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PROPHET
MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)
AS HIS WORDS PORTRAY

By Ahmed H. Sheriff

PART I

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BY:
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PART I

Dedicated to those who assist in the propagation
of truth and for the Isale Sawab of:

Late Mr. & Mrs. Abdulla Kanji and
Mrs. Raza A. Kanji

Late Mr. Haji Mohamedhusein Mulla Nanji

Late Mr. & Mrs. Kara Walli

Late Mr. Kassamali Fazal Dharamsi

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PREFACE

The culture of any type of people is defined with the knowledge and arts acquired by them; the ideals and thoughts imprinted in their minds, as well as the values used by their society as a criteria for their behaviour.

An ideal culture is that which safeguards man's welfare and progress in this transient world and also his salvation in the hereafter.

Islam came as a perfect code of life and the Holy Qur'an - the word of Allah - provides the basis of eternal guidance for mankind. And the sayings of the Prophet and the divinely appointed Imams provide necessary interpretations as well as elucidation of divine guidance.

Muslims are required to mould their culture in the light of the Holy Qur'an as well as Sunnah - the sayings and the life styles of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and his appointed vicegerents. Only by doing so, can they remain on the right path shown by Allah (free of deviations and external influence).

From the countless traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), I have selected and compiled some sayings subjectwise giving translation and

explanatory notes in English. Arabic being a vast language as such, sublime words of the infallible and divinely inspired Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) can never be perfectly translated. I have endeavoured to convey the underlying message contained in the sayings, to the best of my ability.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that this little effort would help in moulding our culture in the light of Islamic values and precepts as expounded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.).

I also hope that this booklet would prove helpful to tutors as well as elders interested in moulding the character of the young ones in the light of Islamic ideals.

I am grateful to all those who assisted and encouraged me in the publication of this booklet.

Ahmed H. Sheriff
19th Rabi-ul-Akher, 1406 A.H.
1st January, 1986.

(1) A TRUE MUSLIM

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من يده ولسانه

A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue fellow Muslims remain safe and free from danger.

المسلم أخو المسلم لا يظلمه ولا يسلمه

A Muslim is a brother of fellow Muslim. Neither does he oppress nor does he give him up.

من أصبح ولا يهتم بأمر المسلمين فليس منهم

He who wakes up in the morning without a concern for the affairs of Muslims is not (to be considered) as one of them.

ومن سمع رجلا ينادي يا للمسلمين فلم يجبه فليس بمسلم

And the one who hears someone yelling (for help) Oh Muslims! and does not respond to him is not a (true) Muslim.

Islam means peace and submission to the will and commands of Allah. It came to establish fraternity, fellow-feeling and brotherhood. It also came to eradicate national, tribal and sectarian prejudices.

Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) laid great emphasis in his teachings upon mutual help, co-operation and safeguarding the well-being of Muslims in general.

How important it is for every Muslim to protect his Muslim brother against every oppression, whether by hand, by tongue or any other means is the lesson to be derived from the foregoing sayings of the Prophet (s.a.w.).

(2) I'MAN AND A MO'MIN

الإيمان الصبر والسماحة

I'man (faith) lies in patience and forgiveness.

الإيمان نصفان : نصف في الصبر ونصف في الشكر

I'man (faith) is divided into two halves: one half lies in patience and the other in thankfulness.

Having recognised the existence of Allah with conviction as the sole controller of our destiny, having acknowledged His attribute of absolute justice, the truth in the mission of the Prophet and the final Day of reward and punishment to come, man is subjected to test of faith through ups and downs in life.

Therefore, when he acts with patience whilst facing afflictions, when he forgives others for their wrongs and when he bows before Allah in thankfulness for His countless bounties, he demonstrate his true faith in God.

أفضلكم إيماناً أحسنكم أخلاقاً

The most commendable amongst you in faith are those who are best in character.

There are stages in faith and the best one as mentioned in this saying is of those having best of character. Good character encompasses all virtues which are closely linked with one's faith.

Once on being asked the meaning and sign of faith, the Prophet said:

من سرته حسنته وساءته سيئته فهو مؤمن

Believer is one who is made happy by his good deed and unhappy by his evil one.

It is an easy way of testing one's faith and consciousness of Allah in his heart. If one's heart is not hardened with negligence and persistent sins and is conscious of Allah's wrath, he is bound to feel the sense of guilt and repentance on erroneously committing an undesirable action. Similarly one who is confident of Allah's pleasure and reward both in this and the next world, is bound to feel happy for performing a good deed.

(3) SEEKING OF KNOWLEDGE

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم ومسلمة

Seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon all muslims - male and female.

أطلب العلم ولو بالصين

Seek knowledge though it be in China.

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل

A sleep with knowledge is better than prayers with ignorance.

The foregoing sayings of the Prophet point clearly to the higher value of education and learning in Islam. That it is a duty not only for every man but also every woman, and for that to be prepared to travel even to a farthest point, shows its paramount importance.

Referring to the benefit and lasting effect of education at an early age, the Prophet said:

العلم في الصغر كالنقش في الحجر

The seeking of knowledge in childhood has such an

impact over the child's mind that it becomes like an engraving made over a stone.

The child's mind is like a clean slate. It is in a readily adjustable condition and retains whatever it is presented with. Hence the Prophetic advice towards the importance of child education.

خير الدنيا والآخرة مع العلم وشر الدنيا والآخرة مع الجهل
The happiness of this world and the next lies in seeking knowledge and the evil of this world and the next is in ignorance.

This saying signifies the fact that seeking of knowledge is meant to be of benefit both in this world and the next. Similarly ignorance would lead to the evil in this world and the next. In other words, Islam pays importance to both secular and religious education.

The Prophet of Islam has also exhorted muslims to preserve whatever facts of knowledge they come to know or hear by saying:

قيدوا العلم بالكتابة

Preserve knowledge by writing down.

Whatever knowledge that is preserved in writing lasts for ages and can be referred to and be of benefit to the generations to come.

For a Prophet who never went to any school and living among the ignorant to emphasize and guide so much on the merits of seeking knowledge, also to succeed ultimately in uniting and improving the warring tribes of Arabia is indeed an evidence of the truth of his divinely revealed mission of Islam.

أربعة تلزم كل ذي حبي وعقل من أمتي: استماع العلم،
وحفظه، ونشره، والعمل به

For every person of understanding and intellect in my Ummah, four things are essential: Listening to (words of) knowledge, preserving, spreading and acting upon them.

In this saying, the Prophet has guided his followers how to reap lasting benefit of knowledge. The Arabic word “ISTIMA’A” meaning listening to what is said with concentration and full attention. Only the one who listens to the words of knowledge

attentively is able to understand and preserve in his mind. Besides by taking notes or by tape-recording, it becomes possible to have access and refer to wherever required.

Spreading of knowledge means propagation and conveying of Islamic knowledge to others, whether through publications, verbal discussions or any other means.

