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Happiness is Submission to God Alone

Is Beauty Only Skin Deep?

O children of Adam, we have provided you with garments to cover your bodies, as well as for luxury. But the best garment is the garment of righteousness. These are some of God's signs, that they may take heed. [7:26]

God has given everybody different qualities. He has also provided some people more than others. Some have become so self-indulgent that they spend much time and money on whatever they think will improve their appearance. This kind of superficial beauty is worthless unless it is accompanied by other qualities. Those other qualities must include the correct perspective about who we are, who our Creator is, and what our real goal in this life is. We read in Sura Joseph about the temptation of physical beauty. Joseph fled the household of the person who had hired him and spent years in prison rather than succumb and violate God's laws. I recently heard from a former colleague who told me she was terminated because she didn't dress appropriately for the rich clients who used the services of her agency.

What happens when the youthful beauty this society values so much turns to gray hair, and there is no longer the youthfulness, vitality and vigor expected of youth? Believers know that the qualities of righteousness, steadfastness, and perseverance are the inner qualities that really matter. The other type of beauty is only skin-deep and may reflect an inner ugliness. How much better to match good looks with an unfaded inner beauty. People can change their personality and way of thinking. God gives us steps in the

Quran on how to do this. Quran talks about love towards others, joy, peace, long service, and self-control. We need to be appreciative of all the blessings God has given us. Always refer your questions to Quran. Wives should have deep respect for their husbands, and husbands should have deep respect for their wives. Wives and husbands should fulfill their responsibilities in a patient and loving manner. They reveal their love and support for each other in this way with loving support. This is inner beauty.

In Quran we are told that one's material possessions are temporary vanities of this world, and completely unimportant in the sight of God. The only thing that matters is righteousness, and this is the only thing that will make you better than someone else. People who are ruthless, materialistic and uncaring about their fellow-man often enjoy temporary success, by God's will. However, this is only in this world, and only temporarily. This outer garment is a vanishing entity. Yet, people spend an entire lifetime trying to improve it, protect it, beautify it. They spend little time nourishing their soul, the real person which will last through all eternity. Here are some verses from the Quran to reflect on:

Whatever you are given is no more than temporary material of this life. What God possesses is far better and everlasting for those who believe and trust in their Lord. [42:36]

O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in

the sight of God is the most righteous. God is Omniscient, Cognizant. [49:13]

You shall not covet the qualities bestowed upon each other by God; the men enjoy certain qualities, and the women enjoy certain qualities. You may implore God to shower you with His grace. God is fully aware of all things. [4:32]

Do not be impressed by their money or their children; God causes these to be sources of misery for them in this world, and their souls depart as disbelievers. [9:85]

"Use the provisions bestowed upon you by God to seek the abode of the Hereafter, without neglecting your share in this world. Be charitable, as God has been charitable towards you. Do not keep on corrupting the earth. God does not love the corruptors." [28:77]

He is the One who made you inheritors of the earth, and He raised some of you above others in rank, in order to test you in accordance with what He has given you. Surely, your Lord is efficient in enforcing retribution, and He is Forgiver, Most Merciful. [6:165]

God has provided for some of you more than others. Those who are given plenty would never give their properties to their subordinates to the extent of making them partners. Would they give up God's blessings? [16:71]

The life of this world is no more than illusion and vanity, while the abode of the Hereafter is far better for the righteous.... [6:32]

Frank Yeargin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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A Pertinent Question From the Quran:

What is Wrong With Your Logic?

Many Muslims grew up with the traditional understanding that Islam rests on four sources: the Quran (God's scripture), *hadith* and *sunna* (prophet Muhammad's sayings and traditions), *ijma* or the consensus of the scholars, and *qiyas* or analogy for anything else that was non-existent during the time of the prophet, in that order. These four sources have supposedly been studied exhaustively by the Islamic scholars so that one would not contradict the others, let alone contradicting itself. Because of this assertion by the scholars, very few if any Muslims ever question the validity of this claim. This is not a phenomenon unique to the Muslims. Other communities have fallen into the same trap. Many people end up following in their parent's footsteps blindly when it comes to religion, for this is a human tendency.

