



Muslim Mums

Welcome!

Salaam Alaykum

As mums, it is common to feel like ping pong balls bouncing at top speed from one set of responsibilities to the next, namely: children, family, work and last and sometimes least of all, ourselves. So what is the solution to this exhausting dilemma? Islam advocates balance and moderation in all spheres of life. Imam Ali (as) gives us the answer in very simple yet meaningful words: "The key to success is moderation."

Motivating Your Older Child By Romana Kazmi

Imam Sajjad (as) said: "The right of your child is that you know that he has emerged from you in this world; his right and wrong are attributed to you. You are responsible for his fine teaching and training, guiding him to his Lord."

As parents, our goal is to take our children to their highest potential. However, often during their pre-teens and teens, they lack the motivation to achieve this. Much to parents' disappointment, their time is overwhelm-

ingly spent on things like TV, football, fashion and video games. Lack of motivation is not just limited to school work, but also extends to things like meeting new people, religious education, physical exercise, going to mosque, etc. So how are parents to guide and motivate their children at such a crucial time?

The first thing to understand about pre-teens and teens that seem to lack motivation is this simple truth: it is impossible to have no motivation. Everybody is motivated—you just need to be aware of what in particular motivates them. As children get older, they are often not receptive when parents demand they do particular things. They feel they are being forced to do things and resist, simply to stay in the power struggle. A better way is to offer them options and let them decide what interests them, or how things can be done that would benefit them.

Sometimes, it is effective to simply explain the wisdom and the importance of certain things that we encourage our children to do. All too often we forget to do this. By giving them the opportunity to think and digest the benefits behind certain activities, such as going to mosque or attending family gatherings, we are trusting and empowering them to make the right decisions.

As with all relationships, nothing is possible without effective communication. The Holy Quran tells us: "O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty) to Allah and speak the right word." (33:70)

When communicating with your older children, think about what you say and how you say it. Often when you communicate, the words you don't say, as well your body language, send a very different message to what you are actually saying. You may be trying to communicate helpful words but if your undertone is laced with fear or frustration, they will not feel encouraged. Instead, they may leave the conversation feeling criticized and discouraged.

Especially when dealing with older children, when we speak to them is critical to our communication with them. Timing is everything. Communicating when you do not have control of your emotions is an example of poor timing. Hold your tongue, count to 10, and wait until you are calm. Ask yourself whether this is the best time to say what you want to say. Sometimes waiting until the storm blows over can make a world of difference in how our words are received.

On a practical level, one of the biggest qualms parents have with their

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children at this age is to find a way to motivate them to do the things that they have to do, namely school work and keeping up their religious duties on time, whilst at the same time being able to do the things that they want to do. One of the ways in which the daily tussle can be avoided is to sit down with them and make a daily schedule. This would be one that they feel comfortable with and not pressured into. It should take into account all they need to accomplish for the day and yet give them the much needed 'me' time. A schedule during winter months may go as follows:

After school
 3 30 - 4 00 – Relax after a hard day at school
 4 00 - 4 45 - Religious duties - Salat and recitation of Quran
 4 45 - 5 15 - More relaxing!
 5 15 - 6 15 – Homework
 6 15 – 8 00 – Dinner and family time

A routine such as this, especially when prepared with the child, would mean that they can now be the boss instead of a nagging parent! It would also take them closer to a far more organized life, which is a necessity in the adult world that they will soon enter.

Often as our children grow older, we forget the universal necessity of verbal praise and encouragement. All of us, adults as well as children, respond positively to and require praise to feel encouraged. The type

of praise is important however; blanket praise is often not taken seriously or may give the child a false impression of themselves, e.g. "You are smart." When motivating your child, praise them on specific aspects of what they have achieved and also focus on the effort and process. For example, "That was a tricky problem, but you put your head down and didn't give up."

One effective tool of encouragement is the use of affirmations. Write down some affirmations that you think will best encourage and inspire your child, using the guidelines above. It has been shown that affirmations are most effective when repeated three times. Choose one affirmation for a day and repeat it at least three times during the day. It is inevitable that as a child hears positive statements, their confidence and self esteem will increase, as will future positive behaviour.

Muslims Mums Muharram Tribute

We all have at the back of minds what black clothes our children will be wearing to mosque during the month of Muharram, what lecturers will be delivering speeches and majalis at our local mosque. Sometimes, we get caught up in attending the mosque, house majalis and by the end of the day we are exhausted and our children have been laden with sweets, crisps and novelty items to keep them quiet so we can listen to the lecture.

The Muslim Mums team would like you to join them in spending five minutes of the day, using the wealth of information that our Prophets and Imams have left us, pondering over Imam Husayn's journey. We encourage you to discuss the hadith below

and understand the true sacrifice of the Imam and his family.

