

Good News

'...And give good news to those who do good (to others)' – Holy Quran 22:37

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The Stigma Caused by Intoxicants on the Human Soul

By Ebrahim Mohamed

The Creation of Man

So set thy face for religion, being upright (*hanifan*), the nature (*fitra*) made by Allah in which He has created men. There is no altering Allah's creation. That is the right religion — but most people know not — 30:30

The manner in which man has been created by Almighty God is such that his very nature (*fitrah*), according to the Holy Quran, has been endowed with the unique qualities of becoming *hanifan* – i.e. upright, moral beings. This is the goal that will set him on a path of success and bring about a state of wellbeing; happiness; peace of mind. This, we are told, is the way man's very nature has been designed

by the Divine Hand and - *there is no altering it* – meaning that if he (man), out of his own accord, decides to go against the natural laws governing his original, pure make-up, he will bring upon himself dire consequences.

No Original Sin in Islam

Islam, therefore, does not support the Christian doctrine of 'original sin' as it goes against the very natural laws of creation as we observe it. Islam teaches that every child whether Jew or Christian or from atheistic parents come into this world in a pure state. That is his natural make-up, described in the Arabic of the Holy Quran as his *fitra*. In fact, this description is from the same root as the creative attribute of Almighty God *Fatir*, **the Creator**.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that every child conforms to the true religion (i.e. the religion of nature or complete submission to the will of God)

then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian - (B 23:93)

Man has been given discretionary powers to choose between good or bad

Islam teaches that man, after receiving guidance from God through His prophets, has the freedom to accept such guidance or not.

The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve - (18:29)

No other creature has been endowed with these discretionary powers which give man dominance over the rest of creation. However, if he violates the natural laws of God, he will deprive himself of that state of peace, bliss and wellbeing. To use the metaphor of the Holy Quran, he will remove himself from the proverbial 'Garden'.

How does man attain true morality? (*Hanifan*)

In order to test man's moral strength, together with Divine guidance, immoral forces (evil) have been put in place to tempt him by targeting his lower passions. Only when he consciously conquers the lower self by following divine guidance and comes out victorious against such opposing, dark forces that draw him towards behaviours that are in conflict

with his original pure nature (*fitra*), does he pass the 'moral' test of being upright (*hanifan*).

Therefore, although man is created pure, in the early stages of the evolution of his soul, there is a stage of weakness that is vulnerable to outside temptations. It is not a fault of creation; it is simply an early stage in his moral growth. This principle is observant in nature all around us, as well. Take a tree for example. In its infant stage when still a little plant it is easily perishable in strong winds; but when it is big and has strong roots it can withstand such strong winds.

This concept is very well illustrated in the story of the Prophet Joseph in the Holy Quran when he said:

And I call not myself sinless; surely (man's) self is wont to command evil (*nafs al amaarah*), except those on whom my Lord has mercy. Surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful. -12:53

The *nafs al amaarah*, the prophet Joseph is referring to here, is the 'commanding' animal stage of dominating passions where man is most susceptible to evil influences.

The prophet Joseph, it should be noted, is not confessing to any sins here as other Scriptures imply, but merely admitting that, like all human beings, he too is open to sin.

That he was the victim of the seduction of the chief's wife and not the guilty one who seduced her, is made clear in the Holy Quran when she confessed after an inquiry into the matter was called for by the King:

The chief's wife said: Now has the truth become manifest. **I sought to seduce him (Joseph) and he is surely of the truthful.** -12:51

Joseph's statement, therefore, should be viewed in the same light as Jesus' response when he was addressed as 'good master' and said:

'Why do you call me good?' 'No one is good—except God alone.' - Mark 10:18.

Thus we see that the righteous never attribute any good to themselves, but attribute all good to the Great Source of goodness — God Almighty.

About the sinlessness of the Prophets, the Holy Quran clearly states:

They are honored servants, they speak not before He speaks and according to His command they act. – 21:25-27.

