

ISLAM AND OUR SOCIAL HABITS

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Islamic Manners versus Western Etiquette

Islam and Cleanliness

Islam and Mental Health

By

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INTRODUCING THE AUTHOR :

Maryam Jameelah was born in 1934 in New York at the height of the Great Depression - a fourth-generation American of German-Jewish origin. She was reared in Westchester, one of the most prosperous and populated suburbs of New York and received a thoroughly secular American education at the local public schools. Always an above-average student, she soon became a passionate intellectual and insatiable bibliophile, hardly ever without a book in hand, her readings extending far beyond the requirements of the school curriculum. As she entered adolescence, she became intensely serious-minded, scorning all frivolities, which is very rare for an otherwise attractive young girl. Her main interests were religion, philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology and biology. The school and local community public libraries and later, the New York Public Library, became "her second home."

After her graduation from secondary school in the summer of 1952, she was admitted to New York University where she studied a general liberal arts programme. While at the university, she became severely ill in 1953, grew steadily worse and had to discontinue college two years later without earning any diploma. She was confined to private and public hospitals for two years (1957-1959) and only after her discharge, did she discover her facility for writing. Marmaduk: Pickthall's translation of Quran and Allama Muhammad Asad's two books - his autobiographical *Road to Mecca* and *Islam at the Crossroads* ignited her interest in Islam and after correspondence with some prominent Muslims in Muslim lands and making intimate friends with some Muslim converts in New York, she embraced Islam at the Islamic Mission in Brooklyn, New York at the hand of Shaikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal, who then changed her name from Margaret Marcus to Maryam Jameelah.

During extensive correspondence with Muslims throughout the world and reading and making literary contributions to whatever Muslim periodicals were available in English, Maryam Jameelah became acquainted with the writings of Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi and so, beginning in December 1960, they exchanged letters regularly. In the spring of 1962, Maulana Maudoodi invited Maryam Jameelah to migrate to Pakistan and live as a member of his family in Lahore. Maryam Jameelah accepted the offer and a year later, married Mohammad Yusuf Khan, a whole-time worker for the Jama'at-e-Islami who later became the publisher of all her books. She subsequently became the mother of four children, living with her co-wife and her children in a large extended household of inlaws. Most unusual for a woman after marriage, she continued all her intellectual interests and literary activities; in fact, her most important writings were done during and inbetween pregnancies. She observes *Purdah* strictly.

Her hatred of atheism and materialism in all its varied manifestations - past and present - is intense and in her restless quest for absolute, transcendental ideals, she upholds Islam as the most emotionally and intellectually satisfying explanation to the Ultimate Truth which alone gives life (and death) meaning, direction, purpose and value.

UMAR FARUQ KHAN

ISLAMIC MANNERS VERSUS WESTERN ETIQUETTE

The modern way of life has given one a much higher degree of comfort and contributed to gracious and spacious living which in its turn contributes to the progress of the world in all directions. We in Pakistan, too have made some advance in these matters from the days of our fathers and grandfathers under British influence. But we of the East have not gone as far as they of the Middle East; the Persian, the Turk or even the Arab. And some of our people have already fallen foul socially of the people there, due to the lack of knowledge of Western ways of living. There has been some criticism in the press that visitors from Pakistan have behaved at official functions gotten up in their honour in a manner which made them quite unfit to meet Western people socially. It is not a trite but true saying that when we are in Rome, we ought to do as the Romans do (pp. 23-24). And when they visit a Western country, they ought to wear the usual garments of the West. For if they don't, they will only make themselves ridiculous and contribute to the gaiety of the nations. (p. 54) *

Such is the mentality of those who, due to the heritage of European rule, are convinced that Western manners are so inherently superior that our culture must be measured by the degree to which we have adopted them. That is why, when Europeans and Americans visit a Muslim country, they do not do "as the Romans do". They never change their mode of dress nor their customs to conform to those of their hosts; rather, they expect, as a matter of course, that everyone will bend to their ways.

* *Pakistani Manners and English Etiquette*, A. F. M. Mohsin Ali, Pakistan Press, Syndicate, Dacca, 1958.

If we Muslims were not so severely afflicted with an inferiority-complex concerning our indigenous culture, we would do exactly the same.

Western ways are not only totally different but contradictory in almost every respect to the teachings of Islam. Those Muslims who live (or wish to live) in the modern Western manner not only advertise their mental and emotional slavery but openly violate the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Since Islam is a complete way of life sanctioned by Divine authority, it cannot be improved upon by borrowing from any quarter.