Moreover those who act upon their acquired knowledge and practice what they preach set examples for others to emulate.

(4) BENEFIT OF TOGETHERNESS

يد الله مع الجماعة

The hand of Allah (i.e. divine support) is with the group (i.e. those living with unity).

الجماعة خير والفرقة عذاب

Togetherness is (a source of) goodness, and separation (a cause of) misery.

كلوا جميعا ولا تفرقوا فان البركة في الجماعة

Eat together and do not separate because verily the Barakah (divine blessing) lies in togetherness.

The strength and benefit of living and working together in unity needs no explanation. A story is related of an old man lying on his death bed. He had several sons, to whom he wished to convey a lesson on the benefit of unity before he breathed his last.

He therefore once asked his sons to bring one stick each from the woods. When the sticks were brought, he asked them to tie all in a bunch with

a string. Then he asked them to bend and break the bunch but all efforts made together could not do so. He then asked them to untie the bunch and then break every stick separately. This they could do easily.

Thus, the old man at his death set a practical example of how strength and prosperity of people depends upon their living together in unity.

It is to promote unity among people that is the primary spirit of many Islamic rules and injunctions. For example the emphasis in Islam upon congregational prayers, the Haj pilgrimage, charities of Zakat and Khums etc, as well as eating together is to foster unity and Islamic brotherhood which could ultimately become such a power capable of facing any enemy in this world.

The Prophet of Islam did not only preach unity and working together for the common good but also set practical examples. On a journey once in Arabian desert, the Prophet accompanied by his companions stopped at a place to prepare and have a meal. Having off-loaded

their luggages, they decided to cook a dish of meat. So one undertook to bring and slaughter a sheep, another offered to skin and clean it, while a third offered to roast it. The Prophet offered his services of going out in the woods to collect and bring firewood. The companions objected telling the Prophet to rest whilst they would do everything to prepare the meal. The Prophet said:

I know you can do all the necessary jobs but Almighty Allah does not like His servant among a group of people to place himself on a higher position and enjoy a distinction over others.

So the Prophet exerted himself by going out to the woods nearby and bring the necessary firewood.

Heads of families and leaders of societies need today to emulate such examples to promote unity and working together for the common good.

(5) GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

وأحسن مجاورة من جاورك تكن مسلماً

Maintain good neighbourliness in order to prove a (true) muslim.

ما آمن من بات شبعان وجاره جائع إلى جنبه وهو يعلم به

He who passes his night satiated whilst aware of his neighbour nearby being in state of hunger, has no faith.

Islamic fraternity and brotherhood commencing from domestic environment extends to neighbourhood, and thence to society and further to a nation.

Islam has come to teach good conduct and how to live with others. It has stressed good behaviour towards neighbours, irrespective of cast, creed or colour. So much so that it has linked the status of one as a true and faithful muslim with the way he behaves with his neighbours.

That one is what his neighbours describe him to

be, is supported by the following saying of the Prophet:

إذا أثنى عليك جيرانك أنك محسن فأنت محسن وإذا أثنى عليك جيرانك أنك مسيء فأنت مسيء

If your neighbour describes you as good than you are good. And if your neighbour describes you as bad, then you are bad.

A man once complained to the Prophet in respect of ill-treatment by his neighbour and he was told:

اذهب فاصبر

Go and be patient.

Again after a few days he came to complain for the second time. The Prophet advised him to remain patient. When he came to complain for the third time, the Prophet told him:

اذهب فاطرح متاعك في الطريق

Go and move your (household) things out and place them across the street.

That man went and did what the Prophet advised him to do. People passing by began to inquire the reason whether he was changing residence

and he explained how he was ill-treated by his neighbour. Hearing this, people began to talk about it and cursed that neighbour.

On hearing about the reproach and curse of the public around, the neighbour felt ashamed and decided to mend his ways. He requested him to return home with assurance of peace and good neighbourliness in future.

What a splendid and tactful way of reproach without retaliation to the misbehaving neighbour suggested by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.).

On the resulting effect and benefit of good neighbourliness, the Prophet had this to say:

حسن الجوار يعمر الديار وينسى في الأعمار

With good neighbourliness, the world prospers and one's age is prolonged.

Obviously good neighbourliness boosts mental peace and mutual co-operation. This enables people to enjoy better health and longer life. In the long run, it promotes the overall prosperity of people.

(6) ILL-TEMPER AND ITS CONTROL

سوء الخلق يفسد العمل كما يفسد الخل العسل

Ill-temper spoils good actions just as vinegar spoils honey.

اتحسبون الشدة في حمل الحجارة انما الشدة ان يمتلى احدكم
غيظا ثم يغلبه

Do you consider the intense strength as being in the lifting of (a heavy) stone whereas infact it is in overpowering oneself when filled with anger.

أشدكم من ملك نفسه عند الغضب وأحلمكم من عفا
بعد المقدرة

The strongest of you is he who overpowers himself when enraged and the most forbearing of you is the one who forgives when having overpowered his enemy.

أحزم الناس أكظمهم للغيظ

The most resolute of people is the one most surpressing of his anger.

The severity of anger and ill-temper is like a fierce fire erupting from man's head requiring strong self-will to control it. Many a crime including murder are committed out of loss of self-control over anger. Long lasting ill-feeling and separation between dear friends or relatives is caused by rage and crude remarks.

When in state of anger, man is ousted from his normal being. In such a state he loses his faculty of reasoning and is non-receptive to wise counsel and guidance. There are three aspects of anger when it over lashes man:

- a. An excessive state beyond limit becoming his habitual nature. In this state, trivial things cause him to lose temper now and again.
- b. Some people are so cool that seldom do they display anger. This is not commendable habit as it points to their suffering indifference and cowardice.
- c. But some people possessing self control do neither go below nor beyond limit in their expression of anger. When they do express, it is not for self interest but rather on humanity ground and for the sake of Allah. For example when it is for reproaching or

raising protest against oppressors in order to protect the interests of the weak and oppressed. This sort of anger is commendable in Islam.

To those in the habit of losing tempers and unable to control themselves, psychologists have recommended to them to divert their attention towards doing something or relax their hands and legs. Another remedy is the use of cold water which helps in calming down one's accelerated heart-beat and circulation of blood. In fact 1400 years ago, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) had already given similar guidance by saying:

إذا غضب أحدكم وكان قائماً فليقع، وإن كان قاعداً
فليضطجع

Should any of you be faced with anger, he should sit down if standing, should lie down if sitting.

إن الغضب من الشيطان وإن الشيطان خلق من النار وإنما
تطفأ النار بالماء فإذا غضب أحدكم فليتوضأ

Verily anger is from Satan and the Satan is created from fire. And the fire is but extinguished with water. Therefore whenever one is overtaken with anger, he should make ablution.

