ISLAM AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF MUSLIMS

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  INTRODUCTION

Many of the younger generation of Muslims are starting to drift away from Islam.  This article is intended to guide them on the correct path without humiliating or criticising them.  Here is a set of points which form part of the religious code of behaviour Allah Most High expects from his servants.  Following these points will ensure that you will not, Insha'Allah, err from the correct path: if this is the case, you will not regret your bad actions later on in life and will, Insha'Allah, be blessed when the time of your last breath comes.  This article is only a small sample of the availability of religious knowledge; it will not answer all your questions but, hopefully, it will teach you to look to external sources for help and guidance.

 RECOMMENDED ADVICE \*  RELIGION

  Is Islam old- fashioned ?

Certain young Muslims of today believe that Islam is old- fashioned. It was brought to the people 1400 years ago and was only for the people during that time and not now.  This is wrong because the Holy Qur'an talks about Heaven and Hell which hasn't happened yet; this means that it talks about what *is going to happen* in the future.  If the Qur'an indicates what’s going to happen on the Day of Judgement, Hell Fire for Eternity and Paradise for Eternity, how can Islam be old-fashioned when it talks about things which haven't happened yet?

 How can you prove that Islam is true?

A few young Muslims don't know how to justify that Islam is True.  Many young Muslims ask "How can you prove that their is a Heaven and a Hell?" The answer is simple, Why do we die? If their wasn't either a Heaven nor a Hell, Why can't we stay alive living on the Earth forever? The Qur'an states that Allah makes the alternation of night and day, makes people grow old and brings death for people to move on to the next world.  If you still don't believe in the Afterlife, try to stop yourself from growing old, stop the alternation of day and night and stop death! those things cannot be stopped.

  Parental and Sibling Responsibility

Parents have the responsibility to teach their children Islam or Allah will ask them "Why didn't you teach your children about Islam" on the Day of Judgement.

In a family, their is a 16 year old boy and a 7 year old boy,  the older boy has responsibility to teach his younger brother about Islam because he is 9 years older so he must act as if he is his parent.

Do Children Understand Islam at Mosque?

It is very good if the parents take their children to learn Arabic and then move onto the Qur'an or if a Imam comes to the house to tutor the children.

When the Imam teaches the children to read the Qur'an,  he must also teach the meanings of the Arabic  in the Qur'an so that the children will understand what they are saying while reading the Qur'an.

At about 30 years ago when Muslims first moved into Britain there were merely a few Islamic books being distributed in Arabic, without any English or Urdu translations.  Nowadays, there are many Islamic book stores all over Britain selling translations of the Qur'an in many languages.  Also, you can access the Internet at home, schools, libraries etc. to look at Islamic work.  You can even download and print from the Internet.  Also, you can make photocopies of the work for only a few pence per page and distribute them to the public.  But, even to this day, some Muslim teachers in Mosques and Islamic Centres still teach like they used to do 30 years ago!

 Religious Education and Secular Education

The biggest fool is one who is very intelligent and passed many hard exams but doesn't believe in Allah!  eg. an Oxforduniversity atheist scientist.

A Muslim youth who has 10 grade 'A' GCSE's and has little religious knowledge is *not*better than someone who passes 2 or 3 GCSE's, but knows about Islam.  Islamic knowledge is the most important since it is to do with the future, all other knowledge is for the temporary life on Earth eg. science - If WW3 begins and everything is reduced to rubble, science will become irrelevant.  So a young Muslim must make sure that he/she has Islamic knowledge as well as doing well in exams.

A.  Don't pretend to be religious, be religious from the heart.  Only Allah knows how religious you are.

B.  Read Islamic books, do *Zikr [remembering Allah]*, give *zakat [charity]* etc.

C.  Compete with one another to be more religious, and successful, Allah allows competition.

D.  Truthfulness is a great virtue, it makes good quality in man.  Whoever practices it will never be condemned by evil.  Also, the key to open the Gate of Paradise is Truth.  If you start telling the truth you will be free from committing sins.

E.  Kindness leads to Paradise and you will be popular, people will be happy to know you.  If you are not kind to people, Allah will have no mercy on you.  It is also been reported that: "Allah is merciful to kind people, be kind to those on the Earth, the ones in the Heavens will be kind to you".  Kindness is one of the most important characteristics a person needs.

F.  Murder is a great sin in Islam because its written in the Holy Qur'an: "If a person sheds blood of another man without justification [ie capital punishment], he will suffer the torment of Hell".

G.  The Prophet [PBUH] said: "Who has these three things will find the sweetness of Faith: (a) To him Allah and His Messenger must be dearer than everything else. (b) If he loves anybody then that love must be for the sake of Allah. (c) When Allah has protected him from Hell, He should consider reverting to disbelief as being flung into Hell fire".

