

## COMING OF AGE

### *Our Unspoken Crisis of Modesty and Chastity and the Rising Muslim Generations*

The challenges Muslims in the West must face in raising the next generations cannot be overcome without first successfully addressing the mental and emotional disruptions in our families and community which stem from the sexual impulse, the fiercest of the carnal desires, we will never be able to aggregate ourselves into an authentic Community of the Midmost Way, worthy of that Qur'anic designation. The main lesson to be understood is that parents need to talk with children about their sexual outlook and behavior keeping certain requirements in mind. So, let the discourse begin.

By Amer Haleem



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*This magazine contains some of Allah's names. Please do not throw in the trash. Either keep, circulate, share or recycle.*

# Overcoming the Challenge of Lust

BY ABU HAMID AL-GHAZALI (D. 505 A.H.)

Allah, the Wise, the knower, tries man and afflicts him with all sorts of lusts: lust for power, lust for sex, lust for food, and so forth, in order to test how he can curb his covetousness and whims. And out of all these types, sexual desire is the most overpowering lust experienced by man and the most defiant when it excites the mind.

Actually, there is an evil side to the sexual desire that is so powerful, and if left without regulation, restraint and moderation, it can threaten with destruction man's faith and existence. It is highly significant, therefore, that man understands its nature, learns how to curb it, and keeps it within the confines delimited by our Creator, the Knower, the Wise. Ultimately, sexual desire leads to having coitus, a bounty that Allah has bestowed on humankind to experience its pleasures and as a means of procreation. The latter is the real purpose.

## The Excellence of Chastity

The benefits of chastity and abstinence are limitless. There is much compensation in safeguarding chastity out of taqwa of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. With determination and increased resistance of desires comes the facilitation of means, particularly when lust becomes real. Such is the way of the righteous.

The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa salam, said, "The Lord will cast His (protective) shadow upon seven on the Day

of Judgment in the shade of His Throne, a day when there is no shade other than God's; among them is the man who had been enticed by a beautiful woman but responded with 'I fear God, the Lord of the worlds.'" (Bukhari)

The story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), alayhes salam, resisting the temptation and seduction of the King's wife with

firmness in spite of her lusting (for him) is well known. And God Almighty has praised him for that in the Qur'an and presented him as a model for everyone who succeeds in resisting the devil as concerns this great lust: "And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, 'Come, you.' He [Yusuf] said, 'I seek refuge with Allah...Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed. And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof [i.e., sign] of his Lord. And thus [it was] that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was one of Our chosen servants.'" [12:23-24] And when Yousef knew of the woman's insistence in sleeping with him, he called upon Allah saying, "My Lord, I would rather be jailed than succumb to the woman's seduction. And if you do not save me from her evil plan, I might incline to her and [thus] be of the ignorant. So his Lord responded to him and averted him of her plan. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." [12:33-34]

The Companion Abdullah ibn Umar related that he heard the Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alayhe wa salam, said, "Three people before you went out one night to a cave, and as they entered it, a stone came tumbling down from the mountain and blocked the entrance. They said (to themselves): 'nothing will save you from this stone other than to appeal to Allah Almighty with your virtuous deeds.' One of the men proclaimed: 'Lord, You know that I had two elderly fathers when before (them) I had no family or money. One day I had to take my cattle to the pasture but I would not move before presenting them with their evening milk. They were, however, asleep. Since I did not wish to have my evening milk before they did, out of respect (for them), I stood waiting with the pitcher in my hand until dawn. They awoke and drank their milk. Lord, if I had done this to

**"...And tell the believing women to lower their sight and guard their private parts..."**  
[24:30-31]



## Birth Control and Abortion in Islam

BY MUHAMMAD IBN ADAM AL-KAWTHARI

Topics related to abortion and birth control are among the hottest issues today, in the world as a whole and in the Western countries in particular. The debate over them reflects various personal, cultural, political and religious attitudes and persuasions.

The Shari'ah of Islam, as a system that guides Muslims in every single aspect of their personal and public life, has a position concerning the issues of abortion and birth control. So, what are the Islamic positions and attitudes toward these issues? The answer to this question is what the author of this book has managed to research, conclude and present to the readers.

The various issues discussed and the rulings opined and concluded in this book

can be summarized as follows:

**First**, in principle, Islam disapproves of any practice that leads to the destruction of human life, which Islam considers a sacred gift from Allah, our Lord and Creator. No one may take the life of anyone, oneself included, except by way of justice or according to other situations indicated by Islamic law (so called *dharurah* or dire and extreme situations). In the Qur'an we read, "On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person—unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading mis-

chief in the land—it would be as if he slew all mankind: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind..." [5:32] And, "Kill not your children for fear of want; it is We who provide sustenance for them as well as for you; for indeed killing them is a great sin." [17:31] So, it is a grave sin to take the life of children for fear of want, as some people did in the past or

some may still do in some societies today. The unborn life is not allowed to be taken for any other reason except in certain rare situations where a tremendous danger is caused by its continued presence in the womb that may result in the death of the mother.