The Holy prophet said to Bibi Fatemah (as): "On the day of judgement, you shall intercede for the ladies and I shall intercede for the men; every person who has wept over the tragedy of Husayn (as), we shall take him by the hand and lead him into paradise".

Imam Redha (as) has said: "One who refrains from seeking his (worldly) desires on the day of Ashura, Allah shall grant him his desires of this world and the hereafter".

Imam Redha (as) has said: "Those who weep should weep over the likes of Husayn (as) for surely, weeping over him does away with ones great sins".

Imam Sadiq (as) has said: "He



(Imam Husayn) sees those, who come to his shrine and he knows them by their names, the names of their fathers and their ranks in the eyes of Allah, The Mighty The Glorious better than you know your own children!"

Imam Sadiq (as) has said: "The pilgrim of Imam Husayn (as) turns back (from his pilgrimage) such that not a single sin remains upon him".

Personal and Spiritual Development

Are you looking after the woman in you?

By: Sayeda Habib

Did you know that a woman's brain is better wired to multitask than a man's is? We are fortunate that Allah (SwT) has given us an innate ability to juggle all our commitments. This however, isn't always easy and women are often left with little time for themselves. The mums out there are the real heroes in my book. I imagine that it gives you fulfilment to see the ones you love thriving, but what would it give you to have some goals for yourselves? Imagine that you have your own personal ambition or a goal, and you achieve it successfully. I wonder how that sense of fulfilment would impact all those around you. The more fulfilled a woman is, the better wife, mother, and community member she makes. If your cup is full, you have more to give don't you?

I imagine that being a mum may not have allowed you to focus on your goals. It can be challenging to start the process if it's new to you. So here are some practical tips to help you get started.

Change your time conversation: We all know that mums struggle with time. I have yet to meet a mum in the West who says that she has time for herself. However, we all know that time isn't a tangible thing; it is a perception. We all have an internal conversation about time. I wonder if you will recognise it as "there is too much to do" or "kids take up all my time." Our internal dialogue about time reflects how much time we spend on things; it becomes real in our lives. So if you find that you don't have time for yourself, then ask yourself: "what do I say to myself about time?" "How useful is it?" "What can I be saying to myself that will help me create some time for me?" Repeat your new time statement daily and notice how you feel. Change it if you feel

that you need to. Once you can begin to create some time for you, then the reflection on your goals can begin.

Ask the "what" question: Knowing what we want to do is sometimes the most difficult question of all. Now that you will have created some time, sit down for a few minutes every day and ask yourself the question "what do I really, really, really want?" and write the answer down. Do this for a few days and you will see a theme emerging. You may notice that it may be something like happiness, or peace of mind that you long for. This is a very good start to exploring your life ambition. This word will allow you to connect to your deeper values and give you a sense of purpose. Once you know what you are looking for, then spend some time to ask yourself: "What will make me (happy, peaceful etc)?" This will give you the starting point of your goal.

The "how" question comes next: You may have some ideas emerging about what you would like to do. Maybe it's starting a little business of your own, or making a difference in the community. The most essential question after the "what" is the "how" question. Ask yourself how am I going to achieve this goal? What actions do I need to take? Are there any skills that I need to acquire? Can I do this by myself or do I need someone's help? Brainstorm with a friend or colleague to get the ideas flowing.

Set a time frame: Time frames keep our goals real and measurable. I wonder if you know someone who says that they "will do" something, but it never gets done? That is because they didn't set a mental time frame for it. A time frame will allow you to work towards something tangible. Once you know what you will do and how you will do it, the question is "by when?" Ask yourself: Is this

a one-off goal or something that is ongoing? By when will I achieve this goal? (Specific day and date) Is this time frame flexible? How much time can I take out given all my other commitments? Make sure that the time frame you give yourself is realistic but exciting enough that it keeps you going.

Adjust and acknowledge: The unexpected may happen from time to time, so make sure to make adjustments to your goal accordingly. If you find that you would like to do something else, or that the time you allotted will not be enough, go ahead and make adjustments. This will keep your goal relevant and exciting.

Take a few minutes every day to remind yourself of the things you did well. It's the little things that mums do that make all the difference, so go ahead and give yourself a moment to enjoy that. You will find yourself feeling good and staying on track too.

Sayeda Habib is a qualified life coach and hypnotherapist. She supports Muslims in overcoming issues, achieving their goals and creating change. To find out about coaching for Muslims log on to www.makelifehappen.com or email Sayeda@makelifehappen.com.