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Verily. Allah would say on the Day of Resurrection: Where are those who have mutual love for My Glory's sake? Today I shall shelter them in My Shadow when there is no other shadow but this Shadow of Mine.

H.  The Prophet [PBUH] said: "When your wrong doings sadden you, then you are a believer.  Everyone is aware of what things wrong and sinful, but when you are not sure, the heart should be consulted.  A believer’s heart does not compromise with a wrong-doing unless it is corrupted.  The believer then should give up the wrong doings.

I.  Reading namaz [ritual prayer] teaches unity, discipline and punctuality, concentration of mind and reverence for the righteous.  It enables physical health and strengthening social relations.

J.  A person should pray in a mosque with other Muslims than individually because you will be rewarded 27 times more than reading individually.

K.  It is unlawful to read namaz at these times: (a) When the sun is in the course of rising (b) When the sun is just in the meridian (c) When the sun is in the course of setting.

L.  A true believer never thinks that Allah has ignored his prayer.  If you ask for something from Allah but it is not given, all it means that the time is not right for you to be granted that particular request.  All prayers are granted some in this world and others in the next world.  Allah is the All Wise and knows the best time for granting a particular request.

M.  Prayer shows that man is a humble servant of Allah, and Allah Most High is the Merciful Lord.  Being a servant of Allah is a blessing, not a shame because the servants of Allah are safe from the torment of Hell.  This is a mighty achievement because the humble believer will have happiness for eternity.

  EDUCATION

Attend Islamic groups, learn more about your religion.

Help the community, share your knowledge with others, let them benefit too.

  PARENTS

If you obey your parents you will obey Allah.  The Prophet [PBUH] has said:

\* ' Paradise lies beneath the feet of your mother'

Abu Huraira reported that a person came to Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) and asked: ‘Who among the people is most deserving of a fine treatment from my hand?’ He replied, ‘Your mother’.  He again said: Then who (is the next one)? He said: Again it is your mother (who deserves the best treatment from you). He said: Then who (is the next one)? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Again, it is your mother.  He (again) said: Then who? Thereupon he said: Then it is your father.  In the hadith transmitted on the authority of Qutalba, there is no mention of the word "the people".

\* The anger of a father is the anger of Allah Most High.

\* If a person looks at his mother or father with a kind look, there is the reward of doing a Hajj for each kind look.

A.  You should follow your parents if they are religious, when you have children then they can follow you and become religious.

B.  Loyalty to parents and Allah is essential, it supercedes loyalty to peers.

C.  Show respect to your elders, Prophet [PBUH] said: You're not a Muslim if you don't show respect to your elders and love for children.

D.  Don't trouble your parents; don't waste parent’s money when they are having difficulties bringing money into the home.

E.  Never abuse other peoples parents, someone will abuse yours.  In fact, you should respect the friends of your parents and the parents of others.

'Abdullah b. Umar reported Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) as saying: The finest act of goodness is that a person should treat kindly the loved ones of his father.

F.  So many young girls today grumble, curse and go in a bad mood if they have to help their mothers.  They make their mothers do the work even though they are young and have plenty of energy.  They just watch TV, go out with friends or listen to music.  By helping their mothers, not only will they get SAWAB from Allah, but the housework will train them to run their own households when they marry, this is essential if they are to look after their husbands property and have a happy married life.  If they are of good character themselves, then they will be able to train their daughters adequately too.

So, if you are a girl, it is very important to help your mother with the housework and to obey your parents at all times.  Similarly, a woman will go to Paradise if she keeps her husband pleased with her, looks after his property while he is away, and happily does the housework in her own household [not asking her husband to do the housework without good reason i.e., if she is expecting].

There is no woman whose eyes water as she cuts up onions for the family meal but Allah writes down to her record the reward of those who weep out of fear of God.

For each smile you give your parents, Allah will give you the reward for performing one Hajj.  If you are cruel to your parents, God will punish you in this world and the next world.  Obedience to parents is obedience to God.

SOCIAL LIFE

A.  You shouldn't have too much of a good time, it makes you forget about religion.

B.  Don't waste your time talking and laughing when you could be doing something that has a meaning.  Don't be lazy and waste time just watching television or talking to friends.  Be ambitious: try to pass as many exams as you can and follow a career which will make your parents proud of you.  Muslim children in this country are very lucky to have first-rate educational facilities, such as schools, colleges and Universities 'on their doorstep'.  Students from all over the world spend thousands of pounds to come to this country and benefit from these same facilities, often overcoming obstacles such as getting governmental sponsorship, showing immigration officials documents such as copies of bank statements, letters of acceptance from Universities and visas etc.  Then there are the added problems, once they reach here, of finding accommodation, adjusting to the lifestyle and taking extra English language lessons, not to mention having to work part-time as well as study for intensive degree courses!  Children already here don't have to overcome these additional obstacles to success, yet they still can't be bothered!

