

YOUNG MUSLIMS

In pursuit of Allah's Pleasure

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S...MUMINMAN?

By night, a city slicker patrols the streets. Seen but not seen, he's just another face in the crowd, unnoticed with trendy glasses and the slickest new Rockport running shoes. He breezes in and out through bars and clubs. He chills with his friends. And if she's not mad, maybe he'll call his girlfriend for a date. Just your ordinary homeboy or girl. No hijab, no beard. No one knows he or she is Muslim.

Dawn comes, a visual thread of white among the black of night. Bleary-eyed, he makes wudu, dons his thobe, and transforms into...MuminMan! Faster than a speeding hajji! Able to recite Surah Al-Baqarah in one prayer! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's MuminMan! (Or MuminWoman!)

Sound familiar? If it does, you're not alone—many Muslim youth today, living in the West, face conflicting values. There are pressures from one side pulling us back to our cultural or Islamic roots, and there are pressures from school and friends, pushing us to be more "Western", an anonymous face with no religion. These pressures force many of us to develop double identities between Islam and un-Islam.

And is this hypocrisy?

Allah (SWT), in Surah Al-Baqarah of the Qur'an, describes all of mankind as being of one of three groups of people: The believers, the disbelievers, and the hypocrites. All of us need to look deep into our hearts and contemplate on this. If we're not truly disbelievers, and we're not truly believers, then where does that leave us?

Allah also says in the Qur'an: "[The hypocrites] sway between this and that, belonging neither to these nor to those; and he whom Allah sends astray, you will not find for him a way (to the truth — Islam)." [Surah al-Nisaa' 4:143]

Living in the West ain't easy, there is no doubt about that. Everywhere you look, society is producing temptation, to stop us from being who we are and practicing our faith.

How many of us, in order to be "cool" and to appease our non-Muslim friends, have shaved our beards, taken off our hijabs, and made statements like "I'm praying because my family makes me" or "I'm fasting because I have to"? We should be aware that the disease of hypocrisy lives in our hearts. But rest assured that recognizing it is the first step towards a cure.

And if we find our hearts fertile soil for

the disease of hypocrisy, what should we do? Is there any hope?

There is always hope! Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an: "Say: O My servants who have transgressed against their own souls, despair not of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful." [Surah az-Zumar 39:53]

There are many steps that we can take in order to earn the mercy of Allah (SWT), and to free ourselves from these characteristics, so that we establish an integral connection with Allah (SWT), and purify our hearts in the process.

Ground Zero: Understanding. Understand that you cannot live that double-life forever. Harmony may exist, but by and far, the two are opposing forces. Which will you choose?

Once you take the time to think it through, you'll see that Islam is the answer for the long-term. This life is limited, while the next life, the *Akhira*, is eternal. Ask yourself: if I die, where do I wake up? Your heart delights in supreme happiness only when it feels Allah (SWT). So purify your heart, resist the call of temptation and have firm belief that you are going to change. You'll notice and experience the change within yourself with your own eyes.

Step One: Repentance. Make sincere, heart-felt repentance to Allah for the sins you have committed. Pray the forgiveness prayer (two units), and your forgiveness will be granted, inshaAllah. The messenger of Allah said in a hadith, "There isn't a man who, when he commits a sin, rises, makes ablution, and offers two units of prayer, but Allah forgives his sins."

Step Two: Your choices. Ultimately, what happens in the next life is your choice, the actions you perform now, today. To obtain true success, choose the best choices that will allow you to maintain that fire in your heart.

Your friends. Take care in choosing your friends properly, for our friends are a reflection of ourselves—we become like them, and they become like us. Are our friends calling us to the religion of Allah (SWT), and to Paradise, or are they calling us to Hellfire?

Your clothes. Clothing is a small, yet often-neglected part of our personality. Your clothes are part of your identity, whether you choose them or your mother chooses them for you. Choose your clothes well—make sure

they are clean, neat, presentable, and, above all, modest according to the standards of Islam. Jeans and shirts should not be tight and revealing, but loose and baggy.

Your activities. In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah said, "Health and free time are two of the gifts that many people are deceived with." Your free time is the only time you have. Once it's gone, it never comes back. If you spend your time doing things which take you away from Islam, you enlarge the gap between yourself and success. Instead of spending 5-6 hours in front of the TV, why not try studying the Qur'an for 10-20 minutes, or praying some extra prayers? You'll feel the difference, inshaAllah.

Your school. If you have the luxury of choosing a school, choose one that will help bring you closer to Allah (SWT). If you are in high school, ask your parents if they can enroll you in an Islamic school. If you're graduating, pick a university with a good Muslim Students Association. Involve yourself in the remembrance of Allah (SWT) constantly.

Step Three: Put a plan. Set up a goal of where you would like to be within a certain time frame—next week or next month. Personalize your own development plan and modify it as you proceed. Plan carefully! Don't run, because you'll burn out quickly. Instead, maintain a regular pace of development.

Step Four: Never despair. Never despair of the mercy of Allah (SWT), for Allah says in a hadith: "I am close to the thought that My servant has of Me, and I am with him whenever He recollects Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I remember him in Myself, and if he remembers Me in a gathering I remember him better than those in the gathering do, and if he approaches Me by as much as one hand's length, I approach him by a cubit. If he takes a step towards me, I run towards him."

If you follow these steps diligently, then inshaAllah your iman will increase. *You can do it!* Stick to your plans, and inshaAllah you will find yourself further and further away from hypocrisy and disbelief. You will maintain the fire in your heart, feel that Allah (SWT) is with you everywhere you go, and you will inshaAllah **transform** into a true *MuminMan* or *MuminWoman*.

WHO ARE YOUNGMUSLIMS?

We are a Muslim organization working for and through the Muslim youth in Canada. Our aim is the establishment of Islam in North America in its entirety and comprehensiveness. We work towards the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social revival of Muslim youth through Dawah (invitation to Islam), Tarbiyah (education & training), Tazkiyah (personal development), and community involvement and activism.

Our goal is to seek the pleasure of Allah by following His guidance in our everyday life so that we may become the winners of this world and the life hereafter. We are always looking for more members. For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.youngmuslims.ca>

Like our articles? Maybe not? We want to know! Email us at ymlink@youngmuslims.ca and let us know!