Growing Feet

Providing parents with "Pearls of Wisdom" (Islamic and Secular) through the growing years

PREGNANCY – Forgetfulness

(Based on "What to Expect when Expecting" by Eisenberg, Murkoff and Hathaway)

Many pregnant women begin to feel that as they're gaining pounds, they're losing brain cells. Even women who pride themselves on their organisational skills, their capacity to deal with complicated issues, and their ability to maintain their composure suddenly find themselves forgetting appointments, having trouble concentrating and losing their cool. Fortunately the scatterbrain syndrome is temporary. Like numerous other symptoms, it's caused by the hormonal changes through pregnancy. Feeling tense about this intellectual fogginess will only compound it. Recognising that it is normal, even accepting it with a sense of humour, may help to ease it. Reducing the stresses in your life will also help. It just may not be feasible to do as much as efficiently as you did before you took on the added job of baby-making. Taking informal inventory or keeping written checklists at home and at work can help contain the mental chaos as well as keep you from mak-

ing potentially dangerous mistakes (such as forgetting to lock the door). And you might as well get used to working at a little below peak efficiency. The fog may well continue through the early weeks after your baby's arrival and perhaps may not lift completely until baby is sleeping through the night.

INFANCY (0-12 Months)

– How do Babies Sleep?

(Extracted from "The No-Cry Sleep Solution" by Elizabeth Pantley)

A baby's biological clock begins maturing at about six to nine weeks of age and does not work smoothly until about four to five months. As the biological cycle matures, a baby reaches a point when she is mostly awake during the day and mostly asleep during the night. At about nine to ten months, a baby's sleep periods consolidate so that she wakes up and goes to sleep at about the same times every day, and her sleep spans are longer.

Because the biological clock is the primary regulator of daily sleep and wakefulness patterns, it is easy to see why a baby does not sleep through the night – and why this pattern so adversely affects new parents! Babies move through the same sleep cycles adults do, but their cycles are shorter and more numerous.

Babies also spend much more time in light sleep than adults do, and they have many more of those in-between stages of brief awakenings.

All the stages of sleep are important for your baby's growth and development. As he matures, so does his sleep cycle; attaining sleep maturity is a biological process.

A baby's biological clock begins maturing at about six to nine weeks of age.

THE TODDLER YEARS – Keeping Your Cool

(Mainly based on "What to Expect – the Toddler Years", by Eisenberg, Murkoff and Hathaway)

Nobody is cool, calm and collected all of the time – particularly when there's a toddler in the house. But since frequent parental tantrums are not good for you or your toddler, it's a good idea to try some simple strategies to help minimise the possibility of such explosions. These will be covered over four issues, Inshallah. Part 3:

- Don't Lose Perspective. Keep handy a photo of your toddler at



a particularly sweet moment, and reach for it whenever he or she has done something to provoke your wrath. Or, when a tantrum or other provocative behaviour is in progress, close your eyes for a moment and summon up a memory of your toddler at his or her best – offering you a bite of ice cream, smiling ear-to-ear from the top of the slide, 'helping' you to fold laundry, or angelically asleep.

- Find a Shoulder to Cry on. If you're so angry with your toddler that nothing seems to help, call a friend or relative who's a good listener and unload your angst. Do this when your child's napping or out with someone else.
- Don't be a Martyr. Parents who never take the time to be good to themselves have a much harder time being good to their children. When parenthood turns to martyrdom, resentment and hostility build, often resulting in parental loss of control. So make sure you get your share of quality time, too.
- Track your blow-ups. Knowing what prompts a loss of temper can often help you control it. If you think you've been angry too often, try keeping a written record. Once you've regained your composure after an incident, make note of when it occurred; the triggering factors (your mood, a missed meal, and so on); what your child did; what you did; and how the situation was ultimately resolved. After several such events, try to evaluate your notes as impartially as possible. If there is a pattern, that could give you a clue about prevention (a snack and a relaxing activity at the end of the day, for instance, before tempers start flaring).

THE OLDER YEARS – Love Languages (Part 5 –Physical Touch)

(Based on "The Five Love Languages" by Gary Chapman)

Language differences are part and parcel of human culture. If we are to communicate effectively across cultural lines, we must learn the language of those with whom we wish to communicate. In the area of love it is similar. Your emotional love language and that of your child may be as different as Chinese from English, and we must be willing to learn their primary love language if we are to be effective communicators of love; something that is especially important as children grow older. Over previous issues we have focused on four of the five love languages: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service. This issue we will conclude with the last love language, Physical Touch. Every child needs all of them, but there is usually one that they speak above the rest. Physical Touch: We have long known that "Physical Touch" is an emotion communicator to children. Research has shown that babies who are handled often develop better emotionally than babies who are not. Naturally many parents and other adults pick up an infant, hold it, cuddle it, kiss it, squeeze it and speak silly words to it. Long before the children under-



stands the meaning of the word love, she feels loved. Hugging, kissing, patting, holding hands are all ways of communication love to a child. The hugging and kissing of a teenager will differ from the hugging and kissing of an infant. Your teenager may not appreciate such behaviour in the presence of peers, but that doesn't mean he does not want to be touched, especially if it is his primary love language. If your teenager is regularly coming up behind you and grabbing your arms, lightly pushing you, grabbing you by the ankle when you walk through the room, tripping you, those are all indications that "Physical Touch" is important to him.

