

A Child without its Family System is as Vulnerable as the Ummah Without its Ruling System

The world is indeed in chaos and this chaos presents itself on every level of society, one of them is family life and its breakdown. As a therapist working with youngsters in the West, the failing of society at large becomes ever more apparent in the privacy of my consultation room.

Studies have found that how children see the world is framed first and foremost by what they experience at home, and that the way parents structure their family plays an important role in teen well-being as how parents relate to each other.

(H. Benson, Marriage foundation) Sadly, the consequence of family breakdown and all its negative outcomes affect all children, including those from a Muslim household. Muslim youth are experiencing mental health challenges, such as anxiety, mood disorders, eating disorders, adjustment disorders, and suicidal ideation (Basit & Hamid, 2010). Also, stigma around mental illness and its treatment within the Muslim community is deeply rooted. This is compounded with a cultural mistrust of the Western mental health system which is stooled upon a different life view.

In reality, this means that Muslim youngster sometimes visit mental health services without the knowledge of their families and that these youngsters are reluctant to involve their families as they often feel that their problems are in fact related to their family system. The consequence is that you are often only able to speak with the youngster themselves as they refuse to give permission to involve the (family) system. So, with no other options you try to help these teenagers develop healthier concepts about themselves and the world around them, teach them behaviour to help them through difficult periods and offer them techniques to keep up with what they have learnt.

Sadly, you know that your one hour a week will hardly weigh up to their daily interactions with their troubled family, school or work environment and the failing societies they reside in with its many social, moral and economic problems affecting them. These youngsters live in societies that place more value and status to what a person earns, looks like and owns rather than having a good and a helpful character. These societies set superficial life goals, where youngsters are taught to gain the unrealistic and irrational approval of others whilst constantly being bombarded via social media with flawless pictures of how life “should be.”

As a therapist you hope and pray that your client will, against many odds, still make the right decisions, have a kind and understanding teacher, meet a good and loyal friend, join a supportive halaqa group in the mosque and most important find a supportive family member they can trust and fall back upon and support them further.

How important family life becomes when faced with these kinds of problems and how important is it to be able to involve these youngster’s family systems. Isn’t it a must for a troubled teenager to be able to fall back on its support system when faced

with mental health issues instead of leaving them to defend for themselves in an already toxic society?

This reality actually reminded me of the state of the ummah at large, for how can you help a youngster without involving its (family) system. It is the system with all its different elements; e.g. parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews and cousins who could provide the youngster the safety, support, shelter, company, advice (positive reinforcement) and communication these youngsters need so hard. Parents need to be alerted about the worries and troubles of their children and together attempt to find ways to help them. And yes, many of our families have got difficult and sometimes toxic traits but all families have challenges as they also have strengths and all families have areas of potential growth.

And yet the support system of our ummah, the system which isn't allowed to be involved in solving our problems, the Khilafah (the Islamic ruling system) is actually completely free of any flaws as it is revealed by Allah (swt), our Creator. It is based on a comprehensive belief system that is able to solve all human problems in the best way. It is a system that will ensure harmony, prosperity, security, and justice for all. Allah (swt) provided with His infinite wisdom solutions to all live problems and the way to bring these solutions to life in through the establishment of the Khilafah state based upon the method of the Prophethood which will implement all the beliefs, values, principles, laws and systems of Islam upon our Muslim lands.

Without the involvement of this system, we are like the teenager, experiencing many problems and not being able to involve our Islamic system making us susceptible to all the problems around us.

﴿فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى * وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى﴾

“So there will surely come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor fall into distress and misery. But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Qur’an nor acts on its orders, etc.) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.” [Ta-Ha: 123-124]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Yasmin Malik

Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

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