

Young Muslims

What they should know



Amir Zaman
Nazma Zaman



Young Muslims

What they should know about Islam

Researched & Presented By

Amir Zaman

Nazma Zaman

Iqra bisme rabbikallzi khalaq: Read! In the name of your
Lord, Who has created (all that exists).
[Sura Alaq (96), ayah 1]

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Young Muslims: What they should know about Islam

Amir Zaman
Nazma Zaman

Suite # 306, 210 Oak Street
Toronto, ON M5A2C9, Canada
Phone: 647-280-9835
Email: amiraway@hotmail.com
www.themessagecanada.com

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For your copy please contact:

Toronto Islamic Centre (TIC)
575 Yonge St. Toronto, ON M4Y1Z2
647-280-9835, 647-350-4262
www.torontoislamiccentre.com

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It is acknowledged that some of the text and photos were sourced online and from various other sources, and as such it was not possible to cite specific references. The sole objective of this book is Dawah in order to raise understanding and interfaith tolerance. There is no intent to achieve commercial or financial gains of any nature. This book will be distributed free among non-Muslims and at cost price among Muslims.

Preface

Dear Young Brothers & Sisters:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته (Blessings and Peace be upon you)

Surely all praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help. We seek His forgiveness and we seek refuge in Him from the evil of our own souls and from the wickedness of our own deeds.

A Muslim's life is guided by his/her Imaan in the Tawheed (Absolute Oneness of Allah, without any association or partner, and His supremacy over all that exists in the earth and the Universe, seen and unseen) and his Taqwa. Taqwa has been defined variously by different authorities but primarily as Fear of Allah. But whatever are the differences in the definitions, one thing is common everywhere, that is, degree of Taqwa in a person shows the depth of his Imaan. But most of us Muslims do not make serious efforts to acquire accurate knowledge about our Deen and remain ignorant, and thus commit excesses in the matter of Ibadah. We do not like to study to learn; we continue to practice Islam with whatever scanty knowledge we possess. This is not acceptable. We should be serious and sincere about our duty to Allah to whom we will have to explain our failures on the Day of Judgment.

We like to emphasize here that Deen and Dunya are essential components of the religion of Islam; these are not two separate entities, and one cannot be ignored for the other. Allah's last Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad (saw), has convincingly demonstrated the integrated Deen and Dunya in his own life which can be and should be emulated by the Muslims all over the world. Muhammad (saw) was sent by Allah as a perfect role model as a religious lawgiver, statesman, administrator, peacemaker, husband, parent, social worker, and you name it. He was a grand success everywhere and we have every detail of his life fully documented. What we need now is to study his biography together with the Qur'an and his authentic Ahadith and set to build our lifestyle accordingly. What we need is a strong Imaan and the determination to be good Muslims to please Allah for rewards.

In the following pages we have furnished various information from the Qur'an and authentic Hadith and other sources touching different aspects of a Muslims life in condensed form for careful study and observance so that blessings of Allah and peace can enrich your life here and in the Hereafter. We strongly urge you to pay attention to the matters to be good Muslims in all aspects of your life. May Allah help you.

Sincerely yours,

Amir Zaman & Nazma Zaman
647-280-9835
amiraway@hotmail.com

Authenticity

Rasul Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam said: "To earn knowledge on Deen Islam is Fard (obligatory) for all Muslim." (Ibn Majah, Baihaqi)

There are many Islamic books available in the market, but be careful. Some of them are not authentic, that means they are not based on the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith. Remember, thousands of Dhaef and Maudhu (weak and false) Hadith are available in the market which were written by the enemies of Islam.

Alhamdulillah, day by day, Islamic scholars are doing research and analysis on these Ahadith and filtering them for Muslim Ummah. This is the time of Information Technology; all information is available in front of you (both correct and incorrect). It is your responsibility to get the correct information. Islam is transparent like Mathematics. Whatever Rasul Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam did in his life and narrated (through Sahih/authentic Hadith) that is Islam, and whatever he did not do in his life, that is not Islam, that is Bida'h, even if any such Ibadah is performed or recommended by any Elderly, Alem, Pir, or Imam.

INDEX

Chapter 1: Fundamentals of Tawheed

- Aqeedah
- Categories of Tawheed
- Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah
- Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat
- Tawheed al-'Ibadah
- Classification of Tawheed
- Tree of Shirk
- Category of Shirk
- Be careful about Shirk
- What is Sunnah?
- The dangers of innovations in Islam (Bid'ah)
- Pillars of Islam & the six articles of faith

Chapter 2: What is Islam?

- Islam Explained
- A Universal Faith
- Purpose of Life
- Worship in Islam
- A Holistic Approach
- 6 Articles of Faith
- Life after death (Akhirah)
- The need to believe in life after death
- This belief divides people into three categories
- True justice becomes apparent by believing in Life after Death

Chapter 3: Life in the light of Taqwa

- What is Taqwa?
- Keep an Islamic compass always within you
- Necessity of regular reading of the Qur'an Understanding the meaning of what is being recited, read
- Technique to understand the Qur'an
- Truth and Falsehood
- Love Allah and His Rasul (pbuh)
- Learn from authentic sources only

Chapter 4: Importance of collective life

- 1. Jama'ah (Collective life)
- 2. Prohibition
- 3. Ukhuah (Brotherhood)
- Dua...
- Selecting Friends

Chapter 5: Duty of Children towards their Parents

- Love your Parents
- Order from the Qur'an
- Advice from the Hadith
- Assist the Parents in housework

Chapter 6: Islamic way of life

- Islamic Manners (Islamic Adab)
- Practicing Salam
- Some very important notes
- Anger Management

Chapter 7: Importance of Salah

- Why Salah?
- Which book should I follow to learn Salah?
- Personal development
- Medical benefits of Salah
- What do we recite (say) in our Salah

Chapter 8: Answer to the non-Muslim Friends

- Are you facing questions from your friends' circle?
- Peace vision of Islam
- Why is the eating of pork forbidden in Islam?
- Why is the consumption of alcohol prohibited in Islam?
- Why is a man allowed to have more than one wife in Islam?
- Women in Islam
- Why Hijab? (Islamic dress code)
- Why does Islam degrade women by keeping them behind the veil?
- National Pink Hijab Day
- Why media highlights most of the Muslims as 'fundamentalists' and 'terrorists'?
- Why are vast differences between Islam and the actual practice of Muslims?

Chapter 9: Exercising Some Alertness & Control over your daily activities

- 17 Harmful effects of TV watching
- Negative effects of Facebook
- Islamic use of Facebook
- How to avoid Pornography
- Sin and Repentance (Tawba)
- Is dating or boyfriend-girlfriend relationship allowed in Islam?
- Advice to Teenagers Considering Taking Drugs

Harmful effects of gambling, Lotto/Lottery which are Haram in Islam
Harm of Alcohol & Drugs
How to stop Masturbation
Prohibition of Free-Mixing Between Men and Women
Smoking is harmful
How to quit smoking
Alcohol is harmful
How to quit alcohol and drugs?
Father's Day, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Halloween
Christmas (25 December) and New Year's Eve (31 December night)
Let us know our Religious Rights in Canada
Making use of our youth

Chapter 10: Some useful Guidelines

Area of study
Study materials
Visit authentic Islamic websites
Sound in Technology
Management skill development
Be a member of an Islamic organization
To get more knowledge on Islam & Science
Listen to Adhan
Haram food ingredients

Chapter 11: Some History we should know

Biography of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) at a glance
Period of the 4 Khalifas (Caliphs)
Lifetime of the 6 prominent Hadith compilers
Number of Ahadith collected, rejected and accepted
Ahadith narrated by Sahaba (Ra)
Lifetime of the 4 Imams
Who is Jesus?
History of Christmas
Myth of Halloween
Valentine's Day - History and Islamic Perspective

Chapter 12: How to do Dawah among non-Muslims

What are our duties as Muslim
Definition of Da'wah
Virtues of Da'wah
Importance of Da'wah
Sura Al-Asr
Whom should we give Da'wah?
Da'wah concept

Foundation of Da'wah
Characteristics of the Caller (Da'ee)
Brief knowledge on comparative religions
Characteristics of the called
Components of Da'wah
Da'wah technique
Obstacles faced by the Da'ee
Da'wah course – On campus and online
Self training from DVD
12 converted Muslim scholars in the West

Chapter 13: Let's learn some authentic Dua

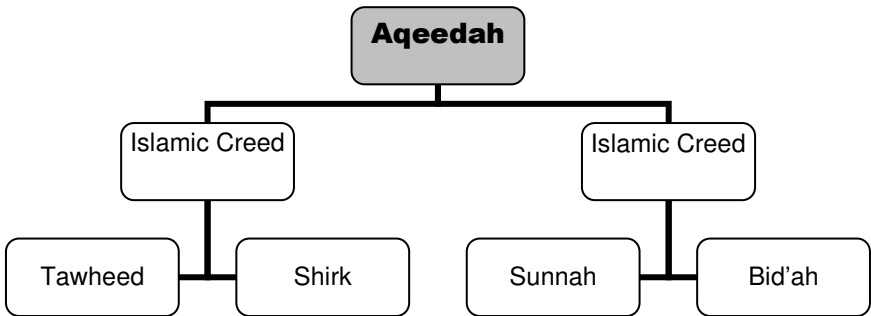
APPENDIX: Lessons from this book



CHAPTER 1

Islamic Creed (Aqeedah)

Monotheism



Categories of Tawheed

Literally Tawheed means "unification" (making something one) or "asserting oneness", and it comes from the Arabic verb (wahhada) which itself means to unite, unify or consolidate. However, when the term Tawheed is used in reference to Allah (i.e. Tawheedullaah), it means the realizing and maintaining of Allah's unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him. It is the belief that Allah is One, without partner in His dominion and His actions (Ruboobeeyah), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (Asmaa wa Sifaat), and One without rival in His divinity and in worship (Ulooheeyah/'Ibadah).

These three aspects form the basis for the categories into which the science of Tawheed has been traditionally divided. The three overlap and are inseparable to such a degree that whoever omits any one aspect has failed to complete the requirements of Tawheed. The omission of any of the above mentioned aspects of Tawheed is referred to as "Shirk" (lit. sharing); the association of partners with Allah, which, in Islamic terms, is in fact idolatry.

The three categories of Tawheed are commonly referred to by the following titles:

1. Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah (Maintaining the Unity of Lordship)
2. Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat (Maintaining the Unity of Allah's Names and Attributes)
3. Tawheed al-'Ibadah (Maintaining the Unity of Allah's Worship)

The division of Tawheed into its components was not done by the Prophet (pbuh) nor by his companions, as there was no necessity to analyze such a basic principle of faith in this fashion. However, the foundations of the components are all implied in the verses of the Qur'an and in the explanatory statements of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions.

Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah (Maintaining the unity of lordship)

This category is based on the fundamental concept that Allah alone caused all things to exist when there was nothing; He sustains and maintains creation without any need from it or for it; and He is the sole Lord of the universe and its inhabitants without any real challenge to His sovereignty.

Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat (Maintaining the unity of Allah's names and attributes)

This category of Tawheed has five main aspects:

1. For the unity of Allah's names and attributes to be maintained in the first aspect, Allah must be referred to according to how He and His Prophet (pbuh) have described Him without explaining away His names and attributes by giving them meanings other than their obvious meanings. For example, Allah in the Qur'an says He gets angry with the disbelievers and the hypocrites.
2. The second aspect of Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat involves referring to Allah as He has referred to Himself without giving Him any new names or attributes. For

example, Allah may not be given the name al-Ghaadib (the Angry one), in spite of the fact that He has said that He gets angry, because neither Allah nor His messenger has used this name.

3. In the third aspect of Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat Allah is referred to without giving Him the attributes of His creation. For example, it is claimed in the Bible and Torah that Allah spent the first six days creating the universe then slept on the seventh. For this reason, Jews and Christians take either Saturday or Sunday as a day of rest in which work is looked at as a sin. Such a claim assigns to God the attributes of His creation. It is man who tires after heavy work and needs sleep to recuperate.
4. The fourth aspect of Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat requires that man not be given the attributes of Allah. For example, in the New Testament Paul takes the figure of Melchizedek, king of Salem, from the Torah (Genesis 14:18-20) and gives both him and Jesus the divine attribute of having no beginning or end,
5. Maintaining the unity of Allah's names also means that Allah's names in the definite form cannot be given to His creation unless preceded by the prefix 'Abd meaning "slave of" or "servant of". Many of the Divine names in their indefinite form like Ra'oof and Raheem are allowable names for men because Allah has used some of them in their indefinite forms to refer to the Prophet (pbuh).

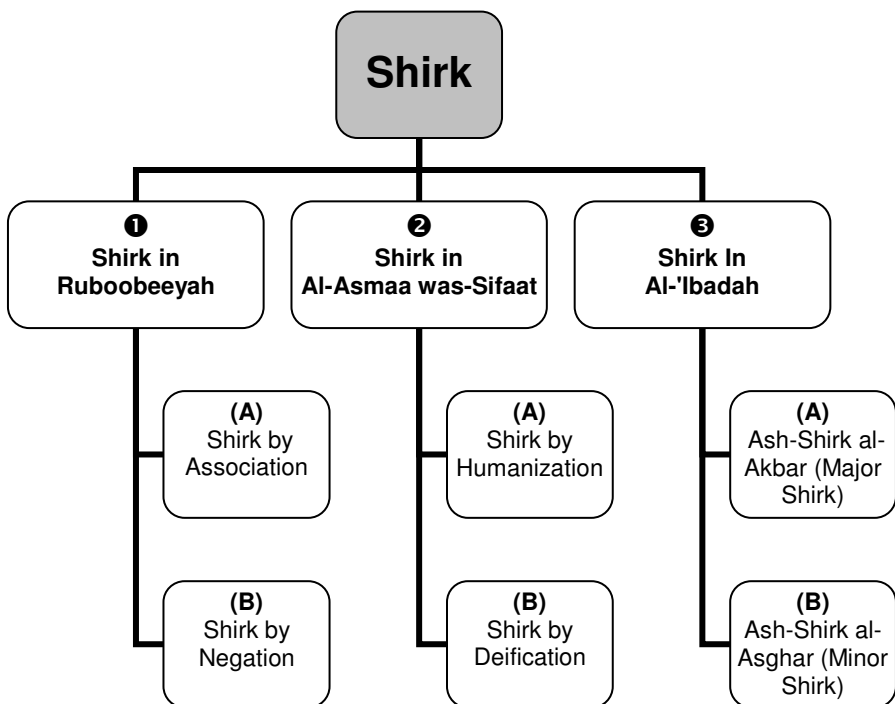
Tawheed al-'Ibadah

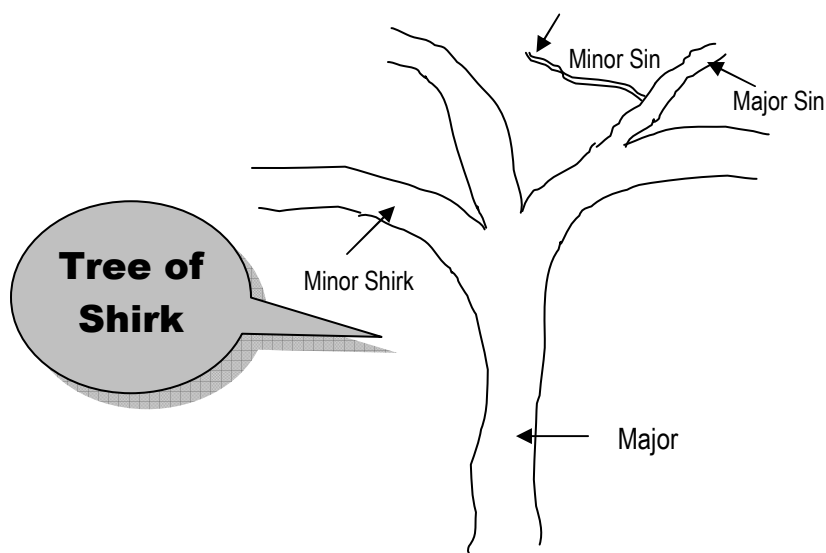
(Maintaining the unity of worship)

Tawheed al-'Ibadah, maintaining the unity of Allah's worship. All forms of worship must be directed only to Allah because He alone deserves worship, and it is He alone who can grant benefit to man as a result of His worship. Furthermore, there is no need for any form of intercessor or intermediary between man and God. Allah emphasized the importance of directing worship to Him alone by pointing out that this was the main purpose of man's creation and the essence of the message brought by all the prophets.

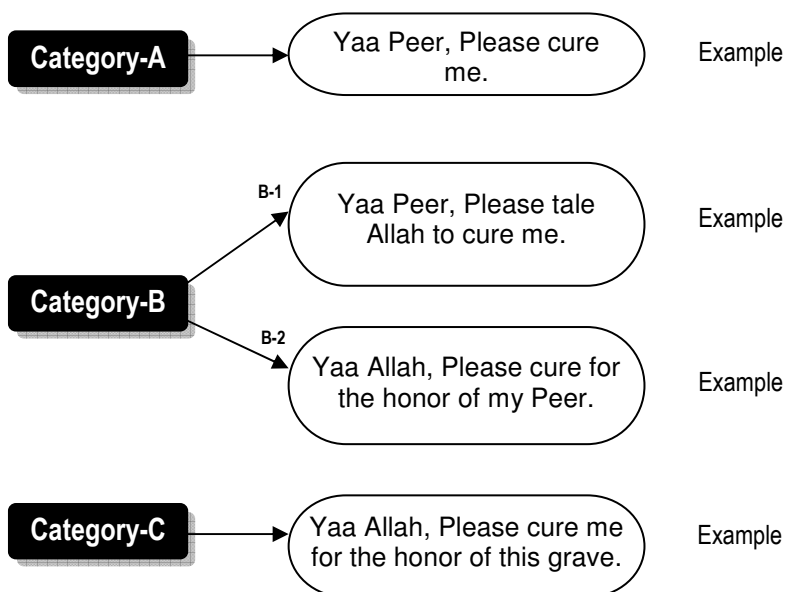
Classification of Tawheed

By way of individual (Bipartite)	By way of Allah (Tripartite)
A) Affirmation & Recognition (By Heart)	1) Lordship OR Ruboobeeyah (By Heart)
	2) Names & Attributes OR Asmaa' was-Sifaat
B) Action & Deeds (By Limbs)	3) Worship OR Ulooheeyah (By Limbs)





Category of Shirk



Be careful about Shirk

“Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else, to whom he pleases; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin Most heinous indeed”. (Sura An Nisa,4 : 48)

Due to lack of knowledge many people do shirk during Ibadah. Following are some practical examples:

- Some people think Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) has not died, he is still alive, which is Shirk.
- Some people believe that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) was made from Noor of Allah, which is Shirk.
- Some people ask something (Shafa'at) to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam), which is Shirk.
- To ask something from Allah via Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) is Shirk.
- Allah would not create this universe unless He wished to create Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). Such a belief is Shirk.
- To make Du'a facing the grave is Shirk.

What is the Sunnah?

Linguistically, Sunnah is an Arabic word which means a path or a way. However, Islamically, it is a primary source of law taken from the sayings, actions and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him). As Muslims we believe that the law Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him) came with, is a divine revelation from our Creator, Allah. However many people believe that the Qur'an is the only form of divine revelation, as it is the literal word of Allah. This view is incorrect as it contradicts the Qur'an itself. About the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him), Allah says: *“Your companion (Muhammad) is neither astray nor being misled. Nor does he speak of his own desire. It is (only) the revelation with which he is*

inspired" (Sura An Najm, 53:2-4). Thus as Muslims, we are required to believe that the Qur'an and Sunnah go hand in hand together as our sources of legislated law. Both are revelation from Allah, the most High. The Qur'an is composed of the actual words of Allah, whereas the Sunnah is expressed through the words, actions and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him). Another difference is that the Qur'an is recited formally in the prayers whereas the Sunnah is not.

As a way of life, Islam is perfect and complete. However, such are the times that we live in, that some of the liberal elite from the Muslims choose to deny aspects of Islam to suit their own desires. It is even more sad, that many choose to deny the Sunnah in particular. However this is clearly wrong, as the saying of the Prophet (pbuh) indicates: "I have been given the Qur'an and something similar to it besides it. Yet a time will come when a man leaning on his couch will say 'follow the Qur'an only; what you find in it permissible, take as permissible, and what you find as forbidden, take as forbidden'. But verily what the Messenger of Allah has forbidden is like what Allah has forbidden".

The Dangers of Innovations in Islam (Bid'ah)

Allah ordered Muslims not to divide themselves into sects. Innovations and divisions in matters of religion and worship within Islam are considered to be Contamination, error, and deviation.

Earlier heinous deviations from monotheism, such as worship-ping creation, resulted in condemnation by Allah. (However, innovations in other matters, such as science and technology to improve life, are greatly encouraged.) Allah, The Most Compassionate, has told us through His last Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him), when Muhammad was nearing the end of his life, that He had completed the religion of Islam.

Muslims must recognize that any change in matters of worship is strictly forbidden. No change introduced by humankind, who is constantly under the influence of Satan, could ever add anything

positive and would only contribute to the degradation of the completed and perfected religion established by Allah.

All innovations in matters of religion lead to straying, and all straying leads to hellfire. People must not allow any deviation (addition or deletion), even as small as one degree, in matters of worship. If any changes are allowed, those deviations will be compounded by future generations, and the result will be another manmade religion, not the Islam as it was perfected by Allah, The Truth. To build a faith using a 'shopping cart' approach or the blind following of any religious leader is in-admissible.

The changing of Allah's laws is forbidden in Islam. Allah condemns religions leaders who alter divine principles. One who attempts to make changes places him or herself on the same level with Allah, committing polytheism. An example of this would be to make the killing of innocents lawful. The laws of Allah are perfect and do not need to be 'modernizes' by anyone. Allah allows us the freedom to obey or disobey Him by choosing to follow His faith or to follow our own desires. However, He forbids us to change His religious principles.

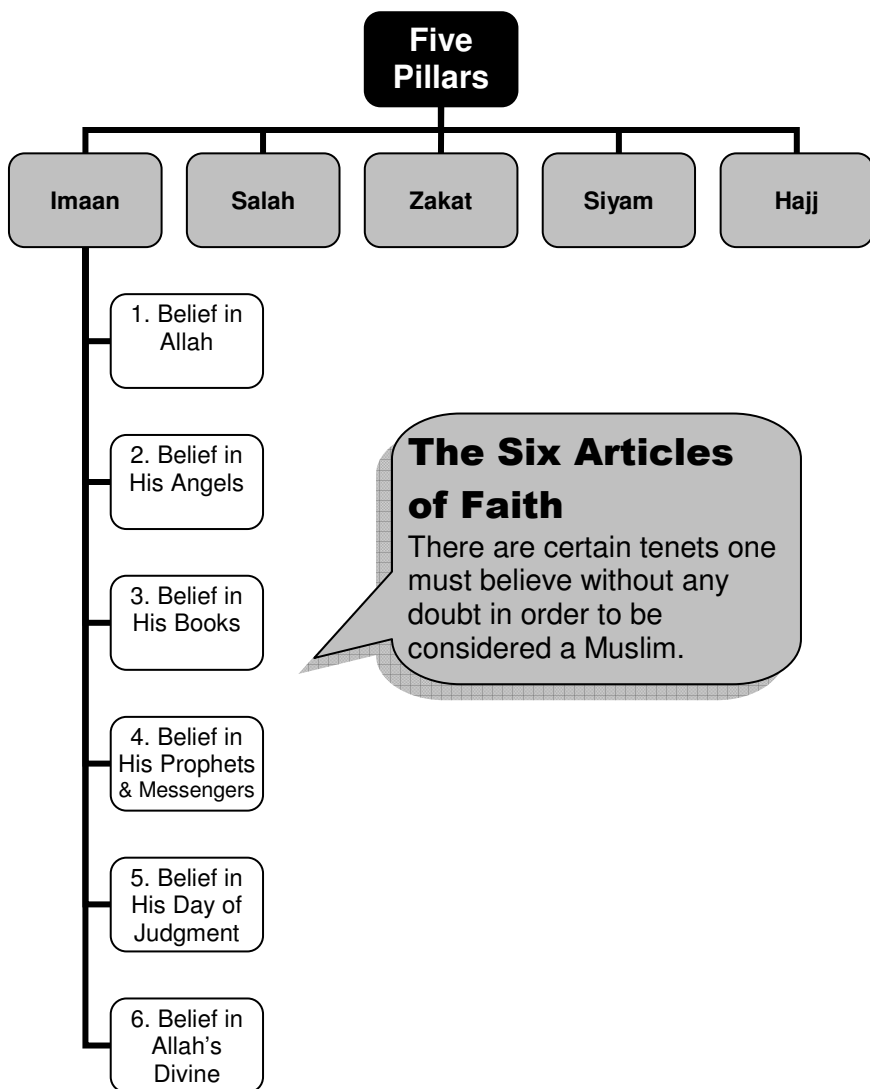
(It is interesting to note that crescent moon is not representative of the religion of Islam, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him) never used or mentioned it. It was a pagan symbol and an innovation brought about by later generations as a political symbol. Sadly, it is commonly adopted and mistaken as an Islamic symbol.)

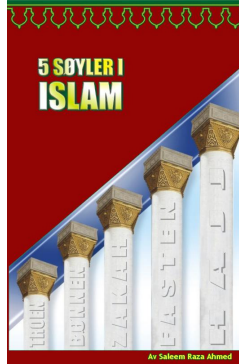
Rasul Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam said: "Beware of newly invented matters, for every invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray and every going astray is in the Hellfire". (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

Due to lack of knowledge many people do Bid'ah as their Ibadah. Following are some practical examples:

- Milad
- Miladunnabi
- Shabe-borat
- Kulkhani
- Chollisha
- Death anniversary, etc.

Pillars of Islam





CHAPTER 2

What is Islam?

Islam Explained

Islam completes the long chain of guidance from God to humanity. Meticulously preserved and thoroughly documented, Islam's message has a familiar resonance, owing to its shared history and common values, with two other Abrahamic religions (Judaism and Christianity). Additionally, Islam reiterates a return to basic principles of faith: belief in one God, righteous living, and faith in the afterlife. This section introduces the central themes of Islam and its core components – with a special focus on our purpose in life and the all-encompassing nature of Islam.

Islam is a faith and comprehensive way of life that literally means 'peace through submission to God.' It provides a clear understanding of a person's relationship with God, purpose in life, and ultimate destiny. A Muslim is someone who adopts the Islamic way of life by believing in the Oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him. Today, Islam is one of the fastest growing religions and is practiced by more than 1.2 billion Muslims across the world.

The most essential principle in Islam is the purely monotheistic belief in one God. God is the Creator of everything in the universe and is unique from His creation. Muslims are encouraged to develop a direct and personal relationship with God without any intermediaries. Muslims refer to God as Allah, which simply means "God" in the Arabic language. Arabic-speaking Jews and Christians also refer to God as Allah.

God describes Himself in the holy book of Muslims, the Qur'an (also spelled 'Koran'), by stating:

"Say, 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'" (Sura Al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4).

A Universal Faith

Islam is the culmination of the universal message of God taught by all of His prophets. Muslims believe that a prophet was chosen

for every nation at some point in their history, enjoining them to worship God alone and delivering guidance on how to live peacefully with others. Some of the prophets of God include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, peace be upon them all. The prophets all conveyed the consistent divine message of worshiping one God only, along with specific societal laws for each nation's circumstances.

However, after the prophets delivered the divine guidance to their people, their message was lost, abandoned, or changed over time, with only parts of the original message intact. God then sent another prophet to rectify their beliefs.

In order to restore the original call of all prophets, God sent Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) as the final prophet to all of humanity in the 7th century C.E.

In 610 C.E., Angel Gabriel visited Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) with the first divine message. For the next 23 years, he continued to receive revelations until the message was completed. Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) called people towards the belief in one God and encouraged them to be just and merciful to one another. He was a living example of God's guidance for the benefit of the entire humankind.

"Then We revealed to you [Muhammad], 'Follow the creed of Abraham, a man of pure faith who was not an idolater.'" (Sura An-Nahl, 16:123)

Muslims also believe that God sent revealed books as guidance to humanity through His prophets. These include the Torah given to Moses, the Gospel conferred upon Jesus, and the Qur'an received by Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him). The Qur'an is the last revelation from God, consisting of God's literal speech. It confirms truths from the previous scriptures and maintains the same core message of worshiping God and living righteously. God has ensured that the Qur'an is protected from corruption, safeguarding it for all of humanity to benefit from until the end of time. It is the only holy book that has been meticulously preserved in its original text.

Purpose of Life

Islam clearly addresses one of the most central and challenging questions in human history: “What is the purpose of life?” God declares in the Qur’an, “And I did not create ... mankind except to worship Me.” (Sura Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56) For Muslims, the purpose of life is to worship God, the Creator of all things. Worship in Islam is a comprehensive concept that urges people to be conscious of God throughout their daily lives and provides a framework to help people live a balanced and virtuous life.

This way of life promotes strong moral character, good relations with people, and just and harmonious societies. Devoting one’s self to a life of submission to God is the key to attaining a true sense of peace because it produces a balance of spiritual needs with worldly affairs. It also lends special meaning to the concept of living one’s life responsibly, aware of the accountability to come in the hereafter.

Belief in the Day of Judgment is extremely important in Islam. This event will signal the transition between the temporary life of this world to the eternal life in the hereafter. On that day, people will be resurrected and held accountable for their deeds in life, which will determine their eternal destination in Heaven or Hell. Many verses in the Qur’an describe the events on the Day of Judgment in great detail and give a description of Heaven and Hell.

Worship in Islam

Worship in Islam is woven into the daily life of a Muslim and is not confined to a holy place. The fundamental aspects of worship in Islam are encompassed within five pillars, which enable Muslims to cultivate their relationship with God.

1. Testimony of Faith (Shahadah): The first of the five basic foundations is knowingly and voluntarily asserting that, “There is nothing worthy of worship except God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” This statement is the basis of faith in Islam, affirming that no partners can be associated with God and Muhammad is His final prophet. As a result of this belief, Muslims

seek guidance in life through God's revelation (the Qur'an) and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him).

2. Prayer (Salah): Muslims are required to pray five times a day to maintain a spiritual connection with God and remind themselves of their ultimate purpose in life. Through sincerity, repentance, and direct prayer to God, Muslims strive to establish a personal spiritual relationship with their Creator all throughout the day. This prayer includes physical motions of bowing and prostrating, which were also performed by Jesus, Moses, and the prophets before them.

3. Charity (Zakah): This is an annual charity given to the poor. Muslims must give 2.5% of their yearly savings to help the poor, the needy, and the oppressed. Charity is one of the vital sources of social welfare in Islam, encouraging a just society where everyone's basic needs are provided for.

4. Fasting (Sawm): Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, by refraining from eating, drinking, and sexual interaction from dawn to sunset. It is an act of self-restraint and spiritual cleansing that increases one's empathy for the less fortunate and enables one to consciously control bad habits such as foul language, idle talk, and anger. Fasting also helps people develop strong willpower as they overcome the essential desires of their body and the damaging acts of their tongue.

5. Pilgrimage (Hajj): The pilgrimage (journey) to Mecca is an act that every Muslim must perform once in their life if they are physically and financially able. It symbolizes the unity of humankind as Muslims from every race and nationality assemble together in equality to worship God, following the traditions of Prophet Abraham.

A Holistic Approach

These primary acts of worship urge individuals to fulfill their purpose in life by becoming more conscious of God and serving the practical needs of society. However, worship is not limited to simply completing these acts.

Islam promotes a holistic approach to worship that encompasses spreading justice and compassion in the world through one's daily interactions with people. Smiling at someone, visiting the sick, and defending an innocent person who is being oppressed are all considered acts of worship as well. These forms of worship exemplify the importance of good manners in Islam. Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) once said, "The best among you are those who have the best character."

Islam has a practical approach to living that positively transforms people's individual connection to God and fellow humans. Islam offers guidance on all matters of life, including one's diet, manners, and social relationships. God tells Muslims to eat everything "good and pure" while adhering to simple dietary restrictions such as avoidance of pork, alcohol and anything slaughtered in the name of other than God.

When it comes to dressing and behavior, modesty and humility are ordained for both men and women. Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) has stated, "Every religion has an essential character and the essential character of Islam is modesty."

Parental obedience and dutifulness is integral to Islam. Men and women are to sanctify their relations in a marital contract, taking their spousal roles and family units seriously. Raising children who are morally upright and responsible participants in their communities is also a significant obligation. The preservation of family ties is a fundamental principle of Islam, along with kind treatment of orphans, widows, travelers, and neighbors. Professional and philanthropic contributions to one's society are encouraged in order to nurture individual and collective success.

God calls on people to remember Him in all of their actions and purify their hearts so that they can live a truly balanced life. Spirituality in Islam is about nurturing tolerance, kindness, control, righteousness, and forgiveness while shunning arrogance, pride, ego, anger and selfishness. This spirituality and God-consciousness should be reflected in a person's interactions with other people. Therefore, Islam stresses the importance of treating people with respect, mercy, and dignity.

In conclusion, Islam is not a new way of life; rather, it maintains the same message God sent to humanity through all of His messengers. Islam teaches people how to have a meaningful relationship with God, without any intermediaries, and how to reform their souls, beautify their character, and be part of a vibrant, healthy community. Through this message, God encourages individuals to draw closer to Him and fulfill their purpose in life.

*"Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of God and the Truth that has been revealed?"
(Sura Al-Hadid, 57:16)*

A Muslim believes in the following 6 Articles of Faith

1. Oneness of God

A Muslim believes in ONE GOD, Supreme and Eternal, Infinite and Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate, Creator and Provider. God has no father or mother, no wife, no son or daughter. None is equal to Him. He is God of all humankind, not of a special tribe or race.

God is High and Supreme but He is very near to the pious thoughtful believers; He answers their prayers and helps them. He loves the people who love Him and forgives their sins. He gives them peace, happiness, knowledge and success. God is the Loving and the Provider, the Generous, and the Benevolent, the Rich and the Independent, the Forgiving and the Clement, the

Patient and the Appreciative, the Unique and the Protector, the Judge and the Peace. Many of these attributes of God are mentioned in the Qur'an.

God creates in humans the mind to understand, the soul and conscience to be good and righteous, the feelings and sentiments to be kind and humane. If we try to count His favors upon us, we cannot, because they are countless. In return for all the great favors and mercy, God does not need anything from us, because He is Needless and Independent. God asks us to know Him, to love Him and to enforce His law for our benefit and our own good.

2. Messengers and Prophets of God

A Muslim believes in all the Messengers and Prophets of God without any discrimination. All messengers were mortals, human beings, endowed with Divine revelations and appointed by God to teach mankind. The Holy Qur'an mentions the names of 25 messengers and prophets and states that there are others. These include Adam, the first Prophet, along with Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, the last of the Prophets (peace be upon them all). The key message brought by all Prophets was the same: to believe in One God and not to associate partners with Him, to stay away from sins and to lead a life devoted to earning God's pleasure.

3. Revelations and the Qur'an

A Muslim believes in all scriptures and revelations of God, as they were complete and in their original versions. Muslims believe in the original scriptures that were given to previous messengers; for example, David received the Psalms (Zabur), Moses the Torah (Taurat) and Jesus the Gospel (Injeel). However, the previous scriptures do not exist today in the original form in which they were revealed.

The Qur'an is the last testament in the series of divine revelations from God, and Muslims recite and turn to it for guidance in all aspects of their life. It comprises the unaltered and direct words of God, revealed through the Angel Gabriel, to the final Prophet,

Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), 1400 years ago. The Qur'an is unique because it is the only revealed book that exists today in the precise form and content in which it was originally revealed.

The Qur'an is unrivaled in its recording and preservation. The astonishing fact about this scripture is that it has remained completely unchanged over the past fourteen centuries, a fact that is attested to by both non-Muslim and Muslim scholars alike. There are no versions of the Qur'an and every copy in the world remains identical, word for word in its original language, Arabic. Muslims to this day continue to emphasize the importance of memorizing the Qur'an word by word, as a whole or in part, recognizing that it is the Speech of God and not a book written by Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), as sometimes erroneously thought.

4. Angels

Angels are a creation of God. They are purely spiritual and splendid beings that require no food or drink or sleep. They have no physical desires or material needs. Like other creations of God, Angels spend their time worshiping God. In contrast to human beings, Angels do not have free Will – they can only obey God and do not have the ability to disobey Him. Each Angel is charged with a certain duty. Angels cannot be seen by the naked eyes.

5. Day of Judgment

A Muslim believes in the Day of the Judgment. This world as we know it will come to an end, and the dead will rise to stand for their final and fair trial. On that day, all men and women from Adam to the last person will be resurrected from the state of death. Everything we do, say, make, intend and think are accounted for and kept in accurate records. Those will be brought up on the Day of Judgment.

One who believes in life after death is not expected to disobey God. They will be ever-conscious that God is watching all their actions and the angels are recording them.

People with good records will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to Paradise. People with bad records will be fairly judged, punished and cast into Hell. The real nature of Heaven and Hell are known to God only, but they are described by God in familiar terms in the Qur'an.

If some good deeds are seen not to get full appreciation and credit in this life, they will receive full compensation and be acknowledged on the Day of Judgment. If some people who commit sins, neglect God and indulge in immoral activities seem superficially successful and prosperous in this life, absolute justice will be done to them on the Day of Judgment. The time of the Day of Judgment is known by God alone.