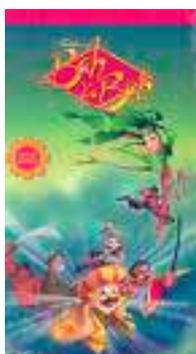
Product Review Children's DVDS

The Jar - A Tale from the East



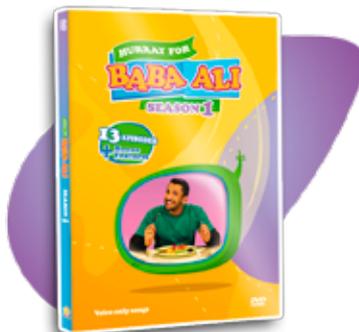
This is a good quality animated film that is sure to thrill kids aged 4-5 years and above. Based on a true story that was narrated over 1,400 years ago, *The Jar-A Tale from the East* deals with the epic struggle between good and evil. Set in an Eastern village, it tells the story of a poor but virtuous family that find a jar full of treasure in their new back yard. As they struggle to find its rightful owners, they are forced to deal with a greedy neighbour. A fascinating adventure unfolds that highlights family values. This is a charming movie with lovable characters in funny situations, with beautiful animations.

Fables of Bah Ya Bah 1 and 2



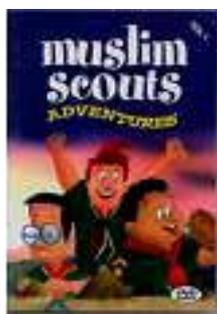
Fables of Bah Ya Bah 1 and 2 is an animated collection of six stories from the Middle East. Each fable focuses on a moral lesson such as good deeds, teamwork and generosity. The movie is bursting with fun and lively characters sure to send the kids giggling. Each fable ends with a catchy rhyme that reinforces the lesson. Suitable for children aged 3-4 years and above.

Hurray for Baba Ali



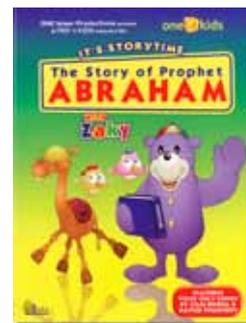
Baba Ali is back in an all-new series for young children. *Hurray for Baba Ali* will teach your child basic Islamic manners in a fun and refreshing new way. In a number of small sketches, Baba Ali's young friends coach him on the right way of doing things, from 'Using Your Time Wisely' to 'Eating with your Right hand', encouraging him, and thus your child, to be the Best Muslim possible! Children as young as one love and learn from this highly engaging DVD.

Muslim Scouts 1 and 2



Join Jamaal, Zaki and Faisal, the Ashbal scouts on their adventures around the Muslim world as they learn about different Islamic destinations in *Muslim Scouts 1 and 2*. Wherever they go they must use their faith, brains and skill to outwit crooks and solve mysteries. Their mission is to earn points towards their Um-mah badge. In Volume 1 they travel around Turkey and in Volume 2 we follow their journey through Africa. Filled with information, catchy rhymes and unforgettable jokes, they are thoroughly enjoyable.

The Story of Prophet Abraham with Zaki

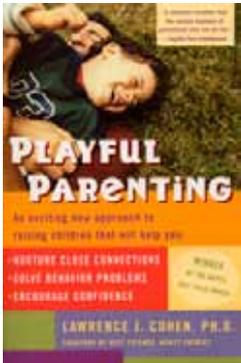


Children of all ages will love following along as the story of Prophet Abraham unfolds before their eyes. It is a combination of mild animation with popular nasheeds by Zain Bhikha and David Wharnsy. The interactive learning in the form of Quiz time and Did you Know with Zaki will be thoroughly enjoyed.

Do you or your child have a product that you love?

Let us know and we may use it for a Readers Pick Review.
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Adult Book Review
Playful Parenting
Author: Lawrence Cohen



How many times have our children said: "Mummy, please play with me" and whilst we run around the house with the washing at the same time as stirring our curries, we have replied: "Wait, sweetheart, we'll have to play later".

Some of us lead busy lives, some of us believe children should play on their own, and some of us simply just don't know how or are too scared to play with their children. Playful Parenting is a wonderful resource that helps parents understand that play is an important part of a child's life. The book helps parents understand that children use play to explore and make sense of the world around them. When parents join their children in the world of play, they foster a strong emotional connection with their child. In 14 chapters, Cohen introduces parents to the importance of play, methods of play and how to incorporate play into everyday life. The book gives ideas for games and strategies for during play to help children cope with their emotions and create a strong feeling of loving attachment between parent and child.

I think any parent, whether they be the Goofy of the family or the strict parent, can get great ideas from this book on how to get their kids to cooperate, how to connect with their kids, and how to help them grow into a confident and secure human being – and all through simple play.