Muslims who have adopted Western fashions, argue that since Islam is a universal faith, it specifies no particular kind of dress ; therefore we are free to clothe ourselves any way we please to conform to the society in which we live. This is a false assumption, because both Quran and Sunnah contain many plain and unambiguous instructions as to how Muslims should dress. The Quran says :

He (Allah) hath given you garments to preserve you from the heat (and cold) and coats of mail to preserve you in warfare. (16 : 81)

Oh children of Adam ! We have indeed sent down for you clothing to cover your shame and for beauty and dress of piety—that is best. (7 : 26)

This means that in Islam the purpose of clothing is : (1) modesty ; (2) protection against the severity of the climate according to geographical conditions ; and (3) to enhance the appearance of the wearer. In the Western dress, the prime purpose is, through semi nudity, transparent

cloth and very tight-fitting dresses, to exhibit the private parts of the wearer to the maximum advantage.

Ayesha reported that Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr, came to the Messenger of Allah while there were thin clothes on her. He turned his face from her and said, "Oh Asma, when a girl reaches puberty, it is not proper that anything on her should remain exposed except her face and hands. —(Abu Daud)

Say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not display their beauty except that which appears thereof and let them draw their head coverings over their bosoms. —(Quran 24 : 30-31)

Islamic dress is neat, clean, tasteful and its style characterised by simplicity, sobriety, and dignity while those who put on Western dress do so above all to look "smart" and "fashionable". Western fashion is dictated entirely by the motives of extravagance and vanity.

Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah said : Whoever puts on a robe of fame in this world, Allah will dress him with a robe of disgrace on Ressurrection Day. —(Abu Daud,)

Ibn Umar reported that the Prophet said : Whoever allows his cloth to flow out of vanity, Allah will not look to him on the Ressurrection Day. —(Bukhari)

Amar Ibn Shuaib reported from his father from his grandfather who said that the Messenger of Allah said : Eat and drink and give alms and put on dress till extravagance and pride do not mix.

—(Ahmad Nisai, Ibn Majah)

The Hadith also describe which kinds of dress the Holy Prophet preferred :

Umm Salamah reported that the dress most liked by the Messenger of Allah was a long gown. —(Tirmizi, Abu Daud)

Ubadah reported that the Messenger of Allah said : You should

put on turbans because they are signs of the angels and allow them to flow behind your backs.

—(*Baihaqi*)

Abu Darda reported that the Messenger of Allah said : Verily the best dress with which you can meet Allah in your graves and mosques is of white colour.

—(*Ibn Majah*)

The Sunnah of the Holy Prophet gives the believer detailed instructions on the proper manner of eating, all of which conflict with that prevailing in the modern West.

Before eating, everyone should see whether the food he is going to take is lawful or unlawful according to Islam. If it is unlawful, it should not be taken at all, because the prayer of a man eating unlawful things is not accepted. *

Western food includes many kinds of alcoholic beverages and swine-flesh not only taken as such but used in the cooking of other foods as well. Since their animals are not slaughtered by Zabbah, all Western meats, except those animals slaughtered by religious Jews, are unlawful. Except for religious Jews, Western peoples make no distinction between lawful and unlawful foods but eat what they relish for the taste only.

Food should be placed on the dining cloth on the ground and not on tables as is now the custom. Sitting on dining cloth should be according to the convenience of the eaters, either cross-legged, or sitting upon one leg or squatting upon the backs of the legs, but eating should never be taken leaning against anything (such as the backs of chairs). Then Niyat should be made for taking food for enabling the body to do religious duties ordered by Islam and not only for relish. Many hands should participate in the same dish as the blessing of the food lies in the company. The first and foremost duty of a man before eating is to take the name of Allah, because remembrance of Allah in every affair is the keynote of Islam. **

• *Al-Hadis*, Maulana al-Haj Fazlur Karim, Calcutta, 1938-1940 Vol. II, p. 118.

•• *Ibid.*

The following Hadith describes in detail the manner of eating according to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet :

Amir Ibn Abu Salamah reported : I was a boy under the care of the Messenger of Allah and my hand was unsteady in the bowl so he said to me, Eat with your right hand and eat from what is in front of you. *(Agreed)*

Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah said : None of you shall ever take food with his left hand nor shall he drink therewith because the devil eats with his left hand and drinks therewith.

—*(Muslim)*

Ka'ab Ibn Malik reported that the Messenger of Allah used to eat with the first three fingers of his right hand and to lick his hand before he washed it.

—*(Muslim)*

Jabir reported that the Prophet used to lick the fingers and the plates and said, "You do not know wherein there is a blessing.

—*(Muslim)*

Nubshah reported from the Messenger of Allah who said : Whoso eats in a plate and then licks it up, the plate seeks forgiveness for him.

—*(Ahmad, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah)*

Abu Hurairah reported that meat was brought to the Messenger of Allah and his hand was raised to it and it gave him satisfaction. Then he tore it up with his teeth.

