

Is Social Media Dangerous?

“Is Social Media dangerous?” is a very common topic of concern and rightfully so. To give a straight and simple answer- yes, it is dangerous. To quote my dad, “It’s as if I was going to send you into a drug infested neighborhood and say, ‘Don’t be home too late! Have fun!’” He couldn’t be more spot on.

It’s not social media itself that’s wrong; the idea is innocent and interesting, but the danger lies in the people. You can’t control the actions of others. You can’t predict everything you’ll encounter. I know, because I’ve experienced it firsthand. If you’re a teen reading this you may say, “Oh I’ll be able to tell.” And yes, maybe you will. But, that’s a maybe. If you had your own kids, would you risk it? I wouldn’t.

Even when a child becomes baligh (reaches puberty) and is considered an adult in Islam, their mind is still developing. They can be influenced easily, fall into a deep, dark, rabbit-hole and only realize it too late. Or perhaps they’ll be too scared to approach an adult about the situation. No matter how good a parent you are, your child still might have these fears.

Parents just want to do their best and protect their kids. You may understand that, and I may understand that, but that doesn’t mean all teens will. Not until they experience it themselves. But that’s actually what you want to avoid so... what’s the solution?

Well, let’s backtrack to the point of teens being influenced easily. It’s a big issue. Even if your children do understand that you want to protect them, they will see their friends getting these apps, exploring the world and will feel left out. Their friends will be babbling on about some video they saw on Instagram, and your teen won’t have a clue. They’ll feel awkward, they’ll feel left out.

The only way to solve that issue completely is to spread the message to other parents, so all teens will have limited access to the internet and then no one can influence anyone.

But, that’s a big job and will take time. So, the first step would be to educate your child. On the internet, there’s no filter. It’s not like a clothing website where you can pick and choose what to see. You see what you see and that’s it. The knowledge you can gain from the internet is limitless and terrifying. If your Islamic foundation is not strong, you’ll fall through. First tiny gaps, then altogether.

You can’t protect your teen forever no matter how much you want to. You need to build their Islamic understandings, and then begin introducing them to the harsh reality of life. You can show them news or things you heard from work and side by side, and educate them on how you should deal with this in an Islamic way.

Don’t put them in the dark, because they might find out another way. You won’t be there to guide them through. It happened to me. I found out so many things far too suddenly. I didn’t know the Islamic understanding completely behind certain issues. I had to figure it out myself.

Rape, the LGBTQ+ society, hormones, and sex: these are all things your child will learn about eventually. They can learn about this from their friends, the internet or you. The best option is likely you. You need to teach your child that no matter what the issue is, they can come to you and you will educate them without getting angry about how they found out. How they found out isn’t the bigger problem, but educating them on the matter is.

The internet is an uncontrollable variable and just like you do with the real world, you need to prepare them mentally before they go into it. Educate your child and yourself on how the world is changing because it’s changing fast. And work for the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood, which will be caring guardian for our kids.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ﴾

“O believers! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.” [TMQ Surah At-Tahreem 66:6]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Inaya Musab