Small Things Make Big Muslims

Tips for instilling Islam in your children

This edition, we have put together ways to make memorizing Suras from the Quran fun! Although some of the games below may seem for younger children, try having a go with the older child – you'll be surprised at how much they enjoy and benefit from them.

1. Traffic Lights - Concentrating on the ayah that you're teaching them that day (for younger ones, try not to do more than one or two in one day), get them to run around when you say 'Green', then freeze when you say 'Red.' They can only 'Go' again if they recite the ayah. Again, they race around, and you say 'Red', etc. If you have more than one child, say it to them individually so as one is still moving around, the other is stopped; that way, if they're each working on different Suras, they can each get a turn to say their line.

2. Tag - Same concept as above, but this time try and catch them. When you do, hug them tight. They can only get out of your 'hug' if they recite the ayah correctly. If they get it wrong, either squeeze them tighter or tickle them!

3. Supermarket Game - Can be played with parent and child, or with any number of children. The longer the Sura, the better! The first person recites one ayah of a Sura of their choice. Then the second recites the first AND the second, then the third recites the first two AND the third, etc... going round and round in circles. This really drums it into them!

4. Turn, Turn - If more than one child, or for longer Suras, turns can be taken to recite the ayahs. If they have to be prompted or they get it wrong, they get a forfeit (e.g. jump up and down 5 times).

5. Reverse Psychology - Challenge the reluctant child, "Bet you can't recite Sura Lahab." Chances are, he'll say, 'Just watch me!', and he'll recite it! Make a big deal of it, saying, "Oh I'm wrong again, not fair!" Then challenge him with another, etc.

For younger children in particular:

1. Push Mummy Over - This is especially nice to teach them their four Quls. Tell them the Suras are like a force field around them, if they recite it they're super-protected and Allah makes them really strong. First, sit cross-legged on the floor and get them to try and push you over, while you're resisting really hard. Then, get them to recite one of their Suras and then try. Allow them to push you very easily, making a big dramatic scene of falling over of course, and exclaiming, "Not fair, you became all strong!"

2. Teacher, Teacher - Make them the teacher. Recite your Suras with mistakes here and there and get them to point out the corrections. Alternatively, get them to recite it correctly as you repeat after them.

Feature Article
The Balancing Act
By Shaista Yusufali

"It's just too difficult to be spiritual when you have kids!" How many of us have heard a frustrated young mother make a similar comment – or felt it ourselves? While we all know that children are a blessing from the Almighty, and motherhood is a jihad with lofty rewards, in reality, many mothers struggle to balance spirituality and child rearing, and may even feel that their kids are an obstacle in getting closer to their Creator.

God Almighty acknowledges this seeming contradiction in the Holy Qur'an. While in verse 72 of Sura Nahl children are considered among the *tayyibaat* or good things of this world, they can also be an impediment on the path to the Divine. In verse 9 of Sura Munafiqun, God warns, "O you who have faith! Do not let your possessions and children distract you from the remembrance of Allah, and whoever does that – it is they who are the losers". Children are a gift from God only as long as an extreme attachment and love for them does not occupy our hearts, to the degree that we can no longer pay attention to the One who

gave them to us in the first place. If our concern for them diverts us from remembering the Almighty in our hearts and our actions, then they are no longer blessings, but rather obstacles in our spiritual growth, resulting in a great loss in this world and the hereafter.

As women, it is only natural that we face a greater challenge in drawing the fine line between carrying out our role as mothers, and allowing our children to divert us from the remembrance of the Almighty. The



selfless nature with which God has made us makes it easy to dedicate ourselves to those around us, sometimes at the cost of our own growth. Of course at times, a mother with a newborn baby or multiple young children might find herself with literally

no spare time. In such a case, she can only strive to carry out every action with a greater purpose in mind, and know that every time she picks up her child and tends to his needs, it should and will take her closer to her Creator.

However, as our children grow less needy of us, we are faced with a different dilemma: do we allocate that extra time we now have to our own education and needs, or do we spend it with them, engaging them further? There is of course no easy answer, but what we are taught by our Prophet and our Imams (as) is that the only way to achieve success, and to find satisfaction and spiritual growth, is to first lead a balanced life ourselves. Only when we are taking care of all the needs with which God created us can we progress on the Divine path, and in return, take care of the needs of those around us.

Among the defining characteristics of a human being is that we are created with a body, a mind, and a soul, and placed in a society. Consequently, God in His wisdom has created each one of us with physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social needs, to name a few. In *Nahjul Balagha*, Letter 47, Imam Ali (as) says, "It is incumbent on you to have *taqwa* (God-consciousness), and to have order in your affairs". That is, *taqwa* and achieving success on a spiritual level go hand in hand with ordering our affairs and paying attention to each of the spheres with which we were created.