—*(Tirmizi, Ibn Majah)*

Ayesha reported that the Messenger of Allah said, "Don't cut meat with a knife because it is the manner of the foreigners, but tear it off with your teeth because it is more tasteful and easy.

—*(Abu Daud, Baihaqi)*

Those who have adopted the modern Western manner of eating with chairs, tables knives, forks and spoons, would regard the above Hadith as repulsive and uncivilized and, consequently, will have nothing but contempt for the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. The modern "buffet" where guests load up their plates with as much as they can

eat and then take their food standing anywhere in the house, is most repugnant to the Islamic way. Islam demands that every bit of food should be eaten and even a morsel wasted is sinful, whereas according to Western etiquette, it is bad manners to eat everything and regarded as the height of cultural refinement to leave a portion of one's food uneaten on the plate to go to waste.

The whole service at the meal is conducted by signals to the servants so if you let go the soup spoon, it is a signal for the servants to take away the soup plate even though you may not have finished eating the soup. It is for the host or hostess to indicate where each guest will sit. An attempt is generally made to place a woman between two men and not to put the husband and wife next to each other. If it is a big dinner, at the signal of the hostess, the ladies leave the table leaving the gentlemen behind who sit down again and light up their cigarettes and have a free and informal chat. The ladies in the meantime had their free and informal chat among themselves or had powdered their noses in the powder room. After a while, on the signal of the host, the men go back into the drawing room and rejoin the ladies. Thus it will be seen that the luncheon or dinner is more of a social than a gastronomical function. And therefore it is all the more necessary for you when departing to say to your host and hostess, "Thanks for a very good time"—not dinner.*

Unless husband and wife or very close relations, Muslim men and women always eat separately and no custom could horrify a practicing Muslim more than to place at a dinner, a strange woman in between two strange men. Contrast with the Western manner of eating the Sunnah as given below :

If by chance any morsel of food falls from the dish on the dining

* *Pakistani Manners and English Etiquette*, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

cloth, it shall be taken up and eaten because if wasted, the Devil will use it. If covered with dust, it should be placed where a dog, cat or bird can reach it. Everyone should stop eating before full satisfaction and 1/3 of the belly left empty. He shall lick his hand and plate before going to wash them because there is a blessing therein. Then he shall praise Allah Who has given him his food and drink.*

The pride of modern Western civilization is its hygienic cleanliness. Westerners accuse Muslims as being a dirty people. But let us examine more closely just how "clean" the Westerners are.

Then comes the "sanitary" wash-basin, another difficult object. People of the West use this for washing their hands and face and for rinsing the mouth also. In the West they fill up this basin with warm water and wash and expectorate into the same dirty water. Even with the advancement of the modern sanitary running water, in a cold country, the (Oriental) would have to put up with cold water all the time or scald one's hands and face with piping hot water unless one could adapt oneself to the Western custom of making up a nice warm mixture with the water from the hot and cold water taps and get used to the Western habit of using the one basinful for everything.**

Nothing could be more objectionable to the practicing Muslim than the above advice since, according to the Sunnah, water which has been used once for washing or bathing cannot be used again. That is why the Western style bath for the Muslim is the epitome of dirtiness.

Attached to the bedroom is the bathroom. This room is used not only for bathing but also for answering the calls of nature. In it is the full-sized bath-tub in which the water is run from hot and cold water taps according to one's liking. Into this tub one has to climb stark naked and sit or stretch up to the neck. After soaping himself, he may either splash the water on himself or use a bath sponge and wash himself "clean" in the same water. He cannot get a

* *Al-Hadis*, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 119).

** *Pakistani Manners and English Etiquette*, op. cit., p. 44.

change of fresh water unless he lets out the dirty water and waits till the bath-tub is filled up again. In the meantime, one may catch a chill and he may not get the second mixture the same temperature as the previous one which is not conducive to one's comfort.*

The modern Western "bathroom" is perhaps the most highly objectionable of all Western ways since to put the latrine in the same room where people bathe is absolutely prohibited by the Sunnah. Another repulsive custom is that the Western latrine compels a man to urinate standing which is forbidden in Islam.

Then it is the commode or latrine which is the greatest difficulty for the Oriental Muslim. For answering the calls of nature in the West, they use "toilet paper" and wipe the parts clean and dry. They do not use water at all for this purpose. The Oriental Muslim would call this a dirty habit for he would feel that he could never be really clean unless he had washed the parts with water immediately afterwards. But if he tried to use water for this purpose in the Western bathroom, he would at once come to grief. For he could not do this job sitting on the floor which must not be wetted under any circumstances. Besides, there would be no "lota" or mug for using water for this purpose. He must conform to Western customs carefully. He may remember that any mismanagement in the bathroom, particularly of the commode, would condemn him as uncivilized, if not a savage, in the eyes of the hotel people or the landlady. The best he can do is to get round some of these disconcerting problems till he succeeds in modernizing himself and shedding his Eastern habits.**

Thus one cannot adopt the Western mode of life without violating, if not altogether abandoning, obedience to Islamic injunctions. In commenting on the craze of Muslims to copy alien ways of life :

Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah said : He who imitates a people (meaning the unbelievers) becomes one of them.