The Quran is by far the most widely known book in the Islamic world, in a sense that many people read it and even memorize it by heart in its Arabic original. This is not to say that Muslims study it and understand its content, because many do not. They believe that reading the Quran in Arabic is a pious act, even if they do not comprehend what is being read. This belief comes from the *hadith*, and has no basis whatsoever in the Quran. In fact, it contradicts the Quranic verses which encourage us to study its content carefully and not to parrot things that we do not understand (4:82, 2:171). The

other three sources are less well known to the general public, and for good reason. Growing up in traditional Muslim societies, the average person is exposed to a *hadith* here and another *hadith* there, but most never see, let alone study, the actual books of *hadith*. As for *ijma* and *qiyas*, these are not for the faint of heart, for only the jurists will understand them. Muslims are taught that other than individual duties such as salat, zakat, fasting and the like, most religious matters are the realm of the scholars. It is a duty of the community to live according to religious guidelines. However, once a scholar in the community undertakes the duty of studying the religion, other people in the community are no longer required to labor in the subject. They are even led to believe that God will reward them just the same. Hence the power of religious scholars in traditional Islamic societies.

The real reason to keep the Muslim masses relatively ignorant of the human-made sources is that they are full of contradictions. If one studies the whole collections of *hadith*, even the so-called six '*sahih*,' or genuine, *hadith* of Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidzi, Ibn Majah and al-Nasa'i, these contradictions will quickly become apparent. The same can be said of the Shi'ite's collections of *hadith* from al-Kulaini, Ibn Babuwayh, Jaafar Muhammad al-Tusi and al-Murtada (they mostly relay *hadiths* that came through Ali, the prophet's cousin and son-in-law). It is a historical fact that

these *hadiths* were collected some two centuries to four centuries after the prophet's death. They are essentially words and actions attributed to the prophet Muhammad long after he was gone. Many of these *hadiths* were recognized as fabrications to legitimize certain political views and conditions at the time. Hence, the Muslim's ignorance of what the Quran really teaches is made even worse by their acceptance of human-made injunction that often contradicts the Quran and itself.

It is not very often that one encounters more than a few *hadiths* at a time on a given subject, because of their conflicting nature. The following example, however, is an exception. It is quoted from a recent posting in one of the many Islamic bulletin boards on the Internet, the computer-era "information superhighway." The original author of this posting was apparently trying to enlighten other "netters" on the virtue of eating and drinking the 'Islamic' way, using the *hadith* as a reference. The readers can judge for themselves whether enlightenment or confusion will result upon reading the following quote:

1. From Ibn Abbas, he said, "I gave the Prophet (pbuh) the zamzam water, and he drank it while standing up" (Bukhari & Muslim).

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2. From Nazzal ibn Sabrah, he said, "All came through the front gate of the masjid's courtyard, then he drank while standing up and said, 'Verily, I had seen the Prophet (pbuh) did what I just did'" (Bukhari).

3. From Ibn Umar, he said, "During the Prophet's (pbuh) lifetime, we used to eat while walking and to drink while standing" (Tirmidzi).

4. From Amr ibn Shualb, from his father, from his grandfather, he said, "I had seen the Messenger of God (pbuh) drank while standing up and (at other times) while sitting down" (Tirmidzi).

NOTE: Eating and drinking are worldly affairs; any means of doing them are *halal* (permissible) originally. Eating and drinking while standing up are one of the ways, which, due to circumstances at the time, are permissible. Therefore, you can do these things while standing up if the circumstance so dictates. However, try to eat and drink while sitting down because of the following *hadiths*:

5. From Anas, from the Prophet (pbuh), he forbade anyone drinking while standing up. Qatadah said, "Then I asked Anas: 'What about eating?' Anas said, 'Eating while standing is even worse'" (Muslim).

6. From Abu Hurairah, he said, "The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: 'Do not any of you ever drink while standing, if you forget (so that you drink while standing) immediately make yourself throw up'" (Muslim).

Note how the original author of this posting singled out the last two *hadiths* quoted above as the 'correct' way of eating and drinking, hoping to ignore the obvious contradictions with the four *hadiths* he quoted earlier. If, instead of being enlightened, the readers are as confused as I am after reading the posting above, congratulations! Anyone who uses his God-given common sense will know that prophet Muhammad would never issue such contradictory statements, let alone those without any basis from the Quran. Unfortunately, the majority of Muslims are still fast asleep and would not recognize that there are problems in following these man-made religious injunctions.

It is high time for the Muslims to wake up and smell the coffee, as the saying goes.