6. Predestination

A Muslim believes in the ultimate Knowledge and Power of God to plan and execute His plans. God is Wise, Just, and Loving, and whatever He does must have a good motive, although we may fail sometimes to understand it fully. The believer should have strong faith in God, recognizing that their own knowledge is limited and their thinking is based on individual considerations. In contrast, the knowledge of God is limitless and He plans on a universal basis. Humans should think, plan and make sound choices and then put their trust in God. If things happen as they want, they should praise God. If things do not happen as they want, they should still praise God, recognizing that He knows best what is good for the affairs of mankind.

How to become a Muslim?

To be a Muslim (male or female) one must proclaim and believe with complete and unfaltering faith the following:

- (1) There is no god worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) is His Prophet and Messenger.

AND

- (2) I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, who is One, and has no partners, and that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) is His slave and Messenger.

Life after death

In Islam, an individual's life after death (or their Hereafter) is very closely shaped by their present life. Life after death begins with the resurrection of man, after which there will come a moment when every human will be shaken as they are confronted with their intentions and deeds, good and bad, and even by their failure to do good in this life. On the Day of Judgment, the entire record of people from the age of puberty will be presented before God. God will weigh everyone's good and bad deeds according to His Mercy and His Justice, forgiving many sins and multiplying many good deeds. One who excels in goodness will be rewarded generously, whereas one whose evils and wrongs outweigh his good deeds will be punished. Those who emerge successful in this judgment will go to Paradise and the doors of eternal bliss will be opened to them. Those who are condemned and deserve punishment will be sent to Hell - the abode of fire and torture.

Those who disbelieve say: The Hour will never come unto us. Say: Nay, by my Lord, it is coming, unto you surely. (He is) the knower of the unseen. Not an atom's weight, or less than that or greater, escapes Him in the heavens or in the earth, but it is in a clear Record. That He may reward those who believe and do good work. For them are pardon and a rich provision. But those who strive against our revelations, challenging (Us), theirs will be a painful doom of wrath. [Sura Saba, 34: 3-5]

The need to believe in the life after death

Belief in the life after death has always been part of the teachings of the Prophets and is an essential condition of being a Muslim. Whenever we are asked to do something, it is our very nature to

think about its benefits and its costs. We regard a useless action as unnecessary and are not prepared to waste our time doing it. Similarly, we are not very eager to avoid a thing that is harmless. The deeper our conviction about the usefulness of something, the firmer our response to it will be. The more doubtful we are about its usefulness, the more wavering and shaky would be our attitude. After all, why does a child put his hand in fire? Because he does not know that fire burns. Why does he evade studying? Because he does not fully grasp the importance and benefits of education.

This belief divides people into three categories

First, there are those who do not believe in the Hereafter and regard life on this earth as the only life and nothing destroys them except time. Naturally, they judge something to be good if it produces desirable results and evil if it brings about undesirable results.

Second, there are those who do not deny the Hereafter, but they depend on the intercession or atonement of someone to absolve them of their sins. Among them are some who regard themselves as Gods chosen people, who will receive only nominal punishment, however grave their sins may be. This deprives them of the moral advantage, which they could have derived from their belief in the Hereafter. As a result, their behavior becomes very much like that of those who deny the Hereafter.

Third, are those who believe in the Hereafter and do not delude themselves that they have any special relationship with God or that anyone can intercede on their behalf. They hold themselves accountable for their actions and their belief in the Hereafter becomes a great moral force. As a result, they find a permanent guard, stationed within them, which cautions and admonishes them whenever they deviate from the right path. There may be no court to summon them, no policemen to apprehend them and no public opinion to pressure them. Instead, the guard within them is ever alert and ready to remind them when they transgress. The

consciousness of this inner presence makes them fear doing anything that is prohibited. Should they succumb to temptation and violate the law of God, they are ever ready to offer sincere regrets and to enter a firm contract with God not to repeat the same mistake in the future.

A person who is focused on successes or failures in this world alone will be concerned with the benefits and harms that come to him in this life only. He may be reluctant to do good deeds that have no worldly benefit. Similarly, he may not be prepared to stop doing a wrong act that will not harm him in this world.

On the other hand, a person who believes in life after death would look upon all worldly gains and losses as temporary and would not put at stake eternal bliss for a transitory gain. Belief in the next world instills in one the desire to do well and avoid the wrong, however costly it may be in terms of worldly sacrifices.

What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, - that equal with their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make. God created the heavens and the earth for just ends, and in order that each soul may find the recompense of what it has earned and none of them be wronged. [Sura Al-Jathiyah, 45:21]

There is a big difference in the way of life of the two types of people. For one, the idea of a good act may be limited to its value in this temporary life: for example gains in money, property, public recognition or similar things which give one position, power, reputation or worldly happiness.

Such things become the objectives of life and they may not deter one from pursuing cruel and unjust means in their achievement. In contrast, for a believer, all that pleases God is good and all that invokes His displeasure and wrath is evil. A good act for a believer will remain good even if it brings no personal benefit in this world.

A believer will be confident that God will reward him in the eternal life and that would be the real success. Similarly, they would not fall a prey to evil deeds merely for some worldly gain, for they

would know that even if they escape punishment in this short worldly life, they would still have to answer to God.

True justice becomes apparent by believing in life after death

God created people and made them responsible for their actions. In this world, we notice that the virtuous often live in a wretched state while the wicked often seem to have the good things in life. Innocent people often suffer at the hands of exploiters and criminals, who seem to gain rather than suffer by their crimes in this world. If there were no future life in which the virtuous are rewarded and the vicious are punished, there would be no justice. There would be no point in creating people with a conscience and in sending Prophets to remind them of their responsibility.

We shall set up scales of justice on the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): And enough are We to take account. [Sura Al-Anbiya, 21:47]

God is the Most Just; He will establish justice among all His creatures and no one can escape from God. Islam, therefore, places great emphasis on having absolute assurance of the Hereafter. This assurance should be similar to the certainty we have in death (which can overcome us at any time). Therefore, striving to earn the pleasure of God becomes the objective of life.



CHAPTER 3

Life in the light of Taqwa

What is Taqwa?

Taqwa is =

Taqwa is an Arabic word. It is the state of heart that motivates virtuous conduct and prevents evil action.



Taqwa is the ability to safe-guard

Taqwa is the central concept running through the Qur'an

1. Fearing Allah in the context of Islam
2. Allah-consciousness as the element of Taqwa
3. Love of Allah in the context of Islam
4. Specific acts that nourish Allah's love
5. Actions that keep away men from Allah's love
6. Benefits derived from having Taqwa

Taqwa is the central concept running through the Qur'an. It is translated normally as piety, heeding or fearing Allah. In fact, Taqwa combines piety, heeding, fearing Allah, Allah-consciousness and love of Allah.

Keep an Islamic Compass always within you

A compass is an instrument that shows directions. We use a compass to find our way in uncharted territory. Similarly, we need an Islamic compass to find directions in our journey through life. This compass points the right directions. Siratal Mustaqeem.

Taqwa, developing Allah-consciousness, is the Islamic compass for us. It is a strong belief that we are being watched constantly, all the twenty-four hours of the day and we are responsible and accountable for all our actions. It is a secret life between self and Allah.

Islam prescribes a complete code for life. It lays down the universal principles. It is the way of life that fits into the Natural Law with a definite code of conduct in all areas of human activities.

Personal life

It is concerned with internal and external aspects of life. Internal aspects of personal life are concerned with prayer, fasting, charity, Allah consciousness, truth, love, compassion for humanity, sacrifice, self-discipline, self-control etc.

Family life

Family is an important social institution. The Islamic code lays down detailed guidelines in all matters concerning the family life. It aims to bring harmony in family relations of marriage, the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife, parents and children, etc.

Social and Economic life

The Islamic code relating to social and economic life aims at achieving justice and prosperity for all. Everyone is equal,

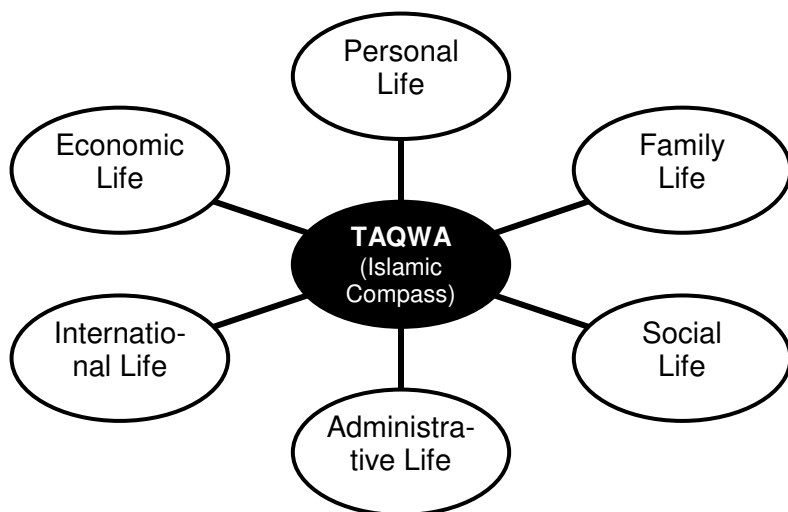
irrespective of race or color, social origin, nationality or wealth. Earning one's living through decent labor is worship in Islam. The rules regarding inheritance of property, interest-free finance, taxation, etc, are quite specific. The Islamic economic system aims at the welfare of the people.

Administrative life

The ultimate sovereignty belongs to Allah. It ensures protection to non-Muslims. The governing principle of the Islamic State is the concept of Trusteeship of Allah with great responsibility.

International life

The Islamic system aims at bringing harmony and cooperation in international relations. It is based on the concept of universal brotherhood. Islamic compass brings alignment in all spheres of life. If you do not hold the rope of Allah in all activities of life such as family, social, economics etc, it will not be aligned and may be lost in isolation. If you hold the rope of Allah firmly, you will find a strong alignment as seen in diagram and your life will be smooth like a well-lubricated engine. The rope of Allah drags and guides us along the right direction in all our activities of life.



Necessity of regular reading of the Qur'an understanding the meaning of what is being read or recited

The Qur'an is a Book of guidance, knowledge and wisdom. It is the only Book to guide the humanity to both spiritual and worldly perfection and happiness. The Book is from Allah, it contains the Words of Allah. It is a blessing for the human race that Allah in His limitless kindness revealed this Book containing signs and messages to read, recite, understand, ponder and implement in human life for attaining Taqwah and pleasure of Allah. Unless the meaning of the messages of the Qur'an are understood by the reader or the reciter, he/she remains in darkness, and ignorant of the wishes and commands of Allah as to the "Do's and Do Nots" for His obedience. He/she is a disobedient slave of Allah who willfully does not want or try to understand His commands.

In His Qur'an, Allah has repeatedly asked the humans to read, recite, and understand the message contained therein, so that they know their duty to Allah and do not disregard or disobey His commands for lack of knowledge and understanding and receive His blessings. Moreover, Allah has made the Qur'an easy to understand, and has repeatedly asked: Is there anybody to heed the admonitions (The Qur'an is a Book of admonitions).

There is no excuse not to read or recite the Qur'an without knowing the meanings of what it contains. Willful ignorance is a punishable act, which the reader is going to regret when he/she meets Allah in the Hereafter.

Those who advocate reading and reciting the Qur'an without understanding its meaning are depriving themselves of the benefits of the message, knowledge and light of the Qur'an and, at the same time, trying to deprive others too which is not at all acceptable. This is misleading.

But the meanings and blessings of the message of the Qur'an will not enter the heart and soul and benefit the reader unless certain

procedure is adopted. Here are some suggestions to the readers for deriving the desired benefits from reading the Qur'an.

Reading the Qur'an

Qur'an is the Word of Allah. He says in His Qur'an

1. *With Truth We have sent it down and with the Truth it has come down [Sura Isra, Ayat 105]*
2. *And Perfect are the Words of your Lord in Truth and Justice [Sura Ana'm, Ayat 115]*

Take the Qur'an in your hands after you have acquired cleanliness. Read the Qur'an with no purpose other than to receive guidance from your Lord, to come nearer to Him to seek His pleasure.

What you get from the Qur'an depends on what you come to it for. Your Niyah (intention and purpose) is crucial. Certainly the Qur'an has come to guide you, but you may also go astray by reading it should you approach it for impure purposes and wrong motives. Thank Allah profusely for the Rahmat and guidance sent through the Qur'an. Come to the Qur'an with a strong and deep faith that it is the Word of Allah, your Creator and Lord.

Read the Qur'an with such deep attention that your soul, heart, mind, tongue and body participate in the reading; your Niyah should be directed to seeking only your Lord's pleasure by devoting your heart, mind, soul and time to the guidance that Allah has sent to you. Bring the will, resolve and readiness to obey whatever the Qur'an says, and change your life, attitude and behavior- inward and outward –as directed in the Qur'an. Concentrate on the reading and meaning of what is being said.

And finally, remember always that Satan is there to create all sorts of hindrances to divert your attention to something else so that you miss the guidance. So be on the alert, and seek protection from Allah.

Technique to Understand The Qur'an

Before the reader begins the study of the Qur'an, he must bear in mind that it is a unique Book, quite different from the books one usually reads. Unlike conventional books, the Qur'an does not contain information, ideas or arguments about specific themes arranged in a literary order. That is why a stranger to the Qur'an, on his first approach to it, is baffled when he does not readily find its theme. Nor does he find it divided into chapters with different topics treated separately. Neither does he see separate instructions for life's various aspects arranged in a sequential order. He does find that it deals with creeds, gives moral instructions, lays down laws, invites people to Islam, admonishes the disbelievers, draws lessons from historical events, administers warnings, gives glad tidings, all blended together in a beautiful manner. The same subject is repeated in different ways and one topic follows the other without any apparent connection. Sometimes a new topic crops up in the middle of another without any apparent reason.

The diction of the speaker and of those being spoken to and the direction of the address change without notice. There is no sign of sections and divisions anywhere. Historical events are presented but not as in history books. The problems of philosophy and metaphysics are treated in a manner different from that of the textbooks on the subjects. Man and the universe are mentioned in a language different from that of the natural sciences. Likewise it follows its own method of solving cultural, political, social and economic problems and deals with the principles and injunctions of law in a manner quite different from that of the sociologists, lawyers and jurists. Morality is taught in a way that has no parallel in the whole of literature.

That is why the unwary reader is baffled and puzzled when he finds all these things contrary to his conception of a book. He begins to feel that the Qur'an is a book without any order, or that it deals with miscellaneous topics in an incoherent manner. As a result, its opponents raise strange objections against the Qur'an,

and its modern followers adopt strange devices to ward off doubts and objections. They either resort to escapism or put forward strange interpretations to ease their minds. Sometimes they try to create artificial connections between the verses to explain away the apparent incoherence, and, as a last resort, they even accept the theory that the Qur'an deals with miscellaneous topics without any order or coherence. Consequently, verses are isolated from their context and confusion is produced in the meanings.

This happens when the reader does not take into consideration that the Qur'an is a unique book. It does not, like other books, state at the beginning the subject it deals with and the object it intends to achieve. Its style and method of explaining things are also quite different from those of other books and it does not follow any bookish order. Above all, it is not a book on "religion" in the sense this word is generally understood. That is why when a reader approaches the Qur'an with the common notions of a book, he is rather puzzled by its style and manner of presentation. He finds that at many places the background has not been mentioned and the circumstances under which a particular passage was revealed have not been stated. As a result, the ordinary reader is unable to benefit fully from the most precious treasures contained in the Qur'an, though occasionally he may succeed in discovering a few gems here and there. People become victims of doubts who are not acquainted with these distinctive features of the Qur'an. They seem to find miscellaneous topics scattered throughout its pages and have difficulty understanding the meanings. Even those verses which are absolutely clear appear to them irrelevant in the contexts they occur.

The reader may be saved from all these difficulties, if he is warned beforehand that *the Book he is going to study is the only book of its kind in the whole world, that its literary style is quite different from that of all other books; that its theme is unique and that his preconceived notions of a book cannot help him understand the Qur'an*. He should free his mind from preconceived notions and get acquainted with the distinctive features of this Book. Then and then alone can he understand it.

In order to understand the Qur'an thoroughly, it is essential to know the nature of this Book, its central idea and its aim and

object. The reader should also be well acquainted with its style, the terms it uses and the method it adopts to explain things. He should keep in mind the background and circumstances under which a certain passage was revealed.

Background: One cannot fully understand many of the topics discussed in the Qur'an unless one is acquainted with the background of their revelation. One should know the social, historical or other antecedents or conditions which help explain any particular topic. For, the Qur'an was not revealed as a complete book at once; nor did God hand over a written copy of it to Muhammad (Peace be upon him) at the very beginning of his mission and command him to publish it and invite people to adopt a particular way of life. Moreover, it is not a literary work of the common conventional type that develops its central theme in a logical order; nor does it conform to the style of such a work. The Qur'an adopts its own style to properly guide the Islamic Movement that was started by God's messenger under his direct command. Accordingly, God revealed the Qur'an piecemeal to meet the requirements of the movement in its different stages.

Suggestions for study of the Qur'an

As people turn to the Qur'an with different aims and objectives, it is not possible to offer general advice about a method of study that will fulfill the requirements of all. However, we may offer some suggestions:

1) The one prerequisite for understanding the Qur'an is to study it with an open and detached mind. Whether one believes it is a revealed book or not, one should free the mind of bias in favor of or against it, get rid of all preconceived opinions, and then approach it with the sole desire of understanding it. People who study it with preconceived notions read only their own ideas between the lines and cannot grasp what the Qur'an wants to convey. While this method of study can never be fruitful even with other books, it is totally fruitless when applied to the Qur'an.

2) There is another thing which must be kept in mind. If a cursory acquaintance with the contents of the Qur'an is all that is desired, then one reading of it might be sufficient. During this preliminary

study, if some questions occur in his mind, the reader should note them down and patiently continue his study, for he is likely to find their answers somewhere in the Qur'an itself. If he finds answers to his questions, he should note them along with the questions. But if, after his first reading, any questions remain unanswered, he should proceed to the second reading. We can say from our own experience that after the second reading, hardly a single question remains unanswered.

After getting this general insight into the Qur'an, one should begin its detailed study, taking notes of the different aspects of its teachings. For example, note should be made of what pattern of life it approves, and which style of living it disapproves. One should write down the qualities of a good man next to those of a bad man in order to bring both of them clearly before his mind. The same method should be followed when reading about the things which lead man to success and salvation, and those which lead to his failure and ruin. The teachings and instructions in the Qur'an about belief, morality, obligations, civilization, culture, economics, politics, law, social systems, peace, war, and other human issues should be studied and illustrated. These notes should be organized and combined to form a complete sketch of the system of life which the Qur'an and Islam represent.

If one desires to know the Qur'an's solution to a certain human problem, he should first study the relevant literature, both ancient and modern, and note down the basic issues. Use should be made of any modern research in the given field. Then, he should study the Qur'an with the knowledge is sought, the Qur'an must be read several times, and each time from a different perspective. Those who desire to make a thorough study of the Qur'an should read it at least twice with the sole aim of understanding the system of life it presents. The goal should be to objectively finding the answers to those issues. Again, we can say from personal experience that when the Qur'an is studied with the goal of researching any problem, an answer will be found to it even in those verses which were skipped over without imagining what treasures lay hidden therein.

But in spite of all these attempts, the inspiring spirit of the Qur'an can never be fully grasped unless its message is put into practice.

For the Qur'an is neither a book of abstract ideas nor ungrounded theories which can be studied lying on an easy chair. Neither is it a book of religious mysteries and riddles which must be unraveled in monasteries and universities. It is a Book sent to inspire people to start a movement by directing their energies towards achievement of its mission. It is only by going to the 'battlefield' of life that one can understand its real message. This is why a quiet and amiable person like Muhammad (God's peace be with him) had to come out of his seclusion, start the Islamic Movement and fight against the rebellious world. It was the Qur'an which urged him to declare war against every kind of falsehood and engage in conflict with the leaders of disbelief. It was this Book which attracted good people from every home and gathered them under the banner of Islam in order to fight against the upholders of the old system, who organized themselves into a gang to oppose them. During this long and bitter struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, which continued for twenty-three years, the Qur'an went on guiding the Movement in every phase and at every stage until it succeeded in establishing the Islamic System in its perfection.

It is obvious that the truths contained in the Qur'an can in no way be grasped by mere recitation of it. For, to get these truths, an active role must be taken in the conflict between belief and unbelief, real and unreal, truth and falsehood. A man can understand it only if he takes up its message, invites the world to accept it, and moves on forever in accordance with its Guidance. By this alone will he experience all that happened during the revelation of the Qur'an.

Such a man will experience all those conditions which the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam), and his companions (Radi Allahu Anhum), experienced. He will encounter the trials and tribulations of the Makkah's, Taif's, and Abyssinia's; he will pass through the same fire that the Muslims passed through at the battles of Badr, Uhud, Hunain, and Tabuk. The rich and powerful, the ignorant and oppressive will be encountered, the hypocrites and two-faced will be dealt with; in short, every type of person the Qur'an mentions will be confronted. Incidentally, this is a wonderful experience in itself, and is well worth the try.

Truth and Falsehood

Always tell the truth, never tell a lie. This is of utmost importance. For truth is light while falsehood is darkness. A truthful person is liked by Allah and will be rewarded, while a liar will be punished by Allah; so goes for cheating or misappropriation of others money and property too. These are criminal activities punishable by Allah.

Love Allah and His Rasul (Blessings and Peace be upon him)

Love Allah and His Rasul (Prophet Muhammad) more than your parents or any other member of your family. Prove this love by obeying the orders of Allah and His Rasul. Again, you should love your religion, ISLAM, and be a good Muslim. Islam means complete and willful submission to the commands and wishes of Allah without protest or reservation whatsoever. This will bring you peace through the blessing of Allah. Be an obedient slave of Allah and worship Him alone.

Learn from authentic sources only

Acquire Islamic knowledge from authentic sources only—best source is the Holy Qur'an, and thereafter the authentic (Sahih) Hadith of Rasulullah (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Before reading a book on Islam, first ask your parents and also the Imam of your local Masjid for guidance. It is advisable to visit Islamic centers and libraries nearby maintained by the Masjids. Also the internet which is very useful in locating Islamic information and Dawah centers, and for any other information on Islam. It is not safe (from the Iman point of view) to accept any religious practice without verification from an authentic source. Incorrect information are plenty, therefore, needs verification before practicing to make Ibadah acceptable to Allah.



CHAPTER 4

Importance of Collective Life (Jama't)

Collective life & Brotherhood in Islam (Jama`ah & Ukhuah)

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

And hold fast all together to the rope of Allah and be not divided. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you: you were once enemies then He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brothers. You stood on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs clear to you that you may be guided to the right way. (Sura Ale Imran, 3:103)

1. Jama'ah
2. Prohibition
3. Ukhuah

1. Jama'ah

a) Hold fast all together

b) وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

(And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves.) It was said that,

- بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ
- (to the Rope of Allah) refers to Allah's covenant, just as Allah said in the following Ayah,
- ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الدَّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا تُفْعَلُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ مِنَ النَّاسِ

- *(Indignity is put over them wherever they may be, except when under a covenant (of protection) from Allah, and from men;) [Sura Ale Imran, 3:112], [in reference to pledges and peace treaties.]*

Importance of Jama`ah (Community)

In order to establish Islam fully in one's life, to witness to it faithfully, to discharge one's duties and responsibilities, it is absolutely essential to form a Jama'ah based on the Principles set by Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

Collective life from Hadith

Al Haris al Ash'ari RA reported that Rasul (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said "I enjoin five things on you, which have been revealed to me as commands by Allah: collective life, listening, obedience, migration and struggle in the way of Allah. Anyone who secedes from the body of Muslims throws off allegiance to Islam, until he returns to its fold and he who exerts ignorance shall be consigned to hell. The companions of Rasool Allah submitted: "Allah's messenger, even if such a man keeps fasts and says prayers?" The Prophet said: "Yes, even if he says prayers and keeps fasts and claims to be a Muslim" (Tirmidhi, Ahmad, and Hakim)

Firstly, in order to work for Islam the correct procedure is to establish an organizational discipline (al-Jama'ah) wherein members will hear and obey their leaders, and then to take up Hijra and struggle (Jihad), as the situation may warrant.

Secondly, that secession from the Al-Jamaah* is tantamount to secession from Islam. Such secession means that the person concerned is returning to the life of the pre-Islamic days, when the communal life is not organized around the obedience of the Creator.

Thirdly, that only through corporate life, Jamaah, and collective struggle can we fulfill the main objective of Islam and most of its requirements.

'Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) said, "Laa Islam bi laa Jamaa'ati wa laa jamaa'ati bi laa Imaarah, wa laa Imaaratu bi laa sam'on wa taa'ah". "There is no Islam without a community, and there is no community without a leadership, and there is no authority without hearing and obeying".

The expression 'rope of Allah', in this verse, refers to the 'religion of Allah'. The reason is, a bond between man and the Creator joins all believers together. To take a firm hold on this rope means that the believers should attach profound importance to their religion: this should always be the centre of their concerns; they should continually strive to establish it; and the common desire to serve it should make them co-operate with each other. (Tafheem)

From Hadith

This Qur'an is the rope of Allah (swt) and is clear light and is cure of all human ills, and is protection for one who holds fast to it and is means of salvation for one who follows it. (Tirmidhi)

2. Prohibition

(and be not divided among yourselves), وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

orders sticking to the community of the believers and forbids division. There are several Ahadith that require adhering to the Jama'ah (congregation of believers) and prohibit division.

Reported by Abu Huraira (RA): Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said, "(It pleases Allah for you to acquire three qualities and displeases Him that you acquire three characteristics. It pleases Him that you worship Him Alone and not associate anything or anyone with Him in worship, that you hold on to the Rope of Allah all together and do not divide, and that you advise whoever Allah appoints as your Leader. The three that displease Him are that you say, 'It was said,' and, so-and-so said,' asking many unnecessary questions and wasting money.)" [Muslim] (Ibn Kathir)

3. Ukhuah (Brotherhood)

وَاذْكُرُوا لِلّٰهِ نِعْمَةً عَلَيْهِمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ
بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا

(and remember Allah's favor on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His grace, you became brethren)(الخُرَاتَنَ)[3:103].

This was revealed about the Aws and Khazraj (two tribes in Madina). During the time of Jahiliyyah, the Aws and Khazraj were at war and had great hatred, enmity and ill feelings towards each other, causing long conflicts and battles to occur between them. When Allah brought Islam, those among them who embraced it became brothers who loved each other by Allah's grace, having good ties for Allah's sake and helping each other in righteousness and piety. Allah said,

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللّٰهُ هُوَ الَّذِي أَيْدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ
وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ
قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللّٰهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Should they intend to deceive you,- verity Allah is sufficient for you: He it is that has strengthened you with His aid and with (the company of) the believers. And (moreover) He has put affection between their hearts: not if you had spent all that is in the earth, could you not have produced that affection, but Allah has done it: for He is Exalted in might, Wise. [Sura Al Anfal, 8:62, 63]

Before Islam, their disbelief had them standing at the edge of a pit of the Fire, but Allah saved them from it and delivered them to faith. The Messenger of Allah reminded the Ansar [from both Aws and Khazraj] of this bounty when he was dividing the war booty of Hunayn. During that time, some Ansar did not like the way the booty was divided, since they did not get what the others did,

although that was what Allah directed His Prophet to do. The Messenger of Allah gave them a speech, in which he said:

(O Ansar! Did I not find you misguided and Allah directed you to guidance because of me? Were you not divided beforehand and Allah united you around me? Were you not poor and Allah enriched you because of me?)

Whenever the Prophet asked them a question, they would answer, "Indeed, Allah and His Messenger have granted us bounty."

Brotherhood

Brotherhood among the believers is a pre-requisite in Islam

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

(49:10) The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that you may receive Mercy.

The lowest limit of brotherhood is to have an unblemished heart towards you brothers and its zenith is to prefer him to yourself in privilege. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) gives a beautiful analogy of Ukhuah. He said: "Believers are like one body, if any of its limbs feel pain, the whole body suffers in fever and sleeplessness."

Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) also said:

"Whoever loves for Allah and dislikes for Allah, gives for Allah and withholds for Allah, indeed has perfected his faith."

Safeguarding our Ukhuah (Brotherhood)

In order to safeguard our brotherhood we must always remember those prohibited points which Allah (swt) has mentioned one by one in Suratul Hujurat.

Prohibitions

In the under noted two verses of Sura Hujurat (49), Allah lays down certain prohibitions, which must be implemented in order to practically establish the brotherhood of believers mentioned in the previous verse.

There are total of six prohibitions, three in verse Number 11 and three in verse # 12

Verse Number 11

1. Let not a group scoff at another group. **لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ**
2. Nor defame yourselves **وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ**
3. Nor insult one another by offensive nicknames **وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ**

Verse Number 12

- Avoid much suspicion **اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ**
- Do not spy on others **وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا**
- Nor backbite **وَلَا يَغْتَاب بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا**

Dua'..... (Supplication)

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

(Sura al Hashr, 59:10) (And it also belongs to) those who came after them, and who pray: "Lord, forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith, and do not put in our hearts any rancor

towards those who believe. Lord, You are the Most Tender, the Most Compassionate.”

Selecting Friends

Character and behavior of one’s friends speak about the character and behavior of that particular person. Friends exert great influence on each individual –“peer pressure” is a reality in life and such pressure can make a person good or bad. So it is essential that a Muslim should select friends very carefully. Let us cite some examples (or standards) that should guide a Muslim (both male and female):

1. A friend should be Islamic-minded, know something about Islam, should be eager to know more about Islam. Should be respectful to Islam. Should respect friendship.
2. He/she should preferably be a Namazi (Musalli), i.e., in the habit of saying 5 times daily salat regularly.
3. Neat and clean. Dress, body, hands, mouth free from bad smells. Well-dressed, well behaved.
4. A non-smoker, non-alcoholic, not a club-goer.
5. Not in the habit of using abusive, vulgar language, telling lies, swearing, gambling, frequently asking for loans, etc.
6. Free of keeping bad company. Not nosy.
7. Attentive to study, not a negative attitude person.
8. Should be easy-going, cheerful, helpful, considerate, and not argumentative.
9. Friendship should be with same-sex persons only: boy to boy, girl to girl.

10. Boyfriend-girlfriend relationship must be avoided. Such relationship is Haram for Muslims. No free-mixing of sexes permitted.
11. Ready to welcome discussions on Islam and share information on Islam. In case of girls, the habit of wearing Hijab should be a welcome thing.

Note: Make such clean friendship that you can always invite them home to meet your parents and share views on Islam and other important matters.

Islamic Programs

In stead of participating in un-Islamic activities, Muslims should participate in the Islamic programs taking place in the city of Toronto all round the year. Various Islamic organizations are conducting lectures, seminars, workshops, training, etc., at different locations to revive Islamic spirit and ideals. Go to the Internet and search these websites for such programs.

Another idea is to organize discussion on Islamic subjects regularly among friends and acquaintances for debating and learning from each other. Non-Muslim friends may also be invited to join/participate.



CHAPTER 5

Duty of Children towards their Parents

All religions of the world have laid great emphasis on the rights of parents and the duties of children towards them. According to Islamic teachings, to be obedient and to show kindness to parents has been enjoined in the Holy Qur'an in such a manner as to say that among the noble deeds, to obey parents, treat them respectfully and to show kindness to them is next to worshipping Almighty Allah. The Qur'an says,

"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor." (Sura Al Isra, 17:23).

According to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the parents of a certain person are his Heaven or Hell. What this means is that if a person obeys his parents, attends to their needs and keeps them happy and comfortable, he will attain Paradise. On the other hand, if he is disrespectful and rude to them, offends them by ignoring their needs and feelings or causes them grief in any manner, his place shall be in Hell. In modern times, a trend has arisen whereby when parents come to be seen as a liability because of old age and physical weakness. They are then sent to 'old people's homes'. (This is done clearly to shun responsibility to the parents on a daily basis. This is certainly a cruelty to the parents.)

But the stricture ordained by Islam makes it clear that shrugging off the responsibility of old parents serves as an invitation to Hell. Both the father and mother are equal when it comes to caring for them and providing them all possible physical comforts and mental peace. The time that the parents need to be looked after most, is in their old age. To serve them devotedly at that stage of their lives is the best way of pleasing Almighty Allah. It is also one of the easiest ways of attaining Paradise. Abu Hurairah, a companion of the holy Prophet, narrated the saying of the Prophet that "a person is indeed disgraced, who does not earn Paradise by caring for his parents during the life time and old age of his/her parents".

A person once asked the holy Prophet, "Who has the greatest claim on me with regard to service and kind treatment?" The Holy

Prophet replied, "Your mother and again your mother and once again your mother. After her is the claim of your father, then that of your near relatives, and then of the relations next to them". This shows that the claim of a mother is greater than a father over the care that you endow upon them in their old age. Serving and obeying parents is a matter of give and take. Those who treat and obey their parents can rest assured that their children will also show kindness and compassion to them. Respecting and caring the parents is a virtue of the highest order that continues to transcend generation after generation.

It is the duty of sons and daughters to pray for the forgiveness of their parents after their death and treat their relatives and friends with due respect. In the Holy Qur'an, Muslims have been urged to pray for the salvation of their parents as shown in the following verse: *"And say, My Lord, Have mercy on both of them as they cared for me when I was little". (Sura Isra, 17:24)*

The holy Prophet has said that to abuse one's parents is a major sin. So much so that if a person abuses someone else's parents and that person, in retaliation, abuses his parents, then it is as though he himself has abused his parents. On another occasion, when asked about the major sins, the holy Prophet replied, "To associate someone with Almighty God, to disobey parents, to kill unlawfully, and to give false evidence".

In the light of the Holy Qur'an and holy Prophet's sayings, one can understand that the respect for parents occupies a special place in the spiritual, moral and social teachings of Islam.

Love Your Parents

An interesting story from Hadith

Ibn Omar reported that the (beloved) Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: "While three men were walking (traveling) the rain overtook them. Then they entered the cave of the mountain. While they were in the cave a huge rock of the mountain then fell down over the mouth of their cave and completely shut them in. In this difficult time there was no other

obvious material source of rescue. They said to one another "let us recall the good deeds, which we did sincerely for Allah (swt).

Make dua (supplication) to Allah (swt)" by mentioning those good deeds as a source of acceptance that He (swt) may rescue us. So one of them mentioned one of his special deeds to Allah (swt) by saying: "O Allah (swt) I had old and weak parents and young children for whom I used to graze sheep. Whenever I went to them at night, I took milk and gave it first to my parents to drink before my children. One day I could not return home till it was evening. Then I found them (parents - mum and dad) had fallen asleep. I had come to them with milk as I used to do (and did not disturb their sleep) but I remained standing near their heads in the state of not liking to begin dinner with children before them (mum and dad), while the children were crying at my feet.

This affair of theirs and mine continued till it was dawn. If my deed as you know was for to seek your pleasure, then rescue us and make for us an opening from which we see the horizon. Accordingly, Allah (swt) made an opening for them till they saw the horizon. The other two also remembered their good deeds by which they made dua to Allah (swt) in this difficult time and Allah (swt) helped them and the huge rock was removed from the opening of the cave." (See Sahih Al-Bukhari & Sahih Al-Muslim)

It is now very easy for us to understand that doing good for our parents and being obedient sons and daughters to them, we can become good servants to Allah (swt). The huge rocks of difficulties will be removed from our ways if we can prove to be the helpful and beneficial to our fellow human beings.

