

A story from Prison 13 September 2012 **Herewith the Winning Story of the Y.O.U Tribute**

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As always Radio Islam's Ramada an Tributes' garner amazing support from local and international listeners, and this year, none more than Prisoner Story 17.

This was a submission from prison by a young man, who had turned his life around from within the prison, Thanks to the support and Duas of his Mother.

It went on to be the selected the Winning story in the Young ,Old, United (YOU) Tribute.

"When I managed to get the prisoner on the line for the finale, I had that feeling something amazing was about to happen. What followed was one of these most dramatic Reunions in Islamic Radio history, a beautiful moment indeed! The judges' choice seems to have been the popular choice amongst listeners as well," said Jazz Khan, co-ordinator of the Y.O.U Tribute.

Prisoner Story 17

Who would have taught that I would be writing in to this tribute and how appropriate this tribute is. Both young and old are in many ways represented in this story...

This tribute goes out to MY BELOVED PARENTS Phenomenal parents who should have thrown me out of their home and her heart many many years ago but, who never did. My parents. My inspirations. My pillars. My strength. My Jannah(PARADISE)

When my mother gave birth to me all those years ago, I wonder what her dreams and aspirations were for me. I wonder if she ever fathomed the pain and heartache she was to endure in this lifetime much of which was due to my actions, my choices.

My dad....the goals and dreams he might have set out for me just like any father would have! The first real heartache my parents experienced was not due to me or to anything anyone else had done, but was simply through the Almighty's will. 21 years ago we lost my brother Abdullah in an accident. He was at the prime of his youth at merely 20 years of age. My parents were shattered and my mother experienced a sadness due to this loss that I believe remains with her to this very day. Now you can imagine the emotions my parents experienced when they learnt that they could very well lose a second of their three sons. Why would they lose me? Let me tell you my story now. I was the envy of my friends and certainly of the young lads in my family. I had the most beautiful women attached to my arm and in my presence you would find the smartest cars, latest phones and the adoration of young and old alike. I was a sweet talker no doubt and although I only completed standard 4, I would like to think I was blessed with being street smart and savvy. All sounds good so far... let me continue.

As a young man I saw the world. Travelled to places like China, Dubai, Hong-Kong, London even Saudi Arabia- stayed in 5 star hotels and ate the finest cuisine. So what's wrong with this you may ask. The problem with this ever so fine picture is that I now write this Tribute from within the confines of my four walls, guarded 24 – 7 by wardens and guard dogs and now called an Inmate or Offender

For years it seemed like I was living the high life when all I was doing was lying and partially scheming.I started taking drugs at the tender age of 14. As time went on, crystal meth became my best friend. I committed one crime after the other from stealing cars to credit card fraud. My parents had no idea about my drug habit or my dark dealings that I was involved in, because I was too clever for my own good. Off course I was eventually caught out and spent a month or two behind those walls but certainly was not ready to change. So in drug rehab, I gave those running the centre a difficult time and even scaled the walls and got out...This kept the rehabilitator in shock as it was the first!

On my second arrest I was sentenced to six years behind bars, of which I have now served three. No one can imagine the pain and anguish of my parents at this time particularly my mother who had

already lost one child. Being called **Hafez Sahib** (One who memorised the Quraan) at that time had no meaning because after becoming a Hafiz of the Qur'aan I had forgotten almost all that I had learnt due to still being close friends with crystal meth and of course the not too good company. The shame I brought upon my family was inconceivable.

Yet with the support and encouragement of extended family my mother began to encourage me. Every Sunday she would visit me at the prison and talk to me about making Zhikr, reading Tahajjud, reading Qur'aan. This love and duas and encouragement of my mother began to soften my heart. I have been completely clean from drugs for over 2 years alhamdulillah.... My dad would encourage me in the same manner and always stress on starting with the sunnahs and for starters the beard! My first Ramadaan behind bars was no Ramadaan. The Almighty has since granted me the hidaayat to change conditions around for myself and my fellow Muslim inmates.

Alhamdulillah, we now have a dedicated area for iftaar, sehri and Taraweeh salaah. My fellow inmates serving longer time than I have, have mentioned that this has been a first and Ramadaans prior to me being here was not a Ramadaan. More than anything else, I now have every reason to be called Hafez sahib again with my Qur'aan back in my heart and memory and having the privilege of leading the Daily Taraweeh Salaah within the Prison walls. Allahu Akbar!

Alhamdulillah my perseverance and hard work is paying off in this blessed month as I ensure that each of my Muslim brothers is taken care of for Sehri and Iftaar. I also encourage each one towards Qur'aan tilawat or at least making dhikr.

All through the mercy and guidance of the Almighty, my inmates & I have managed to abolish certain innovations that were prevalent amongst the Muslim inmates.

This created complete clarification as to what Islam and its practices are.... Alhamdulillah, I am also the Ameer of the Muslim inmates and I do consult regularly with officials of the various departments within.

I attribute every iota of change to MY MOTHER! Her Duas. Her tears, her cries, her pleas, her dedication and my mother's constant encouragement to do good. I know there are times when my mother still cannot believe that I could have done such despicable acts. But without a doubt, she loves me and deserves the acknowledgement of this tribute...My dad is a part of this totally! I can never come close to imagining their fears for me being within these walls. Their pleading to the Almighty to make me change. And now that I have changed Alhamdulillah, I can only imagine her fears for me ever returning to my old ways.

For this I ask each one of you listening to my tribute to make an earnest Dua that the Almighty keep me on the straight path within and once I leave this confines of the Prison.

Allow me to make MY MOTHER PROUD . Let me make my beloved father's heart truly smile again. AMEEN please make me maaf. Ma & Dad.
From your son.