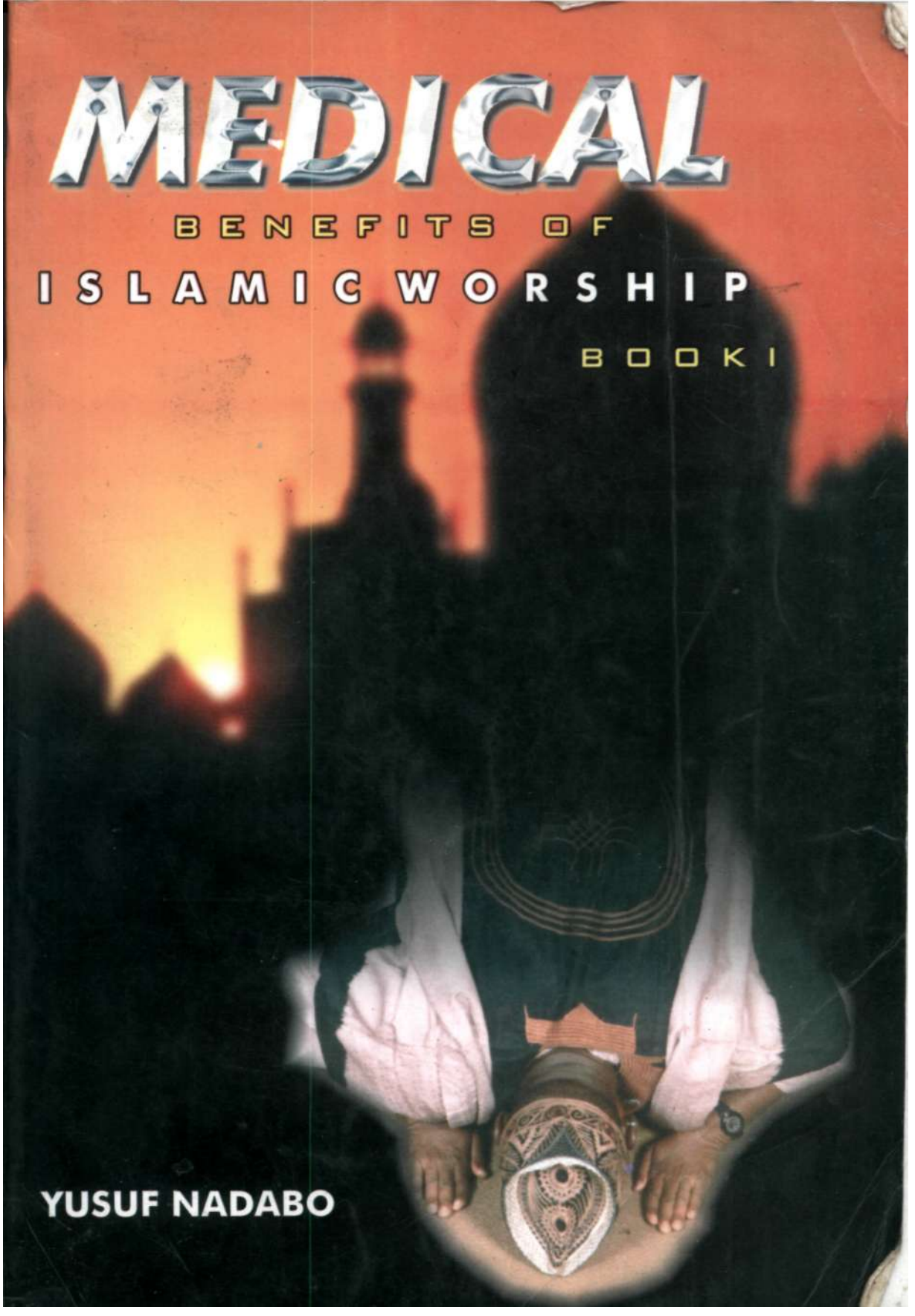
MEDICAL
BENEFITS OF
ISLAMIC WORSHIP
BOOK I
YUSUF NADABO

MEDICAL BENEFITS OF ISLAMIC WORSHIP

Social Deterioration

MEDICAL BENEFITS OF ISLAMIC WORSHIP

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PROLOGUE

MEDICINE AND METAPHYSICS STRUGGLE FOR HEALTH LIFESTYLES*

Last week, I visited my local chemist to make an on-the-spot survey of his stock. From what he had on the shelves, it seemed that people in Britain suffer a great deal from constipation, weight problems, indigestion and gas, headaches, allergies, colds, flu, tooth decay, ill-fitting false teeth, a mania for tanned skin, depression, premenstrual tension, insomnia and anxiety. I am quite sure that another chemist anywhere in Europe or North America would be catering for the same common illnesses.

Constipation is primarily causes by a lack of fibre in the diet. Weight problems are also largely food related, along with indigestion and gas, certain allergies and tooth decay. Anyone of these could led to depression, premenstrual tension and anxiety; but there are numerous other every day factors of modern life which can cause a whole range of headaches and anxieties, not least the rate of change and complete disharmony with nature. Constipation can be easily relieved by putting fibre back into one's diet, by eating whole, unrefined foods. But instead some two billion doses of laxatives are consumed every year in the United States along. Depression and anxiety can be controlled by exercise, yoga, meditation and by slowing down the pace of life. But, to quote American statistics again, some four billion Vallium pills, one and half billion Libriums, a billion Equanils and Miltowns and millions and millions of other mind controlling drugs are swallowed every year by Americans. These drugs may bring temporary relief, but they don't cure the disease; and the disease is life-style.

In Diseases of Civilization (Paladin, London, 1981), Brian Inglis lists heart diseases, cancer, mental illness, infectious diseases and iatrogenic disorders (illnesses induced by doctors and their treatments) as the main illness of Western civilization. With the exception of iatrogenic disorders, with are induced by doctors, all the other illnesses are related to life-styles. For example, heart diseases are a consequence of affluences: they are the

result of overeating, rich food, refined foods, stress, chemicals in the environment and lack of physical exercise.

However, lifestyles do not only produce new illnesses. They can also radically transform old diseases. Diseases can be reactivated, or assume newer deadly forms, by changes in lifestyles. For example, in the early nineteenths century, polio existed in the US as a mild childhood illness. It began to disappear in the 1920's as American cities began to clean and purify their water supplies. However, a few decades later it came back: this time, it could kill and cripple. It had now become a disease of affluences, the consequence of pure drinking water. Consider herpes which has been with us in harmless forms for centuries as cold sores. But as genital herpes, it assumes a newer more irritating shape: sexual behaviour has changed the epidemiology of the disease. Then, of course, there is AIDS.

AIDS has probably existed in Africa for centuries. There is evidence that AIDS has been endemic to Africa for a long time; it has certainly been traced as far back as 1973. But the epidemiology of AIDS in Africa was, and to a large extent still is, quite different. While in countries like Zaire and Uganda up to 15 per cent of the population may get AIDS as mild childhood sickness, very few people actually died from the disease. A recent study in Uganda revealed that none of the children whose blood samples contained antibodies to the AIDS virus showed any signs of the dieses itself. But the disease has, in the last two to three years, started to kill. Why?

In its newer, deadly form AIDS first appeared in the United States. And its fatal mutation is clearly connected to a particular lifestyle. The AIDS virus is spread only through blood and semen. There are only two ways fluids from one body can enter another. The first involves the use of a syringe or a similar device. Thus haemophiliacs needing blood transfusion can become victims of AIDS if they are given contaminated blood. Or drug addicts using contaminated syringes can also fall victim to the dreaded illness. The second is by sexual intercourse: and this is the predominant way most victims of AIDS acquire the syndrome.

However, only certain sexual practices promote the infusion of contaminated bodily fluid from one person to another. The walls of the rectal lining, the mucosa, are only one cell thick. Thus during anal intercourse, homosexual or heterosexual, they are easily damaged and offer a ready entrance for the AIDS virus to enter the blood stream, carried by the sperm or by blood from an injury to the penis. However, even when no

tissue damage is done, it is extremely easy for the infected sperm to enter the blood stream during anal intercourse. The sole function of sperm is to penetrate the corona of the ovum and fertilise it; thus, sperms are designed for cell penetration. During ordinary intercourse, sperms cannot enter the bloodstream as the epithelial cells of the vagina are fortified against such an invasion. But the rectum has not such protection and sperm have no problem in overcoming the barrier and passing on the virus. Thus, despite the propaganda to the contrary, AIDS is exclusively related to lifestyles, a lifestyle practiced by homosexuals; and is found in only those heterosexuals who widely practice anal intercourse. A recent Swedish study, which looked at families of fourteen haemophiliacs infected by AIDS virus from American clotting concentrate, revealed that only one of 35 individuals examined showed evidence of the virus, and she was the only female sexual partner who practiced anal intercourse. Short of annual intercourse and intravenous drugs, AIDS is quite impossible to get.

So why has AIDS now started to kill its African hosts? The most likely explanation is that in its new form the disease was taken back to Africa by American homosexuals checking out hot spots in Uganda and Zaire. In that part of Africa use of needles for performing rituals is quite common. The new form of the disease spread quickly through contaminated needles and is now threatening entire villages. It is quite feasible for the life-style of one group of people to change the epidemiology of a disease and pass it back in the new form to people who were immune to the disease in its original form. Life-styles are dictated by worldviews, certain worldviews tend to encourage certain types of personal, social, and cultural behaviour, and discourage certain other types. For example, Islam takes a grim view of homosexuality and the Shariah prohibits casual sexual relations as well as anal intercourse. As such, chances of outbreaks of AIDS or genital herpes in a Muslim society which practices at least the outer manifestations of Islam are non-existent. But world-views do not only shape life-styles; they also shape the eternal environment within which these life-styles are persuaded. And this external environment plays just as important a role in producing diseases as life-styles themselves, many modern health problems can be traced to environmental problems. For example the rise of infertility amongst men in the United States has been traced to toxins like PCBs which concentrate in men's reproductive organs: average sperm counts, which were 100 million in 1929 and 60 million in 1974, dropped to 20

There are three methods of treating cancer: surgery, which is used to remove cancerous tumours; radiation, which is used to kill cancer cells in the tumour; and chemotherapy, which is used to kill cancer cells in the tumour or throughout the body. All three methods have severe effects on the patient; however, after the treatment the chances of the patients' survival are still slim. Only one in three survives five years after treatment. Whether this constitutes cure is a matter of definition. Cancer can be caused by a number of "carcinogens" which range from asbestos fibre, cigarettes, alcohol, various drugs including those used in the treatment of cancer itself, radiation, food additives and colouring, pesticides, nitrates drained into drinking water from fertilised fields, radiation, nuclear waste and a whole range of industrial pollutants. One can take precautions by avoiding certain foodstuffs and certain kinds of diet, but what is to be done about the environment itself which is overcrowded with carcinogens? Improving the quality of the environment and making it carcinogen free amounts to transforming the industrial culture itself. But even in avoidable areas, the capitalist society places all kinds of pressures on individuals to consume cancer giving vile commodities. Cigarettes and alcohol do not just produce vast profits for those who are involved in their production and distribution; they are also a major source of government tax. Thus, most governments turn a blind eye to massive advertisement campaigns designed to increase consumption of cigarettes and alcohol. Similarly, fast foods as well as food additives, which prolong the self life of processed or frozen food, are a cancer stone of consumer economies. And clearing the environment involves banning certain pesticides and industrial pollutions; it involves taking on the might of the petrochemical gains. An idea of how intrinsically cancer is involved with politics can be judged by the fact that the Board of Overseers of Memorial Sloan Kettering Centre, one of the key cancer research centres in the United States, includes and chairman of the board of Exxon, the president of Exxon, a director of American Cyanamid, a director of Olin, a director of Consolidated Oil and Gas, the chairman of the board of General Motors, and direction of Atlantic Richfield, a director of Philip Morris and a director of Texaco. These people are not likely to permit research which will identify petrochemicals as the major cause of cancers.

However, capital does not only control the agents which cause cancer; it also controls the methods of which cancer is treated. The medical establishment does not permit the treatment of cancer except by its own

methods. In the US, unorthodox methods of treatment that is treatment not based on the three methods described above are illegal. Doctors can be imprisoned by using alternative methods of treating cancer. In Europe, alternative therapies are mocked and ridiculed.

Just as violence is an intrinsic feature of the western world-view and the capitalist mode and thought, it is also central to its medicine. Even the terminology is violent. Diseases are hunted down. War is declared on certain diseases. The cytotoxic chemotherapy that is used with cancer patients is literally referred to in medical slang as poison. Doctors treating cancer patients actually talk of poisoning. When patients are sedated or anaesthetics are administered to them, the process is referred to as slugging. One talks of killing pain; in the cytotoxic language there is the nation of tumour – kill, derived straight from the language of nuclear war.

No wonder then that a patient arriving in a hospital finds him/herself in the middle of a war zone. In this battlefield only the generals of the medical establishment are in control, patients are helpless victims who bring diseases for the doctors to fight and defeat. Thus an expecting mother becomes a helpless patient who is "ill". Pregnancy is not seen as natural phenomena but as a form of sickness that can only be cured in hospital. A world – view that places no premium on family life, indeed actively undermines family relations, is bound to see the home as a place unsafe for giving birth. In Britain, it is against the law to endure childbirth at home. And doctors who encourage natural child birth are disciplined; as the recent case of Wendy Savage demonstrated. Nature cannot be trusted to produce a normal birth; it has to be actively managed by technology. Once inside the hospital, the pregnant women, has no control over her body. She lies there helpless while obstetric technology takes over, even though obstetric procedures often do more harm than good, it is not always obvious to the victim who is led to believe that home births are infinitely more dangerous. However the most common danger to women in labour is haemorrhaging. The remedy requires plasma and sterile water but midwives are not allowed these supplies not because they cannot administer plasma drips or inject needles, but because handing even the limited amount of technology to the midwife means that the medical establishment undermines its control and power.

Systems of medicine based on other world-views, of course, present serious threats to the power and domination of western medicine. On a very simple level, they present an economic threat: in the western worldview,

both health care systems and diseases are commodities, doctors, as Donald Gould writes in *Black and White Medicine Show* are not interested in health. "By inclination and training they are devoted to the study of diseases. It is sick, not healthy people, who crowd their surgeries and out-patient departments and fill their hospital beds, and it is the fact that the population can be relied upon to provide a steady flow of sufferers from faults of the mind and of the flesh that guarantees them of job and an income in harsh times as in fair". Medicine is about income; and advances in modern medicines are not made with health but financial rewards, as well as prestige and fame, in mind. Heart transplants are a case in point.

Coronary heart diseases kill some 350,000 people a year in England and Wales. While heart transplants may make money, reputations and fame, they are bad medicine for they can never make more than a insignificant impact on the people who suffer from heart diseases. A transplanted heart has to cope with all the problems of organ disorder, particularly lungs, which lead to malfunctions in the replaced heart. Thus, even when it is accepted by the new host, the chances that it will acquire the problems of the old heart are high. Even when heart transplants are successful and the patients survive, which they seldom do beyond a year or two, the cost of the operations is huge. Gould estimates that if only half of the patients who lose their lives from the disease in England and Wales could be saved, the total cost would amount to the entire budget of the British National Health Service. Moreover, even if this money could be found, one would still require surgeons, nurses and the equipment necessary to perform some 500 heart – transplant operations a day. Then, of course, there is the other side of the equation: where will the donor hearts come from? As Gould explains, "the major contributors of healthy spare parts are young people badly injured on the roads who have been taken to hospital still alive but with irreparably damaged brains. Transplant surgeons and their supporters therefore have a vested interest in sustaining and even increasing the carnage wrought by motor vehicles. It is a matter of killing Peter in order to have the chance of a long-odds gamble on saving Paul".

It is this kind of absurd logic and unlimited reliance on high technology which led Ivan Illich to claim that modern medicine is on a suicidal course. (*Limits to Medicine. Medical Nemesis: the Expropriation of Health, Penguin, London, 1977*). High technology treatments and profit an glory oriented medicine has combined to produce what Inglis calls the disease of western civilization: iatrogenic disorders or illnesses caused by medical

treatment. Drugs that produce serious side -- effects (chloromycetin, marketed as a broad antibiotic which induces a plastic anaemia – a fatal bone marrow disorder; thalidomide, marketed as a fertility drug which produced children without arms; and clioquinol, marketed as a treatment for upset stomachs but which produced subacute myelo-optic neuropathy leading to paralysis and blindness, are but a few well known examples, surgery that is either unnecessary or leads to serious illness like the notorious operations to remove the "foci of infection" from the gut or the jaw, or sort out "slipped disc", and treatments like radiation or chemotherapy which end up doing more damage than good all these indicate that western medicine has itself become a disease.*

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* A part of a brilliant article written by Ziauddin Sardar, a distinguished Islamic Scholar, which appeared in Afkar INQUIRY Magazine of Events and Ideas. Vol.3. No.10: has captured the tenor of the book.

accounts are given repeatedly often in different contexts and in different phraseology such that "vitally important truths are brought home, and fallacious accusations are parried, disputed with facts and cogent arguments." Therefore, it would not, could not, be so powerful if these were stated with less emphasis or expansion. Lastly, one of the reasons of repetition is that a divine message designed to win faith from atheism, benevolence from corruption and belief from unbelief which this book aims to achieve could scarcely evade rhetorics.

It is an endeavour essentially on personal effort that had taken the best part of a decade. The going was slow and erratic because the research was going side by side with sourcing money to finance the project. Admitted that the combination was indeed very telling. This is because, perhaps, a work of this nature is not in favoured in this society for now; as such it attracts no funding either at personal or corporate level. As a matter of fact, one stands the risk of being misconstrued as a doctor-turned spiritualist or an unwanted interloper in the realm of faith. Be that as it may, all actions are judged by their intentions. The work ought to be done in spite of the overwhelming odds arraigned against it. The purpose is sincere so eventually the will drove the wheel to a successful end but by Allah's help

This success, however, came also due to the timely contributions of many without whom the book would not have seen the light of day. I am indebted to Abubakar Aliyu Liman, a lecturer in the Department of English Faculty of Arts, A.B.U. Zaria, whose enthusiasm and showed interest in this work was consistently helpful at various stages. His scholarly and critical analysis of many of the topics contained, in the book are indeed invaluable as well as motivating. Mr. Emmanuel Oloye painstakingly typed and retyped the manual rather tirelessly. Mr. Emmanuel E. Asuquo of Rainbow Computers expertly did the Desktop Publishing. Mr. Bode Aiyenimelo who has gone through the initial draft had helped in no small measure. And Alhaji Sheriff Abdurrauf Ahmed, Opinion Editor of the *New Nigerian Newspapers Limited*, who with a fine comb had painstakingly gone through the gallery proof.

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I have to state that I am fully responsible for errors inadvertently committed in the explanation and correlation of the ideas in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah. The errors that occurred due to human fallibility either by omission or commission are mine and I stand to be corrected. I wish sincerely to receive such corrections so as to meet the purpose and objective of this contribution to Islam. Finally, as a bonafide beneficiary of these immense and inexhaustible health benefits of Islamic worship, I give my salutation and praise to the greatest health Teacher of all times:

> *Oh Allah! Bless Muhammad and his household and shower Your favours on them as You blessed Abraham and his household and showered Your favour on them. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.*

Nothing from me except with the help of Allah Most High,
Alhamdu Lillahi.

Yusuf Nadabo Abdullahi
Sarkin Tudun Nupawa,
Kaduna.

Arafat Day,
1424 AH

PREFACE

Every Muslim grows up with in an increasing faith in the Holy Qur'an, the Book of Allah, His sacred words revealed through the sacred receptacle heart of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). These words, revealed over a span of 23 years, consisting of 6,626 words in all, were subsequently collected in a Book form with such an absolute completeness and perfection so that the *Textus receptus* was precisely and exactly as *Textus originalis,* a feat which made the Holy Scripture the purest and Most Perfect of all religious Books in history. The word Qur'an literally means the recital. It is the most recited Book in the world. The Final Revelation was given to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) in Arabia. His everlasting miracle and enigma of all times, the Glorious Qur'an positively influences our lives from cradle to grave. It helps us to navigate through the vicissitudes of life, when we are harassed and buffeted by life; when the careless brutalities of nature and the chicaneries of daily life conspire to put us on the edge; when calamity, natural and or man-made, strikes us like an avalanche and threatens to tear apart our moral fibre and cast us into despair and despondency; when the silent yet deadly stress like a fire fuelled by adrenaline fries us from within like a chicken in barbecue; when a shame of failure or disappointment makes us feel life in its entirety is worthless, and the bereaved of those we loved prods us to a suicidal attempt; and when darkened with sin and the fear of death grips like a vice; when the cankerworm of materialism threatens to shear our jugular veins, when we are decimated by scourge of deadly diseases, and lastly when a catastrophe strikes us down like a thunderbolt. Yet in each of these and other similar situations we navigate through and weather the storm unscathed because in the Qur'an you find Healing and Guidance.

My interest to write on this very important topic, *Medical Benefits of Islamic Worship*, which took almost a decade to research and which was then going at a snail's pace, was galvanized by one important incident two years ago. It was when I met some of my friends who were busy buying books and leaflets of Krishna consciousness movement from Kaduna Krishna Temple. I was chanced to meet the Hindu cult disciple telling the "great things" they needed to know about this Eastern Wisdom. When I

asked why this enthusiasm in Hindu cultism my friends told me they were exploring Yoga to improve their health. "Yusuf," said one of them, "there is great wisdom in this ancient practice." Although my friends were not Hindu cult neophytes, they were prodded by curiosity on the one hand to seek for more ways to promote health, and on the other hand, they knew very little about the scientific basis of salat and how it promotes health. There are many Muslim brothers and sisters who act and behave like my friends. Further, the orthodox medicine, to the chagrin of all, has proved increasingly inadequate in dealing with health problems of modern man. This grave defect, therefore, has today given rise to many alternative medical practices such as Yoga, Chiropractic, Naprapathy, Acupressure, Osteopathy, Reflexology Modern Dance, Tai Chi and Physical Exercise, etc.

There is no gainsaying the fact that yoga was an important natural therapy. But like an old currency it seizes to be a legal tender with the advent of Islam in the 7th century. From then onwards *salat* takes over as Super-yoga. The old yoga with all its time consuming postures had been invalidated by the demands of time in modern lifestyle, making the real yoga impracticable. The need, therefore, to bring to practical usage Islamic worship with its immense health benefits is more pressing today than ever before; this is due to the global health crisis generated by the inability of orthodox medicine to provide cure to many deadly diseases that are prevalent today. There is then a shift of emphasis from curative to preventive medicine. And Islamic worship is the best health promoting and diseases preventing system ever to be evolved in history. The onus of responsibility to bring Islamic worship to help man navigate through this health crisis, therefore, lies with the health experts. The book you are reading is a humble attempt toward this important objective.

In this attempt, I opted for a discursive writing for a number of reasons. The topic "Medical Benefits of Islamic Worship" is very broad and extensively interrelated with many health factors. Islam, as we all know is a complete way of life. To give it an exhaustive and detailed analysis, an encyclopaedia dealing with benefits of this Natural and Scientific system of worship is required. From the outset, therefore, this contribution is merely a tip of the proverbial iceberg; a lot lies beneath the sea. In spite of the versatility and wide range of the topic, certain basic, salient and fundamental facts about Islamic health benefits have been recorded by many writers in the past. Further, Islam is a faith of science increase in

science and technology therefore increase its awareness and importance. To buttress these salient points, discursive style is necessary. It helps to direct the reader with facts to lead him or her to an objective conclusion. Thus, the reader will see clearly, in many of the topics treated in this narrative style, how the stout oak stands unique, as it batters the many swaying saplings in the wood.

Furthermore, there are many textbooks written on this or related topics that are found in the book shelves of libraries and book shops thereby making this attempt appear rather superfluous. But most of these books, however, appear to make no impact beyond the national catchments areas because most of them fail to put events in their historical perspectives. This tendency makes them appear archaic and immaterial to the modern usage. Whereas Islam and what it stands for are to cut across the trajectory of all epochs; they are timeless and boundless. For example, it is not enough to write with such simplicity "as medicine in the Qur'an and Sunnah." To generate the desired impact, it must be shown with all subtleties how such medicine has laid the establishment of modern medicine and its influences in the past, present and the future by way of its potential shift of paradigm in all the branches of medicine as they stand today. This has been the approach of this book to some extent. Again, this becomes necessary because the Muslims have failed to establish their own historiographical science. The materials of Islamic contribution to medical science in general in particular are available only from the Western point of view. The consequence is monumental because we are left to see or view the contributions of Islam through the spectacles of our adversaries. In this style of narrative, attempts have been made to point sharply some of the contributions that are "ours" in contradiction to the baseless claim that they are theirs. Unless we stand up firmly to meet up with this challenge the great achievements of Islamic medicine as well as Islamic science would continue to be systematically lost or metarmophosed into "theirs." We would in the end lose our great historic heritage as the founders of Modern Civilization. The labour of our heroes past would then be left to be in vain.

References to the European civilization at its various stages are made vis-à-vis the positive impact of Islamic civilization made through the pages of this book. Thus the book attempts to put historic events of the past in their correct perspectives as they unfolded which due to the lack of substantial Islamic historiographical science they have not been highlighted. Nonetheless, the Europeans as one time students of the early

Muslims have benefited from Islam in this mundane world more than any other nations. They learn from the Muslims and their literature through which they cultivated such habits as hygiene, manners as well as writing among many other things. Professor Bernard Lewis in his *The Muslim Discovery of Europe,* had documented most of these influences of Islam on the West from its advent in the 7th century. It was this civilisational influence that transformed Europe from the barbarism of the Dark Ages to modernism. Even today at the zenith of their glory they still hold on to that momentous contributions Islam gave them. For example, they adopted the gown of the Muslim *Ulema* but put upon it the bishop's head cap. The turban which was supposed to follow the gown was obstinately rejected because it symbolises Islam. Anyhow, in the academic dress and judiciary (the dress of judges and lawyers), the gown symbolizes Islamic contribution to their knowledge and considerable standing. Thus without Islam the modern world as we know it today would not have been possible. It is thereby affirmed as an important caveat that the frissons which such references, "barbaric," "filthy" and "coarse savages," etc. could generate were not out of malignity but benignity. They are motivated by the truth of historical reality.

The book in its style discusses many Islamic rituals with emphasis placed on the health benefits they engender. In Islam what stands out conspicuously is Health and Worship. They are so intertwined to be inseparable. As a Muslim performs salat, for example, he is worshipping Allah (s.w.t) and at the same time improving his health status in a number of ways. A Muslim has, as a religious due, to keep himself clean and sober all the time. These ways have been dealt with to a reasonable extent. It is only in Islam such a unique combination exists. In like manner, the Five Pillars of Islam, *attahara* or purification, ablution (*wudu*), *salat* or prayer, fasting (*sawm*), *zakat* and *hajj* have all been established by a number of writers to foster good health. Islam as a culture is health-friendly. The work highlights essentially the evolution of modern hygiene from attahara and the global impact of wudu to the civilisation of Islamic habits of cleanliness and environmental sanitation, and other matters relating to Islamic lifestyle. The book is written with the general as well as the specialized knowledge in mind.

It is pertinent at this juncture to caution lest the reader be belaboured by what he or she might consider as "mechanical repetition." It is important to stress that repetition is made in good faith. Islamic injunctions and historic

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful.

Humanity's Morningtide

This day, Monday, the 12th Rabi'ul -Awwal in the year of Elephant, remains forever a landmark in the history of mankind. It was the day the Prophet (peace be upon him) was born. It was the most auspicious day in the history of humanity. He came from the most sublime ancestry, descent of Patriarch Abraham. Thus Muhammad (s.a.w) was the son of Abdullahi, b Abdul Muttalib, b. Hashim, b. Abdu Munaf, b Qusayy, b. Kilab, b. Murra, b. K'ab, b. Luayy, b. Ghalib, b. Fihr, b. Malik, b. al Nadr, b. Kinana, b. Khuzayma, b. Mudrika, b. Mudar, b. Nazar, b. Mua'dd, b. Adnan.[1]

The root of this excellent pedigree was traced from Prophet Ismael (s.a.w), the first born of Patriarch Abraham (s.a). After the birth of the Noblest man in history, Amina his Noble mother sent to inform his grandfather, the respected leader of the Quraysh clan of the Arabs. He came, looked the baby lovingly and took him to the Holy Kabah. He praised Allah (s.w.t) and offered solemn prayer for the baby. Abdul Muttalib now gave him the name "Muhammad", which means, "He who is praised". The Arabs were surprised at the unfamiliar name given the new born baby by Abdul Muttalib.[2]

The name no doubt could surprise anyone especially coming from Arabia which had not been identified as a centre of or exposed to any civilization. The name "the Praised One" is the most respected name even among the Europeans. The highest titter that one can achieve is "lof", meaning the "praised one". The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) had remained the "Praised One" in birth, while alive and even after death. He was adjudged the Greatest Man in history.

His birth was for humanity, morning tide. At the time of his birth the world was enveloped by a thick cloud of evil. The global devastations of the Age of Ignorance (5th and 6th century) were telling. He was destined to

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[1] Abul Hassan Ali, *Muhammadu Rasulullah*, p.92
[2] Ibid.

call of Islam then and now is the submission to the Divine Imperative in propitiation, solicitation or adoration. Islam is the ramification of monotheism and its spirit to all mankind. Idolatry, supernaturalism and occultism which fettered the mind of man were due to ignorance. The Prophet (s.a.w) then launched a revolution against ignorance and paganism in all their ramifications.

The first Qur'anic idea that was thundered into the consciousness of the founder of modern civilisation and which was printed on it indelibly was its imperative form commanding him to "Read". He was to impart knowledge and understanding, wise counsels and admonitions with tact and discerning mind. And to establish it as a culture of all peoples. He remained the most successful of all Prophets in history. It was a meritorious appellation that was backed by facts and cogent arguments. It was a verdict well justified as Michael H. Hart, pointed pertinently:

> *How, then, is one to assess the overall impact of Muhammad on human history? Like all religions, Islam exerts an enormous influence upon the lives of its followers. It is for this reason that the founders of the world's great religions all figure prominently in this book. Since there are roughly twice as many Christian as Moslems in the world, it may initially seem strange that Muhammad has been ranked higher than Jesus. There are two principal reasons for that decision. First, Muhammad played a far more important role in the development of Islam than Jesus did in the development of Christianity. Although Jesus was responsible for the main ethical and moral precepts of Christianity (insofar as these differed from Judaism), St. Paul was the main developer of Christian theology, its principal proselytizer, and the author of a large portion of the New Testament.*
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> *Muhammad, however, was responsible for both the theology of Islam and its main ethical and moral principles. In addition, he played the key role in proselytizing the new faith, and establishing the religious practices of Islam...*[1]

It must be pointed out at the outset that the Prophet (s.a.w) was not the founder of Islam, but a Messenger, a sacred agent of its establishment on earth. Allah, the exalted was the Originator and Founder of Islam as the

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[1] Michael H. Hart, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, Iman Foundation, Kaduna – Nigeria, pp.18-19.

only means of His worship by all creatures. The Apostle, however, in establishing the Islamic practices, was in point of fact founding the modern age. The services this true faith rendered transformed the world for the better. It was this great feat of achievement that made many great scholars and thinkers kike Hart to adjudge him the "Greatest Man" in history. He recognised the value and importance of reading several centuries before the world then came to realise it.

Thus he thought the world though unlettered himself, to acquire knowledge through reading without which man would remain forever fettered by paganism, barbarism and savagery. Today, reading is widely accepted by all nations as necessary as well as the driving force behind the progress of man in spiritual, social and intellectual ascent. This Islamic mission of Iqraa to all nations, its essence was captured by Francis Bacon, one of the Western Canons when he said: "Reading maketh a full man." The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) had come to make not only "full" but also "complete" that is an *insanil kamil*. A man is infused with monotheist spirit who, to be well grounded in knowledge, has to undertake all knowledge as his province. Thus, it was the re-establishment of reading as a culture as well as religious obligation that the most influential man in history had contributed among other things to become the founder of modern civilisation.

With the emphasis placed on rational thinking, acquisition of knowledge, Islam contributed to the reinstatement of scientific knowledge. The polytheistic forces that kept scientific knowledge in bondage were dispersed to liberate this important branch of knowledge. This was a great service Islam rendered to the modern world. Islam stands distinctly from any other creeds in history; for it is compatible with science, its liberator from bondage. Science and revelation are the two wings of Islam that give a balance to soar up higher and higher which is not possible if one is defective or completely eliminated. Science lacking Islamic essence, however, gives man ever greater powers but less significance; it improves his tools and neglect his purposes; it is silent on ultimate origins, values and aims; it gives life and history no meaning or worth that is not cancelled by death or omnivorous time.[1] Thus science alone is ineffective in solving all the problems of mankind; it is inherently defective and grossly limited. Islam, however, combines science and revelation as avenues of knowledge, each is designed to complement the other. This is what gives Islam its vibrancy and eternal life.

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[1] Will Durant, *The Reformation*, p.4

To filter off idolatry in all its ramifications the spread of true knowledge became the desideratum. It is only through this knowledge that man can grasp the Power and Wisdom of his Creator and accord him His right to be worshipped through the revealed format or standard. To educate man became the principle aim and cardinal objective. The essence of this education was captured by the renowned historian Will Durant who wrote:

> *...The mystery of mind still eludes the formulas of psychology, and in physics the same astonishing order of nature that makes science possible may reasonably sustain the religious faith in a cosmic intelligence. Our knowledge is a receding mirage in an expanding desert of ignorance, now life is rarely agnostic; it assumes either a natural or a supernatural source for any unexplained phenomenon, and acts on the one assumption or the other; only a small minority of minds can persistently suspend judgement in the face of contradictory evidence...*[1]

There is the need for true knowledge to eliminate ignorance because knowledge that is principally founded on reason alone is bound to continue to recede in an ever-expanding desert of ignorance. The reason in which ordinary knowledge is established is narrow in sense and reasonableness. It is taken only in the sense of the philosophical rationalist point of view. Hence, its essence merely focused at scholastic, deistic, idealistic, materialistic and positivistic standpoints. Thus, it is knowledge that is responsible for the spiritual and moral degradation of the world and the myriad of the problems that beset it. It is a knowledge that fails to overtake ignorance because it is forever receding backward in time and space.

It is only through true knowledge that man can grasp the essence of that Great Wisdom and submit completely to its Will. Islam saves the world because it provides the True Knowledge which entails belief in the unseen and the seen and spread fast across all the corners of the world: to overtake and counter ignorance. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) was indefatigable in his crusades against this ignorance or *Jahiliyya*. Within 23 years of his divine mission he moved like a cyclone to conquer the ignoble period of his time. He vanquished the forces of *Jahiliyya,* a period of darkness and ignorance. The doctrine of faith he preached was a simple, easy, rationally comprehensible as well as practicable. It was and still is the affirmation and testification of the *Holy Kalimatu-Shahada* that brings about the unique difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. It reverts a person to

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[1] Will Durant, *The Reformation*,

realism to encompass all aspects of human life, physical and metaphysical component, in the simplest, efficacious and rationally explainable manner. This makes Islam a faith of science, which is timeless and boundless.

The Holy Scriptures also contain teachings related to health, personal behaviour, attitudes and social interactions or dealings, etc. as well as improves the human health and enhances man's social, economic and spiritual properties. The Straight Path, as opposed to Primrose Path, leads to the attainment of spiritual ecstasy and Perfect Health. The Holy Qur'an is the enigma of all times al-shifa or the restorer of health and the great Whole Health Manual that provides a basic guide to nutrition and dietetics, disease prevention, health promotion, ways to joy and zestful life, etc. that is practicable, simple and efficacious. Undoubtedly, Islamic worship engenders good health and social wellbeing.

The second theme, which runs through this book, is the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w). It translates the great Whole Health Manual into practical action. His lifestyle constitutes a complete and absolutely reliable universe Role Model of all times. He practically translated the principles of the Holy Qur'an into practical reality to emerge the greatest Health Teacher, and a Saviour of Mankind. He left important everlasting legacies in all departments of human life. In the department of health his complete lifestyle remains forever a shining Model of Perfect Health. A role model is necessary because the lifestyle of man is related to disease and health. The modern lifestyle is now established to cause what is described as "diseases of lifestyle, which is stress with its numerous health devastating effects. Thus as a human, what you are in need of is "a healing (for the diseases) in your heart" (Yunus, 10:57), and also "for those in whose hearts is a disease and who are hardened of heart" (Hajj 22:53). One of the wonders of the Holy Qur'an is that several centuries ago it had identified a disease entity called "Disease of the Heart". These are now recognized as diseases of lifestyle, which are essentially preventable, e.g. HIV/AIDS, obesity, gluttony, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, etc. They are mostly non-communicable diseases. Some of them are described as spiritual diseases. On the other hand, there are communicable diseases e.g. cholera, typhoid fever, etc; most of them are physical diseases.

The great Health Teacher had provided all the necessary steps to be taken toward good health and promotion as well as prevention of diseases. The immense benefits of Islamic worship come through the emulation of the Prophet (s.a.w). His personal lifestyle and conduct provide mankind with the vision and reality toward good health and well-being. He clearly demonstrated in a practical way the application of the *vergegenwartigung*

of the Shariah or Islamic Law. This Divine Law in its *Halal* (the lawful) and the *Haram* (the prohibited), constitutes the simplest, practicable and efficacious means of preventive health, which entails health promotion and disease prevention. The law lays down very precisely and in detail prescriptive legislation in the departments of rituals, health, marriage and inheritance and economics, etc. It guides all the areas of human activity not only to salvation, but also to perfect Health and social prosperity.

Consequently, the great Health Teacher left everlasting legacies through practical examples in the department of Health and all its branches or sections. He himself was the personification of the great whole health manual in action; his lifestyle as the foremost principle is a sure means of achieving a 100 per cent health status. The Holy Qur'an which he personified in action was commanded to make it known by the Creator of all things, "says, it is a guide and a healing to those who believe (Fussilat, 41:44)". Here is a faith, which combines Guidance and Healing both wedded together into a macro – paradigm of *tawhid* or oneness of Allah (s.w.t). This book points out that monotheist spirit is a natural propensity of human nature while polytheism and or atheism as aberration creates flux and resonance within the heart to devastate health and to demur social well-being in the real sense of the word.

The *Shariah* in its own right is a comprehensive Health Manual, which seeks to make or empower man to conquer diseases and live a good zestful life with a dignity befitting to an *athropos* man with standard civilised behaviour. It is both "Divine and Human"; this combination helps man to achieve both perfect health and salvation. The Divine element is by virtue of its embodying the divine principles, whether of content or of method; the human element is by virtue of its translation of those principles into the usage in the ever-changing phases of human civilization. Thus the Divine and Human components of the Shariah give it a wide range of scope and applicability. It is the cornerstone of Islamic worship and makes it simple, easy and practicable. It also makes for the first time in the history of religions the incorporation of health in worship. It is only in Islam that while a believer worships Allah (s.w.t) he is in the process improving his health. And this is achieved with ease and comfort through the principle of `necessity dictates exception'. Further, the entire ritual activity is highly simplified. Hunger and safety take precedence over prayer. When food is taken and security of the person assured then prayer can be observed with devotion. The cardinal objectives of Islamic worship in this context are two: Salvation and Perfect Health, just as the two sides of a coin are

inseparable. The two, however, can only be achieved when emulating the great health Teacher himself, who always shows the right way to doing things.

Imperative of a Role Model

The need for a Role Model is therefore crucial and fundamental, thus with the advent of Prophet of Islam medical revolution took place mainly in two planes: i) Medicine changed its course from magico-religious to scientific cum spiritual; ii) from curative to preventive. Thus the combination of Guidance and Healing of the great whole health manual and the shining examples of the Role Model, i.e. the foremost principle, are all based on great wisdom that make the attainment of perfect heath become a practicable reality not only to the individual, but to the society in general.

To reiterate, for the first time in the history of religions, a worldview emerged with a central focus on preventive and curative precepts embodied in the *weltanschauug* of the Qur'an and Sunnah. For the first time also a path to perfect health arose which is clear and straight. A *Siratal mustaqeen,* through which, man can achieve with much simplicity the coveted 100 per cent healthy. This complete Guide and Healing encapsulated in a faith of science and are made readily available to all men in all epochs, in a simple, easy and practicable formulation. The world before the 7th century was a world of horror and all nations were buffeted, decimated with abysmal woes. The fifth and sixth centuries were referred to collectively as the Age of Ignorance because all nations were hotbeds of pestilences and unrest and man, the *anthropos* man was on the verge of annihilation. Then Allah (s.w.t), the Creator of man who knows the best for man decisively intervened. He sent a saviour to salvage the world and all the creatures it contains: "We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as Mercy for all creatures" (Anbiyaa, 21:107)

The Almighty Allah also says: "You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent Exemplar" (Ahzab, 33:21).

A universal Prophet became necessary to help man to navigate through the turmoil and devastations that characterised the Age of Ignorance and subsequently the Dark Ages and now the Perils of Progress, which the modern civilisation engenders. He was to serve as a universal guide with a beautiful pattern of conduct, to reverse the Age of Ignorance with its savagery, barbarism and pestilences. To supplant it with Modern Age, where civilised behaviour, healthful living as well as spiritual and social ascent of the *athropos* man are made easy and practicable to him in the medical care department, as in all the departments of life. The role of an

Exemplar was the crucial deciderum because as pointed out earlier the intricate link between manner or lifestyle directly with diseases pattern. Thus the advent of a great Health Teacher was both pertinent, timely and Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) came to raise human manner to the highest perfection and to establish society free of diseases and miseries. With his advent, therefore, he put a stop to the current magico-religious views on health, sickness and diseases. He then put medicine on a sound scientific footing with prayer well integrated. This earned him the meritorious appellation of the saviour of humanity. This could not be appreciated until and unless these pernicious views are understood in their historic perspective. Their negative impact upon all societies and how Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) had single-handedly changed the entire medical landscape to establish a code of rituals that keep, diseases at bay as well as directly promotes health. His advent wipe away the terrible customs existing among tribes and nations.

Eclipse of Terrible Customs

There were traditional customs in all parts of the world that were pernicious to health and inimical to the social and spiritual ascent of man. All arose due to a number of factors. First, there was a prevailing view of supernatural causes of diseases, which demanded demon worship or Satanism, Spiritism and fetish paganic rituals that were harmful to man and retro-progressive to his social standing. Thus diseases and modality of treatment were shrouded in numerous and bizarre cultist practices involving human and animal sacrifices. For example, the ancient Aztecs sacrificed human beings to use the beating heart of the victim to appease the sun god. Second, with the advent of Christianity 2000 years ago, it came with such a forceful momentum that was intended to sweep away the prevalent practices of mythology, magic, occultism, witchcraft and other pagan practices. It rejected all forms of medication including the use of drugs. It overreacted to take such an extreme measure, thus pharmaceutical practices, a tradition of Greek, Hindu and Chinese medicine as they were all struggling for survival met severe opposition by the magestrium of the Church.

It upheld the supernatural cause of disease but argued that disease and poverty were for the overall interest of man, "for they purify the human soul". This being so the only option left for man was to repent for his sins; treat his condition through prayer alone. According to its teachings, man was made in the image of God, and had a great soul, *anima magna*. A good

man could stand upright and erect before God. But man was bowed by sin; the bent soul, *anima curva*, turned away from God in rebellion. The source of all sins was wilfulness, *proprium conslium*; man thought he knew better than God."[1] Therefore, diseases and poverty were meant to purify the sins of men. To take drugs for cure was to transgress the Lord as an act that was considered inimical to Christian faith. The use of drugs for the remedies of ailments was connoted lack of faith, for the Church argued, Jesus Christ did not treat disease with drugs but with prayer alone. So this legacy must be followed. Thus it legitimised the use of prayer only and outlawed the use of drug medication.

The world as a result was menaced seriously by excalation of pestilences, epidemics and pandemics of deadly diseases. Man was rendered inept and hopeless before the killer diseases. The Greek, Hindu and Chinese medicine purified and improved by Islamic medicine were on the verge of being lost into the dustbin of history because the use of drugs, which they all advocated, was not only considered irrelevant, but also a crime against the Christian faith.

Lastly, there were those who upheld the notion that whatever be the case, man is powerless before diseases. This group resolved that when disease occurs it is useless to use any medication because diseases had no cure. The proponents of this notion preached complacency that is "do nothing but succumb" completely to the enemies. Perhaps, this tiny group arose out of the harrowing experience of the pestilences and epidemics that ravaged towns and cities despite the use of all kinds of measure to curtail them.

It was a usual outcome of deadly epidemics, "those who survived were hardy and their adventures with death toughened them for stratagems and spoils," [2] wrote Will and Ariel. So it was possible this type of lucky survival who escaped death without the use of prayer or drug could lead to the development of this fatalistic group. Perhaps, they arose out of sheer sense of religiosity and self–sacrifice that characterised the early Christians. Be that as it may, man from which angle he viewed his problems he found himself was unfortunately powerless in the face of diseases. Man, as a result, was cast into hopelessness and despondency. It was the office of Islam that was destined to save man on the verge of annihilation by deadly diseases. It gave man the hope, the confidence, the how and the means to conquer disease to reassert his position as Allah's vicegerent on earth.

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[1] Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson London (1961) p. 80
[2] Will and Ariel, *The Age of Reasons Begins*, Simon and Shuster New – York (1961) p.55

The office of the Prophet of Islam was faced by the serious menace of the practices of the Age of Ignorance. It became very crucial to stop all the inimical cultures and views that held man and the world he lives in bondage. To appreciate the appalling condition of the medicine in the Age of Ignorance today, one needs to have a look at areas of comparatively recent time where relics of negative practices of that Age were and still are being seen. This would give us a window to have a faint view of the enormity of the problems before the office of Islam in the 7th century Arabia. The impact of the Age of Ignorance is still being felt in pocket of places in the world where Islam is resisted and opposed. The relics of ignorant culture were palpable in Europe and in England (1500 – 1800). Before its Islamisation, for example, a historic report showed that there was a practice of medical treatment that prescribed: "The swallowing of nine live lice every morning was a "remedy" for jaundice and application of hog's dung was supposed to stop bleeding."[1]

A prescription of this nature reflects the stage of medical knowledge, health and hygiene. It showed how ignorance, and superstition were common amongst the Europeans who swallowed living lice in the hope of curing what was likely to be a typhus fever, a disease that is primarily caused by lice infestation. Thus "lice" which caused the disease was used wrongly to treat the disease caused by the parasites. This showed when a cause of disease is not known a blind treatment could be very fatal indeed. This practice was commonplace in Europe until the mid 19th century. It was for the same reason that this type of treatment was also common in Europe in the eighteenth century. This was the use of:

> *...Powder of the Lion's heart, filings of a unicorn's Horn, Ashes of the Whole chameleon, bark of the witch Hazel, Lumbrici (earthworm), dried man's brain, Bruise wort and Egyptian onions would still have gullible audience a hundred yours latter.*
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> *It was still believed that the king's Evil (scrofula – tuberculosis of the neck) could be cured by the royal touch, and permits were obtained to approach the monarch until the end of Queen Anne's reign (1714). Mothers would bring sick children to Tyburn in the belief that they could be cured by touching corpse of a newly handed criminal...*[2]

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene, p. 18*
[2] Ibid.

What is perplexing and preposterous was the healing effect attributed to the "criminal touch." The "royal touch," however, may exert some psychological effect for its perceived "holiness". But to attach a healing effect to the dead body of a criminal portrayed an abysmal ignorance as well as deeply-rooted superstition. To sanctify the corpse of a newly hanged criminal was tantamount to a posthumous honour bestowed on a criminal who was loathed while alive but only to be sanctified in death, because of the ignorant belief that a dead body cured the sickness of children. Perhaps, a criminal was then held holier than a monarch, although these practices could be attributed to superstitious beliefs. But superstition is always a reflection of societal level of knowledge and degree of its sophistication. A bizarre and outlandish superstitious belief is founded on a barbaric culture. It also relates directly with the scope and success of charlatanism. When a society lacks a *primordial tradition*, a custom with religious sensibility its culture becomes uncivilised; it falters and makes blunders as it develops by trial and error. Thus Europe remained a barbarous and pestilential continent until the mid 19th century because it remained impervious to Islamic civilisatonal influences for centuries, after the Muslim discover of Europe.

With the lack of civilisational attitude charlatanism, superstitious treatments became galore and the practice gained currency because the populace could not distinguish between what was right from what was wrong, what was harmful from what was useful and what was lawful from what was unlawful. Hence, non-Muslim societies grew by trial and error, and at the cost of countless lives and enormous amount of fortune. The Muslims were put on the edge and a leverage above all other nations due to the *Shariah* as embodied in the science of the Halal (lawful) and Haram (unlawful). It came enblock as a "baggage" of education to give the society a better start. It was this revealed baggage that made the Arabs coming out of the blue to assume the mastery of the world for centuries. It gave them a better start. And it did so wonderfully. It was this Right Way to Religion that made Muslims show candle to the rest of the world. Europe, in particular, grew by trial and error because it pinned the success of its ability purely to human ingenuity, which needed no divine assistance. However, it grew up from the shoulders of Muslims to emerge from the crucible of barbarism to modernism.

So it suffered, made blunders as it groped in the dark toward social and healthy development. Its populace suffered adversely due to lack of religion in the core of its civilisation. In the search of causes and treatments of diseases various erroneous postulations were made and wrong remedies

suggested. Numerous pills, balsams and embrocations prepared with bizarre ingredients were believed to cure everything from smallpox, toothache and gout. Prescriptions of pills made of cobweb were, according to Elizabeth Burton, "recommended by reputable physicians as late as 1837 for the treatment of asthma and consumption.[1] A fact that is corroborated by various historic accounts. Wrote Will and Ariel Durant:

> *Therapy was graduating from toads to leeches. Some reputable physicians prescribed dried toads, sewn in a bag and hung on the breast, as a trap to catch and absorb poisonous air that surrounds the body in plaque areas.*[2]

This practice was also prevalent in what the renowned historians described as the beginning of the "Age of Reason." This by itself showed ostensibly that "Reason" alone was and is grossly inadequate in the survival of man in the vicissitudes of life. This fact is an imperishable truth. Reason has to be backed by Revelation. To rely wholly and completely as did Europe then and now on human reason with all its gross limitations is to live perpetually on disease and miseries. Treatment modality remained anchored to superstitious trappings even in the so-called Age of Reason in the West. The London pharmacopoeia of 1618 listed 1960 drugs, the renowned historians who quoting Montaigne described special treatments which a few doctors kept for patients, including:

> *The left foot of a tortoise, the urine of a lizard, an elephant's dung, a mole's liver, blood drawn from the right of a white pigeon, and for us who have the stone...The pulverised droppings of a rat; and such other tomfooleries that are more suggestive of magic and spells than of a serious science.*[3]

Well, if these harmful and ignorant practices typified the Age of Reason in the West, how could the practices be in the Europe's Dark Age (1524 – 1079)? The advent of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) was amongst other things, to stamp out in all nations these tomofoleness paganism, magic and spells" and what they stand for. And what about the terrible practices of the Age of Ignorance in the sixth century? The abysmal woes and ruinous practices are better left to be imagined than described. The Muslims

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*. pp 18-19.
2 Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*. Simon and Schuster. New York (1961), p.593.
3 Ibid.

discovered Europe several centuries but until prodded by deadly pestilences Europe resisted Islamisation process until lately. Against this backdrop we shall now focus our attention to the barbaric forces that tended to eliminate mankind upon the surface of the earth and how Islam countered and neutralised these evil forces to safeguard humanity. They were successfully repelled in many nations except those nations with habitual vileness who held rigidly to the tenets of the ignorant Age and are still paying the heavy price up till now. It is with this extensive digression that the immense contributions of Saviour of humankind can be understood in historic perspective and be appreciated. Undoubtedly, anyone who single-handedly countered the evil forces of the Age of Ignorance and Dark Ages that threatened seriously to eclipse four centuries old human civilisation was indeed a saviour in the real sense of the word. Further, his legacy, the Qur'an and Sunnah continues to provide the necessary panacea for all the perils of progress in this ever-changing phases of the modern world. This introduced us to the crucial role of Prophetic medicine, in the survival of mankind.

The Role of Prophetic Medicine

In the realm of medicine, Prophet (s.a.w) negated prevailing notion that was existing at the time, that to catch disease was to die inevitably. It was a hopeless nation that made man to succumb sheepishly to the ailments or to the vicissitude of life. He had to empower man to treat, control and prevent diseases. The great Health Teacher, for example, responded to a question that reflected the general idea of the people. The question posed to the Prophet (s.a.w) mirrored the prevailing nation of the time: "shall we seek treatment of disease"? Narrated Abu Huraira (r.a) that the Prophet (s.a.w) said; "No disease Allah created but that, He created its treatment". (Bukhari). The great Health Teacher, to properly drive home the point, also declared: "Every disease has a cure; knowing the right medicine will cure the disease by Allah's permission."

This wonderful declaration thundered a new concept and awareness of the "Diagnostic and Therapeutic medicine" that is the need to find the cause of sickness and treatment of all diseases except old age. The modern medicine as it stands today is heavily indebted to this revolution of a new medical philosophy. It has agreed that there is a cause and effect, in the genesis of disease. So that causal agent of the disease must be delineated precisely, i.e. to make accurate diagnosis. It has also agreed that a disease is curable and every cure rests finally with Allah (s.w.t). It has also rightly suggested that to know the right medicine for the disease is all that is

necessary on the part of man. But in essence, Allah Heals. The art of investigating the diseases to arrive at the correct and the precise nature of a disease with a view to applying a correct remedy was re-established at the down of modern civilisation. This is now called "diagnosis". It has reached a very high sophistication involving the use of machines and computer. It is a Prophet's legacy to modern medicine.

The great health teacher did not subscribe to the nation of reliance of prayer alone as perpetuated by the Church, but instead he incorporated it into the regimen of treatment, which entails prayer at one end and medication at the other end. This is now known as "holistic medicine" or *holism*. Further, he narrowed treatment modalities into three broad categories.

> *Narrated Ibn Abbas (r.a.) that the Prophet (s.a.w) said, "healing is in three things: cupping, a gulp of honey or cauterization but I forbid my followers to use cauterization. (Bukhari).*

Islamic injunctions have a latitude of explanation and application because they are not meant only for a particular epoch but for all epochs. These three categories formed the tripod on which the modern medicine stands today. Cupping which is characterized by incision and blood loss represents surgery; honey with all its nutrients including essential elements represent drugs; cauterization then and even now requires caution because it entails the use of fire or radiant energy. Today, it represents the use of diathermy, laser rays, radiation of a verity of types. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) advised that cauterization, branding the skin with hot iron must be used with extreme caution. Even today the use of radiation in the treatment of cancer is potentially harmful. Hence it is used with extreme caution, *albeit*, incompliance with Prophetic medical advice – rather deviously. Cupping therapy is one in which a jar is placed on the skin surface to cause local congestions, through the removal of the air in the jar. This method promotes the free flow of blood in the channels, diminishes swelling and pains and dispels what are described as cold and dampness.

Qi (pronounced "chi" in China, and "Ki" in Japan.) About 2500 years ago, deep in the mountains of Northern China, Taoist priests practiced Qi-Gong meditative movement revealing and culturing the vital life force. They believed this force "qi" was inseparable from life. They discovered that qi animated not only body and earth, but was the energetic force of the

universe.[1] The use of cupping that was advocated might not have this qi underpinning, but it has surgical release of tension, swelling and pain, described in surgical terms as "incision and drainage." Whatever be the case it represents both ancient therapy as well s modern therapy in the form of surgical operations

The Prophet (s.a.w) prohibited the current magico-religious practices of the time when he made a clarion call to all peoples thus: "Seek for medicine; for Allah has created no disease expect that He created its cure, except old age."

The command "seek for medicine" is generalized, it does not specify the "what" and "how" of the medicine to be so sought. For example, swallowing of live lice as was the practice in Europe in the 19th century could pass as seeking for medicine. Hence, the Prophet of Islam used his office as a universal Exemplar to formulate certain remedies of ailments to lay the foundation of standard treatment modality. His approach to various ailments and the remedies suggested were formulated into a corpus, the *Tibbi-i-Nabawi* or the Prophetic Medicine. It comprises both physical and metaphysical approach to disease and remedy. In his medicine, the great health Teacher described the drugs that are halal and those that are haram. The Prohibited drugs or concoctions are those of paganic origins and those that are unhygienic and potentially injurious to health. In addition, he stressed the importance of accurate diagnosis and good surgical skills. Dr. Adamu quoting the work of Ibn Qayyim in his *Tibbi Nabawi* stressing the importance of accurate diagnosis and treatment, said:

> *When the medicament mentioned for every disease by the Messenger of Allah exceeds the degree of the disease, it causes another disease (instead of procuring a remedy), and whenever (the medicament) is in shortage, it fails to combat the disease and the cure will be ineffective. And if the cure does not discover the remedy or if a deterrent agent impedes its influence, then (in all cases) no healing could take place, owing to the incompatibility between the disease and the remedy. But if both the disease and the medicament match together, healing would unavoidably occur...*[2]

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was the Father of Medicine at the dawn of Modern civilization after the Age of Ignorance of the 6th century.

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1 Geddes and Grosset, *Achieving Relaxation*, Geddes and Grosset Ltd, David Dale House, New Lanark, Scotland (1998) p. 221

2 Umar Faruk Adamu, *Medicine in the Qur'an and Sunnah, pp.23 - 24*

He single-handedly liberated medicine from the clutches of polytheistic fetish practices such as magic, spiritism, witchcraft, etc. He successfully put medicine on a sound rational basis embedded in the matrix of monotheism. This is what Islam symbolizes a perfect amalgamation of Health in worship that is most ideal for the modern man. The Prophet's insistence that the right medicine must be applied to a disease before a cure is effected, by the Merciful One, forestalled charlatanism and superstitious practices. It made medical practice pure and vibrant with potential of growth to great heights. The evil trappings that shackled and manacled medicine and health for centuries were cut and totally eradicated by the Saviour of civilization. Since then medicine and health have continued to soar higher and higher, day by day. He forbade sorcery, use of amulets, talismans and astrology.

Further, the Prophet's teachings in the department of health and medicine spurred general awareness and quests for research into disease and their respective medicine. Thus Islam, *Dinal fitrah* or religion of Nature, had come to eliminate or cleanse all unnatural method of remedies of disease. For natural and scientific method have come!

It says: know the disease first before apply its remedy. Wrote Dr. Umar Faruk Adamu:

> *...We can deduce that Prophetic statement provides a pointer to the present day concept of pharmaco-kinetics and pharmacodynamics. The two important tools of pharmacology concerned with the effect of the drug on the body and the effect of the body on the drug – involve the dose–related effect receptor concept and compatibility, and body response. Indeed, this is in preface harmony with our present day knowledge in pharmacology as a branch of medical science. Hence, from the above Prophetic statement concerning medical and healing, we understand the meaning contained in the divine words of the Qur'anic verse: ...everything will it destroy by the command of its Lord (Q 46:25).*[1]

The Prophetic medicine was the precursor of medicine as it stands today. It was superior to the medical practice of Europe in its dark ages and also in its Age of Reason. Neither could it be compared with any extant medical system in Asia and Africa at the time. There was never a remedy related directly or indirectly with magic and superstition. The treatment modalities

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[1] Umar Faruk Adamu, *Medicine in the Qur'an and Sunah*, p.24.

were largely based on rational basis but reason alone as pointed out earlier was not enough to solve all the problems of man. The *Tibb-I-Nabawi* incorporated science and relegation or physical and metaphysical approaches in the treatments of diseases. And the two, like the wings of aeroplane, give a perfect balance. It provides a wide range of scope of diagnosis of diseases rather than reliance wholly on physical or on metaphysical alone as history has shown; each cannot stand without the other. The current crisis in orthodox medicine is a clear vindication of this deposition in the current dispensation. The so-called orthodox medicine is in crisis because it rigidly remain in the straight jacket of physical aspects of diseases. With no room for expansion the much vaunted method of therapy has been sinking in the muck. This gives, as a result, a rising tide of holistic medicine or alliterative medical practices to fill in the vacuum left or created.

Further, when the modern medicine took only the physical component of Islamic medicine, it made a rapid stride in many branches of medicine. But even this was not without a violent resistance because as we have mentioned before the London pharmacopoeia of 1618 had in it 1,960 listed drugs that were mostly suggestive of magic and spells more than of a serious science. This magico-religious trend had remained the tradition in all parts of the world, especially where Islam was absent or largely ignored. Undoubtedly, the inner core of modern medicine and its roots were purely derivative of Prophetic medicine. The *Tibbi–Nabawi* had a far-reaching effect on the Western medical philosophy much more than the celebrated "1000 Arabian Nights" had on Western literature. Thus it is appropriate to say without befuddling the logic or fear of contradiction that whoever takes medicine or treatment in whatever form today is a beneficiary, willy-nilly, of Islamic worship. Without Islam to reiterate again and again, there could not have been human civilisation as we know it today. And without *Tibbi – Nabawi* there would not have been modern medicine as we know it today either.

The *Tibbi Nabawi* is embodied in its corpus, a comprehensive system of remedies of common ailments. It also laid down the basic principles of diseases prevention and therapy, while it encourages research and puts emphasis on diagnosis of disease. The book you are reading draws extensively from a wide collection of Prophet medicine from different sources. And each topic discussed and analysed was found to remain forever up-to-date, which indicates consistently that the medicine would continue to exert positive impact till the end of time. Further, the *Tibbi-Nabawi* remains an exemplification of Islamic concern for human health as

expressed in the foremost principle. The decline of Western medicine due to rigidity and limitation in scope in diagnosis and in treatment modality points to the pertinency of prayer in the life and affair of every man.

Islamic worship is an activity that entails both health promotion as well as spiritual ascent. It is governed by divine law which, as pointed out already, is also an entity of preventive medicine, to simplify matters. Islam was elevated from the status of a religion to *al-Din*, a complete way of life so that a Muslim with Perfect Health and civilised behaviour looks different from a person of any other culture. In other words, it is a simple way to achieve a perfect health. This is the goal of this scientific mode of worship with respect to human health. This might seem untenable but it is a practicable reality. People's thinking is that man is incapable of achieving 100 per cent health. This is because it has been perceived as an impossibility to achieve such a feat. This book, however, argues for its possibility.

We have lost many of our concepts and values due to the impact of Western culture. Even the meaning of health; how to preserve it and how to promote it are no longer within the purview of our ideological confines but that of the West. The cultural erosion and perversion of our understanding of things had reshaped our outlook and perception to reflect that of the Europeans with serious sequela negative consequence. Although they are the current health champions, they do not possess true knowledge. Thus their notion of health and factors that promote it are defective. This is because true knowledge entails belief in the Unseen (Baqara, 2:3) and the seen. The Western intellectuals with their defective knowledge base rely only on the seen, i.e. physical reality; but this alone cannot tell us what health is and how to preserve it. Further, these health champions have just recently emerged from the crucible of pestilence and disease. So they were oriented forcefully to focus their attention largely on cure rather than on preventive health until recently.

When the pestilential hurricane was sweeping across Europe, it was excavated by gross lack of disease preventive strategies on the ground. Will Durant stated this pointedly:

> *In that war of the conquest of knowledge the central battle is that life against death, a battle which the individual is always lost and the physicians and the hospitals had many human enemies:*
>
> *Personal uncleanness, public filth, noisome prisons, quacks with magical potions, "scientific" mystics, hernia setters, stone*

melters, cataract couches, tooth drawers, amateur uroscopist. And new disease ran a race with new.[1]

This was a vivid description of Europe in the Age of Reason. It was an era when cities and towns were hotbeds of pestilences and misery. The clarion call of and emphasis on preventive medicine in which Durant pointed that "an ounce of prevention is better than a ton of treatment", was either unheard of or was largely ignored to the peril of the continent in general. Where personal uncleanness and public filth were rooted and established in the society disease was inevitable. The historians concurred:

Epidemics of typhus, typhoid fever, malaria, diphtheria, scurvy, influenza, smallpox and dysentery appeared in several countries of Europe in this period, especially in Germany. ...figures report 4,000 deaths from a plaque of boils in Basel in 156 – 64; twenty – five per cent of the inhabitant of Freiburgim Breisgau carried off plaque in 1564; 9,000 in Restock and 5,000 in Frankfurt an order in 1565; 4,000 at Hanover and 6,000 at Brunswick in 1566.[2]

It was also reported that terrified citizen ascribed some plaques to deliberate poisoning, at Frankenstein in Silesia, seventeen persons were burned to death on suspicion of "stewing poison". It was also known that in 1604 the Bubonic plaque was so severe in Frankfurt that there were not people to bury the dead.[3] These visitations were only in Germany other countries too had similar harrowing experiences. Unmistakably, when nation stand in opposition too the and nail again Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), a mercy to all peoples (Q 21:107) the loss was their own, then and now.

Since the Great Pestilence or Black Death between 1348 – 49, the Reformation era, European nations had no resting or hiding place against the periodic waves of attack of plague and other forms of pestilential disease. The devastations were indeed telling. As we delve into the past, we came across Reformation and the Black Death that uniquely characterised it. It also pointed than as well as now the perils of refusing to abide by the golden precept which states pointedly: "Take what the Messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you" (Al – Hashr, 59:7).

This injunction remains forever the simplest way to keep healthy and zestful life as well as to avoid disease and misery. This is because as a

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[1] Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*, p. 592.
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid

mercy to all peoples he must be received warmly rather than rejected or ignored. The consequences of doing so are grave as well a disastrous. The Black Death remains a moral lesson in the annals of history, no society can thrive successfully without a religion in the core of its civilisation. Toi this end, therefore, Islam, the seal of civilisation becomes an enduring and enabling culture. And anything outside its purview and or inimical to its teachings is potentially hazardous. Thus we recall the devastation of the Great Pestilence with horror. Its account was given succinctly by Durant. He wrote:

> *...Pestilence was a normal incident in medieval history; it harried Europe during thirty – two years of the fourteenth century, forty – one years of the fifteenth, thirty yeas of sixteenth, so nature and human ignorance, those resolute Malthusian, co-operated with war and famine to counter the reproduction ecstasies of mankind.*[1]

It was learnt that the Black Death was the worst of these visitations and probably the most terrible physical calamity in historic times. According to the educator of mankind plague was a punishment, which Allah used to send to whom He wished. Punishment always follows a commitment of offence or crime of some sort to which the individual or the society must be penalised. The crime against Europe was and is the rejection of Prophet of Mercy. Hence disease and misery would continue to remain their lot as the Back Death typified:

- In Norbonne,...30000 persons died of it, in Paris, 50; in Europe, 25,000,000; perhaps, although, one fourth of the population of the civilised world.
- The medical profession was helpless, it did not know the cause of the disease (Kitazato and Yersin discovered the bacillus of the bubonic plaque in 1894 – and could only recommend bleedings, purges, cordials, cleanliness of home and person and fumigation with vapours of vinegar.
- A few physicians and priests fearing infection refused to treat the sick, but the great majority of them faced the ordeal manfully. Thousands of doctors and clergymen gave the lives of twenty-eight cardinals alive in 1348; nine were dead a year later; of sixty-four archbishops, twenty-five; of 375 bishops.[2]

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[1] Will Durant, *The Reformation, Simon and Schuster New York (1957) p. 64*
[2] Ibid

From the outset the Western style medicine arose as a quick response to provide quick cures of remedies to the periodic waves of pestilence. Until recently the menace of infectious diseases was high and fatal. It gave little room to focus on preventive medicine. The plague epidemic caused bacteria – p. pests that were carried by rat. In the English setting for the Great Pestilence, Shrewsbury wrote:

> *It must be emphasised that mere presence of the house – rat in Enlarge and was not sufficient to engender an epidemic of bubonic plague. For such a thing to happen the rodent must be present in such numbers that the density of the rat population is high enough to enable p. pests to be distributed rapidly over the epidemic haphazard rat – contacts. The creation of this essential density was a process that undoubtedly occupied many years – possibly the best part of a century in the case of a sparsely populated country of the size of medieval England. But when the necessary density of R. rattus had been for the spark in the guise of the plague bacillus, which obviously had to transport across the sea in the bodies of infected rats, to ignite and epizootic of rat – plague in the country.*[1]

Alas, men always misread this true signs of the times. *Ustadly* A. Yusuf Ali had noted the link of life and conduct in relation to time (looking backwards and forwards) which figured forth the frailty of this life. To gloss over the signs of times was to remain thick – skinned, therefore, impervious to *Ibra* or moral lesson. Plague and pestilential epidemics were punishments sent to sinful people so as to mend their ways. Here rats carried the deadly bacteria that decimated towns and cities leaving in its wake thousands of the deaths of people in abysmal woes. The saviour of mankind was once asked of the cause of plague:

> *Narrated Aisha (r.a), the wife of the Prophet (s.a.w), who said that she asked Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) about plague, and he informed her saying:*
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> *Plague was punishment, which Allah (s.w.t) made it a blessing for the believer None (among the believers) remains patient in a land in which plague has broken out and considers that nothing will befall him except what Allah has ordained for him but that Allah will grant him a reward similar to that of a martyr.(Bukhari).*

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[1] J.F. D Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British isles*, Cambridge University Process (1971), p. 17s

The great pestilence and other series of pestilences were perceived not as punishment, wrath or scourge of the time due to a purely materialistic outlook of life. As punishment sent to sinful people believers might be caught and die of the disease due to "collateral damage", and the victims therefore were given the status of martyrs. Further, plague and other epidemics left behind serious complications that comprised psychological, economic, spiritual and medical dissension. Will Durant had enumerated some of the sequela of the Great Pestilence in the Reformation era:

- Shortage of labour followed; thousands of acres were left untilled, millions of herring died a natural death.
- Labour enjoyed for a while improved bargaining power, raised it wages.
- Public sanitation was goaded into moderate improvements.
- The immensity of suffering and tragedy weakened many minds producing contagious neuroses; whose groups seemed to go mad in unison marched through the city streets almost naked, beating themselves in penitence, preaching the last judgement. Utopias and pogroms.
- People listened with more customary eagerness to mind readers, dream interpreters, sorcerers, quacks and other charlatans.
- Orthodox faith was weakened; superstition flourished.
- Strange reasons were given for the plague some ascribed it to an untimely conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, others to the poisoning of wells by lepers and Jews.
- Jews were killed in a half a hundred towns from Brussels to Breslau (1348-49).
- Social order was almost destroyed by the death of thousands of police, bishops and priests.[1]

These pestilential devastations and havoc they wreaked permanently necessitate us to find the actual causes of the punishments. The cause was that Europe rejected the Divine Guidance especially of Islam, to live a vileful life of their, own choice. The repercussions were and still are severe and pervasive. To complete the story, there is the need to know the type of morals and manners that existed in those eras. Without putting these events in historical perspective, a Muslim may erroneously take an ordinary glass for a precious diamond. He might tend also to belittle his own ideology and the monumental services it renders to humanity. This historic perspective

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[1] Will Durant, *The Reformation*, p. 65

will also help him to appreciate the immense benefits of Islamic worship. Thus one can posit without fear of contradiction that without Islam man would have remained a brute, uncouth and uncivilised barbarian. The morals and manners in the West prior to Islamisation no doubt underscored the veracity of this claim.

Uncouth Morals and Manners

Will and Ariel wrote in the Age of Reason that if we believe the moralist of this half century before the war, the moral picture in Europe was as dark as the economic. The following are some of the salient points they advanced:

- Teachers complained that the youngsters sent to them were not Christians but barbarians.
- "The people bring up their children so badly," wrote Matthias Bredenbach in 1557, "that it becomes to the poor school masters that they have got to reckon with wild animals."
- "All discipline appears an end," said another in 1561; "the students are refractory and insolent in the extreme."
- In most university towns the citizen refuse go out a night for fear of the students, who on some occasions attacked them with knives.
- "A chief cause of the general depravity of the student," said Nathan Chytransin in 1578, "is undoubtedly the decline in home training….."[1]
- Now that we have stopped the yoke of ancient laws and statues from our necks… it is no wonder that we find, among the part of our young people, such unbridled licentiousness, such boorish ignorance, such ungovernable insolence, and such terrible godlessness.
- Others taught that "not the least among the causes why the young lapse into immorality and lasciviousness are the comedies, spectacles and plays.

Now take a rest and ponder over this hadith before proceeding to the immoralities of the adults that begot those of the children. The Educator of Mankind declared: "I have been raised to elevate morals to the highest perfection." The importance of morals in relation to health and social behaviour are indeed great. Where the moral teachings of the Great Arabian were lacking, the scale of devastation by plaque and social crimes

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[1] Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*, p. 544

were appallingly very enormous. Thus, by comparison, Islamic societies were saved by the teaching of moral uprightness. Good morals, therefore, formed the backbone of this Seal of Civilisation.

Hence it becomes very clear that where the golden precept was not applicable degeneration of morals and manners continued to accelerate. The renowned historians observed the degeneration so engagingly. They continued:

- As for adults, the preachers described them as quarrelsome hypocrites, gluttons, drunkards, and adulterers.
- Pastor Johann Kuno complained in 1579, "Vice of all sorts is now so common that it is committed without shame, nay, people even boast of it in somodomitish fashion; the coarsest, the most indecent sins have become virtues. Who regards common whoredom any longer as a sin?
- Profanity was almost universal among the men, regardless of creed. Calumny had a festival.
- "My superintendent," wrote the count of Oldenbury in 1594, "has complained to me of the manner in which Dr. Pezel, at Bremen, has abused and slandered him in one of his books, making out he spent his days in gluttony, drunkenness and debauchery, that he... was a sheep devouring wolf, a serpent, a he goat, an abortion,.... And that he must be gotten rid of either by hanging, drowning, or imprisonment, by the wheel or by the sword."
- The court preacher of the Electro of Saxony found that ... I so fill myself with wine... I have to be propped up and laid on a wagon and carted off like a drunken calf or sow.
- Eating and drinking were industries; half the day of a well-to-do German was consumed in passing edibles from one end of his anatomy to the other.
- Bourghers were proud of their appetites, which like the dress of women, served as heralds of their prosperity.
- A circus performer earned national fame by eating at one meal a pound of cheese, thirty eggs, and a large loaf of bread, after which stint he fell dead.
- Dinners lasting seven hours, with fourteen toasts, were not unusual.
- Weddings were in many cases riots of gourmandising and intoxication. A jovial prince signed his letters "*Valete et* inebriamini" (Be well and get drunk).

- Elector Christian II of Saxony drank himself to death at the age of twenty-seven. A temperance society struggled against the evil, but its first president died of drink.
- It was asserted that gluttony was shortening the tenure of life.[1]

In Islam morals and manners are so important that a Great Prophet (s.a.w) was sent to raise them to highest perfection. He was successful because the Islamic moral and manners are exceptional and worthy of the highest standard of civilization. Furthermore, Islam is seriously concerned with and interested in establishing a society that is pure, free from filth of sin and crime. The morals and manners of people in the West prior to Islamisation, were typical of the rest of the world. It was the responsibility of the office of Islam to establish, through the process of aculturalization, good ethics and morals to peoples of all nations.

The Educator of mankind forbids gluttony; we have seen the devastations of excessive eating and drinking. How wonderful then is this Prophetic description: "A Muslim eats in one intestine whereas a non-believer eats in seven intestines."

The danger of gluttony among the non-believers is that they either die quickly through obesity and overweight or suddenly through excessive overeating. A Muslim eats modicum amount of food at a time he grows "lean and live longer" with zestful life. Islamic teaching with respect to moderation in all aspects of life has now received universal acceptance. The civilizational culture eradicates alcohol, drug addiction and many other harmful habits from the society. There is another service, which Islam renders to the world. It teaches all nations the habits of wash up. This impact is felt more strongly in Europe and England.

Wash Ups and the Great Three

Islam introduced the wash up to the modern world. The symbol of every Muslim is the wash up-in *attahara* (purification), *wudu* (ablution) and *ghusl* (bathing). The non-believers especially of Europe and in England up to 1850 had their own symbol too: The Great Unwashed arose when the entire population developed an aversion and disdain of bathing Great Stench arose when these people smelled horribly in body, clothing and in the home. They showed what was described as the Great Unwiped; they cared very little to clean or wash the anal area after the call of nature. So they walked about with heavily loaded anal orifice with faeces down below. The

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[1] Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*, pp. 544 – 545.

disappearance of the Great three was largely due to Islamisation of all cultures and Islamic habits of regular wash ups were imbibed through centuries after the Muslim discovery of Europe. A little digression to clarify this pint is important at this juncture.

Wherever there is a contact of cultures there is bound to be what is described as culture diffusion. The cultural habit of one is largely taken by the other. This can also occur through the process of aculturalization. A typical example is science. According to Syed Hossein Nasr, a professor of Islamic studies of George Washington University U.S.A,. "Science is not a value free activity, it is fruitful and possible for one civilisation to learn science of another civilisation, but to do that it must be able to abstract and make its own". He continued:

> *And the best example of that is exactly what Islam did with Greek science and what Europe did with Islamic science, which is usually called Arabic science but is really Islamic science, done by both Arabs and Persians, and also to some extent by Turks and Indians.*[1]

The distinguished international scholar, stressed many tailing facts about the genesis and causes of decline of science in the Muslim world. He engagingly pointed out how the Islamic science was systematically brought to a halt. It had for centuries positively influenced the world, especially the Western Europe. The fact that it was Islamic wash ups that were imbibed to vanish the Great three would be considered of much significance, until we have some insights on how Islamic science suddenly fizzled out of the scene having been the *dramatis personae* for centuries. One of the reasons was that Muslims have not yet developed their historiographyical science. They relied on the West, which viewed history from its own point of view. As a result, many of the momentous contributions to science by the Muslims were "literarily kidnapped", plagiarised, de-emphasised or the names of their scientists latinised to obscure their identity. This important field had been neglected for so long a time with serious implications, said Syed Hossein Nasr:

> *This is a very important field if you look at all the histories of science written in the West, everything ends miraculously in the thirteenth century (implying) the whole Islamic science, history of*

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[1] A Lecture delivered by Syed Hossein Nasr, entitled, *Islam and Modern Sciences*, Co-sponsored by the Pakistani Study Group and the MIT.

> *astronomy, history of physics alchemy, biology, anything you study, miraculously comes to an end in the thirteenth century which coincides exactly with the termination of political contact between Islam and the West...*[1]

In the Western design and conception the modern civilisation began only from this thirteenth century historical landmark. The Islamic monumental contributions to man's stock of knowledge were slowly and systematically de-emphasised and gradually began to obliterate completely. The chief reason was and still is the Muslims have failed to rise up to this grave challenge to re-articulate their position in the history of science. Professor Nasr pointed out one factor of cardinal importance. He said:

> *...When the West adopted Islamic science, it even adopted the gown of the Muslim ulema, but it never took the turban and put it on its head. The hand – dress of the European bishops of the middle ages was kept on. Whereas at many Islamic universities today, we have taken both the gown and the cap form the West. We cannot think of ourselves independently. The whole thing has been taken...*[2]

Be that as it may, one of the fundamental reasons why the West rejected the turban was because of the value it represents. It symbolises Muslims as such it had to be done away because by taking off. The use of turban is Sunnah. The Prophet (s.a.w) said: "Turrban distinguishes Muslims from disbelievers." Islam had finally served its usefulness. It is henceforth considered a pet anathema. Further, the logic of the enlightenment holds the European way of life superior to the rest of the "barbaric and backward" world. Thus superiority in science and technology was fallaciously equated with superiority of culture as expressed in morals and manners. This is not true, the two are mutually exclusive. But shrouded in a defective garb or culture, the West asserted its might and power to make all nations look upon it as the most evolved in history. And that to be civilised you ought to ape the West parrot – wise and also drink heavily from the spring of Western culture. But the West, in its initial phase of clash of values, had obstinately rejected the Islamic *at-tahara* and *ghusl* system of wash ups. They were perceived to be symbolic of the turban, which combined epitomised Islam.

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1 A Lecture delivered by Syed Hossein Nasr, entitled, *Islam and Modern Sciences*
2 Ibid, p.9

Meanwhile, it must be highlighted at this juncture, that one curious relation between Islam and the West as it exists even today; the former possesses a superior civilisation while the latter on the one hand, possesses science and technological superiority. Superiority in civilisation does not necessarily mean superiority in military might and conversely. For example, erstwhile Soviet Union with all its military might collapsed like a house of cards due to its negative culture. The Western civilisation dehumanises man while at the same time places a higher premium on materials more than on human life. The perils of progress in this manner had all combined to make Western scientific progress not worth the while. The western also civilisation, also called the American civilisation would collapse inevitably because of the same reason. The United States particularly, awaits disintegration. Further, what happened to the West when it obstinately rejected the Islamic wash ups?

Personal hygiene had never been a part and parcel of Western culture. It was initially boxed into a corner; if it accepted the wash ups it was like indirectly accepting the turban and what it represents. If, however, it rejected the wash ups with all their vitality it was bound to perish. Thus goaded by the pestilences the West had no choice but to again embrace Islamic principles of hygiene. When viewed without the negative threat of diseases they never hide their abhorrence to Islamic wash ups. Marmaduke M. Picthall, a distinguished British scholar of considerable standing concurred:

> *...And frequent washing became so much associated with their religion that in Andalusia in 1566 the use of bath was forbidden under penalties because it tended to remind the people of Islam, and an unfortunate gardener of servile was actually tortured for the crime of having washed while at his work. Myself in Anatolia have heard one Greek Christian say of another: "The fellow is half a Muslim, he washes his feet".*[1]

It can be said without fear of contradiction that the West with all its scientific know-how learnt to get rid of the "the Great Three". Today Europeans are excellent in Islamic wash ups. This consistently indicates Islamic civilisation is superior to Western civilisation. The west paid heavily a price before the Islamisation of its culture. The Western culture is humbled by many glaring defects and limitations. Although it describes itself Prometheus, the world view is like the Camusian Sisyphus who

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[1] Marmaduke M. Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam*, p. 37

desperately hopes that all is well. As all is not well it continues to hope against hope. It lacks an efficient system to establish a standard of social life as well as decent manner of hygiene and cleanliness. Wrote Walter Rodney:

> *...As one index to the standard of social life, it has been pointed out that public baths were common in the cities of Maghreb at a time when in Oxford the doctrine was still being promoted that the washing of the body was a dangerous act.*[1]

Friedrich Heer also brought forward this testimony:

> *The towns of medieval Europe differed radically from those of the great non-European urban civilisatioins of the Near East and the mediterranean, from the towns of the Arab world... These non – European cities were after all far more advanced than the European in technology, hygiene, industrialisation and general level of civilisation...*[2]

In his description of women in France Servetus in 1535 noted that the women of Spain have a custom that would be held barbarous in France, of piercing their ears and hanging gold rings in them, often set with precious stones. But by 1550 earrings were worn by the ladies of France, and even by men.[3] Undoubtedly, personal hygiene and beautification came to the West from the inexhaustible treasures of Islam. But it took time to eradicate the bad habits of abhorrence to bathing among the people of France especially the womenfolk. The curious question is how clean were the bodies behind frills? Will Durant; said it all when he quoted a sixteenth century introduction *pour les Jeunes James* spoke of women:

> *"Who have no care to keep themselves clean except in those parts that may be seen, remaining filthy...under their linen", and a cynical proverb held that courtesans were the only women who washed more than their faces and hands.*[4]

The Islamic wash ups were first seen amongst the royalties, the rich and the powerful because it was a civilisational attitude that was highly

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1 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Bogle-L Ouverture London (1972) , p. 64
2 Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World: Europe 1100 – 1350*, Weidenfel and Nicolson London (1961), p. 48
3 Will Durant, *Reformation*, pp. 767 - 768
4 Ibid., p. 768

restricted to the privileged in Europe. This selected group might not wish to be identified with "the Great Three" anymore. Thus from this group the civilisational attitude gradually sank into the societal structure. In France, perhaps cleanliness increased with immorality, for as women offered more of themselves to view or to many, cleanliness enlarged its areas.[1] It was then established the fact that:

> *...Frequent bathing preferably in performed water, became now, especially in France part of good manners. Public bath houses diminished in number as private bathrooms multiplied; these, however, were usually without running water, depending on bowls and tubs. Steam baths, which had come into Western Europe with returning crusader in the thirteenth century, continued to be popular through the sixteenth.*[2]

Finally, we should take a look into households prior to the infiltration of Islamisation process. Accurate Erasmus wrote:

> *Almost all the floors are of clay and rushes from the marshes, so carelessly renewed that the foundation sometimes remains for twenty years, harbouring there below, spittle and vomit and urine of dogs and men, be ...remnants of fishes, and other filth unnameable. Hence, with the change of weather a vapour exhales which in my judgement is far from wholesome.*[3]

It remains forever an incontrovertible fact that it was Islam that helped the West to rid itself of the Great Three: the Great Unwashed, the Great Stench and the Great Unwiped. Islam is a mercy to all nations. It is the Sea of Civilisation. The ubiquity of Islam has made the health benefits it engenders inexhaustible. These health benefits are all contained in the Islamic religious injunctions known as the "Five Pillars of Islam". They are also the "Five Pillars of Health", because in Islam Health and worship are inseparable. These pillars include: the Holy *Kalimat Shahada, Salat, Sawm, Zakat* and *Hajj*. The book you are reading expounds one pillar each in turn in the light of health benefits.

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1 Will Durant, *Reformation*, p. 768
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid, p. 113

CHAPTER ONE

HEALTH IN WORSHIP

Attahara: The Advent of Modern Hygiene

Islam is a faith of science in which Health is intrinsically woven with worship. Such that the acts of worship improve the health of the worshipper both directly and indirectly. This means the Islamic ritual activities invariably promote the health status of the worshipper. In this faith of science, however, *at-tahara* consists of *istijmar,* the practice of cleaning the anal orifices after calls of nature, with pieces of sticks or stones now replaced with the use of toilet paper. This reduces hand faecal contamination. It is followed immediately by *istinja*, the washing of the orifices with water to ensure total cleanliness. Islam places stringent emphasis on anal and perianal cleanliness as well as general body cleanliness. Thus a Muslim is strongly motivated to always maintain the attitude of general cleanliness. This is because Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) the great health Teacher of all times declared that: "Purification is the key to prayer."

Further, when a Divine injunction declared that "Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean" (al-Baqara, 2:222), then purity and cleanliness are ingrained in the mind of the Muslim. The import of this and other similar declarations was (and still is) great. It brought a good health habit to the world and brought about a revolution and a new awareness that turned out to be "Toilet Hygiene" a part and parcel of personal hygiene. Islam recommended right from the 7th century AD certain precautions to be taken in the case of faecal evacuation during or after the call of nature so that a Muslim does not soil or stain himself (body or clothing) with urine or excrement. These precautions constitute what is now described as toilet hygiene. The importance of this hygiene is very great and can simply be summarised thus: "Disease prevention begins and ends in the toilet." This means that where toilet hygiene is lacking or grossly ignored, disease outbreaks become rampant and conversely. Thus, Islam is the driving force behind the evolution and growth of modern hygiene.

Islam lays great emphasis on *At-Tahara* or body purification. The process through which a person rid himself of filths to stay clean, purification is the key to prayer and is equated with one – half of faith. Thus Islam is built on cleanliness. "cleanliness", said the Prophet (s.a.w), "is next to Godliness." Attahara is founded on istinja and istijmar. And upon it body purifications; wudu or ablution, *ghusl* or bathing are established. The practice of cleaning the orifices with tissue paper or its equivalent is known as istijmar. This is followed immediately by istinja, which is washing the urinary and anal orifices after calls of nature. They must be performed together to make a Muslim clean, and free from urinary and faecal stains. When *at-tahara* evolved in the 7th century, it saved the Muslim communities form pestilences and later turned out to be the precursor of modern hygiene. Consequently, a Muslim is known and identified with body purification. This arose sequel to revelation; the injunction was stated thus:

> *O ye who believe! Approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until ye can understanding all that ye say, - Nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (except when travelling on the road) until after washing your whole body if ye are ill or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature of ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands. For Allah doth blot out sins and forgive again (Nisaa, 4:43).*

The Holy Qur'an associates inebriation due to alcohol, sexual impurity, sweats and bodily stains of vaginal and seminal fluids, perianal faecal contamination as very injurious to health. Although these injunctions were revealed several centuries ago, they have now been found to be in perfect accord with sound medical philosophy. The adverse health effects of alcohol are known to everyone as alcoholism is now great threat to most non-Muslim nations, especially the industrialised world. Further, wash up immediately after sex is also known to reduce the risk of infection of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In the case of *varicocoele*, a condition in which there is a collection of varicose veins around the scrotum, the blood carried in the dilated veins makes the testes warmer than they should be, and infertility can result. When the body temperature rises above normal, sperm production in the testes is inhibited. Hence, regular bathing of the testes in cold water may be enough to counteract the

temperature change.[1] Thus *ghusl-ul-janabat,* the Islamic injunction of washing of the whole body afte a sexual contact, improves sperm production and enhance fertility. Here again one sees many practical Islamic injunctions in the Surat Nisaa chapter 4 verse 43 of the Glorious Qur'an that act directly to improve the health of the Muslim. The health benefits of Islamic worship are numerous, real and practically efficacious.

At outset, Islam demands a Muslim to be sober to avoid the use of all intoxicants so as not to approach prayers with a mind befogged (that is drunk). Prayer should not also be approached in a state of ceremonial impurity i.e. after sexual intercourse. Lastly, no prayer is to be observed after the calls of nature i.e. visiting the toilet. These conditions demand for *at-tahara* and bathing. This verse revealed in the 7th century had established the basic foundation of modern civilisation.

It put (gradually) a stop at intake of alcoholic drinks and the barbaric behaviour associated with, excessive drinking was notoriously prevalent in the world then and now except in the Muslim society. The Muslims then became the only sober nations. They said no to intoxicants and alcoholic drinks! Then there is the issue of marriage and conjugal relationships. Wash up was introduced to take care of ceremonial impurity or *janaba.* This obligatory bath is important from medical point of view. It gets rid of bad body odour of fish-like smell of seminal fluid or the peculiar smell of vaginal discharge resulting from sexual intercourse as well as perspiration from soles, palms and body, and sometimes from head, face and neck.[2] The bodily responses of intense sexual excitement is accompanied by convulsions of the body, involuntary movements and sweating, which can be very profuse in some cases. Thus Islam recommends compulsory bath after coitus or *ghuslul-janabat* when there is emission of semen or when the penis penetrates into the vagina. This recommendation is in perfect accord with modern hygiene. Then the clean up required after coming from the toilet which demand for *istijmar* and *istinja*, i.e. toilet hygiene. When there is no water *tayammum* can be performed to observe prayer. But as soon as water is available the person must clean up himself. Thus at the time of revelation of this verse it was only the Prophet's society in the whole world knew the value, importance and benefits of sober mood, wash ups, toilet hygiene and prayer in absolute monotheistic spirit or tradition. These good health habits and good ethical behaviour formed the basis of modern civilisation.

