40163 - Problem With Son Masturbating Daily

the question

I am the mother of an only child, a seven year old boy, and recently I found him practicing the secret habit (masturbation). Every time I ask him if he did it today he tells me, quite frankly, yes. I forbade him to do this haraam (unlawful) action, then I started to take away some privileges and even hit him, but with no success. He is still doing it every day, maybe even more than once. I got tired of keeping an eye on him, and I feel ashamed before Allaah that this sin may stay with him until he grows up, and he may persist in not repenting, so he will get used to sin and regard it as insignificant, and so his heart will become deadened when he is still young.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The family is often responsible for the children falling into sin, because they do not urge children to worship Allaah and they make available the means of falling into sin.

We do not know what is really happening here, but it may be that the circumstances surrounding this boy have made him fall into sin. He is an only child, and an only child is usually spoiled, which makes the means of falling into sin readily available. This problem may be dealt with in a number of ways:

1 – Reducing the extent to which he is spoiled, because spoiling him makes him feel that he is not a man, so he tries to prove that he is a man by means of this habit or smoking, for example.

2 – Not making the means of falling into sin available, especially those which contribute to deadening of the heart, such as giving him music tapes to listen to and providing satellite channels for him to watch.

3 – Try not to let the child sleep alone or close the door when he is asleep, because being alone makes it easy to think about sin and encourages one to do it.

4 – Making the child feel attached to the mosque and its study circles, and to righteous friends. These are the greatest means of helping a person to correct his ways and strengthen his faith.

5 – Providing a useful Islamic audio-visual library, which will create in him a love for worship, teach him good manners and deter him from falling into sin.

6- Encouraging him to read, especially books that have to do with biographies of the scholars and heroic mujaahideen (warriors). Perhaps he will acquire some of their attributes and follow in their footsteps. It is better to encourage him to write a summary of what he reads, hears and watches, and to give him a suitable reward for that.

7 – Encourage him to memorize Qur'aan and fast; undoubtedly these will strengthen him spiritually.

8 –Try to organize his time so that he will be active during the day and will sleep early, because staying up late may make him think at length about sin.

9 – Explain to him the shar'i (Islamic law) ruling on this habit and its effect on the mind, heart and faculties.

10 – Avoid humiliating him, hitting him and embarrassing him, because hitting him, humiliating him and embarrassing him will not make him give up this sin and others like it, rather you should deal with him in the way that is best and by giving him good advice.

And Allaah is the source of strength.