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Islam And Its Perfect Code Of Conduct

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Islam is not simply a religion in the western sense of the word “religion”. It is a way of life providing a perfect code of conduct for its votaries.

Freedom of speech and thought is now universally recognized as the fundamental right of a human being. Islam has never denied such a right. Under the Charter of Human Rights framed by the United Nations in the later part of the first half of this century one is surely guaranteed the freedom of thought and the freedom of speech. But the resulting freedom – unrestricted and unchecked – may be just as disastrous as the rash and negligent driving of an automobile.

So the Lawgiver, while revealing His Will, through His last Messenger Muhammad (S) prescribed a certain code of conduct in the matter of speaking about others and discussing their affairs.

Says the Quran:

“O ye who have believed, let not one group make mock of another, who are possibly better than them, or women (make mock of) women who are possibly better than them; do not scoff at each other, or revile each other nicknames: reprobate conduct (fisq) is a bad name after belief and those who do not repent they are the wrongdoers”. (49: 11)

"O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it: and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful". (49: 12)

The above are words of God – the Words with a challenge that the like of these can not be produced by

genies and men, even if they pool their efforts together in this direction. According to a Persian proverb: *Mushk aanast ke khud bebooyad na ka 'attar ' begooynd.* (Mushk is that which emits its scent and not the vendor who promotes it)

Standards Of The Secular Laws

So we say about the holy book, Qur'an – the last revealed Word of Allah. Let all the civil codes of the world hitherto framed by us human beings, from the earliest times of history down to the modern age, be collected and their gist taken out.

None will be able to put forward even from among the many moral principles laid down here. This is the standard of the secular law. The same is true in the case of laws framed by other religions.

The Occasion Of The Revelation

The First Holy Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said,

"Have a good opinion about your brother-in-faith unless it is proved otherwise."

Once some companions sent Salman Al-Farsi to the Holy Prophet (S) to fetch some food. The Prophet (S) sent Salman to Usama bin Zaid held the charge of the kitchen of the Prophet (S). Usama, unfortunately, had to apologize to Salman for there was nothing edible available in the kitchen.

When Salman returned empty-handed, the companions commented that Usama and Salman are close-fisted fellows (miser). When these companions appeared before the Holy Prophet (S), he (S) surprisingly enquired: "What is the reason, that I perceive bits of flesh stuck to your teeth?"

The companions responded, in utter amazement, as to how that could be possible when they have not eaten any meat. The Prophet replied, "It is the flesh of Salman and Usama." It was on this occasion this verse was revealed.

Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.), the seventh Imam said, "The mention of anything evil about any one among the people who did not know it, is backbiting."

The Holy Prophet (S) have warned the people against indulging in this nefarious evil and unpardonable sin, saying,

"Abstain from backbiting for it is worse than adultery. For after committing adultery, if one seeks God's pardon, He grants it, but the forgiveness for backbiting is not granted, until the victim forgives him."

Eating Of Human Flesh

Eating of human flesh or cannibalism is forbidden in Islam and is considered as a ghastly crime in the laws of modern societies. Apart from the physical injuries, the harmful effects that it has on the various organs of human being surely shape his character.

A cannibal can never be just and normal. A child born in the family of the cannibals, when he grows into a man will be devoid of all sense on ethics. He will be cruel in his conduct, oppressive in his behaviour and aggressive in his manners and style. Tenderness of the heart, gentleness of character and moderation will be of an alien nature to him.

But this was the case of man-eater in general. According to history even cannibals do not eat the flesh of their relatives, neither by killing them for that purpose nor when they are dead. So when judged according to these standards of cannibals, it is a crime and act of utmost cruelty to eat the flesh of one's own brother. Now *Gheebah* (backbiting) is an act similar to the eating of the flesh of one's own brother.

The Analogy And The Intensity Of The Offence

Instituting *gheebah* as a sin of this nature, Allah has drawn an analogy which might deter a person from backbiting. As a matter of fact the analogy is very precise and realistic. The destruction and harm done by eating the flesh of dead brother is analogous to the mischief and foul play done when one backbites another; so we should never nibble at his reputation when he is absent.

Let us discuss some of the points mentioned in the above verses of the holy book.

Mockery

Mocking others or laughing at others or mutual ridicule may appear to be fun. But it ceases to be fun when there is an underlying arrogance or selfishness or malice. We may laugh with people, to share in the happiness of life but we must never laugh at people with contempt or ridicule. In many aspects they may be better than ourselves.

Scoffing

Scoffing or defaming may consist of speaking ill of others by the spoken or written words, or acting in such a way as to suggest a charge against some persons whom we are not in a position to judge. A cutting, biting remark, or taunt or sarcasm is included in the word *lamaza* used in the verses quoted above (Qur'an: 49: 11-12).

An offensive nickname may amount to defamation, but in any case there is no point in using offensive nickname, or names, that suggest real or some perceived defect. They contradict the serious goals which the Muslims should strive for in life.

For example, if a man is disabled, it is wrong to address him as “O, lame one”. It causes him pain and it is among bad manners. So is the case with a rude remark such as "the black man."

Suspicion

Is there anything more toxic than the poison? "Suspicion" is probably the spontaneous reply.

Most types of suspicions are baseless and are to be avoided. Some are even crimes themselves, for they bring about cruelty and injustice to innocent men and women.

Spying

Spying, or probing too curiously into the affairs of other people means either idle curiosity –and is therefore futile, or an escalated suspicion – which almost amounts to sin.

Backbiting

To speak ill of each other in their absence is called backbiting. Now backbiting is also a brood of the same genus. It might be either futile but all the same mischievous, or it may be poisoned with malice, in which case it is a compounded sin.

No one would think of such an abomination as the eating of the flesh of his brother. But when the brother is dead and the flesh is carrion, the abomination is compounded in the same way we are asked to refrain from hurting their feelings in their presence. How much worse it is when we say things – true or otherwise – in their absence.

Divide And Rule

Backbiting cause personal bitterness and animosity. False reports and baseless accusations are the stock in trade of the sycophants and rumor mongers. Certain offices and institutions are the arena for competing groups of employees.

This evil practice may be employed as a tool for the abominable policy of "Divide and Rule". In such cases it is considered as an administrative success by some officers if their subordinates – instead of carrying out their duties and pooling their efforts together – keep flying at each others' throats. The relations between those "tin-gods" and their subordinates as well as co-workers always remains strained. Their conduct is a curse for themselves as well as for the institution under their ruthless rule.

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