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1 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, p.383
2 Ibid., p.364.

Even several centuries afterwards alcoholism and filthy behaviour have remained social and medical problems in Europe in particular and the rest of the world in general. The Qur'anic injunctions are always revolutionary with positive impact to the world. This impact is timeless as well as boundless. With revolution teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah Muslims shared no common ground with filth and sewage. Obviously, health improves with Islamic worship. Europe had remained for centuries a Dark Continent where the people remained filthy and pestilential for centuries, until the Divine illuminating Light of Islam shone through it. The historic account of Europe prior to its Islamisation as given by Peter Baldry was a compelling evidence. He stated thus:

> *...The disposal of sewage in big towns is obviously a far more difficult problem, but unfortunately those in authority have not always been sufficiently strict in the matter. This applied in Great Britain up to the nineteenth century and is still true in certain parts of the world. Because of this lack of insistence on proper sanitation, there were serious widespread epidemics of cholera, typhoid and dysentery in Europe up to the middle of the last century. The description of conditions in big cities at that time showed that the filth was appalling. In the tenements of Glasgow dung was left lying in the courtyards adjacent to the houses as there were no drains or privies; in another Scottish town it was reported that there were no lavatories in houses and only two or three public privies, situated in the better parts of the town. These two examples were typical of the situation in all big cities. This lack of lavatories either public or private led to the habit of house dwellers filling chamber pots with excreta and after some days, when completely full, and with a shout of "Gardez l'eau", emptying the contents out of the window into the street below; a habit not without risk to passers by, and of course of practice which led to persistent pollution and stench in all the streets...Doubt as to whether excreta alone could cause disease however was already present in the minds of thinking people before germs were identified under the microscope. William Budd, the great epidemiologist of the nineteenth century, took the opportunity of the famous Great stench of London, which occurred during the summer months of 1858, to point out that organic putrefaction by itself was not enough to cause disease. At that time, the sewage of nearly three million people was allowed to collect in one vast cess – pit in the middle of the city, and during the summer the hot sun shining on the quagmire produced*

> *a stench so foul as had never been experienced before. The work of parliament was almost brought to a standstill because of the noxious air which penetrated the building, and steps were to taken to overcome this by the suspension before every window of blankets saturated in chloride of lime, and by the lavish use of this and other disinfectants in every room. The Law Courts had to close down and travellers who could do so avoided London by making a wide detour of the city. The newspapers were full of letters from anxious members of the public about the stench, some prophesying calamity, others suggesting remedies; it became the most frequent topic of conversation...*[1]

Islam made purification one-half of faith was to save the Muslim communities from the travails of filth, stench and pestilences, the health hazards that had bedevilled the West for centuries. The Great stench of London occurred when it was the capital city of Great Britain the imperial power that was then ruling the world. Like the rest of the Western nations, Great Britain paid heavily for resisting the Islamisation of its culture for too long. In fact, the Great stench of London was only a tip of the proverbial iceberg a lot lied beneath and sea. In addition, to Great Stench there were two additional, "great" European habits that finally gave way to Islamic ethics of cleanliness. These were Great Unwashed, that is, aversion to bathing and Great Unswiped refusal to perform *istijmar* and *istinja*. Finally, it was pestilences that led Europe to reform; to imbibe the Islamic principles of attahara and purification and modern hygiene was developed only a little over 100 years ago.

It was on record that Islam had established principles of hygiene in the 7th century under the guidance of the Educator of Mankind, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) whose concern for personal hygiene was demonstrated in the following areas: Attahara and wudu; bathing; cleaning of teeth; Nail clipping and hair cutting; and cleanliness form contamination. Thus the aim of Islam is to give the Believer Health in the Life and Health in the Afterlife. The need to know Islam, a faith of science and a founder of modern civilisation is incumbent upon everybody. To save the world Islam became the only revealed religion where health improves in worship. And the entire lifestyle is *Ibadah* (worship). It is the most ideal religion of the wise, a way of life to men of understanding.

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[1] Peter Baldry, *The Battle Against Bacteria:* A Fresh Look, Cambridge University, Press London (1976), pp. 7 - 9

Conceptual Framework

Islam the youngest living and fastest growing religion is one of the Abrahamic faiths that owe their origin to Patriarch Abraham (a.s). It arose from Arabia in the 7th century AD. It is strictly monotheistic and retains all the Divine teachings revealed through Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) in the pristine form. These divine teachings were the renewed, improved, elaborated and perfected version of all the revealed great faiths in history that have now lost their original teachings. It brought a unique and simple pattern of worship which engenders good health and prosperity.

What is Worship? It is the concept of worship or *Ibadah* in Islam differs radically from the rest of other religions. It has it own spirit of worship. In his exposition of the spirit of *Ibadah* or worship Shaykh Abul Ala Maududi wrote:

> *Ibadah is an Arabic word derived from Abd (a slave) and it means submission. Allah is your Master and you are His slave and whatever a slave does in obedience to and for the pleasure of his Mater is Ibadah. The Islamic concept of Ibadah is very wide. If you obey the law of God in letter and spirit in your commercial and economic affairs and abide by it in your dealings with your parents, relatives, friends and all those who come into contact with you, all these activities of yours are also Ibadah. If you help the poor and the destitute, give food to the hungry and serve the afflicted and do all this not for any personal gain but to seek the pleasure of God, this is all Ibadah. Even your economic activities – the activities you undertake to earn your living and to feed your dependents – are Ibadah if you remain honest and truthful in them and observe the law of God.*[1]

In Islam, therefore, all your activities are what constitute *Ibadah* if they are in accordance with the *Laws of Allah* and the ultimate objective is seek His pleasure. It is therefore a health improving lifestyle that is well suited to man in all the phases of his civilisation. Further, what is remarkable about Islamic worship is the fact that these Laws of Allah (s.w.t) and the precepts of the True Faith gender health and prosperity to the worshipper in what has been aptly described as Health in Worship. It enhances human health in the real sense of the word.

What is Health? To understand worship in relation to health, there is then the need to define what health is. The broad concept as embodied in

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[1] A. A. Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p. 88

the charter of the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete, physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Though not definitive, this much quoted reference affirms that the inter-related attributes of individuals or personal health should be regarded as comprising: "freedom from disease, plus physical, mental and social well-being."[1] In essence, what Islam brings to its adherents is that amongst countless benefits, it improves the personal health through freedom of disease, and physical mental and social well-being. All can be achieved in a simple, practical way that can be conveniently performed by a ten year old boy or girl.

The chronological age appears to be the standard gauge that weighs the gravity of Islamic worship. This is the simplest form a religion can be. And Islamic worship is the simplest and easiest form of religious rites revealed, such that at the age of ten, Islamic worship can be performed conveniently but it becomes obligatory at the onset of puberty which ranges between the ages of 14 – 17 years of age in some cultures while much lower in others. Thus man in his efforts to finding a way and a means preventing illness, is hereby guided and strengthened in Islam not only to ward off diseases but it also fosters him with superior intellect and wisdom. Hence Islam as a way of life, is a means to an end; the end in-view is health in this life as well as health in the afterlife.

Wilson pointed out that in recent years there have been a number of attempts to deal with the many facets of health/illness that may characterize a given individual and also to cope with the suggestion that health is a process, a sequence of behaviour, rather than a fixed attribute of the person.[2] Thus this growing notion is rapidly bringing the modern medical philosophy closer and closer to Islamic standpoint. In whatever conception health could be framed or defined Islamic worship in its contents and practicality influences health positively. And as a way of life, it guides the process and the sequence of behaviour in such a manner, man achieves productive health as well as social prosperity. Further, the crucial role of Islamic worship can be understood more clearly when health is, as proposed, evaluated separately on at least three dimensions organic, or physical functioning; psychological functioning; and "social health", presumably identifying the individual's capacity to act in social roles. In such a scheme, ideal health is what Herbert Dunn called "high-level

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1 Fred Grundy and Peter F. Grundy, *Community Health and Social Services*, p.3

2 Robert N. Wilson, *The Sociology of Health:* An Introduction, Random House New York (1970), p. 8

wellness" would consist of maximizing people's position on all three measures, although with realization that all individuals probably exhibit an unequal balance them.[1] Islamic worship, therefore, improves the unequal balance to give an individual of achieving 100% health status with no hardship.

Islamic worship, in its comprehensive purview encapsulates within its fold, health in a dynamic framework to be seen as a continuum of functional ability. It also embraces group relationships as well as the functional processes of the individual to proffer a simple and efficacious means of disease prevention and health promoting measures that are timeless, boundless and practicable. Further, Islam as a code of lifestyle identifies social health as subject other than medical criteria of evaluation because it includes legal, political, religious and aesthetic. Its primary aim, however, is spiritual elevation while health benefits are its inseparable advantages. This points strongly that Islam as a way of life is the only ideology therefore capable of fostering health in all its ramifications because of comprehensiveness, thus the need to understand and practice the faith in the standard and pattern set by the great health Teacher, is crucial to the achievement of 100% healthy which attainable only in Islam, a faith or worship that improves health status. Undoubtedly, Islam is a gift of Mercy from the Almighty of a Health Formula to humanity in the simplest practicable way because "Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties" (Baqara, 2:185).

Islam is the renewed and perfected monotheistic tradition in its pure form; the True New Faith of all times. This Living Faith bases itself on the Holy Qur'an and a great heritage of literature known as Sunnah of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him). This preserves in great detail the words and actions of the Prophet (pace be upon him) inasmuch as his guidance is available for the minute quarter of a Muslim's life.

Besides, this Islam also has the benefit of a great amount of literature, interpreting the Qur'an together with the Sunnah. This is known as Fiqh or Jurisprudence, which allows a great amount of flexibility for Muslims in their day to day lives and also provides formula and methodology for deducing guidance for all aspects of life. It is here that a lot of variety gets introduced in Islam as the *Fiqh* has four recognised schools. Above all, Islam has provided for the instrument of *Ijtihad* which keeps the door open for constant legislation in keeping with the urges of time and society.[2] Islam

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1 Robert N. Wilson, *The Sociology of Health: An Introduction*, p.8

2 M.A Siraj, article: *Islam and Challenges of Globalisation*, MWL Journal April (2002), p. 23

leaves nothing in its elaborate details of how not to fall into disease and misery, while its central focus is spiritual salvation. This book does not incline to any of the four recognised schools but inclines more to *the Grand norm.*

This Grand norm is the direct Sunnah of the Noble Prophet (s.a.w): individuals, groups, institutions, customs, conventions, values and mores, fad and fashions are in Islam liable to evaluation and judgment in relation to this *Grand norm*. It was this *hikmah* or philosophy and practical pattern or sunnah, which always served as the touchstone for measuring the degree of one's commitment to Islam and for scrutinising the moral value and cultural worth of all individuals and social constants and variables in the Muslim society in all ages, environments and climes. The sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) therefore has been and shall always continue to be the *Grand norm* of the Muslim society.[1] Further, the entire beautiful edifice of Islam is founded on five pillars, and built on cleanliness. This is to the extent Islam goes so that through emphasis on cleanliness of mind and body, disease and misery are kept at bay.

The five Pillars of Islam together with the Articles of Faith: belief in the revealed Books, belief in all the Prophets of Allah (s.w.t); belief in the Day of Judgment; belief in the Angels and belief in Destiny, form the framework of Muslim's lifestyle. They are invariably crucial to achievement, and preservation of his health. When they are strengthened, his faith and health are likewise equally strengthened. This direct relationship forms the basis of the health benefits of Islamic worship. The five pillars of Islam which constitute the cornerstone of health in worship include:

- The Holy Kalima: This is the testimony of faith it is the saying with conviction of: *La ilaha illa Allah Muhammadun rasulu Allah.* This means there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. This solemn pledge is the most important pillar of Islam. It means that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah (s.w.t) alone, Who begets not, nor is He begotten and none is comparable to Him. The worship rendered unto Him must be pure and unalloyed, that is without associating anyone or anything with Him. This Holy *Kalima* or pledge is called the *Kalimatu Shahada.* When it is said with conviction; it reverts the person immediately to Islam. The next important pillar is prayer, or *salat*.

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[1] See, Dr. Muhammad Al-Ghazali, article: *Islam's Overriding Stress on Human Welfare*, MWL Journal Ibid, p. 43

- Salat: Muslims perform five prayers (or salat) a day. Salat is the *rukn al-din*, the prop of the religion; it is a direct link between the worshipper and Allah (s.w.t). It is a medium of communion with the Almighty. There is direct linkage without any intermediaries between the Master and His servant, which is of immense benefits to the latter. Like a regular dosing of drug regimen in medication, Salat is performed at specific times – at dawn, noon, mid-noon, sunset and night. The support of the needy is also a pillar of this faith of Islam, this is the Zakat.
- Zakat: The word Zakat is derived from the original meaning: "purification" and "growth." It is a pillar of the faith; giving Zakat means giving a specified percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people. This way, our possessions are purified by setting aside a small portion for those in need, and like the pruning of plants, this act of generosity encourages new growth.[1]
- Sawm: This is fasting in the month of Ramadan. In this Holy month, all Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations. Although the fast is beneficial to health, it is regarded principally as a method of spiritual purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gets to understand the plight of those who go hungry, as well as growth in his or her spiritual life.
- Hajj: This is the annual pilgrimage to Makkah. It is an obligation to be performed at least once in a lifetime those who are physically and financially able to perform it.

These pillars invariably make the Believer 100% healthy in this world and provide him with salvation in the Hereafter.

How to Become 100% Healthy

The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) not only presented the perfect example of humanitarianism in his own ideal conduct, but also showed practically how to be 100 per cent healthy. The principle and pragmatic modes and mores of his health and hygiene, elaborated and explained by him in his acts, utterances and approvals that form not only the whole corpus of Hadith literature, but also a compendium of medical cartulary or *Tibb-i-Nabawi*.

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[1] I.A Abu – Harb, *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, Darussalam, Houston (1997) p. 66

> *We have said that the interaction of spirit in matter produces life and intelligence. The intelligence manifested in the body of man is on a different level, however, from the intelligence manifested by man's mind. There is a still higher level of intelligence than that, which is provided by the intuition. Intuition is quite different from rational mental functioning and it is closer to the spiritual fount of man, which is the very core of his being. Man without spirit would be a mere automation, a robot; but thanks to its possession he can rise to heights of power and achievement undreamed of by him today. We must realise, however, that he can also use his talents and proclivities for unworthy and base ends, thus debasing his spiritual nature, which is distinct from the more animal part of himself, that is his mind and body. Man's mind and body are the more animal part of him because they can be used in the production of mere animal pleasure and sensuous enjoyment. Whereas, if man follows the urges and promptings of the spiritual side of his life he becomes progressively refined and ennobled, as his spiritual grows. There is animal nature tending to drag him down, and his more spiritual nature tending to pull him upwards. It depends, in every case, upon the outcome of this struggle for supremacy as to what men or women will make of their lives. All true religion is concerned essentially with this struggle within, and endeavours to point the way upwards towards spiritual salvation.*
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> *Man cannot live really healthfully and creatively if he ignores the spiritual side of himself. His life will be an empty shell, however much it may seem full and satisfactory superficially. In all of us our spiritual side is only nascent at first. It must be encouraged and developed as we grow older, so that it may come into greater and greater fruition. This gradual development is* ***essential*** *if 100 per cent health is to be ours, as otherwise, we will fail to see any meaning or purpose in living. The development of the innate spiritual power in man provides life with meaning and purpose behind the shield of our intuitive faculties. They are the mouthpiece of spirit, as it were.*[1]

This lengthy elaboration lends support to the imperativeness of man giving Allah (s.w.t), his Creator and Benefactor his due. Islamic worship protects man in his three dimensions: body, mind and spirit. It is in his monotheistic religious worship that his spiritual stature grows

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[1] Henry Benjamin, *How to Become 100% Healthy*, p. 78 - 79

progressively. This gradual development as Benjamin pointedly observed is essential to the attainment of 100% vital health status. Islam provides the way and means for the attainment of this much coveted status. This is the obeisance to Allah (s.w.t) and His Messenger (s.a.w) as contained in the divine injunction: "Obey Allah and obey the Apostle." This exposition also mirrors both the importance and the indispensability of Allah's Apostle as Spiritual Guide and Health Teacher, hence a perfect Role Model of all times. Islam, as a true religion of God, is essentially concerned with man's spiritual salvation and healthful living and the two, as co-joined twins, are inseparable. "All the people who wish for maximum health of mind and body should dwell deeply and long on these things. We cannot live constructively in a mental and spiritual vacuum!" Benjamin wrote.[1] It is only in Islam that worship impacts positively on the health status of the worshipper. No such relationship between health and worship exists ostensibly anywhere else. Further, Islamic worship is founded on hygiene, physical and mental exercise. Physical cleanliness is one of the means of achieving good health because of its crucial importance to man's healthy existence, it is the rock on which the edifice of Islamic worship is built upon.

Habit of Cleanliness

Islam demands that you must take care of your outward cleanliness. Cleanliness of the mind and body must go side by side. The cleanliness of the mind, is the inward cleanliness and it demands the avoidance of sins and to render pure worship to the Almighty, the Creator of all things. Imam Haddad had given a good summary of these aspects of physical cleanliness, which are the gems of Islam. He wrote:

> *Among the divisions of outward cleanliness are those things indicated in the Law such as removing excessive (hairs and nails for instance) and dirt, and purification from acts which necessitate the ritual ablution and impurities. Amongst these are the removal of public hair, depilation or shaving of the armpits, clipping the moustache and the paring of the finger nails. It is recommended to start with the right index finger, carry on to the right little finger, then to the left little finger through to the left thumb and end with the right thumb. As for the feet one begins with the right little toe and ends with the left little toe, in the same order as washing the toes during the ritual ablution (wudu). It is*

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[1] Henry Benjamin, *How to become 100% Health* , p.78

reprehensible to delay these things for more than forty days. Other such things are the removal with water of the dirt which accumulates in wrinkles, the mucus in the eyes, the dirt in the nostrils, and the use of a toothpick to remove the remains of food from between the teeth. You must clean your mouth with the siwak, and it is better if this be of arak wood; it is strongly recommended before initiating any act of worship. You must also clean your clothes with water whenever they become dirty, in moderation, and without imitating those who live in luxury.

Other Sunnas *related to cleanliness are the oiling and combing of the beard, cleaning all the hair, using* Khol *three times in each eye (for he used kohl, may peace be upon him) in this manner every night), using perfume abundantly, for it masks unpleasant odours, whether human or other; this is firmly recommended for the Friday prayer and other gatherings of Muslims. The messenger of God, may blessings and peace be upon him, liked it and used it abundantly; sometimes the shine of perfume would be seen on the parting of his hair: this he did so that people would imitate him, for his body was naturally fragrant; he was in no need of perfume, and they used to collect his perspiration to perfume themselves with. It is good for men to use perfume which has a strong scent but no colour, and for women to do the opposite.*[1]

This succinct account of cleanliness in Islam is important from two standpoints: First, it explains how health is improved with Islamic worship on one hand. It also shows on the other hand that Islam is built on the pedestal medical science; Secondly, the account has vindicated compellingly that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is a Perfect Model of all times and to all peoples. His personal body care and hygiene though evolved in the 7th century they are startling modern as well as timeless. As we would see presently, it was Islam which re-established hygiene in modern times, in a wonderful form of Health in Worship, a way to achieve 100 per cent health.

Hygiene forms the crucial and fundamental basis of health. This important direct relationship between hygiene and health has been duly recognised, appraised and placed at a high premium in Islamic worship. The importance of hygiene in worship is elevated to the highest position

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[1] Imam Ibn Abdullah Ibn Alawi al Haddad, *The Book of Assistance*, tran. by Mostafa Al-Badawi, the Quilliam Press London (1989), pp 47 – 48.

celebrated Medical School of Salerno where he did most of his work. He died at Monte–Casino in about 1087 AD. Thus Islamic teachings of regular baths and cleanliness reinforced that of the Christian faith, an evidence that perhaps led to the notable records of bath houses in monasteries. This was further reinforced by Turkish bath, and was brought by crusaders in an inter-current flow of cultures especially from East to West. In fact, many historians claimed that the transmission of culture through the medium of the crusaders had helped to quicken the transformation of Europe from the Dark Ages to the Renaissance.

Although lavers or washbasins could be ascribed to Islamic influences, the garderobes were antithetical to Islamic tenets of hygiene and environmental health. Islam forbids the pollution of stream with sewage and other pollutants. Thus by the early nineteenth century European culture was Islamised through the process of acculturalisation in numerous ways. In body hygiene, which demands regular washups as prescribed by Islam, Europeans then were, hitherto, not very enthusiastic about it. It could even be said that they were aversed completely to bathing and general cleanliness. The following report lends support to this claim:

> *...In 1877, London had only 10 municipal bath–houses for a population of 4 million. However, it seems that the working classes were reluctant to take advantage of water for washing themselves, even when it was made available. A Leeds doctor in 1831 records: `on enquiry at Leeds baths, I learn that during the four summer months, about 50 persons bathe daily; and in other parts of the year, no more on the average than two or three'. Taking into account the numbers that also `plunge in the river', he calculated that only about 900 working people in Leeds ever immersed their whole bodies. Leeds population at this time was 123,000. No wonder one author in 1868 entitled a book about the working classes the Great Unwashed.*[1]

This vivid account typified the Europeans' attitude to wash-ups and personal hygiene prior to the partial Islamisation of their culture. Muhammad (s.a.w) was incontestably the Educator of mankind. The spread of his teachings to the West had eclipsed the "Great Unwashed" attitude of all the European nations in particular and the world in general. He taught the world to take bath regularly and when the habit was cultivated worldwide, the Great Unwashed disappeared amongst all nations. One

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 30

could juxtapose Europe in the Dark Ages and Arabia in the 7th century to see the marked difference at various levels of human endeavour such as hygiene, literature, etc. With the rise of Islam, the process of acculturalisation began to take place slowly and Europe and the rest of the world were transformed. It would show how revolutionary were the great Educator's teachings at that time. The impact of this hadith could be more glaring now than hitherto understood because it makes a distinction between an archaic and modern culture. It is modernism that insists upon personal upkeep and scrupulous hygiene. Thus, according to Abu Huraira (r.a), the Educator of mankind once asked his companions:

> *"Do you believe that dirt can remain on a person bathing five times a day in a stream running in front of his door?" The companions replied in the negative, that no dirt can remain on his body. The Messenger of Allah then remarked, "Exactly the same is the effect of prayer offered five times a day. It washes away all sins."*

The erudite scholar, Afzalur Rahman in his explication of this hadith highlighted that ablution wipes out physical dirt while prayer wipes out spiritual dirt (i.e. sins). Ablution comprises cleaning the nose, eyes, teeth, face, arms, feet and hair five times a day. The writer also pointed out that the Prophet (s.a.w) stressed the importance of cleaning the teeth before each prayer; made it compulsory for all Muslims to take bath every Friday and after sexual intercourse, and a women must take a bath at the end of their monthly period before they can commence their daily prayer again.[1] The wisdom of obeying Allah and obeying the Apostle is readily discernible, for he took up cudgel against sins and filths and was successful in his crusade against them.

Thus what the Saviour of humanity was doing at that epoch was not only saving the world against the repercussions of spiritual sins but also ridding the world of the obstinate culture of 'the Great Unwashed' and the "Great Stench." It was not only Europe but the world at large that was suffering from the negative culture of aversion to "immersion" or bathing, hence Islam was described correctly as *The Creator of Modern Age*. It laid the foundation of hygiene personal, public and environmental cleanliness. Islam succeeded in making the modern man *Home aestheticus* by establishing a science of *at-tahara*.

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[1] Afzalur Rahman, *Muhammad (saw) The Educator of Mankind*, p. 470

The Muslims well grounded with Islamic ethics of hygiene and general cleanliness remained for centuries the only people who derided the Europeans whom they called as the 'Franks' for their filthy habits. In fact, the Frankish dirty habits were described by many Muslim writers some of which were quoted by Bernard Lewis in his *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, who for example, quoted one of these writers saying:

> *You shall see none more filthy than they. They are a people of perfidy and mean character. They do not cleanse or bathe themselves more than once or twice a year, and then in cold water, and they do not wash their garments from the time they put them on until they fall to pieces. They shave their beards, and after shaving they sprout only a revolting stubble. One of them was asked as to the shaving of the beard, and he said: "Hair is a superfluity. You remove it from your private, so why should we leave it on our faces."*

This was not an exaggerated of fallacious account but, it was a perfect description of Europeans' lifestyle in the Dark Ages, Medieval period up to the middle of the 19th century. It was an account that corroborated the Lionel Rose' description of Medievalism with respect to health and hygiene. This account had pointed rather conspicuously the superiority of Muslims over the Franks in areas of health , hygiene and civilised behaviour. According to Lewis, the dirty habits of Westerners continued to arouse Muslim disgust such that as late as the end of the eighteenth century, the Indian Muslim visitor, Abu Talib noted that in Dublin there were only two bathhouses, both of them small and poorly equipped. In summer the august visitor was horrified by what he saw. His eye witness account was written by Lewis thus:

> *...the people in Dublin wash their bodies in the sea; in winter they do not wash at all. The two bathhouses are intended for the sick and are only used by those who are very sick indeed. When Abu Talib went to the bath he found no cupper or barber or attendant of any kind. In place of a masseur he was offered a horsehair brush of the kind used for cleaning shoes or boots. Everybody, removes his own dirt with his own hand.*[1]

The "Muslim Discovery of Europe" turned out to be a great blessing to Europeans in particular and the world in general. To the Europeans, they

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[1] Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, p.281.

learned and cultivated the ethics of bathing the body and clothes not for the very sick but for prevention of sickness. They had also learned the culture of keeping away from filth in the name of personal and environmental hygiene so that physical handling and keeping at homes of fresh faeces remained on historic realities. Further, it could be said without a fear of contradiction that with the Muslim discovery of Europe, Europeans had subsequently learnt the use of urinal, lavatory and toilet. This awareness brought along with it the assimilation of attahara as an established norm and its subsequent evolution to modern hygiene. Consequently, the Europeans helped directly or indirectly to spread these Islamic ethics to the nations of the world.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SCIENCE OF AL-TAHARA

Europe found it exceedingly difficult to develop because it essentially lacked the basic infrastructure on one hand and the code of guidance on the other hand. It had to start on the scratch while at the same time, as giants the shoulders of earlier Muslims were used as springboard for progress in social and scientific development. The West first had to imbibe the Islamic culture of hygiene so as to rid itself of the menace of overflowing filth and sewage both at home and in the streets. The problems of a nation that started from the scratch and had to learn by trial was captured by Stewart who wrote:

> *Anyone starting out from scratch to plan a civilisation would hardly have designed such a monster as our collective sewage system. Its existence gives additional point to the sometimes asked question, is there any evidence of intelligent life on the planet earth?*[1]

A civilisation must possess a religious core within it so as to make it an ennobling and enduring culture. When, however, this is lacking, misery and regret become part and parcel of people's lives. Said Dr. Vivian Poore, "but we pay for it by fouling every natural source of pure water."[2] This habit of polluting the source of pure water that was prevalent in England in the antithetical to the principles of attahara that was advanced for the benefit of humanity from the 7th century Arabia. It was an era when how to clean the body, clothing and the place of habit was evolved so perfectly in what can now be described as a science of hygiene.

A true civilisation which only Islam represents succeeded in establishing a new system of hygiene that impact positively on all nations. This was because revelation laid its foundation such that it became a shining model to all cultures. It made hygiene purely a personal and environmental question. To Islam, sanitation is the key to prayer. First, the concept of

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1 G. R. Stewart, *Not So Rich As You Think*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston (1958), p.41.
2 Quoted in John Donkin, *Conservancy or Dry Sanitation Versus Water Carriage*, Spon and Chamberlain (London), 1906.

attahara evolved to modern hygiene. It is about personal toilet hygiene on one hand and about sewage disposal on the other. Due to this ethic the houses in Islamic society were freed from pollutions. "Our houses are flushed away."

A science which describes water and filths and how the former can be used to get rid of the latter in minute of details, is indeed comprehensive, to say the least. Due to religious demands a Muslim uses water for personal upkeep far more than any other person in the world. The use of clean water is part and parcel of Islamic worship.

Use of Clean Water

Water is held in high esteem in Islam; it is considered the source of life and its supporter. Allah the Exalted said; "We made from water every living thing" (*Al-Anbiyaa*, 21: 30). This sacred statement was proved to be perfectly correct by science. The life supporting properties of water are now well known and every living thing is dependent on it. From a hadith by Anas bin Malik (r.a) who said the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) used to drink water in three drafts, saying: "water quenches thirst and is sanitary" (Muslim). The sanitary uses of water were first to be recognised and most exploited by the Muslims before other adherents of a religion at the dawn of modern civilisation. Further, in Islamic science water is considered to be:

> *...The material of life, the chief of beverages and one of the world's pillars and even its principal pillar as the skies were created from its steam and the earth was created from its froth. Allah created from water every living being.*[1]

Quality of Clean Water

Islam had evolved its own method of determining the quality of water that remains valid to date at an epoch when good and bad water could hardly be differentiated in Europe. Accordingly, in this science, the quality of water is determined by ten factors:

- its colour should be pure;
- it should be odourless;
- its taste should be delectable and soft as the Nile and Euphrates water;
- it should be light and tender; the watercourse should be clean;
- it should be far;

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[1] Ibn Qayyim Al – Jawziyya. *The Prophetic Medicine*, p. 452

- it shouldn't be hiding under the ground so that the sun and wind would reach it;
- it should be sufficiently abundant in order to repulse its impurities;
- it should be tasteless and it should flow from the North and the West to the East.[1]

Uses of Water

The common domestic uses of water include:

- Drinking and cooking.
- Personal hygiene for washing the body and clothes.
- Wudu and ghusl.
- Environmental sanitation for washing utensils, rooms and disposal of waste.
- Gardening including flowers.

Sources of Water

A culture which places high premium on body purification and general cleanliness must ensure protection of every source of water. The following factors determine the safety of water supply, the means to achieve it must be simple, effective, practicable and affordable. The common sources of water are wells, rivers and streams. Other sources include; rain water, spring water from melted snow, sea water and water from lake or pond.

Watercourse of the river and stream must be clean. It must not pass through areas polluted with sullage and sewage, otherwise, it will be contaminated, to render it unfit for domestic and ritual uses. Islam prohibits defecation in or around the watercourse. It also prohibits dumping of garbage, refuse, industrial wastes or any substances that are injurious to health or could alter the quality of water. In the context of discussion this hadith explains it all; the Prophet (s.a.w) warned:

Avoid three abominable acts (that is one who does them is cursed by Allah and by people), defecating in streams, defecating on roadways, and defecating in shaded places (Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, al Hakim).

It is to be noted against this that the European before the Islamisation of the culture in the 19th century, scarcely looked neat and tidy in appearance but also defecated everywhere indiscriminately. Excrements were littered in every corner, in studies, colehouses, cellers which were all against Islamic

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[1] Ibn Qayyim Al – Jawziyya, *The Prophetic Medicine*, p. 453 - 454

ethics. They lacked a Primordial Tradition hence suffered severely. It was reported:

> *Under the goad of repeated epidemics, towns beings to give serious thought to the problem of sewage disposal. After 1850, a system called water–carriage was increasingly used, whereby the wastes were drained into rivers instead of accumulating in solid heaps for disposal. However, this aggravated the problem of river pollution, as George Vivian Poore wrote in 1893: "There can be no doubt that as water–carried sewage increases, the difficulty of obtaining pure water increases also.*[1]

This historic account is to make you appreciate the positive impact of the hadith quoted above, that is, its global impact not only on the Muslims but on all nations. England applied its principles towards the end of the 19th century.

- Distance: The source of the water must be far away from the toilet or rubbish dumps: it should be safe from chemical and biological hazards.
- Exposure: The water should be exposed to sunlight and air, atmospheric oxygen dissolves in exposed water good water must be well ventilated.
- Abundance: The source of water must be abundant to dilute injurious substances that inadvertently contaminate it the larger the safer. This, however, applies to open sources of water – river, spring and dams.
- Quality: The source must ensure the protection of all the ten qualities of water.

The science of *attahara* ensures that the environmental hygiene, especially with the protection of surface water, is effective. The source of water is easily polluted by direct contamination of either man or animal. This view is consonant with modern hygiene, direct and indirect contamination, especially when water washes faeces, sullage and sewage and other harmful chemicals into streams and rivers. Thus, in Islamic culture, the purity of water must be maintained. For the convenience of uses, water is classified.

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 59

Classification of Water

Water is classified according to its degree of purity. It is therefore classified according to its uses: for drinking, ritual purification and sanitary uses. Although such classifications were made in pre–scientific era, they, however, remain valid to date. The common uses of water are for drinking, purification and sanitary uses. In addition to the agricultural and industrial uses of water. Its cardinal importance is for drinking and sanitary uses. And from the standpoint of Islamic worship, which insists on the use of clean water for drinking and sanitation. It cautions on how and when to drink water. It also gives directives on the type of water to be used for each purpose.

Fresh water is useful for ailing and healthy persons. The cold water is healthier and more delectable. One should never drink cold water on an empty stomach nor after coitus or waking up after bath and or after eating fruits. There is no harm in drinking water during meals if needed; this fact being even obligatory. Water shouldn't be drunk excessively but should be sipped. This way, it won't be harmful as it invigorates the stomach, ignites the desire and quenches the thirst. The lukewarm water provokes flatulence, and it produces effects contrary to what we have mentioned. The previously filled water is better than the fresh water.

One of the most important legacy Islam left for the modern world is *attahara*. Although other revealed religions especially those of Abrahamic faiths came with their own concept of hygiene and purification, they were limited in scope and could not meet up with exigencies, the hurly-burly of the social life of the modern world. In the book of Leviticus 15:16-26 of the Bible, which was common to Jews and Christians cleanliness was mentioned, its importance stressed, but the principle was tailored to meet the taste of Hebrew culture. So it could not be applicable effectively to all cultures. The need therefore arose of a principle of hygiene whose depth and scope could be of universal usage. Thus the cleanliness or *attahara* evolved as a renewed and highly improved version of Judeo–Christian concept of cleanliness. The depth of its scope and its timeless application makes it a science of its own.

The science of water might agree and disagree with that of the western concept in many areas. But they share a number of scientific principles. What is highlighted from this point of view is the fact that even in the seventh century, water was a subject of meticulous study. And in consequence, there arose a system that governed its use for spiritual, domestic as well as sanitary reasons. The system arose quite independently and it was beneficial to the rest of the world subsequently. All books of

medicine especially of preventive medicine contain teachings that are Islamic in origin. Although the principles of the use of water evolved with religious purposes in mind, they were validly relevant to health. And in many instances, discourse on the beneficial use of water was given. For instance, the Prophet's most cherished beverage was the one that was cold and sweet, while lukewarm water swelled and produced some harmful effects.[1] He also indicated that stale water is more beneficial than the water drunk when it's freshly obtained.[2] Possibly because more oxygen dissolved in the former than in the latter, but he drank from well water. Aisha (r.a), the loving wife of the Prophet (s.a.w) and Mother of the Believers said: "The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) used to drink fresh water drawn from the well (Al-Souqia)." Thus the use of well water is established on sound tradition.

Wells

Wells are the common source of water in most Muslim communities especially in pre – scientific era. The wells are constructed in such a way as to preserve the ten qualities of the water. In modern method the principles are more or less the same or similar with that of the principles governed by Islam. Since the Prophet (s.a.w) used to drink from the well water he had sanctioned the use of well as a source of water for domestic and ritual uses. In modern times, the protection of wells involves the following measures:

- A site at least 30m (preferably uphill) from source of pollution (e.g. pit latrine). This explains why the source of water must be far away.
- A watertight lining for at least 3m from the surface. This is also to prevent pollution by seepage.
- A parapet about 1m high surrounded by a concrete apron to drain the water away. This is in line with the principles of Islamic hygiene.
- A watertight cover, to ward off filth flies, rodents and vermin insect.
- A pump or at least a permanent bucket which is anchored to the well.

The great Teacher of hygiene taught the world by precepts and by personal examples. In the pre-scientific era he formulated a cartulary of cardinal importance; he taught his people how to identify and make use of pure and clean water for religious and sanitary reasons, with the result that the spread of water-borne diseases was largely unknown in Muslim

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[1] Al Jawziyya, *Prophetic Medicine*, p. 276
[2] Ibid., p. 277

communities, living in the arid region of the Sahara he extolled the purity of snow and hailed water. Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) often said at the beginning of his prayer: O Lord! Purify me from my sins with water and hail.[1] But the purest and noblest of all waters is the Zamzam water, and it is remarkable in its healthful effects. This sacred water is rich in magnesium which is now known to be of immense importance to people with life-threatening arrhythmias (heart disorder). Although Islam arose from the Arabian Desert but the great health Teacher knew everything about sea-water.

Sea Water

The sea water is also clean. The Prophet (s.a.w) said; "Its water is purifying as its animals are lawful."[2] Today, it is well known that about two-thirds of the earth is covered by sea. Allah (s.w.t) made the sea water salty and strongly bitter for the sake of living creatures.[3] Ibn Al-Jawziyya pointed out sharply Allah's remarkable wisdom in the sea:

> *Allah (glory be to Him) made the sea water salty and strongly bitter for the sake of living creatures, the humans and beasts. The sea water is stagnant and it encloses infinity of animals that die in it without being buried. If the sea water were sweet, it would stink because of the maritime fauna which may be living or dead. The air enveloping the world acquires this stinking odour and the world would deteriorate.*
>
> *Allah (glory be to Him) made by His wisdom the sea similar to a Salina. If all the corpse and putrefactions of the world were thrown in it, they wont alter it and won't affect it since its creation and until Allah perishes this world.*[4]

The sea is rich in a variety of living organisms and natural resources, and its large expanse almost covers the earth. It has more densely populated living things than the earth's surface. Undoubtedly, its high salinity is of great benefit to the survival of all living things upon the earth's crust, with all its variety of ecosystems. Although we know that the high salinity of sea water possesses strong bactericidal, fungicidal and virocidal effects, it is pertinent to note that for several centuries earlier, Muslims though living

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1 Al Jawziyya, *Prophetic Medicine*, p. 454
2 Ibid., p. 457
3 Ibid.,
4 Ibid., pp. 457 - 458

largely in the arid regions were, however keenly aware of the harmful effects of the sea water to man. The Muslim writer also noted some of these harmful effects pointedly:

> *To wash with sea water palliates many blights that emerge at the surface of the skin while its absorption and utilisation are harmful it provokes diarrhoea and emaciation, and it engenders itches, flatulence and thirst. The one who is obliged to drink it should resort to methods that allow to repulses its harmfulness.*[1]

This exposition cannot be faulted by the current scientific knowledge. The effects of sea water on man have been well established in recent years, and many devices have been made to protect sea divers and explorers from these and many other harmful effects of sea water. And to make it drinkable, great strides were made due to high technology in the desalinisation techniques of sea water. Earlier on, in the pre-scientific era, the Muslims employed a method of desalinisation that was also effective that time. Ibn Al-Jawziyya gave a brief description of two methods that were employed to decrease its salinity and to reduce the harmfulness of sea water:

> *...To place the sea in a recipient on which are placed bamboo sticks covered with fluffy linen.*
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> *The recipient will be put on fire until the steam reaches the linen. If the steam is intense, the linen is pressed to obtain the sufficient quantity of water.*
>
> *The linen will acquire a pure steam and only the bitter water will remain in the recipient.*
>
> *Another preventive means is to dig a hole on the beach in which the salty water will filter. Another hole will be made nearby that allows the sea water to filter in it. A third hole will be made until the salty water becomes sweet. If a person needs to drink turbid water, he should throw in it apricot pips or a piece of teak wood or an inflamed firebrand that would be extinguished or Armenian argil or fine wheat flour and its mud will deposit in the bottom.*[2]

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1 Al Jawziyya, The *Prophetic Medicine*, p. 458
2 Ibid.

In these two methods, filtration process was used, in the first filtration and steaming, while the second involves serial filtration processes. In this way the sea water was desalinised for drinking and for other uses. Islam attaches much importance to science and even in the pre-western scientific era, its science of water was startlingly modern in approach. Little wonder then that Islamic science was the precursor of western science. Most of its principles are found well developed with high technology. But the principles remain the same. In Islam, water must be in its high degree of purity and cleanliness. These determine its use for ritual and sanitary purposes. It is necessary, therefore, to purify water.

Prevention of Pollution of Water

Islam prohibited the use of bad water whether for domestic or ritual uses. The importance of the habit of using good water was recognised and various methods of water purification were devised. The importance of good water on the health of the individual and community can never be overemphasised. Purification of water like that of the body and clothes are of crucial importance to Islamic religious ethics. This purity of water can now be achieved by a combination of the following measures: protection of the source, storage, coagulation and sedimentation, filtration, disinfection and boiling.[1]

Islamic medicine is essentially preventive. A clean and adequate supply, were recognised right from the prophetic era that are essential precondition for religious, social and economical development. It takes all effective precautions against water pollution. In its comprehensive preventive strategy, Islam recognises that protection of the source of water is crucial to purity as well as purification of water. It also stresses the importance of covering water pots, jars and milk containers. Once Abu Hamod Ansari (r.a) came with a pot of milk to the Prophet (s.a.w): "Why have you not covered it by placing a piece of wood thereon?" So he queried for this action. The great health Teacher was also reported to have said:

> *When a dog drinks water in the pot of anyone of you, let him wash it seven times.*

He also said:

> *When anyone among you rises from sleep, let him not immerse his hands in any vessel till he washes it thrice because he does not know where his hand passed the night.*

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[1] Lucas and Gilles, *Textbook of Public Health Medicine*, p. 292

It becomes obligatory for every Muslim to protect the source of his water supply right from the river up to the kitchen. All animals, rodents, flies and many other harmful agents must be kept away from food and drinks. He prevented direct or indirect pollutions of the surface water. Obviously, he laid down a solid foundation of hygiene and public health, he also enunciated eloquently against water pollution. Is it not then wonderful that an unlettered and unschooled man arising from a people that were most uncultured to emerge and teach the world in all the departments of life the Right Way to things? This is Divine Agent in action.

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) also prohibits drinking direct from a water-skin. Hazrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri (r.a) said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) had forbidden drinking water directly from a water skin (Muslim and Bukhari). One of the reasons for this prohibition is that drinking directly from a water–skin or pot might let something injurious already in the water may slip in the stomach. There another reason which goes contrary to hygienic principle that is exchange of saliva. When people drink from a common water skin or kettle, etc they invariably exchange saliva stains from the mouth of such water container. Injury can arise from drinking inadvertently harmful insects and chemical irritants. There is also the potential risk of microbial contamination of the saliva. This ruling must have led to the use of cups in drinking water from such containers. Lastly, the remaining water may become increasingly harmful when a large number of people drink from common water – skin.

Drinking water from an open container has its own risks. Islam has recognised such risks and prescribed certain rules to reduce them to the barest minimum. Concerning the risks of breathing and blowing in the container, Ibn Abbs (r.a) related that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) prohibited breathing in the pot and blowing upon it (Tirmidhi). Abu Sa'eed Khudri (r.a) said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) had forbidden blowing over drinking water. A man who saw some impurities in water asked: "What about undesirable articles like straws floating on the surface of the water? The Prophet (s.a.w) the great health Teacher of all times, answered:

> *"Run them out." The man further said: "My thirst is not satisfied with one gulp." The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) said: "You may then take breath, but put away the vessel from your mouth" (Tirmidhi).*

A Muslim is advised against drinking water containing particles as well as breathing into it. The former could be vehicles of germs and also be physically injurious to the gastro-intestinal tract while in the latter breaths contain numerous droplets of millions of germs. Islam puts strict measures, yet practicable and simple, to ensure the protection of water source and the

water. Until the water is safely drunk, it forbids blowing and breathing into drinking water because such actions introduce nasal and oral bacteria into the water with high risk of danger. These health rules were advanced in Arabia by the Saviour of human civilisation. He also taught the Muslims how to determine quality of water.

Assessing Water Quality

In the 7th century and several centuries afterwards, the methods of assessing water and its quality have not reached the present sophistication. However, the underlying principles were laid down. The idea that water must be exposed to scrupulous examination was by itself commendable. Water in the Prophetic era was not used indiscriminately for drinking and ritual purposes. It had to be physically examined closely using the crude method of inspection and analysis through taste and smell. Any physical change in the qualities of the water such as taste, colour and smell arose suspicion and was discarded as impure and unfit for domestic uses. It was this idea that grew and the methods of assessing water quality improved with scientific progress. Two types of water were initially recognised and subsequent divisions made as subdivisions. Islam had laid the foundation of assessing water quality at a time when it was viewed unnecessary.

This evaluation, although was evolved several centuries ago, however remains valid to date. According to this ancient science of water falls into the following types:

Mutlaq Water

This is water that is both clean and a cleaner. The keyword is 'cleaner' because first, it has to be clean to be a cleaner, that is something which cleanses. The essence of Islamic purification is to be cleaned. Thus from this standpoint, it is this water that is recommended for *wudu* and *ghusl*. The former is also called "lesser ablution" or ablution while the latter is called "greater ablution" or bathing. Examples of *Mutlaq* water are rain water, brooks, streams and springs. Others are wells, seas and snow.[1]

Muqayyad Water

This type of water though clean cannot be used for *ghusl* and *wudu*. It is not a cleanser. When something clean is mixed with *mutlaq* water, the water becomes *muqayyad*. It retains one property and loses the other. This

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[1] Endless Bliss, *Fourth Fascicle*, Second Edition Waqf Ikhlas Publication Istanbul, Turkey (1989), p. 78

varies directly with the quality and quantity of the amount of the contaminant. The amount of the mixed substance should be more than the amount or volume of the water that is mixed with it, to lose its cleansing property. This can be achieved in four ways. First, something solid, such as a sponge or grass absorbs the water completely. Second, something which is not used in cleaning like soap is heated in the water. Meat broth and bean juice are of this sort. In this case, it becomes *Muqayyad* water even if its three properties (colour, taste and smell) did not change and even if it did not lose its fluidity. Similarly, a solid substance gets in contact with the water, if it changes it even without any change in its viscosity, the water becomes *muqayyad,* e.g. water containing saffron on sulphate of iron or water containing oak apple.[1] Lastly, when a liquid substance is mixed with water and two out of the three properties of the water are changed, the water becomes *muqayyad*. The three properties are colour, taste and odour, thus any loss of the two transforms *mutlaq* to *muqayyad* water. However, if only one has changed, it is not rendered *muqayyad*, e.g. water mixed with vinegar.[2]

Furthermore, when one or two of its properties are like those of water, or if a property of the water, which is unlike that of the substance has been changed in the mixture, it becomes *muqayyad*. Milky water is an example of this type because being odourless is common in both of them, and so is water mixed with melon juice because being colourless and odourless are common to both of them. However, if all three of its properties remain unchanged, or if the amount of the liquid mixed water is more than or equal to the water, the mixture becomes *muqayyad* and it is not permissible to perform an ablution or *ghusl* with it. The case is the same when *musta'mal* water (that which has been used in an ablution or ghusl) gets mixed with the water.[3]

Musta'mal Water

Musta'mal water, that is water used in ablution or in ghusl, and water used as *qurbat*, water used in washing the hands before and after meals for being sunnat becomes *najs* when the limbs are washed with it. According to some scholars, the water becomes *najs,* it becomes *najs* after the limbs, or

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1 Endless Bliss, Fourth Fascicle, p.78
2 Ibid., p. 79
3 Ibid., p. 80

clothes, have fallen into it. They do not make the place on which they fall first dirty.[1]

The Islamic law governing cleanliness and hygiene forbids putting of hands into clean water because, obviously, dirty hands contaminate both food and drink. The hands must be washed clean before they are immersed into water or food. A simple teaching of hygiene is: "dirty hands contaminate." In this way *Mutlaq* can be reduced to *musta'mal* water. The Prophet (s.a.w) declared:

> *When someone of you gets up from his sleep, he shall make ablution and cleanse his nose thrice because the devil passed the night over his nose.*

The hands of the Muslims must always be kept clean, he is aware of this. But in sleep such awareness is temporarily lost, he might not be aware of what happened inadvertently such as staining them with harmful impurities. So from the point of view of Islamic hygiene he must not assume them to be clean. But he should act wisely to clean them thoroughly as soon as he wakes up.

This proper discernment in the selection and use of water is necessary because of Islamic demands of rituals and hygiene. Water is easily contaminated or polluted; and such discernment is extremely necessary and relevant for the prevention of water-borne diseases. However, other cultures until recently lacked such awareness of water hygiene. This scrupulous analysis and selection are important from the standpoint of prevention of pollution from germs and harmful substances. The importance of Islamic science of water becomes valid even today when water is discovered to be an efficient solvent. One of the most important life of water - sustaining properties - is its effectiveness as a solvent. A solvent is a substance in which another material – the solute dissolves by dispersing as individual molecules or ions. The resulting product is a solution. Water can easily be contaminated by many harmful solutes with deleterious effects. Types of water as enunciated by Islamic science of water are by no means exhausted. It also introduced the concept of 'remaining' to distinguish another type of water from the two mentioned above.

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[1] *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, p. 82

Remaining Water

If a living being drinks from a container or a small pool, the water left this is called remaining, from point of view of hygiene. Remaining water could be injurious. However, a person's saliva remaining after drinking from a container is clean, provided the person is healthy, but the remaining of pigs, dogs, beast of prey, a cat that has just eaten a mouse, their flesh and milk are all *ghaliz najasat,* that is strong impurities. Invariably, they are injurious to health.

Remaining cannot be used for *wudu* and *ghusl.* It may even be harmful to health. The saliva of most of the wild animals including domestic ones like that of dogs, for example, may contain deadly viruses including *rhabdoviruses,* the causative organisms for rabies. It is important preventive measure to avoid such remaining. Thus Islam is a faith of science. It protects the health of its worshippers from all harms. The water that cannot be used for drinking is also unfit for ritual purification, in a subtle expression of Health in Worship. Islam also possesses two Golden Keys: the *Kalimat Shahada* and *attahara,* the former opens the gate of salvation while the latter opens the gate of health. A Muslim is the only person in possession of these Golden Keys. It is, therefore, important to have penetrating insights into the science of *at-tahara* to appreciate its importance in the pre-scientific era, its accord with modern personal hygiene and its timeless validity.

Islam evolved a concept of filth or *najasat* at a time when such a notion was largely unknown in the rest of the world. Filth is even classified according to types in the science of *attahara. Najasat* is measured according to how much it is on a person starting to perform salat. To rule is to get rid of it wherever you come across it. Filth is an enemy of a Muslim in two ways: health and worship. Hence a Muslim and filth have no common ground.

Types of Filth or Najasat

To a Muslim after *kufr* or disbelief then *najasat* or filth is his second deadly enemy. When it stains the body or clothes it vitiates wudu without good ablution, however, salat is invalidated. Hence by getting rid of filth appropriately a Muslim preserves his health by keeping away from filths which contain a variety of deadly germs. Islam considers the following as najasat: blood, urine and faeces, alcohol, saliva of dogs; flesh, fat and bones of pigs, animal dung, etc. These and many other similar things constitute major sources of deadly bacteria and viruses. They may come, therefore, in

different forms such as, for example, sewage, sullage, as well as rubbish dumps. Thus a Muslim cleanses himself scrupulously for spiritual reason and derives immense health benefits. When Muslims discovered Europe, however, these sanitary ideas unknown to the West slowly and steadily spread into Europe. This spread of Islamic culture into the West was aided and facilitated not only the scornful attacks of the Muslims on the Westerners to change their filthy habits but largely because of perils of poor hygiene which became more severed towards the end of the 18th century. The total numbers of Muslim visitors who travelled in Christian Europe between the advent of Islam and the French Revolution was exceedingly small.[1] But those of the Europeans to the Muslim lands was on the other hand large. However, the crusades opened the gate for torrential spread of Islamic culture into the West.

Islam is well in advance in public and environmental health. It has laid the solid foundation of all the health sciences from which the West has built upon the present western science. It provides a better understanding of behavioural factors influencing water use and defecation practices at a time when such factors were largely unknown or neglected in the West. Until the late 19th century bathing and anal washing were considered a taboo in England and the rest of Western Europe. This part of the world was known for accumulation of waste products and their indiscriminate disposal represented a grave hazard to public health. Street cleansing and sewerage in England were poor, posing serious danger to the public. In Newcastle accumulation of up to 50 tons were found in the courts, so filthy were the fever – ridden streets that it was reported from Manchester in 1842, the vehicle used for conveying the patients to the House of Recovery (Isolation hospital) often cannot be driven along them, and the patients are obliged to be carried to it from considerable distances.[2]

When filthy habit became ingrained in people, only sanitary reformers could dispel it, to enforce sanitary consciousness. The public health movement was strongly opposed by a counter movement referred to as "Defenders of Filth" who saw nothing wrong with excrement other than its economic value. Lawes defended it thus:

> *...The Almighty endowed the same particles of matter with the property of entering into a variety of forms, at one time the most*

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1 Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, pp.279-280.
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 24

> *offensive, and at another the most attractive. In this ever changing circle nothing is without its value, not is lost.*[1]

While Picton's argument in its defence was stated:

> *Humanity feels fastidious and shrinks away from any prolonged contamination with filth of organic origin. We know in our bones that it is waste. What we have now to establish as the though and practice of responsible people is that the time has come when the complete utilisation of organic wastes must be ensured as to supply humanity with its food and with most of its raw materials.*[2]

These historic accounts had indicated that up to the middle of 19th century cleansing and sewerage in most cities in Europe were ineffective and largely ignored such that accumulation of waste products, mountain heaps of human excreta were commonplace in England, the mother of all European nations. The sanitary disposal of human excreta was only done irregularly if at all, in the poor districts. Although scavengers were contracted to remove garbage but "accumulations of up to 50 tons were found in the courts", though appalling it was a historic reality.

The Muslim's view of filth or excreta or urine is quite different from the perspective viewed by the non – Muslim. To the Muslim filths and stains of urine could lead him to perdition. So that for health as well as religious grounds a Muslim strives assiduously to rid himself and his community of all forms of filth. It is from this point of view that we must appreciate the contribution of *attahara* to the evolution of modern hygiene in modern times. It laid the basis for it, when the Prophet (s.a.w) declared that "cleanliness is half of faith", it was to mean that a Muslim must be clean and tidy, in mind and body all the time. He also emphasised that *salat* in a dirty, filthy and impure place such as rubbish dumps, slaughter house, toilet and bathing place is unlawful. The Muslims were and are prodded to keep all these places clean all the time. Further, the great Teacher of health mentioned that certain persons were punished in hell because they always allowed urine stains on their bodies and clothes. So they were punished for filthy behaviour. The warning jolted the believers to be strict on hygienic rules. The Muslims were to ensure that cleanliness and hygiene have become their second nature. And Islamic scholars have written a number of treatises on hygiene and general cleanliness based on the Holy Qur'an and

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[1] J. B. Lawes, *The Sewage of London*, W. Trounce Printer. London (1855), p.4.
[2] L. J. Picton, *Nutrition and The Soil*, Devin-Adair Co., New York (1949), p.34.

Sunnah. A number of Islamic literature were found to be exceedingly valuable to the West. A Muslim, therefore, has every reason to avoid urine or faecal stains and all najasat in general from religious standpoint.

Ibni Abidun, an illustrious Islamic scholar, wrote many treatises on these subjects of *Najasat* and *Attahara*, in relation to *Salat*. The latter is an essential condition for *Salat*: "There must be no *najasat* or impurity on the body, on the clothes of a person making *salat* (prayer) or on the place where he prays. A handkerchief, a headgear, a skullcap, a turban, mests and *najs* (patterns) are considered clothing. Since the hanging part of a scarf wrapped around one's neck moves as one moves when performing in Salat, it is included with the clothes, and the Salat will not be accepted if it is not clean. When those parts where one steps and puts one's head on the cloth spread on the ground are clean, salat can be performed.

However, any solid filth on one's skin or clothes and fluid such as urine and blood, even if it is on the mest, can be cleaned only by washing. Soil smeared with some fluid *najasat*, such as blood, wine (alcoholic liquids), urine, is equated with solid *najasat*. When solid *najasat* is on a belt, a bag, mests or shoes, it can be cleaned by scrubbing and washing. Thus filth can be rid of by thorough cleaning or by the use of ire (sterilisation).

Solid or fluid, any *najasat* on things not absorbent, but smooth and shining, such as glass, mirrors, bones, nails, knives, painted or varnished furniture, becomes clean when it is rubbed with the hands, soil or any clean thing until it loses three peculiarities (colour, odour and taste). When a bloody knife or sheep's head is held over a fire until the blood disappears, it becomes clean.

When any soil on which some *najasat* has fallen is dried by the wind and loses its three peculiarities, it becomes pure and one can perform *namaz* on it. But it cannot be used for *tayammum*. This is pertinent from the standpoint of general hygiene because the soil might still harbour some harmful microbes. If any cloth, mat, clothes or one's skin were on the soil, these would not become clean when they dry. When these are smeared with *najasat*, they must be washed before the *namaz* (salat) is performed. Bricks, fence paved on the ground, grass, trees growing in soil, rocks, like soil, become pure when dry.

Muslim scholars have always been painstakingly thorough in the analysis of filths and how to get rid of them. Thus as teachers of hygiene to all nations, every Muslim must be strict to hygienic rules, he must:

- If any najasat falls on your body or clothes, then it must be washed immediately and thoroughly. A najasat that cannot be seen easily

e.g. urine falling on body or clothing, must be washed three times. Clothing must be washed and squeezed three times.

- If a wild animal or dog or pig puts its mouth in a small quantity of water, milk, food, etc. such foodstuff becomes impure and cannot be used.
- If an animal puts its mouth in pots, saucepans, cups, etc., they become impure and can be made pure by thoroughly washing them at least three times.[1]

These Islamic rules of hygiene though revealed in the 7th century are startling modern and perfectly in accord with sound medical philosophy. They had anticipated the modern concept of sanitation by several centuries. Islam leaves no stone unturned in matters relating to najasat. In fact, it goes the whole hog to meticulously classified filth and to get rid of it.

When dried semen is rubbed off its place the skin becomes clean. If the semen is wet, but if the blood is either wet or dry, the clothes or the skin must be washed. Depending upon the kind of *najasat* and the place smeared with it, there are over thirty kinds of cleaning, employed in the science of *attahara* to get rid of *najasat* of whatever kind. The objective is to achieve physical purity. There are two kinds of *najasat*.

Types of Najasat

The concept of najasat has little of no significance in societies lacking primordial tradition. Its significance was however, realised after the human decimation by "sanitary reformers" – cholera, typhoid and bacillary dysentery, etc. During the first half of the nineteenth century, cholera and typhoid epidemics caused by water pollution, lack of personal and environmental hygiene had not only threatened human life but also wreaked severed destruction of lives due to pestilences. In addition, environmental pollution undermined the delicate balance of global ecology. The perils of pollution are potentially deadly as well as rapidly spreading.

The Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) had in the 7th century pointed out the hazards of najasat, which for the convenience of implementation of sanitary measures was divided into strong and weak. But whether a najasat is strong or weak, it must be got rid of because it vitiates wudu and is potentially harmful to health. Thus every Islamic city must rid itself of filth and the muhtasib had the responsibility of ensuring that it was successfully and efficiently accomplished.

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[1] A. D. Ajijola, in Islam Series Book No. (ii) *Prayers (Saluat). Straight Path.* publ. Kaduna, p.6.

By comparison, najasat in other cultures had little or no such religious and health implications. It was only when najasat in its biological and chemical characteristics had set "crisis" through water-borne pollution in London and some other large towns that led to the "health movements" of the 1830s. In Islamic society such a movement was uncalled for because every Muslim must individually undertake such a function as a religious duty. To reiterate, the work of this health movement was only one of the duties of the muhtasib. Thus, a Muslim has a religious cultivated aversion to sewage and sullage which are considered as strong filth or najasat. It is with this preamble in mind that this classification of filth should be appreciated especially when it is considered to have evolved in the 7th century.

Ghaliz Najasat

All things that necessitate an ablution or ghusl when they issue from human body, flayed but not tanned skin, flesh, excrement and urine of those animals whose flesh cannot be eaten (except a bat) and of their young; excrement, urine and mouthful vomited matter of a sucking baby; blood of man and of all animals; wine, carrion, pork, excrement of domestic fowls, excrement of pack animals and sheep and goats are *ghaliz* or stong, that is, *qaba*. Blood is *qaba najasat* in all the four *madhhabs* (or schools of thought), semen, mazy and the turbid white thick liquid called *wadi* that issues after urination are qaba najasat.[1] All intoxicant drinks, like wine, liquor brandy, etc., are qaba najasat. It is compulsory to wash even a mote of any qaba najasat completely. This is of fundamental importance in modern hygiene and sanitation (*najasati ghalize)* is strong pollution. Invariably, it is injurious to health.

Khafif Najasat

With respect to cleaning and making *najs* when dropped into a liquid, there is no difference between *qaba najasat* (strong) and *khafif najasat* (weak). If any falls on the body or clothes, then it must be washed immediately and thoroughly, a najasat that cannot be seen easily e.g. sullage water mixed with faeces and urine, it must be washed three times.

However, drops of urine and blood splashing on one's clothes that is equal in size to a point of a pin, drops of mud splashing on one in the street, steam consisting of *najasat*, gases coming on one in the streets, steam consisting of *najasati* gases coming out after they might have touched some

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[1] Endless Bliss, Fourth Fascicle, p.69

najasat or wind or steam that is formed in stables and baths are usually unavoidable means of contamination. Hence it is difficult to avoid them, are excusable when they touch one's clothes are wet skin, as *darurat* or absolute necessity. They must, however, be rid of as soon as possible. In Islam any form of *najasat* is an enemy so kill it before it kills you.

Purification from Najasat

The method of purification from contamination with *najasat* is natural type; it was employed effectively, it included the use of washing and scrubbing, burning and on some occasion chemicals like in tanning skin were used. It was an era when scientific methods were not developed but the basis of their foundation was being laid down. And the natural methods were believed to be effective in purification. For example, when the skin of a carcass has been tanned with a chemical that is no longer *najs*, it becomes clean. The aim of the methods employed was to get rid of filths entirely, it was perceived to be harmful to health and unacceptable in Islamic worship. However, when with progress of knowledge, filth was discovered to contain infectious agents more advanced techniques were devised to get rid of it, such as the use of chemicals and disinfectants. Thus it could be said without fear of contradiction that it was due to the evolution of the science of *attahara* that led to the evolution of modern hygiene.

Najasat can be cleaned with clean water, with water that has been used for ablution or ghusl or with non-viscous liquids, such as vinegar, rose-water, and saliva. It cannot be cleaned with milk or oil.[1] Water that has already been used for ablution or *ghusl* is called *Musta'mal* water. But it is not a cleaner of *hadas*. *Najasat* can be cleaned or washed with this type of water. It must be stressed that it is only pure water is that which is clean and it cleanses. One cannot make another ablution or *ghusl* with it. For practical health reason, water cannot be used twice for ablution. It has been used already and has lost its cleansing property. It is *makruh* to drink it or to make dough with it. If it splashes on one's bath-towel, clothes or into the bath basin, or if any water used for cleaning some filth which is equal to a point of a pin splashes, it does not cause them to be *najs* (foul). If water used for cleaning impurities forms a small pool somewhere, things smeared with that water become *najs*. If a person without an ablution or without a *ghusl*, menstruating women, a polytheist, or disbeliever dips his hand or arm not smeared with *najasat* into any water and takes some water or picks

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[1] *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, p.71

up a bowl in it, the water does not become foul in any of the four *madhhabs* (Islamic school of thoughts). If more than half of the water flowing over some *najasat* touch the *najasat*, the water becomes *najs*. This means that a small amount of faeces introduced into a large quantity of water renders it impure. If a small quantity of the water touches it and if the three peculiarities of the *najasat* do not exist in the water, it does not become *najs*. When *najasat* burns, its ashes become clean. Bread can be baked in an oven heated by burning dried dung. If a donkey, pig, or any carrion falls into salt and turns into salt, it becomes clean. If dung falls into a well and turns into mud in process of time, it becomes clean. This indicates that Islam considers that a najasat can be rendered clean through chemical process, a notion that anticipated a modern concept by several centuries.

Grape juice is clean. It becomes *najs* when it turns into wine. Wine becomes clean when it changes into vinegar. If *najasat* splashes on one's clothes or body, and if one cannot find out where that place is, it will become clean if one washes the place that one guesses to be the spot. If one discovers the correct place after *namaz*, one does not perform the *namaz* again. When a threshing animal urinates on some wheat, if any part of the wheat is washed, given as a present, eaten or sold, the remainder becomes clean.

When any dirt or blood noticed after it has dried up is cleaned away, the place where it was found becomes clean. There is no prescribed number of washing. Once will be enough if it is removed by washing once. If the *najasat* is removed the existence of a colour and odour is not harmful. It does not need to be washed with hot or soapy water.

Tissue or body dyed with *najs* dye becomes clean when it is washed three times. It is better to wash it until colourless water drops from it. If *najasat*, such as some alcoholic medicine, is syringed under the skin, it will become clean when the syringed spot is washed three times. It is not necessary to raise the skin in order to clean under it. If one's flesh is smeared with a *najs* medicine which one has put on one's skin or wound, or if one has put *najs* eye salve on one's eyes, one does not have to wash one's flesh or eyes.[1] The outer part, as well as the dried blood remaining on any wound, is to be washed away in such a manner as not to cause any harm. If it will be harmful, it should not be washed. But a person who has *najasat* on himself equalling one dirham cannot be an imam. One's things smeared with invisible *najasats*, such as alcohol (spirit) and urine should be washed in a basin or washing machine with clean water several times until one

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[1] *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, p. 72

guesses they have become clean. If they become clean after washing once, it will be enough. The water and other things in the machine will not become *najs* during the washing. Those who are over-scrupulous and dubious that is perfunctory must wash them three times and squeeze the water out after each washing. It is enough for every person to squeeze as hard as he can things that cannot be squeezed because they are rotten, thin or big, such as carpets, body, leather which absorbs *najasat*, must be dried after each washing. That is, you must wait until the water stops dripping. It is not necessary to dry or squeeze jugs, bowls and copperware which do not absorb *najasat* or anything washed in the sea or in a river (in lavabo).[1]

Purification from Contamination

The term contamination is used to imply pollution from a variety of filthy things or at least things liable to infect people with disease such as blood, faecal matter, pus which leaves the body, animal carcasses, and similar impurities by which diseases are transmitted. To this effect, Islam urges believers on the cleanliness of clothing during the time of prayer, and avoids all unpleasant things: "And thy garments keep free from stains! And all abomination shun!" (Muddaththir, 74:3-4).

The Prophet (s.a.w) also advised that a Believer must wash his hands after waking up. They might be inadvertently stained with *najasat*.

The Founder of Modern Age insisted on proper sanitation to every Muslim male or female alike. Lest we forget we were told by Peter Baldry that Europeans lacked insistence on proper sanitation as such their houses also lacked drains or privies. This lack of lavatories Baldry told led to the habit of house dwellers filling chamber pots with excreta and after some days, when completely full, and with a shout of "*Gardez l'eau*", emptying the contents out of the window into the streets; a habit he said that was not without risk to passers by, and of course a practice which led to persistent pollution and stench in all streets. This complacent attitude to faeces led to the famous Great Stench of London, a historic reality that was quoted repeatedly for the sake of emphasis. Lionel Rose added another vista to our gaze of the pre-Islamic Europe. When cleanliness becomẽ well cultivated a sense of body care then arose from Muslims as part and parcel of religious mores.

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[1] *Endless Bliss*. Fourth Fascicle, p.73.

Body Care

The central focus of *attahara* is the establishment in a person a sense of hygiene. This is because "Religion is built on cleanliness." This means that inward purity is the real aim but outward purification is a necessary preparation. According to Islamic tenets purification of the body, is preliminary to the attainment of the purification of the heart. Thus in Islam the notion; "*Mean sana in corpore sano"* the well known Latin proverb, which means, "A pure mind exists in a pure body" is not a mere rhetoric but a practical reality. To a practising Muslim, *najasat* is deadlier than a snake. The latter only kills the body while the former kills both the body as well as the spirit of a man. Islam has laid down the ethics of personal hygiene that is comprehensive, simple and practicable. The cleanliness of the body is placed at high premium. After *Istibra*, *Istinja* is made. After *istinja* with water, the organ is wiped dry with a piece of cloth. Every woman must put *Kursuf* (sanitary pad) on her front.[1] All these steps were recommended from the inexhaustible knowledge of the Holy Qur'an in the 7th century Arabia. To achieve personal hygiene, Islam recommends that environmental sanitation must be pursued with vigour side by side – reducing the hazardous and hostile elements in the environment, e.g. by minimizing environmental pollution of all types. Hence personal and environmental hygiene are inseparable. Although the health benefits of istijmar and instinja were highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, emphasis should have to be paid to their cardinal importance to body care as well as to reappraise their importance in Islamic worship.

Istinja and Istijmar

Islam in its applied purification has introduced two methods of washing after toilet – *istinja*, the washing of the private parts and *istijmar*, the cleaning of the private parts with stones and pieces of wood (like in the modern use of toilet paper). *Istijmar* is followed immediately by *istinja*, This is with a view to establishing cleanliness after the call of nature. Among other things, purity is an important part of Islamic legal system. Poor compliance attracts sins and punishment because cleanliness is equated with half of faith. The practice of washing the orifices that cleans the body after calls of nature, is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. It is mandatory that every Muslim protects himself against faecal stains and drops of urine. The Prophet (s.a.w) warned that: "Most punishments in the grave are due to urine" (Bukhari). They were punished because they

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[1] Endless Bliss, *Fourth Fascicle*, p. 77

allowed urine drops to stain their body and clothing. A habit that is unbecoming of a Muslim.

Shaykh M.S. Al-Munajid, stressed the need to observe the rules of purity strictly. He stated that:

> *While urinating, one should not get up before the urine stops. We should also avoid positions where drops from the urine fall back on us, or neglect "istinjaa and Istijmmaar." The infidels make the urinal fixed onto walls and are exposed. One uses it in the view of passers-by with little or no shame. Those who imitate them commit two forbidden acts, namely, removing and wearing clothes with impurities whilst in public.*[1]

Cleaning one's front or back after *najasat* is called *istinja*. It must be preformed in secret or seclusion because exposure of genitals publicly is anti-Islamic habit and it is uncouth and barbaric in a civilised society. However, cleaning that is, *taharat*, is not necessary when gas or flalulence is passed except it comes along with faeces. *Istinja is sunnat i muakkada*. In other words, after urinating and emptying the bowels in a rest room, it is *sunnat* for a man or woman to clean his or her front and back (private organs) with a stone or with some water so as not to leave any urine and excrement. The number of washings needed has not been prescribed by the *sunnat*. After cleaning with a stone, it is *sunnat* to wash again with water. But if one cannot make an *istinja* with water without opening one's private parts near others, one gives up the *istinja* with water even if a large amount of excrement is left. One does not open one's private parts, nor perform *salat* in such a condition. If one opens them, one will become a sinner who has committed a *haram*. It is unethical to expose one's private part to public glare, privacy must be maintained at all cost at the time of call of nature. When, one finds a secluded place, one makes *istinja* with water and performs the *salat* again. The statement: "when there is a *darurat* involving relieving oneself or in performing a *ghusl*, a man can open his private parts in the presence of other men and a woman can do it in the presence of other women," is weak. Under such conditions it is necessary to make a *tayammum* instead of a *ghusl*. In Islamic ethos privacy involving the private organs must be maintained as much as possible. Thus it is not permissible to bath, urinate or defecate in public.

It is *tahrimi makruh* to make an *istinja* with bones, food, manure, bricks, pieces of pots or glass, coal, animal food, other possessions, costly things

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[1] Muhammad Saalih L-Munajjid, *Unheeded Unlawful Things*, pp. 157 – 159

such as silk, things thrown away from mosques, zamzam water, leaves and paper (excluding toilet paper). Even a blank piece of paper must be respected. It is permissible to make an *istinja* with pieces of paper or newspaper containing terrestrial names or writings that have nothing to do with the *din* or religious writings. But one cannot make an *istinja* with any paper containing Islamic letters. It is permissible to clean semen or urine with a piece of cloth and then wash the cloth. A seriously ill person without a husband or wife does not have to make an *istinja*. But he has to have someone help him make an ablution. It is *makruh* to urinate or empty the bowels with one's front or back towards the *qibla*, standing or naked unless one has to. A *ghusl* is not permissible at a place where urine has accumulated. It is not permissible to urinate in a place used for making ghusl. But this is permissible if the urine will not accumulate flows away. Water used for *istinja* becomes *najs*; it must not be allowed to splash on clothes. Therefore, when making an *istinja* one must open one's private parts and do it in a secluded place. *Istinja* cannot be made by inserting one's hand into one's pants in front of the washbasin and thereby wash one's organ by making it touch the water in one's palm. When smeared with drops of urine, water in one's palm becomes *najs* and causes the pants which it drops on to become *najs*. If the areas which this water drops on amounts to more than the palm's width, the *namaz* will not be accepted, if the person (who has so much urine on his pants) is the *imam;* others cannot perform *namaz* behind him.

When the concept of *istinja* was evolved and practised in the Muslim world from the 7th century, it was unknown in Europe and other parts of the world where people moved about with wet and dry faecal matter in their anal regions. *Istinja* was the precursor, therefore, of the modern use of toilet paper and toilet soap to wash the heavily stained faeces around anus, after the last drop of urine must have been expressed out before the urethral opening is cleaned and finally washed with water.

It is *wajib* (obligatory) for men to make an *istibra*, that is, not to leave any drops in the urethra, by walking, coughing or by lying on their left side. The importance of istibra is to allow complete urinary bladder so that dribbling of urine afterwards is avoided. This is especially important to take elderly men whose contraction bladder is weak or have enlarged prostrate (e.g. Benign prostatic hypertrophy). Thus istibra allows such men to empty their bladder. Women do not make an *istibra*. One must not make an ablution unless one is satisfied that there are no drops of urine left. One drop oozing out will both nullify the ablution and make one's underwears dirty. After *istibra*, *istinja* is made; after *istinja* with water, the organ is

wiped dry with a piece of cloth. Every woman must always put *kursuf* (some cotton or cloth) on the front. [1]

This Islamic ethics of privacy has received universal attention and acceptance. In cities and towns as well as in rural areas, toilets are constructed to public uses. Further, Islamic ethics of gender segregation in the use of toilet has also gained universal acceptance. Islamic ethics of personal hygiene have made the following separations pertinent and desirable. First, males and females should not share a common toilet; there should be male toilet and female toilet. Today this is indicated by the conspicuous signpost of `Female Toilet' and `Male Toilet'. It is a social crime for a female to go into a male's toilet and vice versa. This segregation is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. Secondly, this should be a separation with respect to place for defecation or urination, not for both. Today the urinal is made distinct from the toilet and also from bathroom. According to Islamic teachings the urinal, place where only urine is passed is constructed in such a manner that while passing urine backward splash of the urine is prevented. To stain oneself with drops of urine creates malodour, increases the risk of infection and more seriously is punishable in the hereafter death. Hence this separation of urinal from toilet and bathroom in modern lavatories is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. Lastly, privacy must be observed. All in all, the urinal, the bathroom and the toilet must be constructed in isolated places not in public glare to ensure that privacy is strictly observed. In addition, these places must be regularly washed so that they neither pollute the environment nor serve as foci or sources of fetid smell as well as abodes of cockroaches, filth flies and other harmful rodents or rats. Lest we forget, Europeans before Islamisation were wont to keeping their faeces in pots right close to their beds and where the pots were filled up they threw the contents out through the windows. And their houses – rooms and kitchens were often swarmed with monstrous black beetles, the result of bad drainage or the lack of a damp-course. Such houses were described as "fine houses hiding squalor below stairs." The word toilet was either absent in their lexicon or largely ignored. In fact, Victorian houses were never known to have toilets. The use of toilet was an alien culture in the West.[2] So which of the benefits of Islamic worship can you deny?

The exposition on personal hygiene so far appertains to both males and females. However, women possess certain characteristics that render them

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1 *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, p.77

2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.65.

impure not by their effort but by their own nature. Islam sets down rules and regulations to guide women in their states of impurities. These states are menstrual period and puerperium. It has been established by modern medicine that women in these periods are certainly impure. Islamic principle of personal hygiene had several centuries ago made *ghusl* compulsory at end of these periods of impurity. This obligatory bath is a religious prescription. However, they must observe the regular ethics of hygiene before the end of the period. What is important is that both menstrual and puerperal women must observe extra care in personal hygiene. The menstrual period or *Haid* calls for extra cleanliness in Islamic culture.

Haid and Menstrual Period

When a woman reaches the age of puberty or baligh she starts the menstrual bleeding which may last from 3 to 7 days every month. During this period she is exempted from all the major religious acts such as *salat*, fasting and touching the Qur'anic, etc., because from a religious standpoint she is considered impure. The menstrual bleeding is called *Haid*. She is expected to show extra – cleanliness in this period to obviate the fetid smell that usually comes with menstrual blood. This is often aggravated by poor hygiene. It is, therefore, recommended for women to put *Kursuf*, a piece of cloth or pure organic cotton, on the mouth of their vagina, and to apply perfume on it.[1] Islam considers the period of menstruation a state of impurity. It recommends a ritual bath after its completion. In, addition, to her regular sweat bath, a Muslim woman has additional obligatory bath – *ghusl Haidat* to perform every month to improve her body and perineal hygienic condition. In His recommendation of this bath the Almighty described the menstrual period. "A hurt and pollution: so keep away from women in their courses." Obviously, it is often associated with pains and psychological disturbance. It is also a state of impurity. This injunction is valid from the medical point of view. The Almighty then ordered that: "Approach them until they are clean." This entails purification, "and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean" (Baqara, 2:222). Thus a Muslim woman keeps herself clean to avoid the bodily smell of menstruation. Physical cleanliness and purity make for health, bodily and spiritual. In Islam both go side by side. It is the duty of every Muslim male and female alike to keep himself or herself clean so as to be Allah's Beloved. In one hadith it was reported that:

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[1] *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, p. 42

> *A woman asked the Prophet (s.a.w) about the bath which is taken after the menses are over. The Prophet (s.a.w) instructed her: "purify yourself with a piece of cloth scented with musk (perfume)", the woman asked: How shall I purify myself with it? I (Aisha) pulled her to herself and said, "Rub the place soiled with blood with it (Bukhari)."*

Even in the most delicate matters such as menstruation, purity and cleanliness are demanded. The great Health Teacher taught women to use a scented "sanitary pad" or *kursuf* to rid themselves of offensive odour. Here in the above quoted hadith his wife actively participated in educating women to use a scented cloth the precursor of modern sanitary pad. The use of *Kursuf* in the Islamic community later gave rise to the use of sanitary pad especially in the West. It is, however, *makruh* to insert the entire *Kursuf* into the vagina.[1] This is the modern use of tampon, which is a tube shaped mass of cotton or similar material a woman puts inside her vagina during her period.

The *Kursuf* is changed regularly until the cessation of the menstrual bleeding called *Istimrar*. When the bleeding stops the woman takes the bath or *ghusl-i-Haidat*. She awaits the onset of the next menstrual cycle. In this way a woman's personal hygiene is improved in this state of impurity. This Islamic standard hygiene, to reiterate, has achieved universal recognition and acceptance. However, the menstrual cycle is subjected to various changes in the duration of the blood flow and the volume of the blood flow. Excessive bleeding is called *istihada* or menorrhagia. It is considered abnormal, a sign of a disease, if it continues for long it may be dangerous so medication must be sought at the earliest possible time before complications set in, e.g. severe blood loss leading to anaemia. Even in the obstetrics and gynaecology Islamic culture can stand firmly on its own because it possesses all the basic health benefits. It also has a special considering of women's health in their confinement. The period of confinement or *nifas* calls for extra cleanliness in Islamic culture.

Nifas and Puerperal Period

The bleeding which occurs immediately following delivery is called *nifas*. This occurs within the first six weeks of confinement called puerperal period. The blood oozing out is called *lochia*. The flow is initially heavy but recedes gradually until it finally stops. The maximum period is forty

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[1] *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, p.42

days. This period of *nifas* is perhaps crucial to the identification of puerperium as a special period in which a woman is vulnerable to many disorders and infections. Islam considers this period not only a delicate period but a state of impurity. The woman must be assisted to observe extra care and cleanliness in this vulnerable period.

In the period of *nifas* the woman is exempted from *salat*, fasting, entering a mosque, holding the Qur'an, visiting the Ka'ba and sexual intercourse. All are *haram* or forbidden on the days of *haid* and *Nifas* also applies here. Later the woman, in either of the two, performs the *qada* of fast missed during the month of Ramadan, but not the ritual of *salat* she omitted. A woman must inform her husband on the commencement of her *haid* and her *istimrar* (when bleeding stops) a hadith declared: "A woman who conceals the beginning and the termination of her *haid* is accursed." Knowing the date of onset of menstrual cycle and the date of the last menstrual cycle assists in determining the age of gestation of pregnancy. Since sexual intercourse is prohibited during the periods of *haid* and *nifas*, it is unlawful to engage in anal sex. The penalty of sodomy with whoever is death, a hadith is explicit on the penalty of this "extremely vile deed." The Prophet (s.a.w) stated pointedly: "If you catch in the act those who commit homosexuality as did the tribe of Lut (the people of Sodom and Gomorrah) kill them both!"

Islam ensures that personal hygiene in both male and female is strictly observed. It takes into consideration as we have seen the peculiarity of women in their menstrual and puerperal periods. Islam concerns itself seriously with personal hygiene on the one hand and environment hygiene on the other hand. The two like the wings of aeroplane are important in maintaining a balance. Hence a Muslim is responsible for keeping the two in good condition to establish personal and environmental health. This is necessary for achieving 100 per cent healthy status.

Personal and Environmental Cleanliness

In Islam, hygiene is a very important part of lifestyle cleanliness prevents infection entering the human body. It guards against infection which leads to ill-health, disease and epidemics. To establish modern civilisation, therefore, disease out-breaks or epidemics must be forestalled and prevented. And Islam recognised that this can be achieved through meticulous hygiene. It preserves health and prevents disease, in order to achieve this lofty aim the Almighty ordered our Prophet (s.a.w) our universal model to keep his apparel or clothing clean and to meticulously avoid filth and rubbish (*Al-Muddathir*, 74:4-5). These verses were reverted

in the 7th century when the world was filled with filths of excrement and sewage and of uncouth behaviour.

It was at this period in the history of humanity, when Islamic society, right then and there stood distinctly unique; modern in outlook and behaviour. In this unique human society the Prophet's calls to scrupulous hygiene and good ethical behaviour were distinctively unique and revolutionary. The greatest Prophet called upon mankind to avoid filths and rubbish because as he pointed out: "Allah Himself is pure and He likes purity, Allah Himself is clean and He likes cleanliness" (Tirmidhi). The Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) then took up cudgel against those who pollute water or water course. He warned mankind to; "Avoid three things which are cursed: to urinate at the source of water in the shade and in the pathways" (Ibn Majah). The Muslims abide by these injunctions and remained well protected against water borne diseases and pestilences at a time when all nations of the world were devastated by them all. Europe for centuries resisted his ethical and spiritual revolution until a little a hundred years ago polluted rivers also served as sources of drinking water. In the West, epidemics stimulated public health movement whereas in the Islamic societies hygienic measures were put in place as obligatory acts of worship to prevent them. Thus personal and environment cleanliness were Islamic legacies to the modern world.

The objective of environmental sanitation is to create and maintain conditions in the environment that will promote health and prevent diseases. Man's external environment contains elements that are essential for life and for the maintenance of good health.[1] Islam as you already know is the pioneer not settler in matters relating to salvation, health promotion and disease prevention and success in all aspects oif human endeavour. And as we shall be aware presently, the modern environmental concept of sanitation is based on Islamic principles.[2] You can identify them yourself from this list:

- Provision of a safe and adequate water supply;
- Disposal of wastes;
- Provision of good housing;
- Air hygiene;
- Safeguarding of food;
- Disinfection;

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1 A.O Lucas and H.M Gilles, *Textbook of Public Health Medicine*, p. 289
2 Ibid.

- Control of insect vectors and other pests;
- Control of animal reservoirs of infection;
- Elimination of other hazard.

Most of these set objectives of environmental sanitation had their roots from Islamic teachings. In fact, the concept of "sanitary idea" was a newly born baby to the West, while in the Islamic East it was an elderly grandparent. For example, deepening the sewer in fleet street, London, (1845) became necessary due to epidemics, which stimulated the public health movement and Victorian streets were frequently dug up to install new sewers and water mains.[1] Whereas in the Islamic world public health movement and awareness had reached a full growth, where such awareness was grossly lacking, doctors were often suspected of crooked quackery, and of growing rich on the public's fears.[2] In fact, medical profession was satired; in 1831 – 33 there was cholera epidemic since they could not arrest the spread of the deadly disease. In France cholera divested its people in 1832, when there was a general panic in the whole country, as the cholera victim writes about.[3] Cholera, however, did awaken the sanitary conscience as never before. The *Times* wrote in 1848: "We must cleanse or perish."[4] What in essence the magazine cautioned was to "Islamise" or be annihilated. England chose Islamisation and adopted "cleanliness" its symbol. What indeed saved Europe from extermination on the surface of the earth in its war against the deadly microbes was the application of Islamic principles of hygiene and environmental sanitation.

It is imperative to use clean water in all the ritual acts. It means that which has not been contaminated already or used for some other purposes and has no colour, smell and taste. Where water is polluted, it loses cleansing power and is even deleterious to drinking and use. This shows from the outset that Islamic worship takes cognisant of infectious agents, as such makes attempt to get rid of them. Thus without pure water there is no ablution, because there is no *attahara*, the Golden key of Islamic worship, an *Ibadah* that is founded on meticulous hygiene.

The Qur'an and Sunnah lay great emphasis on cleanliness and piety. The purity of mind must reflect outwardly in physical purity as well. The imperative of purification of the mind and body, which man is made up of are repeatedly emphasised, and instances abound in the Holy Qur'an and

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 40
2 Ibid., p. 39
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 40

Sunnah. Allah *ta'ala* commanded the Prophet of Islam to be clean and pious: "And thy garment, keep from stain! And all abomination shun!" (Al-Muddaththir, 74:4-5).

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) was the quintessence of virtue, piety and personal cleanliness. His emphasis on inward (mind) and outward (body) purification was excellent. The Muslim mind must be pure and housed in pure body. The premium placed on cleanliness can never be overemphasised, this is because according to Hadith, "Purification is the key to prayer." And Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) also said, "Religion is built on cleanliness. Purification, therefore, is an integral part of Islamic faith. In fact, the Prophet (s.a.w) described it thus: "Purification is one-half of faith." It becomes necessary to reiterate these important fact. What the Prophet (s.a.w) was really doing at that time shuttling between Makkah and Madina was to prevent the Islamic world from becoming a pestilential nation, like Europe in the Dark Ages. Islamic worship, therefore, integrates health and hygiene, to enable a practising Muslim to achieve 100% healthy status. Hence cleanliness is of cardinal importance to Islamic faith. It is the bedrock of good health. Its equation with half of the faith underpins the medical benefits of this religious worship. It teaches that every Muslim must keep away from impurity or *najasat*. "And thy garments keep from stain," is Allah's Commandment to the Prophet (s.a.w) in particular and to all Muslims in general, thus maintainers of personal cleanliness is made compulsory to all Muslims.

Islam places personal cleanliness as an integral part of worship. No ritual act is accepted which is performed without purity of the body, the mind and place. Cleanliness is crucial to all acts of Islamic worship without which such acts are vitiated. It prescribes laws of hygiene that antedated the modern concept of hygiene and personal cleanliness, in relation to physical health and disease. It, in this regard, popularises the notion that Allah (s.w.t) is clean, accepts nothing that is unclean; He is pure and abhors impurity. Thus, it is inculcated in the mind of the Muslim that by keeping his body and environment clean he is pleasing Allah, the Most High, and in consequence his service to Him will be acceptable. It then becomes a religious duty of a Muslim to avoid dirty habits in all forms. The science of *attahara*, therefore, was the precursor of personal, public and environmental hygiene because such notions were unknown in the Medieval Europe. As a result the entire continent became pestilential in which two – thirds of the population was wiped out by deadly epidemics of different types.

Further, Islamic worship demands that a Muslim must be clean in three dimensions: his mind, his body and his place or environment. Islam had recognised long before the advent of medical sciences that dirty habits were injurious to health. Today, we know why cleanliness is important to health. Germs, vermin, insects and pests transmit various diseases. They breed in filthy environment. Cleanliness of the surrounding gets rid of them, and as a result reduces the risk of disease transmission. Every Muslim is educated to always keep neat and tidy, he is also made aware of the factors affecting the maintenance of physical health. His religious worship, therefore, impacts positively on his health and social wellbeing. Every Muslim is responsible for keeping himself fit and healthy, as a religious duty. With individual ascertained the community as a whole becomes healthy and vibrant. Each Muslim enjoins his brother to doing good and prevents him from doing evil deeds. This he can do by cultivating certain habits that are taught by the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Prophet (s.a.w) as a role model taught the Muslims these habits that must be emulated by every practising Muslim, habits and actions which due to constant repetition are carried out automatically, spontaneously or subconsciously. Most habits begin at conscious level; and after constant repetition become subconscious actions. They can be easily performed without any direction from the conscious part of the brain. For example, when a Muslim feels the call of nature, he simultaneously feels the urge to go to the privy on the one hand and on the other hand to look for some water to clean himself thereafter. This spontaneous response is due to the religious discipline that no prayer is accepted from a devotee with unclean private part. Thus, the habit of washing and cleaning this area has become the second nature of every Muslim. These healthful practices might appear simplistic but they were revolutionary several centuries ago. In fact, they were "sanitary ideas" that led to modern sanitation. moreover, they saved the Muslim communities from the ravages of pestilences and extermination by deadly germs.

Cleanliness is an integral part of Islamic culture is a fact that cannot be overemphasised. This is because right from his childhood, he is instilled with the basic Islamic rules of hygiene. Every child from the age of seven is disciplined to recognise and imbibe these rules. Firstly as religious duty, to make ablution at least five times a day and to take bath regularly, secondly to keep himself healthy to maintain physical health. In schools, when the rules of hygiene are taught to students, Muslims are not taught but are only being reminded. This is because personal hygiene and public health are important legacies the Prophet of Islam left for the modern world. They

have already been taught at home, as habits that form the integral component of Islamic worship. The Prophet (s.a.w) taught the basics of good health habits under the following personal cleanliness: diet and bowel action exercise and recreation, sleep, seeking for medication when there is ailment. The knowledge of *najasat* in its variety of forms provides the what, the how and the means to get rid of it by *attahara*. The bottom line is to make the Muslim scrupulously clean and tidy. It is his culture that originated and popularised the notion that "cleanliness is next to Godliness."