Hardship of Mothers for a child & Duty towards Parents

- ✍ *And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. (Sura Al-Isra, 17 : 23)*
- ✍ *Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, al-masakin (the poor), the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful; (Sura An Nisa, 4: 36)*
- ✍ *And we have enjoined upon man kindness (good treatment) to his parents. (Sura Al Ahqaf, 46 : 15)*
- ✍ *And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination. (Sura Luqman, 31: 14)*
- ✍ *But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in this world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do. (Sura Luqman, 31 : 15)*
- ✍ *And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty (30) months. When he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous (good) deeds, such as please You, and make my off-spring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will)." (Sura Al-Ahqaf, 46 : 15)*

- ✍ *And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. (Sura Al-Isra, 17 : 23)*
- ✍ *Say (O Muhammad, SAW): "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty. We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near Al-Fawahish (shameful sins, illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause (according to Islamic law). This He has commanded you that you may understand. (Sura Al-An'am, 6: 151)*
- ✍ *And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small." (Sura Isra, 17 : 24)*
- ✍ *And We have enjoined on man to be good and dutiful to his parents, but if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do. (Sura Al-Ankabut, 29: 8)*

Parents are inheritors of the properties

- ✍ *It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves wealth, that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable manners. (This is) a duty upon the God fearing (Al-Muttaqûn) (Sura Al-Baqara, 2: 180).*
- ✍ *They ask you (O Muhammad, SAW) what they should spend. Say: Whatever you spend of good must be for parents and kindred and orphans and the poor and the wayfarers, and whatever you do of good deeds, truly, Allah knows it well. (Sura Al-Baqara, 2: 215).*

Message to the other nations & Prophets regarding Parents

✍ *And (remember) when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none but Allah (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans the poor, [Tafsir At-Tabari, Vol. 10, Page 158 (Verse 9:60)] and speak good to people [i.e. enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, and say the truth about Muhammad, Blessings and Peace be upon him], and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat. Then you slid back, except a few of you, while you are backsliders. (Sura Al-Baqara, 2: 83).*

✍ *"My Lord! Forgive me, and my parents, and him who enters my home as a believer, and all the believing men and women. And to the Zalimun (polytheists, wrong-doers, and disbelievers, etc.) grant You no increase but destruction!" (Sura Nuh, 71 : 28)*

Misbehavior with the parents

✍ *But he who says to his parents: "Fie upon you both! Do you hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up (again) when generations before me have passed away (without rising)?" While they (father and mother) invoke Allah for help (and rebuke their son): "Woe to you! Believe! Verily, the Promise of Allah is true." But he says: "This is nothing but the tales of the ancient." (Sura Al-Ahqaf, 46 : 17)*

Honoring parents

✍ Abu 'Amr ash-Shaybani (RA) said, "The owner of this house (and he pointed at the house of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RA)) said, "I asked the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), which action Allah loves best. He replied, 'Prayer at its proper time.' 'Then what?' I asked. He said, 'Then kindness to parents.' I asked, 'then what?' He replied, 'then jihad in the Way of Allah.'" He added, "He told me about these things. If I had asked him to tell me more, he would have told me more." (Sahih Bukhari)

- ✍ 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar (RA) reported that the Prophet said, "The pleasure of the Lord lies in the pleasure of the parent. The anger of the Lord lies in the anger of the parent." (Sahih Bukhari)

Dutifulness to mother/father

- ✍ Bahz Ibn Hakim's grandfather said, "I asked, O 'Messenger of Allah, to whom should I be dutiful?' 'Your mother,' he replied. I asked, 'Then whom?' 'Your mother,' he replied. I asked, 'Then whom?' 'Your mother,' he replied. I asked, 'Then to whom should I be dutiful?' 'Your father,' he replied, 'and then the next closest relative and then the next.'" (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ 'Ata' Ibn Yasar said that a man came to Ibn 'Abbas (RA) and said, "I asked a woman to marry me and she refused to marry me. Another man asked her and she agreed to marry him. I became jealous and killed her. Is there any way for me to repent?" He asked, "Is your mother alive?" "No," he replied. He said, "Repent to Allah Almighty and try to draw near Him as much as you can." 'Ata' said, "I went to Ibn 'Abbas (RA) and asked him, 'Why did you ask him whether his mother was alive?' He replied, 'I do not know of any action better for bringing a person near to Allah than dutifulness to his mother.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

Dutifulness to parents, even if they are unjust

- ✍ Ibn 'Abbas (RA) said, "If any Muslim obeys Allah regarding his parents, Allah will open two gates of the Garden for him. If there is only one parent, then one gate will be opened. If one of them is angry, then Allah will not be pleased with him until that parent is pleased with him. "He was asked, "Even if they wrong him?" "Even if they wrong him" he replied. (Sahih Bukhari)

Gentle words to parents

- ✍ Hisham Ibn 'Urwa related this ayat from his father, "Take them under your wing, out of mercy, with due humility." (Al Isra, 17:24)
- ✍ Taysala Ibn Mayyas said, "I was with the Najadites [Kharijites] when I committed wrong actions which I supposed were major wrong actions. I mentioned that to Ibn 'Umar. He inquired, 'What are they?' I replied, 'Such-and-such.' He stated, 'These are not major wrong actions. There are nine major wrong actions. They are: associating others with Allah, killing someone, desertion from the army when it is advancing, slandering a chaste woman, usury, consuming an orphan's property, heresy in the mosque, scoffing, and causing one's parents to weep through disobedience.' Ibn 'Umar (RA) then said to me, 'Do you wish to separate yourself from the Fire? Do you want to enter the Fire?' 'By Allah, yes!' I replied. He asked, 'Are your parents still alive?' I replied, 'My mother is.' He said, 'By Allah, if you speak gently to her and feed her, then you will enter the Garden as long as you avoid the major wrong actions.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

Repaying parents

- ✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) reported that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "A child cannot repay his father unless he finds him as a slave and he buys him and sets him free." (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ Sa'id Ibn Abi Burda (RA) said, "I heard my father say that Ibn 'Umar (RA) saw a Yamani man going around the House while carrying his mother on his back, saying, 'I am your humble camel. If her mount is frightened, I am not frightened.' Then he asked, 'Ibn 'Umar (RA), Do you think that I have repaid her?' He replied, 'No, not even for a single grain.' "Ibn 'Umar (RA) did *tawaf* and came to the Maqam and prayed two *rak'at*. He said, 'Ibn Abi Musa (RA), every two *rak'ats* make up for everything that has happened between them.'" (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr (RA) said, "A man came to the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), and made a pledge to him that he would do hijra. He left his parents who were in

tears. The Prophet said, 'Go back to them and make them laugh as you made them weep.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

Disobedience to parents

✍ Abu Bakra (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "Shall I tell you which is the worst of the major wrong actions?" "Yes, Messenger of Allah," they replied. He said, "Associating something else with Allah and disobeying parents." He had been reclining, but then he sat up and said, "And false witness." Abu Bakr (RA) said, "He continued to repeat it until I said, 'Is he never going to stop?'" (Sahih Bukhari)

"Allah curses whoever curses his parents"

✍ Abu't-Tufayl (RA) said, "'Ali was asked, 'Did the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), give you something special which he did not give to anyone else?' He replied, 'The Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him), did not give me anything special which he did not give to everyone else except for what I have in my sword scabbard.' He brought out a piece of paper.

Written on that paper was: 'Allah curses anyone who sacrifices an animal to something other than Allah. Allah curses anyone who steals a milestone. Allah curses anyone who curses his parents. Allah curses anyone who gives shelter to an innovator.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

Being Dutiful to Parents as long as that does not entail disobedience to Allah

✍ 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr (RA) said, "A man came to the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), wanting to do jihad. The Prophet asked, 'Are your parents alive?' 'Yes,' he replied. He said, 'Then exert yourself on their behalf.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

The One who fails his Parents will not enter the Garden (Paradise)

- ✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) reported that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "Disgrace! Disgrace! Disgrace!" They said, "Messenger of Allah, who?" He said, "The one who fails his parents or one of them when they are old will enter the Fire." (Sahih Bukhari)

Allah prolongs the life of someone who is dutiful towards his parents

- ✍ Mu'adh (RA) said, "Bliss belongs to someone who is dutiful towards his parents. Allah Almighty will prolong his life." (Sahih Bukhari)

One should not ask forgiveness for his father if he is an idolater

- ✍ Ibn 'Abbas (RA) mentioned the words of the Almighty, *"When one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say 'Ugh!' to them out of irritation and do not be harsh with them but speak to them with gentleness and generosity. Take them under your wing, out of mercy, with due humility and say: 'Lord, show mercy to them as they did in looking after me when I was small.'"* (Al Isra, 17:23-24) He said, "This was abrogated in *Surat at-Tawba*: 'It is not right for the Prophet and those who have Iman to ask forgiveness for the mushrikun even if they are close relatives after it has become clear to them that they are the companions of the Blazing Fire.' (9:113)"

Dutifulness towards a parent who is an idolater

- ✍ Asma' bint Abi Bakr (RA) said, "In the time of the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), my mother came to me hoping (I would be dutiful). I asked the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), 'Do I have to treat her well?' 'Yes,' he replied." (Sahih Bukhari)

A person should not revile his parents

- ✍ 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr (RA) said that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "Reviling one's parents is one of the great wrong actions." They asked, "How could he revile them?" He said, "He reviles a man who then in turn reviles his mother and father." (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr (RA) said, "A man's reviling his father is one of the major sins (kabeera ghunah) in the sight of Allah Almighty." (Sahih Bukhari)

The punishment for disobeying parents

- ✍ Abu Bakra (RA) reported that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "There is no wrong action more likely to bring punishment in this world in addition to what is stored up in the Next World than oppression and severing ties of kinship." (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ 'Imran Ibn Husayn (RA) said, "The Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, 'What do you say about fornication, drinking wine and theft?' 'Allah and His Messenger know best,' we replied. He stated, 'They are acts of outrage and there is punishment for them, but shall I tell you which is the greatest of the great wrong actions? Associating with Allah Almighty and disobeying parents.' He had been reclining, but then he sat up and said, 'and lying.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

Making parents weep

- ✍ Ibn 'Umar (RA) said, "Making parents weep is part of disobedience and one of the major sins (kabeera ghunah)." (Sahih Bukhari)

The Supplication of parents

- ✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) reported that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "Three supplications are answered by Allah without a doubt: the supplication of someone who is oppressed, the supplication of someone on a journey, and the supplication of parents for their children." (Sahih Bukhari)

Offering Islam to a Christian mother

- ✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) said, "Neither Jew nor Christian has heard me and then not loved me. I wanted my mother to become a Muslim, but she refused. I told her about it and she still refused. I went to the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), and said, 'Pray to Allah for me.' He did so and I went to her. She was inside the door of the house and said, 'Abu Hurayra (RA), I have become a Muslim.' I told the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), and I asked, 'Make supplication to Allah for me and my mother.' He said, 'O Allah, make people love Abu Hurayra (RA) and his mother.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

Dutifulness towards parents after their death

- ✍ Abu Usayd (RA) said, "We were with the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him), when a man asked, 'Messenger of Allah, is there any act of dutifulness which I can do for my parents after their death?' He replied, 'Yes. There are four things: Supplication for them, asking forgiveness for them, fulfilling their pledges, and being generous to friends of theirs. You only have ties of kinship through your parents.'" (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) said, "The dead person can be raised a degree after his death. He said, 'My Lord, how is this?' He was told, 'Your child can ask for forgiveness for you.'" (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ Ibn Sirin (RA) said, "We were with Abu Hurayra (RA) one night and he said, 'O Allah, forgive Abu Hurayra (RA) and his

mother and whoever asks for forgiveness for both of them." Muhammad said, "We used to ask for forgiveness for them so that we would be included in Abu Hurayra's (RA) supplication." (Sahih Bukhari)

- ✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "When a person dies, all action is cut off for him with the exception of three things: *sadaqa* which continues knowledge which benefits, or a righteous child who makes supplication for him." (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ Ibn 'Abbas (RA) reported that a man said, "O Messenger of Allah, my mother died without a will. Will it help her if I give *sadaqa* on her behalf?" "Yes," he replied. (Sahih Bukhari)

The Dutifulness of someone who maintains what his father loved

- ✍ 'Abdullah Ibn Dinar (RA) reported that Ibn 'Umar (RA) passed by a bedouin during a journey. The bedouin's father had been a friend of 'Umar's (RA). The bedouin said, "Am I not the son of so-and-so?" He said, "Yes, indeed." Ibn 'Umar (RA) ordered that he be given a donkey which was following him. He also took off his turban and gave it to him. One of the men with him said, "Wouldn't two dirhams be enough for him?" He replied, "The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, 'Maintain what your father loved. Do not cut it off so that Allah puts out your light.'" (Sahih Bukhari)
- ✍ Ibn 'Umar (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him), said, "The strongest form of dutifulness is when a man maintains relations with the people his father loved." (Sahih Bukhari)

Do not cut off someone with whom your father maintained ties

- ✍ Sa'd Ibn 'Ubada az-Zurqi (RA) reported that his father said, "I was sitting in the mosque in Madina with 'Amr Ibn 'Uthman

(RA) when 'Abdullah Ibn Salam walked by, leaning on his nephew. 'Amr left the assembly and showed his concern for him." Then Ibn Salam returned to them and said, "Do what you like, 'Amr Ibn 'Uthman (RA)," (and he said it two or three times) By the One who sent Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), with the Truth, it is in the Book of Allah Almighty (and he said it twice), 'Do not cut off those your father has joined so that that extinguishes your light.'" (Sahih Bukhari)

A man should not call his father by his name nor sit down before him nor walk in front of him

✍ Abu Hurayra (RA) saw two men and said to one of them, "Who is this man in relation to you?" He is my father," he replied. He said, "Do not call him by his own name nor walk in front of him nor sit down before him." (Sahih Bukhari)

Assist the parents in housework

1. Housekeeping (washroom cleaning, vacuuming etc.)
2. Help the mother in the kitchen & other chores
3. Help to father for grocery, bill payment and other errands
4. Laundry
5. Dishwashing
6. Gardening, snow cleaning, etc.



CHAPTER 6

Islamic way of life

Islamic Manners (Islamic Adab)

Islam is not a religion full of prayer and rituals only; Islam is a complete code of life that teaches and emphasizes on spiritual, personal, familial, and social pattern of behavior and interaction as well. These are called ADAB or Manners. In addition, there are Adab (manners) regulating the affairs of the state too. These Adab or Manners are all-inclusive of the life of the Muslims from birth to death. These are Islamic culture as distinct from other cultures (religions, social, familial or for governance of a country) Islamic culture (Adab) gives the Muslims a distinct identity in all the affairs of life. As Muslims, we should feel proud of our Islamic culture.

The Holy Qur'an and the authentic Hadith of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (blessing and peace be upon him) have given the Muslims details of the Adab (manners) encompassing all aspects of life. A Muslim who practices these Adab with sincerity on a daily basis becomes a person loved by Allah. On the other hand, a Muslim who neglects these manners will tend to drift away from Islam, and become a person far away from the Grace of Allah. This is a tremendous loss. Let us now see the nature of the Adab (manners) for practicing:

1. When the name of Allah is cited, say: *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* (Allah is Holy, He is Great)
2. When the name of Prophet Muhammad is spoken or heard, say: *Sallallahu 'alaihe wa sallam* (Allah's blessing and peace be upon him)
3. When the name of any other Prophet is spoken or heard, say: *Alaihes Salam* (Allah's peace be upon him)
4. When the name of a Sahabi (Companion) of Prophet Muhammad is spoken or heard, say: *Radhiallahu anhu* (May Allah be pleased with him) Sahaba is plural of Sahabi, meaning Companions.
5. In case of a female Companion (Sahabia) say: *Radhiallahu anha* (May Allah be pleased with her)

6. While starting any activity, say: *Bismillah* (I am beginning it in the name of Allah)
7. While entering your own house or apartment, say: *Bismillah*.
8. When a good news is heard, or gratitude to Allah is to be expressed for any reason, say: *Alhamdulillah* (All praises belong to Allah alone)
9. When someone departs from you; say: *Fi-amanillah* (I place you to the safety and protection of Allah)
10. When something strange is heard, say: *Subhanallah* (Allah is Holy, Allah is Great)
11. To express gratitude to anyone for something good/nice done to you, say: *Jazakallahu Khairan* (May Allah grant you better rewards)
12. When entangled in a problem, say: *Tawakkalullah* (I depend upon Allah)
13. When sleep is broken in the morning, say: *Lailaha illallah* (There is none to be worshipped except Allah)
14. While sneezing, say: *Alhamdulillah* (All praises belong to Allah alone)
15. While joining a Du'a (supplication) said by others, say: *Ameen* (O Allah! Accept our supplication)
16. While in pain, say: *Ya Allah* (O Allah)
17. For any promise, or for intending to do anything in future, say: *Insha Allah* (If Allah wishes)
18. If any objectionable thing is done, or you come across any obscene/hateful thing, or hear hateful/obscene news, say: *Astagh firullah* (O Allah! I seek your pardon)

19. While expressing hate for anything, say: *Nauzubillah* (I seek Allah's shelter)
20. When death-news of a Muslim (male or female) is heard, say: *Inna lillahe wa inna ilaihe raje'un* (We are for Allah and we will return to Him)
21. Not to sever connection with blood relations. To fulfill the obligations due to the relations.
22. (a) To maintain good personal character; (b) never to break a trust; (c) never to misappropriate (embezzle) other's money or property; (d) never to break a contract or promise.
23. (a) To behave politely with others; (b) to treat others or decide matters with justice (*Insaaf*); (c) to pay, repay whatever is due to others on time.
24. (a) to maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness 24/7; (b) to keep own surroundings neat and clean, free from dirt and bad smell all the time; (c) to put on clean and odor-free dress; (e) to brush teeth regularly; (f) to use perfume (fragrance)
25. To help the poor (relative and others), orphans, sick, women and children, wayfarers, etc. Not to rebuke a person asking for help.
26. To take best care of the parents, listen to their orders, never to misbehave with them, show them due respects in all matters, make them comfortable in all respects. Children disobedient to their parents cannot expect to enter Jannat (Heaven, Paradise), says a Hadith of Rasulullah.
27. To take care of near relations and neighbors, help them when asked for.

28. To have patience and depend on Allah (Tawakkaul) on all matters.
29. To respect the elders, love the children, to give service to the old people and the sick.
30. To use the right hand while giving something to and taking some thing from others.
31. To use the left hand for cleaning after using the toilet. Not to pee standing. No to do toilet facing Qibla.
32. To answer a question smilingly.
33. To accept a gift smilingly and say "Thank you"; to give gift to others. Exchange of gifts increases love and affection among all.
34. To behave well with others; never to be arrogant.
35. To control anger. Not to scream at others.
36. To accept an invitation, thank that person. In case of inability to accept the invitation, refuse if politely with thanks stating the reason for your inability.
37. Not to put anybody to shame; not to harm anybody wilfully; not to wish bad for others; not to use abusive language with anybody; not to seek for faults and spread bad names of others.
38. To behave nicely with the guests and take good care of them.
39. Not to wear vulgar dress. Women, girls to wear Hijab all over the body, not only tie a scarf around the head because that's not the real Hijab. Women should not wear perfume while going out of home because fragrance attracts men to them.
40. To do good work and encourage others to do so.

41. To lead a simple life free from extravagance; to adopt a middle course in all matters avoiding extremes. To maintain a happy appearance and attitude. Such style of life will encourage others to change towards better.
42. To shun pride, greed, miserliness and extravagance. Not to waste money (wealth) or time. Allah does not like an extravagant or wasteful person.
43. To repay loan on time. Not to borrow paying interest. Interest is Haram.
44. Not to speak ill of other religions or their adherents. Tolerance is always recommended.
45. Not to eat or drink anything in standing position, always to do so sitting.
46. To put forward the right foot first while entering a mosque and put forward the left foot first while leaving the mosque.
47. While wearing socks and shoes, start with the right foot first and then the left foot.
48. While wearing dress, start from the right side first and then the left side.
49. To take food or drink by the right hand and saying Bismillah first. Drinking water is standing position is not recommended.
50. Never waste any food or drink.
51. To shave the unwanted hair of underarms and of the pubic zone regularly within 40 days. This is a part of personal hygiene strongly emphasized in the Hadith.
52. To trim the nails in hands and toes regularly. As well, males should get their hair cut nicely on a regular basis.

53. To wash hands and face and get refreshed soon after returning home from outside. Making Wudu is preferable. Make a habit of remaining in the state of Wudu all day long.
54. While inside a mosque, place your shoes neatly on the shoe rack. It is praiseworthy if you place others' shoes as well on the shoe rack neatly.
55. During winter season, hang your jackets neatly on the hangers provided therein.
56. Put garbage inside the correct bins.
57. Don't waste water or splash water around while making Wudu. Wipe around the sink after Wudu with a paper towel. Wipe the wet floor too and leave it dry.
58. Never to criticize or show contempt to others. Never to judge a person on the basis of his wealth or poverty. Never to call names of others.
59. Never to underestimate any person without knowing him well. Never to form a negative opinion about any person on the basis of others' adverse report before verifying the truth. Not to take a hasty decision without proper verification of the relevant facts and figures. Not to pry into other's privacy.
60. So far we have discussed about Islamic manners, meticulous practicing of which will build the fabric of our life on earth for enjoying bliss in the life after death. Now let us turn own attention to some other very important aspects and activities essential for leading an ideal Islamic life.

Practicing Salam

Practice offering Salam to everyone because our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Blessing and Peace be upon him) has advised us to do so. This Sahih Hadith should guide us all through our life as

Muslims. As'salamu 'alaikum means "Peace be upon you" which seeks Allah's pleasure and blessing for both the parties involved. More Salam, more peace and friendship, cordiality, etc., among the Muslims. Salam strengthens the Muslim Brotherhood. This should be practiced. Make a habit of offering Salam to others. Some examples: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, below.

Role Model for the Muslims: In His Qur'an, Allah has repeatedly asked the Muslims to follow His Prophet so that we may enjoy Allah's blessings. Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and peace be upon him) is the Role Model for the Muslims in performing/executing all matters of life – worldly and spiritual – as we know him through his Ahadith (plural of Hadith) and his biography. All of us should make it a priority to read the Ahadith and his biography available in the market, and in the Internet.

- a. Offer Salam loudly before entering a Muslim residence other than your own. Offer Salam again when you meet anyone inside.
- b. Make a habit of offering Salam to all – elders and children, male and female, inside and outside your residence.
- c. Offer Salam while entering your own residence. Also seek permission before you enter another's room.
- d. Offer Salam while entering an empty (vacant) house too because the angels of Rahmat are present inside.
- e. Offer Salam after rising from bed to whoever you meet.
- f. Offer Salam while entering an empty (vacant) Masjid because angels of Rahmat are present inside.
- g. Offer Salam to the members of your family before you to bed.
- h. Offer Salam when your phone rings and you pick it up.
- i. Offer Salam when you call anybody and again offer Salam after finishing your conversation.

- j. Offer Salam before you take leave from someone.
- k. Say “As’salamu ‘alaikum” (peace be upon you), never say “Slamalaikum” which carries no meaning at all.

Some very important notes

Islam is such a comprehensive religion that no aspect of a pious life has been left out to be discussed in the Holy Qur’an and the Sahih Hadith. Some of those are:

1. **Physical cleanliness:** Physical and mental cleanliness is essential for Ibadah to be acceptable to Allah. That’s the reason why Muslims do Wudu (Ablution) before each and every Salat (prayer). Clean dress is primarily essential. Unless one is careful while using the washrooms in public places like shopping malls, subway station, etc., where washing arrangements are not satisfactory for the Muslims, it is advisable to take one or two bottles of water along for helping in cleansing.
2. **Daily 5 times Salat (Prayer):** Daily Salat has to be performed on time. This is Allah’s order. Therefore, while outside at school, college, university, public library, shopping mall, office, factory, etc., Salat should invariably be performed on a relatively quiet place spreading a newspaper or a new garbage bag. Never to neglect this Fard Ibadah. Shaitan (Iblis/Devil) will try to distract you, but you must defeat him by performing your Salat on time. Make it a habit of attending Salat-e-Janaza when a Muslim dies and make Dua for him or her, for one day you too will die and expect other Muslims to attend your Salat-e-Janaza and make Dua for you. This is Fard-e-Kifaya.
3. **Computer, Ipods, video games, TV, movies, etc.:** Computer games, Ipods, video games, TV, movies (English, Bengali, Hindi or any other language) consume a large amount of time everyday. Reduce such wasteful

habits, set a daily limit so that the time thus saved can be put to Ibadah or such other useful and healthy pursuits.

4. **Cinema, music, dancing, etc.:** Cinema, music, dancing, etc., are not approved by Islam because those are in most cases, indecent. Moreover they spoil valuable time and waste of money too. Such things take the heart away from the remembrance of Allah, these are machinations of the Shaitan. These must be avoided. Rock music is particularly objectionable because these songs in many cases adore the Shaitan which is Shirk.
5. **TV serials, songs, etc.:** Similar is the case with drama, TV serials too. Hindi cinema and serials are particularly harmful to Islamic faith because those entertainments start and continue to show Hindu Idols (gods, goddesses) and their culture watching of which is Haram, and gradually weakens the Iman.
6. Many songs (Bengali and Hindi) contain wordings contrary to Islamic belief. Therefore, must be avoided.

Anger Management

Forgiving faults and mistakes of others is a great virtue of human character. There is a great reward for this virtue in the next world. Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said, on the Day of Judgment, it will be announced on behalf of Almighty Allah, "Stand up if there is anybody who has due on Allah." Then those people will stand up who have forgiven oppression and repression of others in this world. About the benefit of forgiving faults of others, Allah said: *إِذْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ، فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ* "Repel evil with what is better; then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your intimate friend (Sura Ha Mim Sajdah, 41: 34).

On the other hand, restraining and controlling anger is also a great virtue of the believers. Allah said regarding virtues of God-fearing people: *وَالكَافِرِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ، وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ* "And those who restrain their anger and forgive people; Allah loves those who do good deeds (Sura Ale Imran, 3: 134).

While interpreting this verse of the Holy Qur'an, Imam Baihaqi, in his Tafseer Ruhul Ma'ani, mentioned an incident involving Ali ibn Hussain (RA). One day, his maid was helping him in doing ablution with a container of water, but the container accidentally slipped from her hands and fell on him. His clothes got wet and it is usual in such a situation to get angry. The maid was afraid of reprisal from him and recited the verse وَالكَافِرِينَ الْغَيْظَ (regarding controlling anger). Ali (RA) became quiet and his anger was gone. Then the maid recited other portion of the verse وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ (which says about forgiving people). He said I am forgiving you. The maid then recited the last part of the verse وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (which says about Allah's love for righteous people). Hearing this, Ali (RA) said, "Go, I am setting you free (from slavery)."

It is narrated in a Hadith that Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was sitting in the mosque and pointed to a man who was entering the mosque and said "This man is from the people of heaven." The next day he pointed to the same man and said made the same remark. On the third day also, the same incident happened. One of the companions became curious and wanted to know the reason for that man being among the people of heaven – what was special with him. He stayed at the house of that man for a few days with his permission and observed what that man was doing the whole day. But he did not notice any special activity by him – he eats and sleeps like other people. He prays five times with the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) in his mosque as all other companions do. He asked that man what was his special quality that prompted the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) to declare him among the people of heaven. He replied that he did not do any special deed to qualify for heaven; the only special thing he does is that he forgives everyone before he goes to bed every night. This Hadith proves the great virtue of forgiving fellow people.

Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said, "Whoever controls anger while he is able to act upon it, Allah will call him when all creations will be witness until He grants him the choice of any of the Hurs he wishes."

He also said, “There is not a dose of anything that the servant takes which is better than a dose of control of anger that he feels, when he does it seeking the pleasure of Allah.”

The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said, “I swear regarding three matters: no charity shall ever decrease the wealth, whenever one forgives people, then Allah will magnify his honor, and he who is humble for Allah, Allah will raise his rank.”

The Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him) said, “The strong person is not who is able to physically overcome people. The (real) strong person is he who overcomes himself when he is angry.” Bukhari narrated a Hadith from Abu Hurairah (RA): a man said to the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), Counsel me. He said, “Do not get angry.” The man repeated (his request) several times and the Prophet repeated, “Do not get angry.”

Here are some advice for the young generation:

1. Always tell the truth. Respect and obey your parents and teachers. Save yourselves from disobedience of your parents. Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said, “Remember, the satisfaction of parents is the satisfaction of Allah and their dissatisfaction is Allah’s dissatisfaction.”
2. Arrogance is the root cause of downfall. Therefore, save yourselves from arrogance and pride and don’t become proud. Do not consider yourselves greater than others. Rather, consider yourselves inferior and lower compared to others.
3. Forgiveness is a sign of greatness. So, forgive one another. Allah forgives those who forgive other people.
4. Refrain from harming others, particularly Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said, **الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ** “The real Muslim is he from whose words and deeds another Muslim is safe.”

5. Always fear Allah and make every effort to save yourselves from Hell-fire. One of the ways to be safe from the punishment of Hellfire is to give charity (to the poor). The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said, "Save yourselves from Hell-fire donating a piece of dates and don't turn away a beggar (and give) even with a hoof of goat's foot."

Imam Razi (RA) narrated a Hadith in Tafseer Kabir. One day, Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), in his speech, was encouraging people to give charity and all of them donated gold, silver and whatever things were with them. One person came with a shell of dates and said there was nothing with him to give as charity. The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) accepted it. Another person said he had nothing to give as charity, so he was donating his honor. He said, in future, if anybody says thousands of evil to him, he will not be dissatisfied with him.

It is evident from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) and deeds of his companions that it is not only the role of the rich and people of high status to give charity, but the poor and destitute people can also earn the virtue of generosity and charity. They can achieve the great quality of being generous by doing good deeds according to their ability and donating whatever things they have with them.

Way of anger management:

1. Physical movement – (sitting if standing and standing if sitting)
2. Physical relaxation – (closing eyes, deep breathing)
3. Mental distraction – (counting backwards)
4. Verbal engagement – (positive self-talk, supplication)
5. Cooling technique – (ablution or shower)
6. Meditation – (supplication, ritual prayer)



CHAPTER 7

Importance of Salah

WHY SALAH (Namaz/Prayer)

The human being is the only creature who has been distinguished from other creatures with the instinct of knowing right from wrong. He is, therefore, the only one who is expected to be the perfect image of his Creator. That is why the objective of his life is to know his Creator and become a perfect image of his attributes, as Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: *"I have not created jins and humans but for my worship". (Sura Az Zariyat, 51:56)*

SALAT or the method of worship is the main media through which a human can establish a relationship with his Creator and it is one of the main doors which lead to his complete submission to Allah's will.

Salah also prevents him from wrongdoings. Allah says:

"Surely prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil." (Sura Ankabut, 29:45) Which shows that Salah or prayer is a guarantee from Allah that if a worshipper observes prayer with all its conditions, he will be safe from evils, manifest or hidden, small or great. The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) asked to the companions, *"if one of you had a stream running by his door and he takes a bath in it five times a day, would any dirt be left on him?."*

They replied! *"No dirt would be left on him"*. The Holy Prophet said: *"This is the case with Salah (the five daily prayers) Allah makes the Salah wipe out his sins"*.

When we reflect on the creation of the universe and the law that governs it and the design and variety that pleases our eyes, we naturally are convinced of existence and greatness of Allah. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed signs for men of understanding;" Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: *"Our Lord, Thou hast not created this*

in vain; nay, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire." (Sura Ale-Imran, 3:191-192)

This verse beautifully tells us that when a worshipper reflects upon the structure of the Universe he becomes overwhelmed with the greatness of its Creator.

The ENTITY Who created such an awe-inspiring structure with such detailed arrangement and accuracy. He is alone to be worshipped and so right for protection.

There are five daily prayer services, participation in which is obligatory. This may seem a little too much, but it is all a matter of comparative values. Those who realize the true value of prayer through experience are convinced that time spent in it is occupied much more beneficially than that spent in other pursuits.

There is no ordained priesthood in Islam. Every Muslim can be Imam (who leads congregational prayers) and can deliver a sermon. Members of the congregation may select, and for this purpose, they should choose one from among themselves who knows the Holy Qur'an better than the others. No vestment is prescribed for the Imam nor any special dress for the congregation. All that needed is the body should be decently and cleanly covered.

Daily 5 times Salat is obligatory

In his one Hadith, our Prophet Muhammad (blessing and peace be upon him) has asked the Muslim parents to teach daily Salat to their children from the age of seven, and to compel them to say 5 times Salat daily from the age of ten. Salat is of foremost importance among all kinds of Ibadah and Salat is the first item of Ibadah Allah will get examined on the Day of Qiyamah. One who succeeds in Salah, he can expect to go to Jannat (Paradise, Heaven) but the one who fails in this test, will be ruined. It is strongly recommended to perform Salat in Jamat in the Masjid or with other members of the family at home.

Which book should I follow to learn Salah?

Rasul (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: "Pray as you have seen me praying."

(Sahih Bukhari)

- 1) Prophet's (Blessings and Peace be upon him) Prayer – Allama Nasiruddin Albani
- 2) Pray as you have seen me Pray – DVD (One Islam Production)
- 3) How to Pray – DVD (Al Atiq Publishers) (Sponsored by Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, Inc. USA)

Personal Development

- Try to say 5 times Salah in Jamah;
- Try to say Fajr Salah in Jamah;

Medical Benefits of Salah

The main reason why we offer Salah is to thank Allah and to praise Him. This is not for His benefit, since He is free of all wants, as the Qur'an says in Sura Fatir 35:15. The benefit of prayer is what we derive, because it adds to our good deeds and increases our faith. But besides this, there are various spiritual, physical and scientific advantages with offering the Salah regularly.

The Salah programs the person into not doing evil deeds, by ensuring that the Muslims are God-fearing people, and are aware of the wrong-doings going on. Since there are so many evil doings occurring, the Salah keeps us away from doing this, and guides the people into doing holy actions, not evil deeds like: swearing, adultery, rape etc. The Salah also helps to strengthen ones faith, and keeps a person from being strayed away from the truth. Salah is also a great way to ask Allah's help, and is like a "hotline" to pray to Allah. It is very calming and relaxing, because in the Salah, there are no actions which require a lot of strength and

power. Many people may claim that Salah is like gymnastics, where you go: up and down, up and down, etc. Let us see the comparisons of gymnastics and Salah:

- Salah improves social harmony and equality, while gymnastics does not.
- Salah doesn't require apertures, bars, hoops, rings, beam, etc., like gymnastics does.
- Salah is cheap, since you don't have to pay anything. When you want to perform gymnastics properly, you have to pay through your nose (very expensive).
- Salah can be offered by people of all ages (even if you can't stand, you can sit. If you can't sit, you can lie down). People of all ages cannot do gymnastics.
- Salah can be offered wearing clean clothes, whereas your clothes get dirty in gymnastics.
- You have to be clean in order to offer Salah. In contrast, you can be physically be as filthy and dirty as you want to do gymnastics.
- Salah increases brotherhood in the nation. Gymnastics does not do this.
- In Salah, chances of gaining injuries are very little. In gymnastics, chances of gaining injuries, accidents and broken bones are much higher.
- There are fewer risks in Salah, as compared to gymnastics.
- If you're not healthy (i.e. broken arm, leg, shin, foot etc) you cannot do gymnastics. In contrast, in this situation, you can offer Salah.
- After you've eaten a meal, you can offer Salah. If you do gymnastics after you eat a meal, you can easily throw up.
- Salah programs you to abstain from evil deeds and enjoin good deeds. Gymnastics does not program you like this.
- In Salah, you gain a lot of good rewards from Allah. Gymnastics does not have this advantage.
- In Salah, you can offer it at home, in a mosque, even outside. Gymnastics does not have this advantage.
- Salah can only be done if you do wudu (Islamic ablution) which has many scientific advantages. Gymnastics does not have this advantage.

Hence, we see that there are vast differences between Salah and gymnastics, and that Salah is far superior and holier than gymnastics. Gymnastics is nothing like Salah, since when Salah is offered correctly, the differences you can see is vast. Moreover, there are various scientific benefits of the Salah, which include:

In Salah, when we do ruku (that is bow down), extra blood flows into the upper part of the body. The spine becomes supple and flexible, while the spinal nerves are nourished. This relieves backache and pain. This is a good posture for flatulence. Stretches lower back, thighs, and calves while blood gets pumped into the upper torso. Bowing position tones stomach muscles, abdomen and kidneys. When we come back to the standing position (after ruku), the blood which has entered into the upper part of the body, comes back to normal and the body is relaxed. As a result, this blood carries away toxins & releases tension.

When we do sujud, which is basically the prostration to the ground with are 8 parts of the body touching the floor, the forehead in on the ground which is the best position of Salah. It is the most relevant part of Salah. Daily, the human beings are propounded by electrostatic charges from the atmosphere, which gets penetrated in the central nervous system, which gets super saturated. These extra electrostatic charges have to be dissipated and discharged, otherwise you'll have headache, neck ache, muscles spasms, etc. No wonder people regularly take tranquillizers and drugs, to relieve the pain. These electrostatic charges are dissipated and discharged, when the frontal lobe of the brain is put on the ground, in sujud. There is dominance of the frontal lobe, and the thinking capacity of the brain is not on the top of the brain, but in the frontal lobe. In doing sujud, there is less chance of getting headache, spasms, aches, etc., due to the fact that the electrostatic charges are dissipated and discharged. Moreover, the sujud allows extra blood supply to enter the brain, which enables the brain to become healthier, plus has a positive effect on the memory, vision, hearing, concentration & the psyche. In addition, extra blood flows into the skin, neck and face, which increases the circulation of the blood of the skin, neck and face, which is very healthy especially in the cold seasons. Also, allows mental toxins to be cleaned by blood. This is also very good for

the brain. This prevents diseases, such as fibrosis and chilblains. During the sujud, there is drainage of the paranasal sinuses, thus there is less chance of getting sinusitis, which consists of inflammation of the linings of the sinuses that surround the nose. In certain forms of yoga, some adherents stand on their heads for the purpose of blood flowing to the brain, which we Muslims have been doing for centuries.

Normally during the day, the human beings have an upright posture. The maxillaries sinus, the opening is in the upper medium part. The secretions cannot be drained due to the upright posture which people have. Therefore, when you do sujud, there is drainage of the maxillaries sinus, which is very healthy, and decreases the chances of infections occurring. It also causes drainage of secretion of the frontal sinus, ethmoid sinus as well as the sphenoid sinus; all these decrease the chances of a person getting sinusitis. Moreover, someone who has sinusitis, the sujud is a natural treatment. The sujud position is also a natural treatment for a person suffering from bronchitis, which is inflammation in the lungs. The sujud position also causes drainage of the secretion of the bronchial tree, thus prevents bronchitis. It prevents the accumulation of the secretion in the bronchial tree. It is also helpful in other pulmonary (lung) diseases, in which secretion are accumulated. Besides this, other things like: dust and bacteria can accumulate, for which the sujud is prevention from.

Normally when you breathe, only $\frac{2}{3}$ of the lung capacity is used. The remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ of the lung capacity, the air remains in. Therefore, it is only $\frac{2}{3}$ of air which comes in as fresh air, when you breathe and $\frac{2}{3}$ goes out. The remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ is called residual air. When you do sujud, the abdominal viscera, they press against the diaphragm. The diaphragm presses against the lower lobes of the lungs, which causes the person to exhale the $\frac{1}{3}$ residual air. Once this residual air goes out, more fresh air comes in, which is responsible for a healthy lung. When you do sujud, due to the decrease of the gravitational force, there is extra venous return from the abdominal organs. Therefore, the extra venous return (volume of blood returning to the right atrium of the heart) is increased, which makes the heart healthy. This also supplies fresh blood to all body tissues. In the sujud, the weight is concentrated

on the knees, and your legs are flexed. The soleus and the gastrocnemius muscles (muscles of the leg) are also called the peripheral heart, because it has an extensive venous return, which is responsible for increasing venous return, of the lower half of the body. This also causes relaxation in lower half of the body.