(—*Musnad Ibn Hanbal, Sunan Ibn Daud*)

**Ibid.* , pp. 42-43.

***Ibid.* , pp. 45-47.

ISLAM AND CLEANLINESS

The excessive dirtiness which characterizes the Muslim countries of the present-day more than any other single factor, disgusts outsiders and spoils their reputation. Ask any American or European traveller what he thinks of the countries and peoples of the Muslim world and he will invariably reply, "How dirty they are!" The sad fact is that this criticism is in most cases justified to such an extent that even new converts to Islam of European origin are sometimes driven to the brink of apostasy for this reason. As an illustration, one good friend of mine—a European convert—remarked in a letter to me while she and her husband were trying their best to live an Islamic life in a Muslim land :

My husband is utterly disgusted with the filth in this country where the walls in his office, especially on the stairs, are dark red with spat-out pan (betel nut), where men don't button up their trousers in the bathroom but rather only in walking back to their desks, where on the same tap he has to make ablutions for prayers, while others clean their artificial teeth leaving everything around red from pan, where at the same time the servants refill the bottles with drinking water and when on Fridays instead of coming neat and clean to the mosque, men with stinking clothes gather together. As the conditions are in Pakistan, my husband thinks that to keep his idealism in Islam alive, he must separate from the Muslims as soon as possible because in Germany he might be more useful in his missionary attempts.

After making a desperate effort to live in the Muslim society of Pakistan without success, the writer of the previous lines returned with her husband to her native land the following year.

What a sad paradox it is that while Muslim countries of the present day are notorious for their filth, no faith lays so much stress on the necessity for cleanliness both in person and in surroundings than Islam.

Abu Malik said, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, Purification is half the faith.

—*Muslim—Mishkat ul Masabih 3*

Jabir said, The Messenger of Allah said, The key to Paradise is prayer and the key to prayer is purification.

—*Musnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Mishkat ul Masabih 3*

Ibn Umar said, The Messenger of Allah said, Prayer is not accepted without purification nor is charity accepted out of what is acquired by unlawful means.

—*Muslim—Mishkat ul Masabih 3 : 1*

Abd Allah ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah said, When one of you comes to the Friday prayers, he should take a bath.

—*Bukhari 11 : 2*

Amr ibn Sulaim said; the Messenger of Allah said; Taking a bath on Friday is incumbent on everyone who has attained puberty and he should use the toothbrush and scent if he can find it.

—*Bukhari 11 : 3*

Contrast these teachings of Islam to the squalor sanctioned by Christianity in medieval Europe.

The early Christians regarded the cleanliness of the body as a pollution of the soul and those saints were most admired who had become a hideous mass of filth. Saint Anthanasius related with enthusiasm how Saint Anthony had never to extreme old age been guilty of washing his feet. Saint Abraham who lived for fifty years after his conversion to Christianity, scrupulously avoided washing

either his hands or his feet from that date. Abbot Alexander used to say, looking mournfully back at the past: "Our fathers never washed their faces but we frequent the public baths".*

Islam places its greatest emphasis upon personal cleanliness and hygiene both for the health of the body in this life and the salvation of the soul in the Life Hereafter. Ablutions are compulsory after voiding and sound sleep before each prayer and a complete bath incumbent before the major congregational prayers, after coitus, nocturnal pollution, menstruation, childbirth and washing a dead body. Even in the most so-called "advanced" countries of Europe and America today, these essential acts of cleanliness are not practiced.

Islam puts much emphasis upon the cleanliness of the teeth and mouth hygiene :

Ayesha said on the authority of the Prophet. The tooth-stick purifies the mouth and is a means of seeking the pleasure of the Lord.

—*Bukhari* 30 : 27

Abu Hurairah said on the authority of the Prophet, Were it not that I would place too heavy a burden on my community, I would have commanded them to use the tooth-stick at every ablution.

—*Bukhari* 30 : 21

It is also Sunnah to rinse the mouth and clean the teeth after each meal. So highly did the Holy Prophet value a clean mouth that the last thing he did before his death was to use his tooth-stick. Were Islam's teachings on mouth hygiene strictly followed in the so-called "advanced" countries, where tooth-decay and bad breath are universal, it can safely be predicted that dentists

*—*Islam and the World*, Abul Hasan Ali Nadawi, The Academy of Research and Publications, Lahore, 1960, p. 117.

would suffer grave loss of business for lack of patients.