C.  Don't meet girls/boys in private.  Go with friends so you won't be tempted to do bad actions.

D.  Be more independent, take time alone and think of religion - where is life taking you.

E. Don't fight against your Muslim brothers/sisters and do not insult others on wealth and on the way they look.

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds.

F.  It is wrong to get your fortune told because it is unlawful in Islam.  The person who tells the future of someone and the person who goes to someone to get their fortune told will be an unbeliever, they will be cursed.  A person who goes to see a fortune teller, their prayers will not be accepted for 40 nights.  Only Allah knows your future.

G.  The Prophet [PBUH] said: "If a man marries, he has perfected half of his religion.  Hence, he must fear Allah for the remaining half".

H.  You must not search for only beauty and wealth etc. in a woman.  You should look for piety and marry a religious minded woman.

I.  If a Muslim sight falls for the first time on the beauty of a woman and he removes his glance, then Allah will bless him.

J.  When things go wrong in life people should think positively because ups and downs happen in everyone’s life.  When bad things happen it means Allah is testing you, if you succeed or fail the test.

K.  A Muslim boy can marry a Christian or Jewish wife as long as she has good character.  But a Muslim girl is forbidden to marry a Christian or Jewish husband because the children will follow the father and will turn out to be non Muslims.

L.  A Muslim man is allowed to marry 1 to 4 wives but they all have to be treated equally.  A Muslim woman cannot have more than 1 husband because when the woman has a child the husbands could not decide who the real father is and could cause other problems.

M.  Allah hates people who split up so only have a divorce when highly necessary otherwise Allah will be angry with you.  You shouldn't have a divorce over small things, if a married couple can't agree with any solutions then divorce is the *last* option*[and one which is hateful to God].*

N.  There is no harm in competing with other Muslims to do good deeds.  Allah Almighty has ordered in the Holy Qur'an "And vie (compete) one with another for forgiveness and a Garden ( Paradise ) whose width is equal to the distance between Heaven and Earth".  So you should try to do better in your studies, be better behaved, be more religious (but don't show off) than your friends.  It’s definitely allowed to do so.

O.  Don't be affected by television programmes and films.  Don't, for example, copy the habits of kafir people.  There is a lot of sex and violence on television, especially in American films.  If you are not sure of something, read a relevant book, ask a question at an Islamic Site on the Internet or find out from your mosque.  For example, films show drunk people shouting angrily with a bottle of alcohol in their hands as if it is 'cool' a good thing.  But, in our religion, consuming even a little drop of alcohol, let alone getting drunk, is a major sin punishable by a term in Hell.  Other examples are things such as taking drugs, use of bad language, guns/weapons, gangs, boys and girl-dating, stealing etc.

FOOD AND DRINK

A. Use your money to buy food/clothes instead of cigarettes and other harmful things.

B. Drugs and alcohol lead to Hell, don't abuse your body, it belongs to Allah.

C. "You are what you eat", don’t eat Haram, you will not be able to distinguish between right and wrong.

D.  It is forbidden in Islam to eat food and drink from vessels made of gold and silver because it is undesirable.  It has been reported that: "If anyone eats and drinks from vessels made of silver and gold, the fire of Hell will bubble in his belly".

E.  We should eat with our right hand because it is lawful, but with our left hand it is not.  It has been reported that: "None of you must ever eat or drink from his left hand because the devil does so".

F.  The first and foremost duty of man before eating is to rehearse the name of Allah as: In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful. The remembrance of Allah in every affair is the key-note of Islam.

G.  Blessing lies when eating with company because we are all Muslim brothers and sisters, therefore we should stay together than separate yourselves.  It is also good to have company than be alone.

  CLOTHING

A.  Don't wear tight fitting clothes; wear loose clothing so it doesn't reveal your figure.

B. Don't spend too much money on clothes - designer wear, when you need money for food, education etc.

C. Don't wear too much make-up for non special occasions ie. School.

D.  Men should cover their body at least from the navel to the knees but a woman should cover everything except hands, face and feet.  Men should not wear gold and silk, they are not allowed to wear women's clothes and women are not allowed to wear men’s clothes.  A modest dress sense is something which covers the body and where there’s nothing revealing.