And

It is not for a prophet to act dishonestly – 3:160

Joseph, **a prophet of God**, thus admirably demonstrated to humankind what it meant to be *hanifan* - morally 'upright' in the face of temptation and thus passed the moral test of 'chastity' and

'self-restraint' with flying colours. If we see just how rife sexual abuse of all kinds, in all ranks of society, from rulers of the mightiest nations to clergy in the Church, has become, then indeed this moral lesson of 'self restraint' of Prophet Joseph should serve as an effective guiding principle for all nations.

Drug abuse accelerates immoral behaviour

Immoral influences and temptations may come from diverse sources – it could be via a beautiful woman, a friend, the media, a relative, even from the least expected such as a parent, clerics, and the government, and of-course, 'the intoxicated'.

Permitting free use of intoxicating drugs a big mistake in a 'crime ridden' society

It is a regrettable fact that drug-related crimes all over the world are on the rise and out of control and especially so in this country (South Africa) and have been so for too long. It is against this deplorable background that the recent Constitutional Court's decision to decriminalize the use of *cannabis (dagga)* within the confines of private homes in South Africa, is indeed regrettable and one might say irresponsible. This logic by the highest court in the land is baffling and beyond any comprehension.

The prophet Joseph pointed out the human weaknesses in man that are prone to evil. To further excite these lower passions with the free use of yet another intoxicating substance – we have seen what alcohol abuse has done to societies - is to throw fuel on a fire that is already out of control.

No doubt there are good uses in the *cannabis* plant as much as there are good uses for alcohol, cocaine, morphine, and other drugs when used on the right occasion for the right purposes.

This is what ‘morality’ means and that is to do something or use things for the right reasons, at the right time to the right degree or in the right proportions. For example a sharp knife in the hands of a wanton murderer might very dangerous to society but not so in the hands of a skilled and dignified surgeon.

The same moral principle applies in the use of intoxicants. The use of alcohol as an antiseptic and as a preservative in certain medicines, are beneficial in this context. Similarly, morphine administered in regulated doses under medical supervision to dull severe pain, could be vital in cases of severe trauma. *Cannabis* I understand is effective in treating cancer and anxiety. But when these drugs are used freely for purposes other than that for which it was created, is suicidal because then it is extremely dangerous and toxic to the body,

mind and soul, and as we are already well aware, often results in devastating consequences within society as a whole.

Recent studies by the World Health Organization as reported by the BBC on 22nd September 2018 indicate that alcohol (even moderate drinking) accounts for over millions of deaths annually worldwide.

Islam Prohibits the Use of Intoxicants

It is for this reason that Islam strongly prohibits the use of **intoxicants**. Addressing the subject, the Holy Quran states:

They ask thee about **intoxicants** and games of chance. Say: In both of them is a great sin and (some) advantage for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage. - 2:219

O you who believe, **intoxicants** and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil’s work; **so shun it that you may succeed.** - 5:90

The devil desires only to **create enmity and hatred among you** by means of **intoxicants** and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and

from prayer. Will you then keep back? – 5:91

Western societies around the world know that, of all the evils in the world, the habit of drinking alcohol is the most difficult to be uprooted, mainly because it is legal in countries under their control. Yet more than 1400 years ago but one word of the Holy Qur'an was sufficient to blot out almost all traces of it from among a whole nation that came over to Islam. History cannot present another instance of a wonderful transformation of this magnitude brought about so easily, yet so thoroughly.

Prohibition of use of intoxicants driven by intolerable harmful consequence on society

The reason why Islam is so strict on the prohibition of the use of all kinds of intoxicants is clear from the horrible consequences that come with it.

Attention is therefore emphatically drawn to the '**dark**' world associated with the use of drugs. And thus we find...