Not only is it incumbent upon the Muslim to clean his body but his clothes must be kept free from impurities. Towards this end, cleaning the private parts with pebbles, pieces of earth followed by water after answering the calls of nature are essential. The Holy Prophet said that one of the causes of the punishment of the grave is carelessness in protecting one's clothing against defilement of urine and stools.

Abu Hurairah said, When the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, went to the privy, I brought him water in a small vessel or in a leather bag and he used water for cleaning, then rubbed his hand on the ground, then I brought him another vessel of water and he made ablution.

—*Abu Daud, Mishkat ul Masabih 3 : 2*

Abu Hurairah said, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, Prayer is not accepted from a man who voids himself until he performs ablution.

—*Bukhari 4 : 2*

This practice is unknown in Western countries as the "toilet paper" used for this purpose is not sufficient.

Not only must the Muslim keep his person and clothing clean before his prayer is acceptable to Allah but the place of prayer must also be free from defilement. This necessitates cleanliness of one's home and on the streets because the Quran says that the whole earth is a mosque.

The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, said, When one of you wishes to pass urine, let him seek the proper place for urinating.

—*Abu Daud, Mishkat ul Masabih 3 : 2*

Jabir said, When the Holy Prophet wanted to ease himself, he went to a distant place until nobody could see him.

—*Abu Daud, Mishkat ul Masabih 3 : 2*

How shameful it is that daily we witness these teachings of the Holy Prophet flouted by modern Muslims ! Here in Lahore what a common sight it is to see men (and sometimes even women) easing themselves on crowded streets in full view of the public !

Muadh said, The Messenger of Allah said, "Abstain from three objects of curse : easing near springs of water and on roads and under a tree where men sit for shade.

—*Abu Daud, Mishkat ul Masabih 3 : 2*

Spitting in public places has also been condemned by the Hadith.

Anas said, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, spat in a cloth of his.

—*Bukhari 4 : 70*

The Prophet saw phlegm on the front of the wall of the mosque and it was painful to him to such a degree that the signs of it could be seen on his face. Then he took hold of a corner of his sheet and spat in it ; then turned one part of it over the other and said, "Rather let one do like this."

—*Bukhari 8 : 33*

The Hadith warn that the true Muslim must not offend his neighbour by throwing fruit peelings and refuse in front of his house, yet this Sunnah appears to be forgotten here in Lahore with its filthy streets contaminated with cesspools and garbage of every description making life miserable for the inhabitants !

It is mistakenly assumed that cleanliness, particularly public cleanliness, is an exclusive product of the science and technology of modern Western civilization, yet it is not absent even today in some isolated Muslim communities. As Muhammad Asad describes one town he visited in Saudi Arabia in 1932 before it was touched by any modern influence :

Hail is far more Arabian than say Bagdad or Medina : it does not contain any elements from non-Arab countries and peoples ; it is pure and unadulterated like a bowl of freshly drawn milk. No foreign dress is visible in the bazaar ; only loose Arabian abayas, keffiyahs and igals. *The streets are much cleaner than any other city of the Middle East*, cleaner even than any other town in Najd which noted for its uneastern cleanliness probably because the people, having always been free, have retained a greater measure of self-respect than elsewhere in the East.*

In the above quotation, Muhammad Asad has hit upon perhaps the most important reason why the countries of the Muslim world are so noted for their dirtiness. Poverty offers no sufficient explanation for this phenomenon, much less any justification since the Holy Prophet and his Companions lived in such extreme austerity, the poor today appear affluent by comparison. Poverty certainly does make it more difficult to keep clean but in a hot, arid country like Arabia where there is a great scarcity of water and at a time when such amenities as piped running water were unknown, the Holy Prophet and his close Companions were never without ablution nor were their homes and streets defiled. Although centuries of foreign domination caused Muslims to lose their pride and self-respect, now that we have regained our freedom and independence, there remains no excuse any longer for us to neglect these indispensable teachings of our faith.

**The Road to Mecca*, Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 148.

ISLAM AND MENTAL HEALTH

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One of the most serious problems facing modern society is the epidemic of nervous and mental disorders. Paradoxically, the faster science and technology progress and the more economic prosperity experienced by Europe, America and Japan, the more psychiatric patients, the more mental hospitals grow crowded beyond capacity with inmates and the more people committing suicide. It has become increasingly evident to serious thinkers throughout the world that the universal adoption of materialist philosophy is, to a very large extent, responsible.