Other ahadith further emphasize the need to schedule our time. Imam Jaffer Sadiq (as) also says, "A believer has three times; one in which he prays to his Lord, one in which he works for his living, and one in which he lets himself enjoy what is halal and good, which in return, helps him to carry out his other responsibilities" (Al-kafi vol 5 pg 87). Any mother who has children to take care of, a house to run, and additional responsibilities, knows it is impossible to dedicate an equal amount of time to herself. However we are not doing justice to our families when we give every minute of our day to them. It is when we work on our souls, increase our knowledge of our Creator, and take care of our other needs, whether they be physical or emotional, that we can then achieve balance and be better mothers and role models for our kids.

To better understand this concept, let us look at some examples of specific needs and responsibilities within each of these spheres.

- The physical sphere:
Keeping our body healthy and fit
Getting adequate sleep
Eating a proper diet
- The social sphere:
Meeting with good friends

"It's just too difficult to be spiritual when you have kids!"

Maintaining family ties
Informing ourselves of the affairs of Muslims worldwide

- The emotional sphere:
Relaxing through halal pleasures
- The intellectual sphere:
Gaining knowledge, primarily of God. How? By strengthening our belief in Him and in the fundamentals of faith (Aqaid), understanding those of His laws that are related to our specific lives (Ahkam), and learning about the ethics, conduct, and etiquette related to carrying out our responsibilities in the best of manners (Akhlaq).
- The spiritual sphere:
While spirituality is primarily attained by carrying out our responsibilities, we can strengthen our souls and our deeds by adding a daily program of mustahab actions. For example: a few pages of Qur'an, a ziyarat, or an extra prayer; it is not the quantity that matters, but the regularity of the act.

Finally, if this sounds like a great

idea but you're wondering how to put it into practice, here is a practical guideline to scheduling time:

Sit down and write down a list of all the activities you carry out during a typical week. Write everything from what you do with your spare time, to the mundane, such as sleeping and cooking. Categorise each task as something in your control (eg. how you use your free time) to outside your control (hours spent at work, praying, sleeping, chauffeuring the kids, etc). Calculate the number of hours that are not in your control, and see how many hours (or minutes!) you are left with at the end. This is the time that is yours to schedule! Take that time and reflect on the different spheres of your life, and see whether each of your needs can be taken care of during this time. For example, add in a few minutes each day for an extra act of worship, or 15 minutes to take a brisk walk, or a half hour each week to sit down and listen to an inspirational lecture or attend a class.

May the Almighty grant us with the wisdom and the motivation to balance our lives, and to achieve success as mothers, and as His servants.

Adapted from a series of questions and answers with a teacher of the Hawza

What this Ayat means to Our Readers:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ ءَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا وَلَدُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“O you who believe, let not your wealth and your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. Whosoever does so then such are the losers.”
(Surah Munafiqoon, Ayah 9)

We should be careful not to allow children and wealth to distract us, otherwise we shall be at loss, as possessions and children will not last forever.
Mother, teacher, 50.

Children and wealth are a gift from Allah, but they are a means and not an end. We need these two blessings to take us closer to Allah, they are not the destination.
Mother of 3, 34

If we remember Allah through our children then they need not be a distraction and a hindrance from our ultimate goal. A mother child relationship can be seen as a reflection of our relationship with Allah. Out of unconditional love we discipline and guide our children. Despite their asking we give only what is good for them. Allah in His infinite love and mercy does the same. He only answers our duas that are good for

us. As we forgive and reward and cover our children’s faults, He does the same for us. If only we can bear these thoughts in our minds as we spend countless hours on our children we would not be off the losers.
Mother of 2.

We tend to consider our possessions and our children to be central to our lives. The ayat reminds us to keep Allah in the centre of our lives, and

“O you who believe, let not your wealth and your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. Whosoever does so then such are the losers.”
(Surah Munafiqoon Ayah 9)

relegate everything else - our desires, our actions, our attention to our possessions and our children - to the subservient status of orbiting around Allah. Dhikr is an excellent way to keep our minds in this orbit - to keep it in a perpetual mental tawaf if you will. However, a dhikr that comes from the tongue may not be sufficient to really reorient our mind. We must understand what we are saying (ideally word for word) and relate it to a specific aspect of our lives in order for our tongue, heart and mind to all emanate this dhikr.
Father of 3, Engineer, 32

This ayat reminds us that wealth and

children are a blessing from Allah, we have to make sure that the blessing does not distract us from Allah but rather they should help us get closer to the Almighty. This can only be achieved by raising children in a manner as taught to us by Allah and the Ahlul Bayt. It is the parent’s task to ensure that their children get a sound religious education. By sending our children to madressah once a week does not mean that we have completed our child’s religious education, rather we need to enforce Islam and its values in their day-to-day lives. We need to inculcate in our children and ourselves that whatever we do in this world has to be for the pleasure of Allah.
Mother of 3