In *sujud*, the knees are touching the floor, including the hands and forehead. This posture is helpful in diseases of the cervical spine, because this helps the inter-vertebral joints, which allows the spine to move more flexibly. The posture of the *sujud* is also helpful in cardiac diseases. When a person rises from the *sujud* from the squatting position, the blood which has flowed into the upper part of the body comes back to normalcy, and the body is relaxed. There is extra blood flowing in the muscles and nerves, of the thigh and the back, so the back muscles of the back are relaxed. It is helpful and useful in constipation and indigestion. It is also helpful for a person suffering from peptic ulcer and other stomach problems. When a person gets up from the squatting position to the standing position, his weight is concentrated on the ball of the feet, which improves the strength of the back muscles, thigh muscles, knee muscles and leg muscles.

The *ruku* and *sujud* (bowing down and prostrating on the floor) are great postures against femoral and esophageal hernia. These positions in the prayer are also prophylaxis treatment, of a person suffering from hemorrhoids (inflammation of veins in the rectum and anus) which in layman's terminology is called piles. These positions of *Salah* are also helpful in prolapse of the uterus. In *sujud*, the knees form a right angle allowing the stomach muscles to develop, plus prevents growth of flabbiness in the midsection, & reduces high blood pressure.

When sitting on the knees after *sujud*, this helps toughen the legs & hips and makes them stronger, ensuring you have more flexibility in joints plus stretching out muscles. It encourages an upright posture, which is good for the spine. In addition, the body returns to even greater relaxation, and the posture assists digestion by forcing the contents of the stomach downwards. Also, since most of the pressure goes to the lower half of the body, the upper half of the body, especially the shoulder & head, is relaxed.

Furthermore, we repeat the sujud within a few seconds after sitting on knees. What this does is cleanses the respiratory circulatory, and nervous system. There is also oxygenation of entire body, while sympathetic & parasympathetic nervous systems are relaxed.

Praying the Fajr prayer (dawn prayer) stops long amounts of stillness, as one gets up from sleep. This decreases the chance of gaining diseases like arthritis, osteoporosis, anemia, etc. Moreover, the dawn prayer prevents you from getting too much sleep, and scientific established facts informs us that too much sleep increases the chances of gaining diabetes, heart disease, early death, etc.

Also, there have been ways which western countries give, in where you can exercise without standing up, one of which is: turning your head left and right. Similarly, in the Salah, we do this after every prayer. At the end of the Salah, we first turn right and say: "Assalamu alaykum wa rahmutullah" and then we turn left and say the same thing. Salah is light exercise and is heavy in spiritual rewards, so you are getting a 2 in 1 workout. Moreover, in Salah, the recitation of the Qur'an occurs. During the recitation, the sound vibrations of the long vowels: Aa, Thee and oo stimulate the heart, thyroid, pineal gland, pituitary, adrenal glands and lungs, purifying and uplifting them all.

These body movements performed during the Salah are an excellent source of exercise for our heart as well. According to a Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said:

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 49:

"There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart."

It is the heart. A tissue in our body is the cartilage. It is unique in being a living tissue with no direct blood supply. The only way it receives nutrients and oxygen is by movements of the joints. The pumping effect forces blood into the joint area which would otherwise be bypassed. Those who sit at the terminals are in

greater danger of ending up with dead cartilage tissues that will subsequently wear away. This will leave us with arthritis, painful joints and paralysis. Bacteria and viruses find safe haven in joints for this reason as no blood cell can get at them and in most cases neither can antibodies. Salah, therefore, has many orthopedic benefits for all Muslims.

What do we recite (say) in our Salah?

Niyah :

No need to utter Niyah by mouth, keep intention (Niyah) in your mind. (To make niyah i.e. to say Nawaytuan usallaia lillahi taala rakatai IS BIDA'H, and therefore must be avoided)

Allahu Akbar :

"Allah is the Greatest."

Inni Wajjahtu...

"Surely I am facing towards THEE, Who created the Heavens and the Earth truly and firmly and I am not among the Mushriks (Polytheists)." [We can recite it instead of Sana or we can recite both]

Sanaa :

Subhanaka-Allahumma "O' Allah! All glory is due to You, All the praise is also for You, Your name is the most Blessed, Your Majesty is highly exalted and there is none worthy of worship except You."

Ta'awwudh :

A'uzu billahi.... "I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed devil (Shaitan)."

Bismillah.. :

Bismillahir "In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful."

Surah Al-Fatiha:

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds. Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. You do we worship and Your aid we seek. Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not of those who have been condemned (by you), nor of those who go astray.

Any Sura :

Memorize some Suras or verses with meaning (from any good Qur'an translation).

Ruku :

Subhana Rabbi-al-'Azim = "I am narrating the Glory of my Great Lord."

Qawmah :

Sami'-Allahu li-man hamidah. Rabbana lakal hamd = "Verily, Allah listens to one who praises Him. O our Lord, all praise be to you."

Sajdah :

Subhana Rabbi-al-Aa'la = "I am declaring the Praise of my Lord, the Greatest."

In between 2 Sajdah : (in sitting position) *Rabbigfirlee, Rabbigfirlee* = "O Allah, forgive me; O Allah, forgive me"

At-Tahiyat :

Our salutations, our prayers and all pure things are for Allah. Salutation to you O Prophet and Mercy and Blessing of Allah. Peace be on us and on all pious slaves of Allah. I testify that there is no god save Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the slave and messenger of Allah".

Durud Ibraheemi:

O Allah, let Your Peace come upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You bestowed peace on Ibraheem and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as you blessed Ibraheem and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.

Wajib Du'aa :

Allahumma inni a'uzu bika min 'azabi Jahannam, wa a'uzu bika min'azabil Qabri, wa a'uzu bika min fitnatil Masihid Dajjal, wa a'uzu bika min fitnatil mahya wal mamati.

"O Allah! I seek Your protection from the torture of hell, and I seek Your protection from the torture of the grave, and I seek Your protection from the mischief of Dajjal, and I seek refuge with You from the mischief of life and death."

Du'aa Mathura :

*Allahumma inni jolamtu.....*O Allah! I have considerably wronged myself. There is none to forgive the sins but You. So grant me pardon and have mercy on me. You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Compassionate. [Note: This is not the only Du'aa Mathura, any Du'aa from Sahih Hadith is Mathura and can be recited]

Salam : (Right and left twice)

As-Salam-u-Alaikum wa Rahmatullah = "Peace be upon you and Mercy of Allah."

After Salam :

33 times *Subhanallah* (Glory to Allah), 33 times *Alhamdulillah* (All praise is for Allah), 34 times *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest)

Five Times Salah at a glance (Fard + Sunnah) According to Sahih Hadith

Wagt	Sunnah (Rakat)	Fard (Rakat)	Sunnah (Rakat)	Witr (Rakat)
Fajr	2	2		
Dhuhr	2 + 2	4	2	
Asr		4		
Maghrib		3	2	
Ishaa		4	2	1 or 3
Total Fard = 17 Rakat, Total Sunnah = 12 Rakat				

Note: Rakat – Plural; Rakah - Singular

Anbasah ibn Abi Sufyan quoted Umm Habibah as saying "Allah's Messenger (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said:

"A house will be built in the Heaven for one who prays 12 Rakat in a day and evening as follows: 4 Rakat before and 2 after the Dhuhr prayer, 2 after the Maghrib prayer, 2 after the Ishaa prayer and 2 before the Fajr prayer".

Narrated by at-Tirmizi under No. 380. He said: The Hadith narrated by 'Anbasah quoting Umm Habibah in this chapter is a hassan and sahih hadith. It is under No. 6362 in Sahih al-Jaami.'



CHAPTER 8

Answer to the non-Muslim friends

Are you facing questions from your friends' circle?

1. Was Jesus Christ (Blessings and Peace be upon him) crucified?
2. Jesus man or God?
3. Is the Bible the true Word of God?
4. Islamic view on the return of Jesus.
5. The Qur'an or the Bible - which is God's Word?
6. Islam and Christianity.
7. Who is Jesus?
8. Who is Muhammad (pbuh)?
9. What the Bible says about Muhammad (pbuh)?
10. Can Islam offer more to mankind than just a religion?
11. What Islam says about terrorism?
12. Terrorism versus Jihad.
13. What are the women's rights in Islam?
14. Polygamy and the wives of the Prophet (pbuh).
15. Why Hijab?

Answer: To get authentic and logical answers, please watch the videos of the following Islamic Scholars:

- Dr. Yusuf Estes
- Dr. Bilal Philips
- Dr. Abdullah Hakim Quick
- Sheikh Ahmed Deedat
- Shabir Ally
- Khalid Yasin
- Dr. Jamal Badawi
- Dr. Yousuf Islam
- Abdur Rahim Green
- Dr. Tawfiq Chowdhury

Peace Vision of Islam

Islam and Peace: Islam comes from the root word Salaam, which means peace. It also means submitting one's will to Allah (swt). The word Salaam is also an attribute of God. In this context, it means 'The Giver of Peace'. Muslims greet each other saying Assalaamu alaikum which translates to wishing peace for one another. Even when wronged, the Glorious Qur'an advises Muslims to struggle against the temptation for hostility: And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend... [Sura Fussilat, 41:34] The Qur'an refers to Paradise as the "abode of peace". Thus peace is a goal that Muslims are required to strive for, in their own selves, in their families and in their communities. It is ironical, therefore, that Islam is perceived by many as being the motivation behind the wanton killing of innocent people.

Definition of the word 'Fundamentalist': A fundamentalist is a person who follows and adheres to the fundamentals of the doctrine or theory he is following. For a person to be a good doctor, he should know, follow, and practice the fundamentals of medicine. In other words, he should be a fundamentalist in the field of medicine. For a person to be a good mathematician, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of mathematics. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of mathematics. For a person to be a good scientist, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of science. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of science.

Not all 'fundamentalists' are the same: One cannot paint all fundamentalists with the same brush. One cannot categorize all fundamentalists as either good or bad. Such a categorization of any fundamentalist will depend upon the field or activity in which he is a fundamentalist. A fundamentalist robber or thief causes harm to society and is therefore undesirable. A fundamentalist doctor, on the other hand, benefits society and earns much respect.

Dictionary meaning of the word ‘fundamentalist’: According to Webster’s dictionary ‘fundamentalism’ was a movement in American Protestantism that arose in the earlier part of the 20th century. It was a reaction to modernism, and stressed the infallibility of the Bible, not only in matters of faith and morals but also as a literal historical record. It stressed on belief in the Bible as the literal word of God. Thus fundamentalism was a word initially used for a group of Christians who believed that the Bible was the verbatim word of God without any errors or mistakes. According to the Oxford dictionary ‘fundamentalism’ means ‘strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam’. Today the moment a person uses the word fundamentalist he thinks of a Muslim who is a terrorist.

Definition of Jihad: While Islam in general is misunderstood in the Western world, perhaps no other Islamic term evokes such strong reactions as the word Jihad. The word Jihad is mistranslated as “Holy War”. The Arabic equivalent of “Holy War” is *harb-ul-muqadasah*. This term is not found in any verse of the Qur'an. There is nothing in the Islamic sources that permit a Muslim to fight against non-Muslims solely on the basis that they are not Muslim.

The word Jihad comes from the root word *Jahada*, which means to struggle. At the individual level, Jihad primarily refers to the inner struggle of being a person of virtue and submission to God in all aspects of life. At the collective level, Jihad can take various forms, such as: Intellectual Jihad, which comprises of the struggle to convey the message of God to humankind and to combat social evils through knowledge, wisdom and dignified discourse. As the Glorious Qur'an says: Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, *"I am of those who bow in Islam"*? [Sura Fussilat, 41:33]

Economic Jihad, which comprises of economic measures, involves spending from one's means to improve the living conditions of the poor and the downtrodden.

Physical Jihad: It involves collective armed self-defense as well as retribution against tyranny, exploitation, and oppression. Thus the concept of Jihad is vast and comprehensive. Admittedly,

it's the last category of Jihad that is a cause for concern to many, and which we shall explore in detail. Jihad on the battlefield, in the Islamic perspective, is the last resort, and is subject to stringent conditions. It can be waged only to defend freedom, which includes freedom of faith. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;- and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid;-

(They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right,- (for no cause) except that they say, "our Lord is Allah". Had Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure..." [Sura Al-Hajj, 22:39-40]

Moreover, the Qur'an says: *"And why should ye not fight in the cause of God and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? - Men, women and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect; and raise for us from Thee one who will help!" [Sura An-Nisa, 4:75]* Thus the conditions of physical Jihad are clearly defined in the Qur'an.

Rules of Engagement: Although Islam permits Jihad on the battlefield under the conditions mentioned above, the rules of engagement reflect Islam's inherent inclination towards peace:

No aggression towards civilians: Military conflict is to be directed only against fighting troops and not against civilians, as the Glorious Qur'an says: *"Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors" [Sura Al-Baqara, 2:190]*

As far as the non-combatant population is concerned such as women, children, the old and the infirm, etc., the instructions of the Prophet are as follows: "Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman" "Do not kill the monks in monasteries" or "Do not kill the people who are sitting in places of worship."

During a war, the Prophet saw the corpse of a woman lying on the ground and observed: "She was not fighting. How then she came to be killed?" Thus non-combatants are guaranteed security of life even if their state is at war with an Islamic state.

Upholding Justice: The ravages of war are not an excuse for Muslims to engage in any form of cruelty or violation of human rights. As the Qur'an says: *"O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do."* [Sura Al-Maidah, 5:8] It is forbidden under Islamic law, to ill-treat prisoners of war or to deny them the essentials of life, including medical treatment.

Respect for religious freedom: Physical Jihad cannot be waged with the objective of compelling people to embrace Islam. The Glorious Qur'an says: *"Let there be no compulsion in religion"* [Sura Al-Baqarah, 2:256] *"If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed - all who are on earth! Will thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!"* [Sura Yunus, 10:99]

Accept peace: If the enemy offers peace, it should be accepted even at the risk of possible deception. The Glorious Qur'an says: *"But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is One that hears and knows (all things)"* [Sura Al-Anfal, 8:61]

Can terrorism be compared to Jihad? Terrorism is usually defined as ideologically motivated indiscriminate violence that targets civilians, with the intention of inspiring terror in order to achieve political ends. Although this definition ignores the reality of state terrorism, it is clear that terrorism has no place in the noble concept of Jihad. Even Jihad that involves physical conflict is the very antithesis of terrorism, as is clear from the following differences:

Jihad can be launched only by an established authority as a policy in order to deter aggression. Terrorism, on the other hand, is committed by individuals or groups that have no legitimacy to

speak for the majority. When terrorism is committed by states, it usually depends on misleading the masses.

Jihad is limited to combatants while terrorism involves indiscriminate killing of civilians. Jihad, when the need arises, is declared openly, while terrorism is committed secretly. Jihad is bound by strict rules of engagement while terrorism is not bound by any rules.

Conclusion: It is clear from the foregoing discussion that Jihad is a vast concept that encompasses various spheres of activity, all directed towards the betterment of self and society. Regardless of how legitimate a cause may be, Islam does not condone the killing of innocent people. Terrorizing the civilian population, whether by individuals or states, can never be termed as Jihad and can never be reconciled with the teachings of Islam.

Why is the eating of pork forbidden in Islam?

The fact that consumption of pork is prohibited in Islam is well-known. The following points explain various aspects of this prohibition:

1. Pork prohibited in the Qur'an

The Qur'an prohibits the consumption of pork in no less than four different places. It is prohibited in the Qur'an [Sura Al Baqarah, 2:173, Sura Al Maidah, 5:3, Sura Al Anam, 6:145 and Sura An Nahl, 16:115].

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah." [Sura Al Maidah, 5:3]

The above verses of the Glorious Qur'an are sufficient to satisfy a Muslim as to why pork is forbidden.

2. Pork prohibited in the Bible

A Christian is likely to be convinced by his religious scriptures. The Bible prohibits the consumption of pork, in the Book of Leviticus:

“And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you.”

“Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch, they are unclean to you.” [Book of Leviticus 11:7-8]

Pork is also prohibited in the Bible in the Book of Deuteronomy:

“And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you. Ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.” [Book of Deuteronomy 14:8]

A similar prohibition is repeated in the Bible in the Book of Isaiah Chapter 65, Verses 2-5.

3. Consumption of pork causes several diseases

The other non-Muslims and atheists will agree only if convinced through reason, logic and science. Eating of pork can cause no less than seventy different types of diseases. A person can have various helminthes like roundworm, pinworm, hookworm, etc. One of the most dangerous is Taenia Sodium, which is in lay man's terminology called tapeworm. It harbors in the intestine and is very long. Its ova i.e. eggs, enter the blood stream and can reach almost all the organs of the body. If it enters the brain it can cause memory loss. If it enters the heart it can cause heart attack, if it enters the eye it can cause blindness, if it enters the liver it can cause liver damage. It can damage almost all the organs of the body.

Another dangerous helminthes is *Trichuris trichiura*. A common misconception about pork is that if it is cooked well, these ova die. In a research project undertaken in America, it was found that out of twenty-four people suffering from *Trichuris trichiura*, twenty-two had cooked the pork very well. This indicates that the ova present in the pork do not die under normal cooking temperature.

4. Pork has fat building material

Pork has very little muscle building material and contains excess of fat. This fat gets deposited in the vessels and can cause hypertension and heart attack. It is not surprising that over 50 million Americans suffer from hypertension.

5. Pig is one of the filthiest animals on earth

The pig is one of the filthiest animals on earth. It lives and thrives on muck, faces and dirt. It is the best scavenger that I know that God has produced. In the villages they don't have modern toilets and the villagers excrete in the open air. Very often excreta are cleared by pigs.

Some may argue that in advanced countries like Australia, pigs are bred in very clean and hygienic conditions. Even in these hygienic conditions the pigs are kept together in sties. No matter how hard you try to keep them clean they are filthy by nature. They eat and enjoy their own as well as their neighbor's excreta.

6. Pig is the most shameless animal

The pig is the most shameless animal on the face of the earth. It is the only animal that invites its friends to have sex with its mate. In America, most people consume pork. Many times after dance parties, they have swapping of wives; i.e. many say "you sleep with my wife and I will sleep with your wife". If you eat pigs then you behave like pigs. We Indians look upon America to be very advanced and sophisticated. Whatever they do, we follow after a few

years. According to an article in Island magazine, this practice of swapping wives has become common in the affluent circles of Mumbai.

Why is the consumption of alcohol prohibited in Islam?

Alcohol has been the scourge of human society since time immemorial. It continues to cost countless human lives, and causes terrible misery to millions throughout the world. Alcohol is the root cause of several problems facing society. The statistics of soaring crime rates, increasing instances of mental illnesses and millions of broken homes throughout the world bear mute testimony to the destructive power of alcohol.

1. Prohibition of alcohol in the Qur'an

The Glorious Qur'an prohibits the consumption of alcohol in the following verse:

"O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination – of satan's handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper." [Sura Al Maidah, 5:90]

2. Prohibition of alcohol in the Bible

The Bible prohibits the consumption of alcohol in the following verses:

- a. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." [Book of Proverbs 20:1]
- b. "And be not drunk with wine". [Book of Ephesians 5:18]

3. Alcohol inhibits the inhibitory centre

The human beings possess an inhibitory centre in their brains. This inhibitory centre prevents the person from doing things that

he considers wrong. For instance, a person does not normally use abusive language while addressing his parents or elders. If he has to answer the call of nature, his inhibitory centre will prevent him from doing so in public. Therefore he uses the toilet.

When a person consumes alcohol, the inhibitory centre itself is inhibited. That is precisely the reason that an inebriated person is often found to be indulging in behavior that is completely uncharacteristic of him. For instance, the intoxicated person is found to use abusive and foul language and does not realize his mistake even if he is addressing his parents. Many even urinate in their clothes. Neither do they talk nor walk properly. They even misbehave.

4. Cases of adultery, rape, incest and AIDS are found more among alcoholics

According to National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice (US Department of Justice) in the year 1996 alone everyday on an average 2,713 rapes took place. The statistics tell us that the majority of the rapists were intoxicated while committing the crime. The same is true in cases of molestation.

According to statistics, 8% of Americans commit incest i.e. one in every twelve to thirteen persons in America is involved in incest. Almost all the cases of incest are due to intoxication of one or both the persons involved.

One of the major factors associated with the spread of AIDS, the most dreaded disease, is alcoholism.

5. Every alcoholic was initially a social drinker

Many may argue in favor of liquor by calling themselves 'social drinkers'. They claim that they only have one or two pegs and they have self-control and so never get intoxicated. Investigations reveal that every alcoholic started as a social drinker. Not a single alcoholic or drunkard initially starts drinking with the intention of becoming an alcoholic or a drunkard. No social drinker can say that I have been having alcohol for several years and that I have

so much self-control that I have never been intoxicated even a single time.

6. If a person is intoxicated just once and commits something shameful, it will remain with him for a lifetime

Suppose a 'social drinker' loses his self-control just once. In a state of intoxication he commits rape or incest. Even if the act is later regretted, a normal human being is likely to carry the guilt throughout his life. Both the perpetrator and the victim are irreparably and irreversibly damaged.

7. Alcohol is prohibited in the Hadith

The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: "Do not drink wine, for it is the key to all evils"

- a. In Sunan Ibn Maajah Volume 3 Book of Drinks Chapter 30 Hadith 3371:
"Do not drink wine, for it is the key to all evils."
- b. In Sunan An Nasai Volume 6 Book of Drinks Hadith 5669:
"Alcohol is the mother of all evils."
- c. In Sunan Ibn Maajah Volume 3 Book of Intoxicants Chapter 30 Hadith 3392:
"Anything which intoxicates in a large quantity is prohibited even in a small quantity."

Thus there is no excuse for a nip or a tot.

- d. Not only those who drink alcohol are cursed but also those who deal with them directly or indirectly are cursed by Allah.

According to Sunan Ibn Maajah Volume 3 Book of Intoxicants Chapter 30 Hadith 3381:

"It was reported by Anas (RA), that Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) cursed ten with regard to wine: The one who squeezes (the grapes etc.), the one who asks

for it to be squeezed, the one for whom it is squeezed, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried, the one who sells it, the one for whom it is bought, the one who pours it, the one for whom it is poured, until he counted ten like this."

8. Diseases associated with alcoholism

There are several scientific reasons for the prohibition of consumption of intoxicants i.e. alcohol. The maximum number of deaths in the world related to any one particular cause is due to the consumption of alcohol. Millions of people die every year only because of intake of alcohol. I need not go into the details of all the ill-effects of alcohol since most of them are commonly known. Below is a simple list of few of the alcohol related illnesses:

- 8.1 Cirrhosis of Liver is the most well-known alcohol associated disease.
- 8.2 Others are Cancer of Esophagus, Cancer of Head and Neck, Cancer of Liver (Hematoma), Cancer of Bowel, etc.
- 8.3 Oesophagitis, Gastritis, Pancreatitis and Hepatitis are linked with alcohol consumption.
- 8.4 Cardiomyopathy, Hypertension, Coronary Artherosclerosis, Angina and Heart Attacks are linked with heavy alcohol intakes.
- 8.5 Strokes, Apoplexy, Fits and different types of Paralysis are linked with alcohol intake.
- 8.6 Peripheral Neuropathy, Cortical Atrophy, Cerebellar Atrophy are well-known syndromes caused by alcohol consumption.
- 8.7 Wernicke – Worse-off syndrome with amnesia of recent events, confabulations and retainment of memory to old events with different types of paralysis are mainly due to thiamine deficiency due to excessive alcohol intake.
- 8.8 Beriberi and other deficiencies are not uncommon among alcoholics. Even Pellagra occurs in alcoholics.
- 8.9 Delirium Tremens is a serious complication that may occur during recurrent infection of alcoholics or post operatively. It also occurs during abstention as a sign

of withdrawal effect. It is quite serious and may cause death even if treated in well-equipped centres.

- 8.10 Numerous Endocrine Disorders have been associated with alcoholism ranging from Myxedema to Hyperthyroidism and Florid Cushing Syndrome.
- 8.11 Hematological ill-effects are long and variable. Folic acid deficiency, however, is the most common manifestation of alcoholic abuse resulting in Macrocytic Anemia. Zeive's syndrome is a triad of Hemolytic Anemia, Jaundice and Hyperlipidemia that follows alcoholic binges.
- 8.12 Thrombocytopenia and other platelet abnormalities are not rare in alcoholics.
- 8.13 The commonly used tablet metronidazole (flagyl) interacts badly with alcohol.
- 8.14 Recurrent infection is very common among chronic alcoholics. The resistance to disease and the immunological defense system are compromised by alcohol intake.
- 8.15 Chest infections are notorious in alcoholics. Pneumonia, Lung Abscess, Emphysema and Pulmonary Tuberculosis are all common in alcoholics.
- 8.16 During acute alcoholic intoxication, the drunk person usually vomits, the cough reflexes which are protective are paralyzed. The vomit thus easily pass to the lung causing Pneumonia or Lung Abscess. Occasionally it may even cause suffocation and death.
- 8.17 The ill-effects of alcohol consumption on women deserve special mention. Females are more vulnerable to alcohol-related Cirrhosis than men. During pregnancy alcohol consumption has a severe detrimental effect on the fetus. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is being recognized more and more in the medical profession.
- 8.18 Skin diseases are also related to alcohol indulgence.
- 8.19 Eczema, Alopecia, Nail Dystrophy, Paronychia (infection around the nails) and Angular Stomatitis (inflammation of the angle of the mouth) are common diseases among alcoholics.

9. Alcoholism is a ‘disease’

Medical doctors have now turned liberal towards alcoholics and call alcoholism a ‘disease’ rather than an addiction.

The Islamic Research Foundation has published a pamphlet that says:

If alcohol is a disease, it is the only disease that:

- Is sold in bottles
- Is advertised in newspapers, magazines, on radio, television and Internet
- Has licensed outlets to spread it
- Produces revenue for the government
- Brings violent deaths on the highways
- Destroys family life and increases crime
- Has no germs or viral cause

ALCOHOLISM IS NOT A DISEASE – IT IS SATAN’S HANDIWORK

Allah (swt) in His infinite wisdom has warned us against this snare of satan. Islam is called the “Deen-ul-Fitrah” or the natural religion of Man. All its injunctions are aimed at preserving the natural state of man. Alcohol is a deviation from this natural state, for the individual as well as for society. It degrades man to a level below that of the beasts he claims to be superior to. Hence the consumption of alcohol is prohibited in Islam.

Why is a man allowed to have more than one wife in Islam?

1. Definition of ‘Polygamy’

‘Polygamy’ means a system of marriage whereby one person has more than one spouse. Polygamy can be of two types. One is polygamy where a man marries more than one woman, and the

other is polyandry, where a woman marries more than one man. In Islam, limited polygamy is permitted; whereas polyandry is completely prohibited.

Now coming to the original question, why is a man allowed to have more than one wife?

2. The Qur'an is the only religious scripture in the world that says, "marry only one".

The Qur'an is the only religious book, on the face of this earth, that contains the phrase 'marry only one'. There is no other religious book that instructs men to have only one wife. In none of the other religious scriptures, whether it be the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Geeta, the Talmud or the Bible does one find a restriction on the number of wives. According to these scriptures one can marry as many as one wish. It was only later, that the Hindu priests and the Christian Church restricted the number of wives to one.

Many Hindu religious personalities, according to their scriptures, had multiple wives. King Dashrat, the father of Rama, had more than one wife. Krishna had several wives. In earlier times, Christian men were permitted as many wives as they wished, since the Bible puts no restriction on the number of wives. It was only a few centuries ago that the Church restricted the number of wives to one.

Polygamy is permitted in Judaism. According to Talmudic law, Abraham had three wives, and Solomon had hundreds of wives. The practice of polygamy continued till Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah (960 CE to 1030 CE) issued an edict against it. The Jewish Sephardic communities living in Muslim countries continued the practice till as late as 1950, until an Act of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel extended the ban on marrying more than one wife.

3. Hindus are more polygamous than Muslims

The report of the 'Committee of The Status of Woman in Islam', published in 1975 mentions on page numbers 66 and 67 that the

percentage of polygamous marriages between the years 1951 and 1961 was 5.06% among the Hindus and only 4.31% among the Muslims. According to Indian law, only Muslim men are permitted to have more than one wife. It is illegal for any non-Muslim in India to have more than one wife. Despite it being illegal, Hindus have more multiple wives as compared to Muslims. Earlier, there was no restriction even on Hindu men with respect to the number of wives allowed. It was only in 1954, when the Hindu Marriage Act was passed that it became illegal for a Hindu to have more than one wife. At present it is the Indian Law that restricts a Hindu man from having more than one wife and not the Hindu scriptures.

Let us now analyze why Islam allows a man to have more than one wife.

4. Qur'an permits limited polygamy

As I mentioned earlier, Qur'an is the only religious book on the face of the earth that says 'marry only one'. The context of this phrase is the following verse from Sura An Nisa' of the Glorious Qur'an:

"Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one."
[Sura An Nisa, 4:3]

Before the Qur'an was revealed, there was no upper limit for polygamy and many men had scores of wives, some even hundreds. Islam put an upper limit of four wives. Islam gives a man permission to marry two, three or four women, only on the condition that he deals justly with them.

In the same Chapter i.e. Sura An Nisa' Verse 129 says:

"Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women...." [Sura An Nisa, 4:129]

Therefore polygamy is not a rule but an exception. Many people are under the misconception that it is compulsory for a Muslim man to have more than one wife.

Broadly, Islam has five categories of Do's and Don'ts:

- (i) 'Fardh' i.e. compulsory or obligatory
- (ii) 'Mustahab' i.e. recommended or encouraged
- (iii) 'Mubah' i.e. permissible or allowed
- (iv) 'Makrooh' i.e. not recommended or discouraged
- (v) 'Haraam' i.e. prohibited or forbidden

Polygamy falls in the middle category of things that are permissible. It cannot be said that a Muslim who has two, three or four wives is a better Muslim as compared to a Muslim who has only one wife.

5. Average life span of females is more than that of males

By nature, males and females are born in approximately the same ratio. A female child has more immunity than a male child. A female child can fight the germs and diseases better than the male child. For this reason, during the pediatric age itself there are more deaths among males as compared to the females.

During wars, there are more men killed as compared to women. More men die due to accidents and diseases than women. The average life span of females is more than that of males, and at any given time one finds more widows in the world than widowers.

6. India has more male population than female due to female feticide and infanticide

India is one of the few countries, along with the other neighboring countries, in which the female population is less than the male population. The reason lies in the high rate of female feticide and infanticide in India, and the fact that more than one million female fetuses are aborted every year in this country, after they are identified as females. If this evil practice is stopped, then India too will have more females as compared to males.

7. World female population is more than male population

In the USA, women outnumber men by 7.8 million New York alone has one million more females as compared to the number of

males, and of the male population of New York one-third are gays i.e. sodomites The USA as a whole has more than twenty-five million gays .This means that these people do not wish to marry women. Great Britain four million more females as compared to males. Germany has five million more females as compared to males. Russia has nine million more females than males. God alone knows how many million more females there are in the whole world as compared to males.

8. Restricting each and every man to have only one wife is not practical

Even if every man got married to one woman, there would still be more than thirty million females in USA who would not be able to get husbands (considering that America has twenty-five million gays). There would be more than four million females in Great Britain, five million females in Germany and nine million females in Russia alone who would not be able to find a husband.

Suppose my sister happens to be one of the unmarried women living in USA, or suppose your sister happens to be one of the unmarried women in USA. The only two options remaining for her are that she either marries a man who already has a wife or becomes public property. There is no other option. All those who are modest will opt for the first.

In Western society, it is common for a man to have mistresses and/or multiple extra-marital affairs, in which case, the woman leads a disgraceful and unprotected life. The same society, however, cannot accept a man having more than one wife, in which women retain their honorable, dignified position in society and lead a protected life.

Thus the only two options before a woman who cannot find a husband is to marry a married man or to become public property. Islam prefers giving women the honorable position by permitting the first option and disallowing the second.

There are several other reasons, why Islam has permitted limited polygamy, but it is mainly to protect the modesty of women.

Women in Islam

Women and men are equal before God. Both are accountable before God. They equally receive their reward in the Hereafter for their faith and good deeds. Marriage is strongly encouraged and is both a legal agreement and a sacred bond. Islam sees every woman, married or unmarried, as an individual in her own right. She has the same right to own property, earn wealth and spend it as a man has. Her wealth does not become the property of her husband after marriage or divorce. A woman has the right to choose whom she marries and, when married, does not change her last name, out of respect for her lineage.

A woman can seek divorce if her marriage does not work out. Economically, each man and woman is an independent legal entity. Men and women have the right to own their individual property, engage in business, and inherit from others. Both have the equal right to receive an education and to enter into gainful employment, as long as Islamic principles are not violated.

Seeking knowledge is the obligation of every Muslim, male or female. The type of knowledge that is most emphasized is religious knowledge. It is also required within a society to have professionals of both genders available for the benefit of the public. For example, society requires doctors, teachers, counselors, social workers, and many other important vocations. When there is a shortage of qualified personnel, it may become obligatory for women or men to gain expertise in these fields to fulfill the needs of the Muslim community. In this situation, the guidelines of Islam are to be upheld.

Women are encouraged to seek Islamic knowledge, pursue their academic endeavors within the framework of Islam, and strive to fulfill their intellectual curiosity. To prevent anyone from getting an education is contrary to the teachings of Islam.

A man is responsible for maintaining and protecting his family and providing the basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter for his wife, children, and (if needed) other female relatives in the household. Women are not primarily responsible for this, even if

married. The Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said that the most perfect in faith among believers is he who is best in manners to his wife.

WHY HIJAB? (Islamic Dress Code)

Islam promotes modesty and seeks to minimize vice and immorality in society. One of the ways it does so is by requiring modest dress. Islam sets the standards of decency for both men and women.

In most Western countries there are laws defining what is decent. This usually amounts to the male having to cover his genitals and the female having to cover her genitals and her breasts. If this minimum requirement is not met, the most a person can be charged with is indecent exposure. The reason cited for the difference in required clothing between men and women in this matter is the difference in their anatomies.

Islam prescribes a more conservative minimum dress code for both men and women. In Islam, both men and women are expected to dress simply, modestly, and with dignity. A man must always be covered in loose and unrevealing clothing from his navel to his knee. This is the absolute minimum covering required. He must never, for example, go out in public wearing a short bathing suit.

When leaving the home, a Muslim woman must at least cover her hair and body in loose and unrevealing clothing, obscuring the details of her body from the public; some also choose to cover their face and hands.

The wisdom behind this dress code is to minimize sexual enticement and degradation in society as much as possible for both men and women. Obeying this dress code is a form of obedience of Allah. Islam forbids any sex appeal and physical allurements outside of marriage. In contrast, Islam encourages sex appeal and physical attraction for both men and women within the privacy between married couples.

Some Western observers have assumed that the head covering of a woman is meant to show her inferiority to men. This could not be further from the truth. In Islam, a woman who dresses this way commands respect, and through her modesty, she rejects sexual servitude. The message that the woman gives when she wears Islamic dress in society is, "Respect me for who I am. I am not a sex object."

Islam teaches that the consequences of immodesty fall not only on the individual but also upon the society that permits women and men to mingle freely, display themselves, and compete or allure one another through sexual attraction. These consequences are significant and cannot be ignored. To make women into sex objects for the pleasure of men is not liberation.

In fact, it is a dehumanizing form of oppression rejected by Islam. The liberation of the Muslim woman is that she is recognized by the content of her character rather than by the display of her physical attributes. From the Islamic point of view, "liberated" Western women- who must often worry about their looks, figure, and youth for the pleasure of others- are trapped in a form of slavery.

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go out of doors). That will be better, that so they may be recognized and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful". [Sura Al Ahzab, 33: 59]

Hijab in Islam and Christianity



Christian women who chose to follow their religion



Muslim women who chose to follow their religion

National Pink Hijab Day

Muslim women all across North America will be donning pink headscarves every year. October 26, 2007 marked the third annual "National Pink Hijab Day", created as an awareness campaign to show that Muslim women are committed to finding a cure for breast cancer. Pink is the national color for breast cancer awareness and Muslim women in the United States and Canada hope to show their collective support for cancer research and to reach out to the mainstream community.

"It started as a simple statement to show Americans that Muslim women are socially active within their communities and are a part of the American fabric,"

Says 20-year-old Hend El Buri, founder of National Pink Hijab Day. It was while attending Rockbridge High School in Columbia, Missouri that El Buri and her Muslim friends decided to wear pink hijabs in support of cancer research. "People would come up to us and ask 'Why are you all wearing pink today? Is it a part of your religious practice?'" says El Buri. "We told them that we wanted to dispel stereotypes that we had been forced to wear the hijab, and that we supported a cause that affects everyone, regardless of race or religion."

Today, Muslim Student Associations all across the continent are participating in the event and will be supporting National Pink Hijab Day with posters saying, "Do you have a question about my pink headscarf? Ask me on October 26th "Women are encouraged to go out in large groups in hopes to encourage questions about their matching headscarves.

"I am going out to dinner with a group of seven or eight Hijabi girlfriends on Friday," says Sumaya Abdul-Quadir, a resident of Los Angeles, California. "I participated last year also, and it spurred a lot of great questions about Islam and it's positive treatment of women, so we are hoping to get similar results this year too."