According to the prevailing contemporary philosophy, the creation of the universe and its living creatures was but a mere accident. Through the process of mechanical evolution, the human race gradually emerged over the ages from the lower animals. Since the law of nature is impersonal, it has no concern either with the moral law or with the intimate lives of individuals. As life depends upon organic matter, the soul cannot exist. Consciousness cannot survive without the brain ; this life is the only life and nothing can preserve the individual personality beyond the grave. Thus, man created from nothingness, must inevitably return to nothingness, as extinct after his death as before his conception. Hence, any concept of the Hereafter is mere wishful thinking. The purpose of the human being is to create conditions of life most favourable to his happiness and material welfare without the aid of any

supernatural power.

The most outstanding personality of modern times concerned with mental health was Sigmund Freud (1859-1939). The psychological treatment of mental and nervous diseases to this day, is largely determined by his theories. On the authority of Greek mythology, Freud maintained that human behaviour is largely the result of compulsive, instinctive drives of the unconscious mind almost entirely sexual in origin. In his view, disorders of the mind are caused by the frustration of sexual urges unacceptable by civilized society. Even in earliest infancy, Freudian theory maintains that the human mind is filled with passions destructive to one's self and to others and that all the spiritual and material achievements of the human race are but the sublimation of the sex drive. As Freud writes :

“It seems not to be true that there is a power in the universe which watches over the well-being of every individual with parental care, bringing all within His fold to a happy ending. On the contrary, the destinies of men are incompatible with any universal principle of justice. It is by no means true that virtue is rewarded and wickedness punished. It often happens that the violent, crafty and unprincipled seize the desirable good of this world while the pious go away empty. The concept of Divine justice, which according to religion rules the world, seems to have no existence. No attempt to minimize the supremacy of science can alter the fact that it takes into account our dependence on the real, external world while religion is only a childish illusion which derives its strength from the coincidence that it happens to satisfy our instinctual desires.

Some of our fellow men who are dissatisfied with this state of affairs and want something more for their momentary peace of mind may look for it where they can find it but we cannot help them."

The above quotation illustrates the fact that the atheists and materialists can refute religious doctrine only by their negative theories and that they possess no answers which satisfy the spiritual needs of every human being to replace it. It is doubtful if the theories of Sigmund Freud have contributed anything constructive towards the reduction of human suffering. They owe their popularity and influence because they reinforce the prevailing trend of materialist philosophy to degrade the human being to the level of the beast. Consequently, for one afflicted by misfortune and grave calamity who has accepted this mental outlook, is there any alternative for him but to go insane and commit suicide? If religion is only a childish illusion, the materialists are at an utter loss to explain why these instinctive desires, so universal in the human race at all times and all places, must be satisfied if sanity is to be preserved.

Some major causes of mental breakdowns are : (1) self-hatred ; (2) inability to tolerate misfortune ; (3) failure to achieve worldly success ; (4) fear and anxiety concerning the future ; (5) the delusion that one's life has no ultimate significance.

Death is good in itself at the proper time. Rarely is it good for the young, the healthy, the happy and the useful. It may be very good indeed for the old, the sick, those in pain and those to whom life is without hope. The suicide who decides under certain circumstances to choose his own time and make a dignified exit, deserves our respect

rather than our pity or condemnation.*

Islam encourages self-protection. Because the individual Muslim personifies Islam itself, Islam could not exist without him. Only when the individual Muslim's welfare and that of his society conflict so that one cannot be attained without the loss of the other, is the Muslim compelled to value his society more than himself as he is a part of that society and a part of a thing cannot be more important than the thing itself. It is only in pursuit of Jihad that the Muslim is permitted not to protect himself. Otherwise he must never wilfully injure himself nor commit any self-destructive act. That is why the the Muslim is not allowed to eat dirty foods like swine-flesh as these will impair his physical, mental and moral health. He is forbidden to drink poisonous beverages or any intoxicants such as narcotics or alcohol which destroy the body and mind. He is not allowed to indulge in excesses of any kind because these all result in self-destruction. He must also love others and help them so that he may be loved and helped. Above all, he is forbidden to commit suicide under any circumstances :

Abu Hurairah reported that the Holy Prophet said : "Whoever strangles himself, strangles himself into the Fire (of Hell) and whoever stabs himself, stabs himself into the Fire and whoever shoots himself shoots himself into the Fire." (Bukhari : 23 : 83)

As life and death can occur only by Divine decree, Islam regards suicide as one of the worst sins because the taking of one's own life demonstrates a complete absence of faith in God and in the Hereafter. Consequently,

*People ! A Plea for Universal Birth Control), William Vogt Hillman' Book New York 1961, pp. 28-29.

suicide among genuine believers in Islam is virtually unknown.

The social disintegration characteristic of contemporary society has been responsible for countless mental breakdowns.