Every Muslim worth his name is conversant, before his adolescent age, with a simple waste disposal system. He grows up with the good hygienic behaviour and has an aversion for rubbish dumps and indiscriminate littering of sewage or disposal of wastes. His community whether in the village or in the urban area has established an efficient system to efficiently dispose sewage and waste products. Through a practicable system that is culturally and economically acceptable to them. He helps the system to achieve its set objectives. Getting rid of *najasat* is to him a religious duty that must be done! A waste disposal system agreeable to Islamic culture is similar with the modern method. Both are based on science. The broad objectives of a waste disposal system are: to eliminate hazards to man and to prevent pollution of the natural environment. These broad objectives are in tandem with the Islamic cardinal objectives. The Holy Qur'an states: "Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of the (deed) that the hands of men have earned" (Rum, 30:41).

Let us define the word "mischief" and see how the sacred verse fits into the context of our exposition. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English gives formal and informal definitions of the word "mischief": In the formal definition the word means damage or harm that may or may not have been intended. The informal definition means to deliberately cause quarrels or unfriendly feelings between people. The formal definition is chosen from the standpoint of the theme of discussion. This means pollution of the sea and land is a damage caused to the ecology with serious backlash to environment health. This evilness is condemned by the Holy Qur'an. Every Muslim must desist from polluting the environment. He is in the current terminology, environment friendly. So he is to ensure the successful achievement of the set objectives of waste disposal system. It is a religious obligation that he helps to eliminate hazards to man, through, amongst other things, removal of:

- Physical (e.g. broken bottles, empty cans);

- Chemical (e.g. poisonous chemicals in industrial wastes);
- Biological (e.g. the agents and vectors of disease harboured in wastes).[1]

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) encouraged the removal of things that can be injurious to man and animals. In fact, the act of doing this is considered *sadaqa*. It attracts Allah's blessings. Thus the Holy Qur'an as we have seen condemns any act leading to the damage or pollution of the ecology. The act is considered a mischief, therefore, it is evil. Hence, the Muslim must help to make his habitat safe for people and animals. He is as a religious obligation expected to prevent pollution of the natural environment. This means that he must desist from dumping of waste on land, the indiscriminate disposal into rivers and other surface waters or into the air, as they can cause destruction of the natural fauna and flora.[2] This mischief is prohibited in Islam.

It is therefore incumbent upon every Muslim to salvage all materials of economic value, unlawful to be wasteful; "Verily He does not love the wasteful" (A'raf, 7:31). The Noble Prophet (s.a.w) was said to have passed by his companion, Sa'ad, while the latter was performing ablution. He said to him: "Do not waste water." The latter enquired: "could there be wastage in (the use of) water?" He replied: "Indeed! Even if you were on the bank of a flowing river"! (Ibn Majah, Ahmad). In view of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah the issues of environmental pollution, elimination of hazards to man and the salvation of materials of economic value that is economic and proper use of resources, Muslims are teachers not students of anybody. The reason is, Allah (s.w.t) said: "..And we have sent down to thee the Book Explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy and Glad Tiding to Muslims, (An Nahl, 16:89)."

The next important education to be learnt with its healthful benefit is how to get rid of the excreta through the process of defecation. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) and Teacher of health taught that faeces must be passed in a squatting posture. It has now been well established that this posture is the most healthful.

How To Pass Excreta

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w), the Educator of mankind, taught the world what food to eat and how to make the best of the eaten foods and drinks. He even taught humanity the best way to eliminate the waste products of

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1 Lucas and Gilles, *Textbook of Public Health Medicine*, p. 294
2 Ibid.

lawful foods and drinks. And none of his teachings was ever controverted by medical science. One would have thought that the Educator of Mankind would have left "how to pass excreta" unguided. No, he never did! Inasmuch as the "Book Explains all things" so all the great Examplar practically "Demonstrated all things" appertainable to human earthly existence. Hence for the health benefit of mankind, he taught the world the healthful way of passing excreta. Nothing beneficial or deleterious to humanity was omitted by the most successful Prophet in all times. He delivered the Message completely as received and also delivered as instructed. Further, all the teachings of this Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) remain forever incontrovertible. The Prophetic way of passing stool is unsurpassed as the most healthful way. He recommended the squatting posture in defecation. The pit – hole latrine provides means to adopt the prophetic position. Hence it is called the Arabian Toilet.

Man eats and drinks to stay alive. The food which man eats is digested to provide energy to the human body. Most of these foods are in the forms of proteins, fats and carbohydrates are metabolised through complex series of reactions to yield energy. The body absorbs the nutrients from the digested food and excretes the residue through the process of defecation or excreta. When these waste products are allowed to accumulate for a longer period than usual (i.e. constipation) in the body they cause various harmful effects, including cancer of the colon (large intestine) in the long term effect and piles or haemorrhoids the short-term. The faeces or excreta also contains harmful microbes especially bacteria, viruses, other chemicals and gases. Thus when the waste products accumulate in the rectum, they must be expelled as quickly as possible. Often certain drugs or laxatives are taken to facilitate the expulsion of these harmful products from the body. Accumulation of faeces in the rectum causes constipation and haemorrhoids or piles among other disorders.

The Islamic teaching is to adopt a squatting position, while passing excreta neither facing nor backing the *Qibla*, (the direction of Kabah out of reverence), in the open place. While passing the excreta in this squatting posture, the Prophet recommended that the Muslim must incline more on the left foot. There is anatomical reason for this inclination to the left side, and the great health Teacher was aware of it. He recommended that a Muslim should lean more to the left, thereby putting more pressure on the left leg. In the left lower abdomen, the sigmoid colon and the rectum are anatomically located. This squatting posture adds more pressure to the left lower quadrant of the abdomen – where the rectum is located. This

increased intra-abdominal pressure especially in the area of the rectum facilitates faecal evacuation. This is the most healthful way of passing excreta, i.e. the prophetic way.

Importance of Prophetic Posture

The squatting and leaning on the left gives the anatomical position that is best for maximal evacuation of faeces as one stoops to the left and increases the intra-abdominal pressure by straining; one is putting a lot of pressure on his large intestine, ascending, transversing and the descending colon and rectum. Inclination on the left foot helps to compress the rectum (which lies in his left flank). This pressure assists the final propulsion of faeces out of the rectum. Thus the colons are squeezed maximally to empty their content. This empties the most dependent part of the caecum and the appendix (which lies 2-3cm above it). Although revealed in the 7th century Arabia this posture recommended seemed to be based on anatomical knowledge. This Islamic method of defecation, therefore, minimises the incidence of appendicitis and haemorrhoid or piles. A Professor of Surgery confirmed.

> *"...Professor Ian Bird in his textbook of surgery about appendicitis states that the squatting position helps evacuation of the colon and thus avoid stagnation at the tail end of the gut.*[1]

Stagnation of faeces in the rectum causes chronic constipation. The weight of the stool, therefore, compresses the hemorrhoid or rectal blood vessels and restricts blood flow due to obstruction of drainage. These vessels become engorged with blood and bulge out around and in the anus as piles or hemorrhoids.

When a person leans on his left while passing stool as the Prophet (s.a.w) instructed, the additional pressure from this inclined position helps to compress the rectum and expel its contents. With faeces expelled from the rectum, the congestion of the blood vessels is relieved and development of piles, therefore, is avoided. Thus at every call of nature, the rectum is always evacuated owing to which there is free flow of blood in the rectal vessels all the time. This left inclined position also facilitates the expulsion of excreta through the action of levator ani, muscle responsible for elevation of the anus. The pubo rectal sling, a muscle which increases the angulations of the rectum in its junction with the anal canal, is relaxed so

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[1] Ghulam Mustafa Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, London (1982), p.10

that the ano-rectal flexure is lost and thereby anal canal becomes straight. The pubo-rectalis muscle then draws the anal wall upwards and faeces in the canal, goes down. The canal is emptied completely, piles is henceforth prevented. Medical science has helped us to understand the implication of this Hadith regarding the posture to be adopted during defecation. The Prophetic method is the most healthful.

Dr. Khan, a renowned consultant on Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Surgeon highlighted some of the medical benefits of Prophet's teachings in this respect. He pointed pertinently: the last part of the digestive tract where faeces accumulates is in the left side; hence the leaning on that foot is helpful. Similarly, the use of the left hand helps to press the left thigh against the left side of the abdomen. In spite of this method (squatting) being superior to the sitting position most of the toilets in new governmental buildings in Muslim countries have western – type toilets which people, it is interesting to note, use in the eastern way. In cold countries where the slashing of water has to be avoided, some research on this subject can produce a design of a toilet meeting both requirements.

Muslims have to clean the area between the thighs and the groin by washing thoroughly with water after urination. Here again, the etiquette while urinating is to adopt a squatting position. This also has an anatomical basis being the only way of evacuating the passage from the bladder completely. Further, it helps to avoid splashing of urinary droplets over the body or clothes, though this can be achieved by building receptacles at a higher level. It should be remembered that urine and faeces are unclean substances teeming with bacteria. The habit of washing the pereneal region, along with the habit of shaving the hair in this region, enables the Muslim to keep this region, which is practiced by Muslims, in line with this objective. The medical advantages enjoyed by Muslim men as a result of practising this custom – apart from cleanliness of the area – is freedom from stains of urine; it is also the lessening or near absence of urethritis, paraphimosis and carcinoma in the region in man.

In cases where the toilet of the lower part of the body, between the umbilicus and the knee is neglected, a host of unpleasant effects and diseases can arise: body odour, boils or abscess in the region, skin diseases in the region and infections of the various parts of the area. In cold climates where woollen garments are used and garment is not changed frequently, it is especially essential to keep the area clean. Even the use of underpants

does not solve the problem. People who do not pay attention to these hygienic problems are carrying bacteria laden clothes on their body.[1]

This account is lucid and very compelling. It reveals clearly the scientific basis of Prophet's recommendation of squatting position in defecation. This puts the Arabian toilet superior and more healthy to the sitting position of western style toilets, which is based essentially on ease and comfort. Health is sacrificed at the expense of what has been erroneously considered to be a "comfortable position." This account also showed the danger of copying the West parrot-fashion. The Muslim communities adopted the western style toilet and position, perhaps, thinking that by doing so, they are civilised. This feeling arose from what can be described as a vanquished mentality, which the Muslim world became dis – spirited and in despair. They thought rather fallaciously that by aping the West they could gain some technological emancipation. This is a warped thinking. We must wake up from the slumber either willingly or forcefully by the America's cluster bombs or its allies. Anyone who deviates from the Straight Path would suffer distress and misery. This, therefore, calls for self – searching and a return match to the real civilisation.

Personal hygiene in Islam, as Dr. Khan pointed out clearly, is one but important ingredient in a well – integrated scheme of physical and spiritual cleanliness. It must be added that this scheme is well – tailored for man in every geographical location whether in the tropics or the cold climates. Those living in the harsh extremes climatically, Allah (s.w.t) has endowed them with the means to achieve their social life as well as to practise Islam with simplicity and effectiveness. In cold countries, where splashing of cold water could be injurious to health, Allah (s.w.t) has bestowed them with an advanced technique of water pipe cold and hot water system, at homes, in the offices and even on the streets. Obviously, splashing of hot or warm water in *wudu* would add rather than substract to their health. It must be remembered that it was the aversion to bathing that rendered Europe a pestilential continent. Saved by the principles of *attahara* any attempt to renege on the implementation of these principles is to court for disaster – it will be an invitation of pestilences. The West should move farther than adopting Islamic principles; they must accept Islam, the religion of the wise.

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[1] Ghulam Mustafa Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, London (1982), pp.10-11.

Now returning to the anatomic position of defecation, we can appreciate the great wisdom behind emulating the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w), the only universal Role Model. He had really shown the way to achieving 100 per cent healthy conditions.

The Prophet (s.a.w) provided us with the habits to emulate in connection with bowel action. He recognised the vital importance of posture during defecation, in the 7th century Arabia. He was keenly aware of the serious implication of improper faecal evacuation. In addition to the squatting posture he also recommended the use of laxatives including honey, to ensure that a person's rectum is emptied regularly. What has been the practice total evacuation of intestinal content is the usual encouragement to visit the toilet regularly, and to eat plenty of roughages. These are high fibre-diet that cannot be digested but helps to evacuate the faeces. This action can be facilitated when the Prophetic position is adopted. It was only recently that the medical importance of the squatting posture was recognised by the modern medical science. Immediately after passing urine or excreta *al-taharah* commences. This is the *instinja;* the squatting posture in defecation is referred to as the Arabian use of toilet.

The Arabian Toilet

It is squatting toilet, which is an important part of a latrine. Now it is referred to a squatting plate or slab, made of an impervious material so that it can be washed, kept clean dry and covered. If kept dry it will not be favourable to infestation by hookworm larvae. It is kept clean to repel insects, flies, cockroaches, mice and rodents. The toilet was popular and it became the toilet of choice because of the safety and simplicity; the Indians had also cultivated the habits of defecating in squatting position and use water for anal washing.[1] Human, excreta is a source of infection as well as environmental pollution. Every society has a responsibility for its safe removal and disposal. The Arabian toilet remains the simplest and healthful.

Human excreta, is an important source of pathogenic organisms, especially the causative organisms or agents of diarrhoeal diseases. The long–term prevention of diarrhoeal disease rests largely upon the provision and use of adequate facilities for safe water and sewage disposal. In addition, faeces are attractive to flies and support the development of larval stages (maggots) of filth flies. Apart from these hazards, the indiscriminate disposal of faeces can constitute a grave nuisance from the offensive sight

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[1] *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 257.

and smell.[1] Obviously, anyone conversant with Islamic ethics of hygiene would agree that environment menaced by filth flies, horrendous sights of mountain heaps of garbage and dungs, a beehive of maggots and fetid smell in the air make a picture that is quite opposite to that of Islamic community. This graphic picture, however, depicted the European cities before the end of the 19th century. Islamic culture is conducive to good environmental sanitation. It creates the awareness in the individual and community to appreciate the religious and health implications of disposal of human excreta. Hence in these communities there is a better understanding of such delicate and very important implications. The behavioural factors influencing water use and defecation practices have been well established by Islam from the 7th century up to the modern age. In the use of toilet the commonest was and is the pit latrine.

The pit latrine also called the Arabian toilet is the most ideal from two standpoints. It allows the adoption of squatting position in defecation. This position is physiologically and anatomically favourable, therefore, the most healthful position; we shall discuss this presently. On the other hand, it satisfies all the conditions of an ideal latrine. It possesses the following qualities.

- No handling of fresh faeces,
- No contamination of surface soil,
- No contamination of surface water or underground water that may enter springs or wells,
- Excreta inaccessible to flies or animals,
- No unpleasant odours or unsightly conditions,
- Simple and inexpensive in construction and operation, in accordance with the resources of the community,
- Culturally acceptable to the community.[2]

This preamble puts the reader in a better stead to appreciate how Islamic teachings help to ward off spread of diarrhoel disease using both short-term and long-term preventive strategies. The short-term method has already been discussed. This includes the practice of *Istijmar* and *Istinja*. The long-term strategy includes amongst other factors the use of Arabian toilet. It is now well established that it is superior to the western – style toilet because it is designed to make the prophetic posture easy. This is a posture based on most ideal anatomical position for faecal evacuation.

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1 Lucas and Gilles, *Textbook of Public Health* , p. 294.
2 Ibid., p. 295

Its Advantages

Adopting the squatting position recommended by the Prophet (s.a.w) during defecation helps in the prevention of diseases such as chronic constipation, diverticular disease of the colon, carcinoma of the colon, cholelithiasis, hiatus hernia, haemorrhoids and appendicitis. It is necessary to highlight the importance of this posture especially with the current habit of eating refined foods that has become worldwide. Refined foods have now been described as "Diet for Disease." With the prophetic tradition of defecation, however, it is hoped that such diseases could be prevented, especially when the dangers of these foods are duly recognized. Regular evacuation of the faecal contents of sigmoid colon and the rectum is a good preventive strategy. This is where the prophetic posture fits in. It is therefore pertinent to briefly mention that these Diet for Disease for taking preventive measures such as eating high fibre diet and adopting the squatting posture in eliminating the waste products are adhered to.

"The modern refining and processing of foods affect the dietary patterns and nutrient intakes around the world to an extent appreciated by few." Ashton and Laura wrote, in *The Perils of Progress*. They stated that the vegetable oils we consume are refined, our sugar is refined, as well as our major cereals (wheat, corn and rice).[1] Recently, the suspicion has grown that certain gastro-intestinal conditions, increasing in prevalence in our society are attributable in part to deficiency of dietary fibre. It is reasonable to şurmise that the sitting position of the western – style defecation is a strong contributory factor in the genesis of these diseases. It does not evacuate the faecal content effectively. And a deficiency in fibre-diets aggravate the ailing situation. The evidence for an etiologic role for fibre deficiency in these diseases include epidemiologic, clinical, physiologic and biochemical observations, including reproduction in laboratory animals.[2]

The consumption of these refined foods is on the rise worldwide. For example, in India, the second largest producer of rice in the world, approximately 75 per cent of the 80 million tonnes produced is refined by removing the bran. This bran, which constitutes nearly 8.5 per cent of the rice grain, is actually highly nutritious being rich in natural oils (including essential fatty acids), protein, minerals and vitamins. Yet much of this bran is further refined with organic chemical solvents used to make some edible

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1 John Ashton and Ron Laura, *The Perils of Progress*, p. 115

2 Myron Winick (Ed) *Nutrition and Aging*, Vol. 4 in the Wiley Series, Current Concepts in Nutrition, John Wiley and Sons (New York) 1976. p.155.

oils for margarine manufacture, with a larger portion being used for soap production and other related products.[1] It could be seen from this account that foods are refined for economic consideration at the expense of the health status. Clearly that of, the consumers are numerous as well as harmful. This is, indeed, one of the perils of progress and the authors stated the health implications. They said that in general there are two important aspects of refined foods that have a direct bearing on health.

Disease of Civilisation

Firstly, there is the removal of essential nutrients during refining and, secondly, the subsequent addition in most cases of chemical additives, flavours and colours to make the `new' food more desirable. Both these aspects are inextricably interwoven with diseases of civilisation as these "diet for diseases" are referred to. In spite of their harmful effects on health these `new' foods are produced in high quantity with rising consumption rate and the associated rise of diseases or colonic or gastro intestinal origin. The consequences are numerous but suffice it to mention a few of them to drive home the point of their deleterious effects. As it appears now the trend of their consumption worldwide cannot be altered. The alternative is to adopt an effective method of faecal evacuation to obviate the occurrence of these diseases. To sum up the ill–effects of these `new' foods, the following perils now face humanity. These include:

- Loss of essential trace elements: there are at least 14 essential trace elements required for human nutrition in amounts ranging from a few microgrammes to milligrammes per day. They function as catalyst or structural components of larger molecules which are essential for specific biochemical pathways, e.g. chromium is required in microgram for proper metabolism of glucose or sugars. Chromium deficiency is implicated as a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease, illustrating a linkage of refined foods with heart disease.
- Zinc element: More than 90 zinc – containing enzymes have been identified. It appears to have a major role in nucleic acid metabolism, protein synthesis, normal development of the outer horny layer of skin and sexual maturation. Its deficiency causes impaired immune response.[2]

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1 John Ashton and Ron Laura, *The Perils of Progress*, p.115-116.
2 Ibid., p. 124

Although the health implications of refined foods are numerous, the loss of dietary fibres in these new foods is the main thrust of this *excursus*. Dietary fibre appears to protect against colon cancer by increasing stool bulk or decreasing intestinal transit times, thereby, reducing the exposure of the colon to carcinogens (or cancer inducing substances). Sufficient levels of fibre in the diet also enhances the production in the colon of one important short chain fatty acid called *butyric acid*, which is believed to inhibit the growth and proliferation of certain tumours. High fibre diet may also help to reduce the risk of breast cancer in pre-menopausal women (women before the cessation of their menstrual cycles) by lowering circulating levels of *oestrogen*. This lowering of this hormone is due to its components of whole food such as ligands or *isoflavonoid* which occur in very close association with dietary fibre.[1]

The co-authors also mentioned the implications of dietary fibre in what is described as *Glycemic Index* (G1). The G1 of a food is a measure of how quickly a food is broken down during the process of digestion into simpler sugars or glucose. The understanding of the G1 will help us to appreciate the grave harm of processed foodstuffs. This is because milling and processing of food increase the G1 value and high G1 foods are therefore believed to be significant in the development of mature onset of diabetes, one of the modern diseases of civilisation.[2] This is because they dissolve into glucose faster than the rate of absorption. Glucose therefore accumulates in the blood. Bread is the commonest and most widely eaten refined food and is implicated in the increasing prevalence of diabetes mellitus.

Despite the health implications of processed foodstuffs their production on commercial scale is on the increase for economic expediency. The vitamins, iron and trace elements that occur naturally in our foods are extracted and separated, leaving the refined foods lacking in fibre and multivitamins. These extracted vitamins and essential elements are produced in variety of multivitamin preparations for sales in pharmaceutical chemists. One has to spend money to purchase processed foodstuffs which essentially lack these much needed vitamins. So he has to buy multivitamins to supplement his deficient diet, which occurs naturally in his normal foodstuffs. With the rise of refined foods the economic boons to food and pharmaceutical industries are incredibly high. Today, global capitalism has made food and water for sale. Perhaps, what remains to be

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1 John Ashton and Ron Laura, *The Perils of Progress*, p.124.
2 Ibid.

seen tomorrow is the sale of natural air (oxygen) to every living human being on this earth. It is not a far-fetched idea to state that with the current tempo of environment pollution a certain mask manufacturing company can bring up an air filtering device for sale. To the effect that the air we breathe will soon be for sale too. However, be it as it may, the natural antidote to the high refined foodstuff intake, its total rectal-faecal evacuation. And prophetic posture is a means to this end.

Effects of Prophetic Posture

Now having appraised the harmful effects of refined foods, one can appreciate as medical benefit that the prophetic tradition of squatting during defecations can help you obviate some of these perils of progress. Adopting this posture regularly will help to prevent the occurrence of many diseases of the alimentary canal including the diseases mentioned earlier described as Diseases of Civilisation. Now we will have to discuss the medical importance of this posture from two standpoints: anatomical and mechanical factors.

The physical factor is directly related to the increase in the intra to abdominal pressure, which the squatting position increases. This occurs as one squats and leans heavy on the left. This in turn increases the intra luminal pressure; or leads to an increased *gradient* pressure between lumen and peritoneal cavity, which can only be produced by contraction of the intrinsic musculature of the colon.[1] Applying Dr. Thomas P. Almy's argument, diameter (or colon radius) can be related to the intra luminal pressure. If we begin with the law of Young and Laplace, we find that $T = kPR$.

This applies to the distension of a cylinder from within by an applied pressure P, with T (tension) as the dependent variable. Normally contractile gut, tension is generated by muscular contraction, and pressure becomes the dependent variable. If we solve for pressure, we find

$$P = \frac{K.\,T}{R}$$

But pressure, P, is the applied pressure which increases with squatting position. This means for any given level of muscle contraction, pressure generated is inversely related to the radius or diameter of the bowel. And if we solve for tension, we find.

$$T = \frac{P.R}{K}$$

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[1] Myron Winick (Ed.), *Nutrition and Aging*, p. 159.

But K is constant

$\therefore T = PR$

The tension generated is directly related to the product of pressure and radius. As the squatting position increases the tension generated in the gut, this increases the intraluminal pressure to facilitate the colonic and rectal evacuations of faecal contents. The tension is generated more in the sigmoid colon and the rectum to effect maximum expulsion of the faeces as one leans on his left side as he or she adopts the prophetic tradition. The physical factor is facilitated by the anatomical factors to ensure a total and effective faecal evacuation.

This anatomical position strongly assists levator ani muscle in the process of defecation or passing out excreta in the following way: Puborectal sling is relaxed so the ano-rectal flexure is lost so that anal canal becomes straight. Now the puborectalis muscle draws the anal wall upwards and faeces in the rectum and anal canal moves downward and outward. This empties the rectal faecal content completely. The prescription of this posture seemed to be based on anatomical knowledge, and how the unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) came to know of it was no doubt a testimony of divine intervention. Hence, this is the natural and safest position of passing excreta. So which of the benefits of Islamic worship will you now deny?

The role of high fibre diet can be seen from this relationship of T = PR. This diet increases the bulk of the faecal content in the colon and rectum. This increases the intra-luminal radius and raises the tension, which in turn increases the force of expulsion. Thus when high fibre diet is combined with squatting posture, both P and R increase and also PR, the force of expulsion T is increased many fold. Thus a Muslim can apply this combined strategy of diet and position of waste elimination to obviate this serious peril of progress. It is from these mechanisms that the prophetic tradition of defecation helps to prevent the dreaded. As for "Refined Food Diet Diseases", of modern civilisation, this is because with increase in T the intestinal transit time t decreases. T is inversely related to t. When the transit time is increased, the chance of intestinal diseases rises. These refined food disease conditions include:

Constipation and Hernia

Constipation is defined as less than three (3) motions per week or as difficult or painful defecation. Especially, the stool is hard and difficult to pass. Several studies confirm a relationship of stool mass to transit time.

This correlation, of course, is attributed to cumulative absorption of faecal water with longer retention in the colon; and older impressions of the significance of this delayed passage time in constipated individuals have been recently confirmed by modern methods of measurement of absorption from the lumen.[1] Speculation can be made on the possible relief of constipation by adopting squatting position during defecation which increases gut tension and decreases intestinal transit time. This works on the same basis as with high fibre dietary intake. Unless the constipation is of a serious aetiology relief is possible.

As mentioned already, one of the complications of chronic constipation is haemorrhoids. Hiatal hernia may indeed be aggravated by the high intra abdominal pressure generated in constipated patients passing small, dry pellet stools. It occurs due to protrusion of a portion of the stomach into the chest cavity through an opening between the diaphragm and oesophagus. The portion of the stomach slides into the chest cavity with increased inter-abdominal pressure, it is aggravated by obesity and prolonged straining in chronic constipation. Inguinal hernia is a usual accompaniment of chronic constipation. It is an abnormal protrusion of abdominal contents (greater momentum and intestines) into the inguinal canal. This causes a bulging or swelling of the hernia, the inguinal area a junction between the abdomen and the thigh. This is more likely to occur in persons in whom intra abdominal pressure is frequently increased, e.g. by chronic constipation, chronic cough and frequent lifting of heavy weights. There is a link with acute appendicitis which high passage time makes prone and vulnerable to, but the evidence is limited and only slightly convincing. But the combination of high fibre diet, high water intake of fruits in hot climate, regular Salat (a form of ritual exercises) and adopting squatting posture in passing excreta will help to reduce or prevent constipation and its associated complication, especially colonic cancer.

Carcinoma of the Colon

Cancer of the colon and rectum, certainly, are the most important diseases of the digestive system. Except for associations with some rare entities such as familial polyposis of the colon, genetic influence or hereditary in its causation, which appear to be minor but the environmental influence is correspondingly great. It is clearly a disease of advancing age; its frequency rises steeply beyond the age of 40.[2] Thus it is expected that

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1 Myron Winick (Ed.), *Nutrition and Aging*, p. 156
2 Ibid., p. 161

Islamic worship would help prevent its occurrence in a practising Muslim. As with diverticular disease, international comparisons of prevalence figures reveal striking differences and suggest a strong correlation with economic development, Western style living. The United States and Canada lead the world in prevalence.[1] The question is to what characteristic of Western civilisation can this disease be attributed? To this Almy stated:

> *The epidemiologists have provided us with a fairly refined and testable hypothesis. Drasar and Irving, for example, reported last year from the London School of Hygiene (18) on the correlation of colon cancer rates in 37 countries, with a number of variables related in one way or another to economic development. Although correlations were found with such seemingly remote factors as per capita income, motorcars, radio and TV sets, the stronger correlations were with dietary factor, and their predominance was reaffirmed by multiple regression analysis in which the contribution of non-dietary factors could be mathematically eliminated. Note that the most significant coefficients are for so – called combined fat (which excludes cooking oils, butter, and the like) and animal protein, and that here very little influence appears for sugar and sweets versus fibre–rich carbohydrate source.*
>
> *The effect of the American diet on the probability of developing colonic cancer can be manifested in a number of ways. First of all, the faecal residue left by a diet that derives most of its calories from fat and protein, and that furnishes carbohydrate chiefly in the form of transit time delayed. Thus if an intra luminal carcinogen is truly operative, this kind of diet will present it over a longer period of time and in higher concentration to the epithelial surface of the colon.*[2]

This long enough time to induce cancerous changes, but squatting posture transit time gives it decreases this contact time thereby obviating cancer induction. In this exposition, dietary and environmental factors are the leading causes of the high prevalence of cancer of the colon in the western societies. The Western style sitting position in defecation, no doubt, is a contributory factor. In this regard, prophetic dietetics and squatting position in defecation are, undoubtedly, if adopted strong, preventive measures. The electrical environment produced by electrical

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1 Myron Winick (Ed.), *Nutrition and Aging*, p.161
2 Ibid., pp. 161 - 162

appliances, visual display units and high voltage transmission have no doubt seriously induced a high electric field in our environment. With the consequential rise of variety of cancers, but no matter how bleak these perils of progress may cast on the future of mankind, the problems are not as unsurmountable as they are supposed to be. Islamic worship provides the panacea of the whole problems. The incidence of cancer can be curbed and reduced to near absence. The trio combination of *wudu* and *ghusl*, good dietary habit, fasting and adopting the squatting position in passing excrement are some of the things the world requires to bring down the high prevalence of cancers of various types, especially of the gastro-intestinal tract (GIT). The medical benefits of both *wudu* and fasting have been treated. The squatting posture from the standpoint of anatomic and mechanical considerations all combined to help in the quick elimination of carcinogen in the gastro-intestinal tract giving it no time to wreak havoc. With the intra-luminal carcinogen (from any source) quickly evacuated out of the system, it is never allowed to have contact with and in high concentration with the epithelial surface of the colon. Thus both the colon and rectum are protected from developing cancer.

Every civilisation comes along with its own dangers but the perils of western civilization are far the most numerous and overwhelmingly hazardous. Its dietary habits bring along with it digestive disorders especially from the middle age. Now GIT diseases occur in the younger age groups, and the rate is rising. It is pertinent to re-emphasise that the use of high fibre diet when combined with that of squatting posture waste elimination can be facilitated effectively. It has another important benefit; this position can help indirectly in the prevention of *cholelithiasis* or gallstones formation and also in diverticular diseases, in a way similar to the mechanism of high fibre dietary intake. Indeed, we cannot influence the global trend in the coffee and Danish breakfast, the hamburger for lunch, the soft drink guzzling, the ice–cream and cake habits amongst our elite. However we can point to them the prospective benefits of Islamic worship, for each and all to observe so as to weather the perils of progress unscathed. The use of the Arabian toilet is a step in the right direction. Islam is a faith of rules and regulation, nothing is left to an uncharted course. Even the use of toilet is governed by certain rules and manners.

Toilet Etiquettes

To bring the Health benefits of Islamic worship to the foreground, it must be re-interacted that until after the impact and contact of Islamisation of the Western culture took effect, the traditional homes in the West lacked

lavatories. Toilets were unknown either in private or public usage. This attitude to reiterate at the risk of over flogging the point led the habit of house dwellers to fill chamber pots with excreta kept in their rooms. According to professor Lewis, what arouse Muslim disgust about the habits of Westerners was that among other things "everybody removes his own faeces with his own hands."[1] The other was the habit of indiscriminate passing of excreta everywhere without consideration of health and hygiene or the social decorum of privacy. This habit is not acceptable on Islamic ground, which considers stench and environmental pollution as acts of abomination. Thus with this at the back ground the importance of Islamic emphasis on the use of toilet should be appraised and appreciated. In, addition, Islam established toilet etiquettes to ensure that toilets are kept clean, free – from stench and free from infection. There were no episodes of *Gardez I'eau* in Islam societies no matter how lowly. A Muslim is forbidden religiously to physically handle urine or faeces with his bare hands as was the practice in the West prior to the contact with and impact of Islam.

Thus the habit of keeping toilet clean is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. Further, it has now been realised that an average person visits the toilet 2,500 times a year, meaning that he spends nearly three years of his life in the lavatory.[2] Further, the importance of toilet in modern lifestyle has led to the establishment of World Toilet Day, which aims to popularise global awareness of toilet and sanitation standards.

Islam not only recognised the importance of toilet several centuries ago but also set a standard of healthful way of passing excreta. Further, where toileting is done in the "open fields" the tradition demands that it must be far away from the dwelling houses; it must not be done under the shade of trees where people sit, or on the road; excreta must not be passed near drinkable source of water, e.g., wells, spring or rivers. It must be ensured that food and agricultural products are not contaminated by fresh faeces or sewage.

In both, open or closed defecation squatting position is to be adopted. While in the open the Kabah must not be faced nor backed but sided. Similarly, when the pit latrine is constructed, it must be far away from the source of drinking water such as river, well or spring. It must also be ensured that fetid smell disturbs no one. These measures were established to ensure the sources of drinking water were not contaminated directly by

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1 Bernard Lewis, *Muslim Discovery of Europe*, p.281.
2 www.worldtoilet.org.

faeces or indirectly by rodents, vermin insects and flies in the 7th century Arabia. Due to validity of these measures, WHO has adopted them, for example, it recommends that the distance between a latrine and well or any other source of drinking water should be at least 30 metres. Further, a Muslim with his religious motivated deep sense of hygiene visits the toilet far more frequently than any person. Hence his annual visit must exceed the estimated number of 2,500 times.

Islam is built on cleanliness and it is a way of life to perfect health. Toilet is the nerve-centre of hygiene; it is the major source of many preventable diseases. Many germs are found in excrement. When diseases causing germs get into water and food or onto hands, utensils, or surfaces used for preparing and serving food, they may be passed into the mouth and swallowed, resulting in illness. The best way to prevent the spread of germs is to get rid of all excrement to avoid its contamination as much as possible. Human excrement should go into a toilet or latrine. Apart from *al-taharah*, Islam recommends certain etiquettes to be observed in the toilet that must be reflected in the behaviour of a Muslim because Islam is a way of life. It makes *istinja*, the washing of the orifices compulsory. These anatomical openings into the body serve as route of entrance of many diseases. These orifices are urethra, anus and the vagina. Others include mouth, nostrils and the ear. They are the route of entrance of germs into the body. It is therefore mandatory to keep them neat and tidy through regular washing. The hands are the means with which man gets access to these openings, they must be kept regularly washed and clean.

Wash Your Hands

Istinja is obligatory in the preparation of *wudu*. Islam is a religion of scrupulous hand washing regularly with water. They are washed with sand and water to remove germs. Often rinsing hands with water is not enough – both hands need be scrubbed with sand (soap or ash) to ensure their cleanliness. It is mandatory to wash hands before and after defecating. With the advent of Western style toilets the lower anatomical openings can be cleaned with toilet paper and washed with tap water. The hands afterwards are washed with toilet soap and then dried with the towel. The practice of *istinja* is made easier in the urban cities. In the rural areas, however, the old traditional method is equally effective. The use of smooth dry pieces of stone to clean up the anal area, and the hands washed with water and scrubbed to ensure no faecal stain is left in the left hand. The aim is to ensure that after natural evacuation, no stain of urine or excrement is left on the body or clothing. Islam is the religion that is strict on hygiene and

equates cleanliness with half of the entire faith. Hand washing helps to protect people from worms that cause illness. These worms are too small to see without a microscope. They live in excrement and urine, in surface water and soil and in raw or poorly cooked meat. A principal way to prevent worms and germs getting into the body is to wash the hands scrupulously after each visit to the toilet. This, obviously, will engender healthy living.

Furthermore, it is part of the toilet etiquettes to use the left hand only when washing; not to defecate in the open or public places; not to urinate in public places in rivers or dams and that it is undesirable act to urinate while standing because getting some stains of urine from the splash is possible. In urinating and passing of stool, the squatting position is the best. Defecation in this position as we have explained helps to prevent piles and appendicitis.

Many Muslims do not appreciate the values of *al-taharah* in their lifestyle. While many non-Muslims appreciate this scrupulous habit of cleaning and washing of private parts because they have observed a whale of difference. These non-Muslim neighbours had keenly observed that their colleagues do not carry offensive smell below the belt. Which despite the use of costly perfume and deodorants the non-Muslims could not rid themselves of the fetid odours. They discovered too that it was due to the regular application of *al-taharah* which made the difference. So many adopted these Islamic rituals to rid themselves of bad odours; in fact, many non-Muslim women perform *al-taharah* regularly like their Muslim neighbours, to keep clean and avoid body malodorous smell.

It is terrible for a modern woman to smell so badly in her undies; the use of toilet paper alone, after each visit to the toilet without washing has been discovered to be ineffective in ridding the area of terrible smell. A Muslim is taught to believe that filthy habits are cherished by the devils that always prefer stinking and fetid environment. He, therefore, strives arduously to remain clean and tidy.

Wash the Private Parts

Islam teaches that both the urinary and anal openings must be cleaned with pieces of stone or sticks (now tissue paper) 3, 5 or 7 times before washing with water three times to ensure that the area is thoroughly washed and cleaned. The left hand is always used for this function; it is also cleaned and scrubbed thrice; both hands are thoroughly washed and rinsed with toilet soap and water. So that after each visit to the privy the Muslim is

unlikely to have contaminated hands to infect himself or others with virulent bacteria. Improper toilet hygiene is the major cause of food and drink contaminations, the major cause of food borne diseases e.g. typhoid fever, cholera, etc.

Islam teaches toilet practice through *istijmar* and *istinja* for centuries with good and healthful results. The non-Muslim societies faced the teething problems of what had been described as the "Great Unwiped." This account of London workhouses in 1866 is illustrative:

> *Waste paper for use at the water – closet is supplied but in very few workhouse. This appears to be really both a hardship to the inmates and a disgrace to the guardians; and has led in numberless instances to the use of old towels, dusters and dishcloths, which were thrown down the water – closet, and in not a few instances stopped them up. It was however stated and it certainly applies too much to country populations that a very large proportions of the poor do not use waste paper at their homes, and do not therefore notice the necessity for it. It seems that the "Great Un-washed" were also the "Great Unwiped."*[1]

Even today the Great Unwiped still prevails amongst the non –Muslim societies. Even in the so-called advanced societies, private parts are not washed but "cleaned" but "how clean is clean," is shown by fetid smell that is suppressed by perfume. The remedy to it is the application of *istijmar* and *istinja* which are now universally accepted as necessary.

It has also been discovered by the non-Muslims that their pants and or trousers are usually stained with faeces. Whereas such is not usually the case with the Muslims, a story is told of a non-Muslim laundry man (or dry cleaner), who was irked by the discovery of stains of urine and faeces in the trousers of his non-Muslim customers, while he did not see the same amongst the Muslims. He became curious to find out why this was so! He was shocked to find the "Great Unwiped" amongst his people, so he was forced to find out the reason of this marked difference. One day he accosted one of his Muslim customers and asked this question: "Why is it that the Muslims' trousers are usually not stained with either urine or faces?" His customer replied, "because of *al-taharah*." This simple medical virtue of Muslims' culture of hygiene attracted the man to Islam, and he accepted the faith. He must have had the belief that filthy habits are cherished by the devils. So he eschewed from it by accepting Islam. In Islam wiping *istijmar*

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[1] Lionel Rose. *Health and Hygiene*. p.65.

is not enough; it has to be followed by washing or *istinja*. So which of the benefits of Islamic worship can you now deny?

It is pertinent at this juncture to warn that we must not treat any Islamic injunction with levity because there is almost always associated medical benefit with it. Furthermore, it is also appropriate to state that Islam places high premium on purity, which is the bedrock of all health rules or hygiene. Islam and impurity do not stand on a common ground. Impurity and fetid smell belong to the Devil; they are therefore considered evil habits. And all the Islamic rules are equal and must all operate in concert with each other. Without which the entire edifice of one's acts of worship falls into ruins. For example, Islam teaches that in every call of nature, privacy must be maintained. It is un-Islamic, therefore, to urinate or defecate publicly. Urine must be expelled completely in such a manner that its forceful stream does not splash to stain one's body or trousers. And patience must be exercised to allow for the final drop of urine, because the urethra which is long in the male must be pressed gently along its length to fully expel its urine content. This means that *istibra* must not be neglected. This minimises dribbling of urine after micturation (passing of urine), unless there is some disorders in which medication must be sought.

Then the urethral opening is cleaned thrice with toilet paper or its equivalent and then washed also three times. The aim is to be free of urine stains, during or after micturation. This explains why the elderly often stay longer during this period to avoid dribbling of urine, thereafter. If this scrupulous method is not performed, urine is passed in a haste resulting in splashing of urine all over the body or parts of the body. Invariably, this may lead to urine stains on the body or clothing. With stains of urine or faeces in the body or clothes of a Muslim his *al-taharah* is faulted. And the entire edifice of worship comes to nothing because *al-taharah* is the bedrock of Islamic worship. A Muslim is directly forced to maintain personal hygiene because he prays periodically, five times a day. He must be neat and tidy for each prayer.

There is no *salat* acceptable no matter how well it is performed when the *al-taharah* is defective. In fact, passing of wind or flatus vitiates *al-taharah* in wudu on completion or during the process. This *al-taharah* as simple as it appears to be, is the only gateway to spiritual as well as medical benefits to man. Thus *ab initio*, spiritual blessings are co-joined with medical benefits in Islamic worship. *Al-taharah*, therefore, inculcates in the Muslim the basic of scrupulous hygiene and toilet discipline. It is not in the character of a Muslim to pass wind anyhow and anytime. This self-control

helps against social embarrassment. It is also a form of discipline to avoid all sort of stains, urine, stool or any dirt. But for a Muslim to keep himself clean, he must use clean water.

Use Only Clean Water

The hallmark of a good Muslim is simply personal neatness and purity of mind. Again it is not in the character of a Muslim to appear dirty and clumsy. And the expectation of his personal conduct is to do good all the time. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) had ably demonstrated in his lifestyle how a Muslim must look and how he must behave.

The Muslim is distinguished and unique not only in his comportment, but in frequent use of water to keep himself neat and tidy all the time. Personal hygiene and decorum have now come to mean a distinguished feature of a well-disciplined, polished educated man.

In Islam the entire edifice of body cleanliness lies in *al-taharah*, and regular purification is achieved through the use of pure water. This fact can never be overemphasised because pure water can purify or cleanse while impure water has no use in Islamic rituals. It cannot be used either for *ghusl* or *wudu* and can be a potential source of germs and illness. The insistence on the use of clean water, therefore, underscores the medical values of Islamic worship. Hence rain water, iced water, stream or river water and water from melted snow can be used as pure water. Others include sea water, wells and fountains.

However, no matter what is the source, water is pure only when it retains its pure qualities such as freedom from colour, taste or smell. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of disease transmission occurs in the toilet, which is the centre of the spread of water and food borne diseases. Islam therefore puts a lot of stress on certain etiquettes that must be observed in the toilet. Obviously, going to the toilet has its potential risks, so a Muslim offers a prayer the *Basmallah* prior to entrance and he says afterwards. "Praise be to Allah who relieved me of filth and gave me relief" (Ibn Majah).

Undoubtedly, one feels a lot of relief after answering the call of nature; as undue delay will lead to distress. It is only a Muslim who praises his Lord after satiation with useful food; and also praises Him when he is relieved of the harmful faeces. For instance, acute retention of urine is a medical emergency because of the pains and distress it causes, it is necessary to thank Allah (s.w.t) because the waste products of urine or faeces so expelled, are harmful to the body. Thus a Muslim shows his

appreciation to his Lord. Appreciation of the good done to one is a noble quality.

When *al-taharah* is meticulously observed, it keeps the devotee neat and tidy, free from offensive body odour and diseases of various types. It is absolutely necessary to adhere strictly to the rules and regulations of *al-taharah* most of which are health rules; it is the bedrock of Islamic worship. Most of the gastro-intestinal diseases, e.g. cholera and typhoid are easily transmitted through faecal contamination of vegetables and fruits. So also is parasitic infestation, e.g. hookworm, roundworm and threadworm, etc. Schistosomiasis (or bilharzias) is caused by the contamination of food or water by the urine of the infected person. Toilet must always be kept clean, free from pests and fetid smell.

Privy Must Be Clean and Odourless

The privy or toilet of the Muslim must be kept always clean and tidy. All wastes must be properly disposed of. Flies, cockroaches, rats and mice carry germs, and toilets provide the breeding grounds. These creatures thrive on filth so they must be kept clean and tidy to ward off the menace of harmful insects and rodents so as to safeguard the health of the family. The toilet must also be free from stench.

If Muslims can abide by these rules of hygiene that appertaining to *al-taharah* over 70 per cent of water - borne and food - borne diseases can be prevented. When someone is diagnosed as having typhoid fever, it means that such a person has eaten someone's excreta in recent times. *Al-taharah* leaves no room for such careless and unhealthy habits. This is because it is *sunnah* to wash fruits and vegetables with clean water. Unfortunately, most of these rules are flouted with unhealthy outcome. *Al-taharah* rules appertain to toilet hygiene, as well as general cleanliness to the rest of the body and the environment. Thus this principle of health and hygiene is of cardinal significance. It becomes incumbent on every Muslim to keep his toilet, kitchen and the entire surroundings of the house clean.

Gender Segregation

One of the important legacies of Islam to the modern world was the separation in the use of lavatory between the male and female. Unlike other cultures which overlooked this toilet etiquette, Islam has insisted on its application. The world today has recognised its values so that modern toilets have separate privies for males and females in accord with Islamic tenets. Despite the decadent culture of modern age today, there is no unisex

toilet yet. Decorum is exercised in the use of toilet. This rule of social etiquette set in the 7th century Arabia was most advanced ideal and befitting to a civilised society.

Medical Significance of *at-taharah*

The regular and scrupulous washing of the hand before and after defecation (passing of excreta) is firstly, to prevent contamination of the private parts with dirty hands, perhaps containing irritant chemicals or harmful bacteria that could be injurious to these delicate areas. Secondly, it is to prevent auto - infection or self-infection with the soiled hands, contaminated food or drink, causing various gastro-intestinal diseases, which may lead to the outbreak of epidemic of water-borne diseases. The self-infected person may or may not show sign of the disease, but serves as a carrier of the disease (symptomless carrier). He thus spreads the disease.

Another wisdom of this teaching that the urinary opening must be cleaned first to prevent it from faecal contamination, which might lead to retrograde or backward infection of the urinary passage causing diseases such as urethritis, cystitis, and pyelonephritis, especially in the females. Women are more prone to these infections because of the proximity of urethral, vaginal and the anal orifices. To obviate this development the Prophet (s.a.w) taught that the urinary passage must first be washed before the anal opening lest the latter contaminates the former. Inadvertently, faecal matter can be smeared to these areas causing serious infections, cystitis, urethritis, salpingo-oophoritis and fulminating pelvic inflammatory disease (P.I.D.) that can lead to infertility in women if it is not treated in time. Thus, from a faulty technique of cleaning, and (or washing) the private parts. Coupled with poor toilet hygiene, infertility can be caused in women. So *al-taharah* is a very important method of preventing severe infections that could be of severe consequences.

Prolonged faecal smear around these delicate areas can lead to serious fungal, bacterial and viral skin infection, e.g. furuncles (boils), candiasis and, occasionally, even some viral warts. Other harmful effects include chemical excoriation from urine, redness and intense perianal itching and pilonidal sinus. All these can be prevented by regular and thorough washings of the area after every visit to the toilet as prescribed by Islam. This helps a great deal to prevent contracting these dangerous infections among the worshippers. *At-taharah* also helps to prevent the outbreak of gastro-enteritis – vomiting and diarrhoea diseases, because with good toilet hygiene, even the disease carriers (symptomless) like typhoid and cholera can rarely cause the disease to others provided he or she observes the *al-*

taharah which is the strict adherence to the hygienic rules in the toilet, and general household cleanliness.

The epidemic outbreak of preventable water-borne diseases like typhoid, cholera, amaebiasis, shigellosis, etc., can also be reduced to minimum amongst the Muslims, provided that other adequate sanitary measures such as adequate water supply and sewage disposal are also taken. It is obvious that adequate adherence to toilet hygiene as prescribed by Islam can prevent the epidemic of food and water-borne diseases. Per contra, "only four percent of the city's slaughterhouses could be termed 'satisfactory.' He cited typical instances... In England a Coventry's medical officer of health revealed in 1902 that "in one case the door of the slaughterhouse is within three yards of a public house urinal and three water closets."[1] This is not permissible according to Islamic teaching; privies are located far away from the public glare, to maintain privacy and to limit the spread of infection. It is important at this juncture to discern the wisdom of this Hadith reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a) who said:

> *"I heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) say: If there was a river at the door of anyone of you and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt of him? They said: "not a trace of dirt would be left," the Prophet added "that is the example of the five prayers which Allah annuls evil deed." (Bukhari).*

The *Al-taharah* essence is to clean the dirtiest part of man as described about 5 times a day, which means the area is washed at least 15 times a day. Obviously, "not a trace of dirt would be left." And where there is no dirt there are not much germs. The *wudu*, which follows *al-taharah*, takes care of the exposed parts of the body that are in constant contact with the dirty environment. The ritual purity through *Ghusl* or bath; cleanliness of the body, clothes and place of worship all prepare the worshipper to w*udu* or ablution. One unique feature of Islamic hygiene is the specification of the use of hands.

Use of Right Versus Left

Specification in the use of the hands was an Islamic legacy to the modern world. It helps to reduce contamination in the household chores and sanitation. This specification was based on the tradition of the great

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[1] Lionel Rose. *Health and Hygiene*. p. 75

health Teacher. He placed considerable importance to it. There are many accounts that indicated this emphasis:

> *Aisha (r.a) the loving wife of the Prophet (s.a.w) reported that: Allah's Messenger used his right hand for his ablution, water and his food, and his left hand for evacuations and anything objectionable.*
>
> *Aisha (r.a) said: Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) used to like to begin with the right in putting on his shoes, combing his hair, in purification and in all of his affairs (Bukhari and Muslim).*

Abu Huraira (r.a) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w) said: when you dress and when you make *wudu*, then begin with the right (Abu Dawud, at Tirmidhi and an Nasa'i).

This division of labour between the left and the right limbs is of paramount importance since it maintains strictly the basic hygienic rules from the outset. It is indeed disagreeable to wash your perineum (private parts) with the right hand and then use it for eating food as well. This means there is no orderliness and the chance of faeco-oral contamination is increased. Orderliness is a conspicuous factor in Islam, because Islam is a religion of law and order. There is perfect order in it, in the atom, and in the cosmos and in every creation of Allah Most High. In the basic essential acts of wudu and other acts of daily life, the right is always attended before the left. For example, the right hand is washed before the left, the right foot is put into the shoe before the left, the right leg is placed into the mosque, etc. However, the reverse is the case when undoing the opposite things; the left foot is brought out of the mosque before the right, the left shoe is removed before the right, etc.

This orderliness in the life of a Muslim maintains the right-handedness, or the right-handed dominance whose brain or cortical function is in the left hemisphere of the brain. The use of both hands equally improves bi-dexterity and skills, which are very important to all professionals, e.g. surgeons and engineers. This habit helps you master the use of your limbs effectively. Further, this discernment in the choice of the use of the hands helps to improve your cleanliness and your physical health.

The alternate use of right hand and right foot versus left hand and left foot has another medical importance. It improves the cerebral functional integrity of both sides of the body. Although right sidedness causes body asymmetry making the right hemisphere of the brain and the right upper and lower limbs become slightly larger because of over use. The same body

asymmetry results in left sided individuals. Although Islam is biased toward right sidedness, it does not under-utilise the left, instead it apportions it with equal and opposite duty. So that with alternate use of both sides the body asymmetry may be less glaring and the body physique looks good and beautiful. There is another health benefits of the use of left and the right alternatively, which is seen only with Islam. Caroline Laporte pointed this importance thus:

> *First, you must realise that no matter how "unreactive" you may feel, there is no such thing as an unreactive person. This is a simple fact – it is not open argument. Scientists have identified two hemispheres in the brain which carry out different tasks and activities. The left brain carries out different tasks and activities. The left brain tends to be logical, to rationalize, to organise and to order thought into communication... The right side of the brain is much more concerned with images, patterns and feelings – the creative side, if you like, in our world, people spend most of their education and subsequent lives developing left side skills, and usually neglect their right brains...*[1]

Islam, however, attempts to develop both the right and left brains simultaneously. So that the whole intellect and perceptive, imagination of the brain as a whole are improved for the betterment of man and his society. It also de-emphasises the asymmetry of the human body through the active participation of both left and right in the daily activities. These important benefits of Islamic worship have not been fully recognised and the wisdom beyond the use of left and right scarcely goes beyond the idea of hygiene.

Undoubtedly, the use of the right hand in eating and the left in anal washing is a sophisticated personal hygiene that was advanced by Islam and unique to itself. Until when the Islamic right sidedness is fast, assuming a universal habit. For example the left hand is assigned the task of perineal washing. Perineal toileting is an aspect of personal hygiene and general cleanliness which Islam contributed to the modern world. Dr. Khan, a medical scientist noted its importance pertinently:

> *Muslims are asked to clean the perineal region and the region between thighs by washing with water especially after defecation or urination. In the absence of water, the instructions are based on the surgical principle of cleaning away from the cleaner to the*

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[1] Caroline Laporte, *High Energy Living*, p.110

> *dirtier area. The habit of cleaning the perineal region with tissue paper alone does not in fact clean the area; it only wipes off the faeces and spreads a thin film of faecal matter over the area. The combination of modern scientific knowledge, which makes tissue paper commercially available and Muslim cultural practice would produce the best results. Thus tissue paper can be used first and water afterwards. The same principle can be applied to other fields and thus a society better than the present one can be produced.*[1]

This explanation lends support to the view that the practice of istijinar alone without istinja is ineffective in the maintenance of perineal care. Islam goes further than giving the best anal wash it takes appropriate measure to ensure that contamination following the perineal and anal washing ups do not lead to spread of diseases. It dutifully assigns the left hand to take care of the perineal toilet. This great wisdom of Islamic idea of cleanliness is the benchmark of modern hygiene, so which of the benefits of Islamic worship will you deny?

The total population of bacteria in the world is estimated to be about 10^{29} and the population is fast growing. Although Islam established the simplest and practicable system of keeping in check the growth and menace of these microbes, it did not intend to wipe them out. Its measures are only meant to curtail the deadly threats of these pathogens which threatened the existence of man in a variety of ways. As microbiologists claim that bacteria are useful also to man in a variety of ways. This culture of hygiene helps, therefore, to establish what Faruk Sarkinfada, a Nigerian medical microbiologist, described as "The Peace Treaty." A truce mutual co-existence between man and microbes to minimise the occurrence and spread of communicable diseases of microbial origin in human community. Islam provided the articles of this treaty in the 7th century. The medical microbiologist enumerated eleven articles viz:

- Antibiotic treatments: should be prescribed only when and where necessary.
- Washing hands after visiting the toilet: this is particularly important for food handlers and attendants involved in the care of parents and children. Sufficient toilet paper should be used to minimise finger contamination.
- Sewage disposal: faeces must be disposed of in a sanitary manner and a fly-proof latrine should be maintained. This reduces the

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[1] G.M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in* Islam, p.10

chances of air trips via the microbial cargo, the housefly as any exposed faecal surface an international airport. Under field conditions, faeces must be buried at a site distant and downstream from the drinking water. Treat this as important!

- Food hygiene: appropriate sanitary practices and suitable quality control procedures must be employed in homes and all industries preparing food for human consumption; all leftover food must be reheated before consumption.
- Public water supplies: protect, purify and chlorinate public water supplies and avoid possible backflow connection between water and sewer system. For individual and small-group protection while travelling, or in the field, treat water chemically or by boiling.
- Fly control: we envy this microbial plane of ours for its efficient services. The only acceptable measure for this will be screening and spraying with insecticides and by frequent collection and disposal of garbage. Any other attempt to disrupt the microbial airway services will be identified and treated as sabotage.
- Fruits and vegetables: we would no longer accept the blame for diarrhoeal diseases resulting from the consumption of improperly cleaned vegetables and fruits so long as scrupulous cleanliness in food preparation and handling are not respected. Particular attention should also be paid to the storage of salad and other foods served cold.
- Milk and dairy products: henceforth, all milk and dairy products would be pasteurised or boiled before consumption. That is only the modest and judicious way of notifying the microbial indigenes such as the Brucella and the Mycobacteria clans to desert the 'Arctic' land in order to avoid the episode of Brucelloisis and Tuberculosis in the consumer. This and other sanitary practices must be strictly adhered to, especially in the commercial milk production, storage and delivery.
- Infants: for infants, breast feeding must be encouraged and promoted. Water used for infants' food preparation must always be boiled.
- Housing: building of rooms with no regard to the provision for ventilation and the habit of overcrowding in a room must be avoided. The microbial communities of the upper respiratory tract are very enterprising; and the export-free-processing zone located in the nostril enhances the frequency of these transactions. The

prominent bourgeoisies include meningococus, adenovirus, popularly known as the common cold virus, preumcocci, tubercule bacilli and many others.

- General health and environmental policies: the concepts of primary health care, whose basic objectives is to restrict the improper contacts between the microbial communities and humans and animals must be strictly abided by. The following principles would be adopted as the modus operandi:

  Village clinics before city hospitals local herb remedies before important drugs vaccines before kidney machines latrines before antibiotics.[1]

The importance of Sarkindada's allegorical Articles of Peace treaty between man and the microbial world are many. Although presented in an allegorical way but the meaning and import of these articles are very clear. They are not only in accord with Islamic health rules but they also pointedly very sharply that these rules though revealed several centuries they are perfect in accord with modern hygiene. Their implications are equally valid because they are founded on Islamic medical science and undoubtedly as the medical microbiologist pointed out when all humans take serious note of its articles and religiously adhere to their stipulations and specifications the occurrence of microbial infections would drastically be minimised.[2] It must also be added that strict compliance with these rules would as parts of Islamic rules of hygiene create an infection-free society. It is against this backdrop that we should also view the role of cleanliness in the promotion of physical health.

Cleanliness and Physical Health

Islam, the originator of modern hygiene and cleanliness, places a high premium on cleanliness. In fact, it is next to Godliness. This is because the entire fabric of Islamic worship rests on cleanliness. It was this ideology or culture that spread subsequently to the remaining parts of the world. Cleanliness and hygiene are important Islamic legacies to the modern world. Islamic culture was the best evolved as a mercy for humanity. Its attitude to personal hygiene had not only spread through-out the world but also had laid the foundation of modern hygiene. If this assertion seems

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1 Faruk Sarkinfada, *Microbial World: A Mysterious Journey*, Informant Publishers, Kaduna, Nigeria (2001), pp.19-21.

2 Ibid., p.19.

rather forced, consider the gist of this historic account of the Elizabethan era:

> *Personal cleanliness was negligent, to say the least a sixteen – century courtier wrote wonderingly of Queen Elizabeth: "She doth bath herself once a month whether she require it or not.* [1]

The Stuart Court was disgusting beneath in powder and pomp. One resident of Oxford complained about looseness while they were billed there during the plaque in 1665:

> *Though they were neat and gay in their apparel, they were very nasty and beastly, leaving at their departure, their excrements in every corner, in chimneys, studies, cole-houses, cellars.*

This account showed a typical scene of how Islam met Europeans and outrightly changed their behaviour because Islam is a mercy to all nations. Islam insists on purity of mind and body before a worshipper approaches his Lord in prayer. Therefore, physical purity or *al-taharah* is an essential condition of *salat*. It includes cleanliness of the body, clothes and place, which require strict adherence to hygienic rules. Islam also separates the functions of the right hand as distinctly from that of the left. The left hand is used for sanitary work such as cleaning the private parts after every call of nature, cleaning of the nose and the filthy surrounding. The right hand is used for the rest of the functions in the daily chores. This division of function is in accord with modern hygiene and the reason is quite obvious. It reduces the risk of auto infection as well as the source of infecting others. And that clean water must be used in the purification such as *al-taharah*, ritual bath or *ghusl* and *wudu*. These hygienic rules, evolved in the 7th century Arabia, are startling in their modernness. In Europe the culture of cleanliness was largely unknown, much less the division of function between the left and right hands. In fact, in the mid-nineteenth century cesspools were cleared by hands of the "night-men", and cesspools' content were valuable commodities. The concept of general hygiene and cleanliness re-introduced to the modern world were then not fully accepted in the West. Although the men may looked "clean", they were used to faecal matter littered everywhere in their surrounding.

The teaching in Islam is to keep away from filth and anti-social behaviour. Even the sewerman must show a good sense of hygiene in

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 12.

discharging his duty. The Islamic demand of cleanliness and good decorum on every Muslim is not a respecter of person or profession. Hence after defecation and micturation, i.e. passing of stool and urine, these openings must be cleaned at least three times; the urethra opening is to be cleaned first according to Prophetic teaching. The lifestyle of the prophet is the *Grand norm* reference framework on which every Muslim emulates. The impact of Islamic worship on the health status of every nation improved immensely. The Prophet (s.a.w) had demonstrated an excellent and scrupulous adherence to Islamic health rules, which all have remained valid to date. He single-headedly changed global landscape from that gladdened with filth and sewage to general cleanliness. The *fitra* of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) would help drive home the point. Abu Huraira (r.a), one of the close companions of the Prophet narrated that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said:

> *Five practices are characteristics of the fitra: circumcision, shaving the pubic region, clipping the nails and cutting the moustache short (Bukhari)*

These are referred to as the Sunnahs of Nature; and they anticipated the modern day body care by over one and a half millenniums. The observation of the *fitra* recommended by Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) in the 7th century Arabia is now the standard way of keeping the body neat and tidy in the most sophisticated society of the industrialised world. Men the world over now emulates the universal Role Model in body care. It is the most fashionable body care among men and women of world. Furthermore, the Prophet (s.a.w) said, "cleanse yourself for Islam, is cleanliness" (Ibn Hayyan). It was this habit of cleanliness by the process of acculturalisation spread across the trajectory of every nation that the world is now cleaned up by the divine teachings of the Prophet of Islam.[1] This statement on further reflection shows that Islam is not an outdated religion; instead it is always a step ahead of every civilisation. In addition, it also validates this claim that Islamic worship is beneficial to health.

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.12.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPORTANCE OF SUNNAH FITRA

The precepts of the *fitra* established by the Prophet of Islam have now formed the cornerstone of modern concepts of cleanliness and general hygiene. The *sunnah fitra* are five, viz: shaving the private parts, shaving the armpit, cutting the nails, circumcision, and clipping the moustache and growing beard. These acts of the Prophet (s.a.w) have now constituted the highest symbol of neatness and body care. These include cleanliness of the skin, nails and feet. Health expert explained the validity of these precepts in the light of health science: The skin must be kept clean because it is the outer, protective covering of the body. If it is allowed to remain dirty, microbes will breed on it and gradually find their way into the body through the natural openings, sweat and oil tubes, etc.[1] Islam provides the excellent means of skin and body care through the legislation of *wudu* and *ghusl*. They have helped the Muslims head and shoulder above any other nation in personal and environmental hygiene. In contrast, the sanitary condition prevailing in medieval homes in Europe continued largely unchanged over the next three centuries, until the European culture was Islamised.

Clipping the Armpit and Pubic Hairs

It is for the same reason that the pubic and auxiliary (or armpit) hair and the moustache must be cut regularly. If left unkempt, these areas become the breeding ground of bacteria and external parasites like fleas and pediculosis or infestation by lice. Pediculosis capitis or head louse is worldwide. It is found mainly in children and neglected adult with poor hygiene.[2] The other species of lice that infest man is pediculus corporis or body louse. It is common amongst people with poor standard of hygiene. The lice and their nits hide in the seams of clothing. In all, lice infestation causes severe itching in the head or body. The itchy dermatosis can be intense and scratching can lead to secondary bacterial infection around the

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1 Bola Maxwell-Ojo. *Health Science*. Spectrum Books Ltd., Ibadan (1991), p.12.

2 Yetunde Mercy Olumide, *A Pictorial Self-Instructional Manual on Common Skin Diseases*, (1990), p.28.

area of infestation. Long standing itching and debility lead to hypermelanosis.[1] Another serious lice infestation is pediculosis pubis or pubic lice. It is a different genus and may be found on the eyebrows, eyelashes or auxiliary hair. They are usually spread by direct contact sometimes through sexual intercourse. Phthirus pubis or public louse often causes social embarrassment due to intense itching around the pubic area. The body louse also causes the disease of typhus fever. It grows to 6mm long and lives on human blood. The germs are not injected directly into the blood stream. They lie in the louse's droppings and find their way into nearby bite wounds. The importance of *fitrah* in personal hygiene is considerable.

The Prophet (s.a.w) recommended shaving of the head amongst men, when Ka'b bin Uujra was devastated by head lice, he ordered him to shave his head. The menace of head and body lice even amongst the Muslims of the 7th century considerably checked through the application of the *sunnah fitra*. Western Europe was devastated by lice, fleas and bugs with the associated prevalence of typhus fever. For instance, a medical record of visiting medical officers of the Royal infirmary, according to one Manchester doctor in 1882, showed that "at least two out of three are beset with lice, while fleas and bugs are very frequent quests..."[2]

The shaving of the pubic region regularly is an embodiment of modern hygiene and body care. It is a junction between the upper and lower parts of the body and contains numerous secretory glands: the sebaceous and the apocrine glands. The distribution of the sebaceous gland is of striking medical significance. On the face, scalp and scrotum one finds them in greatest abundance. These skin secretory glands produce an oily substance called *sebum*. Excessive production of sebum is called *seborrhea*, and this occurs where the glands are normally found in great numbers.[3] And scrotum is located in the pubic area hence this area needs to be maintained regularly clean and not to be left "bushy." Moreover, sebaceous activity is greater in the male than in the female. This increases the risk of seborrhea of the scrotum. This means that regular shaving reduces this risk enormously and also prevents the occurrence of other skin infections. The other areas, which contain numerous sebaceous glands, include the face and

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1 Yetunde Mercy Olumide, *A Pictorial Self-Instructional Manual on Common Skin Diseases*, p.30.

2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 36

3 Pillsbury and Heaton, *A Manual of Dermatology*, (2nd Edition), W. B. Saunders Comp., Philadelphia, p. 31.

scalp. Regular washing and cleaning during *wudu* also reduces this risk and other skin problems.

The pubic area is also rich in apocrine gland. This skin gland is also well distributed in the axillae (armpit), nipples, pubic or ano-genital region and the ear canal where it produces wax. Its importance, according Pillsbury and Heaton in *A Manual of Dermatology*, stems from the fact that it may be responsible for certain body odour and it is the site of certain disease states.[1] Basically, the Apocrine gland is the specialized gland of the axilla. It is here that the gland is found in greatest size and density.[2] This means that these areas; axilla and the pubis are the major sites of offensive smell of the body. Thus Allah's Apostle (s.a.w), in the 7th century Arabia, recommended regular 'toileting' of these areas – shaving and cleaning increase ventilation, reduces unpleasant smell and prevent infection.

The Apocrine secretion is sterile and odourless as it comes on the skin surface; later, secondary bacterial changes that account for the distinctive odour. A good body hygiene such as recommended by the Prophet of Islam reduces bacterial activity and therefore prevents terrible smell of the body, due to excessive activity of this secretory gland. This makes the area below the belt in man and woman a region of distinctive smell. This almost always stains the underwear and renders the area vulnerable to infections. Thus where *fitra* is not practised fetid body odour becomes inevitable because the *sunnah fitra* improves perianal toileting.

This foul smelling causing gland is also well distributed around the areolae of the nipples, the periumbilical and perianal (around the anus) and densely distributed in the armpits and around the private parts. It was for this reason that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) applied the same Islamic health rules to both the pubic region and the armpits. If hairs are allowed to grow luxuriously, smelling and infection would be exacerbated. Thus he recommended regular trimming or shaving of the armpits too. The apocrine sweat gland area is a common site for a peculiar bacterial infection known as *hiderandenitis suppurativa* these are large painful boils full of puss usually seen in the armpit especially when personal hygiene is poor. Evidently, with regular trimming or shaving of the armpits the risk of this infection is reduced to minimum.

The activities of both sebaceous and apocrine sweat glands are worsened by that of the Encrine sweat gland, which further demands regular body

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1 Pillsbury and Heaton, *A Manual of Dermatology*, (2nd Edition), W. B. Saunders Comp., Philadelphia, p.33

2 Ibid.

hygiene. This gland is distributed around the forehead, the palms and the soles and the axillae. Emotional stimuli induce secretion of this gland such as anxiety and anger. Therefore, they cause profuse sweating from the forehead, soles of the feet, palms and the armpits. This secretion favours offensive body odour, especially in areas where the hair is plenty or bushy and unkempt. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) had prejudice against bad odours from whatever sources. His Traditions when properly implemented would rid the Muslims of all faulty body smells as well as a number of skin infections.

Clipping the Nails

It was his recommendation that a Muslim must cut his nails short. This is one of the five acts of *fitra*. For obvious reason long finger nails and toenails do not only make ugly appearance but can be very injurious to health. Naturally, the nails extend indefinitely unless cut or broken. Nails, longer than a foot long were once a custom in some countries because they were regarded as an indubitable sign of wealth.[1] But today, such a custom is no longer fashionable. In fact, it is injurious to health. Toenails have little useful function in a shoe-wearing civilization. Today it is in vogue to visit regularly manicurist and pedicurist to take care of both the toenails and fingernails in line with the *fitra.* A hadith declares: "a person who cuts his nails on Friday becomes safe from calamities for one week." This is a good motivation for observing the *sunnah fitra* regularly.

It is necessary to trim the nails regularly for both health and aesthetic reasons. The nail grows at an average rate of about 0.1mm a day.[2] The nail fold is also regularly washed to keep clean in *wudu*, while the nail is cut at a regular interval to avoid long nail formation. Both the cuticle and the fine horny lamella are polished neatly in manicuring, for purely cosmetic reason. While to a Muslim, simply cut it to trim it to size, which is a *sunnah* of the Prophet. Therefore, cutting the nails short at least every Friday becomes a religious duty. If not properly catered for, the nail folds and accordingly, provides a continuous pathway for the spread of infections, the best example being that of "run around", or paronychia - a bacterial infection of the nail folds.[3] This acutely painful infection of the finger is commonly called "whitlow." Hence, the twin benefits of Islamic worship are spiritual rewards and health improvement; the two are inseparable

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1 Pillsbury and Heaton, *A Manual of Dermatology*, p.17
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p.20

because they are the two sides of the same coin. Towards better improved personal hygiene, a hadith declares ten acts are sunnat: to clip the moustache, to grow the beard, to use *miswak*, *madmada* (or Mazmaza, to rinse out the mouth with water when making an ablution), *Istinshaq* (snuffing up water into the nostrils when making ablution), to cut the nails, to wash the toes, to clean the armpits, to clean the pubes, and *istinja* with water.

To reiterate, due to their cardinal importance and health benefits all these acts or habits of the Prophet (s.a.w) had positive global impact. They have become the integral components of modern aesthetic lifestyle and fashion. The habits of the Great Exemplar have become the standard and the best for all nations to emulate. As a saviour of humanity his lifestyle constitutes the *Grand norm* .Thus in addition to his *fitra* his mannerism in clothing, drinking while sitting, housing, sleeping, walking, beginning the good deeds with the right hand side, eating and drinking with the right hand, etc have now constituted the benchmark of excellence of a great personality. He is indeed the most ideal Universal Role Model.

The novelty of these ten habits of good body and their impact in Arabia in the 7th century and far beyond were indeed very great. In Europe, particularly in England, the habit of personal hygiene was largely absent so that the rushes, tapestries and sheepskin bedclothes used in the home were breeding grounds for vermin, and helped the spread of plaque.[1] The Prophet (s.a.w) emphasised the importance of strict adherence to hygienic rules to rid the *Ummah* of various epidemics, skin diseases and pediculosis. His precepts have now formed the basis of Health Science. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is a mercy to all creatures.

In like manner, the nails must regularly be cut short because dirt can easily lodge under and around them, forming very good places for bacterial growth. These germs can easily cause disease because it is with the hands we eat and drink. Others are likely to be infected by this bad habit. When they are infected with harmful bacteria, we are liable to get infected and the risks are very high; regular cutting of the nails however reduce this risk.

Health experts have enumerated certain habits to be developed in connection with the cleanliness of the skin and nails. These habits are already the integral parts of Islamic worship revealed to an unlettered Prophet in the 7th century Arabia. They are drawn up mostly from the *sunnah fitra* and Prophet's teaching on health and hygiene. For instance, a hadith declares: "A person who cuts his nails on Friday becomes safe from

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.12.

calamities for one week." This is a strong motivation to imbibing this healthful habit. Similarly, other habits founded on the prophetic tradition modernised for global usage include the following:

- Wash the skin frequently, the parts that get more dirty, e.g. the hands, should be washed most often (cf *wudu*).
- Wash the whole body with hot water every day if possible, and certainly not less than twice a week (cf. ritual bath or *ghusl*).
- Wash your face and neck at the beginning of the day and again before going to bed (cf. *wudu*).
- Wash your feet every night and dry thoroughly between the toes to prevent skin diseases developing there (cf. *wudu*).
- Dry all parts of your body very carefully. This is likely to crack (e.g. the back of the hands) and where it is likely to become infected (e.g. between the toes) because microbes can enter through cuts or breaks in the skin (cf. *ghusl*).
- Keep all nails short, smooth edged, clean by trimming them regularly. Rub a moistening cream into the hands to keep the skin smooth and soft and so prevent it from cracking, especially during harmattan (cf. *fitra*).
- Treatment of open cuts, with a mild disinfectant to kill microbes on the broken part of the skin (cf. prophetic injunction: seek for medication).
- Cover cuts with a light bandage to prevent microbes from entering them.[1] (cf. Prophetic injunction: every ailment has its remedy).

Health habits connected with the cleanliness of the skin and nails are found in Islamic worship. This indicates, invariably, the medical benefits of Islamic worship. It also reveals the health science in *wudu*, which keeps the Muslim regularly neat and tidy. In addition, these health habits show that even the non-Muslims perform *wudu*, in one way or the other without realising it but only being forcefully attracted to its health values. Hence it is performed haphazardly, mechanically without the accompaniment of spiritual blessings. In this regard, like in all aspects of daily life, the Muslims have an edge over the non-Muslims. Nevertheless, both do perform *wudu* for different reasons. Circumcision is another health factor of the *fitra*.

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[1] Bola Maxwell-Ojo, *Health Science*, p.12.

Circumcision

In its natural state, the glands or tip (head) of the penis is covered by a fold of skin, called the foreskin. When rolled forward, the foreskin is like a hood around the glands, but it can also be pushed back along the shaft. Islamic custom dictates that the foreskin be removed – cut away – in a surgical procedure called circumcision.

Al-khitaan or circumcision is a simple operation in which the prepuce or the foreskin of the male sexual organ is excised. This skin flap or prepuce often serves as a reservoir for excess glandular secretion hence it becomes a focus for infection; it favours rapid bacterial growth. Austin Ingram Dodson, Associate Professor of Urology, Medical College of Virginia, wrote that:

> *Congenital or inflammatory narrowing of the preputial orifice produces a condition known as phimosis, which may require circumcision or an incision to enlarge the orifice. Persistent phimosis interfere with adequate personal hygiene and may result in severe inflammation and ulceration of the glands penis and the under-surface of the prepuce. Circumcision in infancy is an effective means of preventing carcinoma of the penis in later life...*[1]

Although no specific time is set for the circumcision, it is recommended that the operation be done on the day of *Aqiyqah*, the day the child is named, the day of naming ceremony which is seven days after the child's birth. The medical benefits of *Al-Khitaan* are many, some of which include those mentioned by Professor Dodson; others are: improvement of personal hygiene and prevention of cancer of the penis. Good hygiene is one of the argument in favour of this religious custom. According to medical experts, when the foreskin is intact, white secretions called "smegma" can accumulate underneath it. Unless these are regularly washed away, the foreskin can become smelly, dirty and possibly inflamed. Men who allow smegma to accumulate may also accumulate papilloma viruses, which can cause tumours to develop in the bladder. These viruses can also be transmitted onto sexual partners. Papilloma viruses have been implicated in the development of cervical cancer in women. Further, these experts also claimed that boys can suffer pain from a foreskin that does not expand as the penis develops, and in adult it can become tight and difficult to move,

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[1] Austin Ingram Dodson, Jr. *Urological* Surgery (Fourth edition), the C.V. Mosby company, 1970 p.21

in both cases, medical circumcision are indicated.[1] Recurrent inflammation of this skin fold usually causes ulceration of the glands of penis, a very painful condition. Infection of the prepuce can also cause healing by fibrosis leading to paraphimosis. Narrowing of the foreskin; in many cases this causes acute retention of urine. Islamic recommendation of this excision of the prepuce is in accord with medical science. The practice has a number of health benefits.

It was found in 1982 that 95% of the boys with urinary tract infections were uncircumcised. Half a decade later, in 1987, it was shown that there was a tenfold increase in the incidence of urinary tract infections in uncircumcised boys. Dr. Ebrahim Kazim, a renowned medical scientist explained that this was due to the increased peri – urethral flora of uropathic bacteria in uncircumcised boys in the first six months of life so there was a greater danger of serious bacteraemia.[2] It has been well established that preputial (foreskin) colonisation with uropathic bacteria in infancy and children is a major cause of a number of bacterial infections involving the urethral pathway (urethritis): the bladder (cystitis) and the kidneys (pyelonephritis). When these bacteria invade the bloodstream (bacteraemia) they cause serious conditions such as pneumonia, meningitis, encephalitis and toxic shock.

The uropathic bacteria can cause posthitis or inflammation of the foreskin, balanitis and balanoposthitis when the infection involves the glans penis of the child. Paraphimosis, i.e. inflammation and retraction is a common complication of un-circumcision. Usually the condition is painful and is associated with retention of urine. Un-circumcision is also implicated in increased incidence of cancer of the penis.

The foreskin is prune to trauma as it is often injured while fastening of the zip along with the prepuce. The recent advantage a al-khitaan is it's protection against HIV infection:

> *Of recent, a research work conducted jointly by medical doctors from the University of Melbourne and Monash University, Australia, revealed that, male circumcision offers protection against HIV infection. Using information from 40 previous studies, the researchers suggest that the virus target specific cells found in the inner surface of the prepuce (foreskin). These cells possess HIV receptors, thereby making this area particularly*

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1 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, pp.367-368.

2 Ebrahim Kazim, *Further Essays on Islamic Topics* Islamic Academy Trinidad, West Indies (2000), p. 213

> *susceptible to infection. The researchers proposed that male circumcision provides significant protection against HIV by removing most of the receptors.*
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> *The most dramatic evidence of this protective effect comes from a new study of couples in Uganda, where each woman was HIV positive and her male partner was not over a period of 30 months, no new infection was observed among 50 circumcised men, whereas 40 out of 137 uncircumcised men became infected – even though all couples were advised about preventing infection and free condoms were made available to them. Thus the researches conclude that: in the light of (available) evidence, male circumcision should be seriously considered as an additional means of preventing HIV in countries with a high level of infection.*[1]

The care of the hair also receives particular attention. Islam is a religion of general cleanliness and fashionable lifestyle without being vulgar or indecent. The beauty and importance of hair care was advanced by the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w), the Educator of Mankind, at the dawn of modern civilisation in the 7th century.

Cleanliness of the Hair

The venerated Prophet (s.a.w) emphasised that we must clean and comb our hair regularly. And today the reasons for doing so are so obvious to us all. According to Health experts, hair must be kept clean because of the following reasons: (a) the hair is not often covered and so quickly gets dirty; (b) it provides a warm, comfortable home for fleas and lice.[2] Although *wudu* reduces the dirt of the scalp, the Prophet (s.a.w) emphasised the need for combing and oiling, obviously, to prevent pediculosis capitis and other related fungal and bacterial infection which were prevalent in non – Muslim communities. In fact, body lice did not fade away in England and other parts of Europe, and the problem of head lice persisted until after the Second World War. On the other hand, the menace of body, public and head lice was reduced to the barest minimum in the Muslim world for centuries due to the impact of the Great Teacher of Health. He stressed the importance of "Hair care" in the Arabian Desert in the 7th century. This teaching was also in line with his philosophy:

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1 See *Male Circumcision Protects Against HIV Infection*by R. V. Short and R. Szabo: BMJ 2000: 320:1592 (10 June).

2 Bola Maxwell-Ojo, *Health Science*, p.12

"Cleanliness invites towards faith, and faith leads its possessor to the Garden" (*Al-Tabarani*).

It was in line with this ideology that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) rebuked many of his companions to mend their ways with respect to hair care. For example, he was reported to have asked someone: "Does he have nothing with which to comb his hair?" (Abu Dawud). This showed that he was irked with dirty hair as much as dishevelled hair. Combing and oiling of the hair not only give beauty and dignity, they also prevent head louse infestation. In spite of extensive public health measures by school health services, it is still common among boys and girls even in the private schools with children of the middle class. Children in boarding houses also transmit it among themselves.[1]

This shows even in the modern world, how poor standard of hair care can lead to serious *pediculosis capitis* infestation. The universal Role Model of all times always showed his aversion for unkempt hair because of the unsavoury complications. While rebuking one of his companions for this negligence of hair care, the person so rebuked quickly responded by taking the correct measure to which the Prophet (s.a.w) delightfully responded thus: "Is this not better than one should come with dishevelled hair, looking like a devil?" (Malik in *al-Muwatta*)

Equating one's look with unkempt hair with that of a grotesque devil showed the degree of aversion, for unkempt hair, and this message really sank deep into the warp and woof of the *ummah*. Everybody must be neat and tidy, with well kept hair to pose a beautiful appearance that is far away from that of the devil. The care of the scalp hair was an area where Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) laid emphasis on to be well taken care of. He has forbidden a Muslims to leave his hair unkempt, bushy or dirty. Regular wiping, washing, combing and oiling were recommended by the Prophet. The upkeep of scalp hair is a religious duty. "Let he who has hair respect it", said the Prophet, as reported by Abu Dawud. Today, the respect of hair has become a universal fashion, attracting the use of a variety of hair creams, shampoos, lotions and soaps. The increasing number of hair salons and barbing salons with a varying sophistications attests to the cardinal importance of hair care, which is an Islamic legacy to the modern world.

The Prophet always combed his hair from the right side. Anyone who does not respect his hair attracts no respect from others too. Because dirty and bushy hair mirror abnormal personality. It also causes pediculosis capitis. Self-dignity or *ghira*, a sense of self respect are the signposts of a

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[1] Y. M. Yetunde, *A Practical Self-Instructional Manual On Common Skin Diseases*, p.28.

good practising Muslim. He is expected as a religious obligation to look neat, good and well performed and not look like a devil, who is usually depicted as one who looks rough, dirty, ugly with fetid smell. Islamic rites must be conducive to body's beautification and aesthetics. They appeal naturally to every human being because man by his natural propensity is *home aesthicus.* In fact, dirty scalp hair reflects improper implementation of *wudu*, which indicates illiteracy or gross negligence of religious duty. Naturally, scalp hair ought to be taken care of regularly. It grows at an average daily rate of about 0.35mm which means it should be allowed to continue growing when the hair is wooly or trim regularly when it is curly.

What is important in all cases is that it must not be left dishevelled. Because the Prophet (s.a.w) said: "cut it all or leave it all" (Muslim). What is of importance is hygiene and proper upkeep, provided that it is kept clean, combed and oily. The era of bushy, unkempt hair was over. A protection against cold and injury afforded by hair is no longer necessary for civilized men. As Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) predicted mankind has become more preoccupied with appearance. The psychological and the cosmetic value of hairstyle today have become so great. And to Muslims cleanliness is a religious duty. But in whatever manner of style and personal behaviour, a Muslim must act contrary to polytheists. He must for example, grow beard.

Grow the Beard

The habit of growing beard was commonplace amongst the disciples of Jesus Christ. In fact, it was an established civilisation amongst the civilised cultures in history. The flame of this tradition was kept alive by the Noble Prophet (s.a.w) who re-established it at the dawn of modern civilisation. This lofty habit of growing the beard among the males was opposed and negated with the rise of European culture, which was essentially founded on Graco-Roman pagan tradition rather than on the Judeo-Christian ethics. Thus growing the beard was considered (and still is) a symbol of dignity, manliness and generals cleanliness for centuries. But the Muslims on discovery of Europe were shocked to find that beard, the pride and glory of mankind was not allowed to grow amongst the Europeans. This struck them at least and often extraordinary that men grew without this visible sign of wisdom and experience was conspicuously absent among their malefolk. Professor Lewis in his "The Muslim Discovery of Europe" while quoting an Arab who was in Rome in about 886 stated the reason of this curious European practice of shaving beard. He wrote:

> *The inhabitants of Rome, young and old, shave off their beards entirely, not leaving a single hair. I asked them as to the cause of their shaving their beards, and I said to them: the beauty of men lies in their beards: what is your purpose in doing this to yourself?" They answered: 'Whoever does not shave his beard is not a true Christian. For when Simon and the Apostles came to us, they had neither staff no scrip (cf. Mathew x:10), but were poor and weak while we were then kings robed in brocade and seated on golden seats. They summoned us to the Christian religion, but we did not answer them; we seized them and tortured them and their crowns and beards. And then when the truth of their words appeared to us, we began to shave our beards in expiation of our sin in shaving their beards.*[1]

The important point raised in this historic account was the fact that Simon and the Apostles were fully bearded in accordance with autochthonous Islamic tradition. Obviously, they must have been taught the habit of growing beard by their Master Jesus Christ who was then the great teacher of Islamic ethics, values and norms. But as the report indicated, they were tortured and shaved by the polytheists they went to Islamise or convert to pristine Christian faith. This showed clearly that the practice of shaving of the beard that arose as an atonement of crime of killing and torturing rather than on a sound religious ground. The correct and normal response would have henceforth been to emulate the bearded Christians to keep their religions. Thus the practice of shaving the beard was polytheistic in origin. This confirmed the veracity of Prophet's disposition.

When the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) was preaching the precept of "Acting contrary to the polytheists: to let the beard grow and trim the moustache in Arabia in the 7th century, very little was known of the impact this philosophy could make to the *mushrikuns* (polytheists) and those who share their values. Perhaps, no one knew then that this precept was aimed at, among other considerations, safeguarding manhood. But Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) was aware of the fact that a time would come when gender distinction (male and female) and sex role (feminine and masculine) would be eroded and debased by the atheists and their collaborators the polytheists. So to forestall the development of this bizarre and weird cultural evolution the Prophet (s.a.w) charged the Muslims and urged them to act contrary to the enemies of human civilisation, to grow beard.

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[1] Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*,p.280.

The Prophetic prediction has today come true; there are many powerful subversive forces working within and outside every society with the expressed aim of spreading a new pernicious worldview that is described as "feminisation of manhood." Its sole objective is the establishment of "androgynic culture" worldwide. Dr. June Singer in her ANDROGYNY, explicates on the guiding principle toward this new sexuality. According to her: ،

> *The principles called "masculine" and "feminine" are well defined within our particular social structure. Or at least they were defined until the sexual revolution plunged many people into a state of perplexity. One could ask any group of people to list qualities they thought would fall into the masculine and feminine stereotypes. The masculine stereotype would, invariably, include, aggressiveness, dominance, hardness, logic, competitiveness, achievement orientation, thinking, inventiveness, reason; while the feminine stereotype would include passivity, compliance, softness, emotion, co-operativeness, nurturance, intuition, conversion and tenderness. There would be little variation in the response from group to group. Always, when I have lectured and put such a list on the blackboard, it has become apparent to both men and women that each person possesses a mixture of qualities from both lists. For most people, it seems important that these "masculine" qualities be in the forefront in men, and those "feminine" qualities be in the forefront in women. The contra sexual qualities have traditionally been thought to be best kept in the background in order to establish and preserve a strong gender identity. But the old values do not carry much weight any more, and new values have got to become established in the realms of sex and gender.*[1]

It becomes discernible from this account that the action of the Prophet (s.a.w) was like placing of a wedge and or barrier between the "old values" and the "new values" in order to save humanity from the catastrophe of androgyny and its consequences. His insistence in the 7th century that the Muslim must act contrary to the polytheists was to vouchsafe the old values, which in this context include the pristine Judeo-Christian view on gender identity and that of Islam which came to reinforce it. The new values are the current polytheistic forces that tend to efface completely both

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[1] June Singer, Androgyny: *Towards a New Theory of Sexuality*, Rout ledge and Kegan Paul. London (1972).

gender role and gender identity. To define androgyny, which the new values tend to establish is, simply put, that every person has a dual capacity of being a man as well as a woman at the same time, a view that forms the basis of homosexuality. The androgynyes, which is one who professes androgyny, is not a hermaphrodite because in general usage, hermaphroditism refers primarily to the appearance of abnormally formed two external genitalia which resemble those of the two opposite sex. In other words, a hermaphrodite has both female and male genitalia, therefore, has ambiguous gender. While an androgyne, on the other hand, has ambiguous sexual orientation or behaviour. But an androgyny is a bisexual by his action and conscious behaviour. He or she selects both male and female sexual partners. It is important to make this lengthy elaboration so as to properly assess the crucial importance of growing beard in the context of the prevailing process of emasculation of male-hood in the name o sexual liberation and sexual liberty.