Muslim support for breast cancer research is not unprecedented. Teams like the Phoenix, Arizona based "Muslim Women Race for a Cure" have joined the Susan G. Komen Foundation's annual 'Race for a Cure' marathon. El Buri registered her group, "National Pink Hijab Day" with the Komen Foundation this year, and the group raised over \$900 in donations. National Pink Hijab Day gained its momentum with the help of the online social networking website, Facebook.com. The group has grown to over 7,500 current members from the United States, Canada, and Australia.

"I didn't expect it to grow so big," exclaims El Buri. "My intention was to just lend a helping hand to the cause against breast cancer." October is breast cancer awareness month in the United States.

Why does Islam degrade women by keeping them behind the veil?

The status of women in Islam is often the target of attacks in the secular media. The 'Hijab' or the Islamic dress is cited by many as an example of the 'subjugation' of women under Islamic law. Before we analyze the reasoning behind the religiously mandated 'Hijab', let us first study the status of women in societies before the advent of Islam.

1. In the past women were degraded and used as objects of lust

The following examples from history amply illustrate the fact that the status of women in earlier civilizations was very low to the extent that they were denied basic human dignity:

1.1 Babylonian Civilization:

The women were degraded and were denied all rights under the Babylonian law. If a man murdered a woman, instead of him being punished, his wife was put to death.

1.2 Greek Civilization:

Greek Civilization is considered the most glorious of all ancient civilizations. Under this very 'glorious' system, women were deprived of all rights and were looked down upon. In Greek mythology, an 'imaginary woman' called 'Pandora' is the root cause of misfortune of human beings. The Greeks considered women to be subhuman and inferior to men. Though chastity of women was precious, and women were held in high esteem, the Greeks were later overwhelmed by ego and sexual perversions. Prostitution became a regular practice amongst all classes of Greek society.

1.3 Roman Civilization:

When Roman Civilization was at the zenith of its 'glory', a man even had the right to take the life of his wife. Prostitution and nudity were common amongst the Romans.

1.4 Egyptian Civilization:

The Egyptian considered women evil and as a sign of a devil.

1.5 Pre-Islamic Arabia:

Before Islam spread in Arabia, the Arabs looked down upon women and very often when a female child was born, she was buried alive.

2. Islam uplifted women and gave them equality and expects them to maintain their status

Islam uplifted the status of women and granted them their just rights 1400 years ago. Islam expects women to maintain their status.

Hijab for men

People usually only discuss ‘Hijab’ in the context of women. However, in the Glorious Qur’an, Allah (swt) first mentions ‘Hijab’ for men before ‘Hijab’ for the women. The Qur’an mentions in Sura An Nur:

“Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do.” [Sura An Nur, 24:30]

The moment a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he should lower his gaze.

Hijab for women.

The next verse of Sura An Nur, says:

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons...” [Sura An Nur, 24:31]

3. Six criteria for Hijab.

According to Qur’an and Sunnah there are basically six criteria for observing Hijab:

3.1 Extent:

The first criterion is the extent of the body that should be covered. This is different for men and women. The extent of covering obligatory on the male is to cover the body at least from the navel to the knees. For women, the extent of covering obligatory is to cover the complete body except the face and the hands upto the wrists. If they wish to, they can cover even these parts of the body. Some scholars of Islam insist that the face and the hands are part of the obligatory extent of ‘Hijab’

All the remaining five criteria are the same for men and women.

- 3.2 The clothes worn should be loose and should not reveal the figure.
- 3.3 The clothes worn should not be transparent or translucent such that one can see through them.
- 3.4 The clothes worn should not be so glamorous as to attract the opposite sex.
- 3.5 The clothes worn should not resemble that of the opposite sex.
- 3.6 The clothes worn should not resemble that of the unbelievers i.e. they should not wear clothes that are specifically identities or symbols of the unbelievers' religions.

4. Hijab includes conduct and behavior among other things

Complete 'Hijab', besides the six criteria of clothing, also includes the moral conduct, behavior, attitude and intention of the individual. A person only fulfilling the criteria of 'Hijab' of the clothes is observing 'Hijab' in a limited sense. 'Hijab' of the clothes should be accompanied by 'Hijab' of the eyes, 'Hijab' of the heart, 'Hijab' of thought and 'Hijab' of intention. It also includes the way a person walks, the way a person talks, the way he behaves, etc.

5. Hijab prevents molestation

The reason why Hijab is prescribed for women is mentioned in the Qur'an in the following verse of Sura Al Ahzab:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when out of doors); that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [Sura Al Ahzab, 33:59]

The Qur'an says that Hijab has been prescribed for the women so that they are recognized as modest women and this will also prevent them from being molested.

6. Example of twin sisters

Suppose two sisters who are twins, and who are equally beautiful, walk down the street. One of them is attired in the Islamic Hijab i.e. the complete body is covered, except for the face and the hands upto the wrists. The other sister is wearing Western clothes, a miniskirt or shorts. Just around the corner there is a hooligan or ruffian who is waiting for a catch, to tease a girl. Whom will he tease? The girl wearing the Islamic Hijab or the girl wearing the skirt or the mini? Naturally he will tease the girl wearing the skirt or the mini. Such dresses are an indirect invitation to the opposite sex for teasing and molestation. The Qur'an rightly says that Hijab prevents women from being molested.

7. Capital punishment for the rapists

Under the Islamic Shari'ah, a man convicted of having raped a woman, is given capital punishment. Many are astonished at this 'harsh' sentence. Some even say that Islam is a ruthless and barbaric religion! I have asked a simple question to hundreds of non-Muslim men. Suppose, God forbid, someone rapes your wife, your mother or your sister. You are made the judge and the rapist is brought in front of you. What punishment would you give him? All of them said they would put him to death. Some went to the extent of saying they would torture him to death. To them I ask, if someone rapes your wife or your mother you want to put him to death. But if the same crime is committed on somebody else's wife or daughter you say capital punishment is barbaric. Why should there be double standards?

8. Western society falsely claims to have uplifted women

Western talk of women's liberalization is nothing but a disguised form of exploitation of her body, degradation of her soul and deprivation of her honor. Western society claims to have 'uplifted'

women. On the contrary it has actually degraded them to the status of concubines, mistresses and society butterflies who are mere tools in the hands of pleasure seekers and sex marketers, hidden behind the colorful screen of 'art' and 'culture'.

9. USA has one of the highest rates of rape

United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. It also has one of the highest rates of rape in any country in the world. According to an FBI report, in the year 1990, everyday on an average 1756 rapes were committed in USA alone. Later another report said that on an average everyday 1900 rapes are committed in USA. The year was not mentioned. May be it was 1992 or 1993. May be the Americans got 'bolder' in the following years.

Consider a scenario where the Islamic Hijab is followed in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic Hijab that is the complete body is covered except the face and the hands upto the wrists. After this if any man commits rape he is given capital punishment. I ask you, in such a scenario, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same, or will it decrease?

10. Implementation of Islamic Shari'ah will reduce the rate of rapes

Naturally as soon as Islamic Shari'ah is implemented positive results will be inevitable. If Islamic Shari'ah is implemented in any part of the world, whether it is America or Europe, society will breathe easier. Hijab does not degrade a woman but uplifts a woman and protects her modesty and chastity.

Why media highlights most of the Muslims as ‘fundamentalists’ and ‘terrorists’?

This question is often hurled at Muslims, either directly or indirectly, during any discussion on religion or world affairs. Muslim stereotypes are perpetuated in every form of the media accompanied by gross misinformation about Islam and Muslims. Infact, such misinformation and false propaganda often lead to discrimination and acts of violence against Muslims. A case in point is the anti-Muslim campaign in the American media following the Oklahoma bomb blast, where the press was quick to declare a ‘Middle-Eastern Conspiracy’ behind the attack. The culprit was later identified as a soldier from the American Armed Forces.

Let us analyze this allegation of ‘fundamentalism’ and ‘terrorism’:

1. Definition of the word ‘fundamentalist’

A fundamentalist is a person who follows and adheres to the fundamentals of the doctrine or theory he is following. For a person to be a good doctor, he should know, follow, and practice the fundamentals of medicine. In other words, he should be a fundamentalist in the field of medicine. For a person to be a good mathematician, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of mathematics. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of mathematics. For a person to be a good scientist, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of science. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of science.

2. Not all ‘fundamentalists’ are the same

One cannot paint all fundamentalists with the same brush. One cannot categorize all fundamentalists as either good or bad. Such a categorization of any fundamentalist will depend upon the field or activity in which he is a fundamentalist. A fundamentalist robber or thief causes harm to society and is therefore undesirable. A fundamentalist doctor, on the other hand, benefits society and earns much respect.

3. Dictionary meaning of the word ‘fundamentalist’

The Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English language (published by Konemann) says that ‘fundamentalism’ was a movement which was first used to describe the Protestant Christians in America in the early part of the 20th century. Earlier the church believed that the complete message of the Bible was from God. But Protestant Christians protested and said that not only is the message of the Bible from God, but every word, every letter of the Bible is from Almighty God. If any person can prove that every word and every letter of the Bible is from Almighty God, then this movement of ‘fundamentalism’ of the Protestant Christians is a good movement.

On the other hand, if someone can prove that the Bible is not the word of God, then this movement of ‘fundamentalism’ of the Protestant Christians is not a good movement. According to the earlier edition of the Oxford Dictionary, “a ‘fundamentalist’ is a person who strictly adheres to the ancient teachings of any religion.” But the second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (published by Clarendon Press) has changed the definition. This second edition says that “a ‘fundamentalist’ is a person who strictly adheres to the ancient teachings of any religion, especially Islam!”

Today the moment a person uses the word fundamentalist he thinks of a Muslim who is a terrorist.

4. Different labels given to the same individual for the same action, i.e. ‘terrorist’ and ‘patriot’.

Before India achieved independence from British rule, some freedom fighters of India who did not subscribe to non-violence were labeled as ‘terrorists’ by the British government. The same individuals have been lauded by Indians for the same activities and hailed as ‘patriots’. Thus two different labels have been given to the same people for the same set of actions. One is calling them ‘terrorists’ while the other is calling them ‘patriots’. Those who believed that Britain had a right to rule over India called these people terrorists, while those who were of the view that Britain had no right to rule India called them patriots and freedom fighters.

It is therefore important that before a person is judged, he is given a fair hearing. Both sides of the argument should be heard, the situation should be analyzed, and the reason and the intention of the person should be taken into account, and then the person can be judged accordingly.

5. Islam means peace

Islam is derived from the word 'salaam' which means peace. It is a religion of peace whose fundamentals teach its followers to maintain and promote peace throughout the world.

Thus every Muslim should be a fundamentalist i.e. he should follow the fundamentals of the Religion of Peace – Islam. He should be a 'terrorist' only towards the anti-social elements in order to promote peace and justice in the society.

Why are vast difference between Islam and the actual practice of Muslims?

Question: If Islam is the best religion, why are many of the Muslims dishonest, unreliable, and involved in activities such as cheating, bribing, dealing in drugs, etc.?

1. Media maligns Islam

- a. Islam is without doubt the best religion but the media is in the hands of the Westerners who are afraid of Islam. The media is continuously broadcasting and printing information against Islam. They either provide misinformation about Islam, misquote Islam or project a point out of proportion, if any.
- b. When any bomb blast takes place anywhere, the first people to be accused without proof are invariably the Muslims. This appears as headlines in the news. Later,

when they find that non-Muslims were responsible, it appears as insignificant news' item.

- c. If a 50-year old Muslim marries a 15-year old girl after taking her permission, it appears on the front page but when a 50-year old non-Muslim rapes a 6-year old girl, it may appear in the news in the inside pages as 'News briefs'. Everyday in America on an average 2,713 cases of rape take place but it doesn't appear in the news, since it has become a way of life for the Americans.

2. Black sheep in every community

I am aware that there are some Muslims who are dishonest, unreliable, who cheat, etc., but the media projects this as though only Muslims are involved in such activities. There are black sheep in every community. I know Muslims who are alcoholics and who can drink most of the non-Muslims under the table.

3. Muslims are best as a whole

Inspite of all the black sheep in the Muslim community, Muslims taken on the whole, yet form the best community in the world. We are the biggest community of teetotalers as a whole, i.e., those who don't imbibe alcohol. Collectively, we are a community which gives the maximum charity in the world. There is not a single person in the world who can even show a candle to the Muslims where modesty is concerned; where sobriety is concerned; where human values and ethics are concerned.

4. Don't judge a car by its driver

If you want to judge how good is the latest model of the "Mercedes" car and a person who does not know how to drive sits at the steering wheel and bangs up the car, who will you blame? The car or the driver? Naturally, the driver. To analyze how good the car is, a person should not look at the driver but see the ability and features of the car. How fast is it, what is its average fuel consumption, what are the safety measures, etc. Even if I agree for the sake of argument that the Muslims are bad, we can't judge

Islam by its followers! If you want to judge how good Islam is, then judge it according to its authentic sources, i.e., the Glorious Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith.

5. Judge Islam by its best follower i.e. Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him)

If you practically want to check how good a car is, put an expert driver behind the steering wheel. Similarly, the best and the most exemplary follower of Islam by whom you can check how good Islam is, is the last and final messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Besides Muslims, there are several honest and unbiased non-Muslim historians too who have acclaimed that prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was the best human being. According to Michael H. Hart who wrote the book, 'The 100 Most Influential Persons in History', the topmost position, i.e., the number one position goes to the beloved prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him). There are several such examples of non-Muslims paying great tributes to the prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him), like Thomas Carlyle, La-Martine, etc.



CHAPTER 9

Exercising Some Alertness & Control Over Your Daily Activities

Keep in mind the 17 Harmful Effects of TV Watching

1. Produces hypnotic effect, bypassing frontal lobe filtering.
2. Reduces interest in reading and learning.
3. Weakens brain power.
4. Encourages poor lifestyle habits.
5. Encourages obesity.
6. Increases daydreaming.
7. Weakens creativity.
8. May reduce our powers of discrimination.
9. Trans in non-reaction.
10. Influences viewers to regard violence lightly.
11. Makes children more irritable.
12. Increases aggressiveness.
13. Accelerates sexual activity.
14. Addictive
15. Reduces time available for productive achievement.
16. Steals time from family interaction.
17. Adversely affects spiritual pursuits.

Let's watch Islamic TV Channels

We can watch 24 hours Internet-based Islamic TV Channel. For free registration please visit: www.islambox.tv

Negative Effects of Facebook

So many Facebook users, especially teenagers, do not realize the negative effects of Facebook. Is it because they are already addicted to Facebook? If they are, as we already know, addiction may lead into negative things if we cannot control it. Here are 7 Negative Effects of Facebook:

Does not care about his/her surroundings

When someone already addicted to Facebook, there is a big possibility that he/she would not care about his/her surroundings. This guy only cares about his/her world.

Less social interaction

Maybe you have a lot of friends in Facebook. However, how often do you interact with them in the real world? Come on, you are human! Human are social creatures.

You will reduce your social skills, communication skills as well as verbal skills if you spend most of your time with the Internet. Do not do that. Appreciate yourself!

Bad for health

Obesity would be one of many Facebook negative effects. Surely you will be fatter. You reduce your physical activity, only sitting in front of the monitor and snacking all the time definitely. By the end of the month, you have made yourself become less attractive in front of your opposite sex.

Reduces the time for study

You still go to school, right? So, why don't you stop browsing Facebook now and turn into educative website which relates to your school subjects?

Less family concern

Family comes first. Do these words still have its meaning for Facebookers? Sometimes, Facebook friends are more important than those of family members.

Privacy blow-up

Never ever put your personal data in detail, especially in a social site like Facebook. Unless you do not want to have privacy or maybe you want to be contacted by a lot of people that you do not recognize at all.

Possibility of conflict

If you are addicted to Facebook, maybe you know that there are so many immature people who create stupid status, upload embarrassing picture and many other ridiculous actions. These actions are definitely a very good way to set up conflicts with others.

Islamic use of the FACEBOOK

Taking advantage of the current technology, we Muslims can utilize the FACEBOOK by organizing a friends' circle therein to do Islamic Dawah by uploading or linking informative Islamic documentaries, thought-provoking articles of renowned Islamic scholars and other interesting topics for information of all concerned. This we may call digital Islamic Dawah, which will certainly disseminate Islamic ideals among a vast population.

How to avoid Pornography?

“A boy at school had a picture of a naked girl pasted inside the door of his locker. His locker wasn't far from mine.” –Robert

“I was doing research on the Internet for a school report when suddenly I came across a pornographic Website.” –Annette

When your parents were your age, people who wanted to view pornography had to look for it. Today, it seems that pornography looks for you. Like Robert, quoted above, you may find that your eyes fall upon a schoolmate's porn. Or, like Annette, you could inadvertently see it online. Says one 19-years-old girl.

“Sometimes I'm browsing or shopping on the Internet or even just checking bank statements online when *wham---*pornography pops up!”

This is hardly unusual. In one study, 90 percent of youths between the ages of 8 and 16 said that they had unintentionally encountered pornography online--- in most cases while doing homework! The fact is, with millions of websites hosting *hundreds*

of millions of sexually explicit pages, pornography is more accessible than ever. It can even be accessed through a cell phone. "It's a big thing at my school." Says 16-year-old Denise. "On Monday, conversation seems to be, 'What pictures did you download to your cell over the weekend?'"

Knowing that so many people are looking at pornography, you might wonder, 'Is it really all that bad?' The answer is yes, for several reasons.

Pornography has devastating effects on those who are ensnared by it. Consider just two examples:

"I was exposed to pornography at a very young age, and it was really a struggle for me to break free from it. It's been years, but those images are indelibly burned into my memory. The thoughts always seem to be lurking in the back of your mind, and your conscience never seems truly clean. Pornography destroys your self-esteem and can leave you feeling dirty and worthless. You always have this silent burden to carry." —Erica.

"I was addicted to pornography for 10 years, and I've been free of it for 14. Even now, though, it's a daily battle. The desire, although much more subdued, is still there. The curiosity is still there. The images are still there. I wish I'd never started down this hideous path. It seemed so harmless at first. But now I know better. Pornography is damaging, it is perverse, and it is demeaning to all parties concerned. Despite what its proponents may claim, there is nothing —absolutely nothing—positive about pornography." —Jeff.

MAKING AN EVALUATION:

Q: How can you avoid even unintentionally stumbling across pornography? First, analyze the situation.

Q: How frequently do you encounter pornography by accident?

- ☐ Never ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Weekly ☐ Daily

Q: Where does this most often occur?

- ☐ Internet ☐ School ☐ TV
☐ Cell phone ☐ Other

Q: Is there a pattern to your encounters? Consider the following examples:

Are some of your schoolmates likely to send pornography via e-mail or cell phone attachments? Knowing this may impel you to delete such attachments without opening them.

When you're online, do pop-ups occur when you enter certain words in a search engine? Knowing that this is possible could help you to be more specific in your use of key words.

Below, list any circumstances that have led to your encountering pornography.

1) 2) 3) 4)

In view of the above, what might you do to reduce the number of times you inadvertently encounter pornography? (Write your thoughts here.)

1) 2) 3) 4)

How do you respond when you stumble across pornography?

- 1) I turn away immediately.
- 2) Curiosity causes me to stare at it briefly.
- 3) I continue to look at it and even search out for more.

If you checked the second or third response, what goal could you set in this matter?

BREAKING FREE:

Some who are unwittingly exposed to pornography become curious and, in time, develop a habit of viewing it. Breaking such a habit isn't easy. If you have fallen into a habit of viewing pornography, do not despair. You *can* get help. How?

Understand pornography for what it is:

It's nothing less than a satanic attempt to degrade humans.

Think of the consequences:

Pornography destroys marriages. It devalues women and men. It debases the person who views it.

Make a commitment: a) I will not use the Internet when I am alone in a room. b) I will immediately exit any pop-up or site that is explicit. c) I will talk to my parents if I have a relapse.

Pray about the matter: Always pray to God to keep you away from the Satan.

Talk to someone: If you have a habit of viewing pornography, discuss with a mature person whom you would feel comfortable approaching about the matter.

Success: Be assured that you can be successful in the war against pornography. In fact, each time you turn away from it, you have won a significant victory.

Sin and Repentance (Tawba and Istighfar)

Sin is willfully and knowingly disobeying Allah. The greatest of all sins is polytheism, though any intentional violation of the commandments of Allah is also a sinful act. Allah, The Preventer, has prohibited a number of things that are harmful to the individual or to the society. Murder, assault, theft, fraud, usury, fornication, adultery, sorcery, consumption of alcohol, eating pork, and the use of illicit drugs are all examples of sinful acts.

Islam rejects the doctrine of original sin. No soul shall bear the burden of another, as this would be a great injustice, because Allah, The Most Merciful, is The Just. Each of us is accountable before Allah, The All-Seeing, for our own deeds. However, if one person encourages another to commit a sin, both are punishable. One of them deserves punishment for actually committing the sin; the other deserves punishment for encouraging it.

When a person commits a sin, he or she is deserving of Allah's punishment. Fortunately, Allah is The Most Compassionate and The Oft-Forgiving. Allah acts out of infinite knowledge and justice. Muslims do not believe that Jesus, the son of Mary, had to die for the sins of mankind. Allah, The Most Compassionate, forgives whomever He chooses. To believe that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die in order to have our sins forgiven denies Allah's infinite power and justice. Allah is unlimited in His mercy.

Allah, the Answerer, promises us that He will forgive us if we turn to Him in sincere repentance. Repentance is a serious matter. It is the way a person can attain salvation by the mercy of Allah. Repentance cannot be taken lightly. Sincere repentance has the following conditions:

1. The person must recognize and acknowledge that he or she has committed a sin and must truly regret having done so.
2. The person must humbly turn to Allah for forgiveness.
3. The person must have a sincere resolve not to commit the sin again.
4. If the sin caused harm to someone else, the person must make every possible attempt to remedy the harm.

This does not mean that if the person returns to the same sin in the future, his or her former repentance is annulled. What is needed is a serious commitment in the heart not to sin again. Because we do not know what the future holds, the door to repentance is always open. Allah, The Oft-Pardoning, is pleased when the children of Adam turn to Him for His abundant forgiveness. Repentance is a form of worship.

No one can forgive sins except Allah. It is forbidden for a Muslim to seek divine forgiveness for sin through or by turning to anyone else, as Muslims believe this would be considered polytheism.

Is dating or boyfriend-girlfriend relationship allowed in Islam?

The only answer is, NO. Having a girlfriend or a boyfriend, or any type of relationship before marriage is not allowed. It is Haram. See Ayah 25 of Sura Nisa of the Qur'an. Allah dictates for legal marriage.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"... Wed them with the permission of their own folk and give them their mahr (dowry) according to what is reasonable; they should be chaste, not adulterous, nor taking paramours..." [Sura An Nisa, 4:25]

In his commentary on this aayah, Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Muhsanaat [translated as "chaste"] means that they should be pure, not indulging in zinaa (unlawful sexual conduct), hence they are described as not being musaafihaat, which means promiscuous women who do not refuse anyone who wants to commit immoral acts with them. Regarding the phrase WA laa muttakhidhaati akhdaan ('nor taking boyfriends'), Ibn 'Abbaas said: 'al-musaafihaat means those who are known to commit zinaa, meaning those who will not refuse anyone who wants to commit immoral acts with them.' Ibn 'Abbaas also said: 'muttakhidhaati akhdaan means lovers.' A similar interpretation was narrated from Abu Hurayrah, Mujaahid, al-Sha'bi, al-Dahhaak, 'Ataa' al-Khurasani, Yahyaa ibn Abi Katheer, Muqaatil ibn Hayyaan and al-Saddi. They said: (it means) lovers. Al-Hasan al-Basri said: 'It means a (male) friend.' Al-Dahhaak also said: 'WA laa muttakhidhaati akhdaan also means a woman who has just one boyfriend or lover with whom she is happy. Allah has also forbidden this, meaning marrying her so long as she is in that situation..."

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Made lawful to you this day are al-tayyibaat [all kinds of halaal (lawful) foods...]. The food of the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is lawful to you and yours is lawful to them. (Lawful to you in marriage) are chaste women from the believers and chaste women from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) before your time, when you have given their due mahr (bridal money given by the husband to the wife at the time of marriage), desiring chastity (i.e., taking them in legal wedlock), not committing illegal sexual intercourse, nor taking them as girlfriends. And whosoever disbelieves in the Oneness of Allah and in all the other Articles of Faith, the fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." [Sura Al-Maidah, 5:5]

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said

"Muhsineen ghayr musaafiheen WA laa muttakhidhi akhdaan ('desiring chastity (i.e., taking them in legal wedlock), not committing illegal sexual intercourse, nor taking them as girlfriends'). Just as Allah imposed the condition of chastity on women, meaning that they refrain from zinaa, so it is also imposed on men. The man must also be pure and chaste. So they should be ghayr musaafiheen, meaning they should not be adulterers who do not refrain from sin and do not refuse any who come to them (for immoral purposes). Nor should they be muttakhidhi akhdaan, meaning those who have girlfriends or female lovers with whom they have an exclusive relationship, as quoted above from Sura An Nisa. (The one with many lovers or the one with just one lover) are both the same. For this reason Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) said that it is not right to marry a promiscuous woman unless she has repented, or to arrange a marriage of such a woman to a chaste man, so long as she is still conducting herself in this manner. Similarly, he (Ahmad) says that it is not right for a promiscuous man to marry a chaste woman unless he repents and gives up his immoral conduct, because of this aayah... We will discuss this matter in further detail after quoting the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

"Let no man guilty of fornication or adultery marry any but a woman similarly guilty, or an unbeliever: nor let any but such a

man or an unbeliever marry such a woman: to the Believers such a thing is forbidden." [Sura An Nur 24:3]

Among the stories that show that it is forbidden to have girlfriends or to marry them is the story of Marthad ibn Abi Marthad, who used to smuggle Muslim prisoners-of-war from Makkah to Madeenah. There was a prostitute in Makkah, called 'Anaaq, who had been a friend of Marthad's. Marthad had promised to take one of the prisoners from Makkah to Madeenah. He said: "I came to the shade of one of the gardens of Makkah on a moonlit night, then 'Anaaq came and saw my shadow by the garden. When she reached me, she recognized me and said: 'Marthad?' I said, 'Marthad.' She said: 'Welcome! Stay with us tonight.' I said, 'O 'Anaaq, Allah has forbidden zinaa (unlawful sexual relations)' ... I came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and asked him, 'O Messenger of Allah, should I marry 'Anaaq?' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained silent and did not answer me at all, until the aayah '*Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty, or an Unbeliever; nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman; to the Believers such a thing is forbidden*' [Sura An Nur, 24:3 - Yusuf 'Ali's translation] was revealed. Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'O Marthad, Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty, or an Unbeliever; nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman, so do not marry her.'"

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3101; he said: it is a hasan ghareeb hadeeth).

'Abd-Allah ibn Maghfal reported that there was a woman who had been a prostitute during the days of ignorance (before Islam). A man passed by her, or she passed by him, and he touched her. She said: "Stop it! (Mah! A word connoting a rebuke or denunciation). Allah has done away with shirk and had brought Islam." So he left her alone and went away, still looking at her, until he walked into a wall, hitting his face. He came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him what had happened. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "You are a man for whom Allah wishes good. When

Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, wishes good for His slave, He hastens the punishment for his sin, so that it is dealt with before the Day of Resurrection." (Reported by al-Haakim, 1/349, who said this hadeeth is saheeh according to the conditions of Muslim, and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. See Saheeh al-Jaami', 308).

These aayaat and ahaadeeth clearly indicate that it is haraam (forbidden) for men to have any kind of friendship or relationship with non-mahram women (women to whom they are not closely-related and to whom they could get married). The evil consequences and misery caused by such relationships are obvious to anyone who observes real life. We ask Allah to keep us far away from that which is forbidden, to protect us from all that may earn His wrath and to keep us safe from a painful punishment. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad.

- Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

Harm of Alcohol & Drugs

By comparison, in the USA with a population of 220 million in 2005, there are 15 million alcoholics, 2 million heroin addicts, 5.5 million cocaine users, 6 million tranquilizer abusers and 18 million regularly use marijuana. There are 700 treatment centers. There are 10,000 kids (children born to cocaine mothers).

The cost of drug treatment to the nation (USA) is \$117 billion per year. In 1986 congress allotted only \$2.5 billion to control drug traffic, a \$110 billion industry. The value of cocaine seized at the borders in 1985 was \$70 million (5 million in 1981) and marijuana \$70 million (2 million in 1981). Next to Columbia, the USA is the second biggest producer of marijuana.

In addition to morbidity, the alcohol and drug scene is closely connected to the crime rate. In 1985 alone 800,000 arrests were made for drug violations (compared to 400,000 in 1973). Of the 523,000 inmates in the U.S. prisons, one-third admitted drinking alcohol before committing the felony. Of the 50,000 auto accidents

deaths annually, 23,000 are related to acute alcoholism, 5,000 being teenagers. In addition about 1500,000 arrests occur annually in traffic violation due to alcoholism. In addition great man made disasters have taken place due to one man's alcohol indulgence i.e. the captain of the Exxon tanker in Alaska. No wonder, the ethics committee in US congress was so careful in choosing the Defense Secretary. One third of all 75,000 AIDS cases are occurring in IV drug abusers or their partners. 54%, of drug related AIDS are in heterosexual men, 16% in women, 20% in homosexual men, 8% in partners of drug users and 3% in children born to mothers with drug abuse or whose partner was drug abuser. The alcohol and drug abuse in children as young as 5 is increasing at an alarming rate.

In addition to alcohol, marijuana, heroin and cocaine, the other drugs abused are an angel dust (PCP), speed, MDMA (ecstasy), china white, MPTP, tranquilizers and anabolic steroids. Let us discuss some of the medical aspects of these drugs in brief.

Marijuana: Has 400 known chemicals, 61 of them affect the brain, the THC or delta 9 Tetra hydro Cannabinol is the most active ingredient. Marijuana impairs memory, concentration and reading capacity. Increases anxiety, apprehension and fear. It damages heart and lung. It lowers testosterone (male hormone) and sperm count and affects the outcome of pregnancy. It is more carcinogenic than cigarettes.

Cocaine: A potent brain stimulant, was initially thought to be harmless, thus added to the soft drink (coke) in 1900. When given intravenously, it produces intense high and intense low (depression), hallucination, convulsion, cardiac arrest and death.

Heroin: (Opium) morphine derivative. Usually injected by needle, but can be snorted or smoked. It is highly addictive with intensely withdrawal. Overdose results in death.

Amphetamines: Are "pep pills" to fight fatigue and stay awake, suppress appetite, and stimulates heart and central nervous system. Dangerous in large doses and can cause psychological addiction.

Barbiturates: Are used to overcome intense high and produce sleep. It can be fatal when used with alcohol.

LSD (Acid): It is a powerful hallucinogen, can cause psychotic reaction and mental breakdown.

New Drugs: MDMA (ecstasy) is LSD + Cocaine, causes disorientation initially but leads to permanent brain damage. China White is 1,000 times more potent than heroin. MPTP causes Parkinsonism (brain damage).

Alcohol: Alcohol damages all organs of the body in due course. It damages liver (cirrhosis), causes stomach bleeding (ulcer), heart (cardiomyopathy), sex hormones and the immune system. Its effect on the brain can be acute (intoxication, delirium) or chronic (ataxia, memory loss, coordination). It is linked to breast cancer and fetal damage in women. But it is violence, homicide, suicide and drunk driving which takes most lives.

Profile of an Alcoholic and Drug Abuser:

Instead of writing at length the problems of drugs and alcohol in youths of America, which cost the nation billions of dollars, and cost mothers their sons and daughters (MADD), I think it will be better if I print an autobiography of one of my patients (19 years old, white female, upper class, name withheld). She writes...

"When I was in high school, my friends and I began to experiment with marijuana. After the excitement of smoking pot became "old hat", we began to try different drugs - such as hash and THC. Pretty soon cocaine and LSD were introduced to us and it was common place to go to any party "high" on one or more of these drugs. Several times, I had very frightening experiences. Specifically one night, after taking LSD I went home (to my parent's home) before my "high" was over. Usually, I stayed overnight with a friend who "tripped" with me. On this night, my boyfriend and I broke up right after I took the LSD, so I went home alone. My parents were asleep in the next room and I felt that I had to be very quiet, so as not to wake them. I was afraid to make

any noise, plus I was upset over the breakup of my relationship with my boyfriend. When the LSD took effect, I was very frightened. The walls looked as though they were melting: I heard strange noises; I hallucinated, even after closing my eyes. The sights were very unpleasant and frightening images. But I couldn't do anything but lie in bed, waiting for the drug to wear off. I didn't think I could tell my parents, since I knew I had taken an illegal and dangerous drug- I was awake nearly all night, scared to death with no one to talk to. For days after this incident, I was nervous and jumpy and depressed. The incident was a major shock to my system and one that I would never want to repeat.

I stopped taking "drugs" immediately after my senior year in high school- (I had only discovered drugs at the beginning of the school year). But, I guess the stage was set off for my future reactions. Drugs did not help- they were just for fun at first - but then once the "high" was gone, there was a real "let down" feeling that followed. So we'd either do more drugs or drink a few beers to make that feeling go away. Even now, whenever I get down or "stressed out"- the first thing I do is have a few drinks. The day after is always unpleasant if I have had too many drinks - so the opportunity for a vicious cycle is there. I honestly believe that the "harmless" experiments with marijuana, several years ago, may have been the start of this tendency to turn to alcohol today. The bottom line is, I'd be a hundred times better off today - happier and wealthier if drugs had never entered my life years ago.

The Islamic Perspective:

The objectives of Islamic divine laws are the protection of faith (belief in one God), life (abortion, suicide, homicide), property (ownership) and the mind (intoxicants). Normally in the brain there is an inhibitory control which tells us not to engage in shameful or wrongful acts. Any suppressant drug including alcohol will suppress these nerve pathways and take away such restraint. Ability to make a judgment, to protect the body or honor, a quality for humans is taken away under the influence of drugs.

There are two main features of Islamic prohibitions:

a) Islam stops the wrong at the inception and not at the end. There

is nothing like safe drinking age, or safe drugs to get high. Most of the teenage alcoholics don't buy the alcohol from the store but get it at home. Islam makes equal laws for both children and parents by prohibiting completely (total abstinence), but the West does not. It is for this reason; the West has been crippled to handle the problem of drugs and alcohol, because it has made dual standards.

b) Islam blocks all the avenues to the wrong. Therefore not only illicit sex is prohibited, but casual mixing of sexes freely is prohibited, but obscenity and pornography is prohibited, and in the same context, not only drinking wine is prohibited, but making it, selling it, keeping it, or even growing grapes for the sole purpose of selling it to winery for making wine is prohibited by the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Some 1400 years ago, Allah (swt), our creator and sustainer, who cares for us, sent down following revelation in the following order, mentioned in the Qur'an.

Sura Al Baqarah, 2:219: "They ask you concerning wine and gambling." Say: "In them there is great sin, and some profit, for men, but sin is greater than the profit."

Sura An Nisa, 4:43: "O you who believe! Approach not prayers, with a mind befogged, until you can understand all that you say."

Sura Al-Maidah, 5:93: "O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divinations by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: Avoid such (abomination) that you may prosper."

Sura Al-Maidah, 5:93: "Satan's plan is to sow enmity and hatred among you with intoxicants and gambling, and to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you not then give up?"

The above verses came over period of years and when the last verse came, Muslims threw away all the wine into the streets and stopped completely in whatever state they were in, and streets of Medina were flowing with wine.

Sayings of Prophet Mohammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) and about wine and other intoxicants.

1. "Every intoxicant is khamr, and every khamr is haram (unlawful)- reported by Muslim.
2. "Of that which intoxicates in a large amount, a small amount is haram" (Ahmad, Abu-Daud and Al-Tirmizi,).
3. "Khamr (intoxicants) is the mother of all evils". Reported in Bukhari.

The solutions: There are no easy solutions. In fact it is a multifactorial problem and each aspect should be addressed individually, and seriously, both by the government and by the public. While the total ban on production, import and export is the ideal solution to create a drug-free society, by experience (i.e. in the USA with total ban on alcohol in 1920's) it is difficult to achieve unless strict laws are made and enforced on drug producers, traffickers and offenders, a law, that sees distinction between the helpless victim and a powerful drug Lord. Our current system punishes the former and spares the latter. Islam offers such tough laws to influence our morality and health. While we are trying to do these, we in the mean time should pay more attention to the needs of the victim by educating the masses, social workers, law enforcements agencies and the physicians, and the same time developing treatment and rehab centers in large scale as human sufferings continue to grow and sons, daughters, husbands and fathers are being lost daily. All these require motivation and commitment from all of us. It is beyond the dignity of a human-being to become dependent on alcohol and drugs and not be able to serve himself, his family and his Creator in the best possible manner.

- Dr. Shahid Athar

How to Stop Masturbation

Allah Ta'ala has created man with innate carnal desires, and has made Nikah a lawful and dignified avenue to discharge these desires.

Under normal circumstances, Nikah is Sunnah. If a man's sexual desires reach a stage where there is a strong fear that he will be involved in Zina (fornication), it will then be Waajib (compulsory) for him to make Nikah. At this juncture, shyness is no excuse. The man will have to approach his elders and request them to make arrangements for his Nikah.

Nikah should not be delayed or avoided for fear of poverty and want. In the Ahaadith, we are told that Nikah creates Barakah in one's sustenance. Allah Ta'ala has taken it upon himself to assist that person who performs Nikah in order to protect his chastity. Nikah is a simple and inexpensive affair in Islam. The errant customs of societies have made it difficult for others. The solution is to abandon all such customs and conduct the Nikah strictly according to the Sunnah. Nikah, then will not be a burden, rather it will release one from a burden.

