

ADOLESCENCE

“Allah does not look at your outer forms and wealth, but Allah looks at your hearts (intentions) and actions.” (Muslim)

Adolescence is the stage in your growth and development during which you pass from childhood to adulthood.

The Arabic term for adolescence is: SINNUL BULOOGH
Adolescent stage of boys:

The adolescent stage for a Muslim boy begins when he had his first seminal discharge. This could be experienced during the day or in the state of sleep by having a wet dream: Ihtilaam.

If no seminal discharge is experienced, then on completion of full 15 years, he becomes an adolescent.

Adolescent stage of girls:

The adolescent stage for a Muslim girl begins when she starts to menstruate, any time after she turns nine years old.

During the adolescence stage of development boys and girls experience internal, external, mental and emotional changes within their bodies. Therefore it is necessary for them to be aware of these changes and know how to cope with them.

Adolescence is a very important stage in the life of every growing child, especially for the Muslim child, because full responsibilities of an adult Muslim (Mukallaf) come into effect immediately.

The Arabic word for an Adult Muslim is:

MUKALLAF (Singular)

MUKALLIFOON (Plural)

This means from now on he/she will be held responsible and accountable before Allah for all his/her actions. He/she will have to fulfil all the duties and rights of an adult Muslim. The 5 pillars of Islam become compulsory on him/her. In other words, he/she will have to fulfil the teachings of the Kalimah Tayyibah and Kalimah Shahadah, perform the 5 daily Salah, observe fast in the month of Ramadhan, pay Zakah if liable and perform Hajj if possible. It is now the time to take responsibility in developing the “Islamic personality” with emphasis on doing good deeds and abstaining from all forms of evil.

To cope with the various changes that will be experienced during the adolescence stage, the adolescent will require knowledge about the physical and mental composition (make up) of the body. This will help him/her to understand why certain changes take place and how these affect him/her and how to deal with them according to the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah.

1. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHANGES-

The body comprises of bones, muscles, blood, nerves, veins, glands as well as many vital organs and systems such as a brain, heart, liver, digestive, respiratory and reproductive systems.

We learn in the Holy Qur’aan in Surah Ar-Rum, Surah 30 Verse 54:

“Allah is He Who created you in a state of weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave you weakness and grey hair. He creates what He wills. And it is He Who is the All-Knowing, the Powerful.”

When you are younger, the functions of the various parts of your body are limited, but when you reach adolescence the body has additional functions which result in many visible changes to yourself. Some of the changes you will experience are as follows:

- a) Wet dreams (involuntary ejaculation of semen.)
- b) Perspiration will have a stronger odour (smell).
- c) Girls begin to menstruate.
- d) Hair growing on the face, in the armpits, pubic region and other parts of the body.
- e) Acne or pimples may appear on the face, chest and back.
- f) Shoulder and chest become broader and the height and weight increase.
- g) Voice of boys becomes husky (gruff).

These changes transform boys and girls into men and women. You now attain the ability to father or bear a child. Most of the changes require you to have very clean habits regarding personal hygiene. In the Holy Qur'aan in Surah Baqarah Verse 222, we learn that:

“Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those keep themselves pure and clean.”

And Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Cleanliness is part of the faith (Imaan)” (Bukhari)

PERSONAL HYGIENE-

Performing Istinja, wudhu, ghusl, as well as changing clothing and underwear regularly, helps to control bad odour. Practice the aadaab of personal hygiene for Jumu'ah. Perform Ghusl, clip the nails, remove hair from the armpits and pubic region, neaten the beard and moustache, wear clean clothes and apply itr (alcohol free perfume).

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar RadiAllahu Anhu, our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Any of you attending the Friday prayers should take a bath.”
(Bukhari)

Acne or Pimples

This skin ailment can be controlled by having healthy food, plenty of fruits and leafy vegetables, and by avoiding greasy foods, fizzy drinks, red meats etc. For a radiant skin, cleanse with a mild antiseptic soap or solution. If acne is acute, then seek medical help.

Spurts in height and increase in size of hand and feet

During the growth spurt, the body does not grow at the same rate and a person may look tall. First the feet and hands get bigger, then the arms and legs lengthen and about a year later the rest of the body will grow accordingly in keeping with the rest of the body. Remember how huge and out of place your teeth looked when permanent teeth replaced the milk teeth!