What the purveyors of androgyny idealise and seek to establish in all societies is nothing but homosexuality. Dr. Singer, an active proponent of this culture, is a Jungian analyst. She had described in her book how androgyny could lead to a new sense of personal unity within the large universe, a universe that is devoid of gender identity, where everyone gratifies his sexual urge through lesbianism and homosexuality. Today homosexuality is identified as America's well established culture, and the evilness spreads like a cyclone to all nations. To achieve this aim, therefore, "masculiness" or "masculinity" must be feminised, so that men look in appearance and conscious behaviour like women because like the females they are objects of homosexual gratification. So they must look effete young men who wear female clothes or to women with boyish figures and façade.[1] So that an androgyne is typical of this genre:

> *The androgyne is certainly one of the great images of camp sensibility. Examples; the swooning slim sinuous figures of pre–Raphaelite painting and poetry in the Art Nouveau style, the thin, flowing, sexless bodies in prints and posters, presented in relief on lamps and ashtrays; the haunting androgynous vacancy behind the perfect beauty of Greta Garbo.*[2]

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1 June Singer, Androgyny: *Towards a New Theory of Sexuality*, Rout ledge and Kegan Paul. London (1972), p. 32

2 Ibid.

The need to act diligently to the prophetic precept and fitra is to be different from the polytheists in all respects. The need to grow the beard is more pressing today than at anytime in history. It is a wedge to the pernicious aculturalisation process that is spreading androgyny fast across all nations. The importance of growing beard in this age of androgynous culture is both cardinal and crucial. Its essence is captured vividly from this account by Dr. Al – Qardawi:

> *The Prophet's command to be different from them was intended to train the Muslims in developing an independent personality, distinct in its inner reality as well as in outward appearance, in substance as well as in form. At the same time shaving the beard is an affront to the masculine nature, as it is an attempt to resemble women, while the beard is an integral part of masculinity and a distinctive feature of the male sex.*[1]

The need to preserve both masculinity and its distinctive nature cannot be over-emphasised. Now androgyny as a culture has come to do away with masculinity and what it stands for entirely. It feminises the male to conduce him properly for homosexual gratification. So that a transvestite is not allowed to grow beard; he must be effete and womanish in character and appearance. Thus letting the beard grow is the natural response of and antithesis to androgyny. It symbolises at the outset masculinity in action, so it is a keep off signpost. Further, it is pertinent to note that Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah had convincingly argued that the beard helps to make Muslims different from non-Muslims was the aim of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w). He marshalled his argument with facts and was quoted to have said that:

> *The Qur'an and sunnah and the consensus of Muslim scholars all teach Muslims to be distinct from non – believers and in general to avoid resembling them. Anything, which is likely to cause corruption in a hidden and diffuse manner is related to this matter and is likewise prohibited. The imitation of the appearance of the non – believers will lead to imitation of their immoral behaviour and evil qualities – indeed, even of their beliefs. Such influences can neither be brought under control nor easily detected, and consequently it becomes difficult or even impossible to eradicate*

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[1] Yusuf Al – Qardawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, p. 94

them. Accordingly, whatever is a cause of corruption has been prohibited by the Law Giver.[1]

Undoubtedly, with the evil wave of homosexuality sweeping across all nation, and androgynous ideology feminising the males of all nations, the most ideal response is to adhere strictly the prophetic injunction: "Act contrary to the polytheist", and growing beard is one of the contrariwise responses. The beard has both psychological as well as physical repulsive effects to transvestite and those with homosexual tendency. Like the mane of the lion, beard gives the Muslim an awe-inspiring personality and a no nonsense appearance or countenance. To reiterate, it is a keep off signpost, thus the beard has a number of benefits. According to Shaykh Fazl-ul-Karim, they include the following:

- It enhances the beauty of the males just as the mane of a lion or the peak of a cock.
- It serves economy and avoids the trouble of constant shaving.
- It saves the most precious time.
- Constant shaving makes the skin loose.
- Shaving makes the eyesight defective, while beard brightens.
- It lends gravity and respect to appearance.
- Beard is a check to free mixing with the fair sex.
- To these benefits, the following could be added:
  a) Beard is a symbol of excellence in scholarship and character.
  b) It deters a person from the menace and harassment by homosexuals and androgynes.
  c) It is an identity or a signpost of a practising Muslim.

Hence any person with beard that is equal on all sides and well trimmed moustache is in this era considered a "terrorist" by the Americans or their allies. He becomes a target for two reasons. First, he is attacked on ideological ground as a Muslim in the current covert war against Islam. Second, like hijab being hated by the lesbianists, the beard is also abhorred by sodomites. So a bearded Muslim is attacked because he remains the only symbol of masculinity, which androgynes are bent upon vanishing. The wisdom behind acting contrary to the polytheists and those who share their values can now be properly appreciated. Both homosexuals and the

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[1] Quoted from *Kitab Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqeem* by Yusuf Al-Qardawi, *The Lawful, The Prohibited in Islam*, p.95.

androgynes tolerate the moustache so we must clip it, to complete the repulsing signpost.

What applies to hairstyle also applies to moustache style. The modern man today has truly revealed himself as *Homo aestheticus* that is an avid lover for beauty; it is a true nature of man. Consequently, he has now established a world of elegance, fashion and beauty. Today, man is conscious of his appearance more than ever before. Bushy hair and moustache are left in the archival history of primeval man. The polytheists have penchant for bushy moustache not only today but right from the Prophetic era. To add another beauty to the stoical physical appearance of the Muslims, Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) introduced and popularised another fashionable style, whose spiritual, aesthetical as well as cultural implications have been explained, he said: "Act against the polytheists, trim closely the moustache and grow the beard" (Bukhari & Muslim).

As such the face of a man with a well trimmed moustache and well kept beard typified the face of a Muslim. Regular trimming of the moustache is one of the five acts of *fitra.*

In the warp of the Muslim's lifestyle is the woof of perfumery entrenched by tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w). He said "whom perfume is offered to, shouldn't refuse it as it is light and odorous." A Muslim, therefore, must cultivate the habit of using the perfume, to complement his neat body, clothes and environment. He is to act contrary to the devil, who likes filth, and fetid smell but loathe cleanliness and the sweet smells of perfume.

Neatness and Cleanliness of Surrounding

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) made the use of perfume his tradition because of what he said:

> *Allah is good and appreciates the pleasant. He is clean and cherishes cleanliness. He is munificent and He loves munificence. He is generous and likes generosity. So clean your court guards and squares and do not imitate the Jews who assemble filth in their homes.*

To corroborate the Prophetic deposition, *Nasara*, i.e. the Europeans who have now teamed up with the Jews and appeared to share common values did not at that time use to clean their surroundings. On the contrary, they littered their excrements in every corner, in chimney, studies, colehouses

and cellers.[1] They defecated indiscriminately everywhere including rivers; the Europeans up to the late 1880s also used to accumulate filth in their homes, filths were loaded in homes, streets and rivers. In the 1850s the "Summer Stinks", grew worse and unbearable. The terrible smell from River Thames was unbearable. According to report the Houses of parliament were standing right on top of the nuisance at West Minister. In 1857 the secretary to the Lord Great Chamberlain wrote to the first commissioner of works:

> *Sir, will you permit me to draw your attention to the pestilential state of the atmosphere at times in and about the New Houses of Parliament, owing to the evaporation of sewage matter in the Thames on hot sunny days? The stench arising from the river has on several occasions compelled me to leave the terrace and I am frequently obliged to close all the windows of my office to exclude, if possible, the noisome air, the subtle poison of which, however, penetrates everywhere, causing headache, nausea and loss of appetite. This state of things must be most injurious to the health of members of Parliament... I fully expect from my own experience, that both the Speaker and the Black Rod will find it impossible to occupy their new residences abutting the river without serious derangement of health...*[2]

It must be recognised that the river Thames was overflowing with sewage and sullage due to the indiscriminate defecating and dumping of sewage into it. It was at a time when faeces were kept in homes and mountain heaps of garbage were commonplace along the streets. It was also a common habit in the West to allow for the accumulation of mountains of stinking stuff in streets not only of England but in European countries. When even the elite, the top echelon of the nation could not be spared of filthy habits of the populace the condition of squalors in these countries are better left to be imagined rather than describe the degree of the filths that accumulated in their homes and the associated fetid smells. In 1858 the "Great Stink" brought matters to a head, MPs rushed around with hankerchiefs over their noses. In the attempt to reduce the horrible smell in and around the river, heaps of bleaching powder were cast into the Thames to deoderize it. Finally, the Islamic principle of cleanliness of the surroundings was adopted. Then the parliament finally gave London the powers it needed to build special arterial sewers. These cut transversely

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.12.
2 Ibid., p.59

across the existing sewers, which fed down to the Thames, and ran parallel to the river outlet – points down-stream, where, hopefully, the tides would carry the sewage away.[1] Islamic principles of hygiene was called upon to salvage the deadly condition.

This historic report lends credence to the assertion that the culture of hygiene and general cleanliness were not properly upheld by the Jews and the Europeans. History has shown both to accumulate filths in their homes. Thus the global level of hygiene and environmental cleanliness were Islamic legacies to the modern world. It is only in the Islamic ideology that filth is abhorred seriously and offensive smell rejected by each and every Muslim. The founder of modern civilisation waged war against indiscriminate dumping of filths in the homes and the streets. He also took up the cudgels against the pollution of rivers and waterways; he also abhorred faeces and filth at a time when filths were not considered harmful in other cultures of the world. Thus his timeless admonition, "so clean your court guards and squares and do not imitate the Jews who assemble filth in their homes", was indeed revolutionary. In modern times, the Jews and the Europeans had both discarded their filthy habit to imbibe that of Islam, because Islam is a mercy to all nations.

Looking back at the history of the relationship between Islam and the world and what came out of it was the incontrovertible fact that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was (and still is) the saviour of humankind in its entirety. In the formative days of Islam, the Prophet taught the culture of cleanliness with tact and discerning mind. These were necessary because it was in an epoch in which the whole world was filthy. Each nation appeared to be swimming in the pool of its own faeces. So he motivated his society, the torch bearers of modern civilisation to imbibe the spirit of hygiene and cleanliness. He said: "Allah has over each Muslim the right of washing up every seven days and touching the perfume if he disposed of it."

Arabia, thus became not only the cradle and fountain head of modern civilisation, but also of aethetics, cleanliness and good hygiene. Hence with the Qur'an and sunnah mankind is for the first time in history empowered to have the mastery of the physical world.

Neatness and Perfumery

In today's world of beauty and fashion, the list of designer perfumes is endless. Men and women spend fortune to maintain a particular brand of perfume. But little did we know that the use of perfume was recommended

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*.

in the 7th century Arabia by the Role Model of all generations. In fact, he single-handedly popularised the use of perfume among his people in the Arabian Desert. He loved musk more than any other kind of perfume. The use of perfume is subsequently well cultivated among the Muslims because it is Sunnah. Undoubtedly, Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) laid the foundation for a world of spiritual devotion, cleanliness and aesthetics. The Prophet (s.a.w) said: "Eat, drink, wear clothes, and give alms without extravagance and without conceit" (Bukhari).

Islam puts emphasis on the cleanliness of clothes and surroundings. The Holy Qur'an in addressing mankind in general and the Muslims in particular states: "O children a Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer" (A'raf, 7: 31).

This Command from the Almighty must be viewed against the backdrop of a filthy world on or before the ethical revolution of the 7th century AD, where a sense of personal and environmental hygiene was eclipsed in their designations. It was at that period of time, to make the Muslims were placed far ahead of their time, they were commanded to wear beautiful apparel at every time and more importantly and the time and place of prayer. They were taught body hygiene and personal upkeep and 'beautiful' in this context means to be scrupulously neat and tidy as well as decent in dresses; a Muslim must look good all the time. His place of prayer, the mosque, or any designated area must also be kept neat and tidy. Thus a Muslim must be clean in his home and in his habits. To further reinforce this hygienic culture, the Holy Qur'an stresses that: "Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean." (*Baqara*, 2:222). To be Allah's beloved, therefore, one must be pure and clean. 'Pure' in this context, means free from spiritual dirt (or sins) and 'clean' means free from physical dirt or filth. To Muslims nothing is more motivating than to be Allah's beloved. And one of the ways of achieving it is through the cultivation of personal hygiene and pure devotion in worship to Him. And Islam stresses that the only way of achieving such a position is by being "pure and clean." It must not be forgotten that these verses were revealed in the Arabian Desert of 7th century AD. Where in spite of the scarcity of water supply, being pure and clean were made obligatory upon every Muslim male and female. Furthermore, it was at a time when poor hygiene and filthy environment were commonplace in all societies. It was also a time when the flame of cleanliness was almost extinguished totally in the whole world but it was reignited by the Great Arabian.

Knowledge and Healthy-body

Islam brought intellectual revolution to the world in the 7th century. At a time when there was a complete dearth of education in all nations. It put a stop to the prevailing Age of Ignorance of the sixth century, it set about to establishing the Modern Age whose most distinguishing characteristics is "reading" and the use of "pen" to acquire knowledge. Hence the first commandment that came towards the establishment of this Modern Age was "READ" (Iqraa, 96:1). And the then unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) was informed through Revelation that Allah is the source of knowledge and that: "He Who taught the use of pen, and taught man that which he knew not" (Iqraa, 96:4-5). Since then the Almighty actively participates in educating humanity through the agency of His Messenger, who then became the most successful of all Prophets. Consequently, the Age of Ignorance was vanished with the Divine illuminating Light of Islam. Thus Iqraa "teach" and "knowledge" which were, hitherto, vanished in the lexicon of all nations were re-introduced rather more forcefully with the advent of Islam. It rekindled the indistinguishable flame of monotheism; to put a stop to all the barbarities of the Age of Ignorance. Thus "read", "teach", pen, which implies reading, writing, books, study were slowly and steadily re-introduced into the world.

Islam re-introduced the culture of acquisition of knowledge in earnest to wipe away the darkness of Ignorance and establish modern civilisation on a sound pedestal. Knowledge here includes science, self – knowledge, spiritual understanding which spooned the inquiry mind so that it becomes incumbent on everyone not only the duty of blazoning forth Allah's message, as going, with the Prophetic office but also the duty of promulgation and wide dissemination of the Truth by all who read and understand it. Thus the first step to knowledge is to be able to read and write to understand the message to Truth. Further, it is only knowledge acquired through education that man could value his health and understands the importance of hygiene.

Islam's care for hygiene is unique and unexampled amongst all cultures in history, it sets down a number of regulations pertaining to man's body to protect it form diseases and illness, in view of the close relation between body and spirit. A person with a sick body cannot lead an active life and fulfil his duty as a good member of the human community.[1] It encourages a Muslim to preserve, promote and protect his health. It shows that a sick person has a weak will and limbs, a disturbed frame of mind, and a nervous

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[1] Afif. A. Tabbarah. *The Spirit of Islam*, Doctrine and Teachings, p. 269

temper. That is why in the Qur'an Allah (s.w.t) praises bodily strength as coupled with righteousness and good morality.[1] For instance, it narrated in the Holy Qur'an that a daughter of Prophet Shu'aib (Jethro) *alaihissalam* talks to her father about Moses (a.s) the Holy Qur'an stated thus: Said one of the (damsels):

> *O my (dear) father! Engage him (Moses) on wages; truly the best of men for thee to employ is the (man) who is strong and truly... (Al-Qasas, 28:26).*

To serve as *Ibraa* or moral lesson as well as to point out the importance of good health and virility the Holy Qur'an cites the story of Prophet Samuel of the Old Testament or Prophet Shamweel (a.s) in Arabic literature. Samuel lived in Rameh in the hill country of Euphrain around 1110 – 1020 BC.[2] In this story Prophet Samuel told the Jews the appointment of Talut (Saul) as their leader, and that amongst the qualities for his choice were knowledge and healthy body (good physique).

The Prophet (Samuel) stated that among the credentials of the chosen leader (Saul) were:

> *He said: Allah hath chosen him above you, and hath gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess: (Baqara, 2:247).*

In Islam, therefore, knowledge and health are Allah's gifts; they must be acquired, preserved, protected, promoted and utilise appropriately. Islamic doctrines related to people's health are in accord with medical sciences. Further, it imposes on its adherents these health principles so as to keep away disease at bay. It shows special concern for preventive measures, as well as curative measures to ensure a devotee achieves 100% Healthy. The great health teacher provides the driving force when he said: "A strong believer is better and more endeared to Allah than a weak one, though each is good." Thus with Islam as a Health in worship we must all endeavour to acquire knowledge and good healthy body. It was through knowledge that the Educator of Mankind successfully changed the history, and the course of the global trend from the Age of Ignorance to the Modern Age of science and technology. A feat that could have been impossible without the Agent of Divinity, since then the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) remains the Universal Role Model of all times.

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 59
2 *Islacoms International*, September – December, 1997, Vol. 1, No. 1, p.11

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) emerged as the most successful Prophet in the history of religion and also the Greatest Man in History. These were the verdicts of the modern world on the unlettered Prophet who turned out to be the most influential person in history. This again was the verdict passed on him by great thinkers in the past and at the present epoch. For example, Michael H. Hart, a historian, mathematician and astronomer, in a book published in America entitled "The 100", the Top One Hundred, or the Greatest Hundred in History.[1] In evaluating his influence on humanity and how he single-handedly transformed was a phenomenon. To analyse this phenomenology we have to scrutinise the man, his source or means and the medium through which he was able achieve such a Great feat that was oneoff in the human history. Thus, first, the greatest man was best described by the Amazing Revelation in the following words: "Most certain, you have in the Messenger of Allah an Excellent pattern (of Behaviour)" (Ahzab,33:21). Again the Holy Qur'an describes him thus: "Most certainly thou (O Muhammad) art of most and Exalted character" (68:4).

These vivid descriptions spoke eloquently about the Greatest Man in history, a man of outstanding conduct. The same Book stressed his divine source or power to be Allah (s.w.t) Who guided him in his mission, revealed His message to humanity. Within 23 years of his divine mission he had accurately and exactly delivered the message, with most successful result ever to be recorded. *Sura Muddaththir* gives us some of the cardinal objectives of his mission to mankind. It declares:

"Arise and deliver thy warning,
And thy Garments keep from stain!
And all abomination shun (Muddaththir 74:2-5)

Here we are made to understand that his mission was essentially based on warning and admonition on three broad areas in the department of human life and existence. First, that man shall worship none but One Lord. This is because it is through worship that the Lord shall be magnified. To be strict on monotheist spirit is the foremost warning that the Prophet (s.a.w) stood up unshakably and delivered against overwhelming odds. Thus he came to warn the world to adhere strictly to monotheistic principles. Secondly, that humankind must maintain the habit of general cleanliness. Man should free himself from stain in body (and mind) and in his clothing. The Prophet (s.a.w) had successfully transformed the world from the abyss of filthy behaviour to that of cleanliness of the modern

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[1] Ahmed Deedat, *Muhummad P.B.UH, The Greatest (among all the Greatest)* p.4

hygiene. Lastly, he called upon humanity to desist from all acts of abomination. The evils of these actions invariably lead to diseases and misery and more dangerously to perdition. He successfully steered the world away from the primrose path to Straight Path.

Arabic, The Greatest Language

Islam, like a coin, contains a means of salvation on the inverse side and health on its oversee side. So that salvation and health were dissolved into one composite whole, *Din al-Islam*. Having briefly described the great mission, we must complete the picture by describing the medium he delivered such an excellent message. The medium was Arabic, the mother of all languages. But here we make a shift, to call an independent witness to tell us how great Arabic was then (and still is).

Sir Thomas Arnold Toynbee and Alfred Guillaume both British historians of considerable standing in their *The Legacy of Islam*, pointed pertinently that:

> *...and it was a fortunate thing for Islam that its message was delivered at a time when Arabic was potentially at its zenith. Aramaic was a poverty stricken tongue compared with Arabic, and not even classical Hebrew at its best could rival Arabic in its astonishing elasticity, from its own inner resources. It could evolve by autogenously processes the most just which new arts and new sciences demand for their intellectual expression.*
>
> *Arabic is fitted to express relation with more conciseness than Aryan languages because of the extraordinary flexibility of the verb and noun. Thus, the ideas, break, shatter, try to break, cause to break, allow to be broken, break one another ask some one to break, pretend to break, are among many variations of the fundamental verbal theme which can or could be expressed by vowel changes and consonantal augments without the aid of the supplementary verbs and to pronounce which we have to employ in English...*
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> *None of these forms is fortuitous, but is predetermined by structural genius of the Arabic language.*[1]

Here the great English historians had attested to the "genius of the Arabic language." They also attested to the fact that the Arabic language

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[1] Thomas Arnold and A. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, (Eds), Oxford University Press London (1960) p. vi.

generally was superior to Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ. It had even assailed the Indo – European languages or the Aryan languages of which English is among the list. In other words, like the Great Arabian, Arabic was also rated as the "Greatest Language" in the world. They advanced many reasons in support of this thesis:

> *It will be realised that with many nuances at the disposal of every verb and noun the Arabic language could readily be adapted to express the scientific terminology of classical world. The Arabs were an observant race; if analytic reasoning was not indigenous to their language they compensated for the lack of it by having a specific name for very different type of thing. A camel of so many years of age, the mother of so many foals, a good trotting beast, a mulch camel, and so on all these had their proper names, a fact which makes an exact and felicitous rendering of Arabic poetry notorious.*[1]

The Arabs who were, hitherto, unknown in any circle of event of international standing suddenly became "an observant race" because of two events that took place in their midst: the emergence of an unlettered Prophet and the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an. These great events transformed the world completely within the twinkle of an eye. The Holy Qur'an enriched the Arabic language, the mother of all languages considerably. It developed in the Arabs analytic mind, sharpened their sense of reasoning and faculty of observation. Sir Arnold and Guillaume only saw the result and told it as it was. But they did no delve into the cause of what made the Arabs an observant race with sharpened analytical mind. The phenomenon which considerably enriched the Arabic language, through the same phenomenology the Arabs were considerably enriched in all the departments of life to become masters of the world. The Holy Qur'an, an enigma of all times, brought the Arabs and to the centre of the world through faith, knowledge and *taqwa* or God fearing. It developed in them an inquiring mind through the synthesis of *tadabbur*, *tafaqqub tafakkur* and *ta'aqul*. The Arabs so well cultured and disciplined then became teachers of Europe, and then the rest of the world.

The Arabic language also contributed immensely to the enrichness of other languages notable among which was the English language. The great British historians concurred:

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[1] Thomas Arnold and A. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, (Eds), p.vi.

> *...examples will be found of the contributions which the Arabic language has made to the languages of Europe... Beside this service, we owe a great deal to Arabic in the field of Old Testament Studies.*[1]

The contribution of the "Greatest Language" to the Western Europe in particular and the world in general was considerable, to say the least. The British intellectuals continued:

> *As soon as Arabic became an imperial language the Jews perceived its close affinity with Hebrew. In the third century of the Hijrah the Jews had imitated the Arabs, or rather, the non-Arab Muslims, and submitted their language to grammatic analysis. The grammar of Rabbi David Qim hi (died C.1235), which exercised a profound influence on the subsequent study of Hebrew among Christians, borrows a great deal from Arabic sources. His exegesis, which was founded on his Grammar, is frequently to be traced in the authorised version of the Old Testament Scriptures.*[2]

The contribution of the Arabic language on English and on the Bible, were monumental. Arabic was used for the explanation of rare words and forms in Hebrew, for Arabic, though more than a thousand years the junior as a literary language is the senior philologically by countless centuries. Arabic was credited with a number of immense contributions even the Bible was not spared from its positive influences, this was worthy of note:

> *...Indeed, no serious student of the Old Testament can afford to dispense with a first-hand knowledge of Arabic. The pages of any critical commentary on the Old Testament will illustrate the dept that biblical exegesis owes the Arabic language. And the legacy is not yet all spent... yet a fair exchange was effected when Ignaz Goldziher forsook Hebrew for Arabic.*[3]

For Islam to change the global landscape with the rapidity of a cyclone a living language with all pervading influence as a medium was necessary. Arabic had succeeded in liberating the world from the clutches of ignorance. Evidently, without the agency of the method of all languages the study of science as we have seen it today would have been impossible. It was Arabic as the great historians rightly pointed out with its subtleties that

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1 Thomas Arnold and A. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, (Eds), p. viii
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

gave the studies of science not only the analytic approach but also the necessary descriptive terminologies it needed. There was another contribution which the Arabs and Arabic encapsulated with Islam gave to *Weltliteratur*, i.e. world literature. The British scholars noted this pointedly, they wrote:

> *...the oriental apologue and other works of its class enjoyed wide popularity in the Middle Ages. The first book printed in England, the Dictes and sayings of the philosophers, was a translation from a French version of a Latin recast of an Arabic work of this type, in the eighteenth century, again the Arabian Nights ran through at least thirty editions in English, and French, and has since been published more than three hundred times in all languages of Western Europe.*[1]

Western Europe and the world in general must be indebted to Islam, the Muslims had taught the world literary pursuit ability to read and write, to make inquiry and to apply the faculty of reasoning in advancing proofs in defence of a thesis. The mother of languages enriched the Old Testament with grammar; without this crucial contribution the exegesis of the Christian Scripture would have remained blurred or grossly defective. This was in line with the essence of the Prophet's advent – a mercy to all creatures. The contribution of literature to the West was going side by side with that of hygiene and general cleanliness.

It is not easy for the reader to visualise the grave danger that faced the West in the Dark Ages, and how it was saved by Islam. But suffice it to say without fear of contradiction that without the timely contribution of Islam the West would have been decimated and wiped out of the surface of the earth by series of deadly epidemics. It was Islam that salvaged it from its pestilential state, the reader must bear this important fact at the back of his mind!

In Europe's records of public and environmental hygiene were appalling. Even eight centuries after the revolution of "purify and clean thyself" that had begun in Arabia, Europe still suffered from pestilences and epidemics due to the prevailing habits of the Europeans of Great Unwashed and Great Stench. The historic report below is in support of this assertion. In 1518, the Dutch Scholar, Erasmus, who was staying in England, wrote disapprovingly of the prevailing domestic habits:

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[1] Thomas Arnold and A. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, (Eds), Oxford University Press London (1960), p.180

> *Then the floors are generally strewed with clay, and that covered with rushes which are now and then renewed, but not so as to disturb the foundation, which sometimes remains for twenty years nursing a collection of spittle, vomits, excrements of dogs and human beings, spilt beer and fishes bones and other filth that I need not mention.*[1]

The Islamic Gospel of "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" echoed throughout the world, with the advent of Islam. The civilising and the aculturalisation of Islam spread rapidly and forcefully to all corners of the globe. Even with the Muslim discovery of Europe, It was, however, resisted to permeate through the warp and woof of Europe, until it was forced by "deadly reformers" of plague, cholera and typhus amongst other epidemics. These reformers made Islamic culture of *attahara* become finally acceptable in Europe and England towards the end of the late 1880s. It must be reiterated for the sake of emphasis that regular *ghusl* helps a Muslim to keep his body clean and tidy. There are many conditions that make it obligatory to take bath. However, Islam teaches that a clean body must be clothed in clean clothes. The reasons why we keep our clothes clean are: (a) dirty clothes allow lice to breed; (b) dirty clothes look and smell unpleasant.[2]

The Prophet of Islam had recognised these and other reasons over 14 centuries ago. He once rebuked someone with dirty clothes thus: "Cannot he find anything with which to wash his clothes?" (Abu Dawud). Obviously, this stern warning had sunk deep into the psyche of the *ummah*. This, therefore, meant that the following habits now being evolved were based essentially on Islamic principles, were popularised by health science teachers:

- Wash all clothes or have them cleansed as frequently as possible. This is particularly necessary in the case of stockings and underwear, which should be changed several times a week.
- Keep separate vests for night and day.
- Do not borrow other people's clothes unless they have been carefully washed because microbes in the clothes may spread disease from one person to another.[3]

The impact of Islamic teaching with respect to health and hygiene is felt worldwide. Europe, in particular, was well transformed. The importance of

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 8 - 9
2 B. Maxwell-Ojo, *Health Science*, p. 13
3 Ibid.

bathing and hand washing is now well recognised in all nations. The habit of cleanliness which grew from Islam has also gravitated to the West and has sunk well into the warp and woof of modern Europeans. For example, Dr. C. Robbin said:

> *Cleanliness of the body has great effect on behaviour, bathing with warm water every morning and evening cleans and relaxes the body and removes boredom and loss of appetite. It also suppresses any anger which might have been caused by the daily routine. Thus we may stress the importance of it for the body and the mind.*[1]

Regular bathing as we know it today is an important Islamic legacy to the modern world. When the West cultivated the Islamic attitude towards education its level of hygiene, however, remained static for three centuries 1500 – 1800 until it was pestilentially prodded to imbibe the Islamic principles with vigour, then things began to change rapidly for the better. They took the issue of personal hygiene more seriously such as cleanliness of clothes, in addition to satorical neatness. The Prophet (s.a.w) introduced as *sunnah* the use of perfume to avoid unpleasant smell, which is different from being neat. A faith built on cleanliness does not sanction the application of urine in the form of treatment. It undermines the basis of body purification which Islam values and it abhors filths.

A Disease Cannot Be A Medicine

In many instances prohibited things are brought to be legalised under the cloak of medicine e.g. alcohol. Islam, however, rejects such a tendency. Unless impelled by absolute necessity the prohibited things remain prohibited. The use of alcohol as a medicine was asked when a man told the great health Teacher that he used wine as a medicine. The Prophet (s.a.w) responded: "It is not a medicine but a disease" (Abu Dawud). Hence this same argument can be extended to such questions as "can urine be used for treatment?" Another question can similarly be asked, 'can dirt be eaten?" These and many other questions would continue to emerge, unless we uphold the tenet of Golden Precept our faith and health would be ruined. Obviously, a disease can never be a medicine, this remains forever incontrovertible.

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[1] M. Musawi Lari, *Youth and Morals*, p.178

Golden Precept

The Holy Qur'an states this precept so eloquently: "What the Prophet gives hold It; what he forbids abstain from it."

This simple precept yet difficult to abide by is the only way of achieving 100% healthy status, although many schools of thought believe that perfect health is beyond expectations. This premise was perhaps made due to the limitation of orthodox medicine. Its goal is to cure all diseases rather than to prevent all diseases. This is where the Golden Precept makes the difference altogether. It is the bedrock of Islam and what it stands for; it is the perfect means of achieving perfect health. Application of this precept is necessary because it is essentially preventive health as well as health promotion strategy. The Prophet (s.a.w) described its main focus in health promotion. He said: "Prayers (salat) certainly promote health." Thus when health is promoted at a higher rate than disease, which is prevented, it is reasonable to state that disease will be left far behind.

The advent of Islam ushered in a new culture that rejuvenated the decaying world, a world that was ravaged by ignorant forces; of polytheism, and barbarism bedevilled by epidemics and pandemics of a variety of deadly bacterial and viral infections. Islam came with different ideological approaches to give a permanent panacea to the ailing world and to establish the modern age. It had succeeded in the achievement of both. Its concept of Golden Precept aims at establishing a perfect health.

The global impact of *attahara* had, among other things, forced a dichotomy of cultures in two, those positive to health and those that are negative to health. Undoubtedly, the former constituted what could reasonably be described as Islamic culture. This worldview is positively linked with health and social prosperity, so that the entire Modern Age rests on its philosophy and precepts. It brought to the world new concepts of rules and values. No society can survive for long if it does not have a set of rules, an abiding code of do's and don'ts for its members. These rules mark out what the society regards as "good" from what it prescribes as bad. So to achieve a perfect health or 100% healthy statuses apply strictly the Golden Principle. When this principle governs your lifestyle, it establishes an Islamic culture which is important in relation to health. This is because your culture can affect your health either positively or negatively, for example, which favours urine therapy for whatever reason, undoubtedly, courts disaster. This precept disallows the prescription of disease, i.e. diseases causing agent for treatment.

Urine Therapy

Islam is a faith of scrupulous hygiene; purity is an important part of the Islamic legal system. Urine therapy as an established means of treatment is therefore unacceptable in this legal system where cleanliness is equated with half – of faith. It is a treatment modality that the debases the fundamental basis of *At-tahara*, the root foundation of Islam. This unhygienic therapy is popular in a culture, in which purification ethics are lacking, are considered irrelevant or largely ignored. The proponents of this therapy claimed that even medical doctors in the West have accepted that to fight and clear toxins from the body, our own body creates antibodies. That during sleep the body produces medicine according to specific requirements of the individuals and is present in big quantity in the first morning urine, so if this first sample of urine is drunk, the body will get all its requirements. This is the principle behind urine therapy. It is also claimed that as a result of this discovery of the medicine value of urine, costly injections are prepared from urine in Japan.[1]

Urine which Islam considers filth is now strongly advocated as an effective medicine. Fresh sample of urine in the morning is collected in a clean glass and is drunk to cure some ailments, urine is also gargled in the mouth and retained for at least five minutes in the treatment of dental caries and gingival (gum) diseases. It is massaged on hair and scalp to make it soft, silky and clears dandruff, germs, etc. Urine now is applied as a body lotion to give clean-smooth facial skin and to enhance its glow. Urine lotion is used for both men and women for beautification purpose. The foamy excrement is applied on beard before shaving to give clean-smooth shave.[2] Thus, we must act contrary to the polytheists we must be strict to Islamic hygienic rules.

Urine therapy is fundamentally a negation of wudu and personal hygiene. It is, therefore, reprehensible to Islamic culture which places strong emphasis on body purification and personal cleanliness. Its advocates claimed that urine therapy gives many of the Indian mystics longevity, youthfulness and healthy skin. These mystics also claimed by drinking self-urine and using it as eye wash, inset cataract can be prevented.[3] Further, in all types of chronic diseases, it is advisable to drink one's urine. But this claim lacks scientific validity. It is pure a mystication of treatment, which undermines personal hygiene and body purification.

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1 Davendra Vora, *Health in Your Hands*, p. 122
2 Ibid.p. 123
3 Ibid.p. 122

Islam emphasises the practice of *istinja* and *istijma* to ensure that a Muslim protects himself from urine drops and faecal stains. But infidels always stain themselves with faeces and urine drops complacently. A Muslim can be punished in the hereafter when he does not protect himself against urine drops. Ibn Abbas (r.a.) related that:

> *The prophet passed by one of the gardens of Madinah and heard the voices of two people being punished in their graves and he said: "they are being punished but not for major sins." Then he said: verily, one of them was not shielding himself from his urine and the other was going about with columny (Bukhari).*

The evils of urine therapy, therefore, outweigh its expected benefits. A Muslim who benefits medically from his faith does not need to embark on a treatment of ailments with filth of whatever type's urine or faeces. The use of urine as a body lotion for whatever reason is unacceptable by all genuine standard hygiene. It demurs the principle of cleanliness of body and clothe, therefore, antithesis to Islam a faith of science. So also is the practice of filth eating.

The advent of Islam was a birth of a new culture, a culture that adds positively to health and social prosperity. It is a harbinger of success in this world and in the next world. The Holy Qur'an brought a precept of diverse application, in the depart of health it prevents disease occurrence to a considerable extent to its near absence. This is the Golden Precept. It prohibits eating of filth or drinking of wine.

Eating Dirt

In another dimension, Eating Dirt is gradually getting popular. For reason, ranging from religious, cultural and economic, eating dirt is gaining currency. The Educator of Mankind and forewarned the Muslims and the world in general that: "Whosever eats earth aid his death" (Tabrani). And to aid one's death in Islam is a serious crime. This unhealthy habit, which is now rising gradually is unacceptable in Islamic culture. Geral N. Callahan had written a comprehensive article on *Eating Dirt*, which is worthy of quoting in parts, it is comprehensive and very educative. It has also, in addition, vindicated the Prophet's warning against dirt eating made several centuries ago as the dirty habit is fraught with many health risks and dangers. Many people resort to eating dirt due to many factors some of which are religious reason and mental ill – health, according to a legend

dirt is sacred and consecrated by Christ.[1] Thus dirt is eaten on religious ground, with a belief that it has some miraculous powers. Many pilgrims throng El-Santuario de Chimayo in the hills of northern New Mexico, to a chapel built in 1816 where they eat dirt. They have come from all over the world to this place in New Mexico to eat the dirt that lies beneath the adobe floor. In his description of this sanctuary this shrine is thronged with visitors, Callahan stated that:

> *...One some days, the line of pilgrims stretches for blacks, some call this place the Lourdes of America, but in Chimayo the miracle can be seen each day by anyone who peers into a low ceilinged room off the main entrance. There, a hole (the posito), half a meter across, pierces the floor. Beside it, someone has left a plastic spoon to aid the faithful. Beyond the spoon, beneath the opening, lies only dirt, only the deep – red dirt of Chimayo.*
>
> *Most of the faithful here today have come to eat that dirt. This religious tradition is practiced, as far know, only at one other place and a Catholic shrine in Esquipalas, Guatemale. But pilgrims to these shrines are not only humans who eat dirt. Nor are religious reasons the only reasons to imagine that dirt may have some special powers.*[2]

For whatever reasons, Islam does not sanction the eating of dirt or drinking of urine. As a faith of science, it gives precise injunctions on nutrition and dietetics. The emergence of eating of dirt is in contravention of Islamic teachings and tradition. It is, therefore, fraught with many health hazards and spiritual consequences. Allah (s.w.t) the Creator of Mankind had fore-warned in the Holy Qur'an against the emergence of this type of weird habit under the guile of Satan. The Almighty says, in a clear admonition.

> *O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan for he is to you an avowed enemy (Baqara, 2:168).*

The catchy phrase in this sacred verse is to, "eat what is *on earth* lawful and good." Thus eating dirt or earth, itself is a contravention of this divine injunction. The description of what is to be eaten is that it must be "*on the*

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1 Emerging Infectious Diseases: *A Peer-Reviewed Journal Tracking and Analyzing Disease Trends*. Vol. 9. No. 8. August (2003) p. 1016

2 Ibid.

earth" or grown from the earth but not "the earth itself." Obviously, earth or dirt is not meant to be eaten. The question of what to eat and not to eat had remained a vexed question in the history of mankind, its trajectory cut across many nations for centuries until the advent of Islam in the 7th century. The question was then posed to the Prophet (s.a.w) who finally solved this recurring problem of nutrition and dietetics. The Holy Qur'an related the incidence pointedly: "They ask thee what is lawful to them (as food). Say: "lawful unto you are (all) things good and pure" (al-Maida, 5:4).

Here again what is to be eaten for whatever reason is explained explicitly, it has to be "good and pure." Obviously, dirt does not fall into this category; everything which is good and pure is made lawful. So it is prohibited for a Muslim to engage in the habit of eating dirt or drinking urine. This undermines the basis of hygiene and is a contravention of Golden Precept which states those take what the prophet gives and abstain completely from what he prohibits. This is the proper guidance to good nutrition a necessary towards step achieving 100% Health. But today, we witness the emergence of many bizarre therapies and eating habits which are by themselves unhygienic and hazardous to health. Yet, they are being popularised by sham medical people to mislead the unwary, in what can be aptly described as direction in the "footsteps of Satan", an avowed enemy of man. Thus no one should in his right senses fall prey to the guile of his bitter enemy. The eating of dirt is one of such satanic antics, who enticed the unguided to undertaking journey to his shrine to eat dirt! Gerald N. Callahan associate Professor of Immunology who made an indepth study of this weird behaviour gave reasons for its rise.

Geophagy (Eating Dirt) and its Reasons

According to Callahan, "other than water what little stuff we humans have inside us is largely dirt." He explained thus:

> *Admittedly, this dirt is sometimes highly processed before we receive it, but most solids that make up humans and other creatures either are now or recently were dirt (the simple stuff that stripes the outer surface of our world, the thin paste that rises us above the rocks) transformed by sunlight into plants or animals. Most of us prefer the dirt we eat in the form of cows and sheep and carrots and squash and bison and sorghum. Other dirt we'd just as soon scrape from our feet and leave at the door. But not everyone wishes to be so far removed from the stuff of mud pies and mucilage. One every continent (except, possibly,*

> *Antarctica), some of us intentionally eat dirt, and we are joined in this practice by a myriad of rats, mice, mute deer, birds, elephants, African buffalo, cattle, tapirs, paces, and several species of primates(1); most scientists consider animal geophagy "normal", probably because most soil consumption by animals has no obvious adverse effects and is sometimes beneficial (2); however, some of these same scientists consider most (for all) human geophagy "abnormal"*

The proponent of dirt eating went to considerable extent to convince his reader on the validity of dirty eating, in this attempt he quoted the work of Krishnamani R. Mahaney W.C. in his *Geophagy among primates adaptive significance and ecological consequences* (1); He also quoted Diamond J. in his, *Dirt eating for healthy living* (2); But he failed to convince his reader objectively that dirty eating is medically justified among the human beings. He invalidated his reasons which he advanced in support of this dirty habit, by stating that the scientists, which considered geophagy normal in animals, however, these same scientists considered it abnormal in human beings. Thus unless there is an ulterior motive behind this filthy behaviour, it must not be popularised because of it potential risks have by far out weighted its expected benefits. Medical scientists described it as pica, and it is a manifestation of abnormal behaviour.

Dirt Eating: Abnormal Behaviour

The proponents of dirt-eating have failed to provide us with convincing evidence that the practice is salutary and beneficial to health. Pica, is defined as a craving to eat things that are not foods, as dirt, clay, chalk, glue, ice, starch hair. It may occur with poor diet, with pregnancy and in some forms of mental illness.[1] Doubtlessly, dirt-eating cannot be divorced from some mental retardation in majority of cases. The term pica originated from the Latin word for Magpie, a bird that was once believed to survive on earth and clay.[2] Thus, it is likely that the habit of dirt eating must have arisen out of imitating this "mysterious" bird. People misled by some fanciful beliefs resorted to eating filths so as to acquire some mystical powers. It is at this juncture pertinent to reflect on this admonition made by Allah (s.w.t) to mankind several centuries ago. It is re-quoted for the second time to stress emphasis. The Almighty said:

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1 Mosby's *Medical Encyclopaedia*
2 Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia

> *O ye people! Eat and what is on earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of satan for he is the you an avowed enemy (Baqara, 2:168).*

Eating dirt, is obviously, following "the footsteps of Satan" because the habit lacked any scientific absolutism. It is only a reaction of fanciful paganic rites or tradition in the modern times. Dr. Callahan, however, made many frantic efforts to justify the practice of this dirty habit, which medical scientists proved to be an abnormal behaviour. He marshalled his arguments thus:

> *In the United States, many of us believe that humans should only eat food. We consider the consumption of non – food items pathological, even though we know that what people define as "food" varies dramatically by region and ethnicity. We call the pathological act of eating non-food items pica. Pica is a disease, but a disease different from polio or smallpox. No infectious agent is obviously associated with pica. Pica is disease only because we believe normal "undiseased" person would not eat anything but traditional human foods; some of those who do, some of the time, are at considerable risk of their unusual appetites.*
>
> *Pathological consumption of soil, "soil pica" is associated with several psychological abnormalities. But all ingestion of soil is not pica. How much soil a person has to eat to be considered ill is not known. One report described soil pica in a developmentally disabled person who regularly consumed more than 50g of soil per day (3). Most of us would consider that level of geophagy at least potentially pathological, although I am not sure why.*[1]

It is true that one man's food is another man's poison due to variation in people's culture geographical region and ethnicity. In like manner the definition of what is food also shows similar variation. Be that as it may, there is, however, an acceptable standard definition of what is a "food" and what is a "poison." In Islam, a universal culture based on science, the Holy Qur'an defines food as that which is obtained "*on the earth*" that is "*lawful and good.*" In this definition the earth on which the food is grown is not food and should not be consumed as such. And eating it is obviously, an abnormal behaviour; therefore a deviation from an established standard. Whatever, the earth contains is contained in the foods grown on it in an ideal requirement that is tailored to the needs of man. These requirements

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[1] *Emerging Infectious Diseases* – Vol. 9, No. 8, August (2003), pp. 1016 - 1017

include; minerals, carbohydrate and protein contents, they constitute a balanced diet. Thus eating the earth directly, as in "soil pica" is to take an excess of one element over another, a condition that has serious health implications. This is because it is unnatural, therefore, harmful to man, pica does not usually involve a refusal to eat normal food items but it is a disorder of eating behaviour characterized by continual ingestion of non nutritive substances.[1] This weird habit undoubtedly harms the body inevitably.

Pica has become a significant medical concern in recent years because of its association with lead poisoning and neurological damage in disadvantaged children. It was first described in 16th century Europe, and it was then considered primarily a disorder a adolescent females and pregnant women. It was one of the symptoms of chlorosis, an iron deficiency disease commonly diagnosed until the end of the 19th century that was also characterized by menstrual irregularities, weakness, poor appetite, and depression. Eating clay, starch, dirt, and chalk was also seen in some populations suffering from parasitic infestations and malnutrition.

No doubt pica leads to mineral and energy deficiencies because it is an abnormal ingestion of non nutritive stuff. Allah (s.w.t) in His Mercy has made all the edible foods for man well balanced in their energy, caloric value, glucose, protein and mineral contents; He made certain foods lawful and others unlawful for the benefits of man. If you take an apple, for example its mineral, glucose and protein contents are made in ideal concentrations not for the beasts in the wild or domesticated animals but for man the *Ashrafal Makhluqat*, the quintessence of creation. All the foodstuffs grown on the earth edible to man are perfectly made to meet his needs. But if he transgresses the limits of "eating what is on earth, and lawful and good" he courts disaster for himself. Although pica was only recognised in Europe in the 16th century, it was well recognised in the 7th century Arabia and its perils stressed by the Educator of Mankind. He was the first to put serious a warning against this dirty practice at the dawn of modern civilisation. He warned that "whosever eats earth aid his death" (Tabrani). This eating of the earth, soil pica or dirt – eating was recognised by the great Health Teacher to be injurious to health. The habit ruins health with serious devastations. The deleterious effects of pica were only established in Europe in the 19th century, vindicating the Prophetic warning to be in accord with medical science. To reiterate the Saviour of Mankind had settled once and forever the question of what is lawful as food

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[1] *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia*

in which he stated without any ambiguity that which is: "Lawful unto you are all things good and pure" (Maida, 5:4). Eating dirt is both unlawful and impure. In spite, of the clarification on the issue of food by both the Holy Qur'an and *sunnah*, many people are misled to follow the "footsteps of Satan."

In June 2000, the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry appointed a committee to review soil pica, the committee settled on pathological levels as consumption of more than 500mg of soil per day but conceded the amount selected was arbitrary.[1] The determination of accurate amount of soil in proportion to other essential elements is beyond the ken of man. It is the realm of Omniscience. What is required of man in this and all situations of things is to: "Obey Allah, and Obey the Messenger" (Ma'ida, 5:92). This is the best strategy to remain healthy prosperous and peaceful both in this life and in the Afterlife. Finally, it must be concluded that pica is a state of aberration an unnatural appetency for non-nutritive things. Thus dirt-eating is a negation of nutrition which Patrick Holford defined beautifully:

> *Nutrition can be defined as the process of receiving food which sustains life. So there are two factors involved, there is the food and the process which makes use of the food. Both are dependent on each other and mankind is dependent on both.*[2]

This then introduces us to culture and its relationship to health. Evidently, Islamic culture, which was founded on cleanliness, is health friendly.

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1 *Emerging Infectious Diseases* (Vol. 9, No. 8) p. 1017.
2 Patrick Holford, *The Whole Health Manual*, p.1

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURE AND HEALTH

Emergence of Islamic Culture

Four centuries prior to the advent of Islam, societal values and norms were eked out by the power of imagination of some men such as great thinkers (philosophers) and religious leaders of non orthodox creed. These eked out rules and values almost always wreaked havoc on the societies that abided by them, with serious backlash. The rules were then reviewed and edited. The society grew by trial and error of numerous rules, societal norms and values, at the cost of several thousands of lives and destruction of property. Such societies, however, are never free from misery and diseases. Then with the progress of human civilisation tribal or national religions came at various epochs to guide nations or tribes. The revealed religions were, hitherto, national or ethnically circumscribed. Many of such religions were corrupted and the original versions lost in antiquity. All in all, every nation had received its own warners. In consequence, the world had remained in the doldrums as each nation was beset with problems peculiar of its own, until the advent of Islam in the 7th century. It came to make all nations united under a banner of Islamic Ummah, to reduce them to a single unit worshipping only one Almighty God in His chosen faith of al-Islam.

Universal Panacea

It was the Age of Ignorance, and with it faith and hygiene, civilised behaviour, knowledge of art and science, medicine and philosophy, etc. were eclipsed in their designations. Diseases and pestilences, barbarism and savagery all conspired to annihilate humanity and to terminate the sojourn of its civilisations. In this Age of Ignorance, religious conditions, social and moral conditions were horrible and rendered inimical to health, social and spiritual prosperity. Indeed, it was an era of darkness and depression.

"The sixth century in which the Prophet of Islam was born was, to be brief, the darkest era of history", Syed Abul Hassan Ali wrote. "It was most depressing period in which the crestfallen humanity had abandoned all

hopes of its revival and renaissance" [1]. The illustrious son of Islam quoting the work of H.G Wells, who recapitulated the condition of the world in his, *A short History of the World*, wrote pointedly:

> *Science and political philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying Empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the reverence of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free gentlemen with bold and independent habits of thought, to carry on the tradition of frank statement and enquiry embodies in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the appearance of this class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age. In both Persia and Byzantium were religious empires in a new way, in a way that greatly hampered the free activities of human mind.* [2]

The era of Darkness and Depression that put the world on a hold, with human intelligence, sterile and in feverish condition waited patiently for Islam to save the "crestfallen humanity", and to "free gentlemen with bold and independent habits of thought." The hopeless and depressive conditions of the great Persia and Byzantium the same characterised Europe, even more seriously. Syed Ali, quoting Robert Briffaut in his the *Making of Humanity*, also wrote:

> *From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism, which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had once been a great civilisation. The features and impress of that civilisation were all but completely effaced. Where it is developed had been fullest, e.g. in Italy and Gaul, all was ruin, squalor and dissolution.* [3]

The essence of taking a short safari into history is to bring in perspectives, why a new culture was needed to save the world from pestilences, barbarism and ignorance, notably at a time when humanity was cast into despondency and decimated by internecine wars, epidemics and pandemics of serious and deadly diseases. A saviour of humanity then

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1 S. Abul Hassan Ali, Muhammad Rasulullahi (*The Life of Prophet* Muhammad) p. 30
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.pp 29 - 30

became the crucial desideratum. It was then the advent of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) became absolutely essential and was as necessary. Thus his mission was precisely delineated in essence and scope. Allah (s.w.t) the Most Merciful, gave His reason why He sent His Apostle: We sent thee (Muhammad) not, but a Mercy to all creatures" (Anbiyaa, 21:107). The Holy Qur'an also states: "We have sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not" (Saba, 34:28).

The essence and scope of range of Islam were precisely described: The Prophet (s.a.w) was and still is a mercy to all creatures. Anyone who takes a look into the history of the world will attest to the veracity of this claim. Obviously, without him there would have been no humanity not to talk of civilisation. Secondly, his mission was and still is universal. It was the entire world that was beset with deadly diseases, barbarism and man-made calamities, etc. So the panacea of these ills must be applied to all nations. Lastly, humanity can only be saved through admonition and warning against sin. This is because sin is not only a reproach to nation but a major cause of misery and diseases. The world had adjudged the Prophet of Islam as the Greatest Man in history; it was a meritorious epithet and the reasons are obvious; they remain forever the benchmarks of modern civilisation.

It is pertinent to state at this juncture that the expression "Islamic culture" should not be viewed within the definition of anthropologist, sociologist and or behavioural scientist; Islamic culture transcends all that; it is a universal mercy that is unique to itself. This important point must be borne in mind as one goes through the pages of this book.

However, with the birth of Islam, the progress of the world in science, literature and all other fields of knowledge had made a phenomenal increase. As a result, man has succeeded in landing on the moon, in his quest for dominating the physical world. But why was this progress had to wait for centuries until the advent of Islam? The reason for this was that the Almighty revealed the Holy Qur'an as the universal constitution. And with it came new rules, social norms and values, which when abided by would not only make the world free of war but also empower man to have the mastery of the physical world. Thus with the Qur'an and sunnah, man was given the map and compass to explore the world successfully without getting lost or being harmed in the process.

It was with Islam that a new culture arose that is intricately interwoven with positive health. It is a worldview where health and worship, were for the first time in the history of religion united together in the spirit of

symbiosis and complimentary; health helps that acts of worship, the acts in turn improve the health status of the Muslim. Allah the Most Exalted, the Creator of man said: "Your body is a special gift from Allah, therefore do not abuse it." The Almighty, as an act of His Mercy went further than this; He revealed Islam to help man preserve and improve this special gift. Thus it is pertinent to highlight the effects of this special culture on health. What is health culture?

Health Culture

Health culture is defined by Mosby's Medical Encyclopaedia, as a system that tries to explain and treat sickness and to maintain health. Health culture is a part of the larger culture or tradition of a people. In this context, Islamic tradition which is characterised by the application of Golden Precept which is a lifestyle governed and dictated by the Qur'an and sunna, is a health culture in its own right. Culture is a complete way of life, which is Islam, a worldview that considers every human act or behaviour an *Ibadah* or worship. It is a faith of science and a practical way of life. A Muslim's conscious action or behaviour is health friendly, that is, it is health behaviour. What is health?

Health, a condition of physical, mental and social well being, concepts of health vary with the culture of the people and the health professionals. It was Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who observed that millions of individuals, particularly those in developing countries, have never experienced health as it is known in industrialised Western countries.[1] This is because health is dependent upon many variables. These obviously, vary according to socio – economic condition of the people. Even then health is not a static condition, constant change and adaptation to stress result in a constant state.

In 1948, the World Health Organisation (WHO) modified the original concept to declare that health is more than the absence of disease or other abnormal conditions. In 1984, the WHO further revised the definition of health to include "the extent to which an individual or a group is able to realise aspirations and satisfactory needs and to charge or cope with the environment.[2] With progress of science a sickness described as the "disease of the heart" by the Holy Qur'an would be fully recognised by the West in the near future. So that health would be re-defined to include the absence of any diseases of the heart. This is because the claim of the industrialised western world to be healthy is not true. It is though an affluent nation, but it

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1 Mosby's, *Medical Encyclopaedia*
2 Ibid.

is devastated by many diseases of the heart. The West in this respect is seriously a sick society, the growing tide of psycho-somatic disorders points strongly in support of this deposition. Faithlessness as weird as it is, it has its own weird nemesis. It is a silent killer in its own way. Hence, a person cannot be certified "healthy" until he or she is free from disease of the heart too. This is tenable only with faith in Allah (s.w.t) in monotheistic spirit. It is only then that a person can effectively cope with his environment. This introduces us to the concept of Health Behaviour.

Health Behaviour

Health behaviour, an action taken by a person, to maintain, attain, or regain good health and to prevent illness, Islamic way of life is to be seen and appreciated as a health behaviour, in this light. This is because health behaviour comes from a person's beliefs. Islam inculcates a health behaviour in its adherents which is more like what is described as a "High-Level Wellness," a concept of health that stress the working together of body and mind, and environment to ensure the highest level of functioning of an individual.[1] To achieve this aim, Islam puts emphasis on hygiene and general cleanliness. It instructs people to eat of the good things that are lawful and good. It also proscribed eating of certain foods and drinks (Baqara, 2:172-173). And makes salat and fasting to directly improve the physical and spiritual well-being of a person.

It prohibits eating of dead meat, blood and flesh of swine or pork. These prohibitions are in accord with modern Health Science. For instance, it is unlawful to eat carrion, which according to *fiqh* Islamic jurisprudence, is anything that dies of itself and is not expressly killed for food with the saying the *Takbir* or Allahu Akbar, Allah is the Greatest duly pronounced on it. But there are exceptions e.g. fish and locusts are lawful though they have not been made specially *halal* (legal) with the Takbir. But even fish or locusts as carrion would be obviously ruled out.[2] Obviously, dead meat or carrion is harmful from the medical point of view, this is because as Dr. Abdul Aziz pointed out in his book, *Islam and Modern Medicine* as quoted by Tabbarah, the animal which dies of itself must have died from some reason. If death was due to a disease, then there is no doubt the disease or poisoning still dwells in the carcass though the flesh of the carcass is cooked, and eating of it may cause death.[3] Thus it is part of Islamic culture

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1 Mosby's *Medical Encyclopaedia*
2 Afif .A. Tabbarah. *The Spirit of Islam*. p. 272
3 Ibid., p. 273

not to eat pork, carrion and blood. All these are now well established medically that they are harmful to health.

It is only Islam that has successfully banned the use of alcoholic drinks and other intoxicants to keep its population sober and healthy. A society where Islam takes sway is freed from the deleterious effects of alcohol and psychedelic drugs. These intoxicants now devastate the industrialised western nations, and have been rendered "unsafe" because of the high crime rate they caused. Alcohol has now been described as the final enemy of civilization. It is a universal problem which only Islam could stem. Thus, Islam, therefore, remains the saviour of modern civilisation, when Islam warned right from the 7th century that "never come nigh to adultery, for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the way (to other evils) (Bani Israil 17:32). "Islamic prohibition of the crime of adultery stems not only from social reasons" wrote Tabbarah, "but also from basic considerations pertaining to consequent disease, which afflict the adulterer's body and spirit."[1] Today, unrestricted promiscuity of global dimension has led to the outbreaks of many deadly diseases such as Herpes genitalis, Chancroid, Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV), HIV and AIDS, which for now have no cure. The Islamic precept against adultery and fornication is what is now popularised to curb the spread of AIDS a "scourge" that has defied all forms of treatment. This shows that Islamic culture is a health behaviour inducer. All in all, it is only in Islam where health is promoted through the acts of worship. And salat is the best promoter of health. Thus Islam as a culture influences health directly or indirectly through legal injunctions and laws.

Controls Behaviour

This culture with its emphasis on *Iqraa*; it places a high premium on the acquisition of knowledge. It also instils in the human behaviour this acquisitive tendency so that the behaviour is patterned to distinguish between right and wrong and to establish a right conduct or lifestyle that is in accord with the *Grand norm*. A Muslim is cultured towards a positive health behaviour. This places him in a better stead to keep disease at bay and to exhibit good sense of personal cleanliness and moral etiquettes. It is a forbidden act for a Muslim to break wind indiscriminately; this is an anti-social behaviour. Besides, passing wind in this way is detestable because it hurts the angel and Muslims.

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[1] Afif A. Tabbarah. *The Spirit of Islam*. p. 282

Human behaviour, as governed by habits of the individual and the customs and culture of groups, greatly influences exposure to disease agents and ways in which these agents are transmitted. Cultural factors also help form individual and group attitudes toward preventive and curative practices. Overall, behavioural factors are not sharply defined and often merge into the realm of environmental factors.[1] This is because health is dependent partly on ensuring a healthy environment and partly on the way the person conducts himself in his daily life. Thus the two aspects of the environment, physical components and the social, are both modulated and even modified by the societal cultural settings. It becomes obvious that the prevention of diseases relies mainly on controlling some aspect of man's behaviour and his environment. To its credit, Islam controls both.

It Controls Environment

Personal health depends partly on ensuring a healthy environment and partly on the way the person conducts himself in his daily life. Physical components of healthy environment include: a healthy standard diet; good housing; healthy work conditions; facilities for the healthy use of leisure and sanitary services. Islamic culture controls the environment to make it friendly and disease free. It makes man the custodian of his environment. The Prophet (s.a.w) had warned "that three abdominal acts, that is one who does them is cursed by Allah and by people": defecating in streams, defecating on roadways, and defecating in shaded places (Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah and al-Hakim). It is pertinent to note that environmental safety cannot be discussed with this oft-repeated quoted hadith because of its import and validity.

Thus pollution of the environment in this manner has serious health implication; water pollution leads to the prevalence of water borne diseases such as helminthic infestation (worm) drancunculiasis (guinea worm) and schistosomiasis or bilharziasis, etc. Each of these diseases afflicts millions of people all over the world at the cost of millions of lives and several millions of Naira are spent in Nigeria, for example, on medication and control. Islam, however, goes to the root of the problems to establish a preventive legislation. For example, it is forbidden to do the abdominal acts stipulated by the Prophet (s.a.w).

As we live in a world in which man in rapidly enlarging his effective environment on the surface of the earth, in the air, under the seas and in

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[1] Fox Hall Elevback. *Epidemiology: Man and Disease*, the McMillan Comp., Collier Macmillan Ltd., London (1970) p. 19

nearby space. Man is today tampering with biological and physical environment in a big way, often with a limited knowledge of the long term consequences. To make the world a safer place, therefore, there is the urging need to establish and implement this culture in order to make the world congenial to human habitation.

Environment in this context has, however, a much wider connotation than the ordinary sense of the word. In a scientific sense it includes everything that is not 'genetic', it includes, for instance, the food we eat, the air we breathe, the animals and plants we come in contact with, our workmates or playmates and the socio – economic setting of our lives. It includes also the environment in which we were born, ante-natal environment, as well as the environment after birth. The items it comprises are obviously far too numerous to list, but they are conveniently grouped under three headings: the physical environment, the biological environment and the social environment.[1] The factors in all these interacting sub – sets are important in varying degrees in relation to health and disease. The physical environment, in addition to the large-scale inanimate things, includes: atmospheric, water and soil pollution, food additives, pesticides, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, man-made ionising radiation and noise, all of which may become hazardous to health. The biological environment includes in particular, microbes, large organisms and parasites which may be causal factors in disease. The social environment is the situation arising out of relationships between at one end of the scale to relationships at work or school and in larger communities. It includes also cultural patterns and the institutions and regulatory systems of our society.[2] Islam had evolved a comprehensive and codified system of *Halal* and *Haram*, which draws a sharp distinction between good and evil in man's relations to his creator, himself and to his fellow men. This system determines and prunes the factors responsible for disease and asocial behaviour. It also determines and specifies health positive as well as health negative social behaviour.

Health which is difficult to define is affected and infected by a legion of factors of which the list is endless. The difficulty in defining individual health in terms of objective standards or to grade it according to any arbitrary scale, is hardly astonishing as the concept of health is extremely complex and varies according to race and local standards; and varies for the same person in childhood, adulthood and old age. However, a person in

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1 Fred Grundy and P.F. Grundy, *Community Health and Social Services*, H.K Lewis and Co. Ltd, London (1974) p. 5

2 Ibid.

health is free from disease and positively enjoys a state of well-being and vigour and the ability to make adjustments to the changing circumstances of life.[1] This is a definition by common consent and the World Health Organisation gives a standard definition, it states: health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Furthermore, it states: "Informed opinion and active cooperation on the part of the public are of the utmost importance in the improvement of the health of the people" (constitution of the WHO).

Many factors relating to the human host contribute to disease occurrence. Some are inherent and others are acquired; the latter include aspects of human behaviour dictated by habits and customs. Epidemiology is the orderly study of the incidence, in human society, of morbid or disease states of every kind. The word epidemiology is derived from the Greek "epi" upon, and "demos", the people, it deals with differences in the distribution of human disease and disabilities as between one place and in the same place from time to time. This orderly study also seeks to define relations existing between disease incidents, on the one hand, and the quality of human environments, standards of personal hygiene and social habits of human communities on the other.[2]

The brief description of culture, health and environmental factors and how they closely depend on one another and influence themselves, would help to give a better insight of culture as a decisive factor in health maintenance and improvement through the application of various modalities. And how epidemiology helps to appraise many of the cultural factors and their roles to the genesis of disease states. The evolution of a concept of *attahara* in the 7th century had significantly influenced our understanding of culture in relation to health. Education is a decisive factor in health improvement. It is widely accepted that formal education is decisive and crucial in improving health and reducing mortality, especially in developing countries. Even a few years of schooling provides basic skills and some capacity for continued learning which makes a vital difference to the individual's ability to handle life situation and cope with a changing environment. This capacity, however rudimentary, can have a far-reaching implication for health behaviour and learning about health.[3] But education must not be viewed in the western spectacle and see it as the ability to read

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1 Fred Grundy, *The New Public Health*, 7th Reprinted Edition, H.K Lewis and Co. Ltd London (1970) p. 5

2 Ibid., p. 4

3 *Intersectoral Action for Health*, W.H.O Geneva (1986) p. 75

and write as dictated by the West. Prior to that Islam had introduced religious education which as we have seen had shown candle to the remaining parts of the world in all the facets of human endeavour. Thus it is against the backdrop of what has so far been discussed that the relationships between culture and health can be more objectively appreciated. Further, in all that has been already discussed the positive impact and relationship between Islamic culture are conspicuously evident. It is therefore reasonable to state that it is this culture that would provide the most needed "informed opinion and active cooperation", which WHO stated that it is the utmost improvement in the health of the people.

Its Relationships

Human behaviour, as governed by customs and habits of the individual and culture of groups, has been known to greatly influence exposures to disease agents, their transmission, treatment and control. Islamic culture, however, is the most evolved tradition that is health – positive which means that it prevents diseases and promotes health. While many other cultures have high culture–linked health risks, it must be emphasised that Islamic culture is health positive and startlingly modern in its approaches to the social as well as environmental factors and their influences to health. Islamic cultural attitudes help toward preventive and curative practices especially in the following areas:

Use of Water

Human behaviour is particularly important in determining the occurrence of diseases and diseases transmitted by water. Individual habits and group customs govern both the form of intake and the quality of water.[1] Islamic tradition insists, as the science of *attahara* shows, upon the use of clean and pure water for rituals, purification and drinking purposes. Its praxis is based on the premise that it is only pure water that can purify and it must be clean as well as cleansing, such water is described as *mutlaq*. Thus the use of impure water from whatever sources is de-emphasized for health and religious reasons. Even at a time, when the sources of water are mainly from rivers and streams, lakes, swamp and waters, springs and rainwater catchments, the insistence on its use was that the water must be clean and pure.

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[1] Fox. Hall. Elveback, *Epidemiology; Man and Disease*, p. 85

It must also be realised that this attitude to water for various uses though evolved in the 7th century Arabia, it is in perfect accord with the modern standard, especially when it is now discovered that there are many water–borne diseases. Today water treatment and sanitation have reached a sophisticated stage. And to meet the water demand of the rapidly growing population of the world, fresh water is obtained from complex process of de-salinisation of the sea waters in order to meet the domestic, agricultural and industrial needs of this teeming population. Large scale de–salting of sea waters is on the increase. As Philip Sporn observed:

> *Pure water is today one of the major problems in some areas and it will become a major problem in many more areas in the future. But, unlike the weather, we are beginning to learn how to do something about it. We are beginning to learn how to make fresh water from saline water.*[1]

Today the high technology involved in the de-salinisation process has reached unprecedented dimension making pure water available in quantity and quality to the industrialised nations and many of the developing nations except in the arid regions. The quality of the water consumed then depends on whether a family bothers to have its water checked for contamination and to take such precautionary measures as boiling or adding chlorine tablets when indicated,[2] which is necessary especially water obtained from the traditional sources. Be that as it may, Islam has left a legacy to the modern world of the use of clean and pure water for drinking and other purposes. It had successfully raised the important awareness of assessing water quality. Today the quality of water is assessed by physical, microscopically, chemical, and bacteriological examination. [3] Islam is a faith of science so its analysis of water was based upon scientific principles. Further, on daily personal use, a Muslim uses water far more than anybody else. A culture that insists on the use of clean and pure water for domestic and ritual uses, no doubt, is a health friendly culture. Food and drinks are usually governed by the same rules in food hygiene. Islam has also left important legacy to the modern world.

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1 Philip Sporn. *Fresh Water From Saline Waters*. Pergamon Press Ltd., Headington Hill All. Oxford (1966)

2 Fox. Hall. Elveback. *Epidemiology: Man and Disease*. p. 84

3 A.O. Lucas & M.M Gilles. *Textbook of Public Health Medicine for the Tropics*. p. 293

Diet and Food Handling

Dietary patterns and food–handling practices also influence patterns of health and diseases within communities. Food and milk are not only excellent vehicles for transmission of disease agents, but also are disease agents in their own right.[1] The western world became aware of this important fact only about 200 years ago. Dissatisfaction with the state of milk supply, for example, was nothing new. According to Rose in his book *Health and Hygiene* stated that in the eighteenth century, Tobias Smolette had condemned the way milk was purveyed by milkmaids in the streets, exposed to "foul ringings discharged from doors and windows, spittle, snot..." The spewings of infants who have slobbered in the tin measure which is thrown back... For the benefit of the next customer; and the vermin that drops from the rags of the nasty drab who sold it[2]. This account shows clearly that food hygiene in the West was a recent concept, which evolved from the East through the process of acculturalisation.

"Although it is hard now to believe, proper handling of milk was once a highly controversial issue,"[3] wrote Fox Hall and Elveback. It was initially difficult to establish the notion of cleanliness in food handling as well as dietary ethics. The controversy arose on whether to pasteurize or not to pasteurize milk became a heated debate because many believed that pasteurization both altered the taste of milk and lowered its nutritive value for children.[4] But in point of fact the debate arose largely due to the cultural aversion of hygiene that was high and prevalent in Europe at that time. However, the role of foods in transmitting disease agents is also largely determined by group cultures, which as we have seen were poor and appalling in the 19th century. Especially as towns grew 'fresh' milk was obtained from urban cowsheds where wretched animals spent their lives tethered in filthy sheds, yielding milk into unwashed buckets. A typical scene in England was described in 1847:

> *Besides the animals, there is at one end a large tank for grains, a store place for turnips and hay, and between them a receptacle into which the liquid manure drains and the solid is heaped... the stench there arising (is) insufferable.*[5]

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1 Lucas and Gilles, *The Textbook of Public Health*, p. 294
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 72
3 Fox. Hall. Elveback, *Epidemiology; Man and Disease*, p. 84
4 Ibid.
5 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 72

In contrast, Islamic culture teaches that not only hands and utensils should be properly and frequently washed clean, but also food and drinks must be kept closed in their containers. The prophetic injunction was: "cover the vases and tie the overtures of water skins." This concept was new and therefore, revolutionary in its epoch, its impact is being felt to date. It was after several centuries that this ethic gained universal recognition and acceptance; until about 200 years ago, the hygiene of food handling in the West was slap-happy as this historic report indicated.

Added to this poignant outlook was that "the grubby general stores which sold most of the shop's milk placed it for sale in open pans", said Dr. George Newman, "where constant drippings, flies and dust from the shop and street served, to a remarkable degree, to contaminate it."[1]

In order to establish meticulous food hygiene among his people, the saviour of humanity warned seriously that:

> *Cover your containers and the mouths of your water bottle, for truly there is a night in the year in which a pestilence comes down and does not settle on any uncovered container without falling into it.*

This declaration, therefore, put the Muslims on the high alert so they take up straightened measure to ward against this "lurking pestilence." This improves food hygiene and cleanliness in food handling. Utensils were kept clean and food and drinking water were kept covered and away from rodents, filth flies and vermin insects. This pestilence that comes down in the night and falls into uncovered food or drink containers could be germs trafficked by filth flies and rodents, so with tact and discerning mind the Great Teacher of health taught his people how to prevent outbreaks of water and food borne diseases. The idea of germs being carried by insect to contaminate food and drink was unknown to the world of 7th century era, when ignorance and disease characterised all nations. The essence was to adopt a preventive strategy against the "invisible killers." One of the effective strategies was food hygiene and the Prophet (s.a.w) was the primary teacher. It was also against the harmful germs that he advised his companions to pour away any water containing particles and not drink water direct from water–skin (bottle or kettle), because one may inadvertently drink with impurities. He or she would then suffer some harm.

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, pp. 72-73

Thus, the occurrence of food-borne, diseases of bacterial, viral and chemical origins depend not only on cooking but also on contamination during handling, selling and poor methods of food preservation. The standard of dietary hygiene and food handling as laid down by the Prophet of Islam remains an unsurpassed culture in relation to health. In addition, in the seventh century Arabia, the habits of kitchen sanitation were established and inculcated in Muslims. The procedures include thorough washing of utensils and provisions of covers for water jars and pots. The validity of these measures was intended to prevent mechanical transmission of disease agents from person to person via eating utensils and dishes.

This *au fait* hygienic culture is backed by scriptural injunctions. In *Surah al–Baqara*, we read:

> *O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah if it is Him ye worship (Qur'an, 2:172).*

The question of diet and food handling is of great importance to Islamic culture, where emphasis was placed over 14 centuries ago that any food to be eaten must be lawful and good (al-Baqara, 2:168). The law stipulates what is lawful and what is good, all in accord with modern dietetics and food hygiene. Again *Surah al–Aaraf* stipulates the injunction of the Most Exalted who says that "eat of the clean and pure things We provided for you", (Qur'an 7:160). This is to inculcate in the Muslims this strict adherence to hygienic principles as they appertain to diet and food handling so that at the end that which is to be eaten is "clean and pure." The great teacher of mankind taught by precepts and by personal examples; he ate only that which met this standard criterion.

Ibn Abbas (r.a) said Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) forbade breathing or blowing into a vessel (while drinking). Abu Said Alkhudri (r.a) said that the Prophet (s.a.w) forbade blowing into a drink. When a man said he saw specks in vessels he told him to pour them, and when he said that his thirst was not quenched in one breath he told him to remove the cup from his mouth and take a breath. Ibn Abbas (r.a) also reported the Prophet (s.a.w) as saying, "Do not drink without stopping as a camel does, but divide your drink into two or three goes with one interval in between each for taking breathing and avoiding blowing in the vessel."[1]

These *ahadith* are well known amongst the Muslims. The impact of their teachings is more glaring today than ever before. It is in the strict sense of

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[1] Afzalur Rahman, *Muhammad (saw) The Educator of Mankind*, p. 463-464

food hygiene that breathing into food and or drinking vessel is deprecated. One need not be a microbiologist to decry the habit because it is the easiest means of transmission of viral and bacterial diseases, as a single breath may contain numerous droplets containing these harmful germs. Many serious respiratory diseases are transmitted through these droplets infection. Besides, these germs are unpredictable in their actions, those in nasal passage may be harmless but become harmful when exposed to the gastro-intestinal tract. Thus as one breathes into his drink or food, he or she is injecting into it millions of harmful germs and he or she is apt to be in the final outcome the one to be harmed by his own faulty habit. This is, however, avoided when the Prophetic tradition is abided by. This, from medical point of view, is incontrovertible. Obviously, food eating becomes injurious to health when the food or drink breath (containing millions of bacteria and viruses) is blown into it. These harmful droplets can be demonstrated practically when one breathes onto a clean, dry mirror. Immediately the surface appear to be dew-like of tiny droplets exhaled containing millions of germs. If they are harmless in the throat or mouth, these bacteria can be harmful in the gastro intestinal tract. They can also invade important organ like the heart through the bloodstream to cause a serious condition called bacterial endocarditic, etc.

It is also known to many that suspended matter in water may be injurious to health. This is especially from water obtained from rivers, streams, lakes and swamps. Even in the pre–scientific era of the 7th century, the Prophet (s.a.w) said that water containing suspended particles should not be drunk. So when a man told him he "saw specks" in the drinking water he was told to pour it out. Undoubtedly, these specks could either be agents of disease or vehicle of the disease – causing agents. The appropriate hygienic method to be adopted is to avoid taking it altogether. Such close observation of water before taking into the mouth is valid from the standpoint of a healthy culture. The inspection of the water may indicate the presence of solid particles of sand, vegetable, algae, protozoa, bilharzias cercaria, etc. These could be injurious to health. Islamic culture saves millions from contracting water–borne diseases in the pre–scientific era, when, "sanitary idea" was unknown in the remaining parts of the world. Although some germs are invisible to naked eyes, inspecting drinking water is important in many ways. Today these contaminants are known to contain micro-organisms such as salmonella spp., staphylococcus aureus, certain strains of escherichia coli, compylobacters, clostridia

(perfringens and botulinum) vibrioparahaemolyticus, listeria spp. And cryptosporidium have all been associated with food-borne illness.

Parasitic infestations carried by food include Toxoplasma gondii, Trichinella spirallis, and Taenia spp. Mycotoxins and Marine biotoxins are increasingly being incriminated.[1] This was because Islam has developed a concept of pure water and has established its characteristics long before any other culture realized the importance. Water hygiene is one of the best enunciated examples of Islamic culture in relation to health. In the disposal of waste materials Islamic culture had shone the light to the world; it is another striking example of a culture that is health friendly. Its impact on health and hygiene is being felt all over the world to date; this is seen today in the form of health education.

Despite great advances made in technology, keeping food safe remains a worldwide public health problem. The basic Islamic principles are used to improve food hygiene. These Islamic ethics form the backbone of health education. It is particularly recognised; it is the key ensuring food safety. These include:

- Do not prepare food too far in advance.
- Do not undercook meat (especially poultry).
- Do not cook meat that is not fully thawed.
- Do not keep perishable foods within the danger zone (10 – 60oC).
- Do not under-heat already cook foods.
- Do not allow contamination from raw to cooked foods (e.g on kitchen surfaces, chopping boards or in the food store).
- Wash hands before handling or cooking food.
- Keep kitchen surfaces and utensils clean.
- Make sure that sores and cuts on fingers or hands do not come in contact with food.[2]

Islamic culture takes stringent measures to ensure compliance of health rules and religious injunctions. The institution of muhtasib and hisba ensure that homes and streets are kept clean and tidy.

Disposal of Human Excreta

This aspect of human behaviour is also an area where Islamic attitude is most lauded as a culture that prohibits the body and clothes of the believers from the stains of faeces and urine obviously, could not allow filth to be littered but disposed effectively. Lack of concern for places where human

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1 A.O. Lucas & H.M. Gilles, *Textbook of Public Health Medicine for the Tropics*, p. 301
2 Ibid, p. 300

faeces are deposited characterises the population of less – developed areas and the young children and poorly educated segments of populations of more advanced areas.[1] Along this line of argument, the Islamic society must be described as developed, educated and advanced. For it laid down the principles to govern the how and the where to pass excreta and the efficient, and safest means of its disposal anticipating the modern method by several centuries. It must be reiterated that even in the pre–scientific era when pit privies and open defecation were common, Islamic societies were modern in their approaches to waste disposal. Both urine and faecal stains must be avoided on both health and religious grounds. Faeces freshly deposited near human habitations attract filth flies, which become active vehicles for disseminating enteric germs and other harmful agents. This development is, however, unacceptable and is reprehensible to the Islamic precept of "cleanliness is next to Godliness." The ideology is unique in its strict adherence to all hygienic rules. As a result, it stands distantly unique as the only health friendly culture in history. Fox Hall Elveback had pointed some of the cardinal importance of this habit. But he warned against the unhealthy practice where rules of hygiene were flagrantly flouted, he said:

> *Such causal defecation, together with failure to wear shoes, contributes to the extensive prevalence of hookworm infestation in many parts of the world. In India there is a compulsion with cultural basis, for faeces to be deposited in or near running water. This fact, coupled with lack of knowledge or concern about water contamination, helps explain the endemicity of many important enteric infections in that country...*[2]

Islamic culture shows aversion for both faecal pollution and water contamination, and has legislated against them. There was a European cultural basis when both faeces and sewage were disposed into rivers. The account of the "Summer Stink" of river Thames was quoted repeatedly because it was typical of this western attitude. The sanitary conditions of Britain and Europe in the last two hundred years were not better than those of India. Street cleansing and sewage disposal were irregular and slap-happy. And with accumulation of faecal wastes in homes, streets and rivers, the result was the great stench in the rural and urban areas in the west. Dung Removers or Sewers were employed to clear them by hand, often

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1 Fox Hall Elveback, *Epidemiology; Man and Disease*, p. 85
2 Ibid.

they had to go down to do so with bare hands to evacuate the sludge and fresh faeces. These dung removers were called 'night men'. In poorer areas they were left to overflow. There was no legislation against indiscriminate dumping of faeces everywhere either religious or secular, to restrict such a despicable behaviour.

By comparison, such development could not be allowed in Islamic cities because the muhtasib was responsible for general cleanliness and good sanitation in each city from the 7th century to the Modern Age. Public health arose in Europe after many years of Muslim discovery of the West. Further, it was a time when excrements were found everywhere and in every corner in chimneys, in the studies as well as in cellers and colehouses. It was a work mostly done at night that was fraught with serious health hazards, often poisonous sewer air was deadly and built up very quickly. The deadly poison of sewer gases then became a potent nuisance especially in summer. Many lives were lost by inhaling it. Rose, who studied the mediaeval hygiene extensively, recalled a case in Warwick Street, Pimlico, in 1852, when five men were killed by sewer gas:

> *Three of these poor fellows (Sewer workers) had gone into a sewer early in the morning and not returning in time for breakfast, an alarm was left for their safety. A surgeon, anxious to render assistance, entered the sewer, and was killed on the spot. A young policeman followed to assist, and was also struck dead in a few seconds. On examination after death, there was also evidence sufficient to show me that they could not have made more than two inspirations before death.*[1]

The putrefaction processes taking place due to bacterial activities in the faecal matter were said to be responsible for the massive production of deadly gases in these sewers with serious danger to lives. In addition, the sewers were badly designed, and until the water carriage system became effective in England, their accumulation stank abominably, especially in hot weather.[2] The introduction of the bucket system of latrine was also a reflection of a culture that was inherently unhygienic. The pails, though more hygienic were unsightly; besides it was embarrassing to leave pails out for collection, rather as we leave milk bottles out today.[3] The eye-sore caused by this was appalling, to say the least. The British government or

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 26
2 Ibid., p. 27
3 Ibid., p. 67

the Crown of the time, instead of enacting a public health act law to prevent the indiscriminate sewage disposal with little or no disposal, encouraged it instead. The infusion of nitrate-rich wastes into the soil created saltpetre, an important ingredient of explosives. The government was in dire need of this salt for its weaponry, the Crown encouraged people to keep their cesspools directly beneath their floor.[1] So that with mountain heaps of faeces in each British home much of saltpetre could be generated. Thus the flagrant disregard of personal hygiene with respect to faecal handling was by design rather than by default. The Crown was in dire need of saltpetre, a very important ingredient for the production of gunpowder. So everybody was directly and or indirectly encouraged to defecate everywhere. The use of toilet was therefore unknown to the populace. Evidently, the modern concept of waste and sewage disposal was an Islamic legacy to the modern world. It first of all stressed the fact that stools and urine must be kept far away from the dwellings. Everybody must not be stained with either faecal or urine stain. The presumption was justified by facts and historic reality. It also revolutionised the modern hygiene. Thus, aversion to filth and sewage was an Islamic attitude as it was an alien habit to the West.

Attitude to Sewage

The objective of environmental sanitation is to create and maintain conditions in the environment that will promote health and prevent diseases. This essentially is the goal of Islamic worship. This noble objective, however, cannot be achieved until and unless there is a safe, proper and efficient system of sewage disposal. Islam remains the only culture with total and complete abhorrence of filth, which is called *najasat*. It defiles the fundamental basis of Islamic worship. To a Muslim, therefore, *najasat* is a veritable enemy, which not only kills but also leads to perdition. The Prophet (s.a.w) had repeatedly warned that many people were thrown into hell because during their earthly sojourn they were careless with urine stains. This, therefore, summarises what sewage is to a Muslim. Islamic authorities empowered the muhtasib and the hisba the onerous talks of ensuring that all Islamic health rules as well as religious injunctions were adhered to seriously by everybody living either in the rural or urban areas. This duty of municipal officers was at then lacking in the West with serious repercussions.

The west prior to its Islamisation was a deluge of sewage, in fact, history devolved to point up matters of significance as far as health and hygiene are

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*.

concerned. The British Government by comparison empowered the saltpetre men or officers to do the opposite work of the muhtasib and the hisba, instead of keeping the cities clean they encouraged every home to generate faeces so that the much needed salt could be extracted from stale and accumulated sewage. This explained the reason why the average European was at then accustomed to handling of faeces with his bare hands without any feeling of resentment. This attitude to sewage soon created health and social problems. Historic events provide us with an apt opportunity to sketch in some graphic details the western attitude to filth and sewage. As the flood of effluent increased, cities had to think again about how to dispose of it. At first, they tended to discharge untreated wastes directly into water courses, until the vile consequences forced them to turn to two alternatives, the sewage farm and chemical treatment.[1]

In this way the sewage was converted into human manure – a fertilizer. The constant flow of sewage though up to a point was beneficial, in the end saturates the soil, causing 'sewage' sickness and offensive smells. Further, it was reported at Blackburn in 1868 that the river receiving the treated effluent was reportedly still a horrible, offensive, turbid, blackish stream disengaging the most offensive gases. Furthermore, the loss of ammonia from the solids left them very inferior as manure.[2] Thus human faeces with all the risks of handling with bare hands, unfortunately turned out to be poor manure; after all, the risk of handling sewage indiscriminately was not worthwhile. Had sewage been of immense importance, the Prophet (s.a.w) would have put a strict law in its handling, but not even a stain is allowed, all is prohibited. This attitude turned out to be a blessing to the Muslim Ummah and subsequently to the world in general.

Where aversion to waste and sewage was absent or largely ignored accumulation of these biological wastes were inevitable; to be made use of in one way or the other. Filths unfortunately, had failed to be of good economic use as human manure. It turned out to be a rather weak fertilizers but a veritable source of epidemics, such as what was then described as "sewage sickness" and offensive smell. Prior to the science of bacteriology, the chemists were concerned with 'deodorizing' that is suppressing the smell of sewage through the use of fragrant substances. This was an attempt to stem the offensive odour by "deodorising" the fetid air. The use of human faeces as fertilizer was purveyed to some parts of the world at a time when Britain was an Imperial power. This was, however, rejected by

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 67
2 Ibid., pp. 67 - 68

Islamic culture on health and religious grounds. Fox Hall Elveback had noted the perils of the use of human faeces as manure, he pointed that:

> *In the Orient and some other parts of the world, human night soil is regarded (quite properly) as a valuable of organic nitrogen and used (quite improperly) for purposes intended to improve fertilization. This practice leads to direct contamination of crops such as strawberries or lettuce, which usually are consumed raw and uncleansed. For this reason, persons travelling to areas of uncertain hygiene are warned to avoid food that has not been cooked or peeled. Diseases transmitted by night soil contamination include typhoid, dysentery, amoebiasis, infectious hepatitis, and poliomyelitis.*[1]

Islam prohibits any act leading to faecal contamination of body, clothes and contamination of food and drink. Its ruling on sewage is pungent and strict, without which cleanliness the basis of Islamic worship is destroyed. Where it is of necessity to handle sewage strict hygienic rules must be adhered to. Thus no Muslim worth his name could be negligent of hygiene in waste disposal management, as hygiene is the bedrock of his own faith. However, when the sewage is chemically treated, it is no longer injurious to health and is not considered a *najasat*. And where necessity dictates exception "night men" are allowed to work only under meticulous hygiene. They are not allowed to handle faeces indiscriminately. Religious injunctions are to guide the sewer-men in the discharge of their duty. Islam through this guidance reduces the perils and potential health risks of this profession. It also prohibits the direct and or indirect pollution of water in streams, rivers and lakes by effluent as was the practice in the 19th century Europe.

The problems of disposal of faeces still persist to date in the highly developed countries. In Scandinavia extensive outbreaks of hepatitis have been traced to shell fish which were harvested from waters over which "sanitary" privies had been constructed or polluted heavily with sewage. Similarly, oysters and clams harvested from sewage polluted waters have been responsible for similar outbreaks in the United States.[2] Culture dies hard, it is therefore difficult to instil hygienic culture without having any recourse to religious injunctions. However, with strict abiding by Islamic rules, a standard hygienic behaviour can be inculcated amongst all nations.

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1 Fox Hall Elveback. *Epidemiology; Man and Disease*, p. 85
2 Ibid.

It disallows a powerful nation to use a weaker nation as its dumping ground for biological and toxic wastes. It is unlawful to pollute waters with sewage because of the backlash upon the health of the people who might use it for household and drinking purposes and be harmed in the process. Besides, polluted water is unfit for ritual purification such as *ghusl* and *wudu*. Where Islamic culture is unique in its relation to health is in its rulings concerning personal hygiene.

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene varies widely between cultures and between individuals. Personal hygiene is a religious duty in Islam. It is in this respect that Afzalur Rahman, a renowned Islamic scholar stated:

> *The Qur'an has laid great emphasis upon personal cleanliness of body, clothes and place of worship and on general hygiene. Daily prayer develops neat and clean habits in believers. They have to keep their body and clothes clean because prayer cannot be offered with an unclean body and dirty clothes. They have, therefore, to keep themselves and their clothes clean from all kinds of dirt. Then daily prayer requires them to perform ablution five times a day and wash their bodies at least once a week...*[1]

This regular and meticulous body hygiene keeps the Muslim from smell or malodour and infestation with body lice, which is directly related to infrequent bathing and laundering of clothes; irregular bathing also has a direct relation to bacterial and fungal infections of skin. The Muslim is identified with frequent washing of hands and general cleanliness. In fact, he washes his hands 15 times a day, three times before offering his *Salat*. The importance of this habit is well established in medical philosophy.

Washing of hands is chiefly important to minimise their role in the direct and the indirect transmission of dirt and faecal contaminations. Although this is most obviously important for food handlers, it is also important for small children who frequently put much–handled toys and objects into their mouths, a mechanism contributing to the ready spread of polio and other viruses in the young children population, in some cultures in which washing of hands may be ignored diseases of vomiting and diarrhoea are common. And according to epidemiologist Fox–Hall Elveback, who misunderstood and deliberately misinterpreted Islamic use of the right and left hand carped at the religious practice that the concept of "hand

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[1] Afzalur Rahman, *Muhammad (saw), The Educator of Mankind*. p. 469

contamination" is honoured by the custom of reserving one hand for feeding oneself and the other for cleaning after defecation (without benefit of toilet issue).[1] But in his own culture, lest we forget, the concept of hand washing was entirely ignored, it devolved only in the last 200 years and the benefit of toilet tissue was realised only about a century previously.

Islam, in an advanced sense of strict hygiene, assigned specific roles to the left and the right hands. It considers utterly unhygienic the use of right hand for the dual functions of feeding and cleaning of the private part after passing excreta as is the practice in many cultures. This is the proper approach because it reduces the chances of food contamination and the overall increase in faecos-oral route of transmission of diseases. It is, therefore, a laudable custom that is in accord with modern hygiene when viewed objectively. It takes into account the concept of "hand contamination", thereby providing the safest, easiest and most practicable method of minimising spread of infection. This healthful habit was, however, misconstrued by the writer deliberately, for distortion and misrepresentation of the fact underlying it. The use of left and right hands, in specific roles is a distinct feature of Islamic culture. This is in relation to sidedness a topic that is well treated elsewhere in Book Three.

What appertains to the theme of this discussion is the driving force behind the use of the left hand in cleaning filth and dirty things. As it has been pointed out it is an aspect of highest form of personal hygiene that is unmatchable. The two hands after every call of nature are scrupulously washed regularly to ensure that they are free from dirt, filth and contamination by injurious substances. It is only in Islam that such a hand care is cultivated and practised as a religious duty. It is also known that washing of hands is largely unknown and ignored in many cultures. Washing habit in general was once considered a taboo in the West. It was, therefore, an alien culture in the West where the "prejudice against bathing, for bathing sake was still strong."[2] Until the late 1880s, however, when the western culture was Islamised and bathing and hand washing became incorporated as part and parcel of European values. Thus it could not have an objective criticism to claim that the act of the cleaning the private parts with the left hand could be invalidated "without benefit of toilet tissue." After all, the writer's own culture was once notorious for Great Unwiped, lest we forget. Islam initiated, formulated and established the hand care ethics, the washing of hand was practised several centuries when tissue

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1 Fox – Hall Elveback, *Epidemiology: Man and Disease*, p. 86
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 18

paper was unheard and undreamt of. Nevertheless, pieces of wood and stones were used to achieve the same benefit.

In pre-scientific era, Islam recommended the use of smooth pieces of wood and stones to be used (in a manner we use toilet paper today) in cleaning the private part thrice before washing with water. The aim is to debulk the faecal mass to the barest minimum. This is exactly the reason why we use the tissue paper. But minimising the bulk of the faeces is not enough; it has to be washed up. In contrast, the use of tissue paper in the modern western culture is believed to suffice today, which is not true. In order to achieve maximum clean up, it has to be followed immediately with washing to avoid offensive smelling. The principle of istijinar and istinja and its significance have been repeatedly mentioned for the sake of emphasis of superiority of Islamic culture. The toilet sink is washed with detergent regularly after flushing but the anal area of the person for which the toilet is made for is left heavily loaded with faeces. This is one aspect of modern toilet hygiene that is defective. But Islamic culture of cleaning with pieces of wood, stones (or tissue paper) must be followed by wash ups. Then the hand is scrubbed with sand and then washed with water thereafter. It was indeed remarkable how this method of personal hygiene was evolved several centuries before the modern era. But still remains appropriate hygiene especially when water is made easily available in taps.