The life history of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) tells us that never did he express anger for any worldly cause. But when it was a question of principle of right and wrong or oppression of the weak that his face colour would change and no one could calm him down.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah had said, Oh the son of Adam! Remember Me when in anger so that I remember you when you deserve my wrath and do not destroy you.

(7) INCURRING DEBTS

الدَّيْنُ شَيْنٌ الدِّينِ

Indebtedness is disgrace for religion.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الْكُفْرِ وَالذِّينِ

I take refuge from Allah from unbelief and indebtedness.

Someone in surprise asked the Prophet if he considered debt to be in line with and similar to 'kufr' - unbelief, and the reply from him was 'yes'.

This shows how strictly the Prophet denounced the habit of incurring debts which leads one to undignified way of life and many other problems.

Dissuading people from incurring debts by describing the disadvantages of their habit, the Prophet added:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالذِّينَ فَانَهُ شَيْنٌ لِلدِّينِ، وَهُوَ هَمٌّ بِاللَّيْلِ وَذَلٌّ بِالنَّهَارِ

Beware of debts because it is a disgrace for religion

and it causes anxiety at night and humiliation during the day.

Those people, particularly in the commercial world, who depend for their expanded business upon loans from banks and constantly remain indebted to others would normally be seen to suffer sleepless nights under mental pressure of debts. And during day time, they have to suffer humiliation in boot-licking the heads of financial institutions. If not this, they have to resort to bribery and trickery and no less bluff to justify continuation of loans and debts.

Islam wants its followers to live a free and dignified way of life. One of the things which causes the lowering of one's dignity and sense of freedom in society is the habit of incurring debts.

Hence the Prophet recommended to avoid or minimise debts by saying:

أقل من الدين تعيش حرا

Minimise debts so that you live a freeman.

If we ponder upon the present world economic system as introduced by the Western countries,

we shall find it a vicious circle of enslavement and exploitation of the masses. In order to wheel the big industries for the benefit of a few capitalists, massive consumerism is encouraged by large-scale advertising beyond an average man's basic needs. A number of non-essentials items of mere luxury have been introduced and easy credit facilities are provided to encourage masses remaining indebted to the rich owners of industries and financial institutions.

The result is that an average worker in the West is always under mental burden of debt which not only tells upon his health but also his personal freedom and dignity.

This vicious circle has reached such a stage that the poor and developing countries are also seen to be sunk deeply in oceans of heavy debts and unable to enjoy true freedom.

Islam had 1400 years ago forewarned mankind from the habit of incurring debts by explaining its disadvantages.

(8) THREE THINGS WORTH NOTING

علامة الإسلام الإيمان والعلم والعمل

The (three) signs of Islam are:

- a. Faith;
- b. Knowledge;
- c. Action.

These are the basic signs of a muslim who is truly on the path of Islam. Unless one claiming to be a muslim does not convince himself of the basic truth behind the roots of Islam, he would not have staunch faith in his religion. Unless he does acquire sufficient knowledge of the teachings of Islam, he would be groping in dark not knowing of what he is expected to fulfil in life. And without action on Islamic rules and teachings, he would neither benefit in this world nor in the next from the religion of Allah.

ارحموا عزيز قوم ذل، وغنيا افتقر، وعالما بين جهال

Have mercy over (three persons);

- a. A respectable person when he is confronted with disgrace;

- b. *A rich person when he is reduced to poverty;*
- c. *A learned person when among ignorant people.*

What this saying is meant to convey is that persons under the above described three categories are bound to feel much embarrassed and degraded by sudden change in their social status or surrounding. As such we are dutybound not to look down upon them but to exercise mercy in our dealings with them. We are required to sympathise with them.

On being asked by Ibn Maso'od as to which actions were preferable, the Prophet said:

الصلاة على وقتها و البر مع الوالدين و الجهاد في سبيل الله

- a. *Saying of prayers on time;*
- b. *Goodness to parents;*
- c. *Struggle on the path of Allah.*

One who says prayers on time portrays love and fear of Allah from his heart as well as being punctual in fulfilling his daily duties. One who is always good to his parents shows his sense of gratefulness and sense of duty in return for their sacrifices in his or her childhood. And

the struggle on the path of Allah, whether by propagation of the truth, by spending of one's wealth for noble causes or the laying down of one's life when need arises, all denote high sense of human sacrifice on the path of Allah.

On friendly connection with people, the Prophet advised not to associate with the following three people:

ينبغي للمسلم أن يجتنب مؤاخاة ثلاثة : الفاجر ، والأحمق ،
والكذاب

- a. *A debauchee - the one wicked and sinning openly;*
- b. *A foolish person;*
- c. *A liar.*

By associating with the aforementioned categories of people, one's character becomes open to suspicion. He is likely to be misguided and harm himself. The influence of the company of undesirable people cannot be denied.

(9) FOUR THINGS WORTH NOTING

أربع لا يدخل بيتاً واحدة منها، إلاّ خرب ولم يعمر بالبركة:
الخيانة، والسرقه، وشرب الخمر، والزنا

Four things when allowed to enter a house become the cause of spoiling and depriving it of prosperity:

- a. *Betrayal and breach of trust;*
- b. *Robbery;*
- c. *Alcohol drinking;*
- d. *Prostitution.*

These four vices are the worst enemies of every society. The chaos and bad consequences which they cause are wellknown to need elaboration. Once allowed into any family, the resulting loss of trust and good name becomes irrecoverable.

Hence to ensure the maintenance of welfare and progress of every family and ultimately of people at large, Islam has not only strictly forbidden them but laid down rigid rules of punishment so as to check them right from their roots.

أربعة قليلها كثير: الفقر، والوجع، والعداوة، والنار

A little of each of these four things has widespread effect and causes enormous harm:

- a. Poverty;*
- b. Pain;*
- c. Enmity;*
- d. Fire.*

It should not therefore be neglected but efforts be made to arrest it.

من سلم من امتي من اربع خصال فله الجنة: من الدخول في الدنيا، واتباع الهوى، و الشهوه البطن، و شهوه الفرج

Paradise is for those from my Ummah who abstain from four habits:

- a. Indulgence in worldly pleasures;*
- b. Following of self-desires;*
- c. Passion for filling stomach;*
- d. Passion for carnal desires.*

Obviously one whose mind and life-style is enslaved by indulgence in worldly pleasures and fulfilment of self-desires would not be free to think and act for salvation in the next world. Besides paradise is a pure place for those who have not maligned their lives with such worldly impure habits. How temporary and short lasting

are the worldly pleasures is a matter of our daily experience. Wise therefore is the one who keeps this fact in mind and abstains from them.