We need to remember children are from Him, and we should love them as part of loving Him, not before or instead of Him. Many of us would claim we would die for our children, how many would die for Allah and His cause?
Mother of 2, doctor, 40

Allah is Ya Maalik ul Mulk. He is the owner of everything. Children are a trust from Him. They are His amanat that we need to be forever grateful for. Therefore if he chooses to test us through them via illness, death or any other misfortune who are we to complain. At the same time when they bring us happiness, joy and pride within our community we need to remember that they are from Him and show humbleness and gratitude for his blessings.
Mother of 3

It is very important for us to instill good qualities and values into our children from a young age. This is because if they grow up and are on the wrong path, our children will distract us from Allah, through their improper values.
Mother of 2, 70

Food Focus

I want Pudding and I want it NOW!

It's Saturday night, the fridge is empty from the week's eating, daddy's gone to play football, he's taken the car, and mummy and daughter feel like some dessert. Muslim Mums have put together three quick and simple recipes for desserts that take less than half an hour to prepare and eat!

No bake chocolate biscuit squares

Ingredients:

150g digestive biscuits
100g milk chocolate
100g plain chocolate 100g golden syrup
75g unsalted butter
60g dried apricots chopped
40g raisins
25g rice crispies

1. Grease and prepare a 20cm square tin
2. Break the biscuits into pieces and put into plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin until you get coarse crumbs
3. Melt the chocolate, syrup and butter in a heatproof bowl over simmering water
4. Stir in the biscuit crumbs, chopped apricots, raisins and rice crispies
5. Spoon the mixture into the tin and press down with a potato masher
6. Chill in fridge for 15 minutes

Rasmalai

For the dough:

1 cup milk powder
1 tsp baking powder
1 egg beaten
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tbsp plain flour

For the syrup:

½ cup sugar
1 cup evaporated milk
3 cups fresh whole milk

1. Mix all the dough ingredients together to form a dough
2. Make small balls from the dough and leave aside
3. Boil all the syrup ingredients on a medium heat
4. Once the syrup mixture is boiling put in the balls until the balls double in size (should take 5-10 minutes)
5. Serve in a glass dish and decorate with pistachios or saffron

Chocolate cheesecake

Ingredients:

200g digestive biscuits (crushed as above)
50g butter
2 eggs separated
Small pot of double cream
1 packet Philadelphia Cheese
75g caster sugar
175g dark chocolate

1. Melt the butter and add the crushed digestives
2. Put into a loose bottom tin and put it into the fridge
3. Blend the egg yolks into the cream cheese and caster sugar
4. Melt the chocolate over a pan of water and mix into the cream cheese mixture
5. Whisk the egg whites until they are stiff and fold into the cream cheese mixture
6. Whisk the double cream until peak form and add to cream cheese mixture
7. Add to the biscuit base and place in the fridge/freezer to set for 15 minutes



Personal Moments

Mombasa to London

By Sakina Rashid

Imagine yourself living somewhere for 40 odd years and then moving to a totally new place where the culture, climate, everything is different. Migration is like that!

Migrating anywhere is a difficult decision at any time, as we don't know what to expect once we have moved. In my case, it was more so because I was moving alone with my three children. We were moving from a small town in East Africa to London. The move was planned by my husband and I together, but due to his unfortunate and sudden demise, I had to move alone.

London terrified me. We had heard a lot about life in London and Londoners and it was scary. Initially, I was even scared to drive anywhere, although I had been driving for more than 20 years. I feared making mistakes with the law because everyone advises you about the different traffic laws, etc. I had two major concerns regarding the move here; one, whether I would be able to cope and support my family and secondly, how I would raise my children on my own and guide them to the right path, considering the environment and peer pressure.

Personally, I found that over here, I had to learn everything anew. Cooking was different and I had to learn different methods not only for that but also for things like laundry, housework, shopping for groceries and meat, etc. Alhamdulillah, it all went well with a lot of help from family members, friends and strangers.



Although people always complain about Londoners, I found people to be very helpful and supportive. Obviously, we had our share of ups and downs, but with Allah's grace and everyone's support, our move was successful. I have found that people, who didn't know me except as a passing acquaintance, went out of their way to help us in different ways. I always thank Allah for that blessing and may He reward them for their efforts. Ameen.