It must be stressed that Islamic culture places importance on personal hygiene as well as on public health far ahead of any other culture. The educator of mankind taught the use of handkerchief to control respiratory secretions and advised the use of right hand or the back of left hand to cover the mouth during yawning. The Prophet (s.a.w) taught that: "when one of you yawns, let him hold his hand upon his mouth because the devil might enter." Thus the Muslim is not allowed to yawn like a donkey, he covers his mouth. This prevents both germs and devil entering his mouth to wreak havoc to his health. Similarly, in the case of sneezing the Great Examplar used to cover his face with his hand or with his cloth. This attitude no doubt helps to prevent the spread of infections.

Use of Handkerchiefs

The prophet of Islam taught the use of handkerchief to blow the nose and how to sneeze, prophetic teachings that revolutionised modern standard of personal hygiene. The Educator of Mankind used soft cloth as handkerchief to regularly clean his nose and he said that the left hand must be used for this. A Muslim must cover his mouth when he yawns and when he sneezes, which must be accompanied immediately by saying

Alhamdulillahi, that is Praise to Allah. Man must really be thankful to his Creator for this highly effective protective reflex act of sneezing. Thus, the use of handkerchiefs as a tradition of the unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) was to maintain good nasal hygiene as well as to reduce contamination by mucous nasal secretions. This occurs more frequently with common cold.

The Islamic tradition is in accord with modern hygiene. It has now been established that the correct method of blowing the nose is to compress each nostril alternatively and blow down the other. To blow forcibly down both at once while the nostrils are closed is liable to send infectious material into the middle ear via the Eustachian tube.[1] However, should there be much nasal discharge as in common cold, paper handkerchiefs should be used to wipe the mucus secretion and to ensure that the soiled papers are well disposed of or destroyed by burning and that the handkerchief is soft.

This is because constant use of handkerchief that is harsh or rough either by reason of its texture or because of dried nasal discharge will cause soreness of the upper lip or painful fissures around the vestibule. When linen or cotton handkerchiefs are used during respiratory infection, they should be disinfected before being washed and boiled.[2] The use of handkerchief as a tradition of the unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) was a legacy of Islam to the modern world. To every Muslim, the use of handkerchiefs is conveniently facilitated by regular wudu, which prevents the desiccation of secreted nasal discharge and also helps in washing the hairs inside the nostrils. Thus all acts of Islamic worship tend to compliment each other to enhance personal hygiene.

The teaching on oral hygiene, meaning proper care of the teeth (and the gums) using *siwak* or chewing stick is principally important to the individual and may prevent the development of chronic foci of infection or dental caries. Thus from the standpoint of personal hygiene and public health, Islamic legal system (*shariah*) issues directives regarding ablution, bathing, cleanliness, general hygiene, eating etiquette, dietary habits, healthy foods and many other aspects that affect the body and its health status. It is a culture that improves the care of skin and prevents infection. Personal hygiene is incomplete without household hygiene.

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1 Susanna Marshall. *Ear, Nose and Throat Nursing*. Fourth Edition. Bailhere, Tindall and Cassell. London (1969). p.5

2 Ibid.

Household Hygiene

Epidemiologists state that familial health depends greatly on the environmental sanitation or hygiene of the individual household. Many aspects of household hygiene relate directly to culture. From this standpoint there are three aspects to this hygiene; over crowding, domestic animals and, pets vermin insects and rodents. It is unlawful in Islam to sleep in overcrowded room, everyone must be separated with one another and privacy must be observed properly even amongst the married couples. Furthermore, children from the age of 5 years are to sleep in their separate rooms. Gender segregation is also observed right from home as girls and boys are to be separated in their apartments, and in each no two mature persons are to sleep on the same bed whether males or females. The culture considers the health and ethical implications of overcrowding and takes measures to prevent them, while many other cultures have not made or lack the sophistication to make such discernment with harmful consequences and instances galore.

Sleeping *en famillie* in a single bed, as is usual among Andean Indians and other impoverished groups, greatly facilitate intra-household spread of contact-transmitted agents and body lice.[1] It was a prevalent custom in the West. The same was typical of England in the mid 19th century, where overcrowded districts were called 'Rookeries', because the overcrowding resembled the way rooks pack themselves together.[2] This was the time when the health and ethical implications of over-crowding were yet to be recognized in Europe, while it was several centuries earlier well recognized and prevented in Islamic society.

A graphic picture of a sixteenth century "Rookeries" was given as follows:

> *A room where a baby has just been delivered, people are eating and drinking, a dog is gnawing a bone and a child is playing. No wonder so many new–born babies and their mothers died of infection.*[3]

The Islamic custom relating to domestic animals and pets is simple and healthful. Keeping dogs in the house without any necessity merely as pets was forbidden by the educator of mankind. The validity of this prohibition is now recognized more than at any other time. Many people especially in

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 87
2 Ibid., p. 23
3 Ibid.

the West have developed a pathological love for their dogs. This leads to inappropriate and utterly reprehensible relationships. As Dr. Yusuf Al-Qardawi pointedly observed how the well-to-do lavishly treat their dogs while neglecting their neighbours. Many dogs are well fed with meat and special costly dog foods when their neighbours often slept with hunger. It is even fashionable to show a well fed dog with luxurious fur as a symbol of 'high class status'. A "Dog Fare" is a fashion parade for dogs to show which is best in outlook and nourishment. The love of this animal is getting incredibly more intimate with man. Even more ominous is the growing trend of having sex with one's pet dog. This development is in line with a rising fashion for sexual deviation such as *zoophilia* or *crimen bestialis,* that is, sexual relations with animals.

The same author quoted Lyom Playfair who described one instance in Liverpool:

> *JS has a father and mother, who live with him; he and his wife sleep in one bed; his father and his mother in another; his two grown up sisters in a third bed; his brother, a lad of 19 and a young man lodger who is courting one of his sisters, in a fourth; all in the same room*[1].

Islam prohibits overcrowding in a room as well as living so intimately with pet animals like dogs. Both prohibited practices are seriously injurious to health and societal ethics.

Unless dictated by necessity, it is prohibited to keep dogs. Islamic culture considers dogs and pigs as *najasat* or pollution, which if polluted or stained with the dung or saliva that is touched (when wet) the body or the clothes so affected should be cleaned and washed thrice. The modern medical science has confirmed that both pigs and dogs act major as sources of serious diseases. The Prophet (s.a.w) several centuries ago had made this recommendation:

> *If a dog licks a plate (or pot), clean it seven times, of which one time should be with sand (or earth) (Bukhari).*

This recommendation of thorough scrubbing and washing off dog's saliva is necessary on health ground, leaving no speck of it. It was at a time when the use of soap or detergent was not discovered so scrubbing with sand sufficed, and it was recommended. The injunction was suggestive of

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[1] Lionel Rose. *Health and Hygiene,* p.23.

the fact that the Prophet (s.a.w) had a strong suspicion that a dog's saliva contains some poison. Today his suspicion is confirmed; it contains germs of one of the dreaded diseases that are incurable yet: dog's saliva contains germs causing rabies. A viral disease caused by a *rhabdovirus,* which infects the central nervous tissue and salivary glands of a wide range of mammals and is usually conveyed by saliva, through bites or licks on abrasions or on intact mucous membrane. Man is most frequently infected from dogs.[1] When bitten by the infected animal, the person develops the disease within ten days. The dreaded disease is characterized by fear of water or *hydrophobia.* Although the victim is thirsty, attempts at drinking provokes violent contractions of the diaphragm and other respiratory muscles, and thereafter, even the sight or sound of water may precipitate distressing spasms and attacks of panic. Delusions and hallucinations may develop accompanied by spitting, biting and mania, with lucid intervals in which patient is extremely anxious. Cranial nerve lesions develop and terminal hyperpyrexia (extreme high body temperature) is common. Death ensues, within a week of the onset of the symptoms.[2] This dreaded disease has no known cure up till now. Thus prevention is the best strategy. The suggested control measures include license and vaccinate domestic dogs, kill stray dogs, monitor reservoir hosts, control and quarantine imported animals and vaccinate at risk animals and man.[3]

To keep you away from this disease and the troubles of the suggested preventive measures, the Prophet (s.a.w) offered the simplest and effective strategy. "Don't keep dogs inside your house." It was a miracle how the Prophet (s.a.w) placed a severer recommendation on dog's saliva rather than pig's saliva the latter being filthier than the former. Today we know the reason why; the saliva of dog contains rhabdo-viruses the causative organism for rabies. A disease that first renders its victim mad or insane before killing him; there is no cure for it yet. Thus with progress in medical science, we come to realise the wisdom of prohibiting keeping of dogs; their presence makes the household utensils unhygienic due to their licking of them. There is therefore a lurking possibility that their saliva may inadvertently infect people with the viruses. Moreover, licking the human body, which is common with dogs is an alternative route to biting but with equal fatal effects. Thus the acclaimed "best friend" of man may turn out to be his "worst enemy." The friend may be a potential source of *zoonoses.*

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1 *Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine*, Thirteenth Edition, p. 850.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.p.881

Zoonoses is a term applied to the diseases transmitted in nature from animals to man. The American Public Health Association, lists 171 diseases of public health importance. Daily, many other zoonoses are emerging as new disease entities, some because of mutations in bacteria and viruses, and certain other zoonoses are being discovered by improved scientific techniques.[1] Islamic hygiene identifies certain animals like dog a potential danger to health. Dr Al-Qardawi cited some scientific findings indicating how this seeming friendliness might turn out to be deadly. According to the Islamic scholar the one scientific research findings by a German scientist, Dr. Gerard Finstimer, has shed some light on the dangers to human health arising from the domestication of dogs or coming in intimate contact with them. The scientist said:

> *The increasing interest shown by many people in recent times in keeping dogs as pets has compelled us to draw public attention to the dangers which result from this, especially because pet dogs are hugged and kissed and permitted to lick the hands of the young and the old, and what is worse, to lick the plates and utensils which are used by human beings for eating and drinking.*
>
> *Besides being unhygienic and uncouth, this practice is bad manners and abhorrent to good taste. However, we are not concerned with such matters, leaving them to be addressed by teachers of etiquette and good taste. Rather this article is intended to present some scientific observations. From the medical point of view, which is our main concern here, the hazards to human health and life from keeping and playing with dogs are not to be ignored. Many people have paid a high price for their ignorance, as the tapeworm carried by dogs is a cause of chronic diseases, sometimes resulting in death.*
>
> *This worm is found in man, in cattle, and in pigs, wolves and rarely in cats. These worms differ from others in that they are minute and invisible; consequently, they were not discovered until very recently.*

He continues:

> *Biologically the developmental process of this worm has some unique characteristics. In the lesions caused by them, one worm gives rise to many heads which spread and form other and varied*

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[1] Ibrahim Kazim, *Further Essays on Islamic Topics*, p. 122

kind of lesions and abscesses. These heads develop into full–grown worms in dogs' tonsil. In humans and in other animals they appear as lesions and abscesses completely different from the tapeworm itself. In animals the size of an abscess may reach that of an apple, while the liver of the infected animal may grow from five to ten times its normal size. In human beings the size of the abscess may reach that of a clenched first or even the head of an infant and it is filled with yellow fluid weighing from ten to twenty pounds. In the infected human it may cause diverse kinds of inflammations in the lungs, muscles, spleen, kidney, and brain, and appears in such different forms that specialists, until very recently had difficulty in recognizing it.

In any case, wherever this inflammation is found, it poses great danger to the health and life of the patient. What is worse is that, in spite of our knowledge of its life history, origin, and development, we have not been able to devise a cure for it, except that in some instances these parasites die out, possibly because of antibodies produced in the human body. Unfortunately, cases in which such parasites die without causing damage are rare indeed. Moreover, chemotherapy has failed to produce any benefit, and the usual treatment is surgical removal of the abscessed parts of the body. For all these reasons we should use all possible resources to fight against the dreadful disease and save man from the dangers.

Professor Noeller through post-mortem dissection of human bodies in Germany found that the incidence of infection with dogs' worm is at least one per cent. In some places such as Dalmatia, Iceland, South-eastern Australia and Holland, where dogs are used for pulling sleds, the incidence rate of tapeworm among dogs is 12 per cent. In Iceland the number of people who suffer from the inflammation caused by this worm has reached the rate of 43 per cent. If we add to this the human suffering, the loss of meat because of infection of cattle, and the permanent danger to human health because of the presence of tapeworms, we cannot be very complacent toward the problem.

Perhaps the best way to combat the problem is to limit the worms to dogs and not to let them spread, since in actuality we need to keep some dogs. We should not neglect to treat dogs when necessary by getting rid of the tapeworms in their tonsils and perhaps repeating this process periodically on shepherd dogs and watchdogs.

> *Man can protect his life and health by keeping a safe distance from dogs. He should not hug them, play with them, or let them come close to children. Children should be taught not to play with dogs or to fondle them. Dogs should not be permitted to lick children's hands or come to places where children play and their bowls are scattered throughout the house. Dogs must have their own separate bowls, and they must not be allowed to lick bowls and plates used by humans. They should not be allowed inside grocery stores, restaurants, or market places. In general, great care must be taken that they do not come in contact with anything which is used by people for eating and drinking.*[1]

It is indeed fascinatingly remarkable how the prophetic teaching with respect to domestication of dogs is in accord with scientific finding. The Prophet (s.a.w) must have known the dangers of dog's saliva through divine intervention. Today we know that the saliva contains rhabdoviruses (from the salivary gland) and a tapeworm (from the tonsils). Both of which are seriously harmful to man. Dr. Finstimer's suggested measures of prevention are also in line with Islamic rulings. But, unfortunately, the close relationship between man and dog in the West and in many parts is becoming more intimate and has taken a bizarre dimension, perhaps, due to the rising tide of global *crimen bestialis*, a rapidly spreading culture of *yahoo*. Islam is the only culture, which forestalls this evilness.

The Muslim must be scrupulously clean in his household. His roms, kitchen and toilet as demanded by Islamic injunctions must be neat and tidy. It is unlawful in Islam, on individual basis, to allow the growth and proliferation of rodents, cockroaches, filth flies and other vermins. The general maintenance of cleanliness throughout the house in relation to food handling is a religious duty that is incumbent upon all members of the household. Kitchen utensils and other household items must be kept clean, neat and tidy. The general environment including the toilet and the dust bin must also be kept clean. In essence, the household and its surroundings are to be kept in good hygienic condition.

A Muslim has to be neat and tidy all the time as he interacts with the rest of the people in social relations and personal contact.

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[1] Gerard Finstimer's Article on the "Dangers of Keeping Dogs," as quoted in Yusuf Al-Qardawi's, *The Lawful and the Prohibited*, p. 122 – 123.

Social and Humanism

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) a great Muslim historian developed a concept – with which to understand the need for and the essentiality of communalism or a social necessary for societal development and progress. Every society needs to provide an ennobling environment in which an individual with peaceful and cordial circumstances to cease the opportunity to express his capacity to do things, the opportunity and capacity relationship of the individual can only be balanced when the society ensures or provides the opportunities through close cooperation within the human community. Ibn Khaldun's key concept was to explain such cooperation. According to Ibn Khaldun:

> *The defensive and protective action (of mankind) is not effective unless they have a common* asabiyah *or fellow feeling of having common descent... with this they become strong and powerful. The compassion and partisan support toward their relatives and blood relation becomes part of their human nature. It leads to their solidarity and mutual support, and increases the fear of their enemy (and when it comes to fighting) it won't do without asabiyah.*[1]

Therefore, asabiyah, which originals with the family, the fundamental unit of society, and tribe, it then grows in strength and scope with the passage of time. It is state of mind that has a natural defensive mechanism of survival and accommodates the emotional aspect. It can also be transformed into a tool of conquest and expansion. Further, it is asabiyah that provided people with the capacity for protection, defence, and other collective action.[2] It is a vivid description of Islamic cohesive spirit that knitted a society into one composite whole. Thus asabiyah forms the basis of Islamic social-humanism, when it cements the society together Islamic brotherhood flourishes and waxes stronger.

The cardinal objective of social etiquette is to foster unity amongst the people; to cement them together in the real sense of brotherhood and fraternity. It removes acrimony and rancour amongst the segments of the community. It also protects the society from attrition and vagabondage that could unsettle the peaceful coexistence of the society. The Great Exmaplar set rules and values of social etiquettes and decorum befitting the most advanced, sophisticated and civilised societies.

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1 *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 19, No. 2, (2000) p.54.
2 Ibid.

The individual, the family and the society in general are governed by an established system of ethics and morals founded on the Qur'an and sunnah, where essential attributes of the good are well enunciated as well as those of the bad. The former attributes are encouraged to be imbibed by each and everyone while the latter ones are to be avoided and rejected entirely. Purity and chastity are to be inculcated while concupiscence in whatever form is proscribed. Similarly honesty and integrity are to be considered as important social values so that with them as yardstick of measurement, men of honour are identified and respected. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) said: "When a respectable man of a people comes to you, show him respect." A society must honour men of considerable standing and must be appreciative of their worth and values. It grows to considered heights through these virtues. The recognition of merit is pointed out clearly in *Surat Hud*, 11:3 where Allah (s.w.t) said: "And bestow His abounding grace on all who abound in merit." Thus Islam encourages meritorious services by men and women so as to move the society forward. In this respect the Prophet (s.a.w) said: "The best of mankind is he who brings benefits to them." This is by meritorious service to God and humanity.

The elders of the society are respected. It is in the character of a Muslim to respect his elders. This is because the Prophet (s.a.w) said: "He is not of us who does not show respect to our elders." This injunction cannot be faulted by any social scientists even though respect for the aged is fast disappearing from the western societies as well as in those societies that share their values. The societal principles of right and wrong to guide the relationship among its members are drawn from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The rules set are immutable, timeless and faultless and are in tandem with the ever changing phases of human civilisation. Unlike the human made laws they have internal checking mechanism to resist the decay of the established system. Man made laws lack the internal capacity to adapt and assimilate or be assimilated. Consequently, the societies that are governed by these laws show incipient decay in values, lack cohesion and are characterised by internal rancour and attrition.

Dr. Pius Okigbo, a renowned Nigerian economist and social analyst gave a graphic presentation of a society governed by eked out laws. He wrote:

> *We see all around us signs that the values and principles which the older generations appeared to consider basic have now been relaxed into permissive behaviour. There is mounting evidence that the doctor – no matter where he trains – pursues his fees even*

> *at the risk of the health of the patient; that the administrator – down to the lowest clerk – openly buys and sells his services; that the judge dispenses justice according to the size of the purse of the litigants; that the priest lives a lie while he preaches chastity and purity. How else can we explain a situation in which the prophet cheats his priests, the priest his congregation, the judge the accused, the teacher the student, the doctor the patient, and the ruler his subjects. In such a situation where everybody seems to rob and cheat everybody else, no system of values can hold for long.*[1]

There appears to be the truth in saying that there is no system of values that can hold for long. However, when the values are revealed rather than formulated the system survives *sine die* as symbolised in Islam. In spite of the subversive forces working from within and external to it, Islamic social system continues to purge forward. It's secret of survival lies in its values, internal cohesion where social distinction is deeply buried in the interest of Islamic sense of brotherhood. The Prophet (s.a.w) taught: "Have a handshake with one another, fraud will them vanish." This is one of the survival strategies of Islam.

Islamic worship has many aims and objective; one of them is the establishment of social relationships in the society. It gives clear instructions for good and generous treatment of all members of the society. It lays great stress on its members fulfilling the duties they owe to the community and caring for the rights of its members. They must cooperate with all in acts of virtue and goodness, and not cooperate in acts of vice and iniquity. This is stressed in *Surah Maidah;* "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour" (Maidah 5:20). Abidance with this divine injunction helps to keep the established human system; prevents it from decay. The factors that accelerate entropy are henceforth checkmated. This also shows the forms of personal conduct we have with our fellows may influence the health status of the society. When people co-operate with one another in iniquity, invariably, the prevalence of prostitution, crimes and sexually transmitted diseases, etc. is high with a result of rise in asocial behaviour. Thus it is incumbent upon everyone to desist from all acts of iniquity and to dissuade others from doing the same. To establish an egalitarian society, the Holy Qur'an provides the way, which is to:

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[1] Pius Okigbo, *Philosophy of Development Essays in the Public*, Vol.I Fourth Dimension Publishers, p. 4

> *Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good – to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are strangers, their companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess:*
>
> *For Allah, loveth not the arrogant the vainglorious; (Nor) those who are niggardly or enjoin niggardliness on others or hide the bounties given to them by Allah (s.w.t) (Nisaa, 4:36-37).*

As all fingers are not equal, so every society has its social and medical casualties. Islam demands they ought to be assisted to cater for themselves -- in feeding, clothing and personal upkeep and personal hygiene. The gist of these sacred verses are obvious and the set objectives are extremely desirable. In his explication of the verses, Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf stated that "neighbours who are near" to mean in local situation as well as intimate relationships, just as neighbours who are strangers includes those whom we do not know or who live away from us or in a different sphere altogether. While the companions by your side may be your intimate friends and associates, just as the wayfarer you meet may be a casual acquaintance on your travels. And what your right hands possess anything that has no civil rights. It includes captives (where they exist in any form whatever), people in your power, or dumb animals with whom, you have to deal. They are all Allah's creatures and deserve our sympathy and our practical service (Cf. Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner). "He prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small, for the dear God who loveth us, He made and loveth all."[1] This introduces us to one of the uniqueness of Islamic – the foremost principle.

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[1] A. Yusuf Ali. *The Holy Qur'an* (Amana Corp. (1983). p. 191)

CHAPTER FIVE

FOREMOST PRINCIPLE

The Holy Qur'an and Sunnah supply the rich resource and authentic criteria for the normal, spiritual and cultural dimensions of Islamic humanism. It stresses on human welfare. It was this *hikmah* or philosophy and practical guide of the Qur'an and Sunnah that constitute the comprehensive guide to social relation and human welfare. The Sunnah, which always served as the touchstone for measuring the degree of one's commitment to Islam and for scrutinising the moral value and cultural worth of all individual and social constants and variables in the Muslim society, in all ages, environments and climes. The Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), therefore, has been and shall always continue to be the *Grand norm* of the Muslim society. Individuals, groups, institutions, customs, conventions, values and mores, fads and fashions shall always be liable to evaluation and judgement in relation to this *Grand norm*.[1] This is how Islamic system of values can hold for long, in fact for eternity.

It is this authentic *Grand norm* which has protected the identity of the Ummah throughout centuries and in the face of all alien invasions. It is therefore tested and trusted as it has passed the tide of time. Dr. Muhammad Al-Ghazali stated that the foremost principle of humanism provided in the teaching of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) is that it combines the good of this world and the hereafter. A Muslim strives in this life to achieve the success and felicity of this world in such a way that it leads to the eventual salvation and ever – lasting bliss of the hereafter.[2]

It is for this reason that the Islamic worldview is founded on the sound pedestal such that it provides health in this life and afterlife. It is with good health that it seeks to idealise and to establish its own unique style and system of humanism. This takes us to the second principle; in this principle, Dr. Al-Ghazali's piece is worthy of quotation in its entirety; he wrote:

The second principle of typical Islamic humanism taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that human nature is essentially good. There is no stigma of any prenatal "essential sin" to mar the pristine purity and

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1 MWL Journal, Safar 1423 – April 2002, p. 43
2 Ibid., p. 87

essential innocence of human soul. But, at the same time, Islam does not demand human beings to live angels. The beauty of Islam lies in the fact that it takes human nature as it is. It gives due allowance to human weaknesses, lapses, errors and blunders. These weakness and failings are granted as part of natural human condition simply because man has been created by Allah with a dual capacity. He has been endowed with both a higher angelic disposition and a lower animalistic temperament. He is called upon to maintain a harmonious balance between two inherent forces of matter and spirit that are simultaneously operative within his being.

Islam, therefore, does not look down upon animalistic dimension of the human self simply because Allah has created his arthropods in this way. And it is in fact in this dualistic disposition of man combining the two poles of angel and animal within the unity of a human being – that his greatness lies, for when he subdues his physical urges and augments his moral aspirations in the pursuit of a sublime spiritual ideal – that is *taqwa*, i.e, identifying with the Will of his Creator – he indeed attains the very high status of *ihsan*. He then becomes the real embodiment of divine vicegerency which is the *raison d'etre* of his creation. He is equipped with the necessary potential within his dual self as well as afforded all the requisite resources of this world so that he is able to realize his supreme objective of life. In a world in which nothing is value-free, and due to demands of nature, man is bound to be value-oriented.

Value Orientations

Hall and Weaver wrote that every individual has his own specific value-orientation, which should be congruent with his own philosophy and which develops through socialisation in a culture, family, and other significant social networks. And that it is important to be aware of an individual's value-orientation since it serves as motivation for behaviour.[1] The value-orientation theory developed by Spiegel could, accordingly to this point of view, be utilised to examine an individual's value system. The theory deals with four value-orientations which are man-nature, time, activity and relational. In the man-nature orientation, the individual considers his relation to nature. The alternatives are subjugation to nature, harmony with nature, and mastery over nature. Characteristically, members of the Appalachain culture believe that man is subjugated to nature that what will be will be. During certain periods, the Chinese tended to view man in

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[1] Joanne E. Hall and B. R. Weaver (eds). *Distributive Nursing Practice: A Systems Approach to Community Health*, J. Blippincolt Comp. Philadelphia (1977). p.85.

harmony with nature since the two cannot be separated. Many American professionals believe that man can control nature which enables man to influence what will happen.

In the time orientation, the individual consider his relation to time. The alternatives are past, present and future. An individual who is oriented to the present does little or no planning for the future. In contrasts, an individual who is oriented to the future focuses on what will occur tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year. The emphasis is on planning for the future and on change.

In activity orientation, the individual deals with the modality of human activity. The alternatives are being, being-in-becoming, and doing. The being activity emphasises spontaneous expressions of behaviour which are usually desires or instincts. The being-in-becoming activity is concerned with the individual being himself, but emphasises activity that has its goal the development of the self as a unified whole. The doing activity emphasises what the individual is capable of accomplishing. The individual is judged by what he can do and what he accomplishes.

In the relational orientation, the individual is concerned with his relationship to other men. The alternative orientations lineal, collateral, and individualistic. The lineal orientation focuses on age, generational differences, and cultural tradition to kinship. The collateral orientation is personal and centres on family and/or kinship. The individualistic orientation is primarily impersonal and non-kinship oriented.[1]

An individual can have any combination of the four value orientations. Further, individual's value orientations change during his development through the lifecycle and in specific crisis situation. Thus the best of all value-orientation is that which is in accord with fitrah. Islam, which is a complete way of life is practically a *Dinal-fitrah*. Therefore, nothing is value-free. A clear understanding of this concept of value-orientation is important in the understanding of Islam as a culture and its direct relation to health.

This is why all teachings of Islam are congruent with the demands of healthy human nature. Nothing has been prescribed in Islam nor laid down by the Prophet (peace by on him) who is the first and the last example of Islam's perfection in human scales, which would offend human nature in any way. In fact, the preservation of the physical health and the satisfaction of all legitimate demands of the flesh and body are an obligation in Islam.

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[1] Joanne E. Hall and B. R. Weaver (eds), *Distributive Nursing Practice: A Systems Approach to Community Health*, pp.85-86.

The significant point of divergence between Islam and all other creeds and cults of the past and present is precisely this emphasis on protecting and promoting *fitrah* i.e., human nature.

The Prophet (peace be on him) expressly forbade celibacy and monasticism. He disapproved continuous and un-interrupted fasting. He declined to allow some of his companions to pray all night without sleeping a wink. He allows one to saving one's life if nothing but pork is available for eating and someone's life if in danger of starvation to death. What is more, the Prophet (peace be on him) himself led a full and eventful life. He married himself and strongly urged his followers to do so. He engaged himself in trade and a variety of material business. He lived as a full and active participant in a socially vibrant community that he himself created and promoted at Madinah. In short, the Prophet (peace be on him) did not sever his link with this world simply because according to his teachings this world has been created for the service of man, while man has been raised as a *Khalifah* to serve his Master and Lord.[1]

This exposition of Islam, the *dinal-fitrah* in its subtleties succinctly has gone at length to show how Islam, fits man so perfectly like his own skin. It is this uniqueness of Islam that steers man away from primrose path but also enables him to achieve perfect health status. The devotional belief in the divine imperative has its own virtues, as Thomas Carlyle once said: "A man lives by believing something not by debating and arguing about many things."

It was Ashley Montagu who pointed that the measure of man's humanity is the extent and intensity of his love for mankind. Islamic sense of philanthropy is truly an expression of that love for humanity. Empathy and philanthropy are areas in the department of social relations where Islam excels over all cultures.

Sense of Philanthropy

Islam inculcates the sense of philanthropy amongst the believers rather than that of misanthropy. It teaches that a Muslim empathises with a fellow Muslim as well as with a non-Muslim. A Muslim is to show kindness to all people irrespective of colour, creed or racial proclivities. This teaching is rooted from Allah's command: "And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want and to the wayfarer" (Bani Isra'il, 17:26).

Islam rekindles and reinforces the spirit of showing kindness to those in want and to wayfarers, i.e. totals strangers to whom a Muslim comes

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[1] MWL Journal, Safar 1423 – April 2002, p. 43

across. According to this sacred and healthful teaching, to give is a divine quality; to take is human. Man succeeds in developing himself who first deserves what he gets, and what he freely gives to others. The Prophet (s.a.w) motivated the practice of giving by saying that "the hand that gives is above the one that receives." A Muslim, therefore, must endeavour to keep his hand above that of others due to his overriding sense of philanthropism. Man can knock down a poor man but to the Muslim his strength lies in lifting up the weak that has helplessly fallen on the ground. He feels elated when he introduces a morsel of food to a hungry and starving man. In Islamic philanthropy no amount is either too little or too much, all depends on the motive behind the action. The teaching is "save yourselves from Hellfire, even if it be with a slice of a date."

However, all acts of philanthropy of whatever degree are conditioned by available resources. There is no merit in spending out of bravado or for idle show. It must be motivated by the deep Islamic spirit of *fisabilillah* and must be given to those who "cannot" as opposed to those who "will not" fend for themselves. Further, extravagant expenses for whatever reason is prohibited. Allah the Most Exalted said, "verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Satans" (*Bani Israil*, 17:27). Many families are ruined by extravagant, ostentatious, and egoistic donations, weddings and funerals. In these cases, the needy are sidelined to fatten the able-bodied beggars, oblige friends and relatives. Hence in charity and philanthropy what should Muslim give or donate? Allah the Most Exalted answers: "...they ask thee what they should spend (in charity). Say (spend what is beyond your needs..." (Baqara, 2:219).

This means that act of charity or philanthropy must be guided by this prophetic injunction: "The best of charity is that which leaves you self – sufficient." Thus a Muslim should not be a miser or a spendthrift. As a member of a "middle nation" he must be moderate in his hospitality; motivated by the inner spirit of *fisabilillah* in the discharge of his responsibility of "live and let live", for the overall health, economic and social progress of humanity.

Further, Islamic sense of altruism and or philanthropy is devoid of arrogance "the grand object of this social etiquette is to cement real brotherhood among the lower Muslims in ranks and positions and to demolish the sense of vanity of the high class gentleman riding on rich couches or conveyances and raise up the position of the lowest street beggars walking in rags and receiving salutes from rich riders", wrote Shaikh Faz-ul-Karim, "thus social distinction, if any, is buried deep and a

true and real brotherhood exists among the members of the grand brotherhood..."[1]

Thus the Holy Qur'an defines social environment most comprehensively several centuries before the concept arose in the 19th century. It calls for social support at one end of the scale, and at the other end of the scale, it stresses the type of relationship to be conducted. According to this teaching real deed of service and kindness proceed not from showing off or from a superior sort of condescension (cf. "whiteman's burden"), but from a frank recognition of our own humility and the real claim before Allah (s.w.t) of all our fellow creatures. For in our mutual needs we are equal before Allah (s.w.t), or perhaps the best of us (as the world sees us) may be worse than the worst of us (from the same point of view). Arrogance is one reason why our deeds or love and kindness do not thrive; another is niggardliness or selfishness. Allah (s.w.t) does not love either the one or the other, for they both proceed from want of love of Allah (s.w.t), or faith in Him. Niggardly is the worldly wise man who not only refuses to spend himself in service, but by example and precept prevents others from doing so, as otherwise he would be made odious by comparison before his fellow creatures. So he either makes virtue of his caution, or hides the gifts which have been given him – wealth, position, talents, etc.[2] Hence the spirit of "live and let live" is an important Islamic legacy to the modern world. Islam places strong emphasis on handshake as a means of fostering love, affection and mutual understanding amongst the members of the society.

Greeting and Handshake

It must be appreciated that social behaviour cannot be divorced from health and personal hygiene because they are all depended upon it. Islamic ethical and social conduct though revealed several centuries ago, are startling in their modernness and appropriateness in our contemporary social settings. They make social habits and dealings mutually interactive and beneficial. The settings also conduce to the individual to expressing his social spirit and aesthetics to the maximum, and to the fullest of satisfaction. It introduced greeting with handshake to increase the scale of warmth of greeting and brotherly love. It is a form of greeting that has been adopted by most people in the world.

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1 Fazl-ul-Karim, *The Ideal World Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh)*, The Book House, Lahore (1935), p. 239.

2 Ibid., pp. 191 - 192

In his book, *Gestures*, Roger E. Axtell, described many categories of gestures and their significance in a wide variety of cultures. Gestures he said provide a dizzying variety of usages and meanings. The variation in meaning he pointed is due to societal, geographical and ethnic influences. The handshakes appear to be the most popular. However, according to the writer the exact origin of the handshake is unclear, citizens of the Roman Empire he said greeted each other with a hand-and-forearm clasp, but some anthropologists believe our handshake of today may be only a couple of years old.[1] The handshake was, however, perfected in the 7th century by the Educator of Mankind.

Today there are many exotic forms of greetings some of them bearing immoral intent and purpose. Greeting is certain manner conveys a secret message, for instance in many countries, a greeting among homosexual men is the shake hands in a very specific and hidden manner: with the middle finger folded down into the palm.[2] Similarly, the writer gave other examples of variations in greetings amongst various peoples. He noted that:

> *Greetings can be downright physical, too, to the point you may want to a wear a football helmet and shoulder pads. Eskimos greet each other by banging the other party with a hand either on the head or shoulders. Polynesian men who are strangers welcome each other by embracing and then rubbing each other's back. Among the Matavai, friends who have been parted for some time scratch each other's head and temples with the tip of a shark's tooth, often drawing blood.*
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> *The Maori tribes people in New Zealand choose even today to greet each other with a gesture that seems to epitomize closeness and friendship. They rub noses, the Eskimos use this same gesture, but with more personal meaning.*
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> *Some East African tribes greet each other by spitting at each other's feet. And for perhaps the most unusual and mysterious greeting, Tibetan tribesmen are said to greet each other quite warmly by sticking out their tongues at each other.*[3]

The simplest and safest form of greeting is the handshake. So that from the innermost heart of each member of the society, *Salam* or peace comes

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1 Roger E. Axtell, *GESTURES, The Dos and Taboos of Body Language Around the World*, John Wiley and Sons, (1991), p. 21
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

out directly to reach the innermost of heart of the other fellow brother to elicit some indescribable soothing and blaming effects, wrought by greeting with peace and blessing as divinely revealed; "say peace be on you" (*An'am*, 6:54). Hence, within the purview of Islamic social intercourse and forms of personal contact, nothing is to be found that is inimical to health or leading to asocial behaviour. Types of contact may influence "contact–transmitted diseases." According to the epidemiologist's point of view, Islamic handshake is the best mode of personal contact:

> *Different methods of greeting such as handshaking, the impulsive kiss, the Latin Abrazo, or the Eskimo rubbing noses are dictated by social custom. The oriental custom of greeting (the* wai, *or shaking hands with oneself) has much to recommend it insofar as health is concerned. Also, sound health reasons support the modern mother who protects her young infant from indiscriminate kissing by affectionate friends and relatives. Occurrence of the several venereal disease is related to cultural and individual habits with respect to sexual intercourse including degree of promiscuity and use of prophylactic devices. Finally, in nearly all cultures and societies the play habits of young children result in highly intimate interpersonal contact which greatly facilitates the spread of disease agents of many types, including the mites which cause scabies, the streptococci which cause impetigo, numerous respiratory viruses, polioviruses, and even pin worms.*[1]

Islam prohibits any intimate interpersonal body contact with a child or an adult, unless such a contact is made within the confine of the law or is dictated by absolute necessity. Especially body contacts that have sensual or sexual underpinning, the Islamic *Law of Halal and Haram* has specified how to conduct every personal contact. It warns that one should not come near *zina* and other sexual immoralities which we know too well today that through such contacts deadly diseases are transmitted. Today a bizarre group of body contacts are practised some of which have some sexual and or homosexual overtures, *albeit* in the forms of body language. And it encourages frequent greeting and smiles to obviate the rising rancour in the society and recommends the method of handshake amongst the males. The Prophet (s.a.w) says: "When one of you meets your Muslim brother, you should greet him and shake his hand."[2]

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[1] Fox Hall. Elveback, *Epidemiology; Man and Disease*, p. 86
[2] S. M. Sohofi, *Social Relations in Islam*, p. 11

Greeting and handshake have today become a universal standard. Handshake is the most popular gesture in the world, even though it has its Do's and taboos amongst the various peoples, Axtell who studied gestures and their variations around the world wrote:

> *Psychologists regard the handshake as one of the most powerful of all tactile contacts, so may be there is something to be learned from the French and the Bolivians.*
>
> *In Southern Europe and Central and South America, the handshake will usually be warmer and probably a bit longer, frequently accompanied by left hand touching the other person's forearm, elbow, or even lapel.*
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> *A version popular in American politics is to shake hands using the free hand to cover the grip. On the scale of warmth of a greeting, this gesture supposedly adds several degrees of closeness and implied unity.*
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> *In the Soviet Union, good male friends with start with a strong, firm handshake and then continue forward into the so-called "bear hug" so often identified with that country. But, just to demonstrate that common customs do not necessarily cross common boundaries, neighbouring Finns firmly reject bear hugging. "Don't do it here," they warm, "we don't hug or kiss or have bodily contact with strangers like the Russians do"*
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> *In Latin American countries, the hug is called the Abrazo, which means "embrace." It is often accompanied by a couple of hearty claps on the back. Most North Americans, Northern Europeans, and Orientals find any such touching or hugging very uncomfortable.*[1]

Islamic handshake is also the most hygienic and is devoid of transmission of diseases. It buoys up human social spirit and ignites a deep sense of brotherhood. Salutation forms the first step in the establishment of good relations in a Muslim society especially when it is preceded by saying: *Assalamu alaikum,* i.e., peace be unto you, it implies a deep sense of belonging and unity. It is amongst the males accompanied by a handshake. This was stressed by the educator of mankind when he said: "In

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[1] Roger E. Axtell, *GESTURES*, pp. 23 -24

your meeting and encounter, your salutation and greeting will be complete when you offer to shake hands."[1]

A modern epidemiologist claimed that this has much to recommend it insofar as health is concerned. Islamic worship in all its ramifications, protect, man from diseases in the world and perdition in the next world. This recommendation may appear simple but it has a profound impact on health and social relation among people. Personal hygiene cannot be complete without hygienic household chores.

Islam is a culture where worship improves health status. It prohibits any action that infringes or potentially likes to infringe on human health and social well-being. It fights idleness to reduce its social menace and recommends work to encourage professionalism necessary for societal growth.

Attitude to Work

To understand the attitude, first let introduce the word Umran. Ibn Khaldun used the term Umran which is derived from the three letters verb *amara*, which is dictionary defines to live long, to thrive prosper flourish, flower, peopled, populated, civilised, cultivated. The word umran has been translated as inhabited ness, activity, bush-ling life, thriving, flourishing, prosperity, civilization, building, edifice and structured umran is a continuous. Progressive process that mankind naturally achieves through cooperation and striving.[2] Work, which is defined as employment, profession vocation, livelihood responsibility. Work in this context is umran or striving for the means of livelihood. According Ibn Khaldun:

> *Human society is a must. Philosophers express this by saying that man is political by nature, meaning he cannot do without social life which is civic in nature. To explain... man cannot survive without food... the capacity of any one individual is inadequate, (there is a need) to grind, knead, and bake food, they also need craftsmen such as blacksmith, carpenters, and potters. Individual also need the help of their fellow men for defence... from aggressive animals, and from aggression of other human beings... (thus) the society of men is achieved and umran is spread.*[3]

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1 Roger E. Axtell, *GESTURES*, pp. 23 -24
2 *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, p.52.
3 S. M. Sohafi, *Social Relations in Islam*, p.11.

Man, therefore, establishes umran in order to satisfy his basic needs as Abdullah al-Ahsan explained. This means every man must work not only to satisfy his basic need but to gradually develop and activate his rational mind for better living, Ibn Khaldun said:

> *Crafts, especially arithmetic and writing, bestow a certain mind on those who practice them... rational soul exists in man only potentially. Its emergence from potentiality to actuality is depicted by the rise of new sciences and perception derived first from the world of senses, then what is acquired afterwards by the speculative power, untie it becomes active perception and pure intellect.*[1]

Allah, the Exalted created and bestowed men with different gifts and talents so that their professional contributions compliment each for the betterment of the individual and his society. Thus Islam makes working for the means of sustenance from Allah's Bounties an obligatory duty. Everybody must work to satisfy his basic needs and aspirations for the collective progress of his society. Islamic injunction provides the deriving force for work ethics, which is therefore, a cultural imperative.

Islamic culture encourages work to earn livelihood and prohibits idleness and joblessness which breed crimes and asocial behaviour. Man is urged to seek for Allah's bounties throughout the earth. He must endeavour to acquire the skills and the know-how to gain the control and mastery over the natural resources in nature, and to profit from them. The abundance of these resources in their variety of forms is from Allah (s.w.t). It is, therefore, the duty of man to profit maximally from this grace and favour. This is emphasised in *Surah Mulk,* where Allah (s.w.t) says:

> *It is He who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse ye through its tracts and enjoy of the sustenance which He furnishes. (Q 67:15)*

In this culture everybody must work to earn his livelihood, without unnecessary pretension. The pretext of devoting life to worship or absolute trust in the Most High to avoid self-actualisation through hard work is unacceptable in Islam. For it outlawed monasticism to allow for intellectual growth and development that are necessary for the society to move forward. Thus work is compulsory because it is a means through which the individual as well as the society could become successful. As in the

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[1] *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, pp.53-54

common dictum that says "attitude is the principal determinant of altitude", Islam provides the best attitude to attain the highest altitude in all things. It, therefore, holds the vital secrets of success. It abhors mental laziness and begging. Islamic charity and philanthropy are aimed at even distribution of wealth to help the weak with the financial assistance to engage in any meaningful enterprises. And it argues quite correctly that without work there is no societal progress and growth. The individual success is the determinant of that of his society; it hinges on three important bearings; spiritual, the mundane and the role model. They all combine to make you successful in the affairs of this world and in the next world.

It is an ideology where the mundane and the spiritual operate simultaneously, one is not relegated at the expense of the other. Both are important; like the two sides of a coin they constitute the lifestyle of the Muslim. The Prophet (s.a.w) as a universal role model provides the precepts and the practical examples or traditions. His tradition offers three types of attitude that determine the altitude that one can successfully achieve in the real sense of the word. The universal role model shows attitude to Allah (s.w.t), attitude to life and attitude to work. In order to cultivate the proper attitude to work, he condemns begging and defines the beneficiaries of charity as those who cannot work as opposed to those who would not work. He said: "charity is *halal* neither for the rich nor for the able-body" (al–Tirmidhi). He also emphasizes that there is dignity in work and indignity in begging. He inculcates the spirit of hard work, which is necessary for any successful achievements. Today we have recognized the healthful benefits of attitude to work, which include: it is a cure for the plaque called worthlessness; it is the gateway to all round fortune; it is the most effective physical fitness device; every delightful worker lives a healthy life but idleness makes the body system to decay through idle hands; work is the all time cure for lack of penury and if you must win, you must work. It saves you from the indignity of obsequious living. But work without play makes jack a dull boy; work must be accompanied by some recreation. This is validly recognised in Islam too. It permits you to legally rejuvenate your heart through some play and recreation.

Rejuvenate your Heart with Music

"Islam is a practical religion. It does not float in the stratosphere of imaginary ideals", Al-Qardawi wrote, "but remains with the human being on the ground of realities and day to day concerns." He continued, "It does not regard people as angels but accepts them as mortals who eat food and

walk in the market-place..."[1] Islam as we have been saying all along is a healthful culture that values and protects human needs and desires. Therefore, it gives guides as to how they could be safely satisfied in the best way. It allows and recognizes that Allah (s.w.t) created man with the need to eat and drink, need to relax and to enjoy themselves. Thus there is time for everything it allows recreation and plays that is permissible within the confines of *halal* and *haram*. So that the heart gets rejuvenated, the body often demands some physical drilling. Permissible sports include; foot racing, wrestling, and archery, horse-riding, hunting, singing and music, etc. It could be seen pointedly that most of the permissible sports increase the strength, endurance, reflexes and the mental performance of the Muslims.

The world has not been created for sports, especially the creation of man the quintessence of Allah's creation, the *Ashraful Makhluqat*. He was created and tailor-made for the worship of Allah Most High. Time for him is to be spent in *Ibadah*, the essence or *raison de'tre* of his creation. Each and every second of his time must be spent for this purpose. But Islam is an ideology that integrates health in worship. It makes the lifestyle congenial to the simultaneous achievements of this life and afterlife both in mutual and complementary terms. Thus recreation and play that are performed within the purview of *halal* and *haram* are considered acts of worship. Play and recreation are kept within the theter because they could be injurious to health either physically or spiritually or both. Hence a Muslim is dissuaded from engaging in sports that are useless and in those that could conspire against the spiritual or social ascent of man. According to the renowned Islamic jurist and writer, among the entertainments which may comfort the soul, please the heart and refresh the ear is singing. Islam permits singing under the condition that it should not be in any way obscene or harmful to Islamic morals. There is no harm in its being accompanied by music which is not exciting.[2]

Music and language are uniquely human. A world without either would be hard to imagine. Both are essential to human survival and progress. Music as simple as innocuous as it appears; it could be a deadly weapon depending on the intent and continents of the music employed. Century's earlier ancient Greek writings claimed that musical training is more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into

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1 Yusuf al-Qardawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited*. p 290.
2 Ibid., p. 300.

the inward places of the soul.[1] For this reason, music could affect man adversely. The truthfulness of this claim has been seen by parents who have observed their teenagers becoming more sullen and un-cooperative after feeding on a steady diet of heavy metal music. It was also seen during the 1930's and 1940's in Germany when the Nazis used stirring march music to help prepare large crowds to listen to Adolf Hitler mesmerizing speeches.[2]

This is one side of music, the other side of music, however, was described by William Congreve about 300 years ago in his *Hymn to Harmony*. He was quoted saying: Music alone with sudden charms can bind the wandering sense, and calm the troubled mind.[3] Although there are benefits that can be attributed to the power of music, however, it seems that dangers of music have outweighed its benefits. In his, *Ihya Ulumiddin*, Imam Al-Ghazalli, a great Islamic writer and thinker wrote about Music and Ecstasy with such a wonderful graphic presentation that is worth quoting. The great thinker wrote:

> *Heart is the seat of secret wealth and it is the invaluable mine of jewels. There lies in it the most valuable jewel, just as fire lies secretly in stoke and iron. It lies hidden in such a way as water lies in the lowest bottom of earth. There is no means of waking it up from sleep without sweet sounds. There is no means of waking it up from sleep without the door of ear. The feelings that lie hidden in heart are brought out by sweet, melodious and rhymed sounds.*
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> *These do not come out of heart without movement as what is in cauldron does not fall without being heated. Melodious song takes out what is hidden in heart and creates a wonderful feeling. When heart is controlled by songs, they take out from it its qualities and guilt. So it is necessary to discuss songs in the light of the teaching of Islam.*[4]

To discuss songs or music in the light of the teaching of Islam, there is the need to exercise extra caution because what music is today is quite different from what it was yesterday. Tomorrow the influence of music

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1 *Awake!* Magazine, October 8, (1999), p. 3
2 Ibid., p. 1
3 Ibid.
4 Iman Al-Ghazzalis *Ihya Ulumiddin. The Book of World Usages* Vol. 2, transl. By Maulana Fazlul Karim, Hasbunallah Printing & Publishing House Offa Kwara state Nigeria (1971) p. 182.

may entirely take a different pattern altogether. But all in all there is a common denominator which links almost all music together. *Surah Luqman* has wisely declared it vividly:

> *But there are among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead men from the path of Allah and through ridicule (on the path): [Luqman, 31:6].*

Music today has become a double edged sword; it must be used very carefully especially in the light of globalisation and its impact. Today music is believed to be a good way of having recreation and play. But it is used as a powerful weapon against the intellectual growth of people especially of the youth. This pernicious weaponry is targeted against the youths of all nations, when a nation's youth are given to music, which usually goes along with wine or drug, they invariably become addicted to it or to all. So truly music intoxicates, when it is combined with alcohol the lethal effects are tremendous. They, as a result, become stunted in growth in intellectual pursuits. Music demurs cognitive function and impairs seriously with the process of memory and internalisation of data. The cerebral cortex, especially the temporal lobes, is involved in memory. The memories produced by temporal stimulation are "flashed back" completely, as if they were relays of a segment of experience. However, addiction to sensual, sexual and nonsensical music impairs seriously this cognitive function of the brain.

Evidently, the music our children listen to endanger their minds, bodies and most importantly their souls. It evokes sexual instinct and facilitates sexual engagements, which opens up the gate of numerous ills and societal degeneration. Sexual frivolity becomes rampant as a result and also commodified women which are used as chattels or mere objects of sexual gratifications by men of unsullied behaviour. The journal, *Sex Role,* agrees with this conclusion, stating:

> *"A recent study... found that the combination of being from an unsatisfactory family environment and having had heavy exposure to music videos was significantly associated with sexually permissive attitudes and behaviour among adolescent females." The graphic violence and sexually explicit lyrics of some rap music caused one U.S district judge to rule that a certain rap album was "obscene by community standards."*[1]

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[1] *Awake!* October 8, (1999), p. 4

This claim was validated by the fact the journal *Adolescence* reached the conclusion that "both the adolescents and their parents report significantly more turmoil in the lives of the adolescents who listen to heavy metal and rap." Such turmoil is linked with "aggressive and destructive behaviours" and low academic achievement.[1] When a nation glamourizes sex in all its ramifications, it attracts to itself visitation of plaque. What modern music does is to fan the flame of sexual passion in both sexes leading to many immoral acts both heterosexual and homosexual manifestations. The saviour of human civilisation had warned several centuries earlier when he said:

> *When fornication is rife among the people and they become promiscuous also, Allah (s.w.t) sends plaque to visit that people and ravages their towns or villages, involving them in such troubles that were unknown to their predecessors (Mishkat).*

Today we are witnesses to the veracity of Prophet's claims, as HIV and AIDS (the modern plaque) devastate millions of people, ravaging towns and villages, leaving deaths and miseries in their wake. In this pandemic disease the modern world with its highly vaunted sophistication in medicine is helpless as there appears to be no cure in sight for now! The campaign against the spread of this deadly sexually transmitted disease is the Islamic injunction: "Abstain from illicit sex." Consequently, disease and misery as well as the devastations wreaked by this 'modern plaque' have forced many to change of behaviour. Many people both Muslims and non-Muslims are today forced to comply with the Qur'anic injunction: "Nor come nigh to adultery." This is the preventive measure adopted by all nations as AIDS helplessly devastate the world. Indicating pointedly the medical benefits in Islamic worship.

Although music is a part of our daily lives, it is now a lethal weapon used by Satan himself to attack and ruin people of all nations. This avowed enemy of man, uses music as a means to an end, this end in-view is diabolical: "to lead to perdition each and sundry." This choice of music as a deleterious weapon against mankind suggests strongly that music has inherent quality in it that can make or mar man, depending the intent of its use. It then becomes necessary to examine the power of music.

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[1] *Awake!* October 8, (1999), p. 4

Power Of Music

Music exerts a powerful influence on man through three-fold combinations: Its musical element, emotional makeup of man and language to control his reaction. It is with this combination that music impacts positively or negatively. Now we shall examine each one in turn to see how each exerts its influence on the human psyche.

Musical Elements

Music is characterised by its elements, which include tone or timbre of element. What gives each instrument its unique voice, is its tone or harmonics of varying strength. Composers use these qualities to create certain sonic effects to stir the emotions of the listener. The first we become familiar with is *rhythm* – perhaps while we are still in the womb, listening to our mother's heartbeat. Hence, it may be no coincidence that most people appeal to musical tempo of ranges between 70 and 100 beats per minute – the same range as the average heart rate of a healthy adult. At least this is what is suggested in the journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills*.[1]

It is from this standpoint that the Qur'anic recitation impacts positively to baby in utero because it exerts a form of vibration or rhythm that is beneficial to health. It is for this and other considerations that Qur'anic recitation or listening to its *tilawah* is recommended to pregnant women especially in their third trimester of pregnancy.

Now returning to musical elements, it is known that five elements are contained in sound and music: pitch, duration, tone colour, and volume. Each affects the whole person – mind, body and emotions – in an individual way. So responses to music depend entirely on the person who listens to or produces the music. But the specific, standard effect of music that is valuable in therapy is its ability to integrate and unify the spheres of mind, body, and emotion within man.[2]

Other characteristic of music includes harmony, discord and melody harmony produces pleasing sounds, while discord produces harsh ones so that these elements compliment each other. A piece of music that sounds harmonious probably has more discord in it that could be imagined. The constant interaction of harmony and discord provides a vacillating, though mostly imperceptible, rise of tension, which finds its release in our emotions. This gentle emotional rocking is soothing, whereas discordant music alone can grate on the nerves and evoke unpleasant feelings – much

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1 *Awake!* October 8, (1999), p. 6
2 B. Hafen and K. Frandsen, *An A – Z of Alternative Medicine*, p. 38

as scraping finger nails on a slate or chalkboard would. On the other hand, if music is base only on harmony, it can be boring.[1] Melody is the tuneful arrangement of single notes in succession. According to some authorities, the word is derived from the Greek word *me'los*, meaning "song." Dictionary defines it as sweet music, any sweet sound.[2] Music has the ability to penetrate different levels of consciousness as it influences the human brain.

Music and the Brain

It has been postulated that music is processed in the right side of the brain, which largely with feelings and emotions. As a result of which it evokes spontaneous reactions from listeners. According to journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills* quoted as stating: "Music has the power to create feelings and emotions in a quick and effective manner. What in a book would require many sentences for description..., in music can often be conveyed by just one measure or one chord."[3]

Adverse Effects of Music

Today, unquestionably, music can affect minds and hearts, and like alcohol it can be used to manipulate them either for good or for bad. However, music is used by the corrupt and evil people as a deadly tool. It has been keenly observed:

> *The music industry today is a multibillion – dollar business. Popular musicians and their promoters are making a great deal of money. Yet, it is a fact that unhappiness, premature death, and suicide have marked the lives of some music is morally, emotionally, and spiritually debasing and can lead to violent antisocial behaviour.*[4]

Although it is said that when music "speaks" our emotions "listen" this calls extra caution to be exercised in the use and selection of the music we use or allowed to be used. This is because of the "why and how" music influence our emotions. To under the why and how music affects our behaviour is necessary and exceedingly essential. The Awake Magazine throws some considerable insights into "why music affects us" as it answers the 'why and how' does music speak to our emotions. It stated that

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1 *Awake!* October 8, (1999), p. 38
2 Ibid., p. 6
3 Ibid., p. 7
4 Ibid., p. 9

first we must understand: (i) the musical elements themselves and the way that our brain processes them; (ii) our emotional makeup and cultural backgrounds, which influence our reaction to music and; iii) language, which can also affect our reaction.[1] As sentimental music is said to fan the flame of sexual emotion, it is a powerful means of evoking passion even on telephone.

Phone Sex and Music Sex

This approach is of considerable importance this because to reiterate music can affect hearts and minds either for good or for bad. Further, some studies have shown direct links between antisocial behaviour and certain types of music. In support of this *thesis* the magazine quoted *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, which stated pointedly:

> *There is some evidence to suggest that viewing rock videos has the same effect as viewing pornography in that men who were shown violent rock videos expressed more callous and antagonistic attitudes toward women than did men who were shown non – videos.*

This effect is not limited to men. Women can also be affected, too that same report adds: "Men and women alike may begin to accept the negative messages these songs present concerning women's lack of worth."[2]

Centuries earlier, the Glorious Qur'an had warned against adultery and fornication, for they have severe repercussions to the individual and to the society in general. The admonition is timeless and salutary. Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils) [Bani Israil, 17:32].

This injunction points strongly that not only should adultery be avoided as a sin but any approach or temptation to it should be avoided. Further, amongst the categories of Zina or adultery classified by the Educator of mankind "Zina of the voice" was included. Today, the world has revolutionalised this form of sex into what has been described to as "phone sex." Music is today, one of the most importance means of sexual temptation or evocation but also a means of sexual gratification through music or telephone conversation. Today, "phone sex" or "music sex" is a means of quick, easy and sensual expression of sexual gratification that is in vogue, and is popular amongst both male and female. Similarly, the Zina

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1 *Awake!* October 8, (1999), p. 5
2 Ibid., p. 4

of the eye or "visual sex" has now been proven to be effective such that "viewing rock videos has the same effect as viewing pornography." Undeniably, music today is used to glamorize sex to the extent that the divine injunction of "nor come nigh to adultery" is flouted with impunity. This, however, is not with all its perils.

Human life international (HLI), in its video review: *Sound and Fury*, had, laid bare the frightening truth behind much of the music that our children are listening to. It stated:

> *Hombergs takes views on an eye-opening journey through the history and study of music. He backs up his statements with various reference materials. He quotes the philosopher Plato, who said so long age, "when the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city quake." Holmberg even points out biblical passages that warn man of how music can be used to destroy souls. Watching this video helps viewers to understand the ways that much of the new, popular rock music glamorizes sex, violence and the occult. Some even goes as far as to morbidly glamorize death.*[1]

Music has a powerful influence upon emotion owing to which it quickly arose emotions of a variety intended. This the because of the interaction between seeing and hearing and the response to each of these. It could be discerned from this standpoint the Prophet's prohibition of women exposing their adornments and or vulgar in speech were based on a sound medical scientific ground. The melodious voice of a woman can evoke sexual arousal without seeing her. So that the "Zina of the voice" e.g. the phone sex in vogue or the "Zina of the eye", as expressed in pornography or in beauty fashion parade are prohibited in Islam. The prohibition to emphasise is based on scientific reason. Thus music causes the glamorization of sex, violence and occultism, and some even goes as far as to morbidly glamorize death. It carries each specific message in the pulsating rhythm and repeated melody.

How so? Well, some of the titles alone create images. Further, the kind of music itself is often the message. What message is being conveyed? One youth journal says: "It appears to be an imagery of power, potency and sexual conquest." Another says: "the basic themes… are extreme rebellion, violence, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, perversion and satanism.[2]

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1 *Human Life International* (HLI), p. 17
2 *Awake!* October 8 (1999), p.8

The music industry today is a multi-billion dollar business mainly because it popularises sexual frivolities in a decadent culture that has become almost global.

Positive Side of Music

However, some claim that while there is much that is wrong and bad in music, it can enrich one's life and bring a measure of joy and contentment. While others even claim that music is good for health and advocate for music therapy.

The permissibility of music and singing is contentious and a subject of a heated debate amongst the Islamic scholars. This is due to the well established adverse effects of music. But Islam is not an archaic or anti – social ideology. It takes what is useful and necessary and discards what is harmful and unnecessary, in the overall interests of mankind. Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qardawi, the contemporary Islamic scholar and jurist clarified the position of singing and music from the standpoint of Shariah. He stated pointedly:

> *Among the entertainments which may comfort the soul, please the heart and refresh the ear is singing. Islam permits singing under the condition that it is not to be in any way obscene or harmful to Islamic morals. There is no harm in its being accompanied by music which is not exciting.*
>
> *In order to create an atmosphere of joy and happiness, singing is recommended on festive occasions such as the days of Eid, weddings and wedding feasts, births, aqiqat (the celebration of the birth of a baby by the slaughter of sheep), and on the return of the traveller.*[1]

Singing and music in Islam are not given the full rein to vulgar expressions and to glamorise sex or obscene behaviours. Their contents and the occasions under which they are formed can either be lawful or prohibited. Thus both are to be distinguished from western types of music and singing, where their primary aim is to evoke sexual desires and fantasies, a condition that worsens the permissive society. Thus from this standpoint, Shaykh al-Qardawi had clearly and precisely provided us with what singing and music are and what they are not in the light of Shariah. And to these rulings Imam al-Ghazzali added:

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[1] Yusuf Al- Qardawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, p. 300.

> *So from what has been stated above, songs sometimes become lawful and sometimes unlawful according to the circumstances of each case. Sometimes it becomes undesirable. It is unlawful for those youths whose sexual passion is strong as it increases their hidden vices in their minds. It is not illegal for those who enjoy good moral songs and it is commendable for those religious persons who are engrossed in divine love. God knows best.*[1]

The problems associated with illicit music are many sided and deleterious. Yet, music, like alcohol with all its harmful effects, is being popularised due to economic factor. Music industry turns out billions of dollars annually from the production and distribution of a variety of musical entertainments. The vested interests of the industry and that of the government in the West down plays' the pernicious effects of music. Depending on its intent and content music can be a lethal weapon. It is only in Islamic culture that such discernment is observed in relation to singing and music. But in the Western culture the contents of songs in vogue are usually vulgar expressions, sexual innuendoes and graphical illustrations of sex and sensuality. And the music is such designed as to stimulate sexual ecstasy especially when combined with dancing nakedly or partly naked involving males and females with overwhelming sexual passion or libidinal energy. Thus the trio combination of music, singing and dancing generate such an overwhelming sexual ecstasy, that sexual intercourse becomes inevitable. Even in ordinary circumstances, ecstasy sometimes can become so strong that one cannot restrain oneself and so act contrary to one's habits.

Then globalisation comes like a cyclone sweeping away morality in many nations posing serious threats to the Islamic Ummah. In view of this potential danger facing the Muslims it is important to bring into focus the view of Shaykh Al-Munajjid whose thrust of argument is decisive as it is compelling. He said *inter alia*:

> *Music intoxicates more than wine as said by scholars such as Ibn Qayyim and others. The prohibition becomes greater with songs and voices of singers and pop stars. The seriousness aggravates when the wordings are an expression of love, passion and description of lovely things. This is the reason why scholars say songs are conduit of fornication. Music and songs are agents of temptation especially in this age. It is sad to see that music is*

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[1] Al-Ghazzali, *the Book of Worldly Usages*, p. 202.

heard in many things such as watches, bells, toys computers and some telephone equipment. Eradicating this requires great determination, and only Allah's Aid.[1]

The Islamic scholar lays bare some of the contents of globalisation, the music being played today and popularised through the most sophisticated way as pointed out contain glamorisation of sex on the one hand and celebration of Satan on the other. This is the danger pop music poses to the Muslim youths, who might be worshippers of devil but are made to celebrate his name wittingly and unwittingly. This is because most of the celebrated musicians and film stars profess Satanism so they use musical means to spread their ideology to all nations.

Thus in order to establish the culture of "sex worship" or *Freudism* many devices are made available to listen to various music through airwaves including the use of earphone. In this way, music does not only make the youths permissive but thwart their attention away from faith, scholarship and intellectual pursuits.

The youths of developing nations have already been caught with the bugs of music loving, illicit sexual gratification and total aversion to work and studies. And with the introduction of sexuality education in primary and secondary schools, with sex itself as a subject of increased coverage by all the media, with explicit movies, which include adult and child pornographies, television and compact disc videos depicting sexual and homosexual intercourse; and with pornographic magazines and newspapers illustrating the acts of coitus, made readily available at affordable cost to our youths, *Jahiliyya* period has returned with full force and with far worse barbarism. In this age of sensation, one could only be saved through Islamic worship. Further, in this deluge of sexual permissiveness Islam is the only Noah's Ark and it is high time to get on board. It shapes your behaviour and makes you a member of *Homo sapiens* in the real sense of the word and not a beast of bestiality in this age of sensation. There is for us to be wise, to seriously reflect on *Suratul Luqman* and to start doing something about it right away. Whatever, be the situation it his the right culture that uplift man to the loftiest heights. And that culture is that of Islam.

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1 Muhammad Saalih Al-Munajid, *Unheeded Unlawful things which people should be cautious of Islam*, p. 131

CHAPTER SIX

CULTURE AND ASCENT OF MAN

At outset we must rid ourselves of the long established mindset that progress of civilisation must have been Greek in origin and in continuity in one form or the other. And that modern civilisation must have ben deeply rooted in Greek culture and that civilisational progress lies in following the footsteps of this heathen ideology. This view is, however, both fallaciously and profoundly misleading. A twentieth-century historian of science, George Sarton, however, had observed the contrary. In his *Introduction to the History of Science,* he stated pertinently:

> *We might be tempted to conclude that if mankind had walked humbly and constantly in their (Greek) footsteps, the progress of civilisation would have been considerably accelerated. But if we did this, we should have shown that we did not entirely understand the nature of progress. It is undoubtedly a function of the increase of positive knowledge... Greek civilisation ended in failure, not only because of the lack of intelligence but because of the lack of character of morality.*[1]

This question of character and morality constitute the true nature of progress. Human intelligence with morality is useless. Human moral, however, is so important that the office of the Prophet (s.a.w) arose only to raise human moral to the highest perfection. Thus, the centre of gravity of ascent of man lies in Din-al-Fitrah, it combines intelligence and morality.

Man is a gregarious animal, a social being who is a part of a larger society. In his daily and continuous interaction with his society, he influences what happens in that society and is himself also influenced by the events in his society. Thus in this interaction between man and his community he is affected by the cultural milieu of that community. The culture or worldview in which he lives, directly which affects his health both positively and negatively. What is culture and how cultural factors affect people's health need to be closely examined.

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[1] *The Islamic Journal of Islamic Social Science*, Vol. 19, Spring (2002), No. 2, p.52.

Sir Edward Taylor, the British anthropologist defined culture as the "complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, art, law, religion customs, languages, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society." When what constitutes culture is closely examined, each cultural item can impact positively or negatively on health. However, when these items are mirrored to reflect Islamic culture very sharply most of these items could be seen to improve health in many ways. Rene Du Boise (1981) defined health as the ability to function. Islamic ideology or lifestyle contributes significantly to this ability. Hence Islam evolved an ideal culture that is not only health friendly but also pro – ascent of man in all the facets of his existence – spiritual, social, economic, health, intellectual, etc.

Functions of Culture

Ascent is defined as a path or way to the top of something. In this context Islamic culture is considered a means or the only veritable means of man's ascent in all the facets of his endeavour, because it is the only culture that engenders progress through "development" and "modernisation." The definitions of these words are themselves rooted in values and norms. Islam as we have seen is the only worldview that is truly progressive in all directions of human affairs. According to Professor Ali A. Mazrui, a distinguished international scholar, stated that culture is relevant for development because of the seven functions which it plays in society.[1] Islam provides all these functions and a lot of others.

First, it functions as *senses of perception* and influences how people view themselves and their environment. The Qur'an and Sunnah provide the perfect and most ideal spectacles with which the Muslims perceived themselves and others and positively influence both the social as well as the physical environment. Secondly, it is a culture, which serves as a *spring of motivation*. Professor Mazrui noted that what people respond to as incentives or disincentives for certain patterns of behaviour is a phenomenon which is greatly influenced by culture. The pursuit of science by school children needs particular motivation. The *work ethic* is very often a product of such cultural configurations as Max Weber's concept of "the protestant ethic" and the more recent phenomenon of work – a holistic behaviour among Japanese executives.[2]

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1 Ali. A. Mazrui. *The African Renaissance Centre for Black and African Arts and Civil.* (CBAAC) (2000) p. 4.

2 Ibid., p. 5

Islamic culture provides all the necessary driving force for the acquisition of knowledge as well as that of work ethics. The motivations for both are outstanding. For example, the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) said: "An hour of meditation is better than sixty years of acts of worship." A Muslim is motivated to work hard and to be persistent in good actions. This is because according to the Great Arabian: "the best of men is he from who good accrueth to humanity." Evidently, the work ethics of a Muslim as dictated by his culture is unsurpassed. In this worldview work ethic is a cultural imperative. "If science progresses by a lot of thought", said Professor Mazrui, "technology advances by a lot of labour."[1] It was due to the combination of thought, reflection or meditation and hard labour, which Islam purveyed, that enabled it to establish the modern age. Thus with the advent of Islam the ascendancy of man in the spheres of science, literature and socio – economics had escalated and continued to escalate severalfold.

Thirdly, culture serves as a *standard* of judgement. What is right or wrong, what is virtuous or evil, what is beautiful or ugly are all conditioned by culture. In the department of judgement and dissemination of social justice, Islam had established a perfect system yet unequalled. The science of *Halal* and *Haram* provides the excellent criteria for judgement. The evolution of Islamic standard of judgment was perhaps predicted by Cicero, the great Roman statesman and orator several centuries ago. He said:

> *There is in fact a true law namely right reason, which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men and is unchangeable and eternal, it will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law eternal and unchangeable binding all times and upon all people.*

This law Cicero spoke about is the Shariah Law. In fact, the great Roman statesman had vividly described its characteristics; a law based on reason and in accord with nature; not a respecter of person, place and time; and it is timeless. Thus when the Prophet of Nature came with a Natural Religion, he brought the Law to mankind to bind them in perfect harmony *sine die*. This natural religion is a faith of science that is founded on reason which Cicero described as the "right reason." Without a standard judgement and dissemination of social justice without fear or favour there would not have been the ascent of man. But for the ascendancy of man in

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[1] Ali. A. Mazrui, *The African Renaissance Centre for Black and African Arts and Civil.* (CBAAC) (2000), p. 7

his spiritual, intellectual and social dimensions the Shariah Law or the Right Reason was revealed to the Greatest Prophet of all times. This became very imperative because the previously established human systems decayed rapidly bringing chaos and collapse to civilisations.

Islamic culture established a standard judgement as well as an internal mechanism to ensure the dissemination of social justice that is necessary for the ascent of man. It demands that every Muslim must speak out and not keep silent in the face of tyranny. "He who remains silent about the truth", said the Prophet (s.a.w), "is a dumb evil." The Saviour of human civilization made these actions mandatory upon every Muslim. He declared that: "Whoever sees wrong being done must change it – with his hand, if he can, or else with his tongue or his heart."

This means that it is an obligatory duty upon every Muslim to fight tyranny in any form whatever, with his hand (with the use of force) if possible, in critically campaigning against it (scurrilous attacks) through every means of publicity. The third option is to hate it completely, i.e. fighting it with his heart. Thus through this arm system of justice corruption in the land will be reduced to the barest minimum.

In the fourth function of culture Mazrui viewed it in the context of its role as the *basis of stratification*. He pointed out that rank, caste and class are all profoundly conditioned by, if not created by culture and how high does the culture evaluate scientists and scholars. Islamic culture *ab initio* repudiated the traditional Hindu caste system. It reinforced the gender identity and sex role. It clearly specified that the male is unlike the female. Although men and women have different anatomy, physiology and sex hormones, there is no inferiority in those differences.

They are both equal in the sight of Allah (s.w.t). Further, although men and women have rights over each other, they have been allotted different duties, i.e. sex roles. Gender distinction is sacrosanct in Islam so it cannot be sublimated or effaced. In spiritual matters, however, gender distinction does not count as both males and females are equal in the sight of Allah (s.w.t). The best amongst them in this respect is the most pious. Thus Islam is devoid of any chauvinism of whatever type, e.g. male or female chauvinism, etc. This tendency demurs the process of ascent of man in many ways.

It stratifies the society according to the learned and unlearned and places high premium on the former. Knowledge is of high cardinal importance and its acquisition is made compulsory upon male and female. Thus knowledge is a *since qua non of Islamic* culture. Its acquisition is not only obligatory but it is the only escalator of the ascent of man in various dimensions. The

Educator of mankind put it eloquently: "With knowledge man rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection in the next."[1]

The spirit of Islam is that which motivates and provides the powerful driving force for man to achieve his or her aspirations through learning. The Noble Prophet (s.a.w) said: "He dies not who gives to learning." This imperishable statement was made over 14 centuries ago but its impact and importance are boundless and timeless. It was and still is a potent stimulus of intellectual growth across cultures. The importance of acquisition of knowledge, stressed by Islam remains unequalled. The imperative of learning in Islamic culture also remains unexampled. It was summed up by the Great Teacher of humanity this way: "It is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night than to pray the whole night. To spend more time in learning is better than more time in praying."

Evidently, it was this ideological relationship with scholarship and learning that paved the way for intellectual growth of the early Muslims; and put them head and shoulder above other nations in dissemination and acquisition of knowledge. Further it was for this reason that the Arabs hitherto, the underdogs of history emerged in the 7th century as primary teachers of Europe as well as masters of the world. The Prophet of Islam was himself asked to read "by his Creator and also to pray for more knowledge"; "O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge" (*Ta Ha*, 20:114).

Islam stratifies the society on the basis of knowledge. The Holy Qur'an grades the individuals on the basis of knowledge and the acceptance of faith. The Amazing Revelation states:

> *Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places hope in the Mercy of his Lord – (like one who does not)?*

Say:

> *"Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition. (Zamar, 39:9).*

Islam and ignorance, therefore, share no common ground. It is considered an anathema in the House of Islam. Even amongst the believers

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[1] *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 361

learned men hold a higher status, because of their fear of Allah (s.w.t). The Prophet (s.a.w), compared men of knowledge to guiding stars in the pitch of darkness. He said: "The example of scholars in this world is like the stars in the sky that guide over land and sea in the darkness."[1]

The impetus given to learning and scholarship progressed as a result of religious expediency. This driving force gave the early Muslims the ascendancy to and mastery of all the branches of knowledge. The impact of this culture on the ascent of man was and still is all–pervading. Little wonder then the world had to wait patiently until the 7th century AD when Islam established the modern age. Its impact today is captured by John Mason in the following words:

> *The person who is afraid of asking is ashamed of learning. Only hungry minds can grow. It's true what W. Fussellman said, "Today a reader, Tomorrow a leader; it's fun to keep learning. Learning brings life to your life."*[2]

It was Islam that re-kindled the touch of learning, when it was extinguished for centuries. Thus learning is a contribution of Islam to the modern world, which remains an incontrovertible fact.

In the fifth function of culture, it is to serve as means of communication. In the words of Prof Mazrui: "culture provides all sorts of nuances in communication and intimation."[3] Despite the sophistication of the present age of information technology, it cannot surpass that of Islam. Islam's religious interaction amongst the Muslims of diverse origins and ethnic or racial backgrounds meet in the mosques five times a day, to say their daily prayers; once week at the Friday prayer, once a year at the Eid prayer at the national level on the one hand. They meet annually on the other hand during Hajj at international level. There is no means of communication and intimate interactions that can surpass this simple, practical and highly effective system of communication which the mosque provides at local, national and international levels.

The sixth function of culture is precisely in defining *production and consumption* and influencing them.[4] Islamic culture abhors idleness and lack of productivity. It motivates the Muslims to acquire knowledge so as to develop the skills and means of exploiting Allah's bounties on land, in

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1 *Sayings of the Prophet*, p. 22
2 John Mason, *Why Ask Why*, Joint Heirs Publisher, Nigeria Ltd, Benin City Nigeria (2000) p.31
3 Ali, A. Mazrui, *The African Renaissance* p.7
4 Ibid., p. 8

the sea for the benefits of humanity. The entire expanse of the earth including its immense natural and agricultural resources, as well as those in the heavens are made subservient to man, who Islam gives the lofty position of Allah's vicegerent on earth. As a corollary, it was only with its advent (Islam) that modernity was born and nurtured to maturity. But not before!

This brings us to the final function of culture – which is culture as a *basis of identity*. Culture is crucial in defining the "we" and the "they" and marking the frontiers of solidarity.[1] Islamic culture serves this function uniquely. Islamic sense of communalism is best expressed in these sacred verses: *Iyyaka na'abudu wa iyyaka nasta'in. Ihdinas Siratal Mustaqim* (Fatiha, 1: 5-6). Translated: Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way.

The communal sense of religious duty is expressed by the use of these words: "We" and "Us" as contained in the first *sura*, verses 5 and 6 of the Holy Qur'an. This sense is translated into action in 5 daily congregational prayers of the Muslims. This abiding sense of communal spirit or *ummatism* forms the basis of Muslim's identity, thereby making the frontier of his solidarity. This spirit of collectivism undoubtedly fosters development to the individual as the society. Islamic culture cements the individuals together with such a cohesive force that is established through lineage – system, kinship and Islamic brotherhood. A fraternity that is unexampled as well as progressive. Further, through worship a Muslim develops a distinct mode of conduct or "salat cultured behaviour." The male is neat, smart, pleasant and bearded, while the female is dignified in *hijab*.

In essence, Islamic ideology satisfies the Mazrui's seven functions of culture, viz.: as lenses of perception, springs of motivation, standard of judgement, basis of stratification, means of communication, patterns of production and consumption, and culture as a basis of identity. It is, therefore, a culture of development and creativity in all the spheres of human endeavour. The history of Islam and its global impact both in the past and at the present underscore the veracity of this thesis.

The Educator of mankind had advanced nine acts that are necessary for the ascent of man. Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said, "My Cherisher hath ordered me nine things:

- To reverence Him, externally and internally;

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[1] Ali. A. Mazrui, *The African Renaissance.*

- To speak truth, and with propriety, in prosperity and adversity;
- Moderation in affluence and poverty;
- To benefit my relations and kindred who do not benefit me;
- To give alms to him who refuseth me;
- To forgive him who injured me;
- That my silence should be in attaining a knowledge of Allah;
- That when I speak, I should mention Him;
- That when I look on Allah's creatures, it should be as an example for them; as Allah hath ordered me to direct in that which is lawful.[1]

On the warp of individual Islamic culture weaves the woof of *Iqraa* or reading and learning. It brought to the modern world the quest for learning and of inquiring mind without which man would not have landed on the moon. It lifts man up to the loftiest heights, in a manner captured by the renowned historian, S.P. Scott, who observed that:

> *In the moral as in the material world, the most perfect and durable forms and systems usually arrive slowly and by almost imperceptible gradations at ultimate maturity. But to this rule Islam was a striking exception. It attained the summit of its greatness, and raised the Arabians to an exalted rank in the family of nations, in a shorter period of time than is generally occupied by a people in passing through the primitive stages of their intellectual development.*[2]

The miracle wrought by the Prophet (s.a.w) in single-handedly changing the historic landscape of Arabia was the same applied in changing Europe and the rest of the world from barbarism to modernity. Islam came to replace a violent destructive darkness of ignorance, which had overwhelmed the world, with an illuminating and transcendental light. Therefore, Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) came as a mercy to all creatures. And he was most successful in his mission because "He was taught by "One Mighty in Power." (*An-Najm*, 53:5). So he successfully led mankind, "from the depths of darkness into light" (*At Talaq*, 65:11). The Greatest Prophet developed his miracle through *Iqraa*, the fundamental basis of learning and acquisition of knowledge. Since then Islam became a culture of reading and writing, with which it showed light to the rest of the world.

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1 Abdullahi Al-Mamum Al-Suhrawardy (Ed.), *The Sayings of Muhammad*. The Book Hose Lahore (1905) p. 84.

2 S.P. Scott, *History of the Moorish Empire in Europe*, p. 60.

Iqraa and Learning

The first commandment the Prophet (s.a.w) received in his divine ministry was *Iqraa.* This laid the very foundation of the most sophisticated modern civilisation. It was established from this apparently simple command from "One mighty in Power who commanded him to: "Proclaim (or Read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who created man, out of a leech-like clot: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful", (*Iqraa*, 96:1-3).

From the outset of this divine revelation, the very first thing Allah revealed to His Holy Apostle (s.a.w), was Allah's immeasurable bounties for man to fully exploit through science and technological means that could be acquired through the concept of learning. This combination ushered the modern age for the first in the annals of human history. The world waited patiently for the advent of Islam before an unsurpassed civilisation took up. The trio combination of man, *Iqraa* (Read) and bounties (of Allah swt) suggests that man can only discover, master and harness Allah's bounties through the agency of reading (*Iqraa*) and learning. But reading and learning lead to experimentation, hence *Iqraa* in this context means science. The combination, therefore, means that man could possess some of Allah's bounties through the application of scientific method. But His bounties transcend the physical realm. So man must through *Iqraa* acquire true knowledge – the belief in the seen (physical reality) and the unseen (metaphysical reality). Islamic culture *ab initio* provides man with the binocular vision of seen and unseen realities. And he is to acquire the true knowledge through science and revelation. Hence the seed of *Iqraa* was planted deeply into the matrix of human in the leech–like stage of his embryological development. Throughout the 6,000 years of human history 15 major civilizations from 5000 BC to the Prophetic era, there was never a culture evolved that watered the deeply ingrained seed of *Iqraa* in man like Islamic culture. So the world waited until the 7th century AD.

Further, meaningful reading for productive scholarship could not be made without a book – the cardinal reading material. The Holy Qur'an a Book that explains everything was revealed to mankind. But without a teacher both the reading habit and a book would not matter much. So to complete the divine mercy to all creatures, Allah (s.w.t) sent His Apostle, the teacher of all nations, so that His bounties both spiritual and material could be harnessed equally by every nation. Undoubtedly, a teacher is to serve as a role model to his students. This principle applies to humankind, so that the great teacher was also the role model of all nations. A teacher

always wants to shape or mould his students to look, behave and act like him. Allah (s.w.t) gave this best prescription to mankind; He said: "Certainly there is for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent examplar" (33:21).

The Prophet's exemplary character was seen in all the departments of life-spiritual, social, medical, economic, etc. And each is in perfect accord with the dynamics and the ever changing phases of civilisation. He was a perfect model to be copied, emulated and followed; in other words, he was the Qur'an personified. In addition, he was not only an Apostle of *Iqraa,* but a great crusader against ignorance, idolatry and pestilences of all forms and ramifications. His Islamic legacy is continuously changing the global landscape for good in its flux and tension.

In pre-Islamic Arabian society there were hardly three dozen persons who could read and write. Iqnaz Goldziher, a Hungarian writer had captured this sordid state of affair. He said: "The Arabs did not like reading and writing, and entirely depended for reproduction mostly on their remarkable memory."[1]

The Arabs though lacked the sense of *Iqraa* they however compensated their defect with high retentive memory that was unexampled. Professor Nicholson was quoted in his book *A Literary History of the Arabs* as saying: "Writing was sparingly used by the Arabs, and pre-Islamic poetry which had attained a high level of excellence was preserved only by oral tradition."[2]

The Arabs waited patiently for the advent of the Great Teacher to attend mastery of the world and emerge as primary teachers of Europeans and the rest of the world. They moved rapidly across all nations spreading the faith of Islam as well as inducing the culture of *Iqraa*. When Islam spread to Spain, the Western Europe resisted the faith but imbibed the culture of *Iqraa* to slowly percolate into the warp and woof of the Europeans. Europe remained in total darkness until it was illuminated by the Divine light of Islam through Cordova. It was from there that the impact to the Great Teacher of Humanity began to permeate into the Western Europe. It was sequel to the Muslim discovery Europe that perceptible changes began to be seen changing its phase of barbarism to modernism. Victor Robinson, gave a comparative description between Islamic Cordova (Spain) and Europe. He wrote:

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1 Imam Z. Y. Ibn Sharaf An – Nawawi, *Riyadh – Us Saleheen*, International Islamic Publisher Ltd. Karache Pakistan (1983), p. xi.

2 Ibid

> *Europe was darkened at sunset, Cordova shone with public lamps. Europe was dirty, Cordova built a thousand baths: Europe was covered with mud, Cordova's streets were paved; Europe's palaces had smoke–holes in the ceiling, Cordova's arabesques were exquisites: Europe's nobility could not sign its name, Cordova's children went to school. Europe's monks could not read the baptismal service, Cordova's teachers created a library of Alexandrian dimensions.*[1]

Presumptuously, it could be stated both the nobility and the monks of pre-Islamic Europe could not read and write. It could also be stated that it was due to the Islamic culture that they first learnt of *Iqraa* and henceforward the ability to write. Thus when both the nobility and clergy of a nation were stark illiterates, learning could be absent in all the strata of the society. Thus reading and writing were alien in the West but were introduced by the Muslims. The literary record of pre–Islamic Europe was far worse than that of the Arabs. In the latter, perhaps about three dozens of Arabs who could read and write could be found in Arabia. Perhaps, pre–Islamic Europe could boast of far less than that number. By pre–Islamic Europe it is meant a period in Europe when Islamic influences were not felt.

Cultural Clash

No sooner had the Islamic influences begun to seep into Western Europe from Spain than perceptible changes began to unfold. The literary record changed drastically. But before then there was internecine feud that existed between the two cultures due to the impact of the Crusades. The polarity then according, to R. M. Savory was Islamdom and Christendom. And that the antagonisms were posed on two levels: the political and the military. The latter exploded into series of crusades on the theological front, Savory wrote:

> *On the theological and religious level, the reaction of the West was strong, sustained and, almost without exception, hostile. Hostility was based on fear and fear had its roots in ignorance. Christendom feared Islam, and therefore misrepre8ented it. Christians were ignorant of Islam, at least in part because Christendom prompted by Odium theologicum had no desire to understand or tolerate Islam... they were content to represent*

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[1] Victor Robinson, *The Story of Medicine*, p. 164

> *Islam as a religion of violence, as a form of idolatry, as a religion which pandered to man's sexual appetites and in this world and the next. They remained almost totally ignorant of Islam's real belief and doctrines.*[1]

A brief safari into the historical relationship between Islam and the West becomes necessary to understand the reason why the existence of Islam had always made the West profoundly uneasy. But in the past and even now, it would also help to give a window through which the reader could view the scene and see how Islam, despite the antagonism was able to transform the West towards modernism. We have already seen how the west adopted its intolerance position, motivated by *Odium Theologium*. The Islamdom, on the other hand, had its own intolerant position too. According Savory:

> *Islamdom was equally ignorant of the Western world, but for quite different reasons... That Islamic civilisation was superior to Christian civilisation. The Islamic world, stretching from Spain across North Africa to the Middle East, was the centre of the civilised world. Since the west was stagnating during the Dark Ages, while Islam was at its peak, Muslims saw reason to modify this view. Yet Muslim historians and geographers rarely bothered to distinguish between different countries or aces in Europe but lumped all Europeans together under one blanket term, "Franks", otherwise characterised as the "northern barbarians." The term was used by a Muslim qadi in Toledo in 1068. Using a concern for science as a criterion for assessing the degree attained by the nations of the world, he arrived at the following classification; the civilised nations were the Indians, Persians, Chaldees, Greeks, Romans (including Byzantines), Egyptians, Arabs and Jews. The Chinese and the Turks got honourable mention as the "noblest of the unlearned nations." Everybody else was classified as either "northern barbarians" (the Frank) or "Southern barbarians" (Negroes). This cultural arrogance, though justified to a degree in the eleventh century, was to have disastrous results for Islam when maintained after the Renaissance.*[2]

It could be seen in this divide whether by the *odium theologium* backed religious intolerance adopted by the West or the cultural superiority and arrogance adopted by the Islamdom in the eleventh century, the outcome

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1 R. M Savory (Ed.), *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, p. 127
2 Ibid., p. 128

was that Islam and the west were locked in a serious clash of cultures. And even nine centuries after, the clash had only taken a different shape and dimension at the beginning of the second millennium. It is now referred to as a clash of civilisation. But this time the West had achieved a mastery of science and technology that backed its stupendous military superiority. It now looks down upon most of the Muslim countries and President George W. Bush of the United States, following the aftermath of September 11 (2001) had described some Muslim countries including North Korea as "Axis of Evil" and many of the Muslims as "terrorists." Thus the "barbarians" or the "Franks" of the 11th century have now become masters of the world. But how?

At the zenith of Islamic civilisation towards the end of the 10th century Islamic influences especially of *Iqraa* was far-reaching and felt deeply into the West. The Muslims then had upheld the tenets of Shariah the backbone of their civilisation and the motive force of their power. They remained unchallenged and uncorrupted. Savory made these revelations that are worthy of note He wrote:

> *...Not only had Muslims resisted conversion to Christianity, but many Christians and Jews had become converts to Islam, and had learnt Arabic. The Archbishop of Seville was forced to have the Bible translated into Arabic – not for missionary purposes, but for use in his own community. A contemporary Christian writer expressed his disgust at the situation in the following terms: where is the layman who now reads the Latin – commentaries on the Holy scriptures, or who studies the Gospels, Prophets or Apostles? Alas, all talented young Christians read and study with enthusiasm the Arabic books, they gather immense libraries at great expense, they despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention. They have forgotten their language. For every one who can write a letter in Latin to a friend, there are thousands who can express themselves in Arabic with elegance.*[1]

The relationship between Islam and the West can be described in stages or waves. These lamentations of a Christian writer mirrored the first wave very vividly. In this wave the Islamdom's cultural superiority and dominance were clearly felt heavily in the Occident i.e. the West. The "Franks" were made to read and write not in the traditional Latin but in Arabic in ratio of 1:1000, thus the lingua franca was unmistakably Arabic.

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[1] R. M Savory (Ed.), *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, p. 128

But in the eyes of the Christian church, such a situation could not be allowed to continue. Soon after AD 1000, Christendom abandoned the idea of peaceful co–existence with Islam and resorted to military counteraction. The "Reconquista" or reconquest by the Christians and Muslim Spain took nearly four centuries. It was the beginning of the second wave.

This second wave coincided with a period when the Muslims abandoned Shariah. They therefore became weak and vulnerable. This led to the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate in Spain in 1031 and the resulting half – century of anarchy in Muslim Spain. The table began to turn against the Muslims and Islamic civilisation continued to nosedive into crises. As a result the might of the Islamic world was broken and the Muslims were left crestfallen and discomfited. It was a mighty blow. Now the West assuming superiority through scientific might also in retaliation developed its own cultural arrogance. Having colonialised most Islamic countries the English language forcefully replaced Arabic as the lingua franca. However, following the September 11, America led the invasion of first Afghanistan followed by Iraq, as an emotional response to September 11 episode. Perhaps, America's cluster bombs are awakening the giant from slumber. This re–awakening was galvanised by the cultural arrogance as well as religious intolerance of the West. Since the aftermath of September 11th the Muslim world became under the barrage of military attacks, economic sanctions and military invasions. These gather the momentum of the third wave of the encounter.