The over-emphasis which is being put on individualism in modern society is disrupting family ties. As a result of disregard for the condition of neighbours and even of friends and relations, more and more people are suffering from loneliness. Middle-aged secretaries, civil servants, teachers, nurses and even doctors complain of loneliness. Their work involves people ; they are not solitary by nature but they have no opportunity to form personal relationships in the city where they live alone. The loneliness of the young and that of the old have their roots in the same malaise. One has his job and the other his pension and no one bothers whether they might need anything more. The plight of the old people is still more pathetic. Confined in a room or flat by rheumatism or arthritis, often deaf, sometimes blind, they may have outlived both children and friends. Their greatest fear is that they may fall ill or die without anybody noticing it. The number of lonely people in Britain and other Western countries and even in the U. S. A. which is the richest country in the world, has been steadily rising for the last twenty years and is posing a problem for general practitioners, psychiatrists and social workers as a serious malaise in those countries which are becoming steadily more impersonal as their mobility grows. In England, mental patients occupy a third of all hospital beds and hundreds put an end to their existence unable to bear the strain of life in solitude.*

That is why Islam places so much emphasis upon the crucial importance of marriage and a wholesome family life. The Holy Prophet said that believers in Islam must

*"The Dilenma of the Welfare State—Loneliness in the Midst of Plenty," Dr. M. Nasim, *The Light*, organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Lahore, February 1, 1966, pp. 1-2.

bestow abundant affection upon their little ones and respect for their old ones. When a desert Arab once approached the Holy Prophet and confessed that he had ten children but had never kissed any of them, he was sharply rebuked. Muslims are not only obliged by the teachings of Islam to love and help their family members but maintain close ties of mutual help to their neighbours as well as all their brethren in faith. This strong sense of community is a great preservative of mental health.

According to Islam, this life is not intended to be a pleasure-trip but the most severe examination, the results which will materialize in the Hereafter. Thus the misfortunes and calamities experienced in this life are not decisive but only tests for the genuineness and strength of one's faith.

As the Quran says :

“We will most certainly try you with fear and hunger and loss of property, lives and fruits but give good news to the patient.” (2 : 155)

“Do you think you will enter Paradise while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you? Distress and harms befell them and they were shaken violently so that the Apostle Muhammad and those who believed with him asked : When will the help of Allah come ? Surely the help of Allah is near.” (2 : 214)

“You will certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls.” (3 : 185)

“Do men think that they will be left alone saying, We believe, and not be tried?” (29 : 2)

The Quran and Hadith tell us that the suffering of the faithful in this world expiates their sins so that they may avoid punishment after death and enjoy greater rewards in the Hereafter.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said, "He for whom Allah intends good, meets with afflictions to get it." (*Bukhari*)

Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah said : when Allah wishes good to His servant, He hastens punishment for him in this world and when Allah wishes evil, he lets him off in this world for his sin until the Day of Judgment. (*Tirmizi*)

Patience to endure adversity with a serene mind is the sign of every true Muslim :

Allah is with the patient. (*Quran 2 : 153*)

And verily We shall bestow upon those who are patient the best rewards on account of what they did. And seek help through patience and surely this is a hard thing except for the humble ones.

(*Quran 2 : 153*)

Most surely mankind is in loss except those who believe and do good works and enjoin upon one another truth and patience.

(*Quran : 103 : 3*)

Anas reported that the Holy Prophet passed by a woman who was weeping near a grave and he said, Fear Allah and be patient. She said, Surely you have not been so afflicted. Then she was informed that he was the Holy Prophet. He said, Verily patience is at the first attack of mishap. (*Mishkat ul Masabih*)

Ibn Masud reported that the Messenger of Allah said, Patience is half the faith. (*Abu Nuyim*)

Muslims are taught to perform their duties to God and to their fellow beings assured that God is with them and persist until they attain their goal believing :

Allah is our support and the most excellent Patron.

(*Quran 3 : 173*)

The true Muslim performs goods deeds for the sake of God alone as actions intended to achieve worldly recognition possess no religious merit. Therefore if others fail to appreciate his humanitarian works, he suffers no disappointment.

Say, we feed you for the sake of Allah only ; we expect no reward or thanks from you. (Quran 76 : 9) w

One who places his total reliance upon Allah and performs his duties to obey the Quran and Sunnah never suffers from any sense of failure even if his efforts are not successful during his lifetime :

Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and is the doer of good, he has his reward from his Lord. (Quran 2 : 112)

Verily those who believe and do good deeds, there is for them Paradise as their reward. (Quran 18 : 107)

There is nothing for man but what he strives for. (Quran 65 : 39)

The authentic Hadith also report that the Holy Prophet warned his followers not to envy any man for his worldly success because it is not possible to know his fate after death.