علامة الشاكر فأربعة: الشكر في نعماء، والصبر في البلاء،
والقنوع بقسم الله، ولا يحمد ولا يعظم إلا الله

There are four signs of a truly thankful person:

- a. Thankfulness for divine blessings;*
- b. Forebearance in calamity;*
- c. Contentment with what Allah has decreed (for him);*
- d. Expressing praise and reverence for none else but Allah.*

Thankfulness in Islam is not limited to verbal expression but has to be displayed with action. For test of one's faith, man is made to face different conditions and circumstances. Therefore one proves to be truly grateful to Allah only when he exercises forbearance when afflicted, contentment with whatever has been decreed for him, thankfulness when endowed with divine blessings and bowing down in reverence before none but Allah.

أربع خصال من الشقاء جمود العين، وقساوة القلب، وبعد
الأمل، وحبّ البقاء

The signs of a truthful person are four:

- a. Sincerity of purpose for the sake of the pleasure of Allah in every action;*
- b. Abstaining from and discarding falsehood;*
- c. Keeping close to righteousness;*
- d. Keenness and greed for doing good.*

The foregoing four are in fact the signs of a truthful person. One need to prove himself to be truthful not only by being true in his words but also by associating with the righteous whilst keeping away from the wrong as well as displaying readiness always to do good.

أربع خصال من الشقاء: جمود العين، وقساوة القلب، وبعد
الأمل، وحبّ البقاء

Four qualities are miserable:

- a. Dry (tearless) eyes;*
- b. Hard-heartedness;*
- c. Extended hopes;*
- d. Love for prolonged stay - duration.*

(10) FIVE THINGS WORTH NOTING

خمسة من مصائب الدنيا: فوت الحبيب، و ذهاب المال، و
شماتة الأعداء، و ترك العلم، و امرأة سوء

Five things are the afflictions caused in this world:

- a. *The death of a friend;*
- b. *The loss of goods;*
- c. *Rejoicing on misfortune by enemy;*
- d. *Abandoning the seeking of knowledge;*
- e. *An evil woman.*

The saying is to create awareness of the afflictions of this world so that man possibly takes steps to guard himself and take necessary precautions. Perhaps it is also meant to arouse sympathy for those afflicted.

اغتنم خمسا قبل خمس : شبابك قبل هرمك، وصحتك قبل
سقمك، وغناك قبل فقرك، وفراغك قبل شغلك، وحياتك
قبل موتك

Appreciate and take care of five before five:

- a. *Your youth before you are worn out due to old age;*
- b. *Your health before sickness afflicts you;*

- c. *Your wealth before poverty overtakes you;*
- d. *Your spare time before being occupied;*
- e. *Your life before your death.*

Wise is he who measures his present circumstances and rightly evaluates his present blessings of Allah which he enjoys. Further, he takes precaution and makes the best of them knowing that the blessing of youth, health, wealth, time and life age are not everlasting but subject to changes and passing away.

(11) RIGHT WAYS OF MEDITATION

لا عبادة مثل التفكير

There is no worship like meditation.

تفكروا في آلاء الله ولا تتفكروا في الله

Meditate into the bounties of Allah and not into Allah (Himself).

تفكروا في الخلق، ولا تفكروا في الخالق، فإنكم لا تقدرون
قدره

Meditate into the creation and not into the creator because you will never be able to estimate Him.

Considerable literatures nowadays are published on the merits of meditation. But 1400 years ago, the Prophet of Islam had already recommended meditation as the best form of worship of its kind. He also guided mankind the right way and what to meditate into.

We, the created beings, are endowed with a limited capacity of understanding. As such, we cannot be expected to meditate into Allah

and reach the estimation of Him, Who is our creator. Instead we have been guided to research and observe and meditate into the countless and different forms of creation. Also into the endless blessings bestowed upon us by Allah. In so doing we would be able to recognize and appreciate the Infinite the All-Powerfull and the All-Wise existence of Allah.

Meditation does not lie in the copious and excessive prayers and fasting but the depthness of contemplation and thoughtfulness into the works and created beings of Allah.

(12) STATUS OF SHAHADAT (MARTYRDOM)

فوق كل ذي بر بر حتى يقتل الرجل في سبيل الله، فليس
فوقه بر

Over every act of virtue, there is another one till a man is martyred in the way of Allah, then there is no other virtue over it.

Obviously what best of virtues could it be other than the sacrifice of the thing dearest to man and that is his own life in the way of Allah. As such a martyr, the one who sacrifices his life for the cause of Allah, merits a highest degree of reward.

It is not surprising, therefore, if he is to be honoured by Allah in being led to heaven as one of the first persons to enter it on the Day of Judgement. And this has been confirmed by the following saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.):

أول ما يدخل الجنة شهيد

The first person to enter Paradise is a martyr.

In fact we have come to witness a martyr rewarded with an unparalleled honour and

eminence right in this world. He is Imam Husain (a.s.) the Chief of Martyrs. The following prediction of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) depicts the lasting honour divinely accorded to his memory in return for his supreme sacrifice on the plains of Kerbala.

وينصبون بهذا الطف علما لقبر سيد الشهداء لا يدرس أثره،
ولا يعفور رسمه على كرور الليالي والايام

And people will erect and raise on this land (Kerbala) over the grave of the Chief of Martyrs (Imam Husain (a.s.)) a flag whose mark would not be wiped out and whose sign would not be obliterated with the passage of nights and days.

وليجتهدن ائمة الكفر واشياع الضلالة في محوه وتطميسه،
فلا يزداد أثره إلا ظهورا، وأمره الا علوا

And the leaders of disbelief and spreaders of misguidance will strive to obliterate it yet its marks would not increase except eminently.

The foregoing prediction of the Prophet of Islam as quoted from Kamilu Zziyarat was intact related by Zaynab binti Ali to Ali bin

Husain (a.s.) when in Kerbala over the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.).

How true 1400 years since today, has this prediction proved to be. The impact of the supreme sacrifice of Imam Husain (a.s.) continues to establish its mark far and wide and the eminence of his memory continues to rise throughout the world.

The fact is that the sacrifice of Imam Husain (a.s.) has created such a heat wave that never cools down and this was also predicted by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) in his following words:

إن لقتل الحسين حرارة في قلوب المؤمنين لا تبرد أبدا

Verily with the martyrdom of Husain, a wave of heat would erupt from the hearts of the believers, which will never cool down.

Such is the status of “Shahadat” and so remarkable is the impact of the supreme sacrifice of Imam Husain (a.s.).

(13) FARMING AND TREE PLANTING

سئل النبي (ص): اي المال خير؟ قال :

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) was once asked as to which of the wealth was commendable and his reply was:

زرع زرعه صاحبه و اصلحه و ادى حقه يوم حصاده

That farm which was cultivated by its owner who kept it in good order and settled its dues on the day of harvesting.

A man once reported to the Prophet that some people said farming was not a good career. In response to this, the Prophet reacted by saying:

ازرعوا واغرسوا فلا والله ما عمل الناس عملا أحل وأطيب

منه

Go for farming and plant trees. By Allah, there is no more lawful and pure occupation than farming and planting (trees).