The crusades of the second wave were a total failure because, as Sir Steven Runciman pointed out, when they ended the whole of Eastern Christendom became under Islamic influence. But the crusaders carried to their homes many of the civilising habits of Islamic creed, notable amongst which was *Iqraa* the modernising attitude of reading and writing. Subsequently, Europe's nobility and their monks became literate. Thus reading and learning were Islamic contributions to the modern world.

The history of the internecine clash between the two cultures is long, complex and complicated. It is only sampled here to put things in perspective. Immediately after the crusades, orientalism followed in its wake; it was an intellectual warfare waged overtly and covertly to distort and misrepresent the true picture of Islam so as to put it in checks. Charis Waddy, the Australian born woman who was the first woman to study Arabic at Oxford and specialised in the Arab side of the crusades, not only believed that the West had much to learn from Islam, but also gave a sympathetic account of Islam and the West relationship. She engagingly wrote:

> *The chequered history of the past does not make this easy. There are blood stained pages on both sides of the record, and old wounds still fester. But even at the times of when confrontation has been most bitter, there have been voices in both. Islam and Christendom, giving a truer interpretation of the spirit of both religions. The simplistic view of the Chason de Roland Chretiens ont droit, paiens ont tort – has never been the limit of Western thought. At the height of the period of crusading fervour, for example, Peter the venerable commissioned a translation of Qur'an in Latin. When Europe was threatened by the Ottoman invasions, the Swiss scholar Bibliander made sure that the new invention of printing should bring the Qur'an to the attention of scholars and statesmen. His edition, first published in 1543, is still to be found on the shelves of the great libraries of Europe. His comment was "the beginning of all these wars, captivities and plaques may be clearly perceived to be in ourselves who are Christian men by name only, not in deeds and living. The same ungracious deeds which we abhor in others, yea or greater mischiefs, are done amongst Christians. Neither would Mahumet seem at any hand to be Christ enemy.*[1]

No sooner was Islam and its great Prophet brought into scholarly scrutiny in the West than they created a variety of Victorian images. All in all, Islam survived the onslaughts of all the deformatory assassinations in the wake of orientalism. The survival of Islam in the face of crusades and orientalism is a miracle on its own right. The secrets of the survival of Islam, in spite of all attempts and efforts to distort and disorient the pristine purity of the universal dispensation and the sublime cultural mission of Islam, lie in the Open Way and the Foremost Principle.

The list of permissible ways of recreation and play is by no means exhaustive. But suffice it to say that every act that is outside the confine of halal (the lawful) is obviously haram (forbidden) except the intermediate position of the two which the Islamic jurists described as *makruh*. Disease occurrence is influenced by human behaviour as dictated by habits and customs. It is only in Islam where human behaviour is not left to uncharted course but governed by *shariah* to avoid chaos and social collapse in a manner akin to the physical laws in the heavens that also prevent chaos and collapse of the heavenly bodies. The medical benefits of *shariah* have been treated elsewhere in this book. It helps us in many important aspects to avoid or minimize the exposure to disease agents and also inculcates in us

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[1] Charis Waddy, *The Muslim Mind*. Longman Group Ltd. London (1976), p. xvi.

the healthful practices regarding water use, food and milk, waste disposal and wash ups and so on and so forth that are in perfect accord with medical science.

The *shariah* also influences other aspects of human behaviour, especially with respect to personal hygiene, social customs, occupation, recreation, use of medical care and visiting the sick. It prohibits the use of intoxicant, sexual profligacy and gambling which are all injurious to health. It sanitises the environment in various ways to make it amenable and congenial to healthful living, social and spiritual prosperity. As it evidently indicates and its name suggests, it is the only straight path. The word *shariah* is derived etymologically from a root meaning road. It is the road which leads to Allah (s.w.t).[1] And this road is free from disease and misery for whoever follows it conscientiously.

The shariah is the divine law by virtue of accepting, which a person becomes a Muslim. Only he who accepts the injunctions of the shariah as binding upon him is a Muslim even though he may not be able to realize all of its teachings or follow all of its commands in life. It is the ideal pattern for the individual's life and the law which binds the Muslims into a single community. It is the embodiment of the Divine Will in terms of specific teachings whose acceptance and application guarantee man a harmonious life in this world and felicity in the hereafter.[2] This Divine Will and its specific teachings guide a Muslim's lifestyle and have helped to distinguish the Muslims in their behaviour and lifestyle and have also enabled them to show the light in all facets of human existence to the rest of the people of other cultures. For example hand washing is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. Today, mothers of all nations teach their children the importance of hand washing. "Washing your hands before meals and after using the bathroom is a good habit", the author of Lifespan Plus wrote, "especially if you want to prevent infections. Since germs on your hands tend to end up in your mouth. A quick rinse with only water is okay, but if you have soap available uses it."[3]

Hand washing is an intrinsic Islamic culture, which is a dictate of Sharia legislation. This Divine Law is the concrete embodiment of the Divine Will according to which man should live in both his private and social life. Owing to which the Muslims had taught other peoples; wash ups, and personal hygiene, household hygiene and general cleanliness invigorate the

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1 S.H Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, Allen and Unwin Ltd. London (1966) p.93.
2 Ibid., p.93
3 *Lifespan-Plus*, p.223

human mind to acquire knowledge and to ask the how and the why, that is, stimulates inquiry in the social and physical phenomena. It was also due to it that the Muslims became the founders and teachers of modern civilisation. Islam is therefore *premum interpares* amongst the ethico-moral religions revealed in the history of this world. Syed Husein Nasr, a distinguished scholar states:

> *With regard to the Divine Law, however, the situation of Islam and Christianity differ completely. Islam never gave unto Caesar what was Caesar's. Rather, it tried to integrate the domain of Caesar itself, namely political, social and economic life, into an encompassing religious worldview. Law is therefore in Islam an integral aspect of the revelation and not an alien element.*[1]

Furthermore, the erudite international scholar stated that in Christian civilization law governing human society did not enjoy the same divine sanction as the teachings of Christ. In fact, this lack of a Divine Law in Christianity he said had a small role to play in the secularization that took place in the West during the Renaissance.[2] In addition, abrogation of the Law and the establishment of attainment of salvation by faith alone rather than the pristine teaching of faith and deeds had led to the escalation of various diseases, crimes and asocial behaviour. This was because for the first time human behaviour was left to uncharted course. It was the office of Islam that rectified this anomaly through the restoration of shariah in its purity and completeness. So that man is rightly guided in the Right Way to religion. It is the only means of ascent of man in all the facets of his endeavour.

Human behaviour henceforth is charted in the proper course and direction. Attitude is the determinant of attitude. Islamic lifestyle, therefore, provides the best and practicable attitude to life for the ascent of man. It is guided and vouchsafed in all aspects of human life. The completeness in its tenets provides a wholesome guide for a Muslim to conduct his life in harmony with Divine Will. Actions are categorized into; *Wajib* or obligatory; *Mandub*, which are meritorious or recommended; *Haram* – forbidden and *Mubah*, which is indifferent. In his explication of this categorization of human actions Syed Nasr stated that through this balance the value of human acts in the sight of the Divine are made known to man, so that he can distinguish between 'straight path' and that which will lead

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1 S.H Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, Allen and Unwin Ltd. London (1966) p.95.
2 Ibid.

him astray. The shariah provides for him the knowledge of the right and wrong.[1]

This lack of discernment and the knowledge to distinguish between right and wrong, what is hygienic and unhygienic, *haram* and *halal*, etc. had cast shadow upon the glory of many nations especially the Europeans who have now assumed the mastery of the world. It was indeed a grave defect in the history of their evolution to stardom, which they achieved by climbing the shoulders of Muslims and by dint of hard labour. The shariah is ubiquitous and as an excalator it leads to the ascent of man in all spheres of his earthly existence. Politically, the *shariah* contains definitive teachings which form the basis of Islamic political theory. In the Islamic view, Allah (s.w.t) is the only legislator. Man has no power to make laws; he must obey the laws Allah has sent him. Therefore, any ideal government from the point of view of the *shariah* is devoid of legislative power in the Islamic sense. The function of the political ruler is not to legislate laws but to execute them. The cardinal fact is the presence of a Divine Law which should be administered in society.[2] Syed Abul Ala Maududi, the erudite Islamic scholar concluded:

> *The fundamental principle of the law is that man has the right, and in some cases the bouden duty, to fulfil all his genuine needs and desires and make every conceivable effort to promote his interest and achieve success and happiness – but (and it is an important `but') he should do all this in such a way that only are the interests of other people not jeopardised and no harm is caused to their strivings towards the fulfilment of their rights and duties, but there should be all possible social cohesion, mutual assistance and co-operation among human beings in the achievement of their objectives in respect of those things in which good and evil, gain and loss are inextricably mixed up, the tenet of this law is to choose a little benefit, so avoiding a great harm. This is the basic approach of the shariah.*[3]

Man's knowledge is limited; every man in every age does not, by himself, know what is good and is evil, what is beneficial and what is harmful to him. The sources of human knowledge are too limited to provide him with the unalloyed truth that is why God has spared man the risks of

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1 S.H Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, Allen and Unwin Ltd. London (1966), p. 95.
2 Ibid., p. 106.
3 Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding* Islam, Islamic Foundation, Kano Nigeria (1981), p. 101.

trial and error and revealed to him the Law which is the right and complete code of life for the entire human race.[1]

Thus it provides a means of political, economic and medical ascent of man. This aspect of the Divine Law was tested and attested as the best in the history or man. When it was conscientiously applied by the early Muslims they became masters of the world and founders of the Modern Age.

Now returning to shariah, the main theme of discussion, its most central aspect in reshaping the behaviour of man, is concerned primarily with rites or acts of worship. Every Muslim must perform these rites, which constitute his way of life and devotional practices. One of the miracles of the shariah is that it renders Islamic worship beneficial to health. Further, of these rites the most important of all, is the daily prayer – the Salat. Salat – *the rukn al–din*, that is, the prop of the religion as we shall discuss later in the book, it is salutary to health. Each Salat is preceded by a call to prayer or *adhan* and *wudu* or ablution, which is not only a physical purification of the body but the purification of the soul as well. "Through, them the dross of reparative existence is washed away", said Syed Nasr, "and man becomes ready to stand before Allah. He suddenly feels as if his body was infused with light and reinstated in its endemic purity."[2]

The Open Way

"To each among you", God states in the Qur'an, "have we prescribed a law and an open way" (5:48).[3] The law, of course, is the Shariah. But the precise nature of the "open way" is unspecified but God implies that it is absolutely vital to the application of the shariah, perhaps it is intended as a partial scheme without which the operation of the shariah will ever remain imperfect.

The Shariah is the corpus of law embodied in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is immutable, external, and unalterable precisely because it is the Law of God, whose knowledge is infinite and total. The Shariah contains the principles, precepts and laws upon which Islamic civilisation can be built. It therefore contains only such rules and regulations as can serve the universal human condition at all times without the need for change or alterations. The

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1 Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding* Islam, Islamic Foundation, UK Nigeria (1980), p. 101.
2 S. H. Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, p. 114
3 *The Afkar Inquiry*, December 1986, p. 51.

Shariah, needless to say, is also the basis for the regeneration of the Islamic communities.

As a rule therefore the Shariah is not intended to operate on its own without the support and cooperation of other aspects of human experience. The shariah in other words is not the only valid form of human knowledge; culture is another, and so is science. Another important source of law is human nature itself, which in the words of the Qur'an, is imbued with moral failings as well as with consciousness of God (91:7).[1]

This succinct and accurate description of the shariah by Ustadh Ibrahim Sulayman is very educative, although as he pointed out the "Open Way" has not been clearly described but the contemporary Quranic exegists indicate that the Law, *Shir'at* refers to rules of practical conduct. Open Way: *minhaj*, the guidance of the Prophet in all aspects of life.[2] Thus the lifestyle of every Muslim is to be governed by the dictates of the *Shir'at* and the *Minhaj* as embodied in the legal corpus of *shariah*. It provides the moral and material elixir of the Muslim as well as his society. It is also the panacea of the present societal ills. Thus one must submit himself to its authority, which entails the application of its method within contemporary realities. Its medical relevance is timeless.

Its Medical Importance

Some of the medical benefits of Shariah have been encapsulated by Ustadh Ziauddin Sardar, a distinguished Islamic scholar in the following words:

> *Life–styles are dictated by worldviews, certain world–views tend to encourage certain types of personal, social and cultural behaviour, and discourage certain other types. For example, Islam takes a grim view of homosexuality and the Shariah prohibits casual sexual relations as well as anal intercourse. As such, chances of outbreaks of AIDS or genital herpes in a Muslim society which practices at least the outer manifestations of Islam are non–existent. But world–views do not only shape lifestyle; they also shape the external environment within which these lifestyles are persuaded, and this external environment plays just as important a role in producing diseases as life–styles themselves. Many modern health problems can be traced to environmental problems. For example, the rise of infertility amongst men in the United States has been traced to toxins like*

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1 *The Afkar Inquiry*, December 1986, p. 51.
2 The Holy Qur'an, *King Fahd* Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, 300

> *PCBS which concentrate in men's reproductive organs; average sperm counts which were 100 million in 1929 and 60 million in 1974, dropped to 20 million in 1978. The result; some 23 per cent of American men are now sterile; and the percentage is rising rapidly.*
>
> *However, world–views are not only responsible for producing diseases and illnesses – both through promoting certain lifestyles and producing an environment within which these lifestyles can flourish they also form the matrix with which attempts are made to cure these illnesses. Medicine is a sibling of world – view; modern medicine is a product of the world – view of the western civilization.*[1]

This vivid account of the direct relationship between world – view on the one hand, and health and disease on the other, illustrates one fundamental point – the imperative of the shariah for the social, spiritual and medical well – being of the individual as well as his society. Islam is the only ideology that recognises this intrinsic relationship and prescribes *shir'at* and *minhaj* to help man navigate through his social, spiritual and health problems successfully. Thus the importance of the shariah in the ascent of man can never be overemphasised.

The Shariah has many benefits on the warp of the individual; it weaves the woof of civility and ethical behaviour. Thus it is the most ideal soul of Modern Age. Where it is lacking human behaviour is characteristically uncouth, brutish and retrogressive. It also directly or indirectly impacts positively on the behavioural pattern of people of all nations because it keeps man in his nature – *Homo sapiens* - and tends to maintain the *fitrah* of all men. This Divine Law helps to reduce culture – links health risks to the barest minimum. And it draws on the positive, healthful, protective and health promoting habits of the traditional culture, by removing all cultural practices that are injurious to health. The *shariah* encourages the acquisition of knowledge to vanish ignorance, which breeds pestilence; education also tends to change attitudes and values towards productive health, as well as helps to foster good social well–being for the overall achievement of positive changes in all the spheres of human endeavour. Health risks, for instance, stem from over-consumption of certain foods, stresses of work and lifestyles, family situations, isolation, sexual permissiveness and addiction to alcohol, tobacco, or drug. These health

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[1] *The Afkar Inquiry*, October 1986, p. 43.

risks according to WHO are related to individual action, choices, and behaviour and require equally individual changes in lifestyle and in values related to work, leisure, consumption and personal relations.[1] The shariah, codified in the lawful and the prohibited, arms the individual to weather the storm of all the problems - social, spiritual and medical ills facing his existence.

Its Socio-Medical Importance

Long before any culture, Islam recommends the care and support for medical casualty. In this category, everyone who falls sick is a medical casualty; he must be treated. A social causality is one who loses his job from the employment market. He must find a job while he receives social support from the *zakat* fund. This is to reduce crimes associated with the vagrant unemployed youth. The orphan and the widow, and other obvious examples, constitute the medical and social casualties. The handicapped, the elderly and the infirm also fall within this group. However, the feckless and work-shy, the timid and the indolent, the tired Tims and weary Willies, the shiftless who will not, as opposed to who cannot, fend for themselves they must be made to work in accordance with their capacity. Obsequious living for whatever reason is not in the character of a Muslim. The Prophet (s.a.w) disallowed any tendency towards that. He declared: "Who so is able and fit and doth not work for himself or for others, God is not gracious to him."[2]

He also said that, "Those who earn an honest living are the beloved of God."[3] While in another hadith he stated pointedly that: "God is gracious to him that earned his living by his own labour, and not by begging."[4]

Islam has no sympathy for the fickle-minded, work – shy, timid and the indolent, no room for idleness or the vagrant unemployed. The saviour of human civilisation in another hadith warned that, *"He who neither work for himself, nor for others will not receive the reward of God."* Every Muslim must work hard for his livelihood so as not to be a vagrant unemployed or obsequious beggar. Further, every labourer must be paid promptly without any delay. "Give the labourer his wage", said the Prophet (s.a.w) "before his perspiration be dry."

Islamic culture takes every precaution to fight poverty from the society. Poverty is next to *kufr* and also brings about diseases and undignified

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1 *Intersectoral Action for Health*, WHO Geneva (1986) p. 92
2 *The Sayings of Muhammad*, p. 2
3 Ibid
4 Ibid

living. All these are unbefitting to the status of a Muslim. But if for unavoidable reasons a Muslim becomes a social casualty, he must be assisted quickly through the Zakat fund or from some wealthy, philanthropic individuals.

The Law stipulates that everyone unless invalidated by age or infirmity must work to contribute his or her own quota to the society and the society in turn must assist everyone by providing opportunity to all, and the capacity to seize such a given opportunity. Thus, work ethic is cultural imperative and enhances both asabaniyah and Umran. Without this social system no society can move forward. Thus the ideas of health promotion and disease prevention have been well established in the Muslim communities several centuries before other cultures realized them. The shariah made the whale of difference between Islam and other cultures of the world.

This difference is clear; it is pertinent to contrast this excellent social, medical and spiritual progress of Muslim society with that of Europe in general and Britain in particular where the *shariah* was *ab initio* absent, but subsequently influenced drastic changes in Europe. The consequences as a result were severe and far-reaching. Trevelyan, in British History in the Nineteenth century, captured the appalling and grotesque social and medical conditions of his people. This distinct difference, in cultural attitude that affects health negatively, he attributed to the exigency of the prevailing situation. He stated:

> *It is perhaps the greatest of our national misfortunes that the modern English town arose too rapidly and with too little regulation, either sanitary or aesthetic. The bodily and spiritual healths of future generations were injured in advance.*[1]

However, the greatest misfortune from this point of view that could be pointed out sharply and correctly was "too little regulation." It is only an established law system that regulates human behaviour effectively that was then the imperative. However, such a legal corpus was absent in Europe at that time. With the law operating in whatever form rapid population growth could do little to jeopardise health. In other words, had the *shariah* been in practice in this part of the world and at that time, modern English towns would not have known such "national misfortunes." But it could be argued that shariah in the form of Mosaic Laws was in existence as contained in the Bible. As such public health measures would have evolved to help regulate the sanitary and or aesthetic conditions. Unfortunately, the lawful

and the prohibited as contained in the Bible were ineffective or largely ignored by the Europeans with severe consequences. The Muslim cities by comparison were saved by the Law and the vigilant activity of the Muhtasib whose office was responsible for keeping the city neat and tidy. The institution of Muhtasib arose subsequently in the West as Municipal institution. In his exposition of these sequalae, Fred Grundy stated that England upon which existing industrial and social structure has been built suffered severely and adversely with much pain and suffering is worth recalling:

> *The age was grossly brutal; the amusements of the average male consisted in watching or taking part in display of ferocity, prize-fighting, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, combats with quarterstaffs, cudgels or broads words. The lower classes settled trivial disputes by hand-to-hand fights, which there were no police to interrupt, the upper classes when armed with swords and pistols, which they were always ready to use, either in self defence or in 'affairs of honour.' Punishments were shockingly severe, the state of the hospitals, prisons, orphanages and lunatic asylums was appalling; all this was regarded callously by everyone save a few humanitarians, like captain Coram. Flogging was universal; children, criminals, vagabonds, apprentices, soldiers, sailors were flogged `within an inch of their lives' upon the least pretext; a man might be pressed to death for refusing to plead, a woman burnt alive for murder of husband or employer (reason), a child hanged for theft, a debtor left to starve in prison; drinking was incessant among all classes; the taxed spirits and wines were sold freely at all hours; it was said that in the lower streets of London, taverns were in the ratio of one to three houses; much of the foreign stuff was smuggled; a large proportion of the general public connived at this.*[1]

It must be realised so far from this historic account of European lifestyle in the early 18th century that the national misfortunes arose due to the lack of the right guidance as *shariah* typifies. The muhtasib and his hisba officers in each Islamic were to ensure and maintain law and order are observed by everyone irrespective of his rank and social standing. All must comply with the law. To leave peoples behaviour to uncharted course was to court disaster and this was evident when harsher brutalities of unbridled individualism had swept the western nation. Kindness in humanitarian

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[1] *The Early Eighteenth Century* from Fred Grundy by Marjorie Bowen

spirit which the Divine Law instills in the human mind was characteristically absent. The secular laws that were eked out to govern were undeveloped, ineffective and very loosely applied. They were flouted by the people in most cases. In contrast, however, the shariah had placed the Muslim society far ahead of other cultures with a wide gulf of difference. Thus the Muslims were well mannered and discipline as a result of which the rustic life of Muslims could not be compared with that of the Europeans of the 18th century. The distinction between the cultures was indeed great, the lot of the masses governed by the Divine Law was by far better in all aspects. The Muslims were lucky to have a better start, as a nation whose ideology spread faster to civilize other cultures within a twinkle of an eye. The author continued the exposition of the lack of law to govern social life of his people as *shariah* typifies:

> *The gentlemen and their womenfolk saw no offence to manners in constant drunkenness, the middle classes consumed the strong ale without stint, the poorest could afford gin, cheap enough and powerful enough for a man to be able to lay himself out unconscious for the expenditure of two pence. It was no individual person's fault that the streets were cobbled, with gutters full of filth in the centre, that spring-less carts and carriages jolted over them with harsh rattling, that wandering hawkers kept up a continuous shouting, that fights were frequent, that a shower of rain sent spouts of water over the pipe-less roofs, that un-repaired pavements caused puddles too wide to jump across, that at night the few oil lamps cast only sufficient light to cast misleading shadows; but the brutal licence permitted to the vagabond and the ruffian was a bitter commentary on the temper of the times.*
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> *London was not safe in the dark; not only did the sneak-thief swarm, not only might the link boy hired to light the way be an accomplice of a footpad, but parties of young men of the better class roamed about, bringing into contempt the ill–paid watchmen who alone represented law and order by their unavenged assaults upon them and indulging in violent pastimes which included savage attacks on life and property.*
>
> *All the education the poorer classes could hope for was from charity schools which could only deal with a small proportion of the destitute; the lower middle classes had to rely on the dame school or the hedgerow pedagogue.*

> *...The labourers lived in hovels of mud, with unglassed windows rudely shuttered at night, they slept in lofts reached by ladders; in London, entire districts of slums rotted amid filth and decay; sanitation of the crudest rendered the place inconvenient, and the mean dwelling dangerous; though some care was taken of personal cleanliness, general cleanliness in street, public place, hospital, prison, barrack of asylum, was utterly neglected.*[1]

Whenever, there is lack of effective law to govern and control the people, individual problems become social problems because a large number of people will be menaced by them, amounting to a threat to the welfare or safety of the whole group. Evidently, this was the case in Britain and many European countries. Poverty, crime and disease become commonplace in a lawless society. Thus, without the law *in situ*, undoubtedly, population explosion would no doubt compound the problems. By comparison with Islamic city, to reiterate was free from these societal ills, the office of the muhtasib has policed the city efficiently. The hisba operating at the grassroots to stem crime and nip it in the bud. It was at a period of time in the west when such an important societal institution was absent. As a result of industrial revolution in Britain, for example, widespread transition from domestic to industrial brought about a material and spiritual deterioration of such magnitude and gravity that a final solution of the problems it engendered is barely in sight even now.[2] The medical and social casualties in the society suffered the brunt as they were neglected or ignored. A poet captured vividly the imageries of the unfolding drama:

> *There children dwell who know no parent's care; parents who know no children's love, dwell there; heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed, forsaken wives and mothers never wed; dejected widows with unheeded tears, and crippled age with more than childhood's fears; the lame, the blind, and far the happiest they; the moping idiot and the madman gay.*[3]

This poetic expression provides us with a graphic picture of a society that was devoid of the Divine Law to effectively govern its people. However, we cannot help it but to again draw parallel between Islamic city and the Western city, at the outset due to the educating and civilizing

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1 *The Early Eighteenth Century* from Fred Grundy by Marjorie Bowen.
2 Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p. 313
3 Ibid., p. 322

teachings of the shariah, the Muslims were and still are conscious of their individual responsibility towards the orphans, the widow and the infirm. And the *zakat* system is well–established to cater for them. The muhtasib was to ensure that the welfare was provided in accordance with the prescribed injunction. However, other cultures were not that lucky enough; they had to start from scratch and to rise by trial and error. A social system that is established by trial and error will be maintained continuously by trial and error. Even in the early years of the 19th century with rapid growth of towns developed to serve the new industries, which greatly enriched the country as Grundy stated, but this also created conditions of poverty and squalor for the great mass of the people.

The inevitable result was that health deteriorated and epidemics of infectious disease were commonplace. This showed that the crux of the matter was essentially lack of legislation of some form and its implementation rather than population explosion per se, was shariah then practically in operation, however, such great national misfortunes would not have arisen. Nonetheless, this grave defect was ostensibly realized only after terrible consequences. Which became even more glaring when the adversity of insanitation, coupled with the spiritual degradation and wretchedness of the masses, could not be corrected overnight. Further, capitalism which the nation operates and perpetuates added weight to the balance. The municipal institution which arose subsequently in the west was patterned along that of the institution of muhtasib. There is also economic advantage of the Open Way.

Its Economic Importance

Islamic economics is also the best evolved and it is the surest path to economic ascent of man. It is defined by Mehdi B. Razavi, as a system based on the Islamic philosophy is predominated by ethics. It is the ethical mores that control and regulate man's economic behaviour and dominate economics, not the other way round.[1] History has witnessed the rise and fall of many economic systems. Some of which were successful for a period of time but then disappeared, Razavi, a seasoned economist stated that some of the problems facing economies of today include full employment, growth, price stability, the elimination of poverty, and more equitable distribution of income. He said that western countries as well as eastern countries are constantly searching for new economic solutions within their

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[1] Abdul Rashid Moten and M.O.K Bajulaiye – Shasi (Eds.), *Nature and Methodology of Islamic Economics*, Bayero University Kano (1990) p.40

ideological frameworks.[1] The current crisis in global capitalism underscores the veracity of these statements. Very soon the world will look up to Islamic economics for its salvation.

Many western economists of considerable standing have decried the capitalist system of economics because it bypasses the poor, the very people for whom development is really needed. The system is deeply flawed and inconsequential; it is currently in crisis. In his critique of this exploitative system, George Soros, a contemporary international financial wizard, states:

> *My critique of the global capitalist system falls under two main headings. One concerns the defects of the market mechanism. Here I am talking primarily about the instabilities built into financial markets. The other concerns the deficiencies of what I have to call, for lack of a better name, the non-market sector. By this I mean primarily the failure of politics and the erosion of moral values on both the national and the international level.*[2]

The much vaunted *laissez-faire* based system of economics is not only in crisis but is falling at the seams. Owing to the fact that capitalism, with its exclusive reliance on market poses a different danger to the culture that established it. Soros, with cogent and persuasive arguments defended the central point of this contention of his book *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* that the *laissez faire* system, which he described as market fundamentalism, he said, is today a greater threat to open society than any totalitarian ideology.[3] This by itself is a valid corroboration of Razavi's deposition. Nonetheless, the system that bypasses the poor cannot provide the panacea to the global economic ills that currently bedevilled the world. When the poor is unjustly sidelined in an unjust economic system the prevalence of diseases becomes inevitable because of the direct relationships between the economic status and vulnerability to diseases. Thus the prospects of Islamic economics are indeed very bright. It is shariah based economics. Therefore, it bypasses neither the poor nor the rich. This economic system has delicately struck a mid-course, between capitalism on one end of the scale and communism on the other end of the scale. It is therefore the best and most ideal for the world.

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1 Abdul Rashid Moten and M.O.K Bajulaiye – Shasi (Eds.), *Nature and Methodology of Islamic Economics*, Bayero University Kano (1990), p. 29

2 George Soros, *the Crisis of Global Capitalism* p. xxiii

3 Ibid., p. xxii

Its Social Welfare

Social welfare is the social services provided by a private organisation. In an Islamic society these important services are provided by the state. The *Zakat* system is comprehensive and effective in its distribution of wealth in the community. Health as we have seen cannot be isolated from its social context. This point of cardinal significance was recognised and identified as a crucial factor in the prevalence of disease and asocial behaviour. Islam therefore established an inbuilt social welfare system to keep poverty at bay. The last few decades, however, have shown that social and economic factors have as much influence on health as medical interventions. All these factors have a direct bearing on the incidence, course and outcome of a wide variety of communicable and non–communicable diseases as well as on many other health problems besetting the world today. They also have an important effect on the provision of health care to all strata of society. Poverty, malnutrition, poor sanitation and lack of education, inadequate housing, unemployed, poor working conditions, cultural and behavioural factors all predispose to ill-health.[1]

Islam, several centuries ago, identified the adverse effects of poverty on man in a variety of dimensions. It linked poverty as very close to *kufr* and established an effective system to eradicate or reduce them to the barest minimum. By eradicating poverty and improving the economic status of individuals, Islam goes to the roots of various diseases and nips them in the bud.

The prerequisites to securing an effective remedy of conditions, which bred and fostered disease were fourfold. First, disease had to be recognized as a problem which concerned the community; next, circumstances which caused or favoured disease had to be studied systematically; third, pubic opinion had to reach a certain level of enlightenment over health and its preservation; and last, legislation and executive action were needed to clinch the matter.[2] Islamic law provides all these and many others, to keep the society steps ahead of others. The lawful and the prohibited in Islam have made explicit the needs of the individual and the society, making other extraneous legislation unnecessary. The lawful and the prohibited are to establish certain good habits relating to health positive lifestyle. The cultivation of good habits is desirable. But for a nation lacking a divine guidance the formulation of legislation especially when it starts from scratch societal or crisis is inescapable. When legislative laws were

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1 K Park, *Park's Textbook Of Preventive And Social Medicine*, 16th Edition, p. 452.
2 Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p. 313

discovered to be imperative as well as public crucial to human existence, subsequently numerous laws were enacted because 'legislation and executive action' were needed to clinch the matter.

However, many of the executed laws that arose out of the spur of the moment were forced to be discarded, for they were found later to be unsavoury. The first great sanitary act became a law in 1848. While the Tudor Poor Law was introduced, culminating finally in the Poor Law Act of 1601. Under this Act the relief of the poor became the obligation of each of the many thousands of parishes under the supervision of local justices of the peace.[1] Per contra, several centuries previously the Zakat system of the shariah was well established to cater for the medical and social casualty of the society. And the office of the muhtasib was responsible for its efficient implementation. In fact, the Tudor Poor Law was a borrowed leaf from this sophisticated means of wealth distribution in the community. In fact, like general hygiene, it came to Britain perhaps by the process of acculturalisation that existed for centuries between Islam and the West. Fred Grundy, for example, in his exposition of the evolution of public health stated:

> *The medicine of primitive societies was hamstrung by a demoniacal conception of disease and a system of controls based on rites and magic, but with the raising of cultural level, knowledge and reason gradually replaced myth and superstition. The Mosaic Laws to cite an early instance, contain rules governing sanitation, personal cleanliness, the choice of food and relations between the sexes. Many of the laws show penetrating insight into the principles of hygiene. But it was not until the rise of the civilization of Ancient Greece that the inductive method replaced magic and authority in clinical medicine; and mainly due to Greek influence, sanitation reached remarkably high standards in Ancient Rome. Then, for a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire, little advance was made.*[2]

The writer for ulterior reasons had decided to show blind spot to the crucial contribution of Islamic civilization when the Roman empire was eclipsed to the era of modern medicine and the rise of hygiene. To claim that "little advance was made" after the Roman debacle was to say that the western civilization arose out of a vacuum, or a mere magic was wrought to create it. This attitude of obstructing the truth was and still is a

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1 Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p. 315
2 Ibid, p. 314

characteristic of Western apologists with bigoted Islamophobia. Otherwise, every writer of repute pays a glowing tribute to Islam for the crucial role it played for salvaging humanity and for laying the foundation of Modern Age. Presumptuously, without the agency of Islam after the decline of the Persian, Greek and Roman Empires to mention only a few, there would not have been modern science and technology as we know them today.

Furthermore, it was due to its concerted influence that the western mindset was forcefully opened for modern changes to be imbibed, especially hygiene, social welfare, literacy and the habit of reading and writing. So that by the end of the 19th century, environmental hygiene became a consolidated community service, whose value was reflected in the falling death rates, and particularly in the reduced mortality from bowel infections. The Public Health Act of 1875 was the bulwark of sanitary legislation, and so it remained until the consolidating Act of 1936 replaced it in large measure.[1]

While in Islam, the lawful and the prohibited have been established to help man in his relationships with Allah (s.w.t) his Creator and his fellow men in social intercourse, a situation that led to the emergence of a healthy society, in peace and social harmony. To reiterate, such legislation was absent in other cultures of the world. Notably in the European culture before the 19th century, legislative laws which the shariah represents are crucial and imperative for man being a social being who must be made to observe certain rules and regulations, if he is to live in society. These laws are indispensable to the harmonious societal coexistence. In His Divine scheme of things, Allah (s.w.t) creates condition for mutual interdependency in the society by making provision of gift and talents to people in variety of forms, so that each one is in need of the other in the respect of such gifts and talents. The Ibn Khaldun's concept of asabiyah and umran as we have already pointed helped to provide with simple yet profound key to understanding this providence of a variety of aptitude and talents to individuals living in the society.

Islam brings to foreground the significance of these provisions. It established a just social system that would improve the capacity of the individual to cease the available opportunity. The intermixture with the poor, social and medical a casualty tends to create flux and tension within the community. And the chasm between the rich and the poor which such provisions create add more weight to the scale, the society as a result becomes complex and apparently ungovernable. However, Allah (s.w.t)

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[1] Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p. 321

revealed the shariah law to establish a just social system and to govern the individual and his society so that the gregarious living is harmonized for the individual as well as for the societal progress. The imperativeness of the shariah is increasingly getting more crucial and necessary for global application. Syed Ala Maududi of blessed memory had captured the essence of this truth. He said *inter alia*:

> *The merits and the truths of this code are becoming more and more clear to man with the passage of time and of knowledge. ...the world is willy-nilly drifting towards the Divine code –many of those people who refused to accept it are now, after centuries of groupings and trials and errors, being obliged to adopt some of the provisions of this law. Those who denied the truth of the revelation and pinned their faith on unguided human reason, after committing blunders and courting bitter experience, are adopting in one way or another the injunctions of Shariah...*[1]

Today the Western civilisation with all its scientific and technological might is bedevilled by a number of problems both within and external to it. The distress and misery that characterised human life and its devaluation had led to many scientists and great thinkers of contemporary times to ring the bell of alarm that all is not well with the West. George Soros, in fact, had brazened the truth when he told the world in his wonderful exposition that capitalism the bedrock of Western civilisation is in crisis. He went further to make some devious suggestion that Islamic economics is the likely ultimate solution of economics. The health and the healthcare system are similarly in quagmire. That health crisis is taking a serious dimension is also known to all.

Islam considers man like a celestial body that must be governed by the law but far more complex and lofty. So he must be governed by the law. Thus the shariah becomes indispensable to man's social existence, spiritual ascent and material progress. The West was forced to adapt to this principle, needless to say, at the cost of many lives. In this respect Grundy concurred:

> *Two circumstances especially combined to provide a climate favourable to the rapid development of personal services during the early 20th century; the high infant and material mortality rates, and the poor physique of the nation brought to public notice*

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[1] A.A Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p. 102

> *by the low standard of recruits coming forward in the Boer War...*[1]

In the West the outbreaks of deadly diseases served as potent sanitary reformers. Whereas to the Muslim, sanitation is a religious obligation. It was after a severe pestilential devastation such as *cholera infantum* or the summer diarrhoea among babies as it was referred to in the late 18th and early 19th century that killed thousands of infected babies. In England that sanitary idea received attention and focus. With thousands of babies killed *en masse*, the alarming pathetic condition compelled attention. This was more than enough motivation to reform. Hard facts of life began to dawn on the authority that to keep man without a law was to court disaster of variety of forms and severity. Social life became chaotic and extremely brutish. Pining faith to an unguided human reason, had led to these blunders. This awareness then led to a maze of acts and laws of various sorts, eking and mimicking the shariah laws in many respects in a bid to stabilize and restore harmonious coexistence in the western society. After courting bitter experiences the ultimate recourse was to adopt, in one way or another, the injunctions of *shariah*. It was painfully realized that without such laws human behaviour could be very ferocious, animalistic and dangerously unpredictable. A few examples shall presently be cited for the sake of objectivity, from this point of view. The economic system which passes the poor (obviously, any system based upon it) can only pretend it has no concern for the poor.

Its Concern for the Poor

Islam is the only ideology that really addresses the problems of the poor and the needy; and it takes up cudgel against poverty; its deep concern for the underprivileged stems from Qur'anic injunctions and the traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w). *Surat Ad-Dahr* in describing the righteous states:

> *They perform (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil flies far and wide. And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, (saying), "we feed you for the sake of Allah alone: No reward do we desire from you, nor thank (Ad-Dhar, 76:7-10).*

This deep concern for the plight of the poor expresses the true motives, of pious and unpretentious charity as perpetuated by Islamic creed. Hence

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[1] Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p.322

for the first time in the history of humanity a humane culture was evolved in the 7th century that showed the light to the rest of the world. The care of the captives of war as enshrined today in the Geneva Convention arose from the impact of the Qur'anic teachings. The Prophet (s.a.w) taught that the hand that giveth is superior to that receiveth when the act is performed for the love of Allah *ta'ala*.

In Islamic culture self-sacrifice is the highest and last point of generosity. This means that the needs and requirements of others should be given preference over one's own. Islam teaches us to go hungry and to feed others; even one should suffer hardships and provide comfort to others.[1] Further, the Prophet (s.a.w) had advanced a precept that would vanish hunger not only amongst the Muslims but in the world. It was reported by Abu Huraira (r.a) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) said: "The food of two persons suffices for three, and the food of three is enough to feed four persons" (Bukhari and Muslim).

This prophetic precept is the way to eradicate hunger in every society, because of its multiplier effects that are salutary and healthful. It also means that population explosion can never lead to hunger. But greed and niggardness can and could. The Prophet (s.a.w) also said: "The food of one man suffices for two men, the food of two men suffices for four men, and the food of four suffices for eight men."[2]

The implication of this hadith solves directly the problems of food, hunger and starvation that bedevilled the modern world today, despite its advances in "high technology" agronomy, with its astounding breakthrough in genetically modified foodstuffs. The population of Muslims today is about 1.6 billion. According to the teacher of mankind if half of that population can feed themselves, it means the entire population is well feed. Similarly, if half of the 6 billions people of the world can feed well, it means hunger is conquered in the world. However, if the well-fed half refuses to share with the hungry half, it inevitably faces the perils of gluttony.

Perils of Gluttony

The Glorious Qur'an warns mankind against dirty dressing and excessive eating. The Amazing Revelation states pointedly:

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1 Imam Ibn Annawawi, *Riyadh – Us – Saleheen*, Vol. p. 327
2 Ibid, p. 326

> *O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters. (Araf, 7:31).*

It strikes at one of the major perils of modern lifestyle; by prohibiting gluttony the Book of Allah has introduced moderation in eating to curb the ill effects of obesity and over-weight. To this effect, the founder modern age said: "never has man filled a receptacle more evil than his abdomen. It suffices him to take a few mouthfuls to keep himself strong. If he can not, then let him reserve a third of it for food, the other third for water, and the last for breathing." The great health Teacher provided the means of taking the nutritional edge in good abundance as well as in scarcity.

To grow lean and strong is an Islamic virtue. Umar Ibn Khattab (r.a) as saying: "Avoid a pot-belly, for is spoils the body causes diseases and makes the conduct of prayer tiring."[1] The development of pot-belly is one of the perils of gluttony. It opposes the tradition of the great health Teacher.

The Americans are today the most affluent and also the most powerful nation of the world. The entire lifestyle of Americans is pinned on faith-unguided human reasoning. The outcome is unhappiness; what a paradox! The rich are supposed to the happy. But unfortunately here we find the richest people are the unhappiest people in the world. People eat to live but they eat to die. This is because they have denied the Prophetic principles, of moderation in the eating habits so they bear the brunt of the adverse effects of unguided behaviour. Bill Gottlieb, Editor-in-chief *Rodale Books* stated pointedly that nine out of ten deaths in America are caused by people killing themselves. The other cause of death is suicide.

"Yes, I'm exaggerating but only a little," said Gottlieb, "fact is, many people in the United States do kill themselves; they don't use six-guns, they use six-packs. They don't drown in rivers, they drown in fat. They don't take a sleeping pill, they take a puff." Here's how the scientist put it:

> *"Nine of the ten leading cause (early death) in the United States are linked to one or more of six behaviours; cigarette smoking, misuses of alcohol, lack of exercise, not wearing seat-belts, overeating, and failure to control high blood pressure.*[2]

This, reported in the *New York State Journal of Medicine*, listed some of the perils of gluttony that afflict many of the Westerners today. The

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1 Umar Faruk Adamu, *Medicine in the Quran and Sunah*. p.40.

2 *Introduction To Lifespan – Plus 900 Natural Techniques To Live Longer*. p. ix

gourmandism which Americans suffer today is typical of the rest of the Western world. To add weight to the scale, the editors of *Prevention Magazine* reported:

> *Today in the United States, 1 out of every 3 people dies from heart disease, making it the number one killer of Americans. It is so prevalent that it is responsible for more deaths than all other causes combined.*[1]

To combine with other causes already mentioned we have: i) heart disease; ii) cigarette smoking; iii) misuse of alcohol; iv) lack of exercise; v) not wearing seat-belts; vi) overeating; vii) and failure to control high blood pressure. These constitute the seven against the Americans. They stand no chance, the book *Lifespan–Plus 900 Natural Techniques to Live Longer*, which Bill Gottlieb introduced was an exercise in futility. These therapies have nothing to offer but the Placebo Effect. The Americans have chance against the deadly seven. They will continue to gourmandise. Further, they will continue to step up the relentless treadmill; they will be so preoccupied with frivolous life; they will continue to suffer the nagging discontent; and they will never have resting points of discontentment until and unless they accept Islam.

The Western civilisation with all its glamour thrives to nothing more than exploitation. The deprivation of the third world countries, the Western nations like, Draculas live only on the blood of poor nations. This is because this is what capitalism stands for and represents. It bypasses and exploits the poor to revamp the rich, thus it robs Peter to pay Paul; both are very unhappy in the end, so for what benefits?

Islam introduces the *Zakat* system to eradicate poverty. The *Zakat* system as has been mentioned earlier is unsurpassed in its care of the poor, the less privileged and casualty of various types. It is pertinent to digress at this junction to give a brief graphic account of the poor, especially the pauper children, those who capitalism had bypassed with brutal ignominy. A report in 1943 England stated:

> *The chief accusations levelled against the children were that large numbers wetted their clothes and were unused to change them afterwards... Some of the younger ones were said to be wholly unaccustomed to use a closet and to have used the hearth or corners of the room for defecation; the more sluttish kind of mothers just let their children run wild, and in some cases*

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1 *Introduction To Lifespan – Plus 900 Natural Techniques To Live Longer*, p.24

> *bedrooms and beds occupied by them with their young children were reduced to a foul condition, especially where the mothers drank to excess, and... They accepted insanitary habits in children up to and over five years as a matter of course, resenting any criticism. Some of the bed–wetting was to be sure, due to the children's emotional disturbance at the upheaval.*[1]

The poor under the capitalistic system of economy bear the brunt of economic deprivation. Although now the children of third world bear this brunt more severely, it is an economy, as mentioned already, that bypasses them. It takes from the poor to add to the rich, so that the latter gets richer while the former poorer. And in the long run both the rich and the poor are made very unhappy. Many economists have described it a "beggar-thy-neighbour policy." In contrast Islam popularises a precept that is antithesis to it. Furthermore, the West is a place where, as far as profit is made, the end justifies the means.

Dolan pointed that in 1552, a committee was appointed to study the problem of poverty in London. Records revealed that some people were so poor that mice were a source of food.[2] While in France, workers could no longer carry their trade in their own homes. The artisans then lived on back streets or slept in the attic of his master, often going to bed hungry. His working day was a long one, sometimes seventeen continuous hours.[3]

In spire of the deplorable economic condition, the welfare concern for the poor was appallingly at its lowest ebb, and the social environment was equally harsh. For example, in 1597, the poor laws were revised since the problem of vagrancy continued. In an attempt to rectify the situation, vagrants were whipped until their bodies were bloody. For a second offence, the vagrant was sent to the galleys to be chained in boat as an oarsman. The philosophy of seeing Christ in the least of these brethren had been forgotten. Even the sick poor in hospitals were referred to as objects of charity.[4]

This sordid state of affair could hardly be surprising because a civilisation lacking a religious core could be more horrendous in its treatment with the less privileged group. A combination of brutal economic policy with poor hygiene could be devastating. Wrote Dolan:

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 85

2 Josephine A. Dolan, *Nursing in Society, A Historical Perspective*, W.B. Saunders, Philadelphia (1978), p.87.

3 Ibid., pp.87-88.

4 Ibid., p.87.

> *In this period of marked intellectual enlightenment and achievement, the knowledge of hygiene was poor. People bathed infrequently although there were many famous medicinal baths. The value of fresh air was not understood or appreciated; when someone was ill, the doors and windows were closed for fear of colds and draughts. Another unfortunate occurrence was the window tax, which fostered the spread of disease because windows in hospitals and hoes were blocked up or bricked over to save money. There were those, however, whose standard of living was much higher, whose homes were comfortable and less unsanitary and whose diet was better balanced.*[1]

This grisly account typified Europe before its Islamisation. The condition of the poor in England was similar.

Consequently, the poor having no saviour or helper become the dross in the society. They are the badly fed, badly housed and remain largely the ill–clad amongst their brethren. England has been the bedrock of capitalism and it has showed the telltale signs of an economic system in which the poor has no soul. In the same report, there were also many criticisms of the poor mothers too:

> *'That they were dirty, verminous, idle and extravagant; that they could not hold a needle and did not know the rudiments of cooking and housecraft'. Slum mothers were accustomed to minimizing the use of water for cooking and washing, since at home this commonly entailed carrying buckets up and down several flights of stairs to a shared tap, so they tended to 'cook with a un-opener'; 'jam butty' meals and resort to the chip shop were products of this sort of environment. It came as a surprise to their hosts that some of the children did not even know how to use a knife and fork. The youngsters were pasty – faced and malnourished (council school boys at puberty were about 2½ inches shorter than public school boys in the 1930s), and frequently scratched themselves because of headlice, fleas or scabies.*[2]

These pauper children, obviously, could not "know how to use a knife and fork" because they were not dinners. They only shared neighbourhood with voracious dinners. Pushed out into the cold how could they have

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1 Josephine A. Dolan, *Nursing in Society, A Historical Perspective*, p.88.
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, pp. 85 - 86

known of knife and fork? As the economic exploitation took its toll, the deprived victims were accused of social vices with reasons both fair and foul. The public, however, was appalled by the backlash of chronic malnourishment when these badly–fed grew to adolescent and adulthood in the Boer War. But these were only a few of negative effects of an economic policy that starve the poor to feed the rich. And its dastardly impact has beggared all description. It was a time when the relation of health and social class and its impact on the society was unknown or largely ignored. But one might ask at this juncture, where was the Tudor Poor Law? Apparently, it was ineffective and largely inoperable in an economic system that is heavily biased against the poor. And since the law culminated into Poor Law Act of 1601, it had failed to disburden the heavy yoke upon the neck of the poor even after over three centuries afterwards. This assertion was actuated and supported by this historic account:

> *One research in 1941 discovered that in the poorest areas of large cities 40 per cent of the children under five were infested with head lice, which, in contrast to body lice, are due more to overcrowding than to intense filth. Head lice among rural children was comparatively rare; indeed, it was said in 1943 that in the country, public opinion has been brought to regard infestation as a disgrace; in the town it is often treated lightly. 'What a fuss about a few nits', was the reported response to efforts by medical officers to persuade mothers to cleanse their children's hair (nits are the eggs of lice which stick to the hair).*[1]

It is again pertinent to point out that this sordid state of affair cannot characterise the Islamic society. Even in the prophetic era infestation with lice was a disgrace that was vanished from the community. The Great Teacher recommended regular bath, washing of clothes combing of hair regularly, and where the head lice menaces he recommended shaving the head amongst the males. His teachings spread across all the four corners of the globe to bring positive change. The much needed change and transformation from barbarism to modernism. In this world view, the poor is not pushed out into the cold but lifted up and integrated into the social system. However, after several centuries of suffering from a variety of pestilences, Islamic transforming habits slowly diffused into the West. Poor personal hygiene and overcrowding tended to increase lice infestation and its spread. The cultural landscape, however, began to change gradually and

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 86

steadily with Islamic habits replacing the traditional filthy habits. As the study of 1941 had shown lice infestation became a social problem.

Older school teachers can still remember the days when infestation in the classroom was almost an occupational hazard. "One described her early days, in a Liverpool slum area, when a mobile bathing and delousing unit used regularly to come round the schools. One day a boy told her; I can't go in today, Miss. My mum has sewn me up for the winter."[1] According to the writer, children were commonly stitched into their clothes, which had been lined with newspapers, flannel or even bacon fat, for warmth, and left without a change during winter.[2] They remained for months without bathing or change of clothes. This obviously, stalled the progress of wash ups that was gradually though at a snail's pace being imbibed. Since religious injunction was lacking to back up the imbibed habit, everyone was at liberty to do as he wished. In Islamic culture, in contrast, a child from the age of seven years upwards must perform *wudu* daily and regularly and he is to take bath at least once a week – on Fridays. Thus, before the age of 10 wash up has been well ingrained in his habit. But here we met children who could not even touch water for months throughout winter.

Although it could be argued, the cold was harsh, nobody suggests bathing with cold. In fact, bathing with moderately hot water could be beneficial to health. In addition to washing up dirt it increases blood supply to all organs, thereby minimising any tendency to chilblains and frostbites. The mobile bathing and delousing unity must have to take holiday in winter when large proportion of the children were "stitched to stench" in their clothes. The implication of this unhygienic habit among others was the rise in verminous school children. And when the pupils were verminous so must be their teachers, as infestation with lice or scabies (or both) was described as an occupational hazard. The writer related one instance when he wrote:

> *Another teacher caught scabies, these are mites which burrow into the skin; the Victorians called it the `Itch', and this is probably adequate to describe its effects. The mites came out onto the teacher's chest during the night. He scratched at them, switched on the light and then watched as they all dived back in!*[3]

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 86.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

Where poverty takes its sway, it is difficult to practise both faith and personal hygiene properly and satisfactorily. The central aim of *Zakat* system is to root out poverty and destitution from the society, which we all know breed diseases and social disharmony. Poverty is a societal anathema because it is next to infidelity. It thwarts personal and environmental hygiene and breeds asocial behaviour in the society. And for centuries the Muslims have lived free from such deplorable conditions. The poor in Europe continued to wallow in abject poverty and severe torture, as a result, in England:

> *Many died of starvation; the homeless and destitute resorted to begging. A statute against vagrancy was issued by Edward VI, who succeeded Henry in 1547. A person discovered was branded with a red hot iron with a letter B on his chest. If a person reported a vagrant to the authorities, the vagrant became the slave of the informant. The owner was granted the right to beat, chain or force him to labour in whatever manner he desired. Orphaned children could be retained as apprentices to whatever person found the child. These children could be chained if the master so desired.*[1]

The social system was harsh and cruel even to the orphans, who Islam so delicately protected against molestation and exploitation in whatever form, but they are to be well catered for. But when even these vulnerable and defenceless group was economically exploited humanity had lost its meaning and value. Islam, a mercy to al nations, slowly and steadily spread into the nook and cranny of Europe to put a check into al these barbaric customs and attitudes, especially the large scale exploitation and torture of the downtrodden and the orphans. The global impact of zakat system was brought to use in England. So that in practice the zakat system was operated but under the garb of "poor tax."

In this regard, Queen Elizabeth I passed the first English Poor Law prescribing a compulsory poor tax on every parish. The relief of the poor was no longer an individual problem dependent for solution upon voluntary acts of Christian charity but a national duty exacting a compulsory contribution toward its alleviation.[2] This, obviously, was zakat system in action. It was employed when the Christian charity could and would not produce the desired effects. Islam is a mercy to all nations.

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1 Josephine A. Dolan, *Nursing in Society. A Historical Perspective*, p.87.
2 Ibid.

The system of Zakat, therefore, became a shining example that is worthy of emulation amongst all nations. In Britain, however, it was only in the 19th century that a remarkable growth of voluntary organisations to cater for the less privileged was achieved. The poor law, like all eked out laws, was not based on any religious precepts; it was abused with impunity. This was reflected in a reaction of public opinion against the harshness of the poor law.[1] So public spirited individuals and organizations came in to salvage the deteriorating condition.

At this juncture, one could speculate that the sense of philanthropy that began to rise was prodded by two factors: Islamic cultural inroad and colonised nations had provided the alternative source of exploitation, so economic exploitation shifted its base from within outward. However, the writer said that some of these organizations were philanthropic in character, while others were based on the principle of self-help. They were not as such motivated by religious fervour. Only few could assert sincerely that "we feed you for the sake of Allah alone no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks" as the Book of Civilisation stipulates. Thus, friendly societies and kindred organizations helped their members in sickness and misfortune, employing club-doctors to serve us contributors within their schemes.[2] In this endeavour, the infant life–protection society was formed to stem the practice of baby–farming and the national society for the prevention of cruelty to children, to protect the child.

Between 1870 and 1891, elementary education was provided free of school fees and made compulsory. The gains of these poor children were the corresponding loses of poor colonised children abroad. However, all these enacted laws arose because religious precepts to serve their functions were grossly lacking. This gave rise to a maze of societies of varying intent and purposes to cater for the less privileged and the downtrodden. With *shariah* in practice, however, such acts and laws would have been superfluous, to say the least. This is because it suffices the Prophet of Islam to make acquisition of knowledge a compulsory duty upon every Muslim – both males and females. This was to mean that free education was to be provided at all levels in Muslim society that is affordable. The benefits of Islamic worship is become even more glaring when the life and social behaviour of Muslims are compared with societies in which shariah was not practicable.

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1 Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p. 323
2 Ibid

The *zakat* system, to reiterate, takes the interests of the poor and provides them with social security without taking unduly influence upon the rich. The society therefore thrives in social harmony and free from pestilences and social crimes. England was forced to adopt a similar system in a different guise or approach. According to the writer:

> *A distinction was made quite early between the sick and disabled on the one hand and the able-bodied beggar on the other. But while there was some show of sympathy towards the former, in pre-Tudor times, legislation reflected almost unexceptionally society's repressive attitude towards the poor. As we have seen, an increase in the number of unemployed during the Tudor period created serious problems. Repressive measures were tried, but without success. It became apparent that some form of relief had to be provided; and the recognition of this fact led to the passing of a number of acts of parliament, and culminated in the Poor Law Act of 1601.*[1]

What is discernible from this account was that the poor was catered for not out of benevolence sense of brotherhood of the Christian ethics, but it was necessitated by the fear of the severe backlash of increase in the vagrant unemployed, for they would constitute a serious social menace of serious scale and dimensions. It would have been a paradox or internal contradiction, if a system of economy that bypasses the poor would turn round to establish a system that would cater for them. This means the philanthropic gestures were to gild the pill of the pangs of severe economic exploitation. This became necessary especially when it was discovered that suppression could prove very disastrous. Even then there was no attempt to root out poverty from the lot of the people. This situation is antithetical to *Zakat* principles. Grundy pointedly observed this:

> *The Act of 1601 embodied a number of fundamental principles. Institutions were established to house the poor, local rates were raised to maintain them; the able-bodied were put to work, and pauper children were apprenticed to a trade. The care of the poor became a local service based on the parish and supervised by justices of the peace, and relief was afforded to such special categories as the aged, the sick, and the pauper child. Many years were to pass, however, before poverty was seen as a social adversity to be treated, and if possible prevented. The prevailing*

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[1] Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, p. 323

> *attitude was to treat it as a moral insufficiency, an attitude which remained the key note of poor law administration until recent times. Little wonder that a stigma attached to poor relief which has died hard.* [1]

Since the western economic system was and still is decidedly against the poor, "to apprentice pauper children" as it was claimed was to subject them to a new method of exploitation of child labour, that was in line with the economic system. A system that is obstinately brutal to the poor and exists where they have no soul, cannot in the final analysis provide them relief and succour. The Prophet (s.a.w) must be credited as the foremost crusader against poverty in history. He was unambiguous in his critique of poverty and its adverse effects, and he was emphatic that it must be rooted out; he described it as "next to *kufr*." It is, therefore, a most odious thing second only to *Kufr* or disbelief as a social anathema. The *zakat* system was established to see that poverty was reduced to the barest minimum; in contrast, poverty was only recently "seen as a social adversity" in the West to be treated and "if possible prevented." There is internal contradiction in the statement because those who advocate capitalism cannot at the same time wage a crusade against poverty. The two don't share a common ground. This is because poverty is one side of the coin, and capitalism its other side. Although, it could be said that the lot of the pauper child, had tremendously improved in the industrial nations, it is only at the expense of millions of children in the colonised developing nations, which the discredited system had impoverished utterly, a sincere welfarist care of the poor and the toiling masses is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. This is because Islam is the seal or summit of civilisation.

Islam at the outset established a healthy, progressive and an enduring social structure. Although established in the 7th century the pattern of inter–relations between persons and between the social classes was startling, modern and boundless in time and place. Every society has a social structure: a complex of institutions, groups, power structure and status hierarchy.[2] The Islamic model remains forever exemplary. One is emboldened by historic evidences to assert that Britain became Great Britain only after it imbibed the Islamic social and ethical values and implemented some of them assiduously and meticulously. So its social institutions that are organised complex pattern of behaviour in which a number of persons participate in order to further group interest were

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1 Fred Grundy, *Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, pp. 324 - 325

2 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 455.

mirrored to reflect that of the universal model. The West in general drew heavily from the rich inexhaustible fountain of economic, social, spiritual and healthful values of Islam, especially in the areas of scholarship and learning; hospital and health care system; in general hygiene; decorum and civil behaviour to mention only a few. In the realm of hygiene it must be reiterated again and again for the sake of emphasis that *attahara* was the precursor of modern hygiene.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SEAL OF CIVILISATION

Civilisation, according to a dictionary definition, is a system, stage of social development. It is a defined as progress, advancement, development, education, enlightenment cultivation refinement sophistication and urbanity. Islam as a culture, a way of life has met all the criteria and definitions of an enduring civilisation. Islam had not only satisfied the requirements of a civilisational fore but had practically demonstrated it by establishing a vibrant culture that succeeded the age of ignorance of the 5 and centuries AD. The foremost theme of Muslim thought the foundation upon which Islam rest is the proclamation of the Holy Kalimah that there is none worthy of being worshipped except Allah (s.w.t) and that Muhammad (s.a.w) was the Messenger of Allah (s.w.t). This civilisational culture was uniquely established in the matrix of *tawhid* or pure, unallowed monotheistic tradition. This is the primordial tradition unto which an enduring civilisation could be founded for the meaningful survival of man individually and for humanity in general.

This presentation of religion as a civilisational force should not be surprising because most civilizations before the advent of modernity could be called civilizations because their civilisational trajectory was centripetal in relation to religion, where as what we call modern civilization, or technically un-civilization, is hopelessly centrifugal in relation to its primordial centre.[1] It therefore lacks a religious, transcendental and metaphysical core or focal point of bearing. This was not without severe ill-effects.

Ejaz Akram, in his article Religion as the source of Reconciliation among civilisations quoted Wittgenstein's famous quotes that "the sense of the world must the outside of the world, and the solution to the riddle of life in space and time his outside of space and time."[2] Thus Islam as a force of civilisation came from the Heavens to establish and ennobling culture in the world as well as to provide the panacea to provide practical solution to the problems of mankind... social, economic, spiritual, medical and

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1 *American Journal Of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 19 No .2

2 Ibid.

intellectual. Hence, from its inception, its theological theme had been that the only proper structure of society is to be found in a community which itself rest upon and is shaped by the full and final Revelation, which is the Qur'an, observed Ashby.[1] The Holy Qur'an, which form the core of this civilisational force or culture was described by another British scholar J. M. Rodwell (1918) in his work, *The Koran,* stated pointedly that: "In it sententious or a collar wisdom, and has proved that there are element in it on which might nations and conquering... empires can be built."[2]

In advancing another proof of Islam as a seal as a force of civilization, Bertherand, an English intellectual argued that:

> *On the contrary, those who have followed its counsels. (Quran) have been, as we described in the course of this study, the creators of a civilisation which is astounding unto this day.*[3]

All the eulogies made for Islam were meritorious because Islam had made history, a clean are fait unexampled historic records in all the fields of human endeavour. The results of Islamic achievements are still pouching and astounding unto this day. This is true even though many critics carped at the present crises afflicting many of the Muslim nations. Some western writers even went further to write that Islam is in crisis. This perhaps was motivated by the America's invasion and devastations of Afghanistan and Iraq and with the capture of Iraq president Sadam Hussein, this was to misconstrue the true facts of the whole event. First, Islam as a divine civilisational force can never be in crisis. The "crisis of the Muslims," is not synonymous with crisis of Islam, Bertherand had pointed this subtle difference almost a century ago when he stated that those who followed the counsels of the Holy Qur'an were creators of astounding civilisations. The key word was "those who follow its counsels." Secondly, today the Muslims all over the world are being punished for their negligence and lackadaisical attitude toward Islamic teachings. Thus like Jews during the time of Prophet Jeremiah are facing Allah's retribution for their negligence of duty. This hopeless state of affair of the Muslims has nothing to do with this force of civilisation. Islam remains pure and pristine with the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah complete, comprehensive, immutable and incorruptible.

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1 P. H. Ashby, *History And Future Of Religious Thought*, 1963. as quoted in Yaqub Shah's *West's Tributes to Islam*, p.49.
2 From Yaqub Shah, *West's Tributes to Islam*, p. 114
3 Ibid., p.113

Islam as seal of civilisation, is the final station in the sequence of transmission of knowledge from one civilisation to another with the Holy Qur'an, a Book which explains everything, knowledge will continue to expand only because Islam is the "summit of all civilisations" that can ever be attained. This important point needs to be clarified. The renowned scientific historian, George Sarton, in his *Introduction to the History of Sciences*, was quoted by Abdullah al-Ahsan in his article on History, Profess and Civilisation, where he quoted Sarton saying:

> *We might be tempted to conclude that if mankind had walked humbly and constantly in their (Greek) footsteps, the progress of civilisation would have been considerably accelerated. But if we did this, we would have shown that we did not entirely understand the nature of progress. It is undoubtedly a function of the increase of positive knowledge... Greek civilisation ended in failure, not only because of the lack of character, of morality.* [1]

Throughout the course of history, in every period, and almost every country, we find a small number of saints, of great artists, of men of science. He also asserted that:

> *Our men of science are not necessarily more intelligent than those of the old and the acquisition and systematisation of positive knowledge is the only human activity which is truly cumulative and progressive.* [2]

Sarton then suggested that:

> *The progress of our own studies makes us see more and more clearly how much the ancient (scientists) borrowed from earlier peoples, but by way of contrast this enhances our opinion of their originality and fortifies our admiration of their scientific genius.*[3]

Therefore, civilisations throughout history have learned from the legacy of earlier civilisations. This sequential transmissions which evolved within the last five thousand years had finally reached its seal in Islamic civilisation because it possesses the rare combination of intelligence and moral behaviour. In fact, the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) was sent to raise human moral to the highest perfection. There is no civilisation, past or

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1 *American Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2002), p.52
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

present, that could match its excellence. The Greek civilisation, though much vaunted by the western writers, only paled into insignificance when compared with that of the seal of civilisation. Thus those who purveyed the notion of western civilisation as purely western in origin are wrong. The word is a misnomer. It is Islamic partly and when tawhid is incorporated into it, western civilisation then becomes purely an Islamic civilisation.

The advent of the Prophet (s.a.w) was a mercy to all creatures. To humankind, however, this mercy can be seen in all the facets of human endeavour. With his advent an ideal universal culture which through socialisation and acculturalisation impact positively on the rest of the cultures of the world. Every society has its beliefs, customs, traditions and prejudices. A man acquires these in his everyday social interaction with the people of his own society and those of others. Socialisation therefore is the process by which an individual gradually acquires culture and becomes a member of a social group. Thus through "culture contact" or acculturalisation, the nuggets of Islamic norms and values gravitate into other cultures and positively influence them. When there is contact between two people with different cultural orientations, there is diffusion of culture both ways.[1] There are various ways by which culture contact takes place: (1) trade and commerce, (2) industrialisation, (3) propagation of religious education and (4) conquest. In diffusion of culture unlike in the biological process of osmosis equilibrium is not reached in the sense that the flow is both ways, therefore bilaterally beneficial. The better and more vibrant culture imposes itself on to the other and would gradually replace it. In acculturalisation diffusion brings a social change from integration of superior values until a permanent social charge of habits is accomplished. Wherever Islamic culture gets into contact with another culture, it slowly and ably replaces it, for Islamic hygiene is vibrantly domineering.

Hygiene has been defined as the science of health. It is also the art of health and, as such, seeks its end by fostering ways of healthy living.[2] As this art and science of ways of healthy living passed down the centuries both improved with the contributions of various cultures. In the years gone by the word hygiene is what we now call personal hygiene. It is concerned with simple practices within the choice of the individual. In the past attracted people's attention at various epochs, as values became attached to certain practices such as the right uses of air, water and dietary discretion.

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 455

2 J. R Currie and A. G Mearns, *Hygiene Second Education*, Edinburgh E and S Livingston Ltd. 16 and 17 Teviot Place, (1945), p.1

Presumptuously, modern hygiene took its roots from Islamic concept of *attahara* and its universal impact felt far and wide with the passage of time.

Hippocrates, the renowned Greek physician had, for instance, recommended sleeping in the open air, advised warm baths, and treated his patients mainly with dietary regulations. A century later, Erasistratus, another Greek reinforced the use of dietetics and vapour baths. Three more centuries later, Celsus in imperial Rome, when compiling his work on medicine, devoted four of its eight books to the treatment of disease by diet and regimen. About this time, watering places were much frequented by wealthy Romans and this provision in Rome itself of spacious public baths has encouraged the outward use of water by all classes. However, the culture of use of water for purification began to wane and it was eclipsed globally in the middle of the 6th century AD and Christianity facilitated its demise. According to Currie and Mearns:

> *But with the fall of the Roman Empire in the west the practice of bathing went out of favour and in the end lapsed. In the view of the Church, now rising to power, the body of man in this fleeting world was base, if not essentially evil. To cleanse it therefore as by washing, was either a futile task or a presumptuous sin. A degree of personal cleanliness came to be accounted as praiseworthy, and hermits who notoriously excelled were reverenced as holy men. This strange idea took deep root, and maintained its hold on Europe through the Middle Ages. It stands however to the credit of a hygienically progressive period that the medical school of Salerno had a good system of dietetics, one of the maxims of which recommended joy and temperance and repose to hold sickness at bay when doctors failed.*[1]

In this age of ignorance other cultural forms of sweat baths were also eclipsed in their designations such as the Inipi of the North American Indians, the bania of the Russian, the huamman of the Turks and the Mushiburo of the Japanese. [2] These and many types of bath including the bath of the ancient Romans were almost totally vanished with the demise of the Roman Empire and the devastations that followed its wake amongst rival world empires. Like evil winds these wars, blew nobody any good. Civilisation after several centuries was finally halted and destroyed. The world then looked upon the nascent Islamic civilisation for a new rebirth and growth. So when it is said that Islamic ideology was the precursor of

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1 J. R Currie and A. G Mearns, *Hygiene Second Education*, p. 455
2 *Awake!* Magazine, July 22 (2003) p.21

modern civilisation it was not an exaggeration but historic fact and reality. However, J.H Denison, a renowned historian can serve as an independent witness. He wrote:

> *In the fifth and sixth centuries, the civilised world stood on the verge of chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilisation possible, since they had given to men a sense of unity and of reverence for their rulers had broken down, and nothing had found adequate to take their place... it seemed then that the great civilisation which had taken four thousand years to construct was at the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe was against the next and law and order were unknown...The old tribal sanctions had lost their power...The new sanctions created by Christianity were working division and destruction instead of unity and order... Civilisation like a gigantic tree whole foliage had over-reached the world... Stood tottering... rotted to the core... it was among these people (the Arabs) that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of the east and south.*[1]

This compelling testimony remains incontrovertible, thus implicit. From this account are the following irrefutable facts. First, when the four centuries old civilisation finally collapsed, it was Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) that single-handedly saved the world. And by so doing he meritoriously deserved the epithet "Saviour of Mankind" and "Saviour of Human Civilisation." This rightly implied that he was indeed a "Mercy unto all creatures." This is because without his timely intervention all would have perished and lost irredeemably.

Secondly, since there wasn't any other culture that could possibly unite mankind once again and save civilisation except the Great Arabian, the Prophet of Islam, then it was to refer to him as the "founder of modern civilisation." He renewed and improved the "tottered and rotted" civilisation to establish the Modern Age. Thirdly, Islam in its comprehensiveness and adaptability in the ever changing phases of human progress, it is a force of civilisation in its own right.

To achieve this great feat, therefore, he had to retrieve all that was good for the modern from the debris of the totally collapsed archaic civilisations. Had he acted otherwise, all the investments of human civilisation at various

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[1] J.H Denison, *Emotions as the Basis of Civilisation, as quoted in Syed Y.K West's Tributes to Islam*. p.1

epochs would have been destroyed and all would have irretrievably got lost into the dustbin of history.

Lastly, a new world was created and started afresh from the 7th century AD, with the advent of dominant paradigm – Islam. This means all nations are indebted to it willy-nilly. This defines the irrefutable statement that Islam was and still is a "mercy to all nations!" It is the only civilisational culture.

It could be discerned from this account down the memory lane that with the collapse of the Roman Empire, the flickering light of hygiene was eclipsed. The torch of hygiene was only rekindled by the light of Islam. It was the illuminating light of Islam, which shone brilliantly for centuries in medical school of Salerno.

The Dark Ages or (the Middle Ages as it is often referred to) was a period of collapse and eclipse of science and art as well as of hygiene, with numerous deadly consequences. The priests of the Israelites may in truth be considered as excellent medical officers of public health, as well as direct physicians to their people; and it is evident that long before other cultures recognized it, the Hebrews were keenly aware of the direct transmission of disease from one individual to another in the various ways that was possible. Irving I. Edgar pointed out that most importantly, the priests practised public health measures to prevent such contagious illness, especially in the handling of plaques.[1] This is true because the common thread that links monotheistic faiths is cleanliness. But its science became well established in Islam. Further, both Judaism and Christianity existed at the time the practice of bathing went out of favour because the latter considered outward cleansing of the body unnecessary while the Jews were accustomed to accumulating faeces in their courtyard. Thus religious injunctions of the time were no longer considered driving force to bathing or general cleanliness. But the records of the accumulated knowledge obtained from Torah, Psalms or *Zabur* and *Injil* or the Bible were mostly lost in the aftermath of the devastations of the Age of Ignorance. The genuine classical teachings of the Hebrew Prophets (mostly in oral tradition) were lost. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 was typical of the fate of the written documents.

Nonetheless some of the hygiene was expressed in Judaism and Christianity. Most of which were not in their original forms. "Christianity was working division and destruction as historian Denison pointed out,

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[1] Irving I. Edgar, *The Origins Of The Healing Art: A Psycho – Evolutionary Approach To The History Of Medicine*, philosophical library, New York (1978) p. 37

instead of working for civilisation, it worked assiduously against it. It was against the backdrop of the historical perspective that Edgar's observation should be understood when he stated:

> *If we now examine more closely this Book of Moses, Leviticus, we cannot help being impressed with the fact that it is truly an extensive monograph dealing with cleanliness and un-cleanliness, and it is spelled out most precisely what was `clean' and what was `unclean': clean and unclean foods, clean and unclean living things, clean and unclean human beings, clean and unclean houses, clean and unclean utensils, clean and unclean clothes, etc.*[1]

The contributions of Jewish priests in the development of the science and art of hygiene were narrow and superficial with little or no significant impact on a large scale beyond the confines of Israel border. The spread of Bubonic plaque was a good indicator. Even within the confines of Judah pestilences were abound with amongst the people. The earliest books, including the Bible, gave many accounts of them. In the second book of Samuel we read that King David lost 70,000 of his people in three days from a sudden pestilence.[2] Undoubtedly, the prevalence of pestilences in a society is a strong indicator of poor hygiene. Further the scriptural ordinances in the two Holy Writ, were too inadequate to deal with large scales epidemics and pandemics. Hence pestilences devastated humankind seriously. Mankind against the killer diseases was powerless as epidemics spread across all nations. Bubonic plaque was notoriously deadly in its onslaughts. James Hemming gave its account succinctly:

> *...the first for which records exist started about AD 542 in and around Constantinople. It lasted for fifty and sixty years and spread "to the ends of the habitable world." Killing about one third of the population of the Roman Empire and reducing well-tilled, populated districts to deserts where no man stirred. It is estimated that altogether 100 million peopled died in this epidemic.*[3]

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1 Irving I. Edgar, *The Origins Of The Healing Art: A Psycho – Evolutionary Approach To The History Of Medicine*, p. 37

2 James Hemming, *Mankind Against The Killers*, Longmans, Green and Co. London (1956) p.26

3 Ibid. p. 30

Apparently the world was powerless against the series of outbreak of epidemics and pandemics. There was no saviour against these killers either at national or international scale. As pestilences continued to decimate humankind, with 100 million people already perished, only a few remained to tell the gory story. Thus Judaic contribution to spread of science of hygiene did little to curtail the deadly spread of plaque and other pestilences that were all out to annihilate mankind. Its contribution was of little or no significance at all. It was a time when there was no saviour on the stage so mankind remained hopelessly powerless against the deadly killers. Judaism, as it was a national religion, remained within the borders of Israel as Hebrew religion. It had nothing to offer to the world especially when mankind was on the peril of extermination. It could not even save itself. Further, plaque devastated Constantinople, the nerve centre of Christianity. So what applied to Judaism, the same was applicable to Christianity. Edgar, a renowned historian had this to say:

> *Church ridden Europe was groping blindly in the pall of the Dark Ages "grovelling in the darkness of besotted ignorance", as the historian Lecky puts it: and while Jewish scholarship was flowering here. While juggling miracles and lying relics were the themes on which all Europe was expatiating, while the intellect of Christendom enthralled by countless superstitions had sunk into a deadly torpor in which all love of inquiry and all search for truth were abandoned...*[1]

The Jews, who used to keep excrements indiscriminately in their homes, the purveyors of ethnic religion could not proffer a universal panacea for the ills that bedevilled and threatened to annihilate humanity. However, with the world lacking a saviour the most skilled of physicians and philosophers could do nothing to salvage the world against the menacing inroads of deadly epidemics and pandemics. The world had to wait desperately for the advent of Al–Mustafa, a Mercy to humanity. Further, as nations fell one after the other from the deadly killers, both Judaism and Christianity could not produce such a great personage, for they lacked the inherent perspicacity to transform the world to a better habitat for mankind, to check and reverse the trend of pestilence. They lacked the know-how and the means to create the modern age. The reason was that they were national religions within an ethnic enclave though with closer affiliation with Islam. All were members of Abrahamic faiths. Both were national religions of the

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[1] Irving I. Edgar, *The Origin Of Healing Art*, p. 132

Hebrews. All decidedly awaited for the youngest epoch-making religion of *al-Islam*. It was with the advent of this youngest member of the Abrahamic faiths that Muhammad (s.a.w) single-handedly revolutionised the world, and meritoriously won the coveted titles of Saviour of Mankind, the Educator of Mankind and the Greatest Man in History. As the historic account of Denison had all consistently indicated, where all failed, he succeeded and then excelled because he was taught by "One Mighty in Power and Wisdom."

While Judaism and Christianity gave their best, the best was however not significant enough to save humanity against epidemics and deadly pandemics. Furthermore, there was no other culture - Greek, Hindu and Chinese, etc.- that could offer the way out for mankind, when humanity was caught in the doldrums. It was only Islam coming later in the monotheistic tradition that was destined to lead the world out of its quagmire. It was only with the advent of this epoch-making creed that mankind finally won its chronic battle against the "killers." It must be re-emphasized that it was Islam that gave soul to the celebrated medical school of Salerno, the nerve centre of the transmission of ideas between Islamic East and the West. It was from this famous school that the transformation light of Islam began to shine slowly into the dark recesses of the West. *Attahara* came with the advent of Islam to revive and expand hygiene; obviously *attahara* was the originator of hygiene at the dawn of the Modern Age.

"Sewage is king," said Benjamin Disraeli and in 1875, his government introduced the Great public Health Act, which brought together all the public health laws over the previous 30 years into one all-embracing code. It covered everything from drainage and quarantine to mortuaries, building regulations and the quality of water supplies, and was only superseded by the current Public Health Act in 1936.[1] Thus with these measures, Israel abandoned its traditional habit of keeping faeces in courtyards. And it finally joined the bandwagon of nations who exploit the benefits of a superior civilisation.

Now armed to the teeth with historical facts, we can now speak boldly and more eloquently with out any fear of contradiction of such imperishable statements like, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was the saviour of humankind, the saviour of civilisation, the founder of modern age and a mercy unto all creature, etc. These epithets and a lot of others were not exaggerations or emotional outburst, but they were meritorious appellations

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.45.

of historic realities. Further, it is ideal to say that *attahara* provided the steps to civilised behaviour.

The Dawn of Civilised Behaviour

Islam restored the science of hygiene, expanded its scope and made it an obligatory social habit that is superior to religious acts of worship. So that man through the force of social habits could overcome communicable diseases that beset and decimated humanity for too long a time. Without this important factor disease, cure, prevention and control could not have been possible. Park's account on the subject matter is quite revealing: Hygiene has two aspects – personal and environmental.

> *The aim of personal hygiene is to promote standard of personal cleanliness within the setting of the condition where people live. Personal hygiene includes bathing, clothing, washing hands and toilet; care of nails, feet and teeth; spitting, coughing, sneezing, personal appearance and inculcation of clean habits in the young. Training in personal hygiene should begin at a very early age and must be carried through school age.*
>
> *Environmental hygiene has two aspects – domestic and community. Domestic hygiene comprises that of the home, use of soap, need for fresh air, light and ventilation; hygienic storage of food; hygienic disposal of wastes, need to avoid pests, rats, mice and insects. Improvement of environmental health is a major concern of many governments and related agencies throughout the world...*[1]

Park's account on hygiene mirrored clearly the prophetic teachings of hygiene in the arid region of Arabia in the 7th century. This indicated pointedly where hygiene arose. Civilised behaviour was an Islamic legacy to modern world. What is civilised behaviour? It is a refined manner or habit. And central to the mission of the Prophet (s.a.w) was to raise the human manner to its highest perfection. He was very successful in achieving this object. Thus civilised behaviour remains his legacy in this modern world. Personal hygiene helps to polish this human conduct to make it ideal of a Muslim and his unique characteristic. The Prophet (s.a.w) had attained the loftiest stand "most sublime and exalted character." In Islam human character and comportment are of cardinal importance, it is

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[1] *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 606

only Islam which cares about human and describes man the lofty of creation or *mashrufal makhluqat.*

Coming now to modern times, we can see the impact of this great religion, and discern a turning back to the Greek aspects of medicine. The Islamic influences were slow in their inroads in the early stages but more rapid at the close end of the 19th century. In changing the cultural landscape of the Western World, the well entrenched poor sanitary practices of people in the West, as we have seen had their roots in centuries old customs, styles of living and habits. They were not so easily altered. The foundation of modern age laid was slowly. Intellectual inquiries were stimulated and hygiene and general cleanliness were slowly and ably advocated with promising results. These were seen in many movements that arose to unsettle the *status quo*. For example, John Wisley, a pioneer of a movement, who advocated the open air life with plain feeding, while Tobias Smollett published, "an essay on the external use of water", and toward the end of the eighteenth century James Currie was employing effusions of cold sea water to control pyrexia. Accordingly, the nineteenth century medical baths of various kinds and temperatures were increasingly used for the sick.[1] It is pertinent to state that in contrast, several centuries earlier, the educator of mankind had popularized the science of hygiene and the use of water to quell rising body temperature, improve hygiene and for domestic uses.

Narrated Nafi: Abdullah bin Umar (r.a) said: the Prophet (s.a.w) said "fever is from the heat of hell, so put it out (cool it) with water." The use of cold water to tepid sponge in the treatment of pyrexia arose from the Arabian Desert and became a popular method that gained currency at that time. It only came to Europe, however, towards the end of the nineteenth century. This use of cold water to bring down body temperature was startling in its moderness:

> *Narrated Fatima bint Al–Mundhir: Whenever a lady suffering from fever was brought to Asma bint Abu Bakr, (r.a), she used to invoke Allah for her and then sprinkle some water on her body, at the chest and say, "Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) used to order us to abate fever with water" (Bukhari).*

Thus treatment of high body temperature with sprinkle of cold water on the body or in modern term `tepid sponging', when wet cloth is used to rub the body, worked on the same principle, "water abates fever." It was the

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[1] J. R Currie and A. G Mearns. *Hygiene*, Second Education pp. 1 - 2

Prophet's teaching after centuries of slow and steady sojourn that finally arrived in Europe and is now accepted as an acceptable method of temperature control. To establish civilised behaviour Islam introduced regular bathing for ritual and for general cleanliness. This singular habit was alien to the West, especially England, before the 19th century. It was to the credit of Islam, a civilisation force for reintroducing and perfecting bathing to the modern world.

Reintroduction of Bathing Habit

Islam, a force of civilisation, reintroduced bathing to the modern world, after its eclipse following the global devastations of the age of ignorance. Baths, the rooms or buildings containing facilities for washing or soaking of the body in water, was once again brought back to humanity, as sign of Islamic Mercy unto all nations. A brief safari into the history of bathing would no doubt provide us with better perspectives and insights.

Bathing In History

A cursory look into the history is important because it would lay bare the monumental contributions of Islam to modern age by its restoration of this important body purification. As a force of civilisation, it considered a world where bathing is considered as important would remain perpetually under the perilous microbial devastations, as evidenced by the frequent outbreaks of epidemics and pandemics emanating from areas where hygiene was unknown or neglected. Bathing had been part of religious practice as ritual purification since early times. It was an Islamic habit even in these early times. The Hindus and Muslims were for ages known for ritual purification.

The *Mikvah* in orthodox Judaism and baptism in Christianity were derived from ritual bathing. It had been considered important to health and comfort in some societies, notably those of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Bathing may also have a social function as in ancient times and in turkey, Iran and Japan.[1]

In excavations of the city of Mohenjo-Daro in India, dating from before 2000 BC, bathing facilities had been found. It was also found in the royal palace of Knossos (Knosos) in Crete (Kriti) built between 1700 and 1400 BC. This ancient tradition was also discovered to be practised in the Egyptian royal city of *Tall al Amarinah,* built about 1350 BC. Similarly, paintings on ancient Greek vases were found showing primitive shower

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[1] Microsoft 2000, *Encarta Encyclopaedia.*

arrangements, and Homer also mentioned tub bathing in the *Iliad*. Public Greek baths were at first adjuncts to gymnasiums and had only cold water, but by the late 5th century BC, they were separate structures run by the city, offering steam, hot, temperate and cold rooms, and serving as a social centre for men and women. This commingling of the men and women later reduced bathhouses to centres for sexual frivolities and overindulgences. The earlier known Roman baths were the Stabian baths at Pompeii, built in the 2nd century BC. Their arrangement was similar to the public baths found in other parts of the Roman Empire.

The 5th and 6th centuries AD were the zenith of the Age of Ignorance, with its large scale destructions of all the pillars of civilisation, the tradition of bathing was almost totally eclipses especially with the debacle of the Persian and Roman Empires. Except for the advent of Islam in the 7th century, the age of ignorance would have continued as the Dark Ages. The Medieval era, especially in Europe, was indeed a continuity of the age of ignorance. For it represented all its stood for barbarism, paganism, pestilences and wars. In the Medieval era, however, the streak of bathing tradition that survived the carnage of the previous centuries was almost punctuated and obliterated by the magestrium of the church. This was because the early Christian church, who considered physical cleanliness less important than spiritual purity, did not encourage private bathing, and it censured the licentiousness of Roman public bathing.[1] Thus when the powerful church considered bathing unnecessary the ancient tradition quickly lost its appeal and tempo. This led to the rise of poor hygiene in the west where the influences of the church took sway. This religious proscription of bathing combined with the traditional aversion to bathing by the average European conspired to make Europe a pestilential continent. Bathing, especially in chilly northern Europe came to be regarded as unhealthy and was frowned upon as an indulgence. Medieval builders consequently, overlooked this important habit and paid more attention to fortifications and fireplaces than water supply and drains. Bathing for most of the population was rare.[2]

However, it must be pointed out that the temperate climate of Europe often with its extremely cold climate was not a major factor why the people were averse to bathing. This was because, the Finns and Russians developed steam baths, derived from the steam baths of the ancient Scythain nomads on the Eurasian steppe. In consequence, Finnish and

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1 Microsoft 2000, *Encarta Encyclopaedia.*
2 Ibid.

Russian families built small rooms or huts (Finnish sauna) with benches around the walls. The Scythain culture had spread throughout Europe, steam bath which have been the practice in cold climate. But in the final analysis, Europe imbibed this tradition of bathing from the Muslims and were forced to reform by cholera, typhus, typhoid, etc.

Therefore, bathing remained an Islamic legacy to the modern world. It valued baths for religious, hygienic, and social purposes. It also developed sophisticated bathing facilities. The rich built splendid baths in their homes. Public baths were built in every town that had a mosque. Some large cities, such as Cordoba in Spain, had hundreds of baths, which men and women visited separately.[1] Islam as a force of civilisation restored or recovered bathing from extinction, it improved the habit to make to simple, practicable and efficacious. Islam modified bathing from the 7th century when it established the modern age. In the past, bathing was performed mainly for religious reasons. But these religions were often magico-religious, as such these baths were often injurious to health. They involved bizarre practices, oiling of the body sometimes through several temperature, during which scraping of the body of oil and sweat was followed. In some other cases, religious oils, concoctions and other harmful substances were used during the "anointing." Thus most of these religious baths were injurious to health. Hence, in view of thee scientific basis. It introduced the following changes:

- Religious baths: must be governed by rules and regulations. There should be conditions which make bathing obligatory.
- The bath must be performed privately.
- The duration of religious bath must not exceed seven days. Unlike the previous practices when bathing may take months or years. It makes religious bath obligatory every Friday, that is once a week.
- It makes the use of pure water necessary for the religious bath. In the past, all forms of filths and sewage could be used or applied on the body in the name of religious bath.
- It prohibits the use of oil, heating and scraping the body which could be injurious to health. It recommends the use of clean and cleansing, enough to wash the impurities.
- It specifies the rules and describes how the religious baths should be performed.

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[1] Microsoft 2000, *Encarta Encyclopaedia.*

- It removes the concupiscence and indulgence practices associated with Greek and Roman baths by introducing gender segregation.
- Islam also indicates conditions in which religious bath must be performed, e.g. after mating.
- It makes religious bath a distinct entity and separate from sweat bath. Sometimes, the two could be performed, one after the other.
- It recognises the importance of sweat bath and lays strong emphasis on its practice.
- Islam says purification is half of faith.

Islam, is truly a force of civilisation. It filters all the injurious acts associated with bathing, then improves it and reduces its difficulties to make bathing simple, efficacious and practicable. Hence, without Islam, obviously, there would have been no human civilisation. The age of ignorance which it succeeded would have since ended the world. This force of civilisation is indeed a mercy to all creatures.

Roman Baths

The Age of Ignorance of the 5th and 6th century AD swept away many cultural practices. Bathing which was practised for centuries was also affected. The earlier known Roman baths were the Stabian baths at Pompeli, built in the 2nd century BC. The baths, however, in time degenerated into resorts of idleness and indulgence.[1] The ancient Rome lost its traditional baths which included a hot room and a steam. What was left now only the archaeological relics of that ancient civilisation. The Roman baths unearthed at the Caracalla bath covered 11 hectares that could accommodate 1,600 bathers.

Temescal Bath

The temescal of Mexico was used by the Aztecs, the Zapotec, the Mixtec and Maya; only its relic survived. This bath was for therapeutic and purification. When the occasion demanded the bath was taken for the purpose of coming-of-age rites, child-birth, burial of relative, and other tribal ceremonies.[2]

In the temescal emphasis was not placed on cleanliness; it was not placed more on symbolic rites than for the improvement of personal hygiene. The temescal which means bath house was a rectangular or round

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1 Microsoft (2000) *Encarta Encyclopaedia.*
2 *Awake!* Magazine, July 22 (2003) p.21

abode structure with a vaulted roof. In it volcanic rocks were heated, and steam was produced by throwing herbal teas, such as rosemary and eucalyptus on the rocks. The bather was gently whipped with ritual medicinal plants, and the ceremony was ended by aspersion with cold water.[1] This bath has little or no hygienic value; it was essential therapeutics bath large. Thus the ancient Maya civilisation contributed very little to the world of modern hygiene. This temescal was discredited for want of morality since both males and females were whipped into the bath. They Spanish friars fought against this custom during the viceroyalty because considered mixed gender bathing inappropriate.[2] Obviously, many participants under the garb of spiritual purification might be motivated by sexual gratification in some form.