My children found it hard to be uprooted from their comfortable environment and to be planted in this new and different one. I have two teenagers who were aged 16 and 13 respectively, and my youngest daughter who was five years old when we moved here. They were all affected by their dad's sudden loss, especially my youngest daughter. She took it very hard and had become a shell of herself. She withdrew into herself totally and wouldn't communicate with anyone. She would stick to me like glue as she feared that just as she lost her dad, I would also disappear one day. Out of all of them, she found it the hardest to adapt to school life. I still remember her first day. Even I was scared of her reaction to school. We went there and were waiting in the playground for the classrooms to open, and it was strange as all we could see were British people. Most of the children in her class were from different cultures and she did not want to go to her class. This was a

major change for her because in her school back home, she knew all the children as they were from within the community. She even knew her teachers from mosque. Plus the fact that the school system here is totally different from there. My daughter skipped Reception class because of her age and was put in Year 1 in school. It was a battle to send her to school and help came from an unexpected corner. I talked to the teachers at school and explained her situation, as she was not responding well in class. They were very understanding and helpful. Her teacher was very helpful in particular; she encouraged her to be confident and helped her over her rough patches. Within two years, I can see the difference in her. Today, she is a confident and outgoing person.

My son and daughter entered high school, one in A-levels and the other in Year 9. As my elder daughter put it, "it was a scary first day at school, there were hundreds of students all going about their business. I didn't know anyone and didn't know where to go! Plus the school was huge, it was just so confusing!" Luckily for her, she found an old friend who was in the same learning group as her and helped her to settle in.

Initially, when we moved here, we missed hearing the Adhaan regularly, seeing Muslims everywhere and being with my mum and dad. Any journey took a minimum of 20 minutes or more and mosque was at least a half hour away. That was difficult to adjust to, when you were used to reaching everywhere within 5-10 minutes. Luckily for us, we have lots of family here and that helped us to feel at home.

I believe that this move was the best thing I could have done for my children. When I see them today, I find they have become strong in their imaan, especially because of the environment outside. Their understanding of religion is much better after being exposed to the different lecturers at the mosque.

I think faith and trust in Allah is the only thing that helps us to overcome problems, to move forward and carry on.





Asma al-Husna: the Beautiful names of Allah (swt)

"The most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on Him by them." (Holy Qur'an 7:180)

"He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most excellent names; whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise". (Holy Qur'an 59:24)

To help us deal with everyday problems and difficulties, we have this treasure trove of help, simple enough to memorise and incorporate into our busy lives yet magnificent in their effects. Let us make use of these blessed gift, and enrich and enhance our lives with the remembrance of our Creator.

AL-WADUDU

To form a strong bond of love and affection and solve differences and disputes between the people sharing a meal, recite this Ism 1,000 times while cooking and blow on your food.



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Kids Corner

You will need:

Coloured card, split pins, colouring pens/pencils, scissors, glue

1. Colour in the clock as neatly as you can.
2. Colour in the clock hands in three different colours. (If you want you can make your own clock hands using coloured cards and label them yourself.)
3. Cut out the clock and the clock hands.
4. Stick the clock and clock hands onto a card and cut them out. Leave a small border around the clock.
5. Make a hole in the middle of the clock and the edge of the clock hands using something sharp like a compass or biro.
6. Poke the split pin through the hands and into the clock and fasten the pin at the back.
7. Point the clock hands to the corresponding prayer times and your clock is done.

Fajr

Zohr & Asr





BEDTIME CHECKLIST

1. Go to the toilet

Imam Ali (as) said to his son Imam Hassan (as), "...and before you sleep, go and relieve yourself. If you do these you will be needless of medicine." *Al- Khisal, p. 229, no. 67*

2. Brush your teeth

It is narrated that the Prophet (saw) used to brush his teeth thrice every night: once before going to bed, once when he would wake up for his night worship, and once before going out to perform the dawn prayer. *Bihar Al-Anwar, v. 76, p. 135, no. 47*

3. Do wudhoo

The Prophet (saw) said, "One who sleeps in a state of purity is as if he is praying (night prayers) and fasting". *Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 25999*

4. Read Tasbih of Bibi Fatima (as)

You are protected from Shaytan and you are given the reward of staying awake and praying the whole night.

5. Recite Surah Ikhlas

The Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever recites Sura Ikhlas when he retires to bed, Allah will forgive 50 years of his sins." *Amali al-Suduq, p. 64, no. 27*

6. Recite Surah Takathur

The Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever recites Sura Takathur when going to sleep will be protected from the trials of the grave." *Bihar al-Anwar, v. 76, p. 196, no. 12*

7. Recite Surah Falaq (113)

Whoever recites 3 times Surah Falaq, 3 times Surah Nas, and 100 or 50 times Surah Ikhlas every night, Allah will keep him safe from every evil-eye, all ailments that afflict children, all stomach ailments, and low and high blood pressure.

8. Recite Surah Nas (114)

Whoever recites this Surah before going to sleep, remains in the protection of Allah till morning.

9. Recite the following dua

The Prophet (saw) said, "When any of you retires to bed...he should say: O Allah, if You take my soul while I am sleeping then forgive it, and if you send it back to me, then protect it as You protect Your righteous servants." *'Ilal al-Shara'i, p. 589, no. 34*



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