a mighty reward” [TMQ 8 : 28 ]
- ◆ SAW “The one who is in charge of these girls and treats them well, they will be a shield for him from the fire [Bukhari]

## 2. Build 2 key ideas

[a] That goal in life is to worship Allah

[b] That we abide by halal and leave the haram actions

- We must drum in that we abide by Islam in order to “worship Allah”.
- That Islam is the most important thing to us
- When they obey Allah, we should praise them reminding them that Allah rewards them for that action which is halal
- When they disobey Allah, we should remind them that Allah hates the haram action so should hate it as well

This helps to build Islam as the criterion.

## 3. Be loving and approachable.

In order to be able to influence our children, parents must be approachable and loving towards them so they will be comfortable to talk to you, confide in you, and listen to you.

Prophet of Allah was a good example for us in this issue

*Al Aqra Ibn Habis saw Messenger of Allah (saw) kissing his grand sons Hussain (ra). He said “I have ten children and I never kiss any of them” Messenger of Allah (saw) said “The one who does not show tenderness will not be shown tenderness [Abu Dawud]”*

*When Fatima (ra), the Prophets daughter came to visit him, he got up for her, took her by the hand, kissed her and made her sit where he was sitting; and when he went to visit her, she got up for him, took his hand by the hand, kissed him, and made him sit where she was sitting [Abu Dawud]*

## 4. Answer their questions from Islam.

We must try to answer all our children’s questions from Islam. By so doing, we show them that Islam has answers to all problems that they may face. Living in the west, our children are bombarded with many issues contrary to Islam.

We say Allah exists; society says it doesn't matter. We say no sex before marriage, society promotes adultery. So we must clarify issues from Islam, and refute the erroneous western thoughts and practices.

How must we react when questioned by children? Should we hit them with a slipper when they ask us to prove that Allah (swt) exists? How did the Prophet answer these types of questions?

*A boy came to Messenger of Allah (saw), and asked "O Messenger of Allah, permits me to do zinna (adultery)".*

**People present were shocked.**

*Messenger of Allah (saw) said come and sit with me. He then asked the boy "What if it happened to your mother? What if it happened to your sister? What if it happened to your daughter? The boy replied "I can never accept that, may I be ransomed". Messenger of Allah (saw) then explained that adultery was one of the great sins"*

Unlike some of us, the Prophet did not rebuke him from asking such a question, but guided him to the answer.

We should always sense and prepare Islamic answers for the current issues facing our children. So we give them the Islamic perspective on issues e.g. Beckhams transfer, sex, pop culture, invasion of Iraq etc. So Islam becomes the reference point for judging all issues

#### **5. Create an Islamic atmosphere at home** and in the Muslim community.

Help each other to find ways to build and reinforce Islamic ideas and practices. So this can be done using

- Dua stickers on doors of house, toilet, etc
- Islamic Nasheeds (songs)
- Tapes on stories of Prophets
- Setting time aside for our children, taking them to the park or countryside and reflecting on Allah's creation together
- Praying and learning together
- Making a big deal out of celebrating the 2 eids & Ramadhan.

Ensure kids are stimulated and don't feel they are missing out, but that we have our own Islamic way of relaxing, having fun, and doing things.

#### **6. Build a vision of Islamic role models**

We must not build western role models for our children so they just want to be doctors or engineers or popstars like Britney Spears.

Build role models like the Sahaba some of who had jobs, but were Muslims first and foremost. So we want children who want to be Islamic doctors, engineers and dawah carriers. Teach them to emulate the great young Islamic heroes in our history like

- o Tariq bin Ziyad who brought Islamic justice and civilization to Europe.
- o Usama bin Zayd, young man who lead Army.
- o Imam Ali
- o Salahuddin who liberated Palestine

- And people who will work for Islam, who will work to save mankind

### **7. Always check \ vet what children are exposed to.**

Protect them from kuffur and point out what is haram.

- What are they watching on TV?
- Who they hang out with?
- Where they go?
- What they read?

- ◆ The above are the many solutions Islam gave to us in order to build children who understand Islam, and who live life according to the Sharia of Allah (SWT). Children who have Islamic personalities.

One of the biggest Keys to achieving this is the practice and the life of the parents. Parents are the first role models for our children. Therefore, we must study and practice Islam correctly. Allah (swt) will account us for this duty. It is incorrect that

- Child is told that Muslim women wear Jilbab, but mum doesn't cover.
- Child is told mortgage is haram, but his dad has a mortgage

We must not build confusion. This is unacceptable and is a source of confusing children and letting them think that the practice of Islam is not so important. We should instead push ourselves to study and adhere more strongly to the ahkham of Islam so as to be the best role models for our kids. Parents should swap tips and advice from one another.

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### **Our call**

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It is parent's duty to bring up Muslim kids

It is a parent's duty to refute the western ideas poisoning the behaviour of our children

It is a parent's duty to build the understanding of Islam as a deen.

It is parent's duty to build their children's practice of Islam

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### **Conclusion**

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We pray to Allah (SWT) to aid us in this task. Ameen

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