

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

و صلى الله على النبي الكريم

Long gone are the days when children would spend relentless hours playing outside and doing all sorts of fun filled activities. Sadly, the only entertainment that most teenagers can relate to is sitting in front of a play station blasting zombies. As the modern parents of the twentieth century, we tend to oblige by providing the latest gaming consoles and violent games without even checking its contents. Unfortunately, we do not realise that the innumerable hours that our teenage sons and daughters are spending playing these futile games are actually shaping their mindsets into the kind of individuals they will become in the near future.

Whilst many a skeptic might defend their cause of blasting inexistent alien monsters and crashing the latest model cars that only exist in a virtual world, the fact of the matter is clear and undeniable, gaming (especially violent games) has become an addiction which promotes aggressive behaviour, health hazards such as obesity, carpal tunnel syndrome, lack of sleep and a lack of industriousness. The long term detriments are much greater than any perceived benefit.

Our beloved Nabi + said, "From amongst the beauty of a person's Islam is that s/he shuns all activities that are unbeneficial".

Many a parent complains that their children are disrespectful and they do not want to help around etc. But, how do we expect them to be respectful when they spend innumerable hours actively playing violent games such as *GTA 5*, that do not promote any moral ethics. On the contrary, these games promote the belittling of women, chaos, sexual perversions and disregard of the law. Studies have also proven that violent games decrease helping behaviour and empathy for others.

In 1972, the Surgeon General issued the following warning on violent TV programs: "It is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. ... There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come." (Steinfeld, 1972)

That was over 4 decades ago! In the years since this warning was issued, hundreds of additional studies have shown a link between violent media exposure, violent games and aggression. Current studies have proven that violent games, instills a passion for aggressive

behaviour, angry feelings, physiological arousal and violent thought patterns within those addicted. In short, those who play violent games are similar to time bombs waiting to explode.

The National Institute on Media and the Family suggests the following potential negative effects of inappropriate video games:

- Over-dependence on video games could foster social isolation and a lack of social skills, as they are often played alone.
- Practicing violent acts may contribute more to aggressive behavior and violence. Studies have substantiated a relationship between violent television watching and behavior.
- Women are often portrayed as weaker characters that are helpless or sexually provocative.
- Game environments are often based on plots of violence, aggression and gender bias.
- Many games only offer an arena of weapons, killings, kicking, stabbing and shooting.
- Games can confuse reality and fantasy.
- In many violent games, players must become more violent to win.
- Academic achievement may be negatively related to over-all time spent playing video games.

Indeed, Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with a perfect example in the life of His beloved Nabi +. When Sayyidinā Hasan @ and Sayyidinā Husain @ were born, their respected father, Sayyidinā Ali @ named them 'Harb' respectively. When informed, Nabi + changed their names. If a person's name can have a positive or negative effect on his/her future, then one can only imagine what effect relentless hours of vibrant and active violence can have on the mindset of an individual.

In this era, it is very common to hear of individuals hailing from prosperous backgrounds who abuse their wives, who have no compassion for their aging parents and many are those who in spite of affluent academic qualifications cannot maintain a long term employment offer. One can imagine why!

It is incumbent that as parents we protect our children from the violent, perverted and music-filled environment of the gaming world. Instead, we should encourage them to take up on those activities and hobbies which will prove beneficial to their health and mindset.

May Allāh Ta'ālā guide us all!