The fact is that the Prophet wanted to establish such a society of the Muslim Ummah in which

no one was to become a burden over another. Nor anyone should have to lower his dignity by begging for his living.

Moreover by encouraging farming as the best, lawful and pure occupation, one would not only produce food for himself and his family but possibly afford supplies to others. Extensive farming in a country would keep its people sufficiently fed and safe from the hazards of famine. Besides cultivation of land on extensive scale would provide jobs to the idle and jobless members of the labour class of every society.

The Prophet of Islam went even further by describing this occupation as an emphasized and lasting charity because of its lasting and extensive benefit to the public as a whole. He said:

لا يغرس مسلم غرسا، ولا يزرع زرعاً، فيأكل منه انسان ولا دابة ولا شيء، إلا كانت له صدقة إلى يوم القيامة

No muslim plants a tree or farms a land from which mankind, animals or anything benefits except that it becomes (a perpetual) charity till the Day of Judgement.

In many countries of the world today, a day for tree planting is observed every year. Heads of States participate in the public tree planting ceremony. Ample publicity is given to this in order to encourage masses to conserve trees and expand their growth for the benefit of people at large.

However, 1400 years ago, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) from his divinely endowed knowledge was already aware of the need and benefit of farming and tree planting hence his emphasis in his above sayings.

(14) CAPRICE OF HUMAN TONGUE

لا شيء أحق بطول السجن من اللسان

Nothing else need to be restrained and kept under control but the tongue.

من اراد السلامة فليحفظ ما جرى به لسانه

Whosoever desires to remain safe should guard against what comes out of his tongue.

Someone came to the Prophet requesting for an advice. The Prophet told him:

احفظ لسانك

Take care of your tongue.

Again he asked for an advice and the Prophet told him the same thing. When he asked for the third time, the Prophet told him:

ويحك و هل يكب الناس على مناخرهم في النار إلا حصائد ألسنتهم

Woe be upon you! Will people be with their noses prostrated in hell-fire except for reasons of what they had reaped out of (misuse) of their tongues.

The fact is that many sins and crimes are committed as a result of the misuse of tongue. Lying, slander, false witness, backbiting, misreporting, exaggerating. All these common habits which lead to chaos disputes and fighting are caused by the caprice of human tongue.

Those who are sharp-tongued and quick in passing remarks and criticisms against others are today thought to be wiser and more intelligent. But quite often this habit of hasty judgement and passing remarks against others are based on assumptions and suspicions rather than bare facts.

The result is ill-feelings or smear of one's reputation which cannot be remedied or erased easily. Such people are generally feared by people because of the caprice and sting of their tongues and the Prophet has condemned them in these words:

من خاف الناس لسانه فهو من أهل النار

The one from whose tongue people are afraid of is from the inmates of hell-fire.

نجاة المؤمن في حفظ لسانه

Salvation of the believer lies in guarding his tongue.

إن كان في شيء شوم ففي السان

If there could be an evil omen from anything, it is the tongue.

(15) CHEATING AND PLOTTING

ليس منا من غش مسلماً أو ضره أو ما كره

He who cheats a muslim injures or plots against him is not one from us.

من غش المسلمين ليس من المسلم

He who cheats muslims is not a muslim.

Cheating and plotting against others is a result of trickery nature of man. It is one of the aspects of the power of intellect when it yields to Satanic wishes and temptations . This vice is fatal one because the individual suffering from it is counted one amongst the party of the devil. When the Prophet says as above that he is not from us, he is not a member of the muslim Ummah.

The way to cure this fatal disease is that the afflicted one should wake up to the dangerous consequences of this vice, and realize that one who digs a pit for others will himself fall into it, getting his punishment in this world itself. He should also ask himself, why instead of being

kind and good to others, he should plot against them. How would he feel and like if someone plotted against he himself?

(16) HUMAN HEART

إن القلوب تصدأ كما يصدأ الحديد

Indeed hearts do rust like iron.

ف قيل: يا رسول الله وما جلاؤها فقال:

On being asked what was helpful in polishing the heart, the prophet replied:

تلاوة القرآن وذكر الموت

Recitation of the holy Qur'an and remembrance of death.

What the saying is meant to convey is that the same way as humidity, water or pollution of external matters can cause iron to rust similarly environmental and external matters like excessive attachments to worldly goods, viewing of indecent sceneries or listening to undesirable sounds and stories affects human heart and reduces its receptiveness to good things. As such the remedy prescribed is regular recitation of the Holy Qur'an and the remembrance of death, the effect of which is to awaken the human heart.

Obviously the regular recitation of the Holy Qur'an with understanding of its multifarious sublime teachings would create awareness of truth and that of the state of one's negligence and lethargy in life. Coupled with this, the remembrance of death - a sure thing to come one day and from which no one can escape - would have the effect of moving one's heart to think of man's ultimate goal and thus create an opportunity for him to revolutionise his life.

إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله وإذا فسدت
فسد الجسد كله ألا وهي القلب

Verily, in the human body there is a small bit. When it is fit and in good condition, the whole body remains so. And when it is in unfit and bad condition, the whole body also becomes so. And that is the heart.

The human heart is the main source of circulation of blood throughout the body. As such any defect or ailment in it is bound to affect the whole body.

(17) INTELLECT AND THE INTELLIGENT

إنما يدرك الخير كله بالعقل ولا دين لمن لا عقل له

Indeed all that is good is attainable by (the help and use of) intellect and he who has no intellect has no religion.

الناس يعملون الخيرات وإنما يعطون أجورهم يوم القيامة
على قدر عقولهم

People who perform good deeds will be rewarded on the Day of Judgement in accordance with their intellect (level of reasoning).

What these sayings convey to us is that it is by sound reasoning and exercise of one's intellect one is prompted to do real good. It is one who uses his intellect and thinks that he is able to maintain his faith and religious values.

Thus without the use of intellect one would not truly perform good deeds in this world to qualify for reward on the Day of Judgement.

The Prophet has mentioned the signs of the

intelligent in his following sayings:

عقل الناس أشدهم مداراة للناس

He who is very courteous to people is very intelligent of them.

صفة العاقل أن يحلم عمن جهل عليه ويتجاوز عمن ظلمه ويتواضع لمن هو دونه ويسابق من فوقه في طلب البر وإذا أراد أن يتكلم تدبر فإن كان خيرا تكلم فغنى وإن كان شرا سكت فسلم

The qualities of an intelligent person are:

- a. *he is forebearing to one who is ignorant;*
- b. *he forgives the one who has wronged him;*
- c. *he is humble to those under him;*
- d. *he seeks support for goodness from those above him;*
- e. *he thinks first before talking. If advisable, he talks and benefits. If not, he keeps silent and remains safe.*

Briefly, an intelligent person is one who is able to measure accurately the limits of the people with whom he deals. He also evaluates the circumstances and his surroundings correctly and accordingly he acts or reacts.