Finnish Bath

The finish sauna bath was the much vaunted; it was claimed to have been in existence for about 2000 years. It differs from the Roman or Turkish baths in that the Finnish Saunas are panelled with and furnished with wood because of its poor heat conduction. High temperature can be achieved without bathers getting burned by the benches, rails or walls. Although the Sauna bath claims some health benefits, there are, however, mixed opinions about these benefits Sauna bath enthusiasts claim.[3]

Sauna bath and the habit of taking a bath in the tub is not hygienic. While sitting in a tub full of water, all the dirt from the body floats over the water and sticks to the margin of the tub. When the water is allowed to drain away the tub is filled with clean water; the dirt that has stuck to the body and sides of the tub contaminates the water. If the tub has to be used, the best way is to wash the lower part of the body and armpit first. Then clearing the tub again, fill it with water and stay in it as long as is desired. Lastly, wash the whole body with running water. [4] While saunas kept at a moderate temperature are usually not harmful they should be used by victims of high blood pressure, heart diseases or severe inflammation of the eyes or nose.[5]

There are many types of baths today but none can be compared with the Islamic bath for safety, simplicity, cost effectiveness and proficiency in purification. And the frequency and regularity of its performance makes a

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1 *Awake!* Magazine, July 22 (2003) p.21
2 *Ibid.*
3 *Ibid.*p. 22
4 G.M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, pp. 11- 12
5 B. Hafen and K. Frandsen, *An A – Z of Alternative Medicine*, p. 88

Muslim a civilised human being in the real sense of the word. Further, when the habit of bathing was lost in the aftermath of the Age of Ignorance, it was the office of Islam that restored, improved and perfected it for the benefits of the modern world.

Japanese Baths

The Japanese also set great store by social bathing. Almost every house had a bath, which was an indoor wooden tub or a garden pool.[1]

Regular Bathing

It was Al-Mustafa (s.a.w) who taught the modern world to take bath regularly. He came at a time when bathing was not only considered unnecessary but the habit was scoffed at for centuries. There was little or no link between bathing and personal hygiene. The view of Christianity that outward wash up was unnecessary was rooted deeply in the psyche of the Europeans up to the middle of the eighteenth century. "... Seaside resorts like Margate and Brighton began to attract visitors for a "sea cure", wrote Lionel Rose. "The object of bathing was to cleanse oneself internally rather than externally. At bath men entered the waters fully clothed, "a hired in the very pink of fashion." The prejudice against total bathing for bathing sake was still strong...[2]

Gebhard, in his *Microbiology* made his readers to note pointedly:

> *During the Middle Ages, swinging was discouraged almost to the point of extinction as sport because of the belief that the great epidemics of the period were caused in part by swimming in open waters and because of the active religious opposition to pubic bathing, stirred into indignant action by the immorality of the public bath houses.*[3]

The previous cultural practices of bathing were lost during the Age of Ignorance of the 5th and 6th centuries. The Greeks and the Romans who looked with great favour on swimming as an effective and highly describable form of exercise, such practices were lost with the decline and devastations of their civilisations. What later emerged in Europe was aversion to bathing and swimming was avoided due to the prevailing belief that it was the cause of epidemics. The civilisational Islamic culture, which renewed and improved bathing ethics were also rejected on the premise that

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1 Microsoft 2000, *Encarta Encyclopaedia.*
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 18
3 L P. Gebhard, *Microbiology*, pp 152 - 153

purification habit was symbolic of Islam. The praxis was not modified until after incessant waves of epidemics that decimated towns and cities. It was the goading of deadly diseases that paved the way for the Islamisation process to make inroad finally into the West. It was only in the nineteenth century that swimming, bathing and water sanitation were well rooted and established in the West. It was only then the discovered ruins of Aquae Sulis, the great Roman bath at bath, became an important historic relic.

This prejudice against total bathing was shown by the then British nobility, the literati and the masses alike. Similarly, personal cleanliness was totally neglected, and to reiterate, a sixteenth century courtier wrote wonderingly of Queen Elizabeth: "She doth bathe herself once a month whether she require it or not."[1] The monthly bathing of the Queen could no doubt arouse curiosity because the traditional habit was to wash twice a year. Thus when one could do it once a month the "new habit" became news, Peter Chrisp, in his book. *The Rise of Islam* quoted the work of Al – Qazwini's *Historical Geography* in which he wrote about the habits of the Franks:

> *... But you shall see none filthier than they. They do not wash more than twice a year. They shave their beards, and after shaving they sprout only a revolting stubble.*[2] *Franks was the name given by Muslims to Crusaders, Norman, Italians, Germans, English and Franks or Frenchmen.*[3]

The people of the West were not the originators of modern hygiene. They improved it and became the major, the beneficiaries of a boundless impact of a civilising culture. When the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) arose he found the world overwhelmed by many vices, notable amongst which were filthy habits, idolatry and barbarism. He wasted no time in restoring and expanding hygiene befitting to a modern age. He took up cudgel against polytheism and other acts of anti–social behaviour. In the arid region of Arabia he made *attahara* obligatory and bathing regularly. He also made bathing compulsory when there is spiritual pollution (after sexual intercourse) to both male and female; after menstrual cycle in the female and bath every Friday, etc.

The great teacher of health and hygiene left a lasting legacy to both medical and modern world, the habit of regular baths. This became

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.2
2 Peter Chrisp, *The Rise of Islam*, Wayland Publishers Ltd. (1991) England, p. 33
3 Ibid, p. 31

acceptable globally towards the end of nineteenth century. The impact of his teaching was also deeply felt in Europe. Currie and Mearns wrote:

> *Then people in good health also took to bathing. They found it invigorating, pleasant, and conducive to self-respect. A complete bath at least once a day has become good form in Britain. The law too has declared for bathing, prescribing that baths must be installed in subsidised houses. Public and school swimming baths also are widely available, and at coast resorts, where health and pleasure join, spacious facilities are offered for sea bathing. These are the right uses of water.*[1]

Presumptuously, it must be stated that Britain had finally been partially 'Islamised' with the culture of regular baths and swimming. It had, as a result, buried her habit of great unwashed for good, to emerge as one of the cleanest nations in this modern age. It was Islamic influence that slowly and ably transformed the medieval hygiene and hence Europe to imbibe Islamic social habits that are in consonance with modern hygiene. It must be recalled that the medieval hygiene had sought against many overwhelming odds to hold disease at bay, but only just. Europe had remained for several years, a pestilential nation.

Britain having been spurred to accept the healthful changes, however, began to show some positive changes, as the law-making that accompanied the practice began to take root. This attempt represented a collective effort to safeguard the community against unsanitary procedure by its component individuals. It was on record that in England up to the 17th century the measures adopted for this purpose, apart from an occasional excursion into quarantine or water supply, mainly amounted to prohibiting nuisance of various kinds.[2] The editors, writing on this account stated that in the eighteenth century the rise of the humanistic or humanitarian movement, sponsored by Wesley, Howard and other high minded men, inspired new ideals and fresh vigorous humanism. Thus by fixing attention on the essential unity of the social fabric, created a more lively sense of public responsibilities and evoked a new chivalry to protect the weak. In other words, the "culture contact" with Islam in Spain and elsewhere had begun to bear positive fruitage.

The tempo of Islamaphobia began to wane in the West to allow for the infiltration of perceptible Islamic influences. In 1557, rules were

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[1] Peter Chrisp, *The Rise of Islam*, Wayland Publishers Ltd. (1991) England, p. 33
[2] *Ibid.*, p.4

formulated by which the charitable institutions for the sick poor were to be managed. Under this system, many hospitals became "houses of correction." Any patient able to work was recruited for service and the work day extended from five o'clock in the morning to eight o'clock in the evening.[1] A sense of humanism arose although lacking religious sensibility it, however, had some Islamic social welfare support.

One of the fruits of humanism was the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802 which provided for pauper children bound apprentices to masters that they should not have to work more than twelve hours a day, that they should not have to sleep more than two in a bed, and that they should be taken to church at least once in a month. These provisions marked the beginning of industrial hygiene. It must be discerned that it was at this period that Islamic influences reactivated, reinforced the vestiges of the Christian ethics and had began to show maximum effects. These health and moral act became necessary because the growth of towns came as aftermath of Industrial Revolution. Many countries were transformed into industrial societies. The need for health and moral culture became both imperative and decidedly very pressing. Especially when local government, which was initially based on a parish vestry system suited to a static village society was faced with such population growth caused by migration from countryside. And added to this, was the sudden acceleration in the overall rate of growth of the population.

There also came along with the beginning of industrial hygiene, the recognition of the link between sickness and poverty. This brought the question of the sick poor. The Act of 1835 for the Regulation of Municipal Corporations opened out new prospects of effective local government. Demands were made for reforms in which Southwood Smith, Edwin Chadwick, the Seventh Earl of Shaftsbury and Sir John Simon played their valued parts. So it came that communal effort received a philanthropic bias and hygiene was guided in the direction of social services.[2] This report provides the clue to the key understanding between progress and civilisation. For instance, the western civilisation as we have seen drew heavily from Islamic society. In other words, it took a lot from Islamic baggage of knowledge.

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1 Josephine A. Dolan, *Nursing In Society – A Historical Perspective*, p.87.
2 J. R Currie and A. G. Mearns, *Hygiene Second Education*, p. 4

Baggage of Knowledge

It goes without saying, from this perspective, that Islamic society had a better start than other cultures in various departments of social services, because the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah gave it a 'baggage' of cumulative experience of the past and opened to it a vast vista of knowledge that is waiting to be tapped. Thus Islam stimulates the inquiring minds and makes compulsory the acquisition of knowledge. The Prophet (s.a.w) warns that a Muslim must either become a teacher or a student, a listener or a seeker of knowledge, otherwise he would be ruined. This warning was both timely and pertinent. It was made to give the Muslim Ummah a competitive edge; to lead as well as to maintain the global leadership. He predicted that the mastery of the world would be by those who maintained the spirit of *Iqraa* and uphold its tenets. The Muslims, therefore, started from a vantage position having a head-start over other nations in socio-economic, medical, political and spiritual development. This vantage position met the description of Professor H. Bondi's, "baggage" who averred:

> *It is very easy to make the mistake of believing that people who didn't know what everybody now knows must have been extremely stupid. This is entirely and utterly false; there is not the slightest reason to believe that human intelligence has improved; the only thing that has improved, in a certain sense, is education. Each new generation receives as its "baggage" the cumulative experience of earlier generations, and since the amount of experience is increasing all the time, this means that each generation has a better start than its predecessors.*[1]

There are two aspects in this disposition: "Human stock of education and its 'baggage'." The phenomenon of the Holy Qur'an is a fountain or baggage which contains inexhaustible and unlimited knowledge of encyclopaedic dimensions. Muslims contributed immensely and meaningfully to man's stock of knowledge. They tap continuously from this inexhaustible baggage. They also protected the previous accumulated experiences of the past civilisations in the form of a 'baggage' decisively when it was about to be irretrievably lost in antiquity. Furthermore, their contributions were not merely of compilers, protectors and transmitters of the previously accumulated stock of human knowledge, they were and still are positive contributors of original ideas to this common pool of

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[1] S. T Butler and M. Messel (Eds.), *Apollo and the Universe*, p. 228

education. It was when and only when the early Muslims transferred this valuable baggage to Europe that it was spurted into intellectual activities. It was a mutual assent of *consensus ad item* amongst the historians that without this vital and crucial contribution of the Muslims, scientific progress as we know it today would have been unattainable. Islam left an important legacy to humanity enriching this "baggage" and passed it unto Europe. It was this baggage that spurred and quickened the intellectual ferment of the West that culminated into the Renaissance, Reformation and the era of Enlightenment. The Muslims in possession of baggage of knowledge were able to achieve mastery of the world. They had a better start with the Qur'an and Sunnah as revealed inexhaustible knowledge of encyclopaedia so they were able to quickly assume the mastery of the world. Further, their intellect was stimulated to give enormous contributions in sciences and other fields of knowledge acquired through the personal efforts of the Muslims.

Muslims received the most comprehensive baggage of education from the inexhaustible fountain of knowledge of the Holy Qur'an that is ever changing phases of civilisation. Islam, coming as the last of the Abrahamic traditions, contains the cumulative education of both Judaism and Christianity and improved upon them. It added into the tradition an encyclopaedic knowledge that is beyond the ken of man. Thus Muslims, in possession of the Book that explains everything, first became the teachers of Europe and then the rest of the world. When Islam arose on the horizon of pagan Arabia, it was dominated by various harmful customs each of which was alone sufficient to destroy a nation.

However, in that dark era when human awareness and consciousness were darkened by vicious customs and perverse habits, Islam, with a great leap, which was an unprecedented phenomenon in itself, shook the society out of its state of slumber and neglect and called the people to abandon customs and irrational and unreasonable practices.[1] And when it did the Arabs became masters of the world. This was due to the Phenomenon of the Qur'an. S. P. Scott, a renowned historian captured the dazzling impact of this phenomenology. He wrote:

> *In the moral as in the material world the most perfect and durable forms and systems usually arrive slowly and almost imperceptible gradations at ultimate maturity, but to this rule Islam was a striking exception. It attained the summit of its greatness, and*

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[1] S. M. Musawi Lari, *Ethics And Spiritual Growth*, Foundation of Islamic C.P.W, Tehran (1997) p. 44

> *raised the Arabians to an exalted rank in the family of nations, in a shorter period of time than is generally occupied by a people in passing through the primitive stages of their intellectual development.*[1]

Islam, having exalted the Arabs to the mastery of the world, spread to the rest of the world. What it did to the Arabs it did the same to the European nations, and also made them masters of the world. In less than two millenniums of its journey, the Europeans had received a lion's share of its mercy with respect to mundane affairs. Although the majority of Europeans did not subscribe to the Islamic belief of salvation, they were the most avid cherishers and users of Islamic tenets that appertain to social, medical and educational philosophies. Islam taught the Europeans the culture of reading and writing; of hygiene and public health, to help them assume the mastery of modernism. They found Islam at a time when both the nobility and the monks in Europe could not read and write. But culture contact with Islam wrought the miracle. Islam is a mercy to the world and Muhammad (s.a.w) the Educator of mankind as well as its saviour.

Islam civilised the West totally and successfully while Christianity though tried fervently, failed in the attempt. It became at stet with the West in science and philosophy, which it opposed on the grounds of faith. Consequently, the moral and ethical barriers imposed by the church were broken and trampled upon in the Renaissance era. Boissonnade, in his *Life and Works in Medieval Europe*, had this to say about the Europeans:

It was these people and others like them who were, during the early centuries of the medieval period, welded into some semblance of national and culture unity. The barbarians were to some degree civilised. This was, in a large measure, affected by the space of 400 years, under the direction of the papacy, "especially from the time of Gregory the Great, the Church successively converted the Arian Visigoths and Burgundians, the Celts of Ireland and Wales, the Salian Franks, the Anglo-Saxons, and the pagan Germans – all in the space of four hundred years." And in the parlance of today, the church thereby got herself a real job.[2]

The Church tried assiduously to reform Medieval Europe, but the harder it tried the more difficult it became. The "real job" was however successfully accomplished by Islam, her junior sister. Iago Galdston, gave a vivid description of this "real job." He said:

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1 S. P Scott, *History of the Moorish Empire in Europe*, p. 60

2 Boissonnade, *Life and Works in Medieval Europe*, Rouledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. London (1927) p. 65.

> *Among these rude and violent peoples the church laboured to advance social peace. She introduced the right of sanctuary and restricted the right of vengeance. She aided in the repression of anarchy, brigandage, and family feuds: she founded and supported hospitals, lazar houses, and almshouses. She set herself to civilising barbarian society by organizing schools and reorganising education. Having initiated that much, the church, in the person of its scholars and thinkers turned at the millennium to the philosophic and psychological exploration of the mainspring of human behaviour. It took up, in a sense, where the Greeks had left off.*[1]

It could be contented that without the medium of Islam the Church would not have any link with the Greek, much less to begin where the "Greeks had left off." Further, the Greeks left nothing for anybody to lay a claim of. It must be recalled that at the critical period of human history historian J. H Denison stated pointedly that Christianity was working "division and destruction" have taken unity and order. Obviously, it could not have taken anything from the eclipsed Greeks in the 6th century. However, the church had succeeded in generating science and religion interaction.

Science and Religion

Islam took up where the Greeks' Church left off. The Church tried with great assiduity to recreate the West and reform it in its own image but failed in the process with disastrous consequences. It intended to make all sources of knowledge a derivable from and explainable by the authority of the Bible. Unfortunately, with the progress of science many biblical expositions of the physical phenomena stood in contradiction with the established facts of science. As the Biblical doctrine could no longer meet the aspiration of the European intellectuals, there was a serious dissent against religious orthodoxy. This religious dissent was motivated by the harrowing discovery that religion as Christianity exemplified was incompatible with science. The late 17th and early 18th century, marked a period of turmoil as well as intellectual ferment that culminated into atheism as the chosen western ideology. When the religious dissent reached its climax the period was described as an Era of Enlightenment. The Church in its reaction employed the use of force to silence the dissenting voices with serious repercussions. The torch of intellectual inquiry, which

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[1] Iago Galdston, *Historic Derivations of Modern Psychiatry*, p. 27

was ignited by the Greeks sustained by the Muslims was about to be extinguished forcefully, especially when the Church established the panel of inquiry to find and try those upholding views contrary to that of the Church. The panel or the Inquisition tried and burnt at stake many scientists and philosophers for their views. This tendency had further widened the gulf between European intellectuals and the religious orthodoxy. As a result humanism with its positivistic notion came to replace religion in the West.

The Inquisition fell many scientists and thinkers for their views that were in opposition to the Biblical contention. Similarly, many others were killed or excommunicated for upholding a contrary religious view. The victims of the inquisition were abound with in history. Spinoza, a Portuguese Jew born in Amsterdam, fled the Spanish Inquisition. However, the son Spinoza subsequently fell a victim to it. He was a heretic because of his pantheism and refutations of the anthropomorphic God image of the Jewish and Christian religions.[1] Spinoza was publicly excommunicated by the elders of the synagogues when he was twenty-seven years old.

Petro Albano (1250 – 1316), of the school of Padua, attempted to reunite Aristotelian deductive reasoning with the known facts of medicine and was condemned to death by the Inquisition because he minimized spiritual principles. The authors also gave the account of Arnold of Villanova (1240 – 1313), of the French school of Montpellier – the counterpart of the Italian Salerno met a similar fate Villanova was tried for heresy because he attempted to amalgamate Hippocratic principles with demon worship. His recommendation for the treatment of mania was by trephination. Whitwell gave a description of this ancient surgical procedure thus: "The skin is incised in the fashion of a cross and the cranium perforated so that the morbific material will pass to the exterior."[2]

Obviously, Villanova wanted to give an opportunity for both demons and morbid vapours to leave the body, as was the practice in the ancient times. The Inquisition, however, on further reflection was to be seen as a sincere attempt by the Church to prevent the Christian faith from the corruption of paganic rites and practices and irreligious philosophies of pagan origin creeping into Christian faith *albeit* surreptitiously. It unfortunately, turned out to be fighting a lost battle. The odds were overwhelmingly against her. The real job was destined to be accomplished by Islam. Europeans, on the other hand, were wrong in rejecting everything pertaining to the Church including its moral and ethical conducts, which

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1 F. G Alexander and S. T Selesnick, *The History Of Psychiatry*, p. 97

2 J. R. Whitwell, *Historic Notes On Psychiatry*, H.K Lewis and Co. Ltd. London (1936) p. 195

could have saved Europe from the pangs of moral decadence and spiritual degradation they suffer to date. Islam then taking a vantage position became the founder of modern Europe. It meets the tastes, demands and the aspirations of an European who wants a religion that is perfectly compatible with science. The average Europeans are wont to exercising their intellect, satisfying their inquiring mind and to exercise freedom to application of reason as opposed to dogmatism. Islam meets up with all these requirements and many others. Afzalur Rahman in propounding his support for this argument, stated:

> *As man is by nature intellectual, possessing mind, intelligence or power of reasoning. Islam has paid special attention to develop and build his intellectual structure on sound foundations... Islam has laid great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge through experience, meditation and observation. There is a divine injunction making its acquisition compulsory for every Muslim, man and woman and pointing to the boundless and ever revealing treasures of knowledge and truth in nature and in all God's creation. It also teaches him to find the 'truth' and 'reality' of things through reasoning and argument and never accept inherited truths or 'traditional facts' without proof or evidence substantiating them. The Qur'an was the first book to demand proof in support of every 'conventional truth' or 'historical legacy' and to ask 'why' should it be accepted? What is the basis of its contention? On what authority are such claims made? At the same time, it provides proof and evidence in support of its own claims and contentions.*[1]

Islam possesses and provides everything a man needs and demands to satisfy his inquiries before whining over his conviction. It brings light of knowledge and reason to wipe off the darkness of superstition and blind faith. It shares no common ground with dogmatism. Thus its compatibility with science is forever incontrovertible. All that is needed for Europe is to join *en masse* this bandwagon of science and faith, having already incorporated many of its tenets and values; the partially Islamised Europe needs to go further than this. But Bernard Shaw predicted that would be in hundred years to come. It must be reiterated that the foundation of modern civilisation was laid by the Educator of mankind in the 7th century. But the civilising process was slow and gradual.

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1 Afzalur Rahman, *Muhammad (saw) The Educator of Mankind*, p. 138

Steps to Modernity

And according to Wahiduddin Khan, there were four steps to modernity. He said the first three are directly with Islamic revolution. The fourth stage is indirectly related: (i) The period of the Prophet, 610 – 632; (ii) the period of the pious Caliphs, 632 – 671; (iii) the period of Umayyads and Abbasids, 661 – 1492 (including Spain); (iv) the modern revolution brought in Europe, which started in the 15th century after the crusades under the influence of Muslim civilisation.[1]

It must be understood at this juncture; even this fourth stage of modernity was not wrought purely by Europeans *per se,* but by what has been referred to in this context as partially 'Islamised Europeans' which is an indication of an admixture of Islamic and Greek culture. With the exception of the *holy Kalima* and the rest of the pillars of the faith, Europeans had imbibed the rest of Islamic tenets. Cleanliness has now been parcelled as an integrated component of European culture. One will also be startled to find other qualities of the Muslim in his culture such as speaking the truth, being honest in social dealings and punctual with time on appointment. Others include care and visiting the sick, helping the needy, keeping one's promise, pursuit of the use of intellect and reason, abstaining from anger and pride. But on moral and ethical virtues and many others shared in common with Christian faith, they were largely ignored in the aftermath of the Renaissance.

However, in the cultural diffusion Islamic influences went deeper than moral – ethical conduct. A westerner inherently possesses an inquiring mind. This spirit of enquiry finds support and re-edification in Islam; hence it is imbibed in Europe and expressed to the fullest especially with the establishment of Modern Age. Military conquest is a means by which the process of acculturalisation is facilitated. The crusades in this respect had helped to establish a flow and mixing of cultures between East and West, an event that led to the development tolerance of ideologies of modernity as Christians and Moslems had begun to mix, the spirit of tolerance moved both. And according to the co-authors of *Civilisation in the West*, "each side respected the valour of the other" the latter learned chivalry and bravery from the former, it also helped to enrich its linguistics, and literary creativity; Arabic words in western languages testify to the concepts and products borrowed by the westerners – in commercial, bazaar, tariff, the French *douane*, the Italian *dogan* (a customs house, from the Arabic *diwan*, the *sofa* on which the official sat); in foods; sugar, saffron, rice, lemons,

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[1] Wahiduddin Khan. *Islam Creator of Modern Age*. pp. 33 - 34

apricots, melons, and pistachios; in manufactured goods; cotton, muslin, damask (from Damascus) and many others. All the new products proved a stimulus to the markets and fairs of the west.[1]

The West in its steps to civilisation was lucky to have the shoulders of a giant to stand upon; and benefited immensely in its social, economic, political and scientific developments. Its economic boons trebled with the discovery that all Moslems were not savage beasts, as the columniators had portrayed that profit lay in trade with them, and that living together was possible. This must have led Christians to question statements to the contrary even when issued by Rome.[2] The crusades were followed by a period of calumniation during which attempts to misrepresent Muslims and Islam were made through malicious propaganda. Today's comments about Islam are similar. For example, Sir Alfred Sherman stated: "There is a Muslim threat to Christian Europe; it is developing slowly and it could still be checked."[3]

In the same vein Samuel Huntington in his *The Clash of Civilisation* posited that: "The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam…[4] Ever since Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade in 1095 the seed of Islamophobia was planted in the Psyche of the Europeans. The seed had germinated and plant had grown into a tree with its historical roots of Islamophobia deeply embedded in the matrix of the Westerners. In the contemporary time, the September 11 incident had only flared up the highly inflammable and explosive flame of Islamophobia in the West. Further, the image of the West as a tolerant civilisation was not real. Europe has never been able to tolerate people of different faiths and culture in its midst. Its commitment to multiculturalism has yet to stand the test of time. Islamic civilisation, however, has always been a multicultural one because the Qur'an lays down the rights of others.[5]

Islam, therefore, left the legacy of tolerance and coexistence in the spirit of multiculturalism. As a superior civilisation it transcends tribal and racial barriers because it is a universal culture. The Western record of internationalism is appalling and has left much to be desired. Whereas, in all Muslim land, tolerance is shown; Christianity, Judaism and other faiths have not only survived but flourished.

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1 Brinton et al, *Civilisation in the West*, p 187
2 *Ibid.*
3 *The Crescent Newspaper*, June 21 – July 4, 2003, p. 6
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid

The truth was, however, unveiled with commingling of the East and West. And the influence of the crusades upon Western European art and architecture were by no means slight. The Arabs belonged to the iconoclastic group of great builders. The artistic buildings of the best architectural style found in Syria, Spain and Egypt and elsewhere attest to a taste for the building activities among the Arabs. They not only revived the architectural patterns of the ancient world, but also introduced new style, unrivalled in the history of human civilisation. The Arabs architecture of the Umayyad is not only unique but has no parallel in the contemporary medieval world.[1] The architectural artistry shown in the town of Petra underscores the veracity of this thesis. The whole town of Petra, which carved out and fashioned from the solid live rock, with its temples, and residential houses, stores and harems, council halls, and courts, stands out as unique and unsurpassed beauty in West Arabia.[2] The tolerance and coexistence that followed the post crusade period allowed the diffusion of this artistry to the West.

The literary creativity was stimulated too. Spanish Christians complained that their fellow Christians were irresistibly attracted by Moslem poetry with its portrayal of life in the desert, with its camels and horses, its warfare and hunting, its feasts and drinking bouts, and its emphasis on love. This spurred the passion for poetry and creative writing in the West. Thus Arabic love poetry, as developed in Spain influenced the troubadours across the Pyrenees in France and so indirectly the Minnesingers in Germany. Brinton et al, stated:

> *Some of the greatest masterpieces of western love poetry thus find their ancestry in the songs of Spanish Moslems. Besides poetry there is a great deal of interesting autobiography and excellent history in Arabic. The fiction is limited to a few subjects sad misfortunes of a pair of lovers, exciting incidents of life in the capital, with the caliph participating, or the adventures of a rogue. These tales were collected in the celebrated* Arabian Nights *together with stories of Indian and Jewish origin, as well as some that derive from the Greek classics and from Hellenistic works.*[3]

The Arab poetry and fiction provided the necessary stimulation and spark that creative potential of the West with positive fruitage. Many of the

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1 *The Crescent Newspaper*, June 21 – July 4, 2003 p. 8
2 *Ibid.*
3 Brinton et al, *Civilisation in the West*, p. 179

western celebrated poets, writers, and dramatist were inspired and spurred by the Muslims' intellectual prowess and sagacity. Similarly, "in music the 'Morris dance,' was simply a 'Moorish dance,' lute, tambourine, guitar, and fanfare are all words of Arabic origin." The most distinguishing quality of Islamic architecture was its ability to achieve a unity that transcended both region and time.

In the art of beauty and the splendour of the mosque building evoke the beauty of the finest architecture in the world. The mosque needed a front courtyard with a fountain where the faithful must wash before entering. Qur'anic extracts and Arabic calligraphy were inscribed, on many buildings, giving them a beauty which was distinctly Islamic and conveying an art form which was distinctly was unique to the Muslim world. The co-authors graphic description was compelling. The inside was a quiet and dignified place to pray, with a small niche in the wall, showing the direction of Mecca, and a pulpit from which the Koran might be read aloud. Since the Muezzin's call to prayer summoned the faithful, slender towers or minarets were built next to the mosque. The interior decoration was excellent, beautiful and with elaborate geometric pattern in wood, stone, mosaic, and porcelain tile. The interior decoration also utilizes the highly ornamental Arabic script, particularly the names of the first four caliphs and passages from the Koran.[1] This means that building throughout the Arab world should have an Arab identity reflecting and radiating Islamic heritage and culture. According to these authors the great mosques of Damascus, Cairo, Jerusalem, and Cordova are perhaps the finest surviving specimens but there are thousands of others all over the Muslim world.

The centre of Muslim culture is the Mosque. So within three unities of time, place and action, we notice a fourth dimension, that is, direction, an element which is not only the integral part of a mosque, but to be considered in all types of the Muslim architecture.[2] The first mosque, the *Masjid–Quba* was erected in 622AD by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w), a model which was to be followed by generations to come. In 624AD, the direction for the prayers changed from north to south, affecting the entire Muslim architecture and town planning. Within the first 70 years, all the main features of a Mosque were settled, that is the open court, the pulpit, the dome, the minarets, the arches and the niche.[3]

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1 Brinton et al, *Civilisation in the West*, p. 8
2 *The Crescent* Newspaper, June 21 – July 4, 2003, p.9
3 Ibid, p. 8

The Arab architecture improved in originality, splendour and magnificence with the rise of Islam. And with the spread of Islam, it came in close contact with excellent monuments and architectural styles of the conquered countries. The forms and elements which influenced it most are the octagon, cycle, apse, nitche, open court, arcade, pier, column, barrel – vault, dome of stone, timber and brick, and pendentives.[1] The exchange of ideas and flow of culture from the East to the West was one of the most important aspects of tolerance and co – existence that was fostered in the post crusade era, and long afterward.

The impact of Islamic architecture was felt deeply in Europe. The Gothic architecture of the West owes a still largely unexplored and unacknowledged debt to the pointed arches and ribbed vaults, the stone tracery (often called "arabesque") and the other striking features of these buildings in the architecture of the Norman period in Sicily. We can see direct traces of Muslim influence as, of course, we can in Spain. Whose entire civilisation has been permanently shaped also by the Muslims. Through Sicily and Spain came Greco – Roman and Moslem science, philosophy and art.[2] The importance of tolerance and co-existence in the overall development of the West can never be overemphasised. It must be pointed out at this juncture that it was not only Spain whose civilisation was permanently shaped by the Muslims but Europe in general. And Brinton *et al* concurred:

> *When we consider all the contributions of the Byzantines and the Moslems to medieval western culture, we are altogether justified in saying that much light comes from the east.*

The only light shining from the East was and still is the civilising light of Islam. In like manner, we are also altogether justified in saying that this light from the east was the creator of modern age. This is also to say that without the partial Islamisation of western culture the attainment of this Atomic Age would not have been possible. This statement holds despite the fact that most of the western scientists are atheists and agnocists. They therefore lacked any religious proclivities. Thinking along this line necessitates making a distinction between knowledge and the possessor of knowledge. Western knowledge is only 'western' by name but it is international in its contents and conceptual framework with major contributions coming from the Muslims especially in its foundation or

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1 *The Crescent* Newspaper, June 21 – July 4, 2003, p. 8
2 Ibid

formative years. Scientific knowledge is not sensitive to the ideological belief of its possessors. In other words, atheism is not a pre – requisite for scientific and technological progress. Fundamentally, science is nothing but the discovery and the use or harness of the physical laws of nature. These physical laws are like Islamic laws; they benefit whoever applies them in this world because Islam is a mercy to all mankind. Hence any nation can select and implement any of the Islamic principles for its socio – economic and scientific developments without necessarily professing the faith of *al-Islam*. Islam found in the West a foundation unto which it built up a skyscraper. But the mission of Islam is not only success in this world but in the next world. Half knowledge is dangerous; the west should drink more and sink more deeply in this spring of mercy. Presumptuously, it could be restated again and again that without Islam there could have been no modernity for it provided the steps or the ladder to its attainment.

One of the fruits of tolerance and coexistence was that it fostered a mutual understanding of cultures. This understanding then allows a flow of communication to take place, and it facilitated exchange of ideas. Communication is a two – way process of exchanging or shaping ideas, feelings and information. Furthermore, it paves the way for desired changes in human behaviour. Thus when Islam re-established and reinforced the concept of sanitation in the 7th century it subsequently became an established science of safeguarding health. As in all aspects of health sanitary ideas were Islamic contribution to modern world.

The Islamic heritage had left many important legacies. Its health code included principles of personal, public and environmental hygiene. It aroused interests in environmental protection was evident in the requirements of inspection of food, the methods of disposal of excreta, the detection and reporting of diseases, and in the disease prevention techniques. Similarly, the difference between what was clean and what was delineated very clearly. This is because a Muslim must eat only that which is lawful and good (Baqara, 2:168). The law of *halal* and *haram* has spelled out everything clearly. Thus a city is the seal of civilisation as a model of modern city. This was what Islamic city typified.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ISLAMIC CITY

A town or city comes into existence when a countryside produces enough food beyond its requirements to enable a group of people to live without growing their own crops or rearing their own livestock, and devote themselves to manufacturing articles for sale or performing other services for a hinterland. When these goods and services are relatively simple or are sold to the region lying immediately a wider range of goods and sell them to a wider market, or perform more than the simplest services, and if so we may call it a city. It possesses other characteristics or functions: good transportation system to traffic many types of goods; centres of secular as well as religious activities. Again a city is also distinguished by its efficient centre of administration, collection of taxes, the control of armies and dispensing of justice; some of these are dependent or provincial centres but others are metropolitan, the seats of autonomous or independent governments.

Other features include: adequate supply of water, cultivable land, well built houses and constructed roads. The town planning is based on broad and airy roads so that there is obstruction to the flow of traffic and to avoid congestion which helps spread communicable diseases. Our blessed Prophet over fourteen centuries ago while establishing an Islamic city commanded that the people should keep the breadth of the streets seven arms length.[1] Now it is known that wide spacious streets are necessary in maintaining cross ventilation in homes. Thus streets and buildings were constructed to follow the contours of the land on which were built. Even in the arid areas, Islamic cities were known for their efficient means of water distribution through storage and canalization systems. They were able to maintain high level of environmental hygiene and public health at a time when other towns and cities especially in Europe were wallowing in abject miseries due to pestilences and fetid smells.

This clarification becomes necessary because many references of medieval towns and cities were made in the course of our discussion on

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[1] Shahid Athar, *Islamic Perspectives in Medicine*, p. 113

medieval hygiene as compared to that of Islamic towns or cities with this basic clarification. This is because the notion of a "city" whether Islamic or European might mean different things. Thus it could be emphasised that Islamic city existed immediately after the devastations of most ancient cities in the wake of the Age of Ignorance of the 5th and 6th centuries. The crucial role of the person of Allah's Apostle (s.a.w), made his birthplace *Ummu Qurra* the mother of all cities. The epithet was and still is justifiable because the centre of civilisation finally gravitated to *Makkah* where it was moulded and recast to modernism by the single action of a great law giver, nation builder and founder of enduring civilisation, an ennobling culture established in the matrix of *tawhid* or unalloyed monotheism. The darkness of European towns and cities form the Dark Ages up to the late nineteenth century was vanished slowly and steadily by the illuminating light of Islam. Islamic cities had shown candle not only to Europe alone, but to the people of all nations.

The founder of modern civilisation migrated from *Makkah* to *Madinah* where he established an Islamic state at the city of Madinah. The Herculean task before him was colossus and almost an impossible feat to supplant modernism in the real sense of the word in the deeply rooted barbarism and heathens or paganic culture. With divine intervention, however, he successfully achieved his set objectives. Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) was able to reshape the hitherto pagan enclave to emerge after Makkah the best city in the world at the dawn of modern civilisation. He was able to lay down norms of behaviour and provide arrangements for their protection and these norms were introduced at a time when the "law of the jungle" prevailed in the rest of the world. Civilisation begins first with change of behaviour from that of a pagan to a Muslim. This change would then usher in a cascade of changes or transformations in man: coarse savage to well mannered; filthy habits to good personal hygiene; lawless vagrant to law abiding and productive citizen, etc. How the Prophet (s.a.w) established Islamic city to serve a universal centre of civilisation was great and ingenious. Muhammad Akram Khan had thrown some light into how the greatest man in history reshaped in the individual and the nascent society of Madinah conformed to the moral and legal injunctions of Islam. He said:

After the establishment of the Islamic state at Madinah part of the task before the Holy Prophet (blessings of Allah and peace be upon him) was to reshape its institutions, lay down norms of behaviour and provide arrangements for the protection and perpetuation of these norms. The pre-Islam norms required drastic modifications as they had evolved in a pagan culture; the Islamic culture, rooted in the foundations of *Tawhid*, *Risala* and

Akhira could adopt values of *Jahiliyya* of course, it did not out-rightly reject everything that was in vogue. Some of the conventions and values were retained intact, while others were modified and reshaped and integrated into the cultural fabric of the Islamic society. The process was both fast and comprehensive. It addressed the totality of the human situation, from small things as table manners to standards of diplomacy, it did not leave anything out of its orbit.

Besides devising a code of approved behaviour the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) took care to institutionalise the perpetuation and preservation of the code by enjoining upon everyone to engage in *amr bil maruf wa-n-nahyi anil munkar.* In a number of traditions the Prophet has been reported to have emphasised this role for every Muslim. He himself would, so often, undertake inspections of markets to see that merchants did not engage in improper behaviour. Wherever he would see someone indulging in an evil he would forbid him. This function he carried out both as Prophet of Allah and as head of the Islamic state. In this regard, the Prophet has been termed as the first *muhtasib* in the Muslim history. Subsequently when his personal engagements increased he appointed Sa'id b. al-As b. Umayyah as *muhtasib* in Makkah and Umar B. al-Khattab in Madinah.

The first four caliphs of Islam carried out the functions of *muhtasib* themselves, although there are reports of the appointment of a market officer by the Caliph Umar. The provincial governors during this era acted as *muhtasib* on behalf of the caliph. A separate department of *hisba*, with a full - time *muhtasib* assisted by qualified staff (known as *Afrifs* and *Arnins*) was introduced by Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur in 157 A.H. He appointed Abu Zakariyah Yahya B. Abdullah; as such every leader is a stickler of truth, justice and honesty. So that with truthfulness in dealing with all maters and fairness in performance by word, deed and by the pen in all affairs will be proper. Thus the society moves forward, hence it is a city where *shariah* operates to the fullest. This smooth operation is however aided and facilitated by the institution of *muhtasib* and *hisba.*

As for the *muhtasib*, he is charged with the responsibility of ordaining that which is good or proper and proscribing that which is improper in the context of *shariah* in those spheres not reserved to the governors, the judges, the administrative offers or *anl-al-diwan*, and so on and so forth. But the cardinal duty of the *nuhtasib* is to see that *salat* cultured behaviour is well established among the people. When this religious conduct is established other ethics will follow the bandwagon effect smoothly and forthwith. One of the greatest *muhtasib* and the commander of the faithful,

Umar Ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased him, used to write to his governors:

> *For me the most important part of your duties is the prayer. Whoever keeps to it and observes it will preserve his faith; whoever neglects it commits the gravest omission of all.*[1]

Islamic faith must be preserved at all cost because it is the only faith ever to be evolved that engenders health in this world and health in the next world. Further, it is the only worldview that keeps and maintains man in the highest civilised position. It is described as *Ashrafal Makhluqat*, the quintessence of creation. To keep the Islamic city vibrant and progressive the *muhtasib* and *hisba* must be alive and active to their responsibilities. The credentials of the *muhtasib* are *au fait*; a free Muslim male with a high degree of integrity, insight, reverence and social status; a scholar of the *shariah* with a degree indepth knowledge of the social customs and mores of his people. He must be well grounded in knowledge (*ilm*), kindness or *rifq* and excel in *sabr* or patience. He is to discharge amongst other functions those matters: (i) relating to the rights of Allah, (ii) relating to the rights of people and (iii) those relating to both.[2]

Hence the *muhtasib* is a person chosen for his piety, sound knowledge and sterling characters. The institution of *muhtasib* and *hisba* is, therefore, the life current that charges and keeps alive the Islamic city. Many orientalists, however, glossed over the refined and delicate system of governance of Islamic city and failed to capture its machinery at work. Many of them even judged the Islamic city with that of European standard of the 19th century. For example, this report was typical of orientalism that:

> *...a number of scholars, who combined vast knowledge of detail with imaginative power and artistic sensibility, have put forward various ideas in the light of which it appeared that cities in the Islamic world did have a common character. The brothers Georges and William Marcais, working in North Africa suggested that the shape of the Islamic city was determined only in part by the exigencies of power (which decided, for example, where the citadel, the walls and the gates should be), but in part also by their being Islamic; or in other words, by the fact that the city is necessary for Islam, since it is only there that the virtuous life as Islam conceives it can be fully lived. The congregational mosque*

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1 Ibn Taimiyya, *Public Duties in Islam*, p. 27
2 *Ibid.* p. 138

> *in the centre of the city, the religious schools beneath its shadow, the hierarchy of suqs, whose position in relation to mosque and school was determined by the religious role of the goods they sold or the attitude of the shariah towards them, the residential quarters with their ethnic or religious solidarity, the cemeteries and shrines of saints the walls: all these, they suggested, existed and were where they were because the city was a Muslim city.*[1]

The fact that the city was a Muslim city made the whale of difference because it was not only peaceful, clean and hygienic it was progressive in all the spheres of knowledge. When compared with any city of its kind the difference was obviously clear and gulf far too wide. It brilliantly became a shining model to the rest of the world. As Hourani pointed out that: "there is however another type of distinction which must not be left out of sight: that based on differences of time and place, what we might call the Islamic city existed in some sense from the seventh century AD until the emergence of a single worldwide society in our times.[2] But at this time there was nowhere a place could be called a city as compared with the standard evolved. The common character of Islamic cities was uniquely, modern in design and environmental cleanliness and hygiene. These cities were superior when compared with those of Western Europe up to the 19th century.

Max Weber suggested that there were five distinguishing marks of the city in the full sense: fortifications, markets, a court administering a partly autonomous law, distinctively urban forms f association, and at least partial autonomy. What Weber failed to bring it consideration was the factor of environmental hygiene which usually comes along with lack of pestilence. This major difference was usually glossed over the health, personal and environmental hygiene records of the western cities were appallingly horrifying as well as slap-happy. When the Islamic cities were full of healthy and prosperous people, those of the West were pestilential cities and were mere centres of epidemic and pandemic disease. Thus the characteristic features of Islamic cities formed the basis of foundation of modern cities and of civilization.

It was erroneous as well as misleading as Aubin pointed out that the city in the Islamic world resembled other Asian cities in its lack of formal institutions. To put forward such a claim was to depict an abysmal ignorance of Islamic city to say the least. Even its comparison with that of

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1 A. H. Hourani and S.M Stern. *The Islamic City*, p. 12
2 Ibid.

the Chinese society was contradictory and slipshod. This comparison arose chiefly out of a desperate desire to cast shadow onto the glory of Islamic city the precursor of modern city. For example when Chinese city was juxtaposed with Islamic city it was noted:

> *...In the vast sedentary empire, where the hand of the imperial government lay equally on all, a city was simply a piece of land where the population was particular thick (and not always even that); it had no special government of administration, no special function in Chinese's society. In one way the picture is like that of the city in the Muslim world, but in others very unlike; they are all like in the absence of municipal institutions and autonomy, but unlike in the quality and volume of public life. The Chinese city is passive beneath imperial rule, but the Islamic city is active, even disturbingly so, whether it takes place within the confines of a political system willingly accepted or tries to break out of it. It is this positive feature of public activity, rather than the negative one of not possessing what European cities possessed from the eleventh century onwards, which poses our real problem. How did this activity express itself? To what extent, in this respect, did they differ from the cities of China, India, the Byzantine Empire and Western Europe in the same period?*[1]

Many of the orientalists stressed that Islamic city lacked municipal institution, yet they were astounded with the efficiency and effectiveness of its smooth governance. A system that outshone and outclassed that of China was no doubt built on a sound base. What was the modus operandis of these cities? Keeping this question in mind, it is important to point out that the orientalists overlooked many of the essential features of the Islamic cities hence they raised more questions of which they could not provide their accurate answers. For example, a second question can again be cited thus (as they asked):

> *How far are such features as we have described, in the city as human community and a physical entity, peculiar to the Muslim world, and how far are they to be explained in terms of Islam? Both Cahen and Aubin warn us that it is more correct to talk of cities in Dar-al-Islam than of Islamic cities. Cahen shows that many of the characteristics of what we call the "Islamic City" are in fact those of the "medieval" city: of the Byzantine city, of the*

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[1] A. H. Hourani and S.M Stern, *The Islamic City*, pp. 15-16

> *Italian city before the eleventh century, even of the Chinese and central Asian city to some extent.*[1]

Evidently, Cahen's claim was both fatuous and inane. Islamic city could not be unique of its kind as identified in the 7th century AD on the one hand, while on the other hand to be a pot-pourri of the Byzantine, Italian, Chinese and Central Asian city. The speculation was wrong altogether. Further, it did not explain how the Islamic city surpassed them all or which of the features belonged to whom. This wrong assumption, however, pointed clearly that Islamic city had purely evolved with its unique *modus operandi* in its administrative style of leadership. A model that was not seen anywhere else whose brilliance dazzled the world for centuries. Further, even when all this had been said there still remains something which could be explained in terms of Islam. To say that Islamic civilization was urban may be commonplace but is still valid to some extent, Hourani wrote: "the Islamic institutions were concentrated in the cities: mosque, schools, *zawiyas*. They possessed a kind of prestige and strength which neither rulers nor bourgeoisie could ignore, and it was for this reason that they provided a framework for urban life..."[2]

The two questions raised above arose largely due to the ignorance of operational methodology of an Islamic city, which was based on the institutions of *muhtasib* and *al-hisba*. It is pertinent at this juncture to describe briefly the institution of *hisba*, which had immensely helped the progressive and efficient administration of the Islamic city that had for long baffled the western writers and critics. It may be classified into two categories, part of it deals with the general principles of *hisba and amr bil ma'ruf wan-n-n-nahi anil munkar*. The other category manualises right and duties of the *muhtasib*. The role and crucial importance of this important institution of *hisba*, like the rest of material on Islamic *fiqh*, needs to be studied in its literary perspective and intellectual tradition.[3] Perhaps, due to the lack of these literacy and tradition had made the orientalists underestimate its value and glossed over its cardinal importance.

It must be pointed out that it was the *muhtasib* who paid special heed to various municipal services especially hygienic conditions in the town. Thus this office was municipal institution in its own right. The *muhtasib* as a result was the only municipal officer in the Muslim society he would look into the entire municipal administration such as street lighting, removal of

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1 A. H. Hourani and S.M Stern, *The Islamic City*, p. 23
2 Ibid.
3 Ibn Taimiyya, *Public Duties in Islam* p. 139

garbage, architectural designs for buildings, water supply and antipollution sanctions. Obviously, need for a smooth availability of these services on an efficient scale has only increased these days.[1] Thus the hue and cry of lack of municipal institutions was based largely on the ignorance of the institution of *muhtasib* and *hisba* as it operated in the Islamic city. Max Weber even attributed the absence of municipal institutions of Islam to the tribal traditions of the Arabs.[2] Be that as it may, these Islamic cities were never described as pestilential nor known for great stench or offensive smell. The housing and sanitation of these cities were startlingly modern. G.T Scanlon shall presently throw some light into some aspects of mėdieval public service as it operated in the Islamic city.

When Islamic cities were brilliantly shining in most parts of the world they naturally became the role model of cities of other nations. The West particularly drew a lot of lessons from Islamic city especially on hygiene and sanitation. It must be noted as Akram pointed that:

> *The institution of hisba was a Muslim contribution to the human civilisation. It has been claimed by some orientalists that the Muslims borrowed the concept and the office of muhtasib from the Romans. The Romans used to have agronomics in their markets who used to perform similar functions as the Muslim muhtasib. But the evidence to show any connection between the two is both scanty and inadequate. There is little reason to believe in the light of the available evidences that the Arabs borrowed this institution from the Romans because the Muslim institution evolved from the Qur'anic injunction of amr bil ma'ruf wan-n-nahi anil munkar and had a much wider scope than the Roman agronomos or Byzantianian prefect. The office of muhtasib was only a logical necessity of the Islamic state to perpetuate and preserve its social norms. It was not merely a secular office to regulate markets and administer municipal services.*[3]

Furthermore, what ripped the orientalists' arguments to shreds was the question of personal and environmental hygiene. It was the office of the *muhtasib* that kept the Islamic cities meticulously neat, clean and tidy at a time when even the Romans and their cities were not filth-free. When Europe was overflowing with raw faeces in their homes and streets neither was agronomos nor the Byzantium prefect could take up cudgels for those

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1 Ibn Taimiyya, *Public Duties in Islam* p. 139
2 A. H. Hourani and S.M Stern, *The Islamic City*, p. 30
3 Ibn Taimiyya, *Public Duties in Islam* p. 139

who defecated indiscriminately at home, in the office, market places and even in flowing rivers. It was a claim that was baseless and was motivated by mutual envy. Alas! Only few orientalist paid glowing tributes to Islam for salvaging Europe from its own filth and uncouth behaviour.

Many references have been made with respect to Western Medieval housing and sanitation; it is therefore appropriate to give a succinct description medieval Islamic housing and sanitation which arose much earlier. In this case some of the opinions of George T. Scanlon who studied the issue extensibly is that some aspects of medieval Islamic public service were highlighted in *the Islamic city.* He observed that limited to considerations of religion and administration, a study of the cities within the Muslim world does present an appertainable aspect of unity to such a degree that one may speak of the Islamic city.[1] This means that there was at the outset a fructifying sense of city organisation and city life dwelling. And good sanitation was the benchmark of an Islamic city.

It was observed that although the Islamic city might lack internally evolved Municipal Institution, the appointment of the *qadi* and the *muhtasib* and the identity of the scope of their work and powers throughout *dar al Islam* was a "patina" of administrative similarity.[2] This system *ab initio* provided an efficient means of governance that gave a city its own heat, odour, cries, tumult and motion and through which it gained its distinction and more importantly kept epidemics at bay. It must be emphasised that this unique distinction of Islamic city stemmed from Islam whose "Baggage of Education" had at the outset put the Arabs head and shoulder above all other notions not only from the point of Health and Hygiene, but in all aspects of life in general. Thus with the Holy Qur'an it is the orbit of its civilisation, the Muslims were able to show the light to the rest of the world. Islamic civilisation as a result lacked medievalism akin to that of the west.

Islamic cities, as a result remained the shining models in the world for centuries. The best of these models here are the pure Arab Islamic cities such as Basra, Kufa, Fustat, Damascus, Istahan and Ifriqiya. The splendour of Baghdad remained for centuries a shining example. The choice of a place where a city is built is governed by many factors. For instance, Scanlon said: No less important is terrain.

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1 A. H Hourani and S. M. Stern. *The Islamic City*, p.179
2 Ibid.

Fustat was built on an undulant shelf of gabal, it had to store water for a river somewhat distant and in places in which dirt and rubbish could not be dumped, hence the need for civic rubbish heaps and for the direction of possible expansion, for the rivers were too wide at flooding to consider anything but temporary pontoon – type bridges. Isfahan and Damascus were green – belt cities whose obedient rivers could keep the water flowing (and hopefully clean) along the main routes of the city, and the supply gardens were almost immediate to its gates. Ethnic and religious considerations prompted certain arrangements within one city which were quite different in another; economic feasibility and civic health were concomitant considerations placing industry and crafts within or without the city boundaries. Finally, Mores gave reason for domestic arrangements, such that housing was always oriented away from the streets, doors seldom faced one another, for the citizen sought to maintain his privacy and achieve "as complete a withdrawal from the public as possible."[1]

Housing and Sanitation

Each Islamic city was unique in the medieval period in at least four distinct areas: potable water supply from a river; provision for civic rubbish heaps; location of industrial area and maintenance of privacy in homes. Factors such as these, the writer said, worked for the ultimate disposition of the physical elements of the city. Each city was governed and motivated by religious moorings. Consequently, the scope and disposition of the public services required to keep the Islamic metropolis alive, safe and successfully kept epidemics at bay for centuries before the "sanitary idea" came to Europe in the early part of the 19th century. Islam prohibits pollution of rivers and indiscriminate dumping of rubbish. These rulings helped to preserve the rivers and necessitated the use of "civic rubbish heaps" in selected areas as a counter measure to protect the environment. Thus the practice of strict sanitary measures in all the Islamic cities had made them the "Models" of public health for all nations for centuries.

It was recognised that the prime needs of each city were housing and water, connected with former was sanitation, and with the latter, storage. Sanitation required a system of intelligently spread and scrupulously maintained generous supplies of water to keep the city clean and some system of canalization or collection to remove wastes. Each city evolved its own systems, and the individual Muslim gave much thought and time to the

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[1] A. H Hourani and S. M. Stern. *The Islamic City*, p. 182

need for personal cleanliness and the best mode to achieve it for his family. To the degree that he was willing to co-operate and achieve it for his fellow craftsmen and / or guild-members, or for his "quarter" we can see this Muslim inhabitant tending towards our concept of citizen.[1] In Islam, cleanliness is equated with half of faith; a Muslim strives assiduously to make good of this portion. And this injunction as we have already discussed impact positively to the health and social progress of the Muslims from the medieval period and far beyond. At-Taharah the basis of its sanitary ethics was the precursor of modern hygiene.

Each city evolved its own system of efficient water distribution through canalization and good system of sewage and waste disposal system that was unique of its types in the world. The water system of canalization was like the pipe-borne water of the modern times, it made safe potable water available for bathing, gardening domestic and industrial uses several centuries before the same was established in Europe. Until the end of 19th century, rivers were heavily polluted in Europe. "Jacob's Island", according to historic report, was a notorious Bermondsey slum adjacent to the Thames, was surrounded by fetid tidal ditches described by the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849 as being "the colour of strong green tea."[2] This description showed vividly how heavy was the degree of pollution of this river and all rivers in most of the Western countries, nothing of this nature was ever reported in Islamic medieval era. In fact, Lord Shaftesbury recalled in 1884 how on a visit there a generation earlier he had positively seen women drop their buckets into the water, over which they were living, and in which was deposited all the filth of the place, that being the only water they had for every purpose: washing, drinking and so on.[3]

When potable water was lacking or very scarce the hazards to health were incredibly high especially when neither ethnic or religious consideration was in existence to stem the massive pollution of surface water. The water storage system was quite unlike that of an Islamic city even several centuries before. The scarcity of potable water had created health and social problems for centuries in Europe. In England, for example:

> *Intermittent supply made it necessary to store the water in large butts which kept in the streets, and attracted all manner of filth. When Hector Gavin looked at some of these in Bethnal Green, he*

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1 A. H Hourani and S. M. Stern. *The Islamic City*, p. 179
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 29
3 Ibid.

> *found that: one contained the remains of fish in a putrescent state; the wood of the second was rotten, covered with a green slimy mould... the third was an open kind of horse trough adjacent to the privy.*[1]

Islam recognised the importance of water several centuries before this awareness became commonplace amongst nations. It lays emphasis on good and lawful food, clean water, decent clothing, good housing and medical care. Along these needs, safe drinking water is the most important. Allah (s.w.t) mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an to highlight the importance of water and its importance and relationship to living organisms. "And Allah has created every animal from water" (*Nur*, 24:45). Thus water is indispensable to life as evidenced by protoplasm of every living cell which depends on the constant presence of water. Protoplasm is the basis of all living matter and the vital power of this basis is dependent on water.

The Muslim is under the religious obligation to use water frequently for purifications and is also religiously bound not to waste it. The demand for neatness and clean appearance are also religiously motivated. *Sura Al-A'raf* declares: "O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer; eat and drink; But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters (7:31).

To a Muslim cleanliness is half of his faith and polluting surface water is an abominable act that is reprehensible and prohibited. This ethical sense of personal hygiene was captured by Scanlon in his studies of some aspects of Islamic medieval public services. He averred that the individual Muslim gave much thought and time to the need for personal cleanliness and the best mode to achieve it for his family. The canalization of water distribution system provided not only potable water, but made it readily available for ritual purifications and bathing. When obtaining clean water became difficult it would hamper seriously Islamic religious services. This, however, is unacceptable in Islamic city. Water scarcity has a very bad effect on hygiene. It discourages sanitation. Thus Islamic city was freed from these and other health and social problems. The situation was however the reverse in the West. In England, for example, Hector Gavin noted the difficulty of obtaining water and the problems it created:

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 29

> *...discourages personal cleanliness... it prevents the clothes being properly washed, and necessitates the same water being used repeatedly, even though foul.*[1]

These were the problems faced by many nations where ethnic and religious considerations were grossly lacking to emphasise the need for personal hygiene and the habit of using clean and "cleaner" water, that is, the water is both clean as well as it cleanses. It is only in Islam where such considerations are considered the benchmark of the faith. For long water scarcity had wreaked severe havoc in the West where Islam was and still is kept at arm's length. Hence in England the following account was historically reported:

> *At bath, a clergyman interviewed a man who had to go a quarter of a mile to get decent water from the public pumps. "It is as valuable as strong beer", he was told "we can't use it for cooking or anything of that sort, but only for drinking and tea."*

Then where do you get water for cooking and washing? Asked the clergyman.

> *Why from the river. But it is muddy, and often stinks, because all the filth is carried there. When pressed as to why he did not use the pump water, he replied: "We can't help ourselves, you know. We could not go all that way for it."*

A Muslim may not appreciate the favours he so much enjoys in Islam until he reads such historic accounts. He would then appreciate and appraise the health benefits of Islamic injunctions that make water pollution an abominable act; make the use of clean water and water that cleanses necessary for ritual purposes, and the great wisdom behind making purification half of faith. For example, a another historic report in 1845 remarked that: for the labouring man, "it is only... at the moment of birth and at the hour of death... that he is really well washed."[2] This meant the labourer who was supposed to regularly wash himself, he remained unfortunately, unwashed throughout his life. It was this attitude to bathing that formed the basis of the "Great Unwashed" in Europe. Further, lack of water encouraged a dirty habit. Inspectors of London work houses in 1866 found:

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 29
2 Ibid.

> *The disgraceful fact, of some of the inmates washing in the chamber pots. One workhouse master told them he had to keep a sharp lookout for this sort of thing, as it was not an uncommon habit in the homes of the poor; and that even in a militia regiment, with which he had been officially connected, this dirty practice had occurred.*[1]

Islam is indeed a "mercy unto all nations." Islamisation of all cultures had vanished this dirty practice. It had succeeded in making purification a good habit of all peoples. It also spreads the culture of scrupulous and generous supplies of water to keep a city clean. Hence the need for civic rubbish heaps was an Islamic legacy to the modern world. In Newcastle, for instance, accumulations of up to 50 tons were found in the courts.[2] And many streets were "adorned" with mountain heaps of garbage and sewage prior to Islamisation of European attitude to sanitation and the general cleanliness of all cities. Scanlon also described privacy in homes as a typical feature of Islamic city. This is important from the standpoint of religious ethics as well as a civilised behaviour. Islamic housing system was not only conscious of sanitation but also privacy and overcrowding. Doubtlessly, in the areas of general cleanliness and sense of privacy a Muslim cooperates with the law to the highest extent because his religion is his way of life. In town planning Scanlon observed these conditions were taken into consideration meticulously.

In comparison with what had been operating in the West several centuries afterwards the difference was distinctively very glaring. A description from Newcastle on Tyne in 1845 pointed out this difference pertinently:

> *In the parish of All Saints the structure of the houses occupied by the poorest classes is universally bad in the extreme; the doors and windows are faulty and incapable of excluding draughts of air, they are crazy and out of all condition and with respect to internal accommodation generally [that is, plumbing and sanitary conveniences], we have found no such thing contemplated in the plan of the buildings. Even in the essential matter of light, great numbers of these houses receive almost none at all on the ground floor rooms, very commonly inhabited by eight or ten persons; they are so choked up by crowded contiguous buildings that...on*

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 29
2 Ibid, p. 24

> *entering them same minutes must elapse before the eye can distinguish objects.*

The working typology of the great Islamic cities Scanlon observed and their modes of building and services were inherited or adapted from the large conquered centres; others construed or evolved from purely Islamic experience and ethos, novel physical conditions, emergent temperament and taste.[1] This shows that Islam is not an archaic faith; it encourages innovation, social and intellectual developments within the purview of its tenets. Even then it shows great latitude to allow where necessary to dictate exception. Further, climate dictates much in the choice of town planning the mode of laying streets for instance, stamped earth in Iraq and Persia, tamped earth and crushed stone in layers in Egypt and Syria, stone slabs and cobbles in northern Syria and throughout Anatolia. It shapes the form of the congregational mosque; in some places it points to large, cavernous warehouses and *khans* while elsewhere it allows goods to lie in the open.[2] This ingenious consideration of climatic factors in city typology had helped greatly in prevention of diseases as well as spread of pestilence.

This contrasted sharply with what operated in the west especially in England several centuries afterwards where in a bid to save space, Jerry builders favoured back-to-back terraces and closed courts. With the former, terraces were laid out so that each house shared a party wall at the back as well as the sides, so preventing through ventilation. The court consisted of a cramped square of houses round a central courtyard where the feeling of depression which it produced after even a short exposure to its influence was according to one observer, more overpowering than the smell. Further, cesspits were dug in the yards or basements. In time they filled up and overflowed. Dr. Hector Gavin described conditions in Bethnal Green, London in 1848:

> *In numerous instances the soil (excrement) has infiltrated the walls, percolated, through them and spread over the neighbouring yard... in some instances, the floors have been saturated, and have been rendered very quagmires of filth.*[3]

Until about 100 years, ventilation, sanitation and privacy in town building in most of the Western nations were disregarded with grave danger

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1 A.H Hourani and S.M Stern, *The Islamic City*, p.181
2 Ibid.
3 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.23

to health. New residential quarters were erected in the geographical lacunae within a city. Disregard to housing sanitation especially rubbish and sewage disposal had rendered houses not only quagmires of filths but had also created serious "sewage erosion" in them with fatal consequences. This posed serious danger to health and put human lives at great perils. Quite unlike in the Islamic cities the slums were built without good foundations. They were built on bare earth, levelled out garbage heaps or covered middens; the cheap absorbent bricks rotted as the filth was soaked up, and Charles Dicken's fictional slum, Tom-all-Alone's in *Bleak House* typified what happened next:

> *Twice, lately, there has been a crash and a cloud of dust, like the springing of a mine, in Tom-all-Alone's; and each time a house has fallen... the gaps remain, and there are not unpopular lodgings among the rubbish.*[1]

Dicken's fictional slum was eked out of historic reality, although it could be said that all these conditions have been generally cleared in many cities in the world due to scientific progress. This progress, however, was Islamically motivated; what remains undisputable is the fact that scientific progress is not synonymous with human progress. This is because as modern science and technology progress they conspire to dehumanise man in his essence as well as in his social standing. Thus modern science bypasses man the very being it presupposes to cater for; it places higher premium and value on materials rather than on human life. This suggests strongly that scientific progress without religious moorings will almost always wreak havoc upon humanity either in the short term or in the long run. Consequently, men today still live in bleak houses even though these houses are well built skyscrapers because the dwellers are devastated by diseases of the heart. Each minute many people are killed by blasts of gun shots in suicidal and homicidal criminal acts. Today, Tom-all-Alone in his sewage soaked filthy house appeared to be happier than his counterpart living in a towering luxurious apartment, living on drugs because of apathy and misery of a faithless soul. Islam cured the West of its *medievalism*, it is panacea to all the ills of the progress bedevilling the west in particular and the world in general.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the ethics of housing sanitation is an Islamic legacy to the modern world. The Islamic models demanded the creation of designated areas within each city such as positioning of the

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.23

Friday mosque and the *dar al-imara*, the Royal Quarter, *dar al – sultana* etc, which are built at some distance from the urban centre or industrial area. And streets were constructed such that highways were related to arrangements of city walls, to Friday mosques, to military needs, or as moves towards sounder administrative organisation, particularly in capital cities.[1] Even at a time when Islamic civilisation was in its formative years all considerations were taken to maintain each city was clean, peaceful and orderly. As it progressed it established a culture super civilization that later turned out to be a universal model. For instance, Victor Robinson observed that: "Europe was darkened at Sunset, Cordova shone with public lamps; Europe was dirty, Cordova built a thousand baths: Europe was covered with mud, Cordova's streets were paved: Europe's palaces had smoke – holes in the ceiling, Cordova's arabesques were exquisite.[2] Each Islamic city had a very efficient water supply system, the cesspools were kept clean. And that the streets were watered daily, drinking water was made available and that public fountain (*sabil*) worked proficiently with water therein potable.[3]

As purification is a second nature to a Muslim the authorities would provide him with water was a *donnee* of medieval life; that he built his house and his place of business in relation to that supply was a foregone conclusion. He, in turn, was subject to almost daily inspection should he be remiss in any matter contingent on water or sanitation. He by both ethnic and religious considerations, a Muslim was made to keep himself and his surrounding meticulously clean, neat and tidy. He was not unguided to make compliance regular and effective. This was the municipal duty and responsibility of the *muhtasib*. He was to ensure that Muslims comply with the Divine injunction of personal hygiene (Al-Araf, 7:31).

Scanlon observed that the *muhtasib's* role as supervisor and regulator of streets, his unheralded but direct relation to public services became more important. He was to make sure all cesspools, rubbish heaps and sewage were properly and efficiently disposed of so that stench emanated from nowhere, either from the house or somewhere on the street. Consequently, fetid smell was not a characteristic feature of an Islamic city. He also ensured that the streets were not only kept meticulously neat and tidy but were watered daily, and that drinking water was made available in those purlieux of the city lacking *sabil* or public fountain. Hence with water

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1 A. H Hourani and S.M. Stern (Eds.) *The Islamic City*, p. 183
2 Victor Robinson, *The Story of Medicine*, p. 164
3 A. H Hourani and S.M. Stern (Eds.) *The Islamic City*, p. 183

readily available to all personal hygiene was not difficult to keep further, merchants could be fined for not keeping the streets fronting their shops well watered and free of dust, or could be held responsible for repairing and heightening the streets when ordered to do so.[1]

The Science Of Sanitation

The way and manner people live have a continuous effect on the physical environment. This environment in Islamic cities must be kept clean and health-friendly as a religious duty. Hence, environmental problems related to poor sanitation and inadequate or unsafe water no longer exist on a significant scale. In Islamic cities, where the science of sanitation was first established and allowed to impact effectively.

In contrasts, however on the value of integrated social, cultural and economic advances development policy, as it exists today in most countries, pursues economic growth without taking due consideration of the distributional effects. In consequence, resources are heavily concentrated on investment in the modernisation and expansion of production. Social objectives are given a low priority because their positive impact on production cannot be readily proved quantitatively. The concern is merely to remove the most glaring negative social consequences of growth and urbanisation. Emphasis is thus on remedial measures rather than preventive environmental and health policies. Poverty, overcrowding and endemic and epidemic diseases are treated as the unavoidable price of economic "process."[2]

Islam, establishes the basic fundamentals of sanitation and makes their implementations obligatory religious duty. Such that diseases and pestilences are meticulously kept at bay through sanitary measures. The sharia law also "sanitises" the social environment to allow for the proper socio-economic development. Good sanitary condition becomes the benchmark of Islamic city worth its name.

Sewage Disposal

The remarkably scientific injunction of Islamic ruling health promotion and disease prevention as well as the existence of sanitary legislation were all brought to bear in the city to ensure that offensive smells either from the cesspools or gutters in the streets, were undetectable or absent. This was achieved with remarkable success. In contrast, cities particularly in the

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1 A. H Hourani and S.M. Stern (Eds.) *The Islamic City*, p. 183
2 WHO, International Action for Health, Geneva (1986), p.99.

West had no drainage, filth and injection were rampant. In consequential, there was exceedingly high infant mortality rate which was due to extremely poor public and personal hygiene.[1] The housing sanitation and street leaning were erratic and slap-happy. Today, it is a well established fact that the control of major communicable diseases hinges on safe water and sanitation. These were areas where Islamic city had remained for centuries a shining model.

In establishing the excellence of housing and sanitation of Islamic city Scanlon, observed pointedly:

> *However, it was sanitation which brought out the genius in the fustat architect. Without a constant supply of water, the simple one storey family complex was impossible to realize; and in the early period, when these were the mode, simple cesspools cleaned from with the complex sufficed. The moment higher building became possible (and they were a godsend in such a congested commercial and industrial entrepot which had never thought to forego its inherited street planning) other solutions were incumbent, first the houses were planned as complexes, four to five storeys high, built around courtyards which generally contained a basin-system. More than one family lodged within, and ownership was divided, yielding, in a non – pejorative sense, a medieval "tenement." In certain instances, more than a hundred persons lived within a complex, and privies had to be available on each floor, which in turn meant that flues had to be constructed with the walls. Such flues can be found throughout the extant structures uncovered in fustat.*
>
> *All these flues gave on to deeply cut canals in the gabal, which ran beneath walls, floors, and courtyards; and covered, at times vaulted, running individually or in systems to cess – pools which were cleaned from without the complex. These canals were constantly watered from within, and the cess – pools covered daily with sand.*[2]

This elaborate account gave a detailed ingenious technique employed in Islamic cities to properly dispose of its sewage. In spite of the limitation imposed by water scarcity and technology, the system employed was very impressive. "It was sanitation which brought out the genius in the Fuskat", said Scanlon. It was really a great genius because several centuries

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1 Josephine Dolan, *Nursing in Society*, p.58.
2 Ibid, p. 188

afterwards European cities lacked this ingenuity so that storey – buildings were constructed without privies, quite opposite to that of Islamic cities as typified by Fuskat where more than a hundred persons lived within a complex, privies had to be made available to each floor, the tradition in the west until a century ago, was construction of privies was considered unnecessary. Persons living irrespective of their numbers living within a complex defecated in chamber pots kept in the rooms. When the pots are filled to the brim with faeces they were thrown out of the windows and poured on the streets, with complete disregard of health and hygiene. Further, sewers were badly designed, and until the "water carriage" system became effective, their accumulations stank abominably, especially in hot weather.[1] Thus Victorian household were elegant upstairs and squalor in the basement. The use of privy was an alien culture to the West, it was an Islamic legacy to the modern world. Until a little over a 100 years houses were built with complete disregard for toilets.

His Excellency, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the First Executive President of Nigeria, once told me what he saw in Vienna some years ago. He had the opportunity to visit this capital of Austria during one of his personal visits to that country and he was taken to historical places, amongst which was a magnificent building. He was told the architect who designed the very imposing building killed himself when he discovered he had overlooked the need for toilet facilities. It was an oversight that caused him so much embarrassment that he committed suicide. For he could not explain how hundreds of persons using the complex could dispose their wastes, perhaps, he had not then realized that the era of throwing or pouring faeces out of the window was over in Europe. In fact, it was such a painful and devastating error committed by one of the best architects of that time. The building as imposing as it is remains a historic relic. It is also a remainder to the fact that the use of toilet was not home-grown in the West but came form the East through Islamisation of all nations. To make good of this monumental contribution World Toilet Organisation was established two years ago.[2] It aims to raise global awareness of toilet and sanitation standards. In other words, it is to popularise the Islamic *at-tahara* to the world.

The annual World Toilet Day was marked on Wednesday 19th November, 2003, with a call for people to speak out against poorly designed or filthy latrines. The group – whose members include the British

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p.27
2 www.worldtoilet.org

Toilet Association and 17 other similar organisations from 13 countries – has a top – 10 list of latrine essentials that will lead to "happier people" that average person, according to the group's website, visits the toilet 2,500 times a year – meaning you spend nearly three years of your life in the lavatory.[1]

This annual celebration of World Toilet Day is, in fact, a devious celebration of *at-tahara* which as we have seen rid the West of great unwashed, great stench and great unswiped. let us give credit to Islam, the culture that equates purification to half of its faith. Consequently, Islamic cities were shorn of filths and stench at a time when the rest of the world was stinking. Now for the World Toilet Organisation to call for more hygiene in public facilities is to spread the Islamisation process to every nook and cranny in the world. In this medieval era, this was one of the duties of the *Muhtasib*.

Duties of Muhtasib

The role of *Muhtasib* was decisive and inevitable. He was the overseer of the economic, public health and social of the city. From the account of Scanlon and from what he quoted from the work of *Ibn al-ukhuwwa* the duty of the *muhtasib* could be summarised as follows:

- Unlike the *qadi* he could investigate without written complaints, though he could not enter private homes to investigate a suspected case.
- Control the movement of animals, the *muhtasib* and his men inveigled against and fined the uncaring merchant or tycoon who tied up traffic for hours with his string of camels plunging amid the donkeys and pedestrians.
- He received reports on disease, heresy and economic malpractices.
- He maintained a regular flow of traffic so that an amazing degree of ingress and egress during working hours was kept smoothly, he was an efficient supervisor and regulator of streets.
- In the market and factory, he scrutinized all weight and measures and maintained an incessant inspection of raw materials and products, foodstuffs and services.
- He inspected all baths, tested water and drainage and kept close watch on the activities of the bath keepers.

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[1] *Daily Trust*, Thursday 20, November, (2003), p.

- There was the execution of the ordinance of burial within twenty four hours of death.[1]

The Islamic burial practice within 24 hours of immense health benefits changes after death are temperature dependent. In the tropics or anywhere the ambient temperature is high, rigor motis will come on rapidly, and pass of rapidly. As it is due to a chemical process, it is temperature dependent and comes more quickly if the body remains warm and is delayed if the body is cold. In average environment, rigour may be first detectable within 1 – 4 hours in the face and in the limbs within 4 – 6 hours.[2] Thus the mandatory burial within 24 hours of death is valid ordinance from the medical point of view. The quicker the body is respectfully disposed of the better and safer for the family and the community. The risks of spread of infection and putrefaction of the dead are reduced significantly.

Hence in each Islamic city death was reported and registered by the police, who generally checked with the *qadi* of the quarter in which the deceased lived. The police official escorted the bier to the city walls and set down rules for public display of grief.[3] The burial practices, the housing sanitation, cesspools maintenance and clearance, sewage disposal and rubbish heaps collection and disposal were such a spectacular ingenious system in each of all. These involved variations and sophistication in housing and urban services were feasible ethnic and religious considerations fused to give each city its peculiar uniqueness. In all the Islamic cities went side by side with good water supply. It was indeed a wonderful feat how desert dwellers came to show the rest of the people of the world the importance of water and the ways of sanitation and hygiene.

Water Supplies

The Glorious Qur'an highlights the importance of water (*Nur*, 24:45) and the imperative of personal cleanliness as well as the need to avoid excesses in appetites such as food, drink, etc. for Allah (s.w.t) does not love wasters (*Al-A'raf*, 7:31). The Muslims are rightly guided to protect and conserve water to keep themselves and their cities neat and tidy. This is both religious and social obligation upon every Muslim. Further, every Muslim believes that water is a special gift of Allah the Exalted, the Most Gracious, He reminds us pertinently: "Say: See ye? – if your stream be

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1 A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, *The Islamic City*, pp. 183 - 185
2 Bernard Knight, *Simpson's Forensic Medicine*, p. 29.
3 A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, *The Islamic City*, p. 185

some morning lost (in the underground earth), who then supply you with clear-flowing water" (Al – Mulk, 67:30).

We are religiously bound, therefore, to protect and conserve water resources and ensure its "clear-flowing" i.e. to protect the water against pollution. Water accounts for approximately 80% of living matter; it is the essence of life but can be deadly if contaminated. Every person has a religious obligation to protect and conserve water. Every human being has a right to clean water source wherever he lives. This Islamic culture has now become a universal concept and attitude.

Water is important due to its variety of uses. It is a major natural resource. Rain and Snow represent the ultimate source of all water which in mineral content is essentially distilled water and such is theoretically pure. What it contains as it reaches earth in the way of bacteria, chemicals, dust, etc. will naturally depend on what is present in the atmosphere through which it passes. This in turn is dependent on the proximity of the falling rain to cities, plant-deficient desert areas, etc.[1] The rain water can thus be contaminated in a variety of ways. A remarkable array of substances, for example, may be washed out of the atmosphere by falling rains. Similarly dust carried into the atmosphere may add substantial number of micro organisms that are normal soil inhabitants; pollen and fine bits of decomposed organic matter contained in the air above the earth may also represent biological contributions.[2]

Islamic science of water was far ahead in recognising the fact that water can be polluted in a variety of ways. As soon as rain strikes the earth, it becomes a *surface water*. Such water is represented by stream, ponds, lakes and wells. In their natural state, Islam considers these waters to be pure for ritual and domestic uses. It legislates against polluting surface water in whatever way. It forbids passing urine or excreta into them or dumping rubbish or any harmful agents into them, which could be injurious to health. It has now been established that surface water is potentially dangerous as a carrier of disease bacteria wherever it comes in contact with man or his habitations. It represents a natural mobile highway that can easily carry disease producing micro organisms from infected person or a carrier of disease organism to any used or untreated water. The statement that surface water is never safer water, while not entirely true, it is a good rule to follow. Appearance may be dangerously contaminated without its

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1 Louis P. Gebhard, *Microbiology*, 4th Edition, The C.V Mosby Comp. (1970) p.133
2 Ibid

taste or appearance being impaired.[1] It is to the credit of Islam, which strongly protects surface water against pollution. To preserve personal and public health, it is now a well established fact that water is a disease carrier.

Water as a Disease Carrier

It is ironical water, which is supposed to preserve life may turn out to be its killer when it carries dangerous agents. Disease-producing micro organisms in water supplies come from a person with a pre-existing case of a disease or from a carrier of such organisms. Typhoid fever, dysentery, or cholera does not develop as a result of filth in the water. It comes from a person with these diseases or from a carrier of the organisms. If we could eliminate all cases and carriers, these diseases would become non existent. This is the cardinal goal or objective of Islam which it relentlessly pursued for centuries. The great health Teacher warned: "No one should pass water in standing water" (Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawud). It is unlawful to urinate or defecate in the forbidden places; water source, dwelling places and streets. Its ruling against water pollution from all sources right from the 7th century remains valid today. Thus water protection against pollution as an ethical behaviour and responsibility of a civilised person remains Islamic legacy to the modern world.

In Islamic science of water, what is categorised according to its level of purity. Today in like manner, water may be described as; i) *Potable*, that is clean, safe, and pleasing in appearance and taste; ii) *Polluted*, that is having substances added that impair colour, odour, or taste and; iii) *Contaminated*, that is, rendered unsafe through the addition of discharges from human or animal intestines or rendered dangerous by the addition of poisonous chemicals. Frequently the term *polluted* is used to imply a combination of the last two terms.[2] Obviously, this classification was built up upon the Islamic categorisation of water that was evolved from the 7th century, till lately, it was unknown in the West, otherwise, Europe would not have had several outbreaks of water – borne diseases. They did not know before, but now they know and are very serious about it. The water classification idea came to the West due to positive influences of Islam; its pervading process of Islamisation of European attitudes to health and hygiene.

Diseases transmitted through water supplies are primarily those present in intestinal discharges. The reason for this is that through sewage these intestinal pathogens find their way into water, where they generally have

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1 Ibid.
2 Louis P. Gebhard, *Microbiology*, p. 134

greater survival power than most of the pathogens so introduced.[1] Thus the bacterial diseases most commonly transmitted through sewage are typhoid fever, paratyphoid fever, hepatitis A and B, bacillary dysentery, and cholera. Amoebic dysentery, a disease caused by protozoa, may be water borne – some viral diseases such as infectious hepatitis are transmitted through contaminated water supplies. At least one epidemic of another type of infectious jaundiced caused by the spirochete *Leptospira haemorrhagiae*, whose chief reservoir is the common rat, has been reported to be water borne.[2]

It must be pointed out at this juncture that Europe and the rest of the world came to know of these facts only about a hundred years ago. They suffered from a variety of epidemics because they had the obstinate attitude of polluting heavily their surface water. For example, the "summer stinks" of London in the 1850s was due to heavy pollution of river Thames. Almost all surface waters were heavily polluted with sewage and sullage. The summer stink was at its peak in 1858 when death stalked the river. In contrast, several centuries earlier a civilisational way of life was preaching against pollution of water surface or habitable places. Such acts are considered abominable. This culture later came to salvage the West against the menace of its own filth. Prior to Islamisation of Western culture sewage and sullage filled everywhere and were physically handled with bare hands, an attitude that was associated with grave health hazards, pollution of water sources was very common. This was aggravated by the use of solid wastes as manure and was sold to the farmers. According to one author in 1876 in England, pollution, "is mainly due to that luxurious contrivance, the domestic water closet."

The water closet (WC) was invented by Sir Harington in 1596. It was said that the foul odour emanating from a privy near his lodgings insulted his aristocratic sense of smell and prompted the invention of this great sanitary device. However it did not assume much importance until well along in the nineteenth century.[3] The idea was far ahead of its time. European towns and cities had made a lot of progress in many spheres of development except for personal and environmental hygiene where for many reasons much was left to be desired. Sewage was dumped indiscriminately into a stream and contaminated the drinking water of the

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1 Louis P. Gebhard, *Microbiology*, p. 134
2 Ibid,
3 Ibid, p. 144

cities below.[1] No harm or health hazard was seen in handling faeces that were littered almost everywhere. For economic reasons to use the human faeces for manure the water closet was resisted. Rivers were so heavily polluted that in 1876, the Irwell passing through Manchester was described as a "reeking sewer" and its tributaries "as black as ink."[2] Hence domestic water closet that was deviced perhaps to reduce this enormous scale of pollution slowly started gaining currency. However, it was initially resisted because disposal of excrement in this fashion, according to G.V Poore, "has increased the rates, increased the cost of our houses, and put us to great expense for water."[3] It was contended that the use of cesspits or pails was more satisfactory because there was an added advantage; solid wastes could be sold to the farmers as manure and adding earth to pail after use was introduced with a view to absorbing the smell.[4] Thus sewage and sullage became stuffs of great economic importance. There was a moral fervour in this new enterprises as one of the profiteerer enthused: "Man in his blindness calls it "waste." It is not waste, but wealth, if rightly used with thrift and purpose."[5] This became a popular slogan, hence soil chemists were cited in 1887, as having worked out the average value of ammonia (the chief fertilising ingredient) that each person excreted yearly: "in urine 7s 3d (36½p), in faeces is 2¾d (6p) – total 8s 5¾d [42½p]."[6] This meant the more the people who produce the excreta to the commercial companies company the greater the income and to augment their income, people handled faeces indiscriminately at the detriment of health and pollution of environment. This contributed to a reasonable extent why the Water Closet (WC) that was introduced was met with initial resistance.

Florence Nightingale had once said: "The secret of national health lies in the homes of the people." But a wealthy Victorian household was described as; "elegance upstairs and squalor in the basement."[7] Thus under this extreme poor personal and environmental hygiene water pollution and its potential dangers to health were doubtlessly very common. However, with Islamisation of European culture cleanliness replaced poor hygiene in the West. And with this, the prevalence of water – borne diseases acceleratedly declined, except in un-Islamised places.

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1 Louis P. Gebhard. *Microbiology*, p. 144
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 60
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid, pp 60-61
6 Ibid, p. 61
7 Ibid, p. 60.

A number of years ago Russian workers reported an unusual epidemics of *tularaemia* transmitted from a colony of water rats to workers on a communal farm who drank contaminated water from a brook.[1] The havoc of water pollution was only slowly recognised, for example, a classical and tragic epidemic that first established the efficacy of filtration of water supplies occurred in Hamburg in 1892. The city of Hambury then with a population of about 640,000 drew its water supply directly from the Elbe River, where it flowed into the water mains following a brief storage in settling basins. Altona, then with a population of 143,000 an adjacent city also drew its water from the Elbe at a point below Hamburg, and this water was grossly contaminated with the sewage from Hamburg. Altona, however, subjected its water supply to slow sand filtration before it was used. In the late summer of 1892 an epidemic of cholera occurred in Hamburg, and before it subsided some 17,000 cases of cholera had occurred and of these, 8,605 persons died. Altona went through the epidemic virtually unscathed, a spectacular proof of the value of water filtration.[2] When the role of religion is lacking in the life of a civilisation it creates growth through the blunders of trial and error. A success achieved at the cost of thousands of human lives is described as a spectacular achievement. This tragedy and a mental set is described in the words of Edmund Burke III, as quoted by Ejaz Akram wrote that:

> *Religion alone, besides languages and culture provides an ontological and cosmic framework that helps weave those cultures into a single civilisation. The most striking feature of the Western European civilisation is its discontinuity from the ways of the past, rather than the continuity of the primordial tradition as in most other civilisation.*[3]

Consequently, the hiccups in its social and scientific development are often severe and very devastating. These arise due to lack of *primordial tradition* in the west. Every civilisation has its own trajectory of development which reflects its people's aptitude and tendency. This accounts for their difference; however, this difference does not imply opposition. Such is the case with all civilisations that can be considered, or traditional.[4]

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1 Louis P. Gebhard. *Microbiology*. p.135
2 Ibid.
3 *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*. Vol. 19, No. 2 p.37
4 Ibid. p.38

Islam, a way of life and a super-civilisation, offers solutions not only to health and hygiene which the west and the rest of the world benefited immensely from, but practically solves problems facing mankind in all facets of existence. The west is today caught in the doldrums. The rise of deadly non-communicable diseases is frightening. Hence, this *summum bonum*, greatest goodness of all times remains the only universal panacea to all problems. The west particularly remains like a *camusian Sisyphus* because:

> *...modernity gives us a picture of the origin of humanity through evolution, coupled with a belief in linear progress, which is utopian. If today is better than yesterday, and tomorrow will be better than today, one gets up in a utopian trap which is at once teleological and futuristic, but imprisoned to the immanence of this world. The moment of perfection resides in the future and not in the origin. Religion eschatology, on the other hand, addresses the phenomenon of the afterlife and death, and its moment of telos is not in this world but in the transcended world. "Modern Science is limited to efforts aimed at understanding the physical world in which we live. It cannot be teleological but only teleonomic."*[1]

It is true the core of every civilisation is not culture but a civilisational religion like Islam whose religious moorings forester civilisational growth. Nations in their endeavour to social growth and development could no longer afford a pyrrhic victory on the path of development. The world is willy-nilly drifting towards the divine code. The massive Islamisation of Western culture is good on itself but what is much needed is *Muslimisation* of the West and the world in general.

Why the name Black Death?

It will be recalled that the causative organism of this deadly disease is *Pasteurella pestis*. It causes bubonic plaque or Black Death. According to Gebhard it was a horrible and terrifying example of the lack of public health work and of medical knowledge in the fourteenth century and up to the nineteenth century. He also stated that in one year (1348 – 1349) over 25 million Europeans perished in London in 1665 over 70,000 persons perished of this disease. In 1894 a moderately severe epidemic raged in Hong Kong and by 1900 spread via infected rat flea on board to Scotland, Australia, and the United States. Over 500 cases have appeared in the

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[1] *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, p.37

United States since 1900. Only on occasional case appears in the United States at the present time, but in India and China the disease is endemic with many cases occurring each year.[1] In like manner, devastating outbreaks of typhus and bubonic plaque occurred. As a result of the latter, Germany lost from one half to three quarters of her population. It was during this period (in 1665) that the bubonic plaque reached England.[2]

Further, this deadly disease derived its name from the manner in which the victim died. The symptom of Bubonic plaque is characterised by lymph nodes enlargement which sometimes ulcerate, high fever, and general bleeding from the capillary, tiny blood vessels. This causes bleeding massively in the skin and internal organs, which in turn becomes "dark or even black." This accounts for the name "Black Death." The disease kills its victim and also turns him black as charcoal.

In the pneumonic type, it is transmitted from a sick person to a normal person by sputum droplets or contaminated dust. A recovery from the disease gives complete immunity for life. The death rate of untreated bubonic plaque is 75%, and in the pneumonic type, it approaches 100%. Streptomycin is the drug of choice in the treatment. The deadly disease (like many other infectious diseases) is under control world-wide. But it is believed to be a biological weapon and is weaponised by the super powers.

It must be stated that in the past nations were decimated by deadly pestilences, when Islam and its tenets were negative or rejected. Today, the same punishment operates *albeit* in different guises, as nations are decimated by HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, social crimes, etc. These, today, constitute the "Modern Black Death." Hence, it is necessary you fortify yourself with the health benefits of Islamic worship, the simplest, natural and highly efficacious system of diseases prevention.

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1 L.P Gephard. *Microbiology*, p. 244

2 Josephne A. Dolan: *Nursing in Society*. p.87.

CHAPTER NINE

DISEASE PREVENTION

Islamic Perspectives

Islam is a faith that is essentially based on prevention: Prevention of damnation of hell in the afterlife and its primary focus; poverty and ill-health is a secondary concern. As a faith of science Islam protects people against disease and keeps them healthy. The Book that explains everything and with the application of Foremost Principle provides the why, and how to achieve perfect health. Health cannot be isolated from its social context; man is a social animal his interaction with his fellow men as well as with his environment increases his potential risks of contracting disease through a variety of causes. Social factors influence the health of the people; it is also now known that cultural factors such as customs, cultural mores, habits, beliefs and superstition, are deeply involved in all the affairs of man, including health and sickness.[1] In the same vein, safeguarding the health of the individuals and the society cannot be divorced from its social context too. Islam provides a means to an end, and this end is achieving 100% healthy status.

Islam from the standpoint of health had established a comprehensive timeless and scientific base system of safeguarding the public health. To achieve this important aim, Islam was elevated to the status of "*al – Din*" in which the entire lifestyle constitutes of the individual's *ibadah* or worship. Thus every act of Muslim counts as an act of worship. This means that in this dispensation worship is continuous and not discrete. Hence the entire lifestyle such as how one eats, what he eats, how he eats as well as the way or manner he eats is not left unguided. And Islamic guidance in matters relating to human activity is simple, practicable and scientific. If performed in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah they are rewarded as acts of religious duty, and are judged as *Ibadah*.

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[1] *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 468

Role of Habit

Islamic guidance on the prevention of diseases is through the departments of personal and environment hygiene; nutrition and dietetics, waste and sewage, environmental protection and ecology; public and social relations and health education, etc. Most of these preventive strategies have already been discussed to some extent. Nevertheless, it is important to stress the fact that all these modalities and others alike evolved in the 7th century Arabia the *au fait* teachings of the Great Arabian. And that the modern medicine as we see it today is a pupil of Islamic medicine. So the Islamic based system of health preservation, treatment and prevention of disease, has been in existence satisfactorily several centuries before the evolution of orthodox medicine.

This transformation of religion to *al – Din*, which took place in the 7th century is of cardinal significance from the standpoint of health protection and disease prevention. When the social and environmental factors are judiciously controlled or modulated the health of the individual and the society can be effectively safeguarded. Thus for the first time in history a religion was evolved that turned out to be one of the most effective health preserver and disease preventor in the annals of medicine. This is because in Islam health and worship are inseparable co-joined twins. Health preservation is not only of cardinal importance but it is a sacred duty to protect it. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) the great teacher of health himself said: "Allah's Messenger appreciates good health just like you do."

