Growing Up A Religious Young Adult

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Abstract

The most difficult period of life in terms of training is young adulthood. This period which is from 12 to 18 is the same age of junior and senior high school. The most problems happen in this period and usually this period causes loss or success for future life. Some crisis a youth should tackle with in this period of time are outlined in this article.

Key words

identity crisis, maturity crisis, personality crisis

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1. Identity Crisis

After going through childhood, human beings will face a crisis in life which is identity crisis. Various questions obsess minds of people, looking for their answer. A youth asks himself, what is life? Who am I? What should I live for? Where will I go to? How and why will I go? Is there any life after this life? If yes, what is it like?

He is worried if his parents accept him as he is? Do they like him? Do they respect him? What is my role in society? Am I important? What does this society expect me?

He finds himself doubtful about all his belief, traditions and ideas. He asked why should I be a Muslim? What do I need to be a Muslim? Who is a Muslim? If God is Just, what does bad events happen? These kinds of question can reach to the point that ruin and depress a young person.

Identity crisis is in fact to find proper answers. If he could not find the answers, he will feel depressed, Alienation, loneliness, … which are dangerous for a youth and will cause identity crisis.

2. Maturity Crisis

Maturity like an earthquake shakes a young person, puts him in a new and unfamiliar situation. As if a young person in teen ages faces a completely new world and horizons towards a new world opens up in front of his eyes. The hand of creation by puberty pushes the person through childhood to adulthood and makes him ready for growth and perfection. As if he is born again and treads in a new path. But this birth is not painless.

With a little attention, it can be understood that what hurricane strikes inside the youth. From one hand, intrinsic motivations topped by sex drive and also emotional motivations each moment draw her to one side; imbalance him psychologically , and from other hand, all types of doubts and dilemmas find their way to his hearts. Among these strange feelings what is felt most is the vague feeling of baffling. This is the first time that he feels disorientation and could not find the necessary power inside himself to face this inside conflict.

Because of this instability young adults become volatile and loss their equilibrium by the tiniest pinch, goes to the extremes uncontrollably. They are too worried about their peer's ideas and people around about themselves, and their behavior and judgments can easily affect their physiological states. These persist changes some of which are so deep bother and wear them out. They are sensitive to any discomfort or problem and take them out on any related or not related factor. Therefore being stubborn, discomfort and baffling are common features of this period of life.

This period takes already three years. In boys it is about 13 to 16 years old and in

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girls one or two years sooner. This period of life is the most critical period of life. At this period a youth needs more attention to pass through it unharmed.

3. Personality Crisis

Human beings during their childhood is always attached to their parents and under their custody. But at the time of puberty and physical changes they tend to be independent and be different from others. They expect others do not look at him like a child and respect his personality, action and mind.

Any action which is a sign of lack of respect will have some psychological effect on them, hidden or apparent. Even these actions or improper behaviors can result in harsh reaction or anti social.

If a youth realizes he is not regarded as an independent and grown up person, it is possible that to prove his independence and character embarks on a bad action to attract other people's attention to himself. This feeling among youth who are suffering from a kind of inferiority feeling can be found more.

NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS IN THIS PERIOD

As young adults in their puberty feel to be in the depth of the ocean of bafflement, losing their equilibrium, and on the other hand because of the importance of psychological calmness at this special period of life, religious growth can play a special role in this regard.

A young person can save himself from all these vague, I-don't-know baffling situations of young hood , find a clear ideology for his life, and find the answers to the basic questions of his life which help to direct his life towards a good direction in the shade of good religious training. In the light of this training, he can find his place in the world of creation, realize his values, honors it and does not tolerate sins and vices.

In addition to it, having faith can help young people to reach psychological calmness which is of needs of this period of life and can lessen his stress.

Parenting

The base of religious and ethical trainings is in childhood at home. Therefore, infallible imams advised parents to supervise and monitor their kids before mischiefs mislead them out of right path. Imam Sadiq said,

بادروا احداثكم بالحديث قبل ان يسبقكم اليهم المرجئه

Teach Islamic traditions to your youth before Murji'a[1] proceed you.

Parents should not leave their children to themselves but they should help them confronting crisis of their puberty time, prepare the ground for their religious growth. It is suitable to observe the following points in religious teachings of young adults.

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1. **Celebrating the age of being grown up enough to do religious practices:** In this period in addition to awakening sexual drives and psychological needs, this tendency towards religious affairs activates in young person, gets him to contemplate on the spirituality and religion.

This time is very valuable and should be noticed as a great opportunity. Therefore, it is proper for parents not to neglect this occasion to have a celebration to make this day memorable for him.

The late Sayyid ibn Tawus knew this day a kind of Eid and warned those who don't care:

Why is this day of reaching puberty is so worthless for this weak human beings this much that it is vague and forgotten among people? I do not remember anyone to get prepared for this very important day or to be sad because of forgetting this day? I advise my children and relatives to remember and celebrate this great day.

2. **Encouraging elder children to do religious practices like prayers, fasting, etc.** parents should care for their children and encourage them to pray and fast; parents should be aware not to order tyrannically to bother children; in the opposite, they should be kind and honor their children's effort to perform pray or when they fast.

Prayer is the connection between hearts of people and God and has a very constructive role in training young adults psychological-wise and spiritual-wise. Those young adults who are familiar with prayers, have a good access to the spring of spirituality. Young people are in need of this spiritual shelter. Those young adults who pray in case of committing wrong actions by relying this spiritual support can turn back to the right path and cleanse themselves.

3. **Explaining the true meaning of religion for young adults:** Of duties of parents is to get their children familiar with religion in true sense and explain for them religion is not just prayer, fast, or likewise but the soul of religion embraces all aspects of our life and should fill the body of our life.

Any attempt to reach knowledge, making a livelihood, joining people, serving people, etc are parts of religion and if they are accomplished by the intention of God's satisfaction and as they are advised in holy teachings of religion they are regarded as worship. Therefore, all life of a religious and faithful person even his eating or sleeping is a kind of worship.

Parents should notice to this very important aspect and warn their children of them; otherwise they will think religion is summarized in a series of actions. But they should know as they pay attention to pray and fast, they should pay attention to honesty, kindness, … .

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4. **Do not leave young adult to himself:** Parents should not leave their children alone in his problems but should help him to find proper answers to his questions. Parents can introduce good books to him or if they can not, they should connect their children to knowledgeable people who can answer their questions. Teachers are of good choices in this regard.

5. **Friendship:** If friendly relationship extends between parents and children, parents can influence their children and have a role in fate of their children. Young adults due to the changes of puberty age and lack of equilibrium need more attention in comparison with other periods of their life. If parents can not do their duty properly, children will go out of family's attention and will be absorbed by environmental factors. When children are tied to families by the strong rope of love they will remain more safe from harms and will have better ground to learn about religion.

6. **Accepting young adults:** Parents should respect and value personality and thought of their children and their independency should be observed. They should be consulted and trusted otherwise a kind of inferior complex will form in them.

7. **Leisure time activity:** Parents should benefit from leisure time and fill them with suitable activities such as sport.

8. **Joining religious ceremonies:** Taking young adults with parents to religious gatherings can grow religious feeling in them.

END NOTES:

[1] Murji'a was a misled group at the time of infallible imams who said faith is sufficient solely. Anyone who confesses to be Muslim by his tongue is faithful. Action is not needed, and no sin can harm faith. This group are named Murji'a as they postponed punishment or rewards of harm doers or benefactors till the Day of Doom till God judge about them. They believed God will forgive every sin in hereafter so they thought sins did not ruin faith.

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