(18) UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

الولد ريحان من الجنة

A child is a fragrant flower from heaven.

The saying exhorts us to appreciate and value our off-springs as divine blessings comparable with the fragrant. flowers from heaven. As such how important it is to take good care of and upbringing them well is to be learnt from the following saying of the Prophet:

أكرموا أولادكم وأحسنوا أدبهم

Accord respect to your children and thereby improve their manners.

The most susceptible period in life for learning and mental impressions is the childhood period. A child is easily impressionable at this stage, and whatever he learns would be registered in his mind. The Prophet is reported to have also said:

العلم في الصغر كالنقش على الحجر والعلم في الكبر كالنقش على الماء

Things memorized in children's minds are like

drawings on a stone whereas in adult's are drawings on water.

This explains the lasting effect and impression on the type of education in childhood.

Islam has presented a very accurate psychology about the upbringing to the extent that it considers naming the child as his right. It is narrated that one of the subjects which parents will be questioned about on the Day of Judgement is the question of 'naming' their children, whether they had performed their duty rightly towards their children or not. Because the person's name is a word with which he is called from the beginning to the end of life, if this name has a bad meaning or is meaningless, it will be like an insult to him. And if the name has a good meaning, then psychologically it would effect the mentality and morality of the person. The Prophet had said:

من حق الولد على والده ثلاثة يحسن اسمه ويعلمه الكتابة
ويزوجه إذا بلغ

Among the rights which the father has to fulfil to his child are to choose a good name for him, to teach him how to write and to arrange for its

marriage when matured.

To choose a film star's or actor's name for one's child is not only to depict one's inferiority complex and ignorance but also injustice to it. There are no less good names in Islam of the faithful, pious and brave for us to emulate.

احبوا الصبيان و ارحمهم و اذا وعدتموهم شيئاً فآوفوا لهم
فانهم لا يرون الا انكم ترزقونهم

Love your children and be kind to them and when you promise them (something) fulfil for them, because they see you not except that you are the one sustaining them.

(19) LOSS OF A SON

In a letter of condolence to Maaz b. Jabal on the death of a son, the Prophet wrote:

من محمد رسول الله إلى معاذ ابن جبل، سلام عليكم؛ فإني أحمد الله الذي لا اله إلا هو، أما بعد: فقد بلغني جزعك على ولدك الذي قضى الله عليه،

From Muhammad the Messenger of God to Maaz b. Jabal. Salutation to you. Verily I praise Allah besides whom there is no God but Him. I have come to learn of your wailing over the death of your son whom Allah has taken away.

وإنما كان ابنك من مواهب الله الهنيئة، وعواريه المستودعة عندك، فمتعك الله به إلى أجل، وقبضه لوقت معلوم فإننا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

Verily your son was one of the pleasant gifts of Allah for a temporary stay with you and ultimately destined to return to Him. Allah let you benefit with him for a stated term and took him away on a time fixed. Verily unto Him is our ultimate return.

لا يحبطن جزعك أجرك ولو قدمت على ثواب مصيبتك،

لعلمت أن المصيبة قد قصرت لعظيم ما أعد الله عليها من
الثواب لأهل التسليم والصبر

Let your wailing not cancel your reward. Were you to witness the reward of your misfortune, you would have come to know that it is smaller than the greatness of the reward of which Allah has promised for the people who submit (to His will) and bear (misfortunes) with patience.

واعلم أن الجزع لا يرد ميتا، ولا يدفع قدرا، فأحسن العزاء
وتنجز الموعد

And let it be known that the wailing does not bring back the dead nor does it repel the (divine) decree, so make good of the misfortune and achieve the promised.

فلا يذهبن أسفك على ما هو لازم لك ولجميع الخلق نازل
بقدره، والسلام عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته

Verily your grief will not remove what is compelling for you and all the people to come down according to His decree. And salutation to you and the blessing of Allah and His grace (be upon you).

The foregoing words of the Prophet can be summarized as follows:

1. That our offsprings are pleasant blessings of Allah bestowed upon us for a temporary stay with us on trust.
2. We all are desired to live in this transient world for Allah and to Him is our ultimate return.
3. There is a natural pang to bear on sudden death and separation of dear ones. But in return to this suffering, Allah has reserved for us a greater reward in after life.
4. That wailing and grumbling over separation of dear ones is liable to annul the reward from Allah. There is no benefit in doing so as it cannot repel the divine decree nor is it logic to do so as it would bring the dead back to life.
5. Therefore wise is the one who controls his emotions from undesirable expression of grief and willingly submits to the Will of Allah.

(20) TRUE MEANING OF JEHAD

كتب الله الجهاد على الرجال والنساء

Allah has enjoined Jihad upon both man and woman.

فجهاد الرجل بذل ماله ونفسه حتى يقتل في سبيل الله

The Jihad for man is in the sacrifice of his wealth as well as his own life till he is killed in the way of Allah.

وجهاد المرأة أن تصبر على ما ترى من أذى زوجها وغيرته

And the Jihad for woman is in bearing with patience with what discomfort she is faced with from her husband and his companionship.

JEHAD, means to strive, to struggle and not merely to go to religious war as is generally misconstrued.

The foregoing sayings of the Prophet define the wide meaning of Jihad as well as provide the directions towards which the life struggle and supreme efforts are required to be made both by man and woman.

Whilst man is naturally created for the struggle outside his home, his most commendable sacrifices lie in spending his earned wealth and his own life fighting in the way of Allah.

In contrast, the woman whose sphere of activity is normally at home, her most commendable struggle is stipulated to lie in bearing with patience all the possible discomfort and problems she may be confronted with by the companionship of her husband.

Thus the essence of this saying of the Prophet is that it calls for sacrifices by both man and woman in their natural spheres of activities of life.

(21) BREACH OF TRUST

لا إيمان لمن لا أمانة له

He who is untrustworthy has no faith.

لا دين لمن لا عهد له

He who keeps no pledge has no religion.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the Prophet of Islam has condemned the one who keeps no trust and breaks his pledge by proclaiming that such a person is to be considered as having no faith nor having any religion. Obviously it is the one who lacks faith in Allah as the All Powerful provider of sustenance that succumbs to acts of breach of trust.

The following sayings point to the effect of maintaining as well as committing breach of trust:

الأمانة تجر الرزق

Trustworthiness increases (leads to) sustenance.

الخيانة تجر الفقر

Breach of trust increases (leads to) poverty.

Obviously one's economic progress depends upon the trust he enjoys among the people of the society he lives in. Once he spoils his name by a breach of trust or break of pledge, people around him would tend to keep aloof and avoid dealings with him.