They must realize the cause of the backwardness and misery that have been haunting them for too long. From the time of prophet Muhammad until several centuries onward, history was marked by rapid growth in power and influence of the Islamic empire. The Muslims were on top of the world politically, economically and culturally. Was it a coincidence that the vibrant period in the Muslims' history was also the same period when they still upheld the Quran alone as their moral compass? The rigid, human-made laws and regulations were being slowly formulated and debated two hundred years after the prophet, but it was not until centuries later that they finally had a firm grip on the society. By then the Muslims were in disarray, their dynamism and optimistic outlook gone. In their place came apathy, fatalism, superstition, and a "follow without question" attitude brought about by the "closing of the door to *ijtihad*" (systematic original thinking) introduced by jurists such as Imam Shafi'i. From the world's just rulers, the Muslims became the world's oppressors and the oppressed. It was this trading away of God's revelations for human-made, Satan-inspired regulations that caused the Muslims' downfall. Indeed, the Muslims have a treasure in their hands, yet they have been duped to trade it away for a cheap price. This is precisely the point of prophet Muhammad's anguish and disappointment on the Last Day—as recorded in the true *hadith* (narration)—when he will say, "My Lord, my people have deserted this Quran" (25:30).

God did not impose any hardship in religion. How we eat, drink, sleep etc. are left open to us because they vary from culture to culture and from one situation to another. The Creator only enjoins us to remember Him before we eat and drink, and to be appreciative of His provisions to us, as we learn from His proven words in the Quran. He gave us the ultimate proof of the Quran's divine source in the form of a mathematical pattern which pervades the whole fabric of the book. Hence, when He says that the Quran is the only source of religious guidance and nothing shall abrogate it, the Muslims should say, "We hear, and we obey." After all, God Himself asserts that the Quran is complete, fully detailed and leaves out nothing. This is the only source of religious guidance as any open-minded person will conclude, after careful study, and in it there is no contradictions (please

check 18:27, 6:38, 114-5, 4:82).

"Why do they not study the Quran carefully? If it were from other than God, they would have found in it numerous contradictions." (4:82)

"Shall we treat the Muslims like the criminals? What is wrong with your logic? Do you have another book to uphold? In it, do you find anything you want?" (68:35-8)

Reading these verses together is noteworthy. The consistent message of the Quran is contrasted with "another book, one which contains anything you want." It is also somewhat of an irony that the question regarding the other book, i.e. the *hadith*, is preceded by a rhetorical and eerily accurate line, "What's wrong with the Muslims' logic?" This same expression questioning our logic is found two more times in the Quran, and in retrospect, every single one of them can be related to the *hadith* (please see 10:35 and 37:154). Interestingly, the very name *hadith* is prophesied in the Quran as the name that people would use for "this other book," while God calls the Quran as the only *hadith* from Him.

"Among the people, there are those who uphold baseless *hadith* (*lahw'al hadith*), and thus divert others from the path of God without knowledge, and take it in vain. These have incurred a shameful retribution." (31:6)

"...This is not fabricated *hadith*; this (Quran) confirms all previous scriptures, provides the details of everything, and is a beacon and mercy for those who believe." (12:111)

"These are God's revelations that we recite to you truthfully. In which *hadith* other than God and His revelations do they believe?" (45:6)

Why did God allow this innovation to happen? We learn from the Quran that the invention of *hadith* is a way to expose those who do not really believe in the Hereafter. They will eagerly accept these Satanic whispers, and hence show their true convictions. At the same time, believers are commanded to disregard these fabrications.

"We have permitted the enemies of every prophet—human and jinn devils—to inspire in each other fancy words, in order to deceive. Had your Lord willed, they would not have done it.

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You shall disregard them and their fabrications. This is to let the minds of those who do not believe in the Hereafter listen to such fabrications, and accept them, and thus expose their real convictions." (6:112-3)

Finally, we should reflect on the wisdom of having one consistent source in the Quran—a book full of examples and without any ambiguity—as opposed to relying on multiple, conflicting sources as do the majority of Muslims.

"God has revealed herein (in the Quran) the best *hadith* (*ahsan'al hadith*); a book that is consistent.... We have cited for the people every kind of example in this Quran, that they may take heed. An Arabic Quran, without any ambiguity, that they may be righteous. God cites the example of a man who deals with disputing partners, compared to a man who deals with only one consistent source. Are they the same? Praise be to God; most of them do not know." (39:23,27-9)

Gatut S. Adisoma

9th Annual Conference

God willing, the 9th Annual International Conference of United Submitters will be taking place in Bellingham, Washington, July 15-17. Attendance is by invitation and prior registration only. If you would like to attend the conference but did not receive the registration form, please contact us immediately.

Help Us Spread the Message

We believe that Islam today is like a precious jewel that is buried under piles upon piles of man-made innovations. Our aim is to purge these innovations by upholding the Quran alone, and present the jewel of Islam to the world.

We need your help so that we can reach out to more people. If you know anybody who might be interested in receiving the *Submitters Perspective*, please send us their name and address. We will include them in our mailing list and begin sending complimentary issues of the newsletter. God bless you.

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