  DETRIMENTAL ASPECTS OF CHARACTER

A.  "Pride comes before a fall". Showing off is not allowed in Islam.

B.  Don't be envious of others.  Jealousy burns good deeds like fire burns wood.

C.  Don't swear.  Foul language is from the Devil and is proof of evil thoughts.

D.  Do not steal.  Allah will give you more too if you be patient.

E.  It is a great sin to become a hypocrite because a hypocrite expresses faith from his tongue while his disbelief is in his mind.  You will be put in the lowest stage of Hell.  A hypocrite is like two thoughts in one body.  They turn their backs when people need help, when they speak they tell a lie, they act treacherously and they fall out with others, he leads away from the path of truth.

F.  "Backbiting is an evil of tongue".  Backbiting has been linked to eating flesh of the dead body of a brother.  This is because the backbiter says things about a person without them knowing; therefore the person can’t defend himself.  Backbiting is a major sin, but whoever listens to the backbiter will also be a sinner.  The person who has been the victim will become violent and will seek revenge.

**CONCLUSION**

**An effort has been made, in this Article, to make young Muslims aware of their religious obligations to their parents, siblings, relatives, to society and, above all, to God.  In fact, the various types of obligations and responsibilities are inter-linked; obeying parents, for example, is akin to obeying God!  Helping another person in need is a *good deed* which merits Reward in the Hereafter.  Of course, the subject of how young Muslims should behave for a happy life in this world, and in the next, is** **an*enormous* field and a person might easily read dozens of specialist books in such an important area.  However, it is hoped that this article will have been thought-provoking and informative and that it will encourage the reader *to learn* how to be a *blessed*young Muslim!**

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Amar Gaffar

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**TEST EXERCISE & COMPETITION**

**1. Why should you try to pass as many exams as possible?**

**2. Why should you not race other drivers (especially if you are a young driver) on the road?**

**3. What is wrong with drugs and drug dealing?**

**4. What is wrong with consuming and selling alcohol?**

**5. How should a good Muslim treat his/her parents?**

**6. Why should Muslim girls help their mothers with the housework?**

**7. What is wrong with pressuring parents to spend money on expensive designer clothes and shoes?**

**8. Can girl and boy students mix according to Islamic rules?**

**9. Why must jealousy be avoided at all costs?**

**10. What is wrong with the bad behaviour which is copied from films and programmes shown on television?**

**11. Why can Islam not be said to be "old-fashioned" or "out of date"?**

**12. Why is it wrong with smoking cigarettes?**

**13. Why is religious knowledge far more important than secular knowledge?**

**14. Why should you help your friends when they need help?**

**15. Why should you respect your elders?**

**16. Why should you show love to the youngsters?**

**17. Why must idle chatter be avoided?**

**18. Why is it a terrible sin to *show off* to others?**

**19. Why should you check the ingredients of foods such as sweets and chocolate before eating them?**

**20. Why is idleness an unpleasant and negative trait of ones character which must be avoided?**

**21.  Why is *backbiting* evil?**

**22.  Why are hypocrites the worst of all unbelievers?**

**23.  Why does Allah give us life?**

**24.  Why does Allah give us death?**

**25.  Who is the biggest educated fool?**

**26.  At which three stages of the day is it forbidden to read Salah [namaz, prayer]?**

**27.  Why is it a *beneficial* to *compete* with one another to do good deeds?**

**28.  Is it advisable to eat with the left hand even if you are left-handed?**

**29.  Which rules of dressing should a young Muslim adhere to?**

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**COMPETITION ENTRY CRITERIA**

**This competition is open to anyone aged 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18. The three best sets of answers will win:**

**a)**     **Certificate 1st, 2nd or 3rd**

**b)**    **Monetary prizes: 1st prize - $100 + free Islamic book.  2nd prize - $75 + free Islamic book.  3rd prize - $50 + free Islamic book.**

**c)**     **Admission for 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winning entries as items in a new section of THE DR UMAR AZAM WEBSITE [this will not prevent winners from simultaneously placing their work on their own websites, if any].**

**Valid Dates for the competition:**

**1st June 2003** **– 31st May 2004** **.  Post [DR UMAR AZAM, PO** **BOX 39** **, MANCHESTER** **M16 8UA** **, UNITED KINGDOM** **] or e-mail [contact@dr-umar-azam.com  \*  dr\_umar\_azam@yahoo.co.uk]   your answers to Dr Umar Azam with your full name, age and e-mail address clearly printed.  Please indicate your country and the name of your school, college or University if you are at school or a student.**

**\*Please indicate which Islamic subject you are interested in; if you win one of the three prizes, every effort will be made to send you your [book] prize which is related to your chosen topic.  This competition is international, geographically unrestricted.  Work hard for your success! [Insha’Allah].**

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**DATE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**SCORE:             MARKS OUT OF MARKS            PERCENTAGE:           % GRADE:**

**\* A list of verified winners has been posted on The Dr Umar Azam Website in the 'Competition Results' section.**

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