Citing a kind of a major breach of trust that can be committed in a conversation, the Prophet said:

كبرت خيانة أن تحدث أخاك حديثا هو لك به مصدق وأنت
له به كاذب

There is no higher kind of betrayal than to relate an incidence to your fellow brother whilst he believes you whereas you have lied to him.

(22) PREFERABLE OF ACTIONS

أفضل العمل أدومه وإن قل

That action which lasts longer is better even though it may be a tiny one.

افضل الاعمال ثلاثة التواضع عند الدولة و العفو عند
القدرة و العطية بغير المنة

The commendable of actions are three:

- a. *Exercising humility when (entrusted with) authority;*
- b. *Forgiving when possessing power (of retaliation);*
- c. *Gifting without obligation.*

أفضل الصدقة إصلاح ذات البين

Reconciliation between two parties is the best kind of charity.

The power of authority over people tends one to become arrogant. Therefore humility of those in positions of authority is mentioned to be very praiseworthy. When overpowering an adversary, the instinct of revenge is aroused.

Therefore forgiving is preferable to taking revenge at that time. One who gives is likely to feel that he is obliging. Therefore to extend any generosity without any show of obligation is preferable and acceptable to Allah.

It will be noted that there is a social aspect in the acts of virtue praised in the aforementioned sayings. The more lasting and beneficial an action is to others, the more commendable it is. Thus acts of charity, forgiveness, reconciliation and promotion of peace are stressed and declared as more rewarding in Islam.

أحب الأعمال إلى الله الصلاة لوقتها، ثم بر الوالدين، ثم
الجهاد في سبيل الله

The preferable of actions are:

- a. *Prayers on time;*
- b. *Obedience to parents;*
- c. *Struggle in the way of Allah.*

(23) DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU LIKE THEM DO TO YOU

أعمل ما شئت فكما تدين تدان

Act the way you like. For as you judge (others) so shall you be judged.

أحب للناس ما تحب لنفسك

Prefer for people that what you prefer for yourself.

In accordance with the saying that, “What you sow, so shall you reap,” we should expect to be repaid in the same coin of what we do to others. And it is only humanly fair that it is so.

Wisdom and humanity of one lies in his being mindful of others welfare the same way as he is of his own.

Were all people in this strife-torn world to adhere to the above logic which is a natural dictate of human behaviour, there would be more security and peace to enjoy than what we see today.

(24) EVIL OF INTOXICATION

جعلت الذنوب كلها في بيت وجعل مفتاحها شرب الخمر

If all sins were to be locked in a house, the key of it would be the intoxicating drink.

اجتنبوا الخمر فإنها مفتاح كل شر

Abstain from alcoholic drinks. Verily it is a key to every vice.

Man is mentioned to be most noble and supreme of all creatures. Why? Because of the power of intellect bestowed upon him by Allah. But when he degrades himself by getting intoxicated whereby he loses his faculty of reason and intellect, thus he is reduced to the level of senseless animals.

Islam, is a perfect code of life, aims at upholding human nobility and dignity. It wants man to preserve and make good use of the divine blessing of the faculty of reason. As such it has strictly forbidden not only the consumption of alcoholic drinks but also the trading, the handling, the sitting in bars and the

participation in parties where drinks are served.

Islamic rules are aimed at precautionary measures and prevention of vices, hence the Prophet described the intoxicant as a key to evil and sins. How many lives are lost from accidents due to the drunken drivers? How many happy homes are broken and how many thriving organizations are ruptured as a result of loss of senses from drinking? Let us study statistics and court cases to find them.

شارب الخمر كعابد وثن

A drunkard is like a worshipper of idols.

What a fine comparison made by the Prophet (s.a.w.) of a drunkard with an Idol-worshipper? An Idol-worshipper lowers his dignity by bowing down before a life-less stone-carved idols. Similarly a drunkard lowers his personality by misbehaving in a shameless manner when he is not in control of his senses.

(25) BLESSED IS HE WHO

طوبى لمن عمل بعلمه و أنفق الفضل من ماله و أمسك
الفضل من قوله

Blessed is he who acts upon his knowledge and spends his surplus wealth in charity and abstains from excessive talking.

طوبى لمن شغله عيبه عن عيوب الناس

Blessed is he who is mindful of his own defects rather than of those of (other) people.

طوبى لمن صلحت سريرته و حسنت علانيته وعزل عن
الناس شره

Blessed is he whose inward status is good, outward is decent and people remain safe of (any) evil from him.

What is worth noting from these sayings is that we qualify for Allah's blessings only when we act upon the knowledge of Islamic values, when we part with our surplus wealth in charity and abstain from vain and excessive talking. All these means that Allah's blessings rest upon our

actions in the right direction.

Those who are always quick in finding and criticizing defects of others fail to realize and correct their own defects. This is a common habit of many in today's society. Such people not only disqualify from Allah's blessings but also earn hatred of people around them.

Those whose outward appearance and behaviour is good but inwardly bad are hypocrites. We are warned to recognize such people who are not blessed by Allah and whose evil can harm us.

(26) HYPOCRISY AND THE HYPOCRITES

ذو الوجهين لا يكون وجيها

*The one with two faces (double standard)
commands no respect.*

للمنافق ثلاث علامات اذا حدث كذب واذا وعد اخلف
واذا أوتمن خان

A hypocrite is recognised by three signs:

- a. *He lies when he talks;*
- b. *He breaks promises;*
- c. *He betrays when trusted.*

ملعون ذو الوجهين ملعون ذو اللسانين

*Curse be upon he who has two faces; Curse be
upon he who has two tongues.*

احذر ان يرى عليك اثار المحسنين وانت تخلو من ذلك
فتحشر مع المرأئين

*Be careful of your being seen with signs of virtuous
people whereas you may not be so. Consequently
you will end up with hypocrites.*

The foregoing sayings portray the signs and profound contempt with which hypocrites are to be recognised.

The fact is that a hypocrite has no faith nor trust in Allah. His behaviour all the time revolves round self-interest and achievement of sporadic gains. He pretends to serve the public whereas in his heart his aim to serve self interest or self glory. Such people who lack purity of heart and are quick in changing their colours are danger to their society, nation and religion. The harm caused to Islam is not so much from non-believers than from the hypocrities.

(27) LYING IS A DISEASE

آفة الحديث الكذب

Lying is a disease - blight of conversation.

A disease in human body erodes into its strength and can cause it to become ugly and incapacitated. Similarly lying is a kind of moral disease which reduces the volume of conversation and makes it futile.

Moreover the habit of lying lowers the dignity of man and makes him untrustworthy before the people at large.

But why does man resort to lying and display lack of courage in telling the truth? The reason is explained by the Prophet (s.a.w.) in his following saying:

لا يكذب الكاذب إلا من مهانة نفسه

A liar does not lie except because of his inferiority complex and lowly innerself.

When a man says it is what it is not or it is not what it is, he portrays his personality as being

not steadfast and firm enough before reality. It shows his carnal desires have overpowered his dignified innerself.