Umar Ibn Khattab reported : I went to the Holy Prophet while he was lying on a couch of date leaves. There was no bedding between it and him. There were the marks of the mat upon his side. I inquired : Oh Apostle of Allah, call upon Allah and let ample provisions be granted for your followers ! Surely the Persians and the Romans have been given abundance of wealth though they do not worship Allah. Oh son of Khattab, replied he, they are a people for whom the pleasures of this world's life have been hastened. Are you not satisfied that for them there should be this world and for us the Hereafter ? (Mishkat ul Masabih)

Fear and anxiety are two of the greatest enemies of mental health. There is nothing so harmful to one's mental balance as worry concerning what will happen in the future. Muslims strong in faith do not worry because we cannot know the future. The future is known only to Allah. That is why it is impossible to judge what will be good for us.

Perchance you hate a thing while it is good for you or love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows best. You know not.

(Quran 2 : 216)

Worry about one's livelihood is one of the most universal human problems. Here is a typical example what the unbeliever will do when confronted with this difficulty :

Sybil, eighteen-year old wife and mother of two small children, found herself pregnant for the third time in as many years. Ted, her husband, brought home a meagre weekly paycheck as unskilled labourer. Sybil, discouraged and depressed, told Ted she'd get rid of the baby even if it meant killing herself. Desperate and determined, Sybil asked the neighbourhood pharmacist to help her. He sold her some pills which only made her sick. She tried on a friend's advice to abort herself with the greased tip of a goose feather. No luck. She tried other likely objects. All her efforts failed. Sybil didn't carry out her threat to kill herself to get rid of the baby. The pregnancy went to term. The baby arrived on schedule, unwanted, unloved and a most unwelcome newcomer to an emotionally disturbed mother and a poverty stricken household.*

In contrast to the above, here is what the true Muslim believes :

Umar ibn Khattab reported : I heard the Messenger of Allah say : If you had all relied upon Allah with implicit trust, He would certainly have given you your livelihood as He supplies provision to the birds who awake hungry in the morning and return with full belly at dusk.

(Tirmizi, Ibn Majah)

Abu Darr reported that the Messenger of Allah said : Surely I know a verse of Quran if people {would have followed it, it would have sufficed them—“And whoever fears Allah, He will find out a way for him and He will give him provision from where he knows not.”

(65 : 3) Ahmad, Ibn Majah)

* -- *The Sex Life of the Modern (American) Teenager*, Dr. Leland E. Glover, Belmont Books, New York, 1961, pp. 173-174.

Ibn Masud reported : The Messenger of Allah read out to me :
 Surely Allah is the Great Giver of sustenance, possessing absolute
 power, the Almighty. (Abu Daud, Tirmizi)

A coward has no true faith in God because he fears
 creation and not the Creator. The Muslim fears only God
 and is certain He is sufficient as his protector. Allah is
 always here to protect us and since our Fate has already
 been pre-determined, nobody can cause our death before
 its allotted time. Belief in this doctrine gives courage and
 strength of mind.

Jabir reported that he fought with the Prophet near Najd. Then
 midday sleep overtook him in a valley full of stones . . . and lo, there
 was a desert Arab near him brandishing his sword over him while he
 was asleep. He awoke while it was in his hand unsheathed. He
 asked, "Who will protect you from me now?" "Allah" ! replied
 the Holy Prophet. Then the sword fell down from his hand and the
 Messenger of Allah lifted it up and asked, "Who will protect you
 from me?" He replied, "By the Almighty who punishes severely!"
 Then the Holy Prophet let him have his way. He came to his friends
 and said, "I have come to you from the best of men..."

【(Mishkat ul Masabih)】

Whatever happens, the genuine Muslim takes positive
 and constructive action. If it is a good thing, he will
 exploit its advantages. If it is a calamity, he should think
 only of its positive side for there is a lesson in every
 experience. When a Muslim is afflicted by some inevitable
 tragedy, he accepts it with resignation :

"Say, nothing shall happen to us but what Allah has decreed for
 He is our Patron and in Him shall the faithful trust.

(Quran 9 : 51)

Some people deceive themselves by attempting to
 escape from the inevitable. When they find themselves

overwhelmed by adversity, they drown themselves in alcohol or commit suicide. By attempting to flee from the inevitable, one only succeeds in destroying his mind and soul.

Pessimism is forbidden by Islam because it kills hope and striving. To hope for death to finish earthly suffering is unlawful/because by living longer, the Muslim may yet win salvation through an increase in his good works and thus expiate his sins while death ends these opportunities forever.

Those who believe in Islam possess everything they need to make them happy. The word "Islam" in Arabic literally means "peace"—peace with God, peace with one's self, peace with one's fellow beings and eternal peace in the Life Hereafter.