Weight

Correct diet and exercise will help to maintain the weight.

Voice

Change in voice is part of normal development.

Wet dreams

The discharging of semen makes a person impure (janabat), and thus Ghusl becomes compulsory.

MENSTRUATION (HAIDH)

During the monthly period, extra care should be taken regarding personal hygiene and body odour. On completion of the menstruation period, Ghusl becomes compulsory (Fardh).

N.B. It is Makrooh e Tahrimi to cut nails and remove unwanted hair in the state of Haidh.

2. MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL CHANGES

The following mental and emotional changes are experienced:

- a) Low self-esteem
- b) Moodiness
- c) Easily influenced by peers and adopt a bullish attitude.
- d) A rebellious attitude- (questioning authority, dislike to take instructions or to be criticised.)
- e) Want to be noticed by or play and interest in the opposite sex.

These changes take place due to various hormones (chemical substances) in the body that are working towards changing you from children to adults.

SELF ESTEEM

Self-esteem is how you rate or value yourself. Since you are going through a phase of trial and error, you are unsure about yourself as well as many other things and therefore you lack confidence. This can be overcome by praying to Allah for help and guidance, seeking the correct knowledge and being an upright Muslim.

Physical changes to your body may make some of you feel that you are not good looking and that nobody likes you. This attitude will keep you away from others and you will thus become very lonely. Do not despair. This is only a temporary phase.

Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Allah does not look at your outer forms and wealth, but Allah looks at your hearts (intentions) and actions.” (Muslim)

Shyness

Some adolescents feel nervous and uncomfortable in the presence of other people. For example, you may feel shy to answer questions in class, or find difficulty in making conversation. If you have something to say, express it in the best possible manner. Remember nobody is perfect.

Everyone makes mistakes sometime or the other, but it is important that you learn and better yourself from mistakes. It is vital for a person to answer questions with dignity (modesty) and sincerity.

Shyness will hold you back, but modesty which is an excellent quality of shyness will gain for you respect and honour.

MOODINESS

The hormones within your body are responsible for changing you from children to adults. These hormonal changes make you feel moody.

Although you cannot avoid bad moods altogether, you can control them. Find the reason for the bad mood and try working around it. For example: -

1. You may have a problem or wish to buy some item. If you going to start complaining or demanding on the way home, when your father or mother is in the middle of heavy traffic or your mother is busy preparing meals or looking after the sick baby or grandparent then naturally they will become irritated with you. If you politely find out from your father or mother how their day was and then mention that you would like to discuss your problem or your request, then this will be a better way of approaching or handling the situation.

2. If your mother is busy, offer to help or relieve her of some of her work. This will not only make her feel good, but both of you will have time to talk about the problem or request, calmly.

Refusing to buy or to fulfil with your wishes does not mean that your parents do not love or care for you. There could be other urgent matters to be solved or items to be bought.

No matter how serious the matter or problem is, you have no right to be irritable or impatient with your parents.

Allah (The Exalted) commands in Surah Bani-Israeel, Surah No: 17 verse: 23 regarding parents:

“Say not to them a word of contempt (uff) nor rebel them but address them in terms of honour.”

Younger Brothers And Sisters

Your duty as part of the family is to try and keep up peace and unity in a home. By being unfriendly, you will not be able to earn your younger brothers and sisters love and respect that Islam so greatly emphasizes upon. Instead of shouting or screaming at youngsters for taking your things without permission, explain to them why you disapprove in a kindly manner. Elder brothers and sisters are to be respected. If there are any complaints let them know in a polite manner, if this does not work, then you should ask your parents to help. Do not be selfish in showing your gratitude for any favour or considerations shown to you either by your parents or anyone else.

3. Peer Pressure

Peers are boys and girls with whom you spend your break times at school or with whom you socialise and have common interests. However, sometimes you find that you do not want to take part in some activity that most of them agree upon but go along so as not to offend them – this is due to “peer pressure”.

Allah (The Exalted) has blessed you with “Aqal” – the ability to choose the good from the bad. Therefore, you do not have to conform to what others expect you to do. For example, your peers begin to take part in activities like smoking, taking drugs, gambling, stealing, going to night clubs and you are aware these activities are Islamically incorrect and would create problems. In this case be Allah Conscious and do not relate with them.

Rather devote the time to improve your intellectual (brain) skills, worship or participate in activities or hobbies that will be of benefit to you and the Muslim community.

Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “It is better to be alone than in the company of the bad, and it is better to be in the company of the good than to be alone. Good company can be a great source of help and support in leading a virtuous life (life with Iman), while bad company leads to sin and ruin.” (Sahih Muslim)

Companions can have a tremendous influence on you. They can influence you to be kind and considerate or selfish and aggressive. They could lead you either to Jannah or Jahannam. Boys and girls that force you to participate in wrong or unlawful deeds are bad companions. These bad companions make you feel silly, incompetent (useless) and out of place. These companions you should avoid. The best way is to ask Allah (The Exalted) to guide you towards choosing such companions that would have an Islamic influence on you.

Bullies

Bullies are persons who use their strength and power to frighten and hurt weaker people. They are generally boys or girls that either feel insecure or not good at their studies or they lack attention. At the very first encounter does not be scared, study their weakness and use it carefully or just stay away from them.

Rebellious Attitude

Generally, adolescents have an attitude that parents, teachers and other elders are their enemies. This is not the case, these people are genuinely concerned about your well-being and they truly love and care about you. In case of disagreement, do not put on a tantrum. If you are scolded or criticised about some misconduct or misbehaviour that is not keeping with Islam, then you have no right to rebel or question their authority.

Self-centred / self-Conscious / Inconsiderate

During the adolescent stage some of you tend to be rather self-centred, self-conscious and inconsiderate. For example, smartening yourself constantly, combing hair, adjusting headgear, admiring oneself in the mirror, etc. You may want to have very little to do with family members or share any responsibilities, you adopt a “don’t care attitude.”

Islam disapproves of anyone that is inconsiderate to unsympathetic towards others. Show concern to family members, neighbours, relatives, servants, etc.

Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “None from amongst you can be a true believer until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.” (Bukhari/Muslim)

INTEREST IN THE OPPOSITE SEX

Allah created human beings and placed them on the earth in order to populate and live in it according to His commands and the Sunnah of Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). To continue the human race Allah has blessed you with many attributes or characteristics that people may find attractive or drawn to.

Although this interest is natural in all of us, it needs to be very carefully guarded and controlled. Otherwise it will lead you to commit Zina (adultery and fornication) which is a major sin.

Stay Away from Zina (Adultery/fornication)

Regarding Zina, Allah (The Exalted) commands in Surah Bani Israeel, Surah No: 17, Verse: 32:

“Do not come near to Zina for it is a shameful and evil, opening the road to other evils.”

Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “The Zina (adultery and fornication) of legs is walking (towards an unlawful person with bad intention); the adultery of the hands is touching and patting, and the adultery of the eyes is casting passionate glances at persons unlawful (for you).” (Mishkat)

REMEMBER! A person’s Iman leaves him/her during those moments or that period of time he/she is engaged in any of the above activities.

Avoiding Zina

Therefore, be Allah Conscious, refrain from seeing, reading, hearing or talking about matters that would arouse a person sexually, for example: pornographic programmes, movies, books and magazines. Do not listen to songs and music or read books that will cause sexual excitement.

Observe Modesty and decency in behaviour, appearance, dress and speech.

Bear in mind verse 77 of Surah Nisa, Surah No:4:

“Say O beloved! Short is the enjoyment of this world: the Hereafter is the best for those who do right: never will you be dealt with unjustly in the very least!”

Which means that a person’s stay on earth is only temporary. Jannah or a pleasant life after death is what you should be striving for. So, stay away from all non-Islamic and immoral lifestyles.

3. THE ROLE OF A YOUNG MUKALLAF-

As mentioned earlier, you are accountable for your own actions, therefore, this is the stage when you should start striving towards the role of a Muttaqi, fearing Allah in all that you do and trying your best to staying away from what you know to be harmful and prohibited in Islam.

Allah instructs in Surah Hashr Verse 7:

“And take whatever the Messenger assigns you, and refrain from what he forbids, and fear Allah; for Allah is very severe in meting out punishment.”