A habituated liar is not only liable to cast his adverse influence over people around him but also mislead and misguide them.

Therefore the Prophet in his following sayings has warned muslims against friendship and association with liars:

إياك ومصاحبة الكذاب فإنه كسراب يقرب إليك البعيد
ويبعد إليك القريب

Beware of association with the liar for he is like a mirage which draws the far one nearer to you and the nearer far from you.

In his clever habit of lying, a liar would exaggerate and magnify a small thing. He would also make a big and serious matter appear very trivial and small before you. In so doing, he could at times pose a great danger.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) has also drawn attention against relating everything of what one hears:

حسبك من الكذب أن تحدث بكل ما سمعت

It is enough from lying on your part by relating everything of what you have heard.

Quite often can be seen that those simple-minded persons are in the habit of relating everything they hear without using common sense and investigating the truth. It can turn out to be a lie and untrue affair but meantime already causing a great harm and an adverse propaganda. Wise and truthful is the one who does not indulge in reporting and relating everything he hears particularly where it is liable to harm a good cause or someone's prestige.

If we study the background of a young man with a strong habit of lying, we may find that when as a 3-4 year old child, he was not lying at all. He spoke only what he heard and saw.

However, as he grew up, he experienced that either his father, mother or an elder in the house spoke a lie which may have succeeded in convincing someone on a particular matter. This impressed his clean mind and he experimented by copying it for achieving a desire without

realizing that it was a bad-habit. Gradually the habit formed becomes deeply-rooted in his mind. When he grows up, it becomes exceedingly difficult to give it up.

Wise and truly considerate parents are those who constantly watch their children and strictly prevent them from lying and other undesirable habits.

(28) SHAMELESSNESS AND CHEWING *MIRA'A* (*MARUNGI*)

لا تقوم الساعة حتى يذهب الحياء من الصبيان والنساء،
وحتى تؤكل المغاثير كما تؤكل الخضر

The Hour (time of Resurrection - Day of Judgement) will not come except when shamefulness would have disappeared from the youth and women and when 'Magatheer' (bitter plants-herbs) would be (widely) chewed the same way as green vegetables is done.

(Biharul Anwar Vol. 2 p . 315)

This is what the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s.a.w.) predicted 1400 years ago. How explicitly today we do see that the chewing of *Marungi* is spreading like bushfire in East and Central Africa besides the use of drags made from plants in many parts of the world.

Prophet Adam was approached by Angel Gabrael telling him that he was instructed to give him one choice of the three viz 'Akl' - intellect, 'Haya' - shamefulness and 'Deen' - religion. Adam selected 'Akl'. Gebrael then instructed 'Haya' and 'Deen' to separate and

move away. They refused, saying that ‘we have been created and instructed to stay together with ‘Akl’ wherever it was.’ (*Biharul Anwar Babul Akl*).

This anecdote is to demonstrate the existence and close relationship of ‘Haya’ - shamefulness and ‘Deen’ - religion with ‘Aki’ - intellect. And if and when lack of ‘Akl’ - intellect and senselessness is allowed to overtake one, whether by chewing *Marungi*, alcoholism or by any other means, shamelessness and neglect of values of religion and decency are bound to follow.

No wonder therefore, the abovementioned saying of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was meant to warn us of the relationship of shamelessness with chewing of harmful plants like *Marungi* and its widespread use during this end of time.

Another subtle reference worth noting herewith is the use of word ‘Magatheer’, an Arabic word meaning bitter plants in the above hadith. *Marungi* is a bitter plant and therefore it is noticed that those chewing it have to sip soda water or eat sweets to counteract its bitterness.

In Somalia, President Siad M. Barre declared

during 1983 a total ban on the use of this *Marungi* otherwise known as *Mira'a* or *Ghat* . It is mentioned that this ban came as a result of a representation made by a delegation of women to the President, complaining of impotency and neglect of their men-folk, who spend day and night out chewing *Marungi*.

People who chew *Marungi* have the habit of sitting and squatting together in groups and sipping soda or eating sweets along with it. In some places they pose a health hazard by spiting saliva. Those addicted claim it to be a good passtime, boosting of working energy whilst others liken it to having refreshment in a bar. But what is not borne in mind is the far reaching effect on one's brain, health and family life.

Henry Mutua, a prominent *Marungi* businessman in Nairobi, when interviewed by a *Daily Nation* correspondent said that most of his customers agree that this has the same effect as alcohol i.e. it is intoxicating. Some claim they feel strong and high after taking it, forgetting their problems and they do not even feel hungry (*Daily Nation* 8.8.84).

Time and again medical experts have been carrying out research in the harmful effects of *Marungi* by examining victims of its addiction. *The East African Medical Journal* of February, 1981, whilst publishing the findings of a recent research, states "As the stimulation (of *Marungi* chewing) last for a short time, the user must chew the leaves almost continuously. Animal experiments have shown that its constant use can cause chronic gastritis, haemorrhages in the gastro-intestinal tracks, damage to kidneys, constipation, insomnia, restlessness and increased wakefulness and can cause ejaculation without erection".

Moreover, patients examined and treated have shown characteristics of hysterical features, epileptic fits, severe headaches and at times behaving like a 'mad man'. No wonder therefore, a separate ward exists for *Marungi* chewing mental patients at the Port Reitz Mental Hospital in Mombasa. Dr. H.A. Attas - an experienced medical man in this hospital - told me instances of how some reputed personalities ruined their careers as a result of *Marungi* habit. He also claimed that the harm caused by this far exceeded that of alcoholism.

In an article published in *Message* - Jan./March, 1983, Dr. Attas writes:

“All the toxic effects prove that like alcohol, *Marungi* is definitely harmful. Psychological effects, he says include euphoria, unnatural sense of wellbeing, artificial toiviality, excitement, indifference, carelessness. Later on apathy, depression and anxiety could develop.

Dependence on the drug is frequent and can be very strong with users developing ‘the dropout syndrome’. They walk out on their families and friends, stop working, neglect their appearance, eat poorly and lose all their former interests, becoming solely concerned on how to satisfy their addiction. They sell and pawn what they possess, beg or borrow, steal or sink even lower until the sole aim of keeping continuous supply of their stock of the drug. They become completely human wrecks and outcast of society”.

The Kenyan Minister of State, Mr. Hussein Maalim Mohamed, criticized the habit of *Mira'a* chewing and called on the Muslim community to stop the practice.

Describing the habit as *chafu* (dirty), the Minister said Islam forbids eating of unclean things. Chewing of miraa, he continued, destroyed the health of the chewers. It could also affect the brains. (*Daily Nation* - January 13th 1986)

Thus like alcohol, addiction to *Marungi* ultimately results in ruining one's health, faculty of reason and family life. Would a wise and truly practicing Muslim, therefore, ever think of indulging in this type of addiction????

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