The next step would be to guard the gaze. It is, thus, imperative to strictly guard the gaze. Where it is practical, avoid all such situations where one's gaze may fall on Ghayr Mahram (women not prohibited in Nikah) females. TV, books, magazines, internet, newspapers, should be shunned.

Should one's gaze accidentally fall on some woman, immediately lower the gaze. This is not difficult. It only requires some courage and training. Some points that may assist in this are:

1. Consider that this is not a calamity but rather an opportunity to win a big prize. It is a once in a life opportunity to strike a huge windfall. In the Hadith, we are told that a person, who, after having been tempted, lowers his gaze, Allah Ta'ala will grant him the sweetness of Imaan. What more can one ask for? The one who has the sweetness of Imaan has everything. Others

strive their entire life for this very goal of finding the sweetness of Imaan. Here is the opportunity to acquire this in a split second. Therefore, lower the gaze and in your heart make this transaction with Allah Ta'ala that, 'O Allah! I am lowering my gaze for you. So you grant me the sweetness of Imaan.

2. By maintaining the gaze, one is in fact moving to the depths of Jahannam (hell). And by lowering the gaze, one is ascending the highest ranks of Jannah.
3. Consider the reality of the woman at whom one is gazing. If she does not groom herself or apply perfume for one day, she will look dreadful and stink. For a number of days every month she has impurity pouring out of her. If one had to just go near such impurity, one will wish to flee. Imagine if she went to the toilet and forgot to flush and, if you had to enter the toilet, will you still have the desire to gaze at her? If this woman does not have Deen, then by raising her arms and exposing her unsightly armpits, she will give out the smell of a skunk. These are some thoughts (although undignified), will assist one in taming the evil desire to look at women.
4. Try as far as possible to remain in the state of Wudu. In the Hadith, we are informed that Wudu is the weapon of a Mu'min. With this weapon, it is much easier for him to thwart the onslaughts of the Shaytaan.
5. Try to remain in the company of the true friends of Allah Ta'ala. The true friends are those that, when you sit with them they remind you of Allah Ta'ala and their company produces a desire for the Aakhirah (hereafter). The company of such people is extremely efficacious in imbuing the obedience of Allah Ta'ala, and in cultivating an abhorrence to sin.
6. There must surely be somebody who you have a lot of respect for, e.g., your mother, father, grandparents, Ustaadh or Shaykh. Consider if that person was present, would you indulge in the evil of masturbating. The very fact that the presence of such a person will deter you is sufficient to show that you do have the strength to abstain from this evil. When the presence of such a person will be a cause for controlling

one's desires, consider the fact that the Mala'ikah (angels) are with you and are watching. Remember that Allah Ta'ala is watching you. Do you not feel ashamed of His presence whereas you feel ashamed of the presence of a human being? Is this the degree of respect that Allah Ta'ala deserves from you?

May Allah Ta'ala save you and every Ummat from this evil, Aameen.

Masturbation is defined as the manual stimulation of the male or female genitals, not by sexual intercourse, designed to produce an orgasm. Masturbation is totally forbidden in Shari'ah.

One of the most humiliating problems that the constant male masturbator suffers from when he attempts to have sexual relations is premature ejaculation or the failure to maintain an erection. When a person is masturbating, he tends to reach his orgasm as quickly as possible but in sexual intercourse, he normally has to attempt to control his excitement which can impose a great strain on those who indulge in self-abuse over a lengthy period.

Those who achieve insufficient satisfaction from sexual intercourse and return to masturbation or never give it up suffer a great torment. Normal sex life is empty for them, which leads to many more problems, marital disputes, divorce, etc.

Therefore, people who continuously masturbate lose out all rounds. The physical pleasure becomes reduced to a natural act like urinating or excreting and at the back of their minds there is awareness that they are missing out on the real pleasures of life. No adult can honestly claim to masturbate without a guilty feeling of complete uselessness. Masturbation is merely an exhaustive rather than constructive undertaking resulting in nothing but total loss. Once orgasm has been achieved, there is nothing left except a feeling of complete emptiness.

Steps in overcoming masturbation

Be assured that you can be cured of your difficulty. Many have

been, both male and female. And you can also be cured if you determine that it must be so. If you want to give it up, you need will-power and determination. Rasulullah [sallAllahu alayhi wasallam] said, 'The Niyyat of a believer is better than the act.'

This determination is the first step. That is where you begin. Firstly, you must decide that you will end this practice and when you make that decision, the problem will be greatly reduced at once. But it must be more than a hope or a wish only. It is good for you. You must realize that this is a great evil and you must give it up.

It must be actually a decision. If you truly make up your mind that you will be cured, then you will have the strength to resist any tendency which you may have and any temptation which may come to you. Ask Allah to help you and give you strength and steadfastness to succeed.

After you have made this decision then observe the following specific guidelines.

Guidelines

1. First step is to realize that you are violating Allah's command and you are bringing upon yourself a lifelong destruction and harm.
2. Never touch the intimate parts of your body unnecessarily.
3. Avoid being alone as much as possible. Find good company and stay in this good company. Remember, an idle mind is the devil's (Shaytaan) workshop.
4. If you are associated with other persons having this same problem, you must break off their friendship. Never associate with other people having the same weakness. Don't suppose that both of you will quit together, you never will. You must get away from people of that kind. Just to be in their presence will keep your problem foremost in your mind.

The problem must be taken out of your mind for that is where it really exists. Your mind must be on other and more wholesome things. It is mentioned in a Hadith that a person is upon the way of his friend. (Bukhari, Tirmizi)

5. When you take a bath, do so as quickly as possible.
6. When in bed, if that is where you have your problem for the most part, dress yourself for the night so securely that you cannot easily touch your vital parts so that it would be difficult and time-consuming for you to remove those clothes. By the time you started to remove protective clothing, you would have sufficiently controlled your thinking and the temptation would leave you.

If the temptation seems overpowering while you are in bed, engage in something useful. The purpose behind this suggestion is that you focus your mind on something else. You are the subject of your thoughts, so to speak.

7. Never look at pornographic material.
8. The attitude of the individual has an effect on how easy it is to overcome. It is essential that a firm commitment be made to control this habit. The person must first realize the evil of this act. Secondly he must understand the reason for this behavior.

After these 2 steps, the individual needs to become sensitive to the situations and conditions which may cause a person to commit this vile act. Hence a person must guard himself from anything, which may trigger a desire for this act. By following these steps, a person gains the ability to gain victory from this act, hence the power to control this filthy practice is developed. Remember you need also a bit of will-power.

ADVICE

1. Make Dua daily; seek help from Allah, this will strengthen you against temptation.

2. Follow a program of vigorous daily exercises. The exercise reduces emotional tension and depression and is absolutely basic to the solution to this problem. Double your physical activity when you feel stress increasing.
3. When the temptation to masturbate is strong, turn your thoughts away from the selfish need to indulge.
4. Set goals of abstinence. Begin with a day, then a week, a month, a year and finally commit to never doing it again. Till you don't commit yourself, to never indulging yourself in this vile act, you'll always be open to temptation.
5. Begin to work daily on a self-improvement program. Strive to enhance your strengths and talents.
6. Be aware of situations that depress you or that cause you to feel lonely, bored, frustrated or discouraged; these emotional states can trigger the desire to masturbate as a way of escape. Plan in advance to counter these low periods through various activities, such as reading books, visiting a friend, doing something athletic, etc.
7. Start frequenting the Masjid. Make it a daily practice to recite part of the Qur'an. Find out about authentic books which you can read from your local Aalim (Imam).
8. Make a pocket calendar for a month on a small card. Carry it with you. Color the day on which you masturbate black. The calendar becomes a strong visual reminder of self-control and should be looked at when you are tempted to add another black day. Keep your calendar up until you have at least three clear months.
9. A careful study will indicate that you had the problem at certain times and under certain conditions. Try and recall in detail what your particular times and conditions were. Now that you understand how it happens, plan to break the pattern through counter activities.

10. In the field of psychotherapy, there is a very effective technique called 'aversion therapy'. When we associate or think of something very distasteful with something which has been pleasurable, but undesirable, the distasteful thought and feeling will begin to cancel out that which was pleasurable. If you associate something very distasteful with your loss of self control, it will help you to stop the act. For example, if you are tempted to masturbate, think of having to bathe in a tub of worms, and eat several of them as you do the act.
11. Do not let yourself return to any past habit or attitude patterns which were part of your problem. Shaytaan never gives up. Keep a positive mental attitude and always stay on guard. You can win this fight! The joy and strength you will feel when you do, will give your whole life a radiant and spiritual glow of satisfaction and fulfillment.

- Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Prohibition of Free-Mixing Between Men and Women

The terms "mixing" and "mingling" are used frequently in discussions on the subject of male-female relations in Islam, but these terms were not used at the time the Qur'an was revealed. For this reason, we cannot find direct references in the Qur'an and Sunnah that say "free mixing between men and women is unlawful". However, this does not mean that such conduct is permissible or that Islam has failed to address the matter. Islam has detailed the relationship between men and women in the most precise and exacting terms. It has set down clear guidelines to show men and women how they must conduct themselves with one another. From all of this, there can be no question that Islam prohibits the free mixing of the sexes.

If we look at every verse of the Qur'an in search of a direct statement prohibiting a child from beating his parents, we will never find it. It is not there. However, the Qur'an says: "Do not even say to them 'uff'." Can any rational person, after hearing this

verse, claim that it is permissible for a son to beat up his mother or father?

Likewise, Islam has forbidden a woman from putting on perfume and passing in front of men. It has prohibited her from striking her feet on the ground when she walks to reveal the jingle of her hidden ornaments. Can anyone, after considering these and so many other rulings, assume that women and men are allowed to freely mingle and mix with one another?

The texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah are limited in number. If we were to abstain from forbidding anything that is not directly stipulated by word in the texts, we would be rejecting the validity of analogous reasoning in Islamic Law. This would leave countless matters of life without an Islamic legal ruling. This would strip Islamic Law of one of its greatest qualities, which is its relevance to all times and circumstances.

It is absolutely clear from the texts that Islam does not allow men and women to meet each other whenever and however they like. It has placed clear regulations and restrictions upon such behavior and has defined the limits of interaction between men and women. Moreover, Islam has closed all doors that lead to temptation and promiscuity.

When we consider all of the laws governing the relationship between men and women in Islam, we are forced to come to the conclusion that Islam forbids any mixing between the sexes that might provide even the remotest possibility of temptation. Scholars of Islam throughout history have fully appreciated this fact. We can see it evidenced in the writings of the great jurists:

Al-Sarakhsi writes: "The judge should try women separately from men since people tend to crowd together in the courtroom. It is quite obvious that the mixing together of men and women under such crowded conditions is conducive to temptation and other distasteful consequences." [Al-Mabsut (16/80)]

Al-Nawawi writes: "Ibn al-Mundhir and others maintain that it is a matter of unanimous agreement that women are not obligated to attend the Jumu'ah prayers. However, his argument that this is

because it brings about the mixing of women and men is not correct. The attendance of women at the Jumu'ah prayers does not necessarily bring about such mixing since the women stay behind the men." [Al-Majmu' (4/350)]

Al-Nawawi also writes: "One of the vilest innovations, that some ignorant people today are involved in, is the habit of lighting candles on Mount 'Arafah on the ninth night. This behavior is gravely misguided and is full of improper goings-on such as the mixing of men and women." [Al-Majmu': (8/140)]

In the law book entitled al-Fawakih al-Dawani, there is a discussion of when it is permissible to refuse an invitation to a wedding party. It says: "An invitation may be refused if there is any clear wrongdoing at the party, like the mixing of men and women." [Al-Fawakih al-Dawani (2/322)]

When scholars warn against the free mixing of men and women, they are not talking about the mere presence of men and women together in the same place. This is something that is definitely not prohibited by Islamic Law. Men and women gathered in the same place at the time of the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) in the mosque and in the marketplace. They walked down the same roads and public thoroughfares.

The mere presence of men and women in the same area is not a great cause for temptation. It would be wrong to treat this as unlawful mixing, since the reason for prohibiting free mixing does not exist in such circumstances. If someone were to prohibit men and women from frequenting the same public places under the pretext of preventing temptation, this would be taking matters to an extreme and imposing a restriction that is unduly severe. Such a policy is, moreover, unnatural and would impose great hardships on people's lives.

At the same time, some circumstances are indisputably cases of unlawful mixing. This would include situations where women and men are crowded together so that there is a danger of their making physical contact. Equally unlawful would be any occasion where unrelated women and men are seated next to one another. Under these circumstances, desires are kindled and temptations

are greater and regrettable things happen, as is seen time and again in co-ed schools and mixed social events.

The same can be said for any repeated acquaintance between men and women. Repeated meetings break down the barriers between men and women and allow a relationship to develop between them.

We cannot compare situations like these to the general presence of men and women at shops and other open public places, especially when women are accompanied by their family. In such cases, there is no intimacy, no crowding, and no reason for suspicion. Preventing women from public places frequented by men in order to prevent temptation would be taking things to an extreme.

A woman is commanded in Islam not to come too close to men. She is not, however, prohibited from going to places where men are present as long as she does not approach them or place herself in a position where she is alone with them.

There can be no doubt that preventative legislation is an important part of Islamic Law. There are numerous rulings in Islam that are preventative in nature. However, this does not mean that we can legislate against every remote possibility of wrongdoing that we can think of. Doing so would be a violation of Islam's tolerance and magnanimity and its ease of application. It would place too great a burden upon the believers.

People might differ as to the degree of mixing that is prohibited. We can, nonetheless, get a good approximation of proper limits by reviewing the laws of Islam that govern the relationship between men and women. The sacred texts provides ample evidence about how and when men and women can meet, how women should dress and conduct themselves when they go outside, and many other pertinent matters. It is impossible for free mixing between men and women to occur if Islamic Law is properly observed.

The body of evidence showing that women and men should not

mix freely with one another is quite large. We will briefly mention some of it:

1. Allah says: *"And when you ask the ladies for anything, ask them from before a screen. That makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs."* [Sura Al Ahzab, 33:53] For women to go about uncovered in the company of men is inarguably a gross violation of the command given in this verse.

2. It is prohibited for men to join women in one place in the absence of at least one of the women's close male relatives. The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) forbade men and women from being alone together. He said: "Never is a man alone with a woman except that Satan is the third party with them."

The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) also said: "Do not enter into the company of women."

A man then asked him: "What about her male in-laws?"

The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) replied: "The in-law is the most dangerous".

This Hadith emphasizes the importance of being wary of in-laws since they are likely to have more opportunities to be alone with the woman and to see her as others do not get the opportunity to see her.

The private meeting between a man and an unchaperoned woman is one of the serious forms of mixing that can take place between the sexes. Temptations are worse when the people know that they are shielded from the sight of others.

Ibn Daqiq al-'id makes the following important observation: "We must take into consideration whether or not the man's arrival at a place brings about a situation where he is alone with the woman. If it does not do so, it is not unlawful for him to go there." (2/181)

This point was made clear by the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) when he said: "No man should enter into the

presence of a woman after this day unless he is accompanied by one or two other men." [Sahih Muslim]

3. There are numerous evidences that the woman may not shake hands with men who are not among her closest relatives.

The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) never shook hands with an unrelated woman. Umaymah b. Raqiqah said: "I came to the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) with a group of the women of Madinah to swear fealty for Islam. The women informed Allah's Messenger (Blessings and Peace be upon him) that they wished to swear fealty to him. The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: 'I do not shake hands with women. The way I accept the pledge from one woman is the same as with one hundred women.'" [Al-Muwatta', Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Nasa'i and Sunan Ibn Majah].

The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) also said: "It is better for one of you to be pierced by a steel pin in his head than to touch the hand of a strange woman." [Al-Mundhiri mentions that all the narrators of this Hadith are trustworthy. Al-Albani classifies it as a good Hadith in Ghayah al-Maram (no. 403).]

4. The Qur'an clearly forbids women from being soft of speech while talking to men. Allah says: *"Be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak with a speech (that is) proper."* [Sura Al Ahzab, 33: 32].

5. There is evidence that women may not sit with strange men while wearing perfume. The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: "Any woman who puts on perfume then goes and passes by some men to let them find her scent is a type of adulteress." [Musnad Ahmad, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abi Dawud, and Sunan al-Nasa'i with a sound chain of transmission]

6. The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: "The best of rows in prayer for the men is the first row and the worst for them is the last, and the best of rows for the women is the last row and the worst for her is the first." [Sahih Muslim].

If this advice is being given for men and women when they are in

their purest frame of mind and engaged in prayer, then how should they be expected to conduct themselves in other situations?

Ibn 'Abbas relates that he prayed one of the 'Id prayers with the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him). He informs us that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) prayed and offered a sermon, then he went to the women and offered to them a separate sermon, admonishing them and encouraging them to give charity. [Sahih al-Bukhari]

Ibn Hajr offers the following observations about this hadith: "The fact that he went to the women separately shows that the women were assembled separately from the men and were not mixed in with them." [Fath al-Bari (2/466)]

7. Once the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) saw men and women mixing together on the road upon their departure from the mosque. He said to the women: "Hold back a bit. You do not have to walk in the middle of the road. You may keep to the sides." The narrator of the Hadith commented that after that time, women would come so close to the buildings that their dresses would sometime cling to the walls." [Sunan Abi Dawud with a sound chain of transmission]

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said about one of the mosque's doors: "We should leave this door exclusively for women to use." Ibn 'Umar, until he died, never again entered through that door. [Sunan Abi Dawud with a sound chain of transmission. Al-Albani says: "This Hadith is authentic according to the conditions set down by Bukhari and Muslim."]

Umm Salamah said: "When the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) completed the prayer, the women would get up to leave. He would then wait a while before standing." Ibn Shahab said: "I believe that he waited for a while to give the women an opportunity to depart before the men." [Sahih al-Bukhari]

Ibn Hajr comments: "In the Hadith, we see that it is disliked for men and women to mix on the road. How much more, then, should such mixing be avoided inside of houses." [Fath al-Bari (2/336)]

8. It was related in al-Bukhari that women at the time of the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) did not circumambulate the Ka'bah along with the men. 'A'ishah used to go around the Ka'bah at a good distance from the men and avoided mixing with them. Once another woman bade to her to go forward with her so they could touch the corner of the Ka'bah. 'A'ishah refused to do so. [Sahih al-Bukhari]

One of 'A'ishah's handmaidens came to her and said: "O Mother of believers, I went around the Ka'bah seven times and touched the corner twice or thrice".

'A'ishah replied: "May Allah not reward you for pushing your way through men. It would have been sufficient for you to say "Allahu Akbar" as you passed by". [Musnad al-Shafi'i]

There are two things that this shows us. First, 'A'ishah did not hesitate to circumambulate the Ka'bah when there were men around, nor did she forbid other women from doing so. She only refrained from crowding into men and mixing with them and this is what she prohibited others from doing. This shows us in the clearest of terms that the mere presence of men and women in the same place is not prohibited.

Second, the mixing and contact between men and women circumambulating the Ka'bah that unavoidably occurs during Hajj under today's crowded conditions cannot be used as proof that such mixing is generally allowed. Firstly, the practice of the people does not constitute any sort of evidence in Islamic Law. Secondly, what is happening today during Hajj is unavoidable. It is permitted out of necessity and cannot be made into a general rule for all times and circumstances. It would be fruitless for us to try and demand that women avoid contact with men while circumambulating the Ka'bah during Hajj. It would be equally impossible to ask them to delay their circumambulations until the crowds depart, especially since the women on Hajj are always accompanied by the others who came with them who cannot be forced to wait around.

It is pure sophistry for anyone to use these exceptional

circumstances to argue that men and women are allowed to mingle under circumstances where no necessity exists. It is just as baseless as taking the other extreme and declaring the mere presence or men and women in the same place to be unlawful mixing.

We will conclude by mentioning a few verses of the Qur'an. Allah says: "Nor come nigh to adultery". In this verse, Allah does not say "Do not commit adultery" but tells us not even to come close to it. This means that everything that may seduce a person to fall into adultery is unlawful.

Moreover, Allah says: *"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them."* and says: *"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty."* [Sura An Nur, 24:30-31] This shows us how men and women are to conduct themselves.

- Shaikh Sami al-Majid

Advice to Teenagers Considering Taking Drugs

Praise to Allah the Exalted and the choicest peace and blessings be upon His Messenger!

Indeed these times try us all, the pious and sinful, the young and the old. The Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him) praised the youth who spent his youth worshipping his Lord as is narrated from Abu Huraira with an agreed upon chain of narrators:

"Seven groups shall be in the shade of Allah on a Day when there will be no other shade: A just ruler, a youth who grew up in the worship of his Lord, a man whose heart was attached to the

mosque, two men who for the sake of Allah's love met and separated, a man called to by a woman of beauty and position to commit adultery, a man whose right hands' giving in charity is not noticed by his left hand and a man who remembers Allah in solitude till his eyes water."

None of us are immune to contemporary challenges even those of the widespread use of intoxicants and narcotic drugs whose illicit nature in the eyes of the Sacred Law is not in doubt.

Ibn Hajar in his al-Zawajr 'an iqtiraf al-Khabair has discussed the impermissible nature of such drugs as hashish, opium, henbane, etc., substances which are not ritually impure (najs).

He cites the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and Peace be upon him) as saying:

"Every intoxicant is prohibited." [Bukhari & Muslim]

And his (Blessings and Peace be upon him) saying,

"That which intoxicates in large quantities is prohibited in small quantities." [Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and others, with a sound chain of narrators]

So here there is no need to doubt the illicit nature of such modern narcotics like cocaine, heroine, etc. or such soft drugs that are available in the club scenes, places, unfortunately, visited frequently by Muslim youth in the West.

What I would like to draw our attention to though is how we value ourselves. Perhaps when we as Muslims, even sinful Muslims, realize the value that Allah the Exalted has given us, perhaps it will be then that we will value our individual selves: physically and ultimately spiritually.

Allah the Exalted states:

"We have created man in the best of forms, then We have lowered him to the lowest of the low, except for the one who acquires sound faith and does wholesomeness." [Sura At Tin, 95: 4-6]

Here Allah indicates our unique createdness both physically and spiritually, for the form of man is the composite of his total self, not just the physical frame.

Further Allah the Exalted confers upon certain of the Children of Adam higher status with His statement: *"The one whom Allah wants to guide He opens his heart to submission."* [Sura Al Anam, 6:125]

Also He the Exalted states:

"Is the one whose heart Allah has opened to submission so that he is upon a light from his Lord (the same as those He describes as) Woe to those whose hearts have hardened to the remembrance of Allah. They are in a manifest effort." [Sura Az Zumar, 39:22]

The 'remembrance of Allah' not simply being what we commonly bring to mind as dhikr but ...but the some of the Qu'ranic revelation , its commands and prohibitions.

Allah the Exalted says:

"O you who believe do not follow in Satan's footsteps whoever follows Satan's footsteps should know that he only commands to evil and corruption. Had it not been of the grace of Allah to you and His mercy not one of you would have been purified but Allah purifies whom He wills, and Allah is the seeing, knowing." [Sura An Nur, 24:21]

Here He warns us as believers to be on guard against our sworn enemy and from his deceptions which lead to evil and corruptions: physically and spiritually, individually and communally.

He the Exalted wishes to purify us while Satan desires the opposite. All this is because of the great concern and care that Allah the Exalted has shown and shows to us. In this concern and care let us rejoice and seek Him, let us console and encourage one another in this divine largesse.

It has been this faqir's experience while working with youth that our and their self worth is often never considered.

Rarely do our elders, whether scholars, teachers or even our parents stress our true value in the sight of the Qur'anic revelation and the domain of the Prophetic exemplar. We must address our youth compassionately, and passionately convey to them their true self value while acknowledging our own.

These are some of the words I wished to share concerning this topic, may they prove beneficial and of practical use. My errors are my own, and the right is only by His grace and guidance.

- Sidi Naeem AbdulWali.

Harm of Smoking

Thirty percent of men and 19 percent of women around the world smoke. One hundred thousand children under the age of 15 start smoking every day. One of every ten deaths around the world is caused by a smoking-related disease. With statistics like this, it's hard to imagine why smoking continues to be so widespread.

There are over 4,000 chemicals in a single cigarette, some of which are highly poisonous. Examples include naphthalene, which is used in moth repellent; acetone, the main component of nail polish remover; butane, a constituent of lighter fluid; and formaldehyde, used in embalming. Cigarettes also contain nicotine, a highly addictive stimulant that causes physical and psychological dependency.

The two most serious health effects of smoking are cancer and emphysema. Smoking has been linked to 11 forms of cancer, including cancer of the esophagus, mouth, pancreas, bladder, and kidney. According to recent studies, smokers are 26 times more likely to die of lung cancer than non-smokers. Emphysema is a chronic disease that destroys parts of the lungs and results in shortness of breath, hyperventilation, and asthma-like attacks.

Another common health effect of smoking is coronary artery disease. Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen that reaches the heart, increases blood clotting and blood pressure, and decreases high-density lipoprotein (HDL) or "good" cholesterol. Women taking oral contraceptives should not smoke, as the risk for stroke increases almost four times.

Other possible side effects of smoking include cataracts, reduced fertility, a higher risk of stroke, peptic ulcers, and back pain. Pregnant women who smoke are at risk for miscarriages, premature labor, and ectopic pregnancy. Babies born to mothers who smoke have a higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and behavioral problems later in life.

Smoking has some unpleasant cosmetic effects too. Smokers often suffer from bad breath, yellowing teeth and nails, and early

wrinkles around the mouth. Smoking causes changes in the coloring and texture of the skin, often resulting in an ashy complexion. A smoker is also three times more likely to lose teeth than a non-smoker.

Passive smoking, also known as second-hand smoke, can be just as deadly, especially for children, pregnant women, and non-smoking adults.

Cancer

Cigarettes are responsible for 30 percent of overall cancer deaths and 87 percent of lung cancer deaths. Lung cancer is hard to treat and often not diagnosed until it is in advanced stages, which accounts for its extremely low survival rate. Cigarettes are a major factor in cancers of the larynx, mouth, throat, bladder and esophagus as well. The following cancers are also linked to smoking, but not as strongly: pancreatic, cervical, kidney, stomach and leukemia.

Women's Health

Cigarettes do severe damage to reproductive organs and newborn children. Women who smoke are more likely to have trouble conceiving and are more likely to experience a miscarriage. Smoking is also linked to premature delivery, stillbirths and low birth weight. There is also a connection to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Circulation

Smoking negatively impacts blood flow to the extremities, resulting in PVD (peripheral vascular disease). PVD can be treated surgically, but the operation will be ineffective if the patient continues to smoke. Many doctors will refuse to do the surgery unless the patient agrees to give up cigarettes. Since erections are linked to blood flow, men who smoke may suffer from erectile dysfunction.

Respiratory Problems

Smoking is responsible for a host of respiratory conditions. It damages air passages and can cause emphysema. Cigarettes also worsen conditions such as pneumonia and asthma. Many longtime smokers suffer from chronic cough and excessive phlegm.

Heart Disease

Smoking is directly linked to one-third of all heart disease-related deaths. Smokers are 2 to 4 times more likely to suffer some form of heart disease. Nicotine releases adrenalin into the system and speeds up the heart rate. It causes the arteries to restrict, blood pressure to rise and robs the body of oxygen. Chemicals present in cigarettes cause atherosclerosis and damage arteries and blood vessels.

Other Negative Effects

Smoking affects physical appearance by yellowing skin and teeth. It causes wrinkles and premature aging. Eye damage can occur through macular degeneration or cataracts. Bone thinning and fractures are possible, as well as peptic ulcers.

How to quit smoking

Most people find it hard to quit smoking. Quitting can be hard, but it's not impossible. Many people like you have quit smoking. You can too. Counseling, medications, and other supports can help you quit.

If you've tried quitting smoking before but couldn't do it, try again. Each time you try, it will get easier. You will be one step closer to quitting for good.

Now is the best time to quit. It's never too late.

1. Pick a 'quit day'

Choose a date within the next two weeks to quit. Don't wait for the "perfect" day – just pick a date and work with it. Put it in your calendar.

If you'd like: List your reasons for quitting - health, family, money.

Write down some new hobbies you can do instead of smoking – exercise, knitting, making model airplanes- something to keep your hands and mind busy.

Speak with friends, family, and colleagues and ask for support. Tell them about your plan to quit, so it feels more real to you.

Start making the changes to push smoking out of your everyday life - stop smoking in the house and in the car. Make your house and car smoke-free, so no one is allowed to smoke inside.

2. Choose two or more proven quit-smoking methods

There are many proven ways to quit smoking. To boost your chances of quitting, choose more than one method. Pick what seems right for you. Each person is different. You'll know what will work best for you.

Proven quit smoking methods:

Join a support group for people trying to quit. Research shows that people in quit-smoking support groups are more likely to quit for good. (Find out about quit smoking support groups in your area).

Get individual counseling in person or by phone. You can get counseling in person or over the phone, through a free smoker's quitline. Both are proven to help people quit. There are free quitlines across Canada - find out about the one in your area. If you prefer to see someone in person, ask your doctor or quitline staff to recommend a counselor. The cost of counseling may be covered by your workplace or extended health plan, if you've got one.

Take nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). The nicotine patch, gum, lozenge or inhaler replaces some of the nicotine you usually get from cigarettes. This can make nicotine withdrawal easier to manage.

Ask your doctor about a prescription medicine called bupropion. It's an antidepressant that can make it easier to quit.

Ask your doctor about a prescription medicine called varenicline tartrate. It can take away some of your craving to smoke, and make smoking less enjoyable.

If you slip up, don't give up. Try again, and again... keep trying until you've quit for good.

Ask for support from your family and friends.

Going "cold turkey" – quitting spontaneously, on your own - also works well for some people. Some people just decide to quit smoking one day - maybe it's the day they find out they have a lung disease, or the day their grandchild is born. Maybe there is something else that motivates them. Many people who have quit smoking for good say they quit "cold turkey". If you think going cold turkey could work for you, try it.

3. On your quit date, butt out completely.

Don't smoke, not even a little.

Toss out your cigarettes, other tobacco, and ashtrays.

Avoid people and situations where you will be tempted to smoke. If you usually smoke in a certain chair, don't sit in that chair. If you usually smoke at a nightclub, avoid that nightclub for a while. Change your usual routine, so your new routine doesn't include smoking.

Go for a walk instead of a smoke.

Be positive. Believe in yourself and your plan.

Remember that nicotine withdrawal symptoms only last a short time. Follow these tips to cope with withdrawal symptoms.

Get help from support groups, counselors and your local quitline. Take it one day at a time. Remind yourself that once the withdrawal is over, you'll feel better than you have in years. You deserve to feel better.... You're almost there!

Celebrate your success and give yourself credit! Tell people how long you've been quit. It's a major achievement and you should be proud.

If you'd like, tell us how long you've quit. We'd love to hear from you and celebrate your success! You can use this form to submit your quit story.

Consider exercising more. When you're quitting smoking, exercise can help. Exercise is a healthy alternative to smoking, it can take your mind off your cravings, it can help your mood and energy level, and it can help keep off extra weight. If you are new to exercising, start slowly. A walk around the block is a good start.

4. If you slip up, don't give up. Try quitting again.

Quitting smoking gets easier with practice. Every time you try to quit, you boost your chances of quitting for good. Most people who've quit smoking forever had to try 5 or 6 times before they could quit for good. This is normal.

Don't be discouraged if you slip up. You are not a failure. Try to figure out what the barriers were to your quitting. Were the nicotine cravings too strong? Did you go back to smoking when you were stressed? Talk with your counselor, doctor or pharmacist about your experience. Ask yourself how you can do it differently next time. If you think quit smoking medicines will make it easier for you to quit next time, ask your doctor or pharmacist for their recommendation. Then try quitting again. Keep trying.

Harm of Alcohol

Alcohol consumption and Violence

- Alcohol is a factor in 41% of all rape cases
- Alcohol is a factor in more than 50% of all homicides.
- Alcohol is a factor in 72% of stabbings.
- Alcohol is a factor in 73% of all felonies..
- Alcohol is a factor in 40% of all assaults.
- Police spend about 50% of their time dealing with alcohol related problems.

Alcohol consumption and Motor Vehicle Accidents

- Alcohol is a contributing factor in 50% of all traffic accidents. In the U.S., someone is killed every 30 minutes in an alcohol related traffic accident.
- In 2001, more than 500,000 people were injured in crashes in which alcohol was a factor.
- In the year 2006, it is estimated that 17,600 people died in alcohol-related traffic accidents. These deaths constitute 41% of all traffic fatalities that year.
- About 3 out of every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol related crash at some time during their lives.
- *In 2001, statistics showed that one in ten (25 million) Americans admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol.
- In 1996, police estimated that nearly one and a half million people nation wide were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol Consumption and Health Statistics

- Alcoholism is a chronic disease.
- An alcoholic will die on average 27 years earlier than a non-alcoholic person.

- One third of alcoholic deaths are from suicides or accidents, such as drowning, car crashes or head injuries as a result of falling.
- Twenty percent (20%) of all suicides in the general public are alcohol related.
- About 27,000 people will die of alcohol related cirrhosis of the liver every year in the U.S.
- Alcohol contributes to 100,000 deaths annually. This makes it the third largest cause of preventable death in the U.S. after tobacco and diet/lifestyle patterns.
- Approximately 50,000 cases of alcohol overdose are reported every year. Once every week someone loses their life because of alcohol overdose.
- According to one study, 68% of people who come to a trauma center have an alcohol or drug problems.
- 25% of Americans admitted to hospitals have alcohol related problems.
- Alcohol Consumption in the Work Place
- As many as 40% of all industrial deaths and 47% of industrial accidents are linked to alcohol consumption at work.
- Absenteeism from work is 3.8 to 8.3 times higher among problem drinkers.
- Nearly 7% of employees have admitted to drinking heavily while at work.
- Loss of productivity to companies in the U.S. from alcohol and drug related abuse is estimated to be nearly \$100,000 billion per year.
- Alcohol Consumption in the Family Setting
- Alcohol is considered the number one drug problem in America.
- 43% of Americans have been exposed to alcoholism in their families.
- It is estimated that 6.6 million children live in a household where at least one parent is an alcoholic.
- Alcohol is a factor in 73% of child beatings cases.
- Alcohol is a factor in 81% of domestic abuse cases
- A staggering 45% of homeless street people have serious problems with alcohol and other substance abuse.
- Alcohol Consumption and Youth

- *More than 3 million teenagers in the U.S. between the ages of 14 to 17 are estimated to have a problem with alcohol abuse.
- More than 40% of children who start drinking before age 13 will develop alcohol addiction some time in their lives.
- U.S. alcohol statistics show that 2.6 million binge drinkers in 2001 were between the ages of 12 and 17.
- By the time they reach senior high school, 80% of students have used alcohol and 62% have been drunk.
- Children who start drinking by the 7th grade are much more likely to have academic problems, substance abuse and delinquency problems in middle and high school.
- Students spend an estimated \$5.5 billion on alcohol per year. That is more than they spend on soft drinks, tea, milk, juice, coffee or books combined.
- It is estimated that in a one year period, a typical young person will be inundated with more than 1,000 commercials for beer and wine coolers.
- Underage drinking costs Americans nearly \$53 billion annually.
- Alcohol is the leading cause of death among 16 year olds.

Father's Day, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Halloween

These are not at all Islamic cultures. Muslims must avoid observing or participating in these occasions. For the Muslims, every day is a Father's Day, every day is a Mother's Day. Muslims are obligated by their religion (ISLAM) to take care and love their parents every day of the year, not on one particular day only. Observing Father's Day and Mother's Day is now a ritual only without touch of the heart of the children; taking greeting cards or flowers or some food on these days does not reflect real honor and love for the parents, rather this practice is painful for the parents.

So is the case with Valentine's Day and Halloween. These are not Islamic too. As Muslims, having the Holy Qur'an and the

Ahadith before us for guiding our activities of life, we must not follow and participate in activities of other cultures. Besides, Muslims must not go out to collect Halloween candies, nor should they handout such candies themselves. Besides, such occasions are expensive and wasteful. Allah dislikes a wasteful person. Know that Halloween encourages loving and adoring ghosts, goblins, demons, etc. which is Haram for the Muslims.

Christmas (25th December) and New Year's Eve (31st December night)

These festivities are also un-Islamic and therefore should be avoided by the Muslims. Planting a Christmas tree inside a Muslim home, serving Christmas dinner, exchanging Merry Christmas cards and gifts with Christian friends and colleagues on these occasions are not sanctioned by Islam for the very simple reason that participating or celebrating such un-Islamic cultures encourages Muslims to deviate from the teachings and core beliefs (creed) of Islam. Such participation makes the Iman weak and brings an element of Shirk in the heart of the participants. Muslims must try to keep away from such activities. In reply to Merry Christmas greetings from the Christians, Muslim may say: "Happy Holidays" or "Season's greetings".

Let us know our Religious Rights in Canada

Canada's constitution has granted religious rights to every faith group living in Canada. Here are some examples to take advantage of. If wished by the Muslim students in educational institutes, they can have permission from the management-

- (2) to have a designated place as their "prayer room";
- (3) to say their Zuhr and Asr prayers in that prayer room; individually or in Jamat;

- (4) to have absence granted on the two Eid days each year;
- (5) to fast during the month of Ramadan;
- (6) to go out to say Jum'ah prayer in congregation in the nearby mosque (Masjid);
- (7) to avoid dance and music classes, yet earn marks by doing extra assignments/projects;
- (8) not to go to outdoor camping;
- (9) to avoid boys' and girls' joint swimming classes;
- (10) not to attend Halloween party or Christmas party;
- (11) can ask for Halal refreshments in the school or college cafeteria;
- (12) girls can wear their Hijab; even Niqab, if wished;
- (13) can invite non-Muslim teachers and students to Islam.