Furthermore, Islam advises against birth control and abortion because they go against its view and idea of marriage which

looks at sex not as an end in itself but as a means to good ends—the top most of which is procreation. Therefore, a woman is not permitted to have abortion simply because she wishes to do so to maintain a beautiful figure, advance



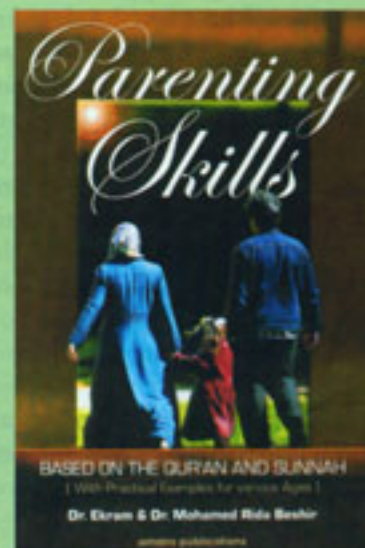
## Parenting Skills

Based on the Qur'an and Sunnah

BY DR. EKRAM & DR. MOHAMED RIDA BESHIR

In the surah of the *Furqan* Allah enumerates some of the praiseworthy traits of those whom He named: the **Servants of the Merciful** (*Ibadur-Rahman*). Traits like tawheed, modesty, perseverance in worship, perpetual mindfulness and fear of the torments of

Hellfire, moderation in spending, abstinence from unlawful sex, and avoidance of falsehood, are emphasized, then that is immediately followed by a trait of those excellent servants which is relevant to the subject of the book at hand—the fact that they supplicate Allah, "Our Lord,



# FAMILY

MUSLIM FAMILY LIVING HAPPILY AND HEALTHFULLY

# LIFE

## PARENTING

# Yikes! Our kids are coming of age... what do we do?

BY ELIZABETH BASA

Come with me briefly back in time...back to the time when you first felt that pang in your gut. You know what I'm talking about. The pang that you feel when someone you like is in the room. The feeling that makes your insides go crazy, heart racing, palms sweating, nerves twitching.

For most people, it was most likely a neighbor, or a classmate—maybe the friend of an older sibling. For me, it was Luke Skywalker. Yes, from Star Wars. Little did my parents know what would happen to me that night we went to the movies. I dreamt about him. I made up imaginary games. I thought what it would be like to marry him. I was about 8 years old. Sound young? Well, it probably was, but whatever the age of awakening in your child, 9, 10, at the latest 12... it will happen. Guaranteed. Who was it for you? Take a moment and relive in your mind your first feelings of that nature. Are you getting the butterflies in the stomach? Feeling jittery? Increased

heart rate? Now imagine your child experiencing the same thing. If you were a fellow young person, you would be on the same page, sharing giddily with each other. But, as the grown up parent, what is going to be your response? As a Muslim, what *should* be your response? What do we say? What don't we say?

Regardless of cultural divides, humans are created to be attracted to the opposite gender and those feelings start sprouting a lot earlier than seems convenient. Sometimes I wonder why Allah has done this? Why not keep the hormones in check until at least 18? 20? I'm sure in His absolute wisdom,

there is a reason for it. I just haven't figured it out yet.

I realize in many Muslim cultures, approaching the subject of sexual education is scorned upon. It is even seen as indecent, disrespectful or dishonorable. However, nothing could be further from the truth. A quick read of several ahadeeth on the subject should remind you how open and forthcoming the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, was about such issues, and how comfortable people were in asking him such questions.

If you have cultural issues with discussing this topic, this article is probably 1000 times more critical to you than those who don't. The fact is, Islam, in its perfect form, does not veer away from reality. It embraces it. It encourages the use of intellect and spirit combined to make for a thoughtful, educated, sensitive and responsible individual. It is within this mindset that we approach such a

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## PARENTING

### Sharing the Joy of Giving

BY SALMA SANWARI

*"My children are so unappreciative! They have so much and yet all they ever do is want and want. They have the latest games and toys and they come home from school asking for more. They see things in the store and ask for it. They see things that others have and ask for it. They are so ungrateful! Help!"*

Does that sound familiar? For many moms, this is all too common. We hear our children tell us time and again that they want what their friends have and that ultimately they are not satisfied with what they already have. And we are stumped with how to teach them to be happy and content with what they have. How do we teach them to be pleased with what Allah has already blessed them with? How can we teach them to be satisfied with enough when it is never enough?

It is human to want more and to want what we do not have. And once we have acquired what we want, we move on to the next thing. This begins at a young age and progresses as we mature. And it seems never to stop. One way to combat this would be to realize that Allah has blessed us with



whatever He has given us and we have to use His blessings in the best way possible. In other words, there are some people whom Allah has blessed with financial security. They have enough money for home and provisions and their children have what they

need and most of what they want. In these situations, they see that their children are still asking for more and this is where they find that their children are becoming 'greedy'.

These parents are worried that their children do not value what they have and will grow up to under-appreciate the true blessings that Allah has bestowed on them.

#### SAYING 'THANK YOU' SAYS SO MUCH

One of the most elementary steps in gratitude is to simply say, "Thank you." And this applies to us, as well. When our children see us saying "Thank you" to one another, to our own parents and friends and especially to our spouses, they will mimic that behavior. When