In another hadith Ibn Abbas (r.a) reported that a Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) and asked: "What shall I ask Allah after the five prayers? He replied: Ask Allah to grant you good health. The Bedouin kept on asking the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) this question, and in the third time, he told him; ask Allah to grant you good health in this life and in the hereafter." This, therefore, identifies the primary aim of Islam, which is salvation in this and in the hereafter. Health from this standpoint is equated with success in the mundane world and eternal bliss in the hereafter. In Islamic ideology, the human body, that is his health is considered a gift from Allah (s.a.w), it is therefore, mandatory that he preserves it. Hence in this world view the highest premium is placed on health preservation[9] It is made a sacred duty upon every Muslim.

How does Islam help a Muslim to preserve his health? The answer is simple and practicable; it makes *Ibadah* (worship) a complete way of life. This is because cultural factors are intimately connected with all the affairs of man and so can impact negatively or positively on his health or sickness.

So by making a religion *al Din*, good habits can be inculcated and enforced to ensure high degree of compliance. In societies where social habits are left freely to uncharted course, disease prevalence is high. Habits are formed and are culturally determined. They are of many kinds, e.g. habits relating to illicit sex, food, sleep, work, alcohol intake and drugs, etc. These habits have been described as disease of lifestyle, e.g. AIDS, alcoholism, obesity, etc. Habits once formed persist and influence human behaviour.

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) was sent to influence human behaviour to attain the highest perfection; to achieve the highest level of moral and ethical behaviour. Therefore cultivation of good habits is not only desirable but is in accord with the tenets of Islam. Its sole aim is to establish good habits in man, which invariably kill bad habits thereby preserving health as well as preventing diseases. Thus habits build up human personality. Man should not become a slave to his habits, he should remain a master.[1] Islam provides the modalities of how man can become the master of his habits. How? Florence Nightingale showed the answer when she said: "The secret of national health lies in the homes of the people."[2] Islamic homes are developed to help every Muslim to possess good health in this world and in the hereafter; this is where its secret lies.

The principal cause of disease is bad habit; therefore, it is the first thing to be protected and guided to prevent the occurrence of disease whether that of overindulgence or of poor hygiene. And a person is the one in the best stead to control his habits, therefore, his action. Islam provides an absolute guidance. Allah (s.w.t) keeps man on the watch, *Suratul Qaf* declares that: "Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him ready (to note it)" Surah Qaf, 50:18.

The health implication is that when man is conscious of vigilant guardian angel *raqib* watchful over him, he is unlikely to act capriciously. This is where *taqwa* helps in health preservation and prevention with disease. It aids man to take the right action most of the time. A Muslim should be watchful of what he says and be conscious of it. The dictum of "think before you say" is the key word. It is the tongue which slits the neck not the knife. Thus to make the Muslim work conscientiously and with good habit, the founder of human civilisation said: "Whoever believers in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet." A Muslim must cultivate the habit of good talk because it leads to good action, which

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 460
2 Ibid.

invariably either prevents disease or improves in its cure. It is, therefore, salubrious.

The following habits ran counter to good health in the real sense of the word, and are therefore deprecated. *Kufr* or disbelief and evil deeds: these run against the true essence of *fitrah* or human natural. They defile the grain of man's essential humanity and the basic purpose of life. This is because they lead man to primrose path which ruin and devastate his health on his way to perdition. The importance of habit in the genesis of disease or prevention cannot be overemphasised. James Allan in his, *As Man Thinketh* summed it up: "A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts. As the plant springs from, and could not be without the seed, so every act of man springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them. Islam at the dawn of modern civilisation inculcated in man the sense of sanitation.

Sanitary Ideas

Islam brought along with it sanitary ideas, it linked such important ideas with religious duty by asserting that "cleanliness is half of faith." Purification of "body and place", were made obligatory upon every Muslim. The phrase "body and place" in modern terminology refers to "person and environment." The latter as we now know implies all the external factors living and non–living, material and non–material, which surround man. In its modern concept, environment includes not only the water, air and soil that form our environment but also the social and economic conditions under which we live.[1] The "body and place" which demand both to be kept in good sanitary condition can now be expanded into three components, all closely related:

- Physical: Water, air, soil, housing, wastes, radiation, etc.,
- Biological: Plant and animal life including bacteria, viruses,
- insects, rodents and animals
- Social: Customs, culture, habits, income, occupation, religion, etc.2

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) must have realised that the key to man's health lies largely in his environment so he stressed emphatically that both the body and place of abode must be free of filths and fetid smells. Often man is responsible for the pollution of his dwelling but in Islam sanitation is linked directly with faith, in fact, it constitutes 50%. One of the best definitions of sanitation is given by the National Sanitation Foundation of

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 481.
2 Ibid,

USA, which is as follows: Sanitation is a way of life; it is the quality of living that is expressed in the clean home, the clean farm, the clean business, the clean neighbourhood and the clean community. Being a way of life it must come from within the people; it is nourished by knowledge and grows as an obligation and an ideal in human relations.[1]

This definition only translates that was advanced by the Great Teacher on health matters in the 7th century when he said: "Cleanliness is half of faith." It made sanitation a way of life since Islam is a complete way of life and cleanliness constitutes 50% of it. Furthermore, it is only in this worldview, where the demand that every act must be "clean" is stressed and reinforced. Thus clean habit is inculcated because of the fact that Allah is clean and accepts nothing but clean. The prefix of Muslim behavioural act be preceded by "clean" - clean house, clean body and clean clothes, etc. His clean attitude comes from within him to make cleanliness 50% of his faith. Hence Islam was the originator of the science of safeguarding health because; it made sanitation an integral part of worship. This science remains Islamic legacy to the modern world. It is crucial and fundamental to health preservation at all times.

The Prophet's insistence and strenuous advice that the "place" of every Muslim must be kept clean and tidy, led to the evolution of environmental sanitation in modern times. It was sequael to this important legacy that man is now known to be responsible for the pollution of his environment. In 1972 the UN Conference on the Human Environment focused worldwide attention on the environmental hazards that threaten human beings. Environmental sanitation, therefore, becomes crucial and fundamental to health preservation. The term "environmental sanitation" has now been defined by WHO as, "the control of all factors in man's physical environment which exercise or may exercise a deleterious effect on his physical development, health and survival."[2] The spiritual and physical well-being of man were the course the Prophet (s.a.w) championed to establish good health habits among humanity, and was extremely successful in the crusade.

It was owing to his legacies in various departments of health, social and spiritual realms, that the world today attains the modern status. The sanitary ideas he introduced have helped to improve the quality of life and social well–being. In fact, sanitation now covers the whole field of controlling the

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 481
2 Ibid.

environment with a view to preventing disease and promote health.[1] This can be achieved effectively through public health.

Public Health

Islamic health rules and beliefs make a combination of science that is directed at the maintenance of the health of the people. It is simple, practicable and promotes peoples health through collective or social action. These contribute immensely to health rules established in the 7th century in Arabia which has startled everyone by their moderness. These rules have contributed very significantly to the present public health system.

There is a positive relationship between food and health. It plays an important role in physical fitness and well-being of the individual as well as the society. Good nutrition is necessary for good health. Nutrition may be defined as the science of food and its relationship to health. The habit of cleanliness is important from the standpoint of individual as well as that of the community. Islam recommends eating regularly. This is because good nutrition helps maintain a nutritional status that enables good growth and therefore good health, after each meal; and to rinse the mouth after taking meals or to lick and suck the fingers before cleaning them with a handkerchief (Bukhari). This is a good healthful habit.

One of the wonders of Islam is that it recommends ablution before eating and ablution after eating, which means scrupulous hand washing before and after eating. Hand washing which is linked with ablution in this regard is to ensure regular performance and compliance. This is very important from the point of view of personal as well as public hygiene. The food handlers working in restaurants and other related public places where food is sold should also be very conscious of the concept of washing their hands thoroughly. This meticulous sense of hygiene helps to ensure prevention of diseases emanating from the contaminated hands of food handlers. For example, typhoid fever and other forms of diarrhoeal diseases are prevented through this simple measure. Thus with well washed hands, a Muslim says bismillahi before eating and alham-dulillahi after eating. This inculcates a sense of appreciation and the ability to say thank you.

The illuminating light of Islam shines across all nations of the past, present and the future, thereby changing their cultures meaningfully. The barbaric culture of the Age of Ignorance imbibed by every nation therefore showed perceptible changes, as modernisation replaces barbarism and backwardness. Islam targeted the individual in order to improve the lot of

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[1] *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 481

the people, when the individual is changed for the better the community improves directly and proportionately. Hence public health was reinforced with such teachings as "cleanse yourself, for Islam is cleanliness (Ibn Hayyan) and cleanliness invites toward faith, and faith leads its possessor to the Garden" (al – Tabarani). All combine to make personal and public hygiene part and parcel of Islamic faith. This revolution of cultivation and maintenance of hygienic behaviour, which began with the advent of Islam, slowly spread throughout the world. But it was not a smooth and easy journey.

The perceptible changes could be seen in Europe. At the beginning of the Middle Ages the torch of knowledge flicked dimly; it was at a critical time in history when all the literary and artistic achievements of the classical past seemed destined to be lost forever under the vigorous Germanic races that had risen to political power in the Northern and Western parts of Europe. "The new rulers found neither pleasure nor honour in the philosophy, literature and arts of the nations outside their frontier," Frank Thilly wrote, "and appeared to be as filthy as their minds were filled with superstition."[1] The Islamic acculturalisation process often with resistance mounted by blocks of barbarism of this cattery, but it had to surmount all barriers to civilise humanity. It was the office of Islam that was largely concerned with general cleanliness and ridding the world of a filthy culture. And Europe was notorious for poor sanitary condition, barbarism and filthy behaviour because sanitary ideas were largely unknown or grossly neglected. Robert Briffault in his the *Making of Humanity* wrote:

> *From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more harmful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had once been a great civilisation. The features and impress of that civilisation were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, e.g. in Italy and Gaul, all was ruin, squalor and dissolution.*[2]

However, with the slow and steady encroachment of the civilising acculturalisation process, the deplorable trend was timely arrested and slowly reversed, in the four corners of the world. As pointed out before, the Holy Qur'an is not a Book of medical science but a Book of Guidance to

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1 Frank Thilly, *History of Philosophy*, New York (1945) p. 155
2 Robert Briffault, *The Making of Humanity* p. 164

mankind. It gives guidance in the departments of human life, especially which deal with many problems of health and hygiene. The habit of environmental cleanliness was inculcated, perpetuated and established with positive results. Thus the Muslims at the outset were rightly guided. Islamic societies were known for general hygiene, with their cities full of drainage system, adequate waste and sewage disposal method with many bathhouses strategically located. They are motivated to doing so because of the Qur'anic injunction that stipulates: "Allah loves those who are pure and clean," (*Baqara*, 2:222). This laid the foundation of public health because Islam is a faith of collective action. All would want to be Allah's beloved so all must be "pure and clean"; the sense of scrupulous hygiene was well cultivated amongst the Muslims in matters of hygiene, purification and cleanliness; it was the Muslims who showed the light to the rest of the peoples of the world. Public health and hygiene was only recently introduced in Europe, perhaps, about two centuries old. The West was the last continent to be conquered and saved by the autochthonous Islamic habits.

With poor sanitary condition, flies played a significant part in spreading *cholera infantum*, or summer diarrhoea among babies with high infant mortality rate. Islam must promptly come to save those who were habituated to live with filths and poor hygiene. With children and babies dying at that high rate, the condition was appalling as grave. The account of Dundee in 1904 showed: it was quite a common thing to find a woman have as many as thirteen children, and had lost eleven or twelve of that number, in some cases the whole of them.[1] Flies bred in millions and quickly due to the poor environmental hygiene. Scientific study of the way they spread disease was stimulated by experiences of camp hygiene in the Boer War, where sometimes the house flies were a veritable plague, and the hospitals and the regimental tents and soldier lines were actually swarming with them.[2] Islamic cities lacked any history of a nuisance as "swarm of flies" due to the medical benefits of Islamic worship. Personal cleanliness and environmental hygiene which Islam made compulsory decided the deference. While in the West and Britain in particular unclean body and unclean home were part of the social behaviour. In support of this assertion, it was reported that:

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1 Lionel Rose. *Health and Hygiene*, p. 79
2 Ibid. p. 87

> *One author in 1913 described an incident in a village coffee room north of London 20 years before, when two students sat down to a tea with strawberry jam and cream: "then came the flies ... in their tens, their hundreds, their thousands, and they ate up the strawberry jam, and they inspected the cream, and many had ecstatic but fatal baths in the milk jug. The students had no place and they had no tea – the flies took it all." The hotel keeper was genuinely mystified as to where they had come from. "Had he looked at his own stable yard he would have seen multitudes of fly–grubs crawling about a smelling manure stack.*[1]

Undoubtedly this incident had shown pointedly that personal hygiene, food hygiene and environment were largely unknown to this people at this point in their history. It was only after several thousands deaths due to food and water borne diseases that researchers became convinced that flies were second only to water supplies as the cause of typhoid contagion during the war.[2] Well, the Boer War exposed soldiers with close contact with soldiers because they were actually 'swarming with them'. This provided an easy way to establish such a link of disease contagion with the house–fly. It was during a period of time that milk and foodstuffs were often left exposed to dust and flies. In contrast, however, several centuries earlier the Educator of mankind taught his companions about the danger of house-fly: "that it carries harmful germs on one of its wings and the anti–dote on the other." Thus even in the 7th century Arabia, Muslims viewed flies not only as filthy insects, but also harmful as they transmit germs, the causative agents of various diseases. It was also to the credit of the great educator that they learnt to keep their milk, water and foodstuffs covered and free from dust and flies. Mice and rodents are to be kept away from their dwelling houses. The intellectuals of the Western world were aware of the healthful teachings of Islam, but due to racial arrogance and aversion for religious beliefs remained heedless and impervious to the calls of Islam. However, the cultural arrogance was finally broken by pestilence and epidemics. It was only several centuries afterwards in Europe that house-flies were discovered to be vehicle of disease transmission and rats harbour the rat flea, the source of bubonic plague. This minute organism, the flea is less than 3mm long. Due to pestilences of various kinds had made Islamic praxis of public and personal hygiene acceptable to the Europeans. Filthy habits die hard but the epidemic of "summer diarrhoea" became a potent

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1 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 79.
2 Ibid., p. 87

stimulator for change of habits. It is un-Islamic to allow a swarm of flies and filthy surrounding. Today we know well enough the medical implications of Islamic tenets and practices. The flow of Islamic culture helped the West in many ways. It was forced to follow the bandwagon effect willy-nilly.

Islam is a religion of all ages because it satisfies to the fullest all the needs and the aspirations of man at every age of his evolution. The Muslim is allowed to eat, drink and wear clothes, provided that they are all within the limits of the law. "Allah (s.w.t) said: Lawful for you are (all) good and pure things" (5:4). So that when "cleanliness and purity" were nuisance words or absent in the lexicon of the West they were integral parts of Islamic worship.

Whenever you eat, drink and wear good and pure things, the chances are the risk of contracting diseases are reduced to the barest minimum. Islam not only saves man from perdition, it keeps him away from diseases as well. Al-Bazzari stated that the Prophet (s.a.w) said:

> *Allah is good and appreciates the pleasant. He is clean and cherishes cleanliness, He is Munificent and He loves munificence. He is generous and likes generosity. So clean your courtyards and squares and do not imitate the Jews who assemble filth in their homes (Hadith).*

This is a clarion call on every Muslim to be good, pleasant, clean, munificent, generous and to translate these habits into practical life. Islam is a religion of faith backed up with right action. He must assiduously keep filths away, to act contrary to the Jews. Evidently, the Jews and the Europeans were wont to keeping filth in their dwellings. This Hadith, has uniquely distinguished the Muslim Ummah from any other community in personal cleanliness as well as ethical conduct. It could also be seen that sanitary habit arose *de novo* from the mind of every Muslim. There is absolute show of deep sense of relation with Divine realm in Islam that is not seen anywhere else. The way and manner a Muslim eats, drinks and wears clothes are well stipulated by the Islamic law. Charles J. Adams captured this complete submission to the supernatural imperatives in the following words:

> *The lively sense of relation with a supernatural realm shows itself in many different ways. Perhaps the most evident is the operation of the religious law which has its basis in the Will of the Sovereign Lord. The law determines the form of greeting that*

> *Muslims use toward one another, the types of food they eat or refuse, the manner of dress they adopt, the relations between the sexes, even so minor a thing as the method of cleansing the teeth. All of these aspects of culture, and many others beside, in addition to the specific obligation of worship, emerge from religious teachings of the Islamic tradition, as mediated in the Qur'an itself, in the example of the Prophet...*[1]

Undoubtedly, it is this absolute submission to the Divine Will in all aspects of human life that distinguishes Islam from any other culture and makes Muslims a Chosen People; a Messianic Community. It is also for this reason that Islamic worship engenders healthy living, the touchstone of divine origin. These beliefs and precepts today constitute what can correctly be described as the determinants of public health. Today it is known that the study of disease is really the study of man and his environment. So to keep disease at bay, a Muslim must apply the Golden Precept, which states that what he gives receive warmly; what he prohibits, reject completely. This is the Golden Precept and it is applicable in all daily activities. Islam provided the effective means of arresting or stemming the spread of epidemics.

Stemming Epidemics

Islam has put all the necessary measures in place to promote the health of the individual and to prevent disease occurrence, so that the individuals and the community remain safe from distress and disease. This is possible, if and only if, everyone plays the rules correctly both in public and in private. However, despite the full protection Islam offers to him, he remains a servant of the Almighty. He may be afflicted with disease for a number reasons whether due to known or unknown causes (i.e. idiopathic). Outbreak of disease becomes inevitable due to a trial of the individual or as a *kaffara* (atonement of sin) etc. Be that as it may, when a disease occurs utter *Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi – rajiun*, meaning from Allah we come and unto Him we return. This when said is a potent de – stressor, which is needed very much because disease of every kind comes along with a severe stress. It is a life event. This helps him to cope with the stress and to improve his recovery or death, for he is well prepared for both.

A Muslim does not succumb complacently to disease nor does he panic to the state of jittery and agitation. He fights the illness with medication and

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[1] Charles J. Adam, *Islamic Faith: Introduction to Islamic Civilisation*. Cambridge University Press (1979), p.35.

solemn prayer. If the disease is infectious he tries recently to ensure that no one gets infected through him. This attitude characterises a believer, he loves for his brother what he equally loves for himself and conversely. The attitude to illness and disease should be contrary to that of the unbelievers. As for them when one is infected with a disease he infects others so that they suffer the same disease and if possible to all die along with him. The Islamic attitude to illness and disease contributes significantly to the improvement of public health. And there is an outbreak of disease or epidemics, this is the most effective public safety to be adopted. The Prophet (s.a.w) said, "If you hear of an outbreak of plaque in a land, do not enter it; but if the plaque breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place" (Bukhari).

For centuries many Muslim countries were protected from the ravages of plaque or *at-tauon* due to a number of healthful measures. The Prophet (s.a.w) commanded that whenever there was an outbreak in a city those inside it should not flee and those outside should not go in. The medical implication of this commandment remains salutary to date. It was this concept that later gave birth to cordon and quarantine in the subsequent generation. When the devastation of the two Florence in the wake of plaque pandemic known as Black Death, the Prophetic advice was indirectly used to curtail its spread. John Simpson stated that it was this same pandemic, which induced Venice to introduce a Quarantine Code in 1348 in an effort to control the spread of the disease.[1]

Petrarch, in conclusion of a letter in which he described the devastation of the two Italian cities wrote: "O happy posterity, who will not experience such abysmal woe and will look upon our testimony as a fable."[2] The Muslim world was armed with an effective preventive strategy; "*attahara* and the wash ups." The general cleanliness involving personal and public health had helped most of the Islamic communities against the menace of plaque and other deadly epidemics as compared with the non – Muslims communities at the time.

The Muslim societies who followed diligently the Guidance of Allah (s.w.t) and the Sunnah of His Prophet (s.a.w) suffered little from this misery, which Petrarch described as 'abysmal woe'. They enjoyed the wholesale benefit of quarantine and the isolation as compared to non-Muslim communities. The Prophetic advice was and is still an effective

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1 John Simpson, *An Introduction to Preventive Medicine*, William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. (1970) p. 208

2 Ibid.

way of protection from exposure to infectious diseases during any epidemics. To underscore its efficacy, it has now become a universal measure used to check transmission of deadly diseases.

The value of quarantine could not have been great at a time when modes of transmission were unknown, yet it did seem an obvious practical solution and as such it served as effective preventive strategy for centuries. Perhaps, it arose from the "avoidance" measure advanced by the great health teacher "those in should remain within; those out should not come into the area of the disease outbreak." The area in modern term must be "cordoned." The Prophet's approach was excellent. It was the best, simplest and effective way to tackle the disaster; so it was an excellent and timely intervention performed by the most influential man in history. This in itself shows what Islam is all about: to make man healthy in the world and in the hereafter. The impact of Islamic teaching with respect to health and diseases was not felt in England until much later. London was devastated with plaque and threatened with annihilation by deadly sanitary "reformers." Deadly infectious disease forced a change of habit towards the *Grand norm.* They forced the West to imbibe Islamic principles of health and hygiene because the medieval hygiene courted serious disaster that could wipe out Europe of the surface of earth completely. With a population of 460,000 in 1665, London was densely populated. But the environmental hygiene was very poor; people were densely packed into jerry-built, decaying, wood houses. Streets and alleys were generally narrow and filthy. Contaminated with human and animal wastes they acted as open sewers (Ferguson, 1975). The teaching of the Prophet of Islam, "cleanliness is next to godliness" did not reach this part of the world yet and the outcome was ominous and "abysmal woe."

The people of London, and the West in general, were ignorant of the basic Islamic rules of hygiene which was an effective preventive strategy against disease. The people of London were lacking largely, or were not embarrassed due to cultural arrogance and Islamphobia inherited from the time of the crusades. As a result, in the overcrowded filthy conditions bathing was considered unhealthy. Naturally, in this foul smelling environment, everywhere was infested with rats, mice and other infested vermin, feeding on the littered human and animal faeces. The environment quite unlike that of the Muslim world existing at the time was fertile for the outbreak of epidemic diseases. When the plague started in the harsh cold of winter of 1664 – 5, England and Holland were unfortunately at war. However, England had to face a more deadly enemy at home, which had already started decimating its population; it was sandwiched between two

enemies. The testimony of the Lord Chancellor, The Earl of Clarendon, was very vivid enough; he recorded that:

> *There began now to appear another enemy, much more formidable than the Dutch, and more difficult to be struggled with; which was the plague, that broke out in the winter and made such an early progress in the spring, that though the weekly numbers did not rise high, and it appeared to be only in the outskirts of the town, and in the most obscure alleys, among the poorest people; yet the ancient men, who well remembered in what manner the last great plague (which has been near forty years before) first broke out, and the progress it afterwards made foretold a terrible summer (Crowrie, 1970).*

Plague re-attacked London at a very crucial period of its history: poor and squalid environment, densely populated, harsh cold weather for people with aversion for bathing spelled disaster! And the fear of war was looming in the horizon when the country was at war. Tough time requires tough measures to deal with it, but the Islamic preventive strategy was either nonexistent or largely ignored. Consequently, Londoners could not save themselves from the devastation of the more deadly enemy from within due to lack of effective measures. The basic rules of hygiene were conspicuously absent amongst the populace. The Praxis of poor hygiene remained unsettled.

So in the summer of 1665, plague spread rapidly like wild fire among the inhabitants of London. The mortality rate reached its peak in August claiming as many as 5,000 victims in a week. The state of misery was horrendous as London was turned into a ghost city. Gohfried gave its graphic picture:

> *Men toured the deserted streets each night with carts: "Bring out your dead." Bodies were collected and after the churchyards could accommodate no more, were buried in huge communal pits. In an effort to prevent its spread, the families of those affected were boarded up in their homes. Such houses were marked with red crosses and painted with the words "Lord have mercy upon us." Watchmen, armed with halberds, stood guard to prevent escape. By early 1666, when the worst was over, an estimated 100, 000 inhabitants of the city had died; a number that was doubled when the plague spread to the rest of England. Yet even this loss was relatively small compared with the repeated earlier*

devastation caused by the plagues in England, during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries (Gohfried, 1978).

What mercy? The Lord had already sent a mercy unto the world with the advent of Islam. But when its saving precepts were denied or lackadaisically implemented the repercussions could be deadly and disastrous. The protective strategy brought by Islam was not put in place to save the people. So cities became filthy and pestilences ravaged them so quickly and were rendered ghost cities. Plague had been known for at least 3,000 years with epidemics being recorded in China since 224 BC (Bram, 1979). With no Islamic preventive strategy in place so there had been at least three plague pandemics in Western history. However, the scale of devastation of that of London in 1665 was severe due to a number of factors. Simpson stated that in London in 1665, there was a strong prejudice against bathing and personal hygiene, which helped to increase the susceptibility to infection. While in comparison personal hygiene and bathing formed the integral part of Islamic worship which were meticulously observed for the safety of the community. In fact, Islam demands purity of place, body and mind. A fact that can never be over – emphasised, they are essential parts in the worship. It is necessary to reiterate and repeat incidence of this nature so as to appraise and put more upon our faith and practices. Our faith is the best in the world. A hygienic attitudinal behaviour was cultivated as well as ingrained in the heart of a Muslim. And the wisdom could not be appreciated and the greatness of Islam be ratified once again. While plague and other communicable diseases were afflicting many non-Muslim nations, Islamic societies, on the other hand, were enjoying merrily the dividends of Islamic worship.

The other factor, according to Simpson, which helped the rapid spread of the plague was the habit of attending funerals. He explicitly elaborated on how the funeral rite had helped to escalate the spread of the deadly disease. For example, Samuel Pepys recorded of how the Vestry Greenwich tried to reduce the number of mourners in order to reduce the chance of spread of infection. He wrote:

I up to vestry at the desire of the justices of the peace, in order to the doing something for keeping of the plague from growing; but lord! To consider the madness of the town, who will (because they are forbidden) come in crowds along with the dead corpse to see

> *them buried; but we agreed on some orders for the prevention thereof (Crowrie, 1970).*[1]

This description of the grisly practice, which was typical of the West was favourable to the spread of pestilence. In a society where there was a strong prejudice against bathing and basic hygiene in general, naturally attending funeral in the manner described was to court disaster because of the increased risk of infection from the infectious corpse or corpses. In Islamic culture, however, this risk of contamination is reduced to the barest minimum due to the strict imposition of rules of hygiene with respect to the dead as well as the mourners. Since the cause of the death is usually unknown, Islam imposes four duties which the community owes to the dead irrespective of the cause of the death. These are: (i) Washing (ii) Wrapping (iii) Prayer and (iv) Burial. The corpse has to be washed clean in the hygienic way; wrapped in a clean white cloth; prayer is then offered to the deceased before the corpse is finally buried also in a hygienic way. *Janazah* means corpse. When a Muslim dies he must be buried as soon as practicable. He or she must be decently buried to avoid rigor mortis and purification. This development is prevented to limit the spread of infection in the interest of the public.

Islam was well in advance of Europe in public health. The concept of environmental cleanliness featured very prominently in Islamic worship. It is even reasonable to state that the concept of public health was popularised by Muslims because Islam attached great importance to the maintenance and improvement of the health of not only the individual but the society in general. At a time when the concept of public health was unknown the discipline, however, was well developed in Islamic societies. It laid the responsibility of protecting, promoting and restoring the people's health through collective or social action, when such a lofty idea was unheard of in Europe. *Istinja*, the practice of washing the orifices (anal and urethral) after every call of nature and sewage disposal were the hallmark of Islamic faith. These habits may appear simple and commonplace to the Muslim, but they are the actual determinants of civilised behaviour in the real sense of the word. The left hand must be used and certain precautions are to be taken in the case of natural evacuation (and physical evacuation of faecal matter) so that no part of the excrement should remain either on the body or clothing. A Muslim must keep away from filth as much as possible.

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[1] John Simpson. *An Introduction to Preventive Medicine*, p. 7.

Similarly, the idea of ecology, which is now known as a biological discipline concerned with the mutual relationships of various living organism in an environment, was also well recognised during the era of Islamic civilisation. Because filthy environment was not only scoffed at as unhealthy, but was not in tandem with Muslim's way of life, where "cleanliness is next to godliness." A notion that was popularised in the community, it has now gained universal acceptance. In another view, unhygienic environment was symbolic of both impurity and ugliness all of which have no place in Islam. "Allah is pure and He accepts nothing impure!." Thus filthy environment is alien to Islamic community because it is not a place of worship. By keeping the environment clean and tidy the spread of communicable diseases is prevented. And the concept of public health was well established, first among the Muslims before it spread to other parts of the world.

The picture of Europe at the time of Islamic civilisation was entirely a different kettle of fish. But Islam and what it stands for were abhorred. It was this senseless abhorrence and the praxis of cultural arrogance that made them keep Islam at bay with severe repercussions. This was seen evidently in the Great Stench of London, which occurred in 1858. It was the height of ignorance, bad habits and obstinate prejudice to both personal and environmental hygiene that culminated into this famous, "Terrible Smell of London." Poor sanitation led to poor sewage. It was pestilences that broke finally the cultural arrogance for their own survival that they accepted to adopt Islamic attitude to filths and sewage.

Sewage Disposal

What is Sewage? Sewage is waste water from a community, containing solid and liquid excreta derived from houses, streets and yards washings, factories and industries. It resembles dirty water with an unpleasant smell. It is to be distinguished from "sullage", which is a term applied to waste water which does not contain human excreta, e.g. waste water from kitchens and bathrooms.[1] What is the attitude of a Muslim towards sewage? Both sewage and sullage are repugnant to a Muslim from the spiritual and health standpoints. They constitute a veritable barrier to his salvation because when stain with them his *wudu* is vitiated. Without a valid *wudu* no *salat* is accepted by Allah (s.w.t). It is a basic fact understood by everybody now that stains of both sewage, sullage contain harmful microbes that could be dangerous to health. Thus both sewage and sullage are most hateful and

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[1] *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 530.

reprehensive things which are to be avoided at all costs. This attitude is in accord with civilised behaviour. So it anticipated the modern concept by several centuries, they must be disposed off promptly. A spectre of sewage or sullage is an anathema in Islamic worship. All filthy materials are hateful in the sight of every practising Muslim.

This attitude towards sewage and sullage is in perfect accord with modern hygiene. Unless prompt measures are taken to provide proper means of sewage disposal, the following environmental problems may be created: a) Creation of nuisance, unsightliness and unpleasant odours; b) breeding of flies and mosquitoes; c) pollution of soil and water supplies; d) contamination of food; e) increase in the incidence of disease, especially enteric and helminthic disease.[1]

Since without *attahara* there is no valid *wudu,* without this pre-condition no *salat* is acceptable; cleanliness, therefore, is the key to prayer. *Salat* is the most environmental sanitizer ever to be evolved. It shares no common ground with filth, sewage and sullage. To keep *salat* regularly is to regularly keep them away and well disposed. Sewage disposal in big towns in Europe was a very difficult problem. Unfortunately, those in authority had not always been sufficiently strict in the matter. Strict hygienic rules could not be imposed because poor personal hygiene was part and parcel of the lifestyle of every European citizenry. So it was difficult to apply the rule of hygiene. Even more difficult when the harms of sewage and sullage were not appreciated application of basic hygiene was therefore considered an unnecessary encumbrance. One of the great wisdom of making religion a complete way of life, is to make social and religious rules easy; to make compliance where it is lacking filth, sewage, and sullage become abundant everywhere. It becomes exceedingly, difficult to maintain hygienic rules. "This applied in Great Britain up to the nineteenth century," said Baldry, "and is still true in certain parts of the world." Peter Baldry then explained:

> *...because of this lack of insistence on proper sanitation, there was serious widespread epidemics of cholera, typhoid and dysentery in Europe up to the middle of the last century. Description of conditions in big cities at that time showed that filth was appalling.*[2]

The appalling filthy condition of Europe was horrifying; heaps of garbage, sewage and pools of sullage were commonplace. They were

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 530.
2 Peter Baldry, *The Battle Against Bacteria: A Fresh Look*, p.7

everywhere in the towns, villages and cities. People lived with both human and animal faeces, which littered everywhere. The use of toilets was virtually unknown or at least it was not used because of the general erroneous belief that they were harmless. This then let to the development of prejudices against personal and environmental sanitation amongst the Europeans. Outbreaks of various diseases were prevalent as a result. No city was an exception to the prevalence of disease brought by unhealthy conditions; examples abound in history, Baldry continued:

> *In the tenements of Glasgow dung was left lying adjacent to the houses as there were no drains or privies; in another Scottish town it was reported that there were no lavatories in houses and only two or three public privies, situated in the better parts of the town. These two examples were typical of the situation in all big cities.*[1]

Dirty habits were aggravated by stark ignorance even among the British elite of the day. For instance, William Budd (1811-80), the great epidemiologist had wrongly pointed out that organic putrefaction by itself was not enough to cause disease. This belief coupled with dirty habits had led to the horrifying experience of the famous Great Stench of London, because Budd was doubtful at that time as to whether excreta alone could cause disease.[2] This explained why the use of toilet was avoided and sewage and waste disposal systems were lacking in all the cities in Europe. With adverse consequences because faeces were considered "harmless stuffs" they could be thrown about indiscriminately. Further, since fetid smell was all over the place people got used to it. Scanty smells were unknown or uncared for. To buttress this point Baldry stated eloquently:

> *This lack of lavatories, either public or private, led to the habit of house dwellers filling chamber pots with excreta and after some days, when completely full, and with a shout of "Gardez l'eau," emptying the contents out of the window into the street below; a habit not without risk to passers-by, and of course a practice, which led to persistent pollution and stench in all the streets.*[3]

One important point to highlight at this juncture is *salat* by itself is strong armour against the perpetration of this horrendous act of filthy behaviour. The Muslims at that material time could not fathom or even

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1 Peter Baldry, *The Battle Against Bacteria: A Fresh Look*, p.7
2 Ibid., p.8
3 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

think such things could ever happen even in their wildest dream. Why? Because they were well projected by Islamic worship, so they were at the outset civilised people with deep sense of hygiene, they might not know about bacteria and viruses but they completely rejected what harbour them; they remained well protected against their harms. Islamic worship rejects even a spectre of filth or sewage. It makes Islamic cities unique and special. Despite this detailed and elaborate exposition, Baldry's graphic picture of unclean and filthy habits of Europeans as typified by Londoners, the composite picture of these unhealthy social behaviour was only a partial account. Where dung and excreta were considered harmless stuffs, then the ominous outcome is better left to be imagined. Baldry gave a more detailed and accurate picture of the entire landscape, when he described how a new record was set in history, which was described as the Great Stench of London. This incident led to its establishment:

> *At that time, the sewage of nearly three million people was allowed to collect in one vast cesspit in the middle of the city, and during the summer the hot sun shining on this quagmire produced a stench so foul as had never been experienced before. The work of Parliament was almost brought to standstill because of the noxious air which penetrated the building, and steps were taken to overcome this by the suspension before every window of blankets saturated in chloride of lime, and by the lavish use of this and other disinfectants in every room. The lawcourts had to close down and travellers who could do so avoided London by making detour of the city.*[1]

This vivid description of the famous Great Stench of London which paralysed the social activity of the city for sometime was immediately followed by public reaction as fetid smell overwhelmed the city. Because people had never experienced such horror of most offensive foul smell, this most odious quagmire could have occurred at such an abysmal degree only reflected how life could be without right guidance. This in itself is enough evidence to show that there are health benefits in Islamic worship. Furthermore, in the retrospective study of Islamic societies, no such horrifying experience or event could occur. Islamic society is a well guided one; it is not a society that grew up by trial and error. The Islamic understanding of a society is that composed of individuals, as well as three further elements that determine the relationship of the individual, and these

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[1] Peter Baldry, *The Battle Against Bacteria: A Fresh Look*, pp. 8 - 9

are: a) The predominant thoughts that the people carry; b) the predominant emotions that the people carry; c) the prevailing governing system (government).

"Islamic society's likes and dislikes, taboos and preferences," said Fredericks, "are coloured by the Qur'an and Sunnah."[1] Both reject filths and fetid smells from whatever source. All emphasise the vital importance of cleanliness of outward and inward purifications. The Prophet (s.a.w) himself was an epitome of cleanliness. He single-handedly sanitized the world and he remain forever a universal role model This stand is in line with Prophetic injunction. He said: "None of you (truly) believes until his inclination is in accordance with what I have brought."

The importance of this inclination can be understood and appreciated when Dr. Ejaz Akram pointed that:

> *It is our conclusion that the core of every civilisation is the culture but its primordial tradition, the life of that entity which we can call civilisation is tied to its worldview, which emerges from those answers that religion gives to the existential predicament of humanity. Cultures are the realms of shared meanings and shared understanding through the use of mutually comprehensible language and symbols. However, they evolve and gravitate around the primordial tradition. Whereas the former is subject to change, the latter is a repository of those principles and has a timeless value. Therefore, several systems of culture can well be integrated into a large civilisational whole to which they belong, and the cohesive element that unites them together in spirit also allows the plurality of their outer forms to exist. It is that element which is universal and the one that can serve as a platform for reconciliation at the local as well as the universal level.*[2]

The clarion call of the Prophet (s.a.w) to all who believe was and still is towards integration into this super-civilisation that can untie all cultures into a one civilizational whole. However, when a society acts or inclines not in accordance with what the Prophet (s.a.w) brought, it negates the essence of the golden precept and death, misery and pestilence becomes as typified by Europe before the middle of the 19th century. Dr. Ekram then defined tradition in the context:

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1 Salim Fredericks, *Society*, Alkhalifa Publications, London
2 *American Journal of Islamic Social Science*, (AJISS) Volume, 19 Spring 2002, No2.p.35.

> *...By tradition here, we mean those principles that bind humanity's origin to heaven via religion. It is a single truth, which is at the heart of all religions. It is important also not to confuse customary traditions with the primordial tradition defined as the core of the forms of different traditions, for the heart of all the traditions is a single universal Logos.*[1]

In contrast, modernity, on the other hand, can be identified with that process which seeks uniformity as a way to resolve conflict. This phenomenon is as visible as daylight if one observes how the process of state making took place in Europe and how the nation state is, by its very nature the enemy of diversity, and, therefore, of universality.[2]

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) was not only the role model of all Muslims but of all nations; In Islam although diverse cultures co-exist with each other, they are unified in one whole via a religious *weltanchauung;* cleanliness is a hallmark of that organic unity. His strict hygienic standard was known to all; and his insistence on sanitation and environmental cleanliness had all combined to establish and popularise the concept of public health. Thus, although the West today is a strong advocate of this concept, it was an idea that was not home grown. It was a social norm that was completely alien to Western culture but imbibed from Islamic ideology. Public health is a part and parcel of Islamic norms and values. And personal hygiene is an integral part of Islamic worship. However, when the West cast off its filthy habits and imbibed the Islamic culture of scrupulous personal and environmental hygiene, it underwent a new rebirth, to become world leaders in public and private sanitation and hygiene. This was a positive impact of Islam on the West, and a legacy to the modern world. Undoubtedly, therefore, Islamic worship is beneficial to health. Islam left another legacy, the inculcation of regular baths to people of all nations to promote personal hygiene.

Great Prescription of Ghusl

Islam came at an epoch where water was used for many things except bathing because many nations had developed aversion to it. It had helped to establish hygiene, which has two aspects, personal and environmental. The aim of personal hygiene which Islam inculcates is to first meet the good sanitary demands of *salat*. This helps to promote standards of personal cleanliness within the setting of the condition where people live. Personal

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1 *American Journal of Islamic Social Science*. (AJISS) Volume. 19 Spring 2002. No2.p.35
2 Ibid.

hygiene includes bathing, clothing, washing hands and toilet, care of nails, feet and teeth, spitting, sneezing, personal appearance and inculcation of clean habits in the young. Training in personal hygiene should begin at a very early age and must be carried out through school age.[1]

Sunnah fitrah is synonymous with personal hygiene in modern terms which the Prophet (s.a.w) had advanced; no doubt, *ghusl* or bathing is of cardinal importance without which this type of hygiene loses its purposes and values.

This Islamic ritual bath, unlike the temescal bath of the ancient Maya or any other ritual or ceremonial bath, is essentially purification. It gets rid of dirt and or pollutants from the body. It uses only clean water, it adds freshness and zest to the life of a Muslim. The life of every civilisation as we have seen is related directly with well-being and operativeness of those religious truths that it upholds. Regular *ghusl* keeps the Muslim fleshly alive and gives him the go. Aversion to bathing or *ghusl* in the pre–modern time was a common habit amongst most nations. Islamic culture, however, was unique in reinforcing, popularising and rationalising the habit of bathing. With this Islamic habit diffusing rapidly across all nations, bathing today has attained a most distinguishing habit that is befitting to a modern man. This habit, however, is an Islamic legacy to the civilised world.

For undisclosed reason Europeans initially had prejudice against bathing for bathing's sake. Dr. Johnson's response to go and take a bath way typical to the lot: "to let well alone and content, I hate immersion."[2] When people cultivated an aversion for "immersion" or bathing the health implications were grave and disastrous. In court life, where the learned could be expected to show a contrary behaviour the attitude was unfortunately similar to the rest of the public the bathing; Lord Harvey described the behaviour graphically among the court men. He said it was a round of "dice, dancing, crowding, sweating and slinking in abundance.[3] To mask their odours, both men and women wore strong perfumes.[4] For obvious reason to suppress the stench, this was one end of the scale. On the other end of the scale, it was reported that the Stuart court was disgusting beneath its powder and pomp. Why? They were neat and gay in their apparel but very nasty and beastly because they left their excrements in every corner, in chimneys, studies, colehouse and cellers." The Europeans lived for centuries without the benefits of the Great Prescription. In consequence,

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 606.
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 18.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid, p.12

they smelled terribly while alive and stank in their graves while dead. In contrast, the Muslims benefit from the Great Prescription in life as well as in death. The Muslim and fetid smell, therefore, share no common ground.

As a faith of science, Islam defines precisely every ritual act without any ambiguity. This is important because every precept attracts its own reward and fits into a specific scheme to make the worship a composite whole. *Wudu* means ablution; *tawaddi* means to perform an ablution. While *ghusl* means to wash something; *ightisal* means to perform a *ghusl*. And *ghusl* in the context used in this book is bathing, the washing of the complete body to rid it of dirts and impurities. There are many terms used to designate various acts of wash ups. This indicates the cardinal importance of hygiene and cleanliness in Islam. When wash ups were completely alien to many cultures, Islam had perfected the science of wash ups and made it a universal culture; it was this science of bathing that slowly spread to Europe and the rest of the world. In Islam there are many conditions that obligate *ghusl* or complete bath. The list here is without the traditional categorization of *fard*, *sunnat* or *mustahab*.

Types of Ghusl

- To make a ghusl for Friday prayer. This makes it mandatory for a Muslim to take bath, at least once a week.
- When a disbeliever is converted to Islam. This means that when a non-Muslim becomes a Muslim, he is to take bath.
- To wash a Muslim when he is dead. Even the corpse of a Muslim must be washed clean before burial.
- The person who washes a dead Muslim. He should take a bath himself. This is also important from the standpoint of medical health. So that by taking bath he reduces the risk of contracting communicable disease from the dead.
- To take bath on the days of Eid festivals.
- To take bath on Arafat Day.
- To take bath after coitus. This is known as ghusl–ul–janabah. There are three ways of becoming a junub, that is one with janabah; (a) Sexual act, (b) ejaculation of semen lustfully and (c) lustful dream leading to ejaculation. Any of these conditions necessitates taking bath.
- To take bath after nifas. A woman after delivery continues to bleed during the period of puerperium that may last up to 40 days. This

bleeding is called nifas or lochia. On the day the bleedings stops she performs the ghusl–ul–nifas and commences salat.

- To take bath after haid or menstruation. Haid is the bleeding due to menstrual cycle in the female. Its commencement at pubertal age or baligh is called menarche. Menstrual bleeding normally lasts between 3 and 7 days. Menorrhagia, however, is called istihada and is considered an abnormal bleeding.
- To make a ghusl before putting on the ihram for hajj and umra.
- To make a ghusl when entering Makka or Madina.
- To take a ghusl when standing for waqfa at Muzdalifa.
- To take a bath when a child reaches 15 years of age.
- To take a bath before washing a dead Muslim. (bath is taken after washing the dead).
- To take a bath after cupping.
- To take a bath on Qadr.
- To take a bath on Arafa and Barat nights.
- To take a bath when sanity is regained.1

Islam is a faith of ablutions and bathes, a religion of cleanliness; therefore a religion of health and bliss. Although this list is by no means exhaustive, it only shows pointedly that Islam is completely averted to dirts of behaviour and impurities, on the body, clothing and place. Through the ritual acts of *ghusl*, Islam provides the believer with a head start on good sense of personal hygiene and good health.

Method of Taking Bath: After cleaning the body properly, wash the head and the neck and then the first right half of the body below the head and later the left half. The *ghusl* can also be performed either by body immersion or by plunging fully into running water. It is necessary to wash the dirt and/or pollutant thoroughly. After pronouncing the appropriate *niyyat* or intention, *ghusl* becomes obligatory after the following: sexual intercourse, discharge of semen, completion of menses and confinement and after touching a human dead body. Thus it is only Islam that makes regular bath an obligatory habit, the medical importance of which cannot be overemphasised.

So there is a methodology in every action to be done, including the performance of the ritual bath. As a faith of science it specifies a standard in all its ritual acts even though there might be a slight variation based on

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1 *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fasclicle, p. 41 - 49

madhab or school of thought. Professor Doi, a distinguished Islamic scholar and writer described the method of taking the *ghusl*:

> *First of all one should wash two hands up to the wrist and then the hidden part of one's body or any other place which has become unclean. Then one should perform an ablution, one should start first washing hands and then the entire body. The whole body should be made wet, no portion should remain dry. There are three important aspects of bath: (1) the mouth should be cleaned thoroughly so that water may reach up to the palate, (2) the nostril should also be made wet (up to the soft portion), (3) water should be made to reach every part of the body (including holes) except in sickness when there is a fear that by making the head or any part of the body wet, the suffering will increase or the sickness will get worse; then that part should be left unwashed and the bath would still be correct.*[1]

The *ghusl* differs from the regular bath; in that case toilet soap is not used. However, many scholars are of the opinion that after completion of the *ghusl* the application of soap as in regular bath can be followed. As such there is no much difference *sweat bath* in terms of purification and hygienic values. The *ghusl* makes obligatory or *farad* the washing of the mouth, rinsing of the nostrils and washing the entire torso. It is therefore vital to personal cleanliness. It differs markedly from other forms of bath like the Temescal baths and even more hygienic than the Sauna baths.

It is compulsory for a Muslim to take a bath after touching a corpse so that he is neither infected by the infectious disease of the deceased nor serves as its vehicle of transmission. The Islamic rulings concerning the compulsory *ghusl* though revealed in the 7th century are pertinent and strikingly modern in our time. It must be reiterated too that it is for the strict hygienic stance of Islam that makes Islamic communities neat, clean and tidy while in many others fetid and squalor environments were tolerated, a tendency that led to Europe, particularly England, to witness the Great Unwashed the Great Stench of the 17th and 18th centuries. It was only in the late 19th century that the culture of regular bath became fully accepted worldwide. This point cannot be overemphasised; it is even necessary to reiterate it pointedly because it benchmarks the perils linked with refusal to implement the foremost principle. Islam considers the following as *Najasat* or pollutant and recommends immediate cleaning,

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[1] A. Doi, *The Cardinal Principles of Islam*, p.58.

washing or *ghusl*: urine, stool, blood, saliva of dog, soiling with the pig, animal dung, excrement, wine, semen and corpse (touching).

Islam considers soilings with animals' saliva like dog and animal dung or excrement like pig as *najasat*. A consideration that is valid from the standpoint of health and sickness. Animals are part of man's biological environment, some of them act as reservoir hosts of a number of diseases, for example, the WHO records more than 150 diseases and infections of animals communicable to man – these are termed "zoonoses." And zoonotic diseases may be due to viruses, bacteria, ricketisiae, fungi, helminths, protozoa, arthropods or insects (WHO, 1976).

In Islamic health science *najasat* vitiates *wudu* without which no *salat* is valid. Whether this *najasat* comes from animals or man; it is to be avoided at all costs. It must be washed away promptly. Rabies, a deadly disease is caused by dog bite. Its saliva contains the deadly viruses.

The *Ghusl* or bath is taken to clean one's body or refresh oneself.[1] It is called the greater ablution; it plays a great role in personal cleanliness and physical health. Usually *ghusl–il–janabah* in which no soap is used is combined with the ordinary bath. This promotes personal hygiene. In this regard, the importance of regular bath, especially to our modern world of aesthetics, and cleanliness cannot be overemphasised. In tropical Africa, and especially in the arid area of the Sahara, the hot sun, and dust and with the attendant profuse sweating as a result of high body temperature from the scorching sun all necessitate a regular bath, to refresh oneself and improve the body hygiene. Small amounts of sweat and oil are being poured out onto the surface of the skin all the time, and if these are allowed to remain they will cause unpleasant smell. Even along the West African coast, with high humidity and the hustles and bustles of the day-to-day activities also demand regular bath. In the cold region of the world warm water is used where *ghusl* is indicated. Thus, regular bath is recommended to man in every part of the world both for social, aesthetic and health factors. This introduces us to importance of sweat bath to general health, and to the prevention of offensive body odour.

Perspiration and Body Odour

Islam is the only culture that makes regular bathing an obligatory duty to all its adherents. And it is this Islamic bathing ethic that has become acceptable to all nation because bathing improves general health. Pertinent to add that the bathing habit is Islamic contribution to the modern world.

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[1] A. Doi, *The Cardinal Principles of Islam*, p.57.

The importance of *ghusl* is now well recognised because lack of it causes amongst other things Bad Body Odour (BBD). When everybody moves with BBD a Muslim should be an exception because body purification his half of his faith. Thus it is a religious duty to take his bath regularly. This is uniquely typical of health in worship of Islam, it was the Prophet (s.a.w) that re-introduced the habit of bathing to the modern world at a time when only few recognised its virtues and importance, modern civilisation would not have been possible without this simple hygiene of body purification. So the Educator of mankind re-introduced it to the world taught the peoples of all nations how to take bath. The Universal Role Model should the sequence to be followed to remove major impurities from the body through washing of the whole body.

The way to perform total washing of the body as advanced by the great Health Teacher of all times in the 7th century Arabia was described by Aisha (r.a) his loving wife and Umm al-Muminin (mother of the faithful). According her:

> *First, the Apostle would begin by washing his hands, then he would wash off the discharge from his private part before performing wudu. He would next put his fingers into the water and rub the roots of his hair. Next, he would pour as much water as two hands can take on to his head three times, and over the entire surface of his skin. (Bukhari)*

From the above, it could be seen that by following methodical approach every part of the body is given its due attention, such that the whole body's impurities are washed thorough, leaving the body clean, neat and hygiene. Although this system of body purification was advanced several centuries ago, it is still relevant today and at all times. This is because it gives the body total and comprehensive purification. It is disheartening to point that many non-Muslims admit going to take bath without washing their private parts, such that the anal area remains laddered with faecal matter. While many others take bath minus their heads because of the use of "shower caps", in this case the head stinks while the rest of the body is claimed to be washed. And even more serious is the fact that many of the non-Muslims do not take bath regularly sometimes it takes a for-night or a month before the body is totally washed with water. To the Muslim, however, this is unacceptable. It is a religious offence to miss the juma'at taking a bath on Friday. This shows that least a Muslim can reach is to take bath once a

week provided that there are no other factors that make body purification necessary.

Further, Islam recommends that a Muslim musk keep away from BBD because felid smell is attractive to the Devil while scantly smell or perfume is attractive to the Angels. He is therefore highly motivated to take sweat bath frequently especially after perspiration. Perspiration is a term used to describe the fluid produced by the sweat glands (sweat), and its production. Sweat is composed of 99% water and 1% dissolved salts, urea and waste products. An average 1½ pints of sweat is produced in one day in temperate conditions.[1] The sweat production in the tropics is a lot more, thus at outset, it could be seen that without regular bath life would be hampered seriously in the hurly burly of the social and economic activities of the modern world.

Although perspiration helps to keep the body temperature normal in hot condition because heat is lost when the sweat evaporates from the surface of the body, it creates the bad body odour. It increases during exercise and anxiety so that without regular bathing body smell could be over bearing. Fresh perspiration produces very little smell in a healthy person. Stale perspiration results in body odour because bacteria that live on the skin act on the sweat produced by the apocrine glands to produce substances that smell. Body odour problems therefore commonly occur in the hairier part of the body under the arms and in the genital areas. Here body shape and clothing cause a build – up of perspiration by slowing down the rate of evaporation.[2]

This brings to foreground the importance of *sunnah fitra* which includes regular shaping of the hair in the armpits and public hairs. By this recommendation the unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) had anticipated the modern hygiene by several centuries. This was, however, not surprising because what else do you expect from the greatest and most successful Prophet in history? To educate humanity on what right and what is wrong and harmful. Today, his lifestyles in terms of general hygiene and cleanliness have become the major source of inspiration to many people in the West and other parts of the world. This because the entire lifestyle of the Universal Role Model was ultramodern informs and contents, to Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) hated bad odour with the same vehemence he hated the devil. So to prevent bad odour is to a few things to his personal habits.

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1 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body:* An Owner's Manual, p. 170
2 Ibid, p. 170

Preventing Bad Body Odour

- Both sweating and body odour can be aggravated by obesity, highly spiced foods, alcohol and coffee.
- Regular washing and changes of clothing help counteract body odour by removing bacteria and old perspiration.
- Odour can also be prevented temporarily by using a deodorant and / or an anti perspirant. Anti-perspirants block the pore or swell the surrounding area to shrink the pore size.
- Manufactured sprays, sticks, roll – one and creams usually contain both deodorant and anti-perspirant. Good cream, roll-on, or stick anti-depressants reduce sweat output by 40%, and sprays by 20%.
- Both deodorant and anti-perspirants can cause skin irritation in some people. Changing to a non – perfumed brand or to a different type often eliminates the problem.[1]
- *Sunnah fitrah* – shaving the pubes and hair in the armpits facilitates evaporation of sweat and washing of stale sweat.

In one of the traditions emphasising the use of the Great Prescription, the Holy Prophet said: "Purification is the key to prayer." In another hadith, Ibn Majah (r.a) reported from the Prophet who said: "Purification is one-half of the faith."[2] There is no religion, which puts emphasis on strict hygienic rules like *deen-al-Islam*.

These prophetic traditions and many others are all in response to Divine injunctions on the Messenger of Allah in particular, and to the Muslim world in general. For example, Allah (s.w.t) instructed His Apostle thus: "And thy garment keep from stain" (Q.74:4). Hence the issue of personal hygiene and body care in Islam are of paramount importance. It is to be expected that should the Muslims follow these guidelines individually and collectively their societies would be free from pestilence and diseases like it was the case among the early Muslims. To underscore this important fact, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) said in one hadith that: "Prayer is not accepted without purification and charity is not accepted out of what is acquired by unlawful means." Further, cleanliness is elevated or equated with "half Islamic faith." Thus modern hygiene is to reiterate an Islamic legacy to the modern world.

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1 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body:* An Owner's Manual, p. 170
2 Ibid., p.57.

Towards Change of Attitude

The essence of the Great Prescription is to bring about behavioural change from a filthy attitude to that of general cleanliness. How is such dirty behaviour to be remedied? The vast Islamic intellectual heritage provides solutions to all human problems. It suggests that education, law and the application of the foremost principle are the three key pillars to disentangle the centuries old filthy behaviour in every nation. We consider each in turn.

Education: It is to be noted that moral conduct is a manifestation of societal values and concepts of social justice. Filthy behaviour is not only antithesis to Islamic moral conduct, it is an eyesore that runs counter to beauty and aesthetics which Islam upholds and perpetuates. The starting point for curing dirty behaviour lies in reforming social values, grounding them in appropriate concept of rules of public health, and linking them with a broader worldview. This therefore forms the very basis of Islamic health rules and education programme. It is through education that unethical behaviour is most likely to be discarded while those of virtues to be upheld and implemented. Education, however, must be backed up by the law.

Law and Incentives: The core law in Islam is given by Allah (s.w.t); it is codified as a legal corpus in the form of *halal* and *haram* as enshrined in the *weltanstauung of* the *shariah*. The relevance and the pertinency of the *shariah* are better understood when first order and second preference are differentiated. Harry G. Frankfurt defined this distinction when he pointed out that first order preferences refer to "basic desires" while the second order preferences refer to "desires directed at the desires." According to *Iqbal* and Lewis: since people are distinguished by criterion that they have higher order attitudes, namely attitudes toward attitude and especially, attitudes. Moreover, desires can be evaluated not only from the viewpoint of their practical reliability, but according to standards that represent something other than simply desiring.

In this sense, then learning of such path means comprehending higher order, beliefs, values, virtues, and conceptions of justice that true equality and peace among human beings. It means practising freedom from the servitude of "lower order" (first – order) tastes, desires, passions, and enticements in most cases not by abject denial out by admittance to the extent and through the channels permitted by higher - order norms elaborated in the *shariah*; developing consciousness of ends and means, rights and means, right and obligations, and externalities of individual or community action all defined as right or wrong with reference to the objectives of mankind's creation and being; seeking and strengthening faith

not only in worship and reflection but also in every action undertaken in life; seeking God not in escape out by participating "righteously" in every action that defines and constitutes our being; viewing all action through the lenses of an origin – destiny framework in which human beings are unable to escape accountability and internalizing:

> *Behold two (guardian) angels appointed to learn (man's doings) learn (and note them), one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does one utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready (to note it). (50:17-18).*

The role of foremost principle, finding a straight path in the pitch of darkness is perilous, to say the least. It is even more perilous when sailors lack a guiding compass in the tempest of the sea. The need of a role model is fundamental and crucial, the application of foremost principle provides a floodlight to point and guide people unto the straight path as opposed to the primrose path whose darkness leads humankind to the abysmal woe. Primrose path is a path that is characterised by misery, distress pestilence and diseases in life and perdition in the life hereafter. The Prophet of Islam is the most ideal world Prophet and his lifestyle is a practical translation of *shariah* into action. Therefore, he conformed to the *Grand norm.* Thus worthy of emulation by all people at all times; where his guidance is refused or rejected the consequence is almost always fatal. The medieval hygiene and with all its horrible fetid smells, terrible death and misery was only a tip of the iceberg, a lot lay beneath the sea. Europe before the 19th century suffered from the havoc wreaked by medieval hygiene and from the age of Industrial Revolution the cause of misery and death did not leave but only changed the goalpost. The new goalpost in this age, therefore, could be seen in the devastations caused by crimes, drug addiction, alcoholism and an alarming rise of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, stroke, diabetes mellitus, and severe stress, etc.

Taking along safari into how Islam brings about attitudinal changes to people of all nations is important. It helps to give a considerable insight into how Europe suddenly transformed from an era of abysmal woe to modernity. The changes continue because, to chagrin of all, science and technological sophistication have failed to give the average European a peace of mind. We are all in bondage; it is only shariah that shall set us free. Free from barbarism, filthy behaviour and spiritual death. The reason for this extensive exposition is to bring into focus and reinforce the cardinal importance Islam attaches to manner. In fact, the central thrust of Prophet's

message is to raise human behaviour to the highest perfection. Thus in this endeavour the monumental importance of law and incentives can never be overemphasised. The law is just and ordinate and punishment prescribes commensurate with the offence. The essence of the law and punishment is to serve as a deterrent; it is to stimulate good changes to come from within and not to enforce from outside.

This view was also perpetuated by Ibn Khaldun, and the significance that he attached to "internal" forces as opposed to "external" law enforcement was expressed thus:

> *When laws are (enforced) by means of punishment, they completely destroy fortitude, because the use of punishment against someone who cannot defend himself generates in that person a feeling of humiliation...* [1]

Islam conquers the world not by the force of sword as it is falsely propagated but by inducing subtle acceptable change of behaviour from the inner hearts of people. Even the medieval hygiene with the havoc it wreaked finally gave way not by force of arm but through rational understanding of Islamic virtues and the imperative of adopting most of them. It must be stressed that the use of both education and a constitution to govern and change people's attitude cannot bring the desired effects without the role of a role model.

One of the central role of cardinal importance of the great exemplar is to help us mould our behaviour towards his pattern of behaviour which is of "most sublime and exalted." This again will make us well guided to observe the religious law like the *sahaba* did. With the restraining influence of the encouragement and discouragement the Prophet (s.a.w) gave them, it was then reported that:

> *...Umar said: "Those who are not disciplined are not (disciplined) by the religious law are not educated by God." Umar's desire was that everyone should have his restraining influence in himself. His certainty was that Muhammad knew best what is good for mankind.* [2]

Islam gives training in all the facets of human life. All civilisation are linked to a certain worldview that is imparted to the people of that

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1 *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (19:2), p.22
2 Ibid.

civilisation by its religious moorings. In this respect Islam is *primum interpares;* it has successfully, willy-nilly, civilised the world.

Islam is a religion of peace and of cleanliness, from the scriptural teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah; the Muslim can easily be mobilised to improve his health status. Due to the impact of these teachings, the Muslims became the pioneers of modern medical sciences in history. Islamic civilisation was noted for its emphasis on absolute adherence to all hygienic rules. It differed radically from western culture which established a civilisation without hygiene until lately. Picthall, a distinguished British scholar of international standing wrote that:

> *A notable feature of this civilisation was its cleanliness at a time when Europe was coupled filth with sanctity. In every town there was a hammam,[1] public hot baths, and public fountains for drinking and washing purposes. A supply of pure water was the first. Consideration whenever there were Muslims and frequent washing became so much associated with their religion that in Andalusia in 1566 the use of baths was forbidden under penalties, because it tended to remind the people of Islam, and an unfortunate gardener of Seville was actually tortured for the crime of having washed while at his work. I myself in Anatolia have heard one Greek Christian say of another: "The fellow is half a Muslim; he washes his feet"*[2]

It was only in recent years that the West knew the correlation between improved sanitary condition and decline in mortality rate. Europe had suffered seriously in the past due to ignorance of this important relationship. McKeown T. (1976)[3] noticed the relationship between nutritional and sanitary improvements with fall in death rate in Europe in the 19th century. This means that the importance of health and hygiene came to the West only a century ago. Whereas the Muslims from the 7th century onwards were aware of the role of hygiene in the pattern of morbidity and mortality in the society the public food and water supplies were under strict regular inspections in all Muslim cities; and meat and other perishable food exposed for sale had to be covered with muskier as a protection from dust and flies. Improper burial of the dead can be a potential source of danger to the public. It was on record that burial practices in Europe had led to the excavation and spread of infectious

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1 *Medi-Link Journal*, vol. 1 No. 1, p.13.
2 M. M. Pickhall, *The Cultural Side of Islam*, p.37.
3 Mckeown T. *The Modern Rise of Population*, Edward Arnold, London 1976., p.2

diseases as epidemics ravaged the continent. Dr. Akram quoting the work of Victor Segesvary's *From Illusion to Delusion: Globalisation and the Contradictions of later Modernity*, where he said: All cultures except the modern Western culture are centred on a religious or transcendental/metaphysical core.[1] Akram, then pointed sharply:

> *Religion alone, besides language and culture, provides an ontological and cosmic framework that helps weave those cultures into a single civilisation. The most striking feature of the Western European civilization is its discontinuity from the ways of the past, rather than the continuity of the primordial tradition as in most other civilisations.*[2]

This rejection and primordial tradition in the West proved fatal as there was a point in time when Europe was at a loss on how to decently bury its dead. Infectious dead bodies were physically handled with little regard to the dangers of infection. Friends and relatives of the deceased thronged to give the "parting goodbye" and in the process got contaminated with a large "dose" of highly virulent bacteria. Soon afterwards they died of the same disease. This viscous cycle of infections continued to decimate the European population *albeit* unknowingly. Here again a lack of religion as a core of civilisation of the West proved very grave and extremely harmful.

The dead were turned out *en mass* and accelerated. During the bubonic plaque in London in 1665, hospitals were already turned places of horror. It was a period of stagnation, the hospitals were squalid with severe shortage of attendants. Even the few that were available were described as "dirty, ugly, unwholesome hags."[3] It was also a time when:

> *Human science and art appear particularly weak in great pestilences, because they have to contend with powers of nature, of which they have no knowledge. Elaborate precautions were taken in the burial of the dead, which was done at night. Dog catchers prowled the streets, killing stray dogs and removing their bodies for burial. The huge mounds of earth were mute testimony to the plight of the English during this scourge. In one of these mounds 50,000 bodies were said to be interred.*[4]

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1 *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 19:2, p. 37.
2 Ibid.
3 Josephine A. Dolan, *Nursing in Society*, p.87.
4 Ibid.

Elaborate burial precautions by people who "have no knowledge," as we have seen had only added fuel to the inferno. In contrast, centuries earlier, Islam had perfected a simple method of burial either singly or en mass with no health deleterious effects.

"Today over half the dead are cremated", said Rose, "but cremation has only become popular since 1945."[1] This adoption of Hindu burial practice was not motivated by a religious belief but by force of circumstances, prominent of which was to curb epidemics Islam provides the safest and simplest burial practice.

CHAPTER TEN

ISLAMIC BURIAL PRACTICE

Until lately, community diagnosis – assessment of the health status and health problems concerned itself more with morbidity and mortality statistics rather than the safety of burial practices. Little or attention was given to burial practices as a result. The practice was injuries to public health in the West as it posed serious dangers of infection. It was not lack of attention but the gross ignorance of hygiene. When a person was very filthy while alive he could be cleaned when deceased. Since the idea of afterlife was scoffed, corpses were hurriedly buried in shallow graves with serious health implications. Today cremation is popular in many European cities. A century ago, however, the burial practices in these cities served as potential sources of many deadly communicable diseases.

The public health issue is never complete until and unless the burial of the dead is made safe, simple and practicable. Again this was an area where Islam left another legacy. Islamic burial practice is safe and devoid of any potential risks of infections. However, Islam is not a rigid faith where the ground is marshy, the use of casket to minimise exhumation and infection becomes recommendable.

Alhaji A. D. Ajijola, a Nigerian Islamic Scholar and a prolific writer, stated in his description of the burial of the dead that:

> *When a person has died, the body should be properly placed. A cloth should be fastened around the head and below the chin in such a way that the mouth cannot be opened. Close both eyelids. Place both feet together and tie them to each other so that they do not separate. Then place a cloth or a sheet over the body. It is sunnah to light (obaan, incence). One should not recite the Qur'an at the side of the dead person until ghusl has been given.*[1]

Washing the Body

In Islam, washing the dead body is a communal obligation or *fard kifayah*, because the Prophet (s.a.w) commanded the Muslims to perform it

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[1] Lesson in Islam Series Book No. (ii) Prayers (Salaat) , Straight path Publishers Kaduna. p. 78

in various ahadith. It is practical expression of the highest extent purification attains where even the dead must receive a final spiritual bath. The deceased is bathed with dignity because his *awrah* or private part must be covered. Covering the *awrah* is an obligation that the Muslims must fulfil not only for themselves, but also the dead that they may happen to wash and or put into the grave. The *awrah* must not be accidentally exposed. Islam is a faith of science and a culture of civilised behaviour; the Prophet (s.a.w) prohibits unnecessary exposure of the *awrah*. He said: "Do not expose your thigh, nor look at the thigh of a living or dead person" (Abu Dawud). He said in the males: "The area between the navel and the knee is *al-awrah*" (al-Hakim), while the female extends all over the body except the hands and the face.

Islam is a religion of purification in the living as well in death. A deceased body must decently be washed in a manner befitting to a standard of hygiene; *ghusl mayyit* is the bathing of the corpse. Those who are to wash the dead must first wrap their hands up to the elbow with clean cloth. This is necessary because Islam prohibits handling of the dead with bare hands to ward off infections. This hand clothing can be said to be the precursor of modern surgical glove. Because Islam does not allow the handling of a corpse with bare hands irrespective of the cause of the death. This is a good habit from the standpoint of health and hygiene. The principle is to approach the dead with full hygienic measures as though it were infectious; this is to play safe. Further, the water to be used is mixed with lotus and camphor, after the corpse is thoroughly washed, the pieces of the cloth used must be buried along with the dead. Suggested and useful supplies during the washing include three or more water buckets, cup for water pouring, tissue, cotton, etc, two sheets and a towel, ground lotus or soap and shampoo for cleaning, sponge or a rough piece of cloth for scrubbing, camphor or perfume, scissors and comb washing sequence.[1] And finally the attendants wash their hands thoroughly and then take *ghusl*. Ablution is performed to the dead before washing. The dead is washed three times with clean lukewarm water, until the body is sufficiently and thoroughly washed and cleaned: this can be 3, 5 or 7 times. Darsh, described vividly how to wash the body:

> *The body is put on a higher level, the burning incense thurible must be circulated. The clothes are taken off, except those*

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[1] Muhammad al-Jibaly, et al, Funerals: *Regulations and Exhortations*, Alkitaab and as Sunnah Publishing, Arlington Texas (1998), p. 118.

covering the private parts. Only a person helping the washer should stay. The washer will raise the upper parts of the body almost into a sitting position, then press lightly on the stomach to empty it. A quantity of water is used to clear the stomach waste. The incense is kept burning.

The washer will then wrap his hand in a piece of cloth and wash the private parts thoroughly; this cloth is then to be disposed off and a clean, soft piece is then to be used. Wudu will be performed for the dead. The head and beard will be washed three times with soap. The body is then put on the left side and right side will be washed from head to toe at least three times. The water is then moved to allow the water to penetrate the left side. This is the first wash, the obligatory one. The sunnah requires that the body be washed twice more by turning on the right side pouring water from head toes three times, moving the body to allow the water thoroughly to cleanse the right side. For the third wash, the body is to be turned to the left side and again water is poured from head to toe to clean it thoroughly. The first washing is done with soap, the third with kafur loaban; then the body is dried and perfume applied.[1]

It was emphasised that according to the authentic sunnah, the whole body should be washed (preferably using perfumed water), an odd number of times (3, 5, or 7) or as necessary to remove any defilement.[2] It is discernible to note how the systematic application of these Islamic hygienic rules had a positive impact in preventing the transmission of communicable diseases from the *Janazah,* from the Prophetic era down to the age of medical sciences.

A Bath After Washing He Dead

Islam is a practical religion of meticulous hygiene, it cares about the Muslims with such a loving, tender and sympathetic care. To recommend a bath after washing a dead body, is to suggest a possible contamination in the process. Possibly some germs which might have killed the deceased; the deceased might also release some infective fluids such as urine, stool or vomitus in the process of drying that could be of potential harm to his relatives or those who attended to him. Thus one wonders how the great teacher made this *au fait* public health recommended in two hadiths that are

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1 S. M. Darsh, *Islamic Health Rules*, pp. 14 - 15
2 Ibid.

mutually complementary. For example, Abu Huraira (r.a) reported that the Prophet (s.a.w) said: "Let whoever washes a dead person take a bath; and let whoever carries him perform *wudu* (Ahmad, Abu Dawud).

This hadith from the point of view of preventive medicine is excellent. A person who washes the deceased is more likely to be more contaminated (if it were infectious) than one who handled it. So *ghusl* is recommended to the former while the latter is to perform *wudu*. Obviously, during bathing a dead body the splashing of the water, scrubbing the dirts (with hands well covered with cloth or glove) is more exposed to risk of infection than a person who helped in delivering into the grave or uploading it to the place of transportation. Undoubtedly, the Prophet of Islam was the greatest teacher of hygiene in history. Further, the hadith quoted above points to a command which strongly indicates that bathing after the washing is *wajib* or obligatory. However, there is another hadith reported by Ibn Abbas (r.a) who reported that the Prophet (s.a.w) said: You are not required to take a bath after washing your deceased, because he is not *najis* (filthy). It is sufficient that you wash your hands, (al-Hakim, al Bayhaqi).

> *Also, Ibn Umar (r.a) said: After washing a deceased at the time of the Prophet (s.a.w), some of us would take a bath and some would not (ad-Daraqutni, al-Khatib)*

These two ahadith do not in anyway contradict that reported by Abu Huraira (r.a); in fact, they complement it. The Prophet (s.a.w) in these ahadith allowed us to use our discretion. Is the body we handled extremely dirty or highly infectious? This will help us to either take bath or perform wudu. In hospital we show this discernment meticulously we are on high alert when handling corpses from infectious disease unit or ward than we are of a patient who died of heart attack due to hypertension or coronary heart disease. Similarly, the great health teacher warned us not to treat corpses scornfully like *najast* but we must be very wary of the infectious substance that might come of them.

It contrasts so sharply with the ritual or funeral rites among the non-Muslim nations. The plaque in London and escalation of its spread were contributed by the poor unhygienic burial practices of the time. With strong prejudice against personal hygiene the dirty mourners thronged to the corpses especially an infectious one. Handling the infectious dead with bare hands and disregarding the dangers of infection could be disastrous; the fatal outcome was better left to be imagined; all the Islamic hygiene rules that are with the dead are all in line with modern hygienic rules. The use of

the piece of cloth to serve as hand-gloves, the soap and water to reduce bacterial load and the perfumed water to counter offensive smell (if any), are all in line with medical scientific method. Further, with the spread of numerous germs and viruses, one is encouraged to adhere to this sunnah, as well as other suggested measures that were evolved in the 7th century. Surprisingly, however, it took Europe over a thousands (1000) years to embrace this scientific and hygienic mode of sustainable good health practices. Islamic health rules, add another dimension to the ritual of burial of the dead – the *at-takfeen* or dressing the body – or wrapping.

Wrapping The Dead

"There is a minimum of covering specified for both the male and the female," said Darsh, "it must not be less than this. It is prohibited to dress the dead in anything except that which was allowed during lifetime. And that white material is best, whether new or used according to the Hadith.[1] Ibn Abbas (r.a) reported that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) said: of the clothing available to you, wear the white, for verily it is your best form of clothing, shroud your dead with it as well" (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi). Wrapped properly with inexpensive cloth, the corpse is brought for prayer to be performed before it is promptly laid to rest. The *kafn* are the grave clothes of the dead. In the male, it comprises of three pieces; the *iyaar* or trousers; the *khamees*, *kurta* or the Shirt and the *lifafah*. The *lifafah* is a sheet from covering the head to below the feet.[2] The female has additional pieces, *orni khimaar* or scarf and serial band or breast cover. The male and female children are clothed respectively. Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said do not use expensive cloth in *kafn* because it will soon decay." So it is economically wasteful to use expensive cloth. This is a relief to many a bereaved family (economically).

All the processes undergone from the bathing to wrapping ensured minimal risk of infection from the *janazah* before its burial. Further, the atmosphere should be under scanty smell. It is also recommended to perfume the shroud with incense an odd number of times before wrapping the body in it.[3] Jabir (r.a) reported that Allah's Messenger said: "When you burn incense to perfume your dead, do it three times." (Ahmad, Ibn Hibban). Cremation like in Hinduism is prohibited in Islam. The practice of keeping the corpse on stone slabs in the tower of silence for vultures to eat

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1 S. M. Darsh, *Islamic Health Rules*, p. 15
2 A. D. Ajiolola, *Islamic Prayers*, Book No. (ii), p. 82
3 Muhammad al-Jibaly et al, *Funeral Regulations and Exhortations*, p. 121

up the flesh and the dry bones dropped in the well to disintegrate placed in Zoroastrianism is equally prohibited.[1] Islam does not allow the dead to be cremated, immersed in water, left in tower of silence but be buried under the earth. It is, therefore the best, simplest and safest burial practices. And it takes all precautions to prevent the dead from being mutilated or molested and the livings are not harmed from it either. As a mercy to both the dead and the living, the corpse is scrupulously cleansed, wrapped in the most dignified manner and buried quickly. There are medical benefits in the Islamic rites of the bathing, wrapping and burial of the *janazath*; they are numerous. After shrouding, the corpse is laid before the congregation for prayer. Prayer of the dead or *salatul janazah* is performed for the deceased. He is then quickly buried.

Quick Burial

Islam takes medical, social and spiritual aspects of the burial practice into consideration. It recognises that as soon as a person dies, the process of decay immediately sets in; any delay could be disastrous. In non – Islamic burial rites like in Britain before 1945, even the poorest among the Britons thought it indecent not to give a good "send off" for a relative's corpse, and would keep it in the home for a fortnight or so until money was raised, disregarding the dangers of infection.[2] It was a time when the embalming was not highly developed; so not readily available to all, thus the potential risks involved in this preparation for burial ceremony were indeed grave. How could a burial practice of the 7th century Arabia be more dignified and hygienic than that of Europe at least 10 centuries afterwards? Medical consideration in burial practices was advanced by Islam in the 7th century. The deceased must be promptly buried without procrastination. Its medical validity cannot be controverted.

There shouldn't be a delay in taking a deceased Muslim to the cemetery. So it is obligatory to bury the dead as quickly as possible. The burial time must be quick and great hurry should be made in going through all the preparatory steps for the final one in funeral process. A Muslim should normally be buried within twenty-four hours from death.[3] This was reported in Hadith:

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1 S. A. Nigosian, *World Religions*, Edward Arnold Public ltd, London (1975), p. 186
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 30
3 M. W. Jibaly et al, *Funeral Regulations and Exhortations*, p. 224

Talhat ibn Al-Baraa (r.a) was sick, so the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to visit him, and he said, 'I see that Talha is dying. So let me know when he passes away and get him ready immediately as it is not proper for the corpse of a Muslim to be kept among its family (Abu Dawud).

The medical importance of this rule concerning quick burial of the dead are many. The longer it stays with the family the greater the chances of spreading infection, especially if the deceased died of a communicable disease. Furthermore, irrespective of the cause of death, the body begins to putrefy. Immediately, it begins with rigor mortis – stiffness-followed by swelling and then the fetid smell. As the great teacher of health rightly pointed out, "it is not proper for the corpse of the Muslim to be kept among its family."

The risk is worsened by the quick onset of decaying process, which begins as soon as the person dies. Rigor mortis or stiffness is quickly followed by process of putrefaction unless the corpse is embalmed. Psychologically, an offensive or grossly distended body in the house is repulsive, as well as a cause of concern or embarrassment to the family. So the quicker the body is laid to rest the better and safer not only to the family, but to the community. Quick burial also reduces the risk of *necrophilia*, sex with the dead – a female corpse. This potential risk might in the near future rise to an alarming proportion with the rising trend of bestialities of a variety of types. So that quick burial will remain an effective preventive measure. The health benefits of this Islamic injunction in this respect are numerous. In addition to social consideration, Islamic rites of burial also consider the economic factor.

Further, expensive, elaborate ceremonial funeral procession is prohibited while carrying the body to the grave is made a religious obligation like wrapping. But the entire process must be simple and prompt so that the deceased is laid to rest with minimal economic cost as well as the least health risk. Women are not allowed to join the funeral procession. Many non-Muslims are impressed with the social and health implications of funeral burial in Islam, because it is an expensive and costly matter in many cultures. Any family that loses a member will inevitably suffer from the extra expenses associated with the embalming of the dead, expensive cloth or garment for wrapping, the coffin and the festivity to entertain the guests all amount to a lot of money. Many a family have to resort to bank loan in order to give a 'befitting' burial to their elderly relatives. The elderly may die of hunger and neglect only to have costly burial after they are dead.

This is like taking medicine after death. In the final journey the "earth is returned to the earth."

Position of the Corpse

Three words describe a Muslim's grave: wide, deep and good.[1] The educator of mankind sat near the edge of the grave and instructed the digger: make it wide from the side of head, and make it wide from the side of the feet. Indeed, a palm tree may be for him in *Jannah* (Abu Dawud, al-Bayhaqi).

Many non-Muslims extol the manner the Muslims bury their dead. More importantly, the Islamic health rules governing the entire processes, have combined to make it free from any health risk. This risk is further reduced by the type of the *kabr* or grave which is determined by the type and nature of the earth in the locality. However, it is permissible to make the grave in the form of a plain rectangular vertical hole dug such that the short sides of the rectangle point in the direction of the *qiblah*. "It is preferable to add to that a *lahd*," wrote *al-Jibaly et al,* "which is another hole, large enough to accommodate the body, made near the bottom of the grave in the wall that is in the direction of *qiblah*. After the body is laid in the *lahd*, bricks are placed behind it." They explained: "The purpose of the lahd is that, when the soil is dumped into the grave, it does not fall directly over the body but behind it."[2]

The *lahd* from medical point of view is more secure against exhumation with its attendant fetid smell which is never heard in any Muslim cemetery. The *lahd* is a more preferable method of burial. Ibn Abbas (r.a) and Jarir (r.a) reported that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) said: "Lahds are for us (Muslims), and plain holes are for other people" (Abu Dawud, Ahmad).

Obviously, the Prophet's choice is the best of choices. This was proved to be so in Europe as we shall discuss it presently. The aim is to secure the dead in its grave and well protected against exhumation by predatory animals. A shallow grave will easily pollute the surrounding. There are two types of graves; each is determined by the geological nature of the soil. If the soil is solid, *lahd* type of grave is chosen, while *shaqq* is preferred in soft ground. In both types, however, each grave is deep enough to ensure that the dead is securely protected and the surrounding from contamination. A grave that is wide, deep and good ensures security; it also guards against exhumation by predatory animals if it were shallow; it protects the

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1 M. W. Jibaly et al, *Funeral Regulations and Exhortations*, p. 226

2 Ibid. pp. 227 – 228.

community against fetid smells and contamination of surface water. Thus this technique of burial developed over 14 centuries is still in accord with the modern time. It is absolutely safe from the point of view of public hygiene. An account of horrible smelling graveyard in England 200 years ago would help to drive home the point:

> *At Enon chapel, Clements's Lane, the chapel was directly above the burial place... one man who used to attend the chapel told investigators that the smell was abominable and very injurious; I have frequently gone home with severe headaches... Of the bugs he complained:*
>
> *"I have seen in the summertime hundreds of them flying about the chapel; I have taken them home in my hat and my wife has taken them home in her clothes.*
>
> *It was disheartening to also discover that: "A sewer ran through the centre of the vault so situated that any inconvenient surplus might be quietly disposed of."*
>
> *Investigators further made more appalling discovery when: "The attendant readily admitted that the rubbish, including a human hand as perfect as his own and which did not appear to have been buried a month, had been shot at the foot of water 100 bridge."*
>
> *"To cap it all the minister used the coffin wood for his kitchen fire, and conducted a Sunday school directly above the vault, this abominable receptacle of putrid and decaying mortality"*
>
> *"The congestion forced vicars to store many coffins in the crypts. Leaden coffins were popular as they did not rot, but as the bodies decomposed the build–up of gases inside them caused occasional explosions in the vaults.*
>
> *The stench from graveyards and crypts were considered a dangerous source of infection in those days of "misasms", and the putrefying remains sometimes percolated into nearby wells, making the water from them undrinkable. The campaign to clean up the burial grounds that grew space in the 1840s resulted in the Acts of 1852 and 1853 which prohibited further burials within cities and empowered vestries to buy up land outside for municipal cemeteries.*[1]

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 32 - 33

The West lacking any religious moorings pander here and there in search of a better option to adopt for the burial of their dead. It was remarkable how scientific and simple method of *lahd* could surpass that of the West even a millennium after it. The horrendous way of burial practices, as described above, underscored the veracity of Syed Abul Ala Maududis deposition that: those who denied the truth of the revelation and pinned their faith on unguided human reason, after committing blunders and courting bitter experience, are adopting in one way or another the injunctions of shariah.[1]

The failure of trial and error, finally left them with no choice but to accept the Islamic principles; it was not in consonant with the progress of science and technology that Europeans should stink with stench in living and in dead. The burial practice must be improved. Again, as always, Islam provides a way out of every human quagmire; the West adopted the Islamic *lahd* of burial to prevent their graveyards from stinking fetid smell. The Graveliner came to be in practical use in Europe and United States. Al-Jibaly *et al*, wrote:

> *Some of the United States (and other countries), and some funeral homes, require building a container in the bottom of the grave, which is meant to protect the body against the ground's sinking–in after the burial. This container is called a burial vault or a graveliner, and is made of a variety of materials including concrete, stainless steel, galvanised steel, copper, bronze, plastic, or fibre glass.*
>
> *If required, a concrete graveliner should be used, because it is closest to the Islamic burial. The body is placed in that liner, and then a concrete lid is brought down sealing the box, before dumping the soil into the grave. This obviously, meets some of the requirements of lahd as well, and may be used by the Muslims if they do not have the better alternatives.*[2]

The reason why the graveliner is closest to the Islamic burial is easy to discern. The *lahd* method of burial was the precursor of this burial vault. The Europeans only used their ingenuity to improve the basic principle to meet their taste and climate, they used science to improve the burial practice that was founded on scientific principle, otherwise, it could have been

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1 A.A Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p.102
2 M. W. Jibaly et al, *Funeral Regulations and Exhortations*, p. 230

improved in the way it was done. In the event of mass burial, Islam again showed the way to the Western world.

Mass Burial

In the event of man-made calamity, e.g. war and natural calamity, there would be a large number of corpses to be hurried. This brings two problems at the sametime, first, burying the corpses one after another would impose a lot of hardship. Digging a separate grave for each of the dead is extremely tedious. This same problem could arise with natural calamities such as epidemics and earthquakes, etc. Secondly, with a large number of the dead coming at the same time digging individual grave would quickly exhaust or fill up the burial ground. Thus faced with these two teething problems what is the solution? This type of problem arose in the battle of Uhud, where many Muslims were killed. The solution offered by the great health teacher remains valid, timeless and boundless. He commanded: "Dig (graves), and make them wide, deep and good. Bury two or three in one grave, putting ahead the one with the most knowledge of Qur'an" (Abu Dawud, Nisa'i).

Comparison will again make us appreciate the greatness of Islamic worship more, especially when its teachings were not only ahead of its time, but also they were right guidance to people of all nation. This simple, hygienic and scientific method of mass burial was lacking in Europe ten centuries after its evolution in Arabia. England which is the mother of all European nations remains a typical example of them all. It was recoded that due to the rapid growth of towns after 1800, the intense overcrowding, and the high death rate from epidemic and industrial diseases soon created congestion in the parish graveyards. Commercial burial companies opened up new grounds but these, too, soon filled up.[1] This then created a quagmire.

The report further showed that by 1843 it was estimated that upwards of a million people had been buried over the previous 30 years in London's 203 acres of burial grounds. The grisly practice of packing them in was exposed by Dr. George Walker in 1838, St. Giles Churchyard was typical. In his exposition he stated that the ground was:

> *Full of coffins up to the surface... near the east side we saw a finished grave, into which projected a nearly sound coffin; half of the coffin had been chopped away to complete the shape of the new grave.. We then crossed to the operate corner, and there is the "bone – house", which is a large round pit; into this had been shot, from a wheelbarrow, the but partly – decayed inmates of the*

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 31

> *smashed coffins. Here, in this place of "Christian burial", you may see heads, covered with hair... human heads, covered with hair and... Human bones with flesh still adhering to them.* [1]

In mass burial the Islamic method is simple, practicable and has added advantage of land economy, where it is practised with standard set by the unlettered Prophet; grisly in the haphazard manner described was largely unknown. The Muslim graveyards are neat and free from fetid smell and bugs. One of the medical benefits of Islamic worship is even when dead, a Muslim's corpse does not stink in its grave. It is well protected and dignified.

Islam satisfies all functions of religion, one of the crucial functions is to secure the moral guidance of believers in this life. The medico–ethical tele-guidance had helped to guard the Muslims from the pangs of "abysmal woe" that non-Muslim nations suffered and still suffer from a variety of medical and social diseases. The transcendent cores of Islamic culture give sense and direction to the vicissitudes of life; it explains, gives meaning to and assigns a role and a permanent value to life and afterlife.

Mourning Period

Life is but like a bubble, all this world is a fleeting show. A Muslim accepts death as inevitable and timely for, "every soul shall have a taste of death;" (*Ai-Imran* 3:185). A Muslim must work hard to better his lot in this world but he or she must not be beguiled by its illusions and its false nuggets because the only reality is to attain the final goal of salvation. Similarly, Muslims believe that the essential purpose for which humankind were created was to worship Allah (s.w.t); Allah (s.w.t) says: "I have only created jinns and men that they should worship Me" (*Az-zariyat*, 51:56).

A Muslim, therefore, knows precisely why he is here and when he departs he knows his destination. He also knows well enough that Allah (s.w.t) has a serious purpose behind His creation, which is undoubtedly not for idle sport. The world to him is only a period of probation for death is an inevitable end. So within his heart of heart lies this important fact that it is: "From the earth did We create you, and into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you once again." (*Ta Ha*, 20:55)

Death and Resurrection are occurrences which are undeniable truths and their whole heart's belief in the recognition and acceptance create little inner turmoil of stress in the face of death or any calamity. The faith

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[1] Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 31 - 32

renders a Muslim stress proof in the face of the tragedy of loss of life and other vicissitude of life. Islam is concerned with the real; its cosmology and ontology include all that is physical as well as spiritual. It, therefore, engenders a number of health benefits. Consequently, the attitude of the Muslim to life and death is unique because he is well conditioned to expect death and life after death. He or she has been psychologically well prepared. So when the inevitable occurs, he shows a unique capacity to absorb the trauma with little or no consequence. So the mourning period is expected to be short and uneventful. Its impact is cushioned by series of condolences he receives from people due to loss of dear one. People come individually and in groups to commiserate with the bereaved. Prayers are offered in each visit for the soul of the deceased as well as the family to show some fortitude in bearing the loss. Food and other essential items are brought to the bereaved family who within the first three days are usually preoccupied with the emotional trauma of losing a beloved one. These condolence visits have potent psychotherapeutic effects, which, therefore, help in a great measure to soothe the bereaved family to weather the storm. The mourning period is usually three days except when a husband is lost, where the widow is expected to observe the widowhood period.

Wailing over the dead is prohibited, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) curses women who scratch their faces, rip off their clothes, those who invoke woes and ill lucks on themselves (Ibn – Majah). A Muslim is a highly civilised being and should behave as such in every state of natural or man-made calamity when he or she is devastated by stress and inner turmoil. With such a highly developed personality he has become the only person in the world: "Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return" (*Al-Baqara*, 2:156). This utterance from within the heart of a devoted servant of God becomes a potent de-stressor.

This conviction is a potent means of de-stressing, a sublime confession to complete submission to divine imperative. It makes the Muslim accept whatever misfortune that befalls him with a view to improving the situation. This makes Islam's teaching concerning death wholesome and salubrious. It teaches that death is not an end by itself but a means to an end. It is a journey from one end to another that no amount of mourning which might include wailing, lamenting and excessive grief for the dead can bring him back. Nothing could reverse the verdict of the Creator. What a Muslim should do in the interest of his faith and health is to accept it as a *fait accompli*.

This is the best medical approach to death and bereavement. No doctor in the world can add anything to Islam's prescription neither can he reduