

Jumma Khutba- Adoption and Fostering

(Less than 10min – longer khutba available upon request)

All praise is for Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Peace and blessings upon His final messenger, Muhammad (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) his family and companions, everlastingly.

I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and I bear witness that our master, Muhammad (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) is His final prophet and messenger.

You should know, my brothers and sisters in Islam, that the role of the Sunnah of the messenger of Allah (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) is to teach us not only about disciplining our own selves, but about living together as members of functioning societies, in the best and most righteous way- the way of RasoolAllah (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*). We therefore have a duty of care to our own selves, families, neighbours and in reality to the whole of our communities, both within the *ummah* and outside of it. We have a duty to be *mohsineen*, doers of good to all.

Today we are going to consider the role of adoption and fostering in our Muslim communities. Audhubillah it is a point of shame in our communities that some Muslims have said that adoption and fostering are forbidden. We must correct this misinformation now and make sure that foster carers and adopters are given the respect they deserve, and that children who are cared for outside their family home are recognised for their elevated status within Islam.

The Messenger of Allah (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) himself taught us the way to foster and adopt because he raised, nurtured and cared for Sayyiduna Zayd bin Harithah alhamdulillah. Allah (*azzawajjal*) directed us in the Quran that an adopted or fostered child must be told about their heritage and family background, but Allah (*azzawajjal*) did not forbid the care of vulnerable children; in fact, this was encouraged by the *Sunnah*, and is in line with the Quranic values.

Besides, was the beloved Messenger of Allah (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) not an orphan himself? Was he not left without parents at a young age himself? There is a lesson to learn from this. RasoolAllah (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) taught us not to return to the times of *jahilliyah* whereby orphans were abused and neglected by the communities they belonged to. His orphan status is a sign that orphans are amongst the most beloved people to Allah (*azzawajjal*)! Look at the Quran, look what Allah (*azzawajjal*) says about the orphans. Was Musa (*alayhi salaam*) not an orphan? Musa (*alayhi salaam*) too was removed from his family and cared for by a believing woman - a woman later whom we know is from the women of Jannah, according to RasoolAllah (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*). Do we not want to be amongst those who Allah bestows His infinite mercy and blessings upon because we too helped the orphans and vulnerable children?

As Allah (azzawajjal) says in the Quran al-Kareem:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا
مَا اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Those who believe and do righteous good deeds, there is no sin on them for what they ate, if they have Taqwa and believe and do righteous good deeds, and they (again) have Taqwa and believe, and then (once again) have Taqwa and perform good. And Allah loves the good-doers.”

Islam tells us that we have to help the most vulnerable in our society. Who is more vulnerable than a child living in an abusive or neglectful home? We must provide safe, loving and uplifting homes for our own children, we must help families who are struggling to care for their own children and we must open our homes to children who need it. This is not option, it is a communal obligation and we will be accountable for failing the children in our community on judgement day. Our children aren't only Muslim, all children are our children and we can provide love and care to all children while respecting their religion and culture, as our religion teaches us to.

We strive to be the best in our society, better than non-Muslims, but non-Muslims are opening their homes to Muslim children and the good homes are feeding Muslim children halal food, getting Islamic literature for the children and trying to find suitable Islamic tuition for these children. Are we not better than these non-Muslims? Can we, as a community not do more than them? We should have plenty of fostering and adoptive homes, more than enough for Muslim children and plenty of homes for non-Muslim children too. We should be ambassadors and examples to others.

Fostering and adoption are not easy – the children come from extremely difficult backgrounds so they may be angry and sad, and we must help them through their distress. We are taught that great blessings come with great challenges – there isn't a greater and more important challenge to Muslims than to protect and care for abused children who live in our communities.

Many of the children looking for Muslim homes are asylum seeking and refugee children from war-torn countries – we have all given money to charities working in war-torn countries

alhamdulillah – but who is prepared to open their home to children and young adults who have reached this country and need help to find their feet? Every person with a spare bedroom should ask themselves if Allah will hold them accountable for not considering if they can share their home with a vulnerable child.

The messenger (*sallalaho alayhi wa alihi wasalim*) said;

“Whoever fails to show mercy to our children and honor to our elders is not one of us.”

In this time of great *fitna*, our vulnerable families and their children are suffering. It is now time that we unite in goodness (*ihsan*) as Allah and His messenger have taught us to do. It is time we step forward to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable people in our communities. By becoming a registered foster carer or adoptive parent in the UK, the Muslim community could help many young people in care; so many of whom are Muslims. Not only for the benefit of children, who are in need of our help and support, but also for the betterment of ourselves resulting in the pleasure of Allah (*azzawajjal*) inshaAllah.

One day, perhaps soon, we will be asked of what service (*khidmah*) we did upon the earth and who can vouch for the good we did that reached them. By taking care of vulnerable children today, perhaps there will be someone for you who can bear witness on the day of *Qiyamah*, that you lived on this earth well and served Allah’s creation the way He wanted. If you’re not able to open your home to vulnerable children, then at least learn more about fostering and adoption and speak to others about it – become ambassadors for this beautiful cause. If someone becomes a foster carer or adopter because of your good guidance, then you will receive blessings for their work. Fostering and adoption is not only of benefit to the child, it benefits everyone who knows the child and the community as a whole – we should be competing for the opportunity to benefit from the huge blessings that come with such noble actions.

If you continue to have any doubts about adoption or fostering, think about our sister Sehar, who grew up from the age of 2 in non-Muslim foster homes. Sehar was never taught about Islam as a child and she only became Muslim, by the grace of Allah (*azzawajjal*), when she became an adult by reading a book that she found in a hostel. We must let down any more Muslim children in care, we must find more than enough safe, loving, and patient Muslim homes for at least all of the Muslim children in care. Sehar is now a practicing Muslim and alhamdulillah she is a law graduate; we can be sure that Sehar is loved by Allah and that anyone who supports Sehar is blessed by Allah. You can also be blessed by trying your best to support any of the thousands of children needing loving, stable and suitable homes.

For those of you who may wish to adopt, it is important for you to know that adoption services won’t assess you if you only want to look after a child who is under the age of 3; to adopt you should open your mind to caring for older children.

For those who want to foster, have a look at the Sparks Fostering website – it is the only website in the country that will give you a simple overview of all the basic requirements of fostering. It can be read in 20 languages and you can listen to the audio instead of reading it.

[If you're also doing events] The next fostering or adoption event at [your venue] is on [date and time] in [room]. I hope to see you there insha'Allah.

The Muslim Homes for Children in Care project will also be holding online seminars at 6pm on the 1st Friday of January, May and September. Email info@sparksfostering.org to receive the invite to the event.

May Allah bless you all for listening and showing support to our fostering and adopting brothers and sisters.

Wa'alaykum as'salaam warahmatullahi wa barakatuhu.