Making use of our youth

Dear friends, if Allah gives us 60 years to live then it comes to around 21,900 days (60x365). All these days Allah gives us to prepare for one day of interview with Allah. That is on the Day of Judgment. On that day, Allah will ask us some questions and He wants some correct answers. Allah is so merciful that He already told us what the questions will be through Qur'an and Ahadith. His mercy is so great that He even told us the answers to these questions. Now imagine, a student goes to write an exam. He opens his exam paper and finds the questions on one side. Then he finds that the answers to the questions are on the other side. Now after writing the exam, if this student still fails then what would we think of him? We would think that he is the dumbest person around. Well, tell you what. On the Day of Judgment, us

people who knew the questions and answers will still fail! That is why, this is the time to wake up before we prove ourselves to be the dumbest of all people.

Youth is the prime time of our life. This is where people make important decisions like what to become in the future. Things you do in this time will most likely affect you throughout the rest of your life. That is why, it is important to bring Islam into your life during these days. Many people have the conception that when they get old then they will start practicing Islam. Probably you and I also have this feeling. But look at it this way: If you want to become a famous hockey player then you would start playing right from the youth. As you grow up, you will become better and better. But if you think that you will start playing when you are an old man then the chances of becoming famous is virtually zero. That's the reality. When we become old, we won't have enough energy to even stand up and pray.

Because youth is the prime time of our life, that is why it is very precious to Allah. Allah has prepared a shade on the Day of Judgment for those people who used to worship Allah in their youth. On that Day, there will be no other shade except the shade from the throne of Allah. Imagine standing outside on a very hot day under the sun for hours after hours. You would definitely want some shade to rest under. But what about that Day when the sun will be much nearer to us and the heat will be much more extreme? Wouldn't you want some shade on that day? Of course you would!

You and I are all weak in terms of keeping our duties to Allah and Allah is aware of that. Allah wants that we keep trying to do our best. If a baby falls down while walking he tries to get up again and walk. He doesn't keep sitting down. Then a day comes when he does start to walk. Similarly, we should keep trying our best and not give up. A day will come when, Inshallah, we will be strong enough to obey Allah in every situation. Let us make a small promise to Allah right now that we will start doing the things for which we were sent to this life. Otherwise, we will be like that dumb guy who will fail the test on the Day of Judgment.

May Allah make it easy for us. Ameen.



CHAPTER 10

Some Useful Guideline

Rasul (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: “To earn knowledge on Deen Islam is Fard (obligatory) for all Muslim.”
(Ibn Majha, Baihaqi)

Area of Study

1. Tawheed (Islamic Aqeedah/Islamic Creed)
2. Basic principles of Islam
3. Taqwa and how to attain Taqwa
4. How to pray Salah (Prayer of Muhammad BLESSINGS AND PEACE BE UPON HIM)
5. Learn basic Dua for our daily life
6. Personal hygiene in Islam
7. What should be the character of a Muslim
8. Biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
9. Biography of other 24 Prophets in the Qur'an
10. Who is Jesus? & Background of Christmas?
11. Biography of the Sahaba (Companions of Prophet PBUH)
12. Islam in the West: and challenges
13. Islamic history & world history
14. Duty of children towards their parents
15. Objective of Ramadan
16. Hajj and its teaching
17. Importance of Sadaqa and Zakat
18. Islamic Banking & Economics
19. Islam & Sex
20. Islamic view on Gay – Lesbian & same sex marriage
21. What is Sunnah? And how to practice Sunnah
22. What is lawful and unlawful in Islam (Halal and Haram)
23. What is our real culture (Islamic way of life)
24. Terrorism & Jihad in Islam (Real conception of Jihad)
25. Who is a Fundamentalist?
26. Islam and Science
27. Miracles of the Qur'an: Modern scientific discoveries
28. Human Rights in Islam
29. Women in Islam and clear conception on Hijab
30. Why Islam & who are Muslim?
31. Gender equity in Islam
32. Islam's view on music
33. Clear conception of Shirk and Bid'ah

34. Collective life & brotherhood
35. Importance of Dawah & Dawah in the West
36. Fiqh & Islamic Law (Jurisprudence)
37. Life after death: Road map of Akhirah
38. Tafseer of Sahih Hadith
39. Translation and Tafseer of The Qur'an

Study Materials

Qur'an Translation & Tafseer:

- 1) Qur'an Translation – Sahih International or Abdullah Yousuf Ali
- 2) Tafseer Ibn Kathir – Ibn Kathir
- 3) In the Shade of the Qur'an – Dr. Sayyid Qutb Shahid

Sahih Hadith:

- 1) Sahih Bukhari - Darussalam Publications
- 2) Sahih Muslim - Darussalam Publications
- 3) Riyadhhus Saleheen - Darussalam Publications
- 4) Bulugul Maram - Darussalam Publications

Biography of Muhammad (BLESSINGS AND PEACE BE UPON HIM):

- 1) The Sealed Nectar (Arraheeqal-Makhtum) - by Shafiur Rahman Mubarakpuri
- 2) A Biography of Prophet of Islam - Part 1 & 2 - Darussalam Publications
- 3) Muhammad - by Dr. Martin Lings
- 4) Movie: The Message - DVD
- 5) Cartoon: Son Paygambar (pbuh) – DVD (Badar International Production)

Life of Companions of the Prophet:

- 1) Biography of Umar Ibn Khattab - Darussalam Publications
- 2) Biography of Uthman bin Affan - Part 1 & 2 - Darussalam Publications
- 3) Biography of Abu Bakr - Part 1 & 2 - Darussalam Publications

- 4) Biography of Ali Ibn Talib - Darussalam Publications
- 5) The Man and Women around the Messenger (pbuh) - Darussalam Publications

Biographies of other Prophets in the Qur'an:

- 1) Stories of the Prophets – Allama Ibn Kathir - Darussalam Publications

Islamic Creed:

- 1) Fundamentals of Tawhid – Dr. Bilal Philips
- 2) Towards understanding Islam – Sayyid Abul Ala
- 3) Kitab at Tawheed – Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab
- 4) The Book of Tawheed – Darussalam Publications
- 5) The Concise Coll. Creed Tauhid - Darussalam Publications
- 6) The Many Shades of Shirk - Darussalam Publications
- 7) Four Principles of Shirk – Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab
- 8) Commentary on the Three Fundamental Principles of Islam - Darussalam Publications

Other Islamic Literature:

- 1) Milestone – Sayyid Qutb
- 2) Islam and Ignorance - Sayyid Abul Ala
- 3) The Prophet's Prayer – Nasir Uddin Al Albani
- 4) Islam and Management
- 5) Islamic Banking and Economics
- 6) Way to the Qur'an – Dr. Khurram Murad
- 7) The History of Islam - Part 1, 2, 3 - Darussalam Publications
- 8) The Islamic Law of Succession - Part 1 & 2 - Darussalam Publications

Visit Authentic Islamic Websites

Dawah	www.whvislam.org http://www.themessagecanada.com/ www.irf.net http://liftingspirit.com/ www.torontoislamiccentre.com http://www.icnacanada.net/ http://www.iera.org.uk/
Islamic Institute	http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com/ http://www.alkauthar.org/ http://almaghrib.org/ http://ilmpath.com/ www.alhudainstitute.org http://www.helpandknowledge.com/
Tafseer of the Qur'an	http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3000&Itemid=731 http://www.allahsQur'an.com/learn/ http://www.archive.org/details/Bangla-Tafseer-Fatiha http://islamihoi.wordpress.com/ http://www.tafheem.net/tafheem.html
Translation of The Qur'an	http://www.Qur'anexplorer.com/Qur'an/ http://www.islamdharma.com/ http://www.Qur'antoday.com/bangla.htm http://www.searchtruth.com/chapter_display.php?chapter=1&translator=2 http://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php
Qur'an Recitation	http://www.aswatalislam.net/ http://www.allahsQur'an.com/listen/index.php# http://www.Qur'anexplorer.com/Qur'an/ http://www.Qur'anflash.com/en/Qur'anflash.html
Hadith	http://www.searchtruth.com/hadith_books.php http://islamihoi.wordpress.com/sahih-bukhari-in-bangla/ http://bdislam.com/hadith/hadith.htm
Islamic TV/Video	http://www.peacetv.tv/ http://www.watchislam.com/ http://www.theedenshow.com/index.php http://www.abuhuraira.org/ http://www.banglalite.com/
Children Site	www.muslimville.com www.soundvision.com http://muslimkidstv.com/
Lectures	http://www.readislam.net/media/zakir/ http://www.halaltube.com/ http://www.minarmedia.co.uk/ http://english.truthway.tv/ http://bayyinah.com/media/
Information	www.islamicfinder.com www.islamicity.com http://musliminfo.com/ www.eat-halal.com

Sound in Technology

We should know very well about following office management software. Inshallah, it will help us in our personal life as well as professional life.

1. Microsoft Word for word processing
2. Microsoft Excel for spreadsheet analysis
3. Microsoft PowerPoint for presentation
4. Microsoft Access for database management
5. Microsoft Project for project management
6. Microsoft Publisher for desktop publishing
7. Microsoft Windows as operating system

Management Skill Development

1. Time Management
2. Quality Management
3. Project Management
4. Youth Leadership Development
5. Skill Development
6. Event Management
7. Resource Management
8. Accounts Management
9. File Management

Be a Member of an Islamic Organization

- Alkauthar Institute (www.alkauthar.org)
- Almaghrib Institute (www.almaghrib.org)
- Ilm Path (www.ilmpath.com)
- Al Huda Institute (alhudainstitute.org)
- ICNA (Islamic Circle of North America)
- MAC (Muslim Association of Canada)
- QSS (Qur'an Sunnah Society)

- MSA (Muslim Students Association)
- CDA (Canadian Dawah Association)
- Journey of Faith Conference
- IERA
- Toronto Islamic Centre (TIC)

To get more knowledge on Islam & Science

Dr. Harun Yahya – Video Documentary www.harunyahya.com

1. The Qur'an leads the way to science
2. Miracles of the Qur'an
3. Miracle of the men's creation
4. The fact of creation
5. The secret of the taste
6. Technology in nature
7. Altruism in nature
8. The miracle in the ants
9. The miracle in birds
10. Sacarism Satan's bloody teaching
11. For men understanding
12. Answers from the Qur'an solution
13. The values of the Qur'an
14. Perished nations
15. The miracle of respiration
16. The collapse of evolution
17. The secret beyond matter
18. Prophet Moses and the ark of the covenant
19. The prophet Yusuf
20. The miracle of seed
21. The names of Allah
22. Architects in nature
23. Allah is known through reason
24. Truth of the life of this world
25. Deep thinking
26. Love and cooperation in living things

27. The collapse of atheism
28. The signs of the last day
29. Miracles of the brain: smell and taste
30. Allah's artistry in color
31. The miracle of planet
32. The golden age
33. The miracle in the cell
34. Biometrics technology initiates nature
35. The world of ice
36. The creation of the universe.

And

- Dr. Zakir Naik Lecture - Qur'an & modern science conflict of conciliation.
- Dr. Zakir Naik Lecture - Islam, medical science and dietary laws.
- Dr. Zakir Naik Lecture - Media and Muslims.
- Dr. Zakir Naik Lecture - The Qur'an & Science.

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Azan is the call to the Muslims to perform their 5 daily Salat on time. You can download free Azan software in your computer from www.islamicfinder.org. Make a habit of listening to the Azan (keeping your computer on all the time) and saying your Salat every time on time. Allah will love you and bless you.

Haram food ingredients

Beware of Haram food and drinks. Always eat Halal: Halal means permitted, and Haram means strictly prohibited by Allah. Please always keep in mind that fast food served in Canada and the U.S. are mostly not Halal. Allah has asked the Muslims to eat and drink Halal only, never to take Haram. Pork and its byproducts are Haram; so is wine, beer, alcohol, drugs or any other substance that intoxicates a person. Take care before you order

for a burger or pizza or hotdog, etc. and always avoid Haram stuff. There are plenty of Halal food and drinks around. Look for those things and eat Halal. Look for the Halal certification on the food packages. Similar is the case with school lunch too. Check for Haram items and avoid them. If you are not sure that the food is Halal, don't order for it or don't eat it. Allah will bless you enormously for your Halal food habit.

Please check following ingredients when you buy any food.

Haram Food Ingredients		
Animal shortening	Investigate	*Animal fat shortening can be from beef fallow or lard. If it is from lard, then it is Haraam. If it is from beef fallow, then the animal has to have been slaughtered Islamically, otherwise it is Haraam.
Collagen (Pork)	Haraam	
Diglyceride (animal)	Haraam	**Rennet/Pepsin: Rennet is a milk coagulant that is the concentrated extract of renin enzyme obtained from calves stomachs. Note: At the time of purchase, if you are unable to verify the fact, you can call the concerned company. The company's name and number is generally mentioned on the product, if not see the telephone directory.
Enzyme (animal)	Haraam	
Fatty acid (animal)	Haraam	
Gelatin	Haraam	
Glyceride (animal)	Haraam	
Glycerol/glycerin (animal)	Haraam	
Hormones (animal)	Haraam	
Hydrolyzed animal protein	Haraam	
Lard	Haraam	
Lecithin (If soya then Halal)	Haraam	
Monoglycerides (animal)	Haraam	
Pepsin (animal)**	Haraam	
Phospholipid (animal)	Haraam	
Renin Rennet**	Investigate	
Shortening (animal)*	Haraam	
Whey**	Investigate	



CHAPTER 11

Some History we should know

Biography of Prophet Muhammad

(Blessings and peace be upon him)

At a glance

Grand Father: Abdul Muttalib. His 10 sons: Al-Harith, Az-Zubair, Abu Talib, Hamzah, Abu Lahab, Al-Ghidaq, Maqdam, Safar, Al-Abbas and Abdullah (Father of Muhammad Blessings and Peace be upon him).

Birth: 20/22 April, 571 CE: (9th Raby-al-awal) The Prophet Muhammad [bpuh] was born in Makkah on Monday morning, the same year of the Elephant incident. His father, Abdullah Ibn Abdul Muttalib, died two months before his birth.

Death of Mother: Aminah, the Prophet Muhammad's [bpuh] mother, took him to Madinah (Yathrib) at age six. On the way back to Makkah, Aminah died.

Death of Grandfather: When Muhammad [bpuh] was eight years old, his grandfather Abdul Muttalib passed away in Makkah. The charge of the Prophet [Blessings and Peace be upon him] now passed on to his uncle Abu Talib.

A trade journey to Syria: At the age of twelve, Muhammad [bpuh] traveled to Syria along with his uncle Abu Talib on a trading mission.

Marriage to Khadijah (RA): Khadijah (RA), widow and merchant, employed Muhammad [bpuh] to sell her goods. He traveled to Syria taking her goods to trade there. At the age of 25, Prophet Muhammad [bpuh] married Khadijah bint Khuwailid (age 40).

Sons and Daughters: The Prophet Muhammad [bpuh] and Khadijah (RA) had 4 daughters (Zainab, Ruqaiyah, Umm Kulthum & Fatimah (RA) and 2 sons (Al-Qasim & Abdullah). Sadly, both sons died very young.

Gabriel brings down the Revelation (1st Time): When Prophet Muhammad [bpuh] reached the age of 40, Angel Gabriel (Jibreel) came to him from God in the cave of Hira with the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an on the 21st. Ramadan at night with Sura Alaq, ayat 1-5. The Prophet started to profess Islam (Secretly) to the Makkans who were idol worshippers. The Makkans leaders did not like it. They started persecuting the new Muslims.

The Early Converts to Islam: Khadijah, Zaid bin Harithah, Ali bin Abu Talib, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Radiallahu Anhum).

1st Migration to Abyssinia (Ethiopia): In the 5th year of Prophethood, the situation got so grave and intolerable that he permitted some of his followers to seek asylum in Abyssinia (in Africa).

Social Boycott: Due to increase of persecution, the Prophet [bpuh], his family and followers were boycotted by the Makkans for three years during the 7-10th year of Prophethood.

The year of Grief: After the boycott (10th year of Prophethood) was withdrawn, Abu Talib and Khadijah (RA) passed away. At her death, Khadijah (RA) was 65 years old.

Visit to Taif: In the 10th year of Prophethood, the Prophet [bpuh] went to Taif (another township nearby) to seek help, but the people of the city turned him away, urging street children to pelt him with stones. He was wounded all over his body and blood filled his shoes.

Isra and Miraj: Isra and Miraj (The night Journey to Jerusalem and the Ascent to the 7th Heaven) took place. The Prophet (bpuh) was taken from Makkah to Jerusalem (Temple Mount) on a horse-like creature with wings, called Buraq, brought to him by the Angel Gabriel. From the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the Prophet [Blessings and Peace be upon him], accompanied by Gabriel, went up to the Seven Heavens and came into the Divine Presence.

The Emigration of the Prophet: A plot was hatched in Makkah to kill the Prophet [bpuh]. To save his life, the Prophet [bpuh] went away to Madinah, which marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar known as Hijrah (14th year of Prophethood, 12th or 13th Sept. 622 CE). The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) received a warm welcome from the people of Madinah.

Change of Qiblah: The prophet and his followers used to face Jerusalem while (praying to Allah daily. Jerusalem was their Qiblah (direction) for prayers. Change of Qiblah from al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem to the Kabah in Makkah. Fasting (Siyam) enjoined on the believers.

The Battle of Badr: (17 Ramadan, 2 A.H.): 1300 strong army of Makkans came all the way to Madinah to attack the 313-317 Muslims soldiers. An outnumbered Muslim army defeated them at Badr near Madinah. The great tyrant Abu Jahl was killed. In this battle 14 Muslims soldiers were killed & 70 Polytheists were killed.

Fasting made obligatory: The fasting of Ramadan was established as an obligatory observance in the year 2 A.H., along with the duty imposed upon Muslims of paying Zakat.

The Battle of Uhud: (7 Shawwal, 3 A.H.): The Muslims were defeated at Uhud outside Madinah. The Prophet [bpuh] himself was wounded and one of his teeth broken. 70 Sahaba including his uncle Hamza (RA) were killed in this battle.

Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty: (Dhul Qadah, 6 A.H.): The Prophet [bpuh] signed the Peace Treaty with the Quraish at Hudaibiyah, near Makkah, which the Qur'an calls "a clear victory."

The Prophet's [Blessings and Peace be upon him] plans to spread the Message of Islam beyond Arabia: (Late in the 6 A.H.): The Prophet [bpuh] sent letters and couriers to the kings of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Egypt, Persia, Rome, Bahrain, Yamamah, Damascus, and Oman inviting them to accept the Message of Islam.

The Conquest of Khaibar: (Muharram 7 A.H.): 1400 Muslim soldiers took part in this battle.

The Battle of Mu'tah: (Jumada Al-Ula 8 A.H.): It was the most significant and fierce battle during the lifetime of the Messenger (bpuh). Mu'tah was a village on the borders of Greater Syria.

The Conquest of Makkah: (20 Ramadan, 8 A.H.) (630 CE): Makkah surrendered without a fight. The Prophet [bpuh] forgave his Makkan opponents. 360 idols were all taken away from inside the Kabah & destroyed, and all of the people there accepted Islam.

Multitudes embrace the Religion of Allah: (9 A.H. and 10 A.H.): Islam was accepted by many Arabian tribes.

The Farewell Pilgrimage: (Dhul Hijjah, 10 A.H.) (632 CE): The Prophet [bpuh] went for his Hajj. As he stood at Arafat to deliver his sermon, the very last verse of the Qur'an was revealed to him. (Sura Maida : 3)

The Journey to Allah, the Sublime: (Monday 12 Rabi al Awwal, 11 A.H.) (632 CE) : The Prophet [bpuh] died at age 63, and his closest Companion, Abu Bakr (RA), succeeded him as the first Caliph (Khalifa) of Islam.

Prophet's Wives: Khadijah, Sawdah, Aishah, Hafsa, Zainab, Umm Salamah, Zainab bint Jahsh, Juwairiyah, Umm Habibah, Safiyah, Maimunah (RA).

Period of the 4 Khalifas (Caliphs)

Caliph (Khalifa)	Name	Period of Caliph (CE)	Death Hijri/CE
1 st	Abu Bakr as-Siddiq	632 – 634	13/634
2 nd	Umar Ibn al-Khattab	634 – 644	23/644
3 rd	Uthman Ibn Affan	644 – 656	35/656
4 th	Ali Ibn Abi Talib	656 – 661	40/661

Lifetime of the 6 Prominent Hadith Compilers

Sl.	Name	Born in (City)	Hijri/CE	Died in (City)	Hijri/CE
1	Bukhari	Bukhara (Uzbekistan)	194/810	Khartank (Samarkand), Uzbekistan	256/870
2	Muslim	Nishapur (Khurasan), Iran	204/820	Nishapur (Iran)	261/875
3	Abu Dawood	Shistan (Iran)	202/817	Basra (Iraq)	275/888
4	Nasaee	Nasa (Khurasan), Iran	215/830	Mecca (Saudi Arabia)	303/915
5	Tirmizi	Tirmiz (Iran)	209/828	Tirmiz (Iran)	279/896
6	Ibne Majah	Kazvin (Iran)	209/828	Kazvin (Iran)	273/890

Number of Ahadith Collected, Rejected, and Accepted

Sl.	Name of the Ahadith collector	Total number of Ahadith he collected	Percentage he rejected	Number of strong Ahadith he accepted
1	Bukhari	600,000	99.54	2,762
2	Muslim	300,000	98.55	4,348
3	Tirmide	300,000	98.96	3,115
4	Abudawood	500,000	99.04	4,800
5	Ibn Maja	400,000	99.00	4,000
6	Nasai	200,000	97.83	4,321
Total		2,300,000	98.98%	23,346 (1.02%)

Ahadith Narrated by Sahaba (RA)

Name of the Sahaba (RA)	Narrated Ahadith
Abu Hurayra	5,374
Aysha Siddiqah	2,210
Abdullah Ibn Abbas	1,660
Abdullah Ibn Umar	1,630
Jabir Ibn Abdullah	1,540
Anas Ibn Malik	1,286
Abu Sayeed Khudri	1,170
Abdullah Ibn Masud	848
Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Aas	700

Lifetime of the 4 Imams

Sl.	Name	Born in (City)	Hijri/ CE	Died in (City)	Hijri/ CE
1	Imam Abu Hanifa (Noman Ibn Thabit)	Kufa (Iraq)	80/700	Baghdad (Iraq)	150/767
2	Imam Malik Ibn	Medina	93/715	Medina	179/795

	Anas	(Saudi Arabia)		(Saudi Arabia)	
3	Imam Muhammad Ibn Idris ash-Shafi	Gazza (Palestine)	150/767	Fustat (Egypt)	204/820
4	Ahmad Ibn Hanbal	Baghdad	164/780	Baghdad	241/855

Who is Jesus? (Peace be upon him)

Jesus a servant of God.

It will be quickly obvious that they often referred to him as a servant of God, but never Son of God. Peter, for example, said: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus” (Acts 3:13).

Peter further said: “God raised up his servant” (Acts 3:26), where the title servant refers to Jesus.

Not only Peter, but the entire group of believers viewed Jesus as God’s servant. When they raised their voices together in prayer to God, in the course of their speaking to God they called Jesus “your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed” (Acts 4:27). They repeated this title also in verse 30. Consistently, Jesus was being called servant of God by the original followers of Jesus.

Some people mistakenly thought that the disciples called Jesus Son of God. An inconsistency of translation actually helped to give this wrong impression. In the King James Bible, the translators call Jesus “Son of God” in Acts 3:13, 26, and “child of God” in Acts 4:27. They simply translated the Greek word paida as “son” or “child”. But the word paida also means “servant”, and the present context demands this translation since the author of Acts is trying in this passage to establish that Jesus is indeed the servant of God.

The translators knew that the Greek word paida means servant. When the same word was used for David in chapter 4, verse 25,

they translated it “servant”. Why not call Jesus also by the same title? Or, if they feel that “son” is the correct translation, why not also call David “Son of God”? Jesus and David are both called by the same title in Greek. Why not call them by a same title in English also?

Other translators recognized this inconsistency and corrected it in the modern translations of the Bible. Therefore the New International Version of the Bible and many others call Jesus Servant of God in the verses already quoted above. Nevertheless, the fact that Jesus was God’s servant was so well known that even the King James Bible called him by this title in Matthew 12:18. Referring back to Isaiah 42:1, Matthew identified Jesus as the servant of the one true God Yahweh.

In the next part, we will see how the eagerness in some people to call Jesus “Son of God” led them to invent explanations that indirectly insult God.

- By Imam Shabir Ally, Toronto

History of Christmas

Since earliest times the inhabitants of the Northern countries (in Europe) have observed that there is a period during the year when the days begin to lengthen and the cold begins to strengthen. This event is the Winter Solstice, the turning point when winter having reached its zenith, has also reached the point when it must decline again towards spring. Thus, December 21st is the shortest day of the year.

It was on or about December 21st that the Ancient Greeks celebrated the Bacchanalia or festivities to honor Bacchus, the god of wine. In Ancient Rome, the Saturnalia of festivals in honor of Saturn, the god of time, began on December 17th and continued for seven days. Both festivals ended in drunkenness, obscenity and disorder. The Druids observed this season in their great roofless temples at Stonehenge and Avebury in England. Torches were lit and strange pagan ceremonies were enacted in honor of the Sun god and to cut the Mysterious Mistletoe to which

they gave god-like powers. Even the Ancient Egyptians celebrated this mid-winter in honor of Horus, the son of Isis, born at the close of December.

The Ancient Germanic tribes celebrated the pagan feast of the 12 Nights from Dec. 25th to Jan. 6th. The conflicts between the active forces of nature were represented as battles between the gods and plants. The winter was the Ice-Giant, cruel and unruly, and darkness and death followed him. The Sun god and the South Wind were symbols of light and life. At last Thor, the god of the Thunderstorm riding on the wings of the air, hurled his thunderbolt at the winter castle and demolished it.

In Scandinavian countries, great fires were kindled to defy the Frost King. The followers of Mithra, throughout the Northern countries, called this period sol invictus representing the time of the victory of light over darkness. Mithra, for them, was not only the Sun god, but the Mediator between mankind and the Supreme Being. His birthday was celebrated on the 25th of December. Sunday, the seventh day of the week (for seven was his number) was consecrated to him, and known as the Lord's Day long before the Christian Era.

The roots of the Christmas observance, therefore, go deeply into the folklore of the early pagan traditions. What we may read of Christmas in ancient days finds its flower in the past and present customs of Western Civilization. We should clearly understand one important fact. Christmas is not the actual date of the birth of Jesus (Blessings and Peace be upon him), but a compromise with paganism. The Gospels say nothing about the seasons of the year when Jesus was born. On the other hand, they do tell us that shepherds were guarding their flocks in the open air. Hence, many of the early leaders of the Church considered it most likely that the nativity took place either in the late summer or early Fall.

This and countless facts point to the conclusion that Christmas (Dec. 25th) actually has nothing to do with Jesus (Blessings and Peace be upon him.) and Mary (Blessings and Peace be upon him.), the humble of servants of Allah who abstained from the world and submitted entirely to their lord. Christmas has actually incorporated into itself all the pagan festivals; Greek, Roman,

Druid, German, Scandinavian, etc., and given them new meaning. The wild revels of the Bacchanalia, the Saturnalia, and the Twelve Nights survive in a milder form in the merriment that marks the season of Christmas today.

“Christmas gifts themselves remind us of the presents that were exchanged in Rome during Saturnalia. In Rome, it might be added, the presents usually took the form of wax tapers (candles) and dolls – the latter being in turn a survival of human sacrifices once offered to Saturn. It is a queer thought that in our Christmas presents we are preserving under another form one of the most savage customs of our barbarian ancestors! The shouts of ‘Bona Saturnalia’, which the Roman people exchanged among themselves, are the precursors of ‘Merry Christmas!’ The decorations and illuminations of our Christians churches recall the temples of Saturn, radiant with burning taper and resplendent with garlands”

SANTA CLAUS

Today, when Christmas is mentioned, most people immediately think of Santa Claus. The image of Jesus, the son of Mary ((Peace be upon them) is secondary and sometimes lost in the merriment and materialism. The prices in the market place go up and we find that people are spending thousands in order to buy gifts for their friends and neighbors. Most Christians fall into debt that can last for the greater part of the next year. The problem that comes during the Christmas season for Muslims and non-Christians is that there are a number of contradictory symbols. Some of these symbols reveal an animistic religious base but others appear to be monotheistic. At the top of all of them is Santa Claus. One might then ask ‘What do pagan festivals have to do with the innocent, loveable Santa Claus?’ “Actually, in every one of these festivals, the leading figure was an old man with a large, white beard. In the Bacchanalia, the chief god was not actually the young Bacchus, but the aged, cheery and decidedly disreputable Silenus, the chief of the Satyrs (Half man, half animal figures of Greek mythology) and the god of drunkards. In the Saturnalia, it was Saturn, a dignified and venerable old gentleman, the god of Time. In the Germanic feasts it was Thor, a person of patriarchal aspect, and a warrior to boot.”

So, although the main figure of the Christian festival was supposed to be Jesus, the child-god born to an innocent woman, the pagan ways of the past were too strong in the hearts of the Christians to be easily dismissed. The earlier gods were replaced by Saint Nicholas, an austere Christian Bishop who was born in Turkey in the 4th Century A.D., and became the patron Saint of children throughout the Western World. The name Saint Nicholas has now been abbreviated to Santa Claus and even his image has changed, but one fact remains crystal clear; this merry, mystical figure that flies through the air in a reindeer-drawn sleigh is the re-incarnation of a pagan deity that is very much alive today in the minds of men.

WHY DOES SANTA COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY?

“The early Germans considered the Norse Hertha or Bertha, the goddess of domesticity and the home. During the winter solstice, houses were decked with Fir and Evergreens to welcome her coming. When the family and the serfs gathered to dine, a great altar of flat stones was erected and here a fire of Fir bough was laid. Hertha descended through the smoke, guiding those who were wise in Saga to foretell the fortunes of those persons at the feast. We learn from this story of Hertha and the reason why Santa Claus comes down the chimney instead of in at the door.”

THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND THE YULE LOG

In just about all times and continents, we find records of the worship, at some former period, of a tree as a divine object. The Pagan Scandinavians called their greatest and most famous tree (the Ash tree) Yggdrasil. Nobody had ever seen it, but everybody believed in it. It was supposed to have been so big that it had three roots, one in heaven, one in hell, and one on earth. According to Scandinavian mythology, when the roots of Yggdrasil are eaten through, the tree will fall over and the end of all things will have arrived. The Anglo-Saxon Druids adopted this mythology and during Christmas period chose Yule log which they blessed and proclaimed that it should be ever burning. This custom has survived and the Yule log is burnt throughout England. The origin of the sacred tree may have been developed in Ancient Egypt and other older societies.” Egypt had one in the

palm, which puts forth a shoot every month. From Egypt the custom reached Rome, where it was added to the other ceremonies of the Saturnalia. But as palm trees do not grow in Italy, other trees were used in its stead. A small fir tree or the crest of a large one was found to be the most suitable because it is shaped like a cone or pyramid. This was decorated with twelve burning tapers lit in honor of the god of Time. At the very tip of the pyramid blazed the representation of a radiant sun placed there in honor of Apollo, the sun-god to whom the three last days of December were dedicated.”

HOLLY

“Some people believe that the word “Holly” is a form of the word “Holy” because of the association of these evergreens with Christmas. This is not the true derivation, however. Holly is merely a variation of Holin, Hollin, or Holm. The name Holme is now used for a kind of oak. This tree was admired by the Druids who believed that its evergreen leaves attested to the fact that the sun never deserted it. It was, therefore, sacred. It was also believed to be hateful to witches and is, therefore, placed on doors and windows to keep out the evil spirits.”

CONCLUSION

This is only a glimpse at the incredible amount of distortion and paganism that has been incorporated into the Christmas doctrine and disseminated throughout the world in the name of love, giving, and the purity of the Virgin Mary and Jesus (Peace be upon them). Somewhere along the line when the Christians were being tortured and killed in Roman coliseums, somebody made the decision to make it easy for the northern people to accept these teachings. So what come about are an adaptation and a change so that you actually have the Christmas ceremony which once represented Pagan images of nature, images based upon the worship of the sun, or the worship of the created things, now in the monotheistic religion.

It is interesting to note that as late as 1647, Britain's Puritan Parliament had Christmas ceremony banned as pagan. St. Nicholas appeared in early European folklore as another

character, sometimes known as Beowulf, or Nick or Nikker. He was said to be a demon or the evil spirit of the North. Descriptions of him show him when humanoid as an aged creature with a flowing white beard. By the 16th century, the term had become more specific, the Christianized: "Old Nick" or even "St. Nicholas" meant the devil proper. In the Bible, Isaiah 14:13, the devil's throne was in the North. Satan presided over the winter's darkness. So the character representing evil for the northern Christians was transferred into the figure of Santa Claus. He was often covered with red fur or driven in a sleigh by winged snakes.

If Santa Claus now is flying all over the world giving gifts to children what happened to the labor of their mother and the father? Why is Santa Claus coming down the chimney? That is because there was a belief in ancient Scandinavia that a goddess of flames would come into the home. And so this confusion now is all put together on the Christmas occasion and people have forgotten about Prophet Isa (bpuh).

In the Islamic understanding, Isa or Jesus (Blessings and Peace be upon him), the son of Mary (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was a very humble person who possessed only one or two changes of clothing. He used to walk bare foot most of the time. He renounced the life of materialism and wanted people to move away from focusing on gold and silver. He encouraged the Children of Israel to have spirituality and to remember the Creator. According to most Christian and Muslim theologians, the actual birth of Jesus the son of Mary (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was in the summer. In a Qur'anic chapter called Maryam (Sura Maryam, 19:16-40), there is a detailed discourse on Mary (Blessings and Peace be upon him). She is depicted as a very pious individual who spent most of her life fasting. When the Angel Gabriel told her that she would have a son, she couldn't believe it. He informed her that it would happen by the power of God who would breathe his spirit into her and she would become pregnant; and she did. She went out of the city to a remote area. In the Qur'an, 19:24-25, Allah (swt) sent the angel to tell her that water will come under her and then to shake the palm tree and rutuban janniyya, the ripe dates, will fall down from the tree. The Arabs knew that the ripe dates come in the summer time. Even the Christians agreed with this because, according to their

traditions, the shepherds were putting their flocks outside. And in the area of Bethlehem and Nazareth this could only be done in the warm weather.

Therefore, it is basically agreed upon that Jesus (bpuh) was a humble, simple, non- materialistic person who was born in the summer. What is happening now is a cleverly contrived mixture that is moving more towards the celebration of immorality and materialism than piety and God-consciousness.

Allah has revealed in the Blessed Qur'an, Sura An Nisa, 4: (157-159), the following verses:

...And because of their sayings: We killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, Allah's messenger, but they killed him not nor crucified him. It appeared so to them. And lo, those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture. They killed him not for certain. But Allah took him unto Himself. And Allah is ever Mighty, Wise. There is not one of the People of the Book but will believe in him before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them.

Sura Al Ma'idah (Ayat 75-77) has the following:

The Messiah, son of Maryam is but an Apostle; Apostles before him have indeed passed away. And his mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away. Say: Do you serve besides Allah that which does not control for you any harm, or any profit? And Allah is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.

Say: O followers of the Book! Be not unduly immoderate in your religion, and do not follow the low desire of people who went astray before and led many astray and went astray from the right path.

- By Shaykh Abdullah Hakim Quick, Toronto

Myth of Halloween

Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France, celebrated their New Year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the New Year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31, they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and direction during the long, dark winter.

To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes. When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help protect them during the coming winter.

By A.D. 43, Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. In the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain.

The first was Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the tradition of "bobbing" for apples that is practiced today on Halloween.

By the 800s, the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands. In the seventh century, Pope Boniface IV designated November 1 All Saints' Day, a time to honor saints and martyrs. It is widely believed today that the Pope was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, but church-sanctioned holiday. The celebration was also called All-hallows or All-hallowmas (from Middle English Alholowmesse meaning All Saints' Day) and the night before it, the night of Samhain, began to be called All-hallows Eve and, eventually, Halloween. Even later, in A.D. 1000, the church would make November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honor the dead.

The American Tradition of "Trick-Or-Treating"

The American tradition of "trick-or-treating" probably dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England. During the festivities, poor citizens would beg for food and families would give them pastries called "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's dead relatives.

The distribution of soul cakes was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits. The practice, which was referred to as "going a-souling" was eventually taken up by children who would visit the houses in their neighborhood and be given ale, food, and money.

The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.

VALENTINE'S DAY - History and Islamic Perspective

What is it and where did it come from?

Consider Valentine's Day, a day that after dying out a well deserved death in most of Europe (but surviving in Britain and United States) has suddenly started to emerge across a good swath of Muslim countries. Who was Valentine? Why is this day observed? Legends abound, as they do in all such cases, but this much is clear: Valentine's Day began as a pagan ritual started by Romans in the 4th century BCE to honor the god Lupercus. The main attraction of this ritual was a lottery held to distribute young women to young men for "entertainment and pleasure"--until the next year's lottery. Among other equally despicable practices associated with this day was the lashing of young women by two young men, clad only in a bit of goatskin and wielding goatskin thongs, who had been smeared with blood of sacrificial goats and dogs. A lash of the "sacred" thongs by these "holy men" was believed to make them better able to bear children.