- It is called *unclean, filthy, and impure- the devil's work*. Listening to the stories of drug users in various studies and documentaries you will find that drug abuse is the main factor that leads to numerous kinds of illnesses most of which are mental. It is the main cause of depression that

often leads to suicide if not treated. The doses that normally exceed any prescribed medicinal use are often toxic and thus impure and extremely harmful. Studies also show that most of the crimes committed in the world are drug related, be it murder, rape, prostitution, theft etc. In our own country drunken driving is the main cause of thousands of deaths on the roads annually. Alarm bells are already going off as we approach the festive season. So the Holy Quran is correct in calling it *the filthy work of the devil* because that is in fact what it is.

- The Holy Quran further says it creates *enmity and hatred* within societies. We see this happening around us every day. When the flames of human passions such as '*anger, lust and greed*' are ignited by the use of drugs - the outcome is inevitable. When the bestial nature of man comes to the fore, he loses control of himself and seeks trouble with everyone he comes in contact with. He starts abusing his wife, his children, his neighbours etc.
- Worst of all, the Holy Quran, says: 'It keeps you away from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer.'

It is a well known fact that whereas meditations on God and

prayers help to pull in the reins of reckless immoral behaviours of the weak souls out there, drug abuse accelerates evil and criminal behaviours.

Connecting to a Higher Power as a means to heal drug abuse

All professional rehabilitation institutions place the establishment of a spiritual connectivity with a Loving, Merciful, and Forgiving Super Power as the primary 'essential' in the treatment of addiction. The Holy Quran says that the remembrance of Allah is *the greatest force* (29:45) not *dagga*, tik, alcohol, cocaine, heroin, etc.

Numerous studies confirm the beneficial effects of the 'remembrance of God' through **meditative prayer and acts of goodness**. It increases the endorphin levels in the body, the chemicals that create euphoria. This euphoria and inner bliss grows stronger and stronger over time as these acts of meditative prayers and acts of goodness to humanity increases – then the state of happiness never leaves you no matter the challenges you have to face. The beauty of it all is you do not need drugs to attain this state of inner contentment, peace, and happiness.

Drugs might give a momentary high to the user but no sooner afterwards he comes crashing down into a state of

depravity, with feelings of depression, loss of self esteem and dignity. Prayer on the other hand brings **lasting peace of mind**:

Now surely in Allah's remembrance (*prayers and acts of kindness to humanity*) **do hearts find rest** -13:28

Shun Drugs in order to be successful - Holy Quran

Drug addiction, no doubt, leads to failure in life. The addict can never be successful in his work, or as a married partner or as an example to his children. Unless he takes proactive steps and makes a serious transformation of the self by shunning his enslavement to drugs and embark on a path of rehabilitation, he will always end up a loser.

According to the Holy Quran, **Almighty God calls man to success** and it is the devil that calls him to failure and beckons him to join the party of losers:

The devil has gained mastery over them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the devil's party. **Now surely the devil's party (they) are the losers.** – 58:19

Do not despair GOD is Most Forgiving, Merciful

The sincere, repentant soul, anxious to find his way back to freedom from addiction, will find Almighty God most Forgiving, Merciful. In Islam, stress is laid on the mercy and love of Allah, such mercy that is all-comprehensive before which the sins of the sincere repentant soul become quite insignificant:

Say: O My servants who have been prodigal regarding their souls, **despair not of the mercy of Allah; Surely Allah forgives sins altogether. He is indeed the Forgiving, Merciful.** – 39:53

Millions of victims of drug abuse, who have found themselves on the verge of hopelessness and who have reached out and made this connection with God, have found their way back to permanent recovery and regained their birthright status of *hanifan* – being ‘upright’ and at peace with God, their inner selves and with fellow man.

So can you - if you are a victim!



We strongly condemn all acts of aggression and terror including all violations of basic human rights

specifically those carried out in the name of Religion or State!

The Good News

Editor : Ebrahim Mohamed

Contact Details: P.O. Box 13744

Goodwood Cape Town South Africa 7463

Email: emuhamed@mweb.co.za