As usual, Christianity tried, without success, to stop the evil celebration of Lupercalia. It first replaced the lottery of the names of women with a lottery of the names of the saints. The idea was that during the following year the young men would emulate the life of the saint whose name they had drawn. (The idea that you can preserve the appearance of a popular evil and yet somehow turn it to serve the purpose of virtue, has survived. Look at all those people who are still trying, helplessly, to use the formats of popular television entertainments to promote good. They might learn something from this bit of history. It failed miserably) Christianity ended up doing in Rome, and elsewhere, as the Romans did. The only success it had was in changing the name from Lupercalia to St. Valentine's Day. It was done in CE 496 by Pope Gelasius, in honour of some Saint Valentine. There are as many as 50 different Valentines in Christian legends. Two of them are more famous, although their lives and characters are also shrouded in mystery. According to one legend, and the one more in line with the true nature of this celebration, St. Valentine was a

"lovers" saint, who had himself fallen in love with his jailer's daughter.

Due to serious troubles that accompanied such lottery, French government banned the practice in 1776. In Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Germany also the ritual vanished over the years. Earlier, it had been banned in England during the 17th century when the Puritans were strong.

However in 1660 Charles II revived it. From there it also reached the New World, where enterprising Yankees spotted a good means of making money. Esther A. Howland, who produced one of the first commercial American Valentine's Day cards called--- what else--- valentines, in the 1840s, sold \$5,000 worth--when \$5,000 was a lot of money--the first year. The valentine industry has been booming ever since.

The history of Valentine's Day serves as a powerful lesson for Muslims. St. Valentine became a Saint trying to resist free sex. Even though there was an attempt to Christianize it, today St. Valentine's day is gone back to its roots. No one even knows that the Church even tried to ban the St. Valentine's Day. Rather, most people think of romance, cupid and his arrow, which are vestiges of pagan Rome.

Pagan origins of Valentine's Day

The first information about this day is found in pre-Christian Rome, when pagans would celebrate the "Feast of the Wolf" on February 15, also known as the Feast of Lupercalia in honour of Februata Juno, the Roman goddess of women and marriage, and Pan, Roman god of nature.

On this day, young women would place their names in an urn, from which boys would randomly draw to discover their sexual companion for the day, the year, and sometimes the rest of their lives. These partners exchanged gifts as a sign of affection, and often married.

Christian Influence

When Christianity came onto the scene in Rome, it wanted to replace this feast with something more in line with its ethics and morality. A number of Christians decided to use February 14 for this purpose. This was when the Italian Bishop Valentine was executed by the Roman Emperor Claudius II for conducting secret marriages of military men in the year 270.

Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, so he outlawed marriage for young, single men, who made up his military. Valentine defied Claudius and performed marriages for young couples in secret. When his actions were revealed, Claudius put him to death. Another version of the story says that Valentine was a holy priest in Rome, who helped Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

Valentine was arrested and sent to the prefect of Rome for this. He found that his attempts to make Valentine renounce his faith were useless, and so recommended he be beaten with clubs, and later beheaded. This took place on February 14, 270.

According to the Catholic encyclopedia, there are at least three different Saint Valentines, all of whom are Christian martyrs of February 14. One of them is described as a priest from Rome (as mentioned above), another as bishop of Interamna (modern Terni), and the third from Africa.

It was in the year 496 that Pope Gelasius officially changed the February 15 Lupercalia festival to the February 14 St. Valentine's Day to give Christian meaning to a pagan festival. The holiday became popular in the United States in the 1800's during the Civil War.

As well, Pope Gelasius ordered a slight change in the lottery for young women that would take place during the pagan festival. Instead of the names of young women, the box would have the names of saints. Men and women were allowed to draw from the box, and the purpose of this was to copy the ways of the saint they had selected for the rest of the year.

Valentine's Day Customs

A number of the customs connected to Valentine's Day originated in the belief in England and France during the Middle Ages, that on February 14, birds began to pair.

Fourteenth and 15th centuries' French and English literatures make indirect references to the practice. Those who chose each other as husband and wife on Valentine's Day apparently called each other their Valentine.

In terms of the Valentine's greeting "Your Valentine" which today you find on a number of Valentine's Day cards, the above-mentioned Roman priest Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself.

While he was in prison awaiting execution, he apparently fell in love with a young girl who would visit him. Before he died, he allegedly wrote her a letter, signed 'From your Valentine,' In terms of the virtually naked, arrow-shooting cupid character, which shoots people with its arrows to make them fall in love, this character is a vestige of Roman pagan times. Cupid was described as the son of Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty. You usually find Cupid's picture on Valentine cards and other paraphernalia.

Islamic Perspective

We should avoid anything associated with pagan immoral practices - We do not need to honor or celebrate the death of a Christian "saint" - Islam does not encourage flirting or suggestions of romantic relationships before marriage - Love between families, friends and married people does not need to be celebrated on a day with such un-Islamic origins.

Question: In recent times, celebration of the Valentine's Day has spread, particularly among female students. It is a Christian celebration, and it is (manifested) with fully red costumes, clothing and shoes, and exchange of red roses. What is the ruling on celebrating this holiday?

Answer: Celebrating the Valentine's Day is not permissible because:

Firstly, it is an innovated holiday that has no basis in the Sharee`ah.

Secondly, it calls to love and passion.

Thirdly, it calls to keeping one's heart busy with nonsense matters which contradict the guidance of the righteous predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them.

So it is not permissible that anything from the signs of that holiday takes place on that day, whether it relates to eating, drinking, clothing, giving gifts, or other than that. It is incumbent upon the Muslim to be proud of his/her religion and that he/she does not blindly follow every crier. May Allah the Exalted protect Muslims from every trial, apparent and hidden, and that He give them protection and guidance. Ameen.

Question:

Some people celebrate Yawm al-Hubb (Valentine's Day) on February 14 [the second month of the Christian Gregorian calendar] every year by exchanging red roses as gifts. They also dress up in red clothing, and congratulate one another (on this occasion). Some sweet shops produce special sweets - red in color - and draw hearts upon them. Some shops advertise their goods which are specially related to this day. What is the Islamic view [concerning the following]: Celebrating this day? Buying from these shops on this day? Selling - by shop-owners who are not celebrating - the things which are used as gifts, to those who are celebrating?

Response

The clear evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah - and this is agreed upon by consensus (Ijmaa) of the early generations of the Muslim Ummah - indicates that there are only two 'Eids in Islam (days of celebration): 'Eid al-Fitr (after the fast of Ramadan) and 'Eid al-Adhaa (after the standing at 'Arafah for pilgrimage).

Every other 'Eid - whether it is to do with a person, group, incident or any other occasion - is an innovated 'Eid. It is not permissible for the Muslim people to participate in it, approve of it, make any show of happiness on its occasion, or assist in it in any way - since this will be transgressing the bounds of Allah:

"and whoever transgresses the bounds of Allah, he has wronged his own self," [Sura At Talaq, 65:1]

If we add to this fabricated 'Eid the fact that it is one of the 'Eids of the disbelievers, it is sin upon sin. This is because it is Tashabbuh (imitation) of the disbelievers, and a type of Muwaalaat (loyalty) to them. And Allah has prohibited the believers from imitation of them and having love or loyalty for them in His Mighty Book (Qur'aan). It is also confirmed from the Prophet Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam that he said: "Whoever imitates a people is one of them."

'Eid al-Hubb (the celebration of Valentine's Day) comes under the category of what has been mentioned here, since it is one of the pagan Christian holidays. Hence it is not permissible for any Muslim, who believes in Allah and the Last Day, to participate in it, approve of it, or congratulate (anyone on that occasion). On the contrary, it is obligatory to abandon it and stay far away from it - in response to Allah and His Messenger, and to distance oneself from the anger of Allah and His punishment.

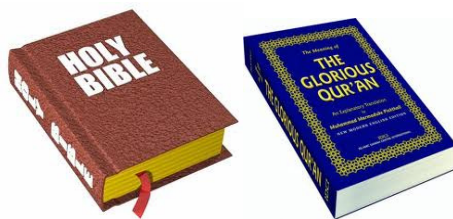
Additionally, it is forbidden for a Muslim to assist or help in this Valentine's Day, or any other of the forbidden/illegal celebrations in any way whatsoever - whether by food or drink, selling or buying, production, gift-giving, correspondence, announcements, etc. All of these things are considered as co-operating in sin and transgression and disobedience of Allah and His Messenger. Allah, the Glorious and Most High, says:

"and co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not co-operate in sin and transgression. And fear Allah! Verily Allah is severe in punishment," [Sura Al Maidah, 5: 2]

Likewise, it is obligatory for every Muslim to adhere strictly to the Qur'an and Sunnah in every situation - especially in times of

temptations and corruption. It is incumbent that he/she understands, be aware and be cautioned from falling into the deviations of those whom Allah is angry with and those who are astray and the immoral people who have no fear of punishment - nor hope of reward - from Allah, and who give no attention at all to Islam.

It is necessary for the Muslim to flee to Allah, the Most High, seeking His Hidaayah (Guidance) and Thabaat (Firmness) upon the Path. Verily, there is no Guide except Allah and no One who can grant firmness except Him.



CHAPTER 12

How to do Dawah among non-Muslims

What are our duties as Muslims?

AMR BIL MA'RUF WAN NAHYI ANIL MUNKAR

(Command for good deeds and forbid evil deeds)

Main duty for all the Muslims, especially who have performed Hajj is “Amr bil ma’ruf wan nahyi anil munkar” – command people to do good deeds and avoid bad/evil deeds. Even in difficult situations speak the truth and do the right thing; and try to stop any wrong/evil/unlawful deeds. Inviting people to obey the commands of Allah and His Rasul Muhammad (bpuh) is DAWAH.

When you see any injustice, you will protest. If any of your relatives do something wrong or does some injustice, at least you have to remind him/her that ‘you are in great loss’. If you find injustice anywhere, you have to stop it by force. If you are not capable of applying force, you have to request to stop it. If you are not able to ask him to stop, you should at least hate such acts and this last step is the lowest level of Imaan. (Sahih Muslim)

Our Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, I swear in the name of Allah in whose hands is my soul (life). You must command people to do good deeds and them to abstain from injustice and sins. Otherwise Allah’s punishment will befall you. Then you will pray to Him (to escape from this punishment) but your prayer will not be answered. (Jame-at Tirmidhi)

DEFINITION OF DA’WAH

The Arabic term دعا “da’wa” is derived from the verb “da’aa” which means “to call; to invite; and to supplicate, i.e. to call on God”. It is used to refer to the act of conveying or calling people to the message of Islam.

In that context it is a contraction of the phase “adda’wah ilAllah”....

“Say, This is my way. I invite you to Allah. I myself see my Way in full light and my followers see it, too....”. [Sura Yusuf, 12: 108]

VIRTUES OF DA'WAH

Da'wah was the basic mission of all the prophets. They were raised up among their respective people to call them to the worship of Allah alone and to abandon the worship of the various false gods that they had invented.

"I have sent every nation a messenger [proclaiming:] Worship Allah and avoid the [worship of] false gods....." [Sura An Nahl, 16: 36]

IMPORTANCE OF DA'WAH

Da'wah is 24 hours' Fard Ibadah. What Allah says in the Qur'an?

Da'wah is an obligatory duty (Fard) for all Muslims. There are lots of verses in the Qur'an that prove it and there are lots of references from the Qur'an & Hadith that prove Da'wah is a duty of all Muslims:

- *"Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and reason with them in ways that are best and most gracious: surely, your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way." [Sura An Nahl, 16 : 125]*
- *"And it is thus that We appointed you to be the community of the middle way, so that you might be witnesses before all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness before you." [Sura Al Baqarah, 2 : 143]*
- *"You are now the best people brought forth for (the guidance and reform of) mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah." [Sura Ale-Imran, 3: 110]*
- *"Who is better in speech than one who calls (people) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam"? [Sura Fussilat, 41: 33]*

Sura Al-Asr

وَالْعَصْرِ

By [the token] of time (through the Ages);

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

Surely, Man is in loss;

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالصَّبْرِ

Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and [join together] in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.

- What was the Mission of all Prophets (AS) from Adam (AS) to Muhammad (bpuh)? Answer: Da'wah
- What was the main responsibility of all Sahaba (RA)? Answer: Da'wah

WHOM SHOULD WE GIVE DA'WAH?

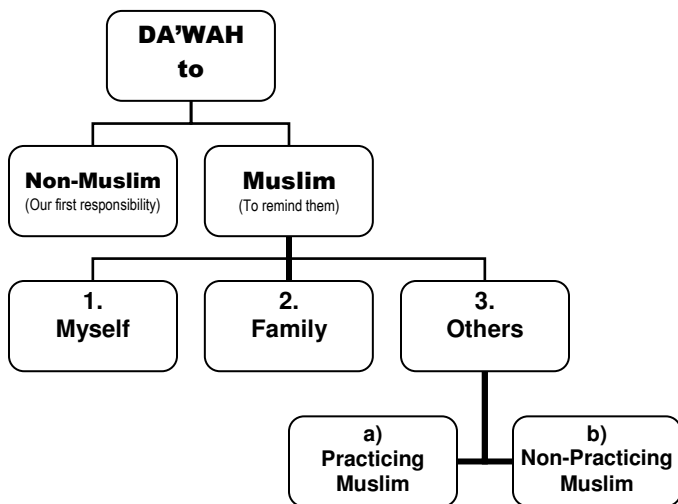
Rasul (bpuh) never gave Dawah to Muslims, he gave Dawah to non-Muslims and given reminder to the Muslims.

Da'wah means a 'call' or 'invitation'; which means to invite non-Muslims to Islam as well as the Muslims to the true understanding and practice of Islam, but many a times, in context, it refers to the invitation of Islam extended to those who are yet to believe in or accept Islam.

'Islaah' literally means 'to repair' or 'to improve'. In an Islamic context, it refers to efforts to improve Muslims or to correct them. It also refers to their moral rectification. Allah says:

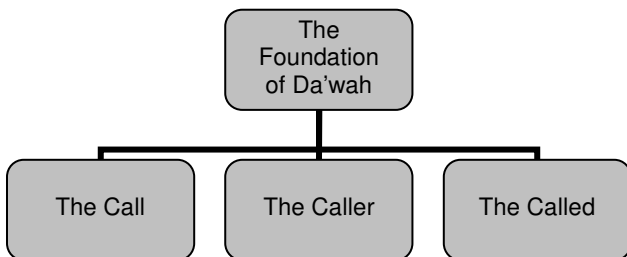
“Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord, with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious!” (Sura An Nahl, 16:125)

DA’WAH CONCEPT



FOUNDATION OF DA’WAH

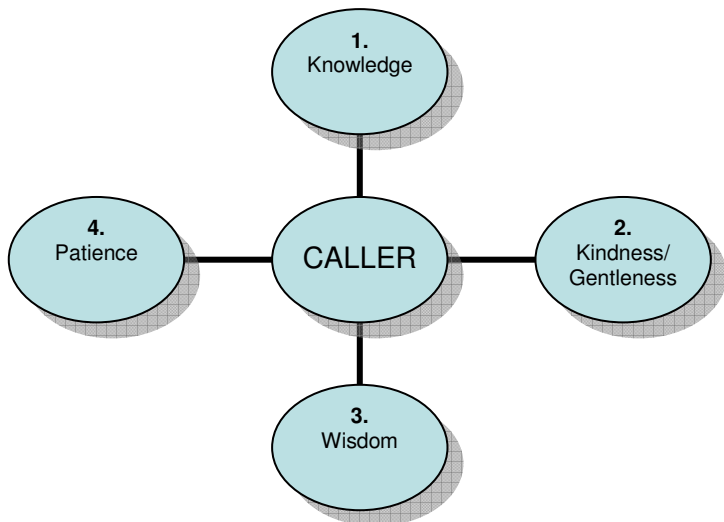
There are 3 elements of the foundation of Da’wah



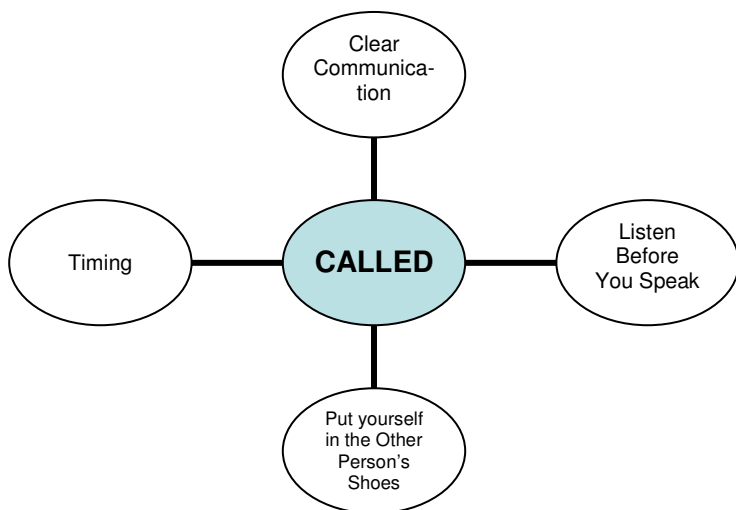
Each has its own particular –

- a) Characteristics
- b) Prerequisites
- c) Goals

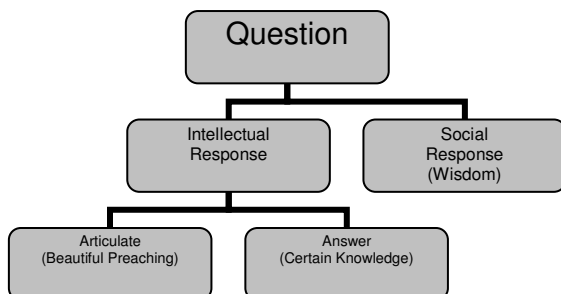
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALLER



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALLED



COMPONENTS OF DA'WAH



DA'WAH TECHNIQUE

@ How to do Da'wah?

@ How not to do Da'wah?

Do's of Effective Da'wah

1. Convey the message; you're not there to convert. Only Allah SWT guides whom He wills!
2. Have patience.
3. Explain Tawheed with priority.
4. Ask for the name.
5. Listen to your visitor with your eyes and ears.
6. Maintain eye contact (same gender).
7. Use open gestures.
8. Determine beliefs of your prospect.
9. Use simple language.
10. Be straightforward.

Do's of Effective Da'wah

1. Remain focused – Avoid confrontations.
2. Identify needs, obstacles and issues.
3. Focus on misconceptions.

4. Be positive.
5. Use “Good” and “Yes”
6. Find similarities before differences – Get a “Yes” first.
7. Avoid obstacles – Phone calls, interruptions, etc.
8. Golden Rules – Ask for Shahadah, even if not fully convinced.

Don'ts of effective Da'wah

1. Don't shake hands with opposite gender.
2. Don't judge based on appearance.
3. Don't say anything that might annoy.
4. Don't make them feel uncomfortable.
5. Don't negotiate.
6. Don't falsify – don't feel sorry for anything about Islam.
7. Don't be evasive.
8. Don't be negative.
9. Don't use “but”.

Don'ts of effective Da'wah

1. Don't get stuck – know your stuff.
2. Don't put on spot.
3. Don't be pushy.
4. Don't attack.
5. Don't insult.
6. Don't interrupt.
7. Don't give up on visitor.
8. Don't just give Shahadah in Arabic (Translate it in English).

Direct Da'wah and Indirect Da'wah

- One-on-one Street Da'wah
- One-on-one Sit Down Da'wah

DA'WAH MATERIALS

1. Translated Qur'an
2. Islamic literature

3. DVDs
4. Pamphlets
5. Posters

OBSTACLES FACED BY THE DA'EE

We should know some Da'wah tips

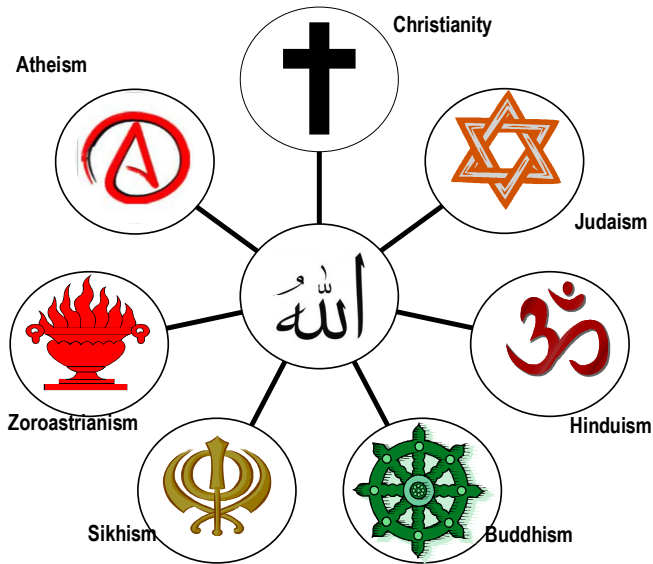
1. Know what you're distributing
2. Obedient and disciplined
3. Stay on the main topic
4. Trained and knowledgeable
5. Well dressed
6. Try to avoid negative arguments
7. Have a partner whenever possible

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Statistics on world religions

Christianity:	2.1 billion
Islam:	1.57 billion
Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist:	1.1 billion
Hinduism:	900 million
Chinese traditional religion:	394 million
Buddhism:	376 million
Primal-indigenous:	300 million
African Traditional & Diasporic:	100 million
Sikhism:	23 million
Juche:	19 million
Spiritism:	15 million
Judaism:	14 million
Baha'i:	7 million
Jainism:	4.2 million
Shinto:	4 million
Cao Dai:	4 million
Zoroastrianism:	2.6 million
Tenrikyo:	2 million
Neo-Paganism:	1 million
Unitarian-Universalism:	800 thousand

Rastafarianism: 600 thousand
Scientology: 500 thousand



ISLAM

Islam is a Semitic religion, which has over 1.5 billion adherents all over the world. Islam means "submission to the will of God". Muslims accept the Qur'an as the word of God revealed to His last and final prophet, Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Islam thus makes it an article of faith to believe in all the earlier prophets, starting with Adam, and continuing with Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John the Baptist and Jesus amongst many others (May peace be on them all).

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a Semitic religion, which claims to have nearly 1.2 billion adherents all over the world. Christianity owes its name to Jesus Christ (Blessings and peace be upon him). The Holy Bible is the sacred Scripture of the Christians: a) The Bible is divided

into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the Holy Scripture of the Jews and contains records of all the prophets of the Jews that came before Jesus (Blessings and Peace be upon him). The New Testament contains records of the life of Jesus (Blessings and Peace be upon him). b) The complete Bible, i.e. the Old Testament and the New Testament put together, contains 73 books. However, the Protestant Bible i.e. the King James Version contains only 66 books as they consider 7 books of the Old Testament to be apocrypha, i.e. of doubtful authority. Therefore, the Old Testament of the Catholics contains 46 books and that of the Protestants, 39 books. However the New Testament of both these sects contains 27 books.

JUDAISM

Judaism is one of the important Semitic religions. Its followers are known as Jews and they believe in the prophetic mission of Prophet Moses (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Concept of God in Judaism: The following verse from the book of Deuteronomy [6:4] contains an exhortation from Moses (Blessings and Peace be upon him): "Shama Israelu Adonai Ila Hayno Adna Ikhad". It is a Hebrew quotation which means: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord". Judaism condemns idol worship in the following verse: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." [The Bible, Exodus 20:3-5] In Jewish Scriptures (The Old Testament): God Almighty speaks to Moses in Book of Deuteronomy 18:18.

HINDUISM

The most popular among the Aryan religions is Hinduism. 'Hindu' is actually a Persian word that stands for the inhabitants of the region beyond the Indus Valley. However, in common parlance, Hinduism is a blanket term for an assortment of religious beliefs. There are several sacred scriptures of the Hindus. Among these are the Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas.

The two epics of Hinduism are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Bhagavad Gita is a part of Mahabharata.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is a non-Vedic religion. Historical criticism has proved that the original teachings of Buddha can never be known. It seems that Gautama Buddha's teachings were memorized by his disciples. After Buddha's death, a council was held at Rajagaha so that the words of Buddha could be recited and agreed upon. Buddhist Scriptures can be divided into Pali and Sanskrit Literature: The most important of all Buddhist scriptures is the TRI-PITAKA which is in Pali text. The TRI-PITAKA or Three Baskets of law is composed of 3 books: 1. Vinaya Pitaka: 'Rules of Conduct' 2. Sutta Pitaka: 'Discourses' 3. Abhidhamma: 'Analysis of Doctrine'

SIKHISM

Sikhism is a non-Semitic, non-Aryan, non-Vedic religion. Some consider it as an offshoot of Hinduism. It was founded by Guru Nanak at the end of the 15th century (CE). It originated in the area of Pakistan and North West India called Punjab. Guru Nanak was born in a Kshatriya (warrior caste) Hindu family but was very strongly influenced by Islam and Muslims. Sikhism is a religion of ten Gurus, the first Guru being Guru Nanak and the tenth and the last being Guru Gobind Singh. The sacred book of Sikhism is Sri Guru Granth, also called Adi Granth Sahib.

ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism is an ancient Aryan religion that originated in Persia more than 2500 years ago. Though it has relatively few adherents, it is one of the oldest religions. Zoroaster was the founder of Zoroastrianism, also commonly known as Parsi-ism. It is also known as the religion of fire worshippers and Magianism. Parsi Scriptures consist of Dasatir and Vesta or Zend-Avesta. Dasatir is further divided into two parts: Khurda Dasatir and Kalan Dasatir. Avesta is further divided into Khurda Avesta and Kalan Avesta also known as Zend or Maha-Zend.

ATHEISM

This is non-belief in the existence of God. An atheist, even though he/she may belong to a religious family, uses his/her intellect to deny the existence of God; whatever concept or qualities of God he/she may have learnt in his/her religion may not seem to be logical to him/her. An atheist agrees with the 1st part of the Shahadah, i.e., the Islamic Creed, 'La ilaaha' - meaning 'there is no God'.

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CHAPTER 13

**Let's learn
some authentic Dua**

Dua when leaving home

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ، تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

Bismillah, Tawwakkaltu 'ala-Allah, wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah

Meaning: In the name of Allah, I place my trust in Allah, and there is no might nor power except with Allah. [Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi].

Dua when entering the home

سَمِ اللَّهِ وَلَجْنَا، وَيَسْمِ اللَّهِ خَرَجْنَا، وَعَلَى رَبِّنَا تَوَكَّلْنَا

Bismillahi walajnaa, wa bismillahi kharajnaa, wa 'ala Rabbinaa Tawakkalna

Meaning: In the name of Allah we enter and in the name of Allah we leave, and upon our Lord we place our trust.
[Sahih Muslim, Abu Dawud]

Supplication for travel

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ، وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ

Bismil-lah, walhamdu lillah, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, subhanal-lathee sakhkhara lana hatha wama kunna lahu muqrineen, wa-inna ila rabbina lamunqaliboon.

Meaning: In the name of Allah and all praise is for Allah. Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, how perfect He is, The One Who has placed this (transport) at our service, and we ourselves would not have been capable of that, and to our Lord is our final destiny. (Sura Az Zukhruf, 43: 13-14)

OR

Invocation for riding in a vehicle

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ
مُقْرِنِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ
نَفْسِي فَاعْفِرْ لِي، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

*Bismil-lah, walhamdu lillah, subhanal-latheeh sakhkhara lana hatha
wama kunna lahu muqrineen, wainna ila rabbina lamunqaliboon,
alhamdu lillah, alhamdu lillah, alhamdu lillah, Allahu akbar, Allahu
akbar, Allahu akbar, subhanakal-lahumma innee thalamtu nafsee
faghfir lee fainnahu la yaghfiruth-thunooba illa ant.*

Meaning: In the name of Allah and all praise is for Allah. How perfect He is, the One Who has placed this (transport) at our service and we ourselves would not have been capable of that, and to our Lord is our final destiny. All praise is for Allah, All praise is for Allah, All praise is for Allah, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest. How perfect You are, O Allah, verily I have wronged my soul, so forgive me, for surely none can forgive sins except You. (Abu Dawud, At-Tirmithi)

Upon entering the Masjid

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ،
وَوَجْهَهُ الْكَرِيمِ، وَسُلْطَانِهِ الْقَدِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ
لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

*Bismillah, was-Salaatu was-Salaamu 'alaa Rasool-illah. A'oothu
billaah-il-Atheem, wa Wajhih-il-Kareem wa Sultaanih-il-Qadeem
min ash-Shaytaan ir-rajeem. Allahumma-ftah lee abwaaba
Rahmatik.*

Meaning: In the name of Allah, and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah. 'I take refuge with Allah, The Supreme and with His Noble Face, and His eternal authority from the accursed devil. O Allah, open the gates of Your mercy for me. (Abu Dawud)

Upon leaving the Masjid

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ،
وَوَجْهِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، وَسُلْطَانِهِ الْقَدِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي
أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ،

Bismillah, was-Salaatu was-Salaamu 'alaa Rasool-illah. A'oothu billaah-il-Atheem, wa Wajhih-il-Kareem wa Sultaanih-il-Qadeem min ash-Shaytaan ir-jaeem. Allahumma innee as-aluka min fadlika.

Meaning: In the name of Allah, and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah. 'I take refuge with Allah, The Supreme and with His Noble Face, and His eternal authority from the accursed devil. O Allah, I ask You from Your favor. (Abu Dawud)

Visiting the graves

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ
اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ، نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ.

Assalamu AAalaykum ahlad-diyari minal-mu/mineena walmuslimeen, wa-inna in shaallallahu bikum lahiqoon, nas-alul-laha lana walakumul-AAafiyah.

Meaning: Peace be upon you all, O inhabitants of the graves, amongst the believers and the Muslims. Verily, we will, Allah willing, be united with you, we ask Allah for well-being for us and you. (Sahih Muslim)

When waking up

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

Alhamdu lillahil-lathee ahyanabaAAAda ma amatana wa-ilayhin-nushoor.

‘All praise is for Allah who gave us life after having taken it from us and unto Him is the resurrection.’

Before entering the toilet

(بِسْمِ اللَّهِ) اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ

(Bismil-lah) allahumma innee aAAoothu bika minal-khubthi wal-khabaith

‘(In the name of Allah). O Allah, I take refuge with you from all evil and evil-doers.’

After leaving the toilet

عُفْرَانَاكَ

Ghufranaka

‘I ask You (Allah) for forgiveness.’

When starting ablution

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

Bismil-lah

‘In the name of Allah.’

Upon completing the ablution

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ

*Ashhadu an la ilaha illal-lahu wahdahu la shareeka lah, wa-
ashhadu anna Muhammadan AAabduhu warasooluh.*

‘I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.’

Upon seeing a good dream or a bad dream

‘The righteous dream is from Allah and the bad dream is from the devil, so if anyone sees something which pleases him then he should only relate it to one whom he loves...’

Summary of what to do upon having a bad dream:

- Spit on your left three times
- Spit: A form of spitting comprising mainly of air with little spittle
- Seek refuge in Allah from Shaytan and the evil of what you saw
- Do not relate it to anyone
- Turn and sleep on the opposite side to which you were sleeping on previously.
- *Get up and pray if you so desire.*

Qunoot Al-Witr

Al-Witr: Supplication made before or after bowing in the witr prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ، وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ، وَتَوَلَّنِي
فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ، وَبَارِكْ لِي فِيمَا أُعْطِيتَ، وَقِنِي شَرَّ مَا قُضِيَتَ،
فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَذِلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ، [وَلَا
يَعِزُّ مَنْ عَادَيْتَ]، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ.

*Allahumma-h-dinee feeman hadayt, waAAafinee feeman AAafayt,
watawallanee feeman tawallayt, wabarik lee feema aAAatayt,
waqinee sharra ma qadayt, fa-innaka taqdee wala yuqda AAalayk,
innahu la yathillu man walayt, [wala yaAAizzu man AAadayt],
tabarakta rabbana wataAAalayt*

‘O Allāh, guide me along with those whom You have guided, pardon me along with those whom You have pardoned, be an ally to me along with those whom You are an ally to and bless for me that which You have bestowed. Protect me from the evil You have decreed for. Verily, You decree and none can decree over You. For surety, he whom you show allegiance to is never abased and he whom You take as an enemy is never honored and mighty. O our Lord, Blessed and Exalted are You.’

Supplication before eating

‘When you are about to eat, you should say:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

Bismil-lah.

...and if you forget to say it before starting, then you should say (when you remember):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي أَوَّلِهِ وَآخِرِهِ

Bismil-lahi fee awwalihi wa-akhirih.

‘In the name of Allāh in it’s beginning and end.’

Upon completing the meal

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنِي هَذَا وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةَ

Alhamdu lillahil-lahtee atAAamanee hatha warazaqaneehi min ghayri hawlin minnee wala quwwah.

‘All praise is for Allah who fed me this and provided it for me without any might nor power from myself.’

Supplication said upon sneezing

‘When one of you sneezes he should say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

Alhamdu lillah.

‘All praise is for Allah.’

...and his brother or companion should say to him:

يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ

Yarhamukal-lah.

‘May Allah have mercy upon you.’

...and he (i.e. the one who sneezed) replies back to him:

يَهْدِيكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحُ بِالْكُم

Yahdeekumul-lahu wayuslihu balakum.

‘May Allah guide you and rectify your condition.’

Dua for parents

رَبِّ أَرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy, and say: *My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little. (Sura Al-Isra, 17: 24)*

Recite this dua after every salah.

To increase memory

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge. (Sura Ta-Ha, 20: 114)

Dua before delivering a speech

رَبِّ أَسْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي (٢٥) وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي (٢٦) وَأَحْطِلْ عُقْدَةً
مِّنْ لِّسَانِي (٢٧) يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي (٢٨)

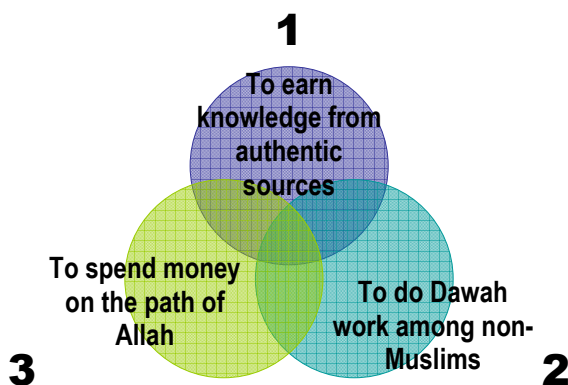
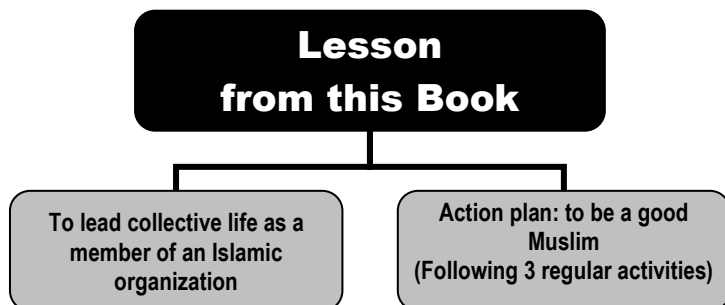
"O my Lord! Expand my breast;" (25) "Ease my task for me; (26) "And remove the impediment from my speech. (27) "So they may understand what I say. (Sura Ta-Ha, 20: 25-28)

MORE AUTHENTIC DUA

To get more authentic dua, you can follow these 2 books:

- Fortress of the Muslim, Invocations from the Qur'an & Sunnah – Darussalam Publications.
- Hisnul Muslim – Madinah University.

APPENDIX



- ❖ Take a project to study Islamic teachings for you and for your family.
- ❖ Make a niyah to study the whole Qur'an with authentic Tafsir. Do not only recite the Qur'an.
- ❖ Try to study and earn knowledge of the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith at least for one hour everyday.

- ❖ Always seek Islamic knowledge from authentic sources and be cautious of misguided Islamic lessons.
- ❖ Increase your Sadaqa activities; pay Sadaqa regularly from your halal income. Spend more money for the establishment of Sahih Deen of Islam and Dawah.
- ❖ Try to follow all Islamic dress codes and Hijab for men and women as per Qur'an and Sunnah.
- ❖ Always try to keep Islamic environment alive in your family.
- ❖ Avoid watching evil and worthless Hindi movies, drama and songs in your TV, DVD and Computer.
- ❖ You can watch Islamic scholars' DVD and other Islamic topics with family at home.
- ❖ Make it a habit to perform your regular salah (prayer) in the Masjid in a Jamaah (Jamat).
- ❖ If you cannot go to Masjid for some unavoidable reason any day, then pray in Jamaah (Jamat) at home along with all other members of the family.
- ❖ Always make friendship with Islamic minded families and maintain all your social activities with them.
- ❖ Try to participate in Islamic programs, seminars, short courses and workshops with your family regularly.
- ❖ Join an Islamic organization and try to participate regularly in Dawah activity (First preference for non-Muslims and then non-practicing Muslims too)
- ❖ Avoid criticizing and pointing finger to others; rather try to rectify all your faults day by day.
- ❖ Do not spend most of your time to earn a lot of money or property.

- ❖ Reduce the habit of free-mixing of men and women in family gatherings. Try to maintain a reasonable distance between the two groups.
- ❖ Do not spend all of your time in family social gatherings in idle talk. Discuss some Islamic topics for at least 20-30 minutes and make your gathering meaningful.
- ❖ Arrange a family program to discuss any Islamic educational subject at least once in a week.
- ❖ Establish a family library with Islamic resources like books, CDs and DVDs, etc.

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Are you thinking to Perform Hajj & Umrah According to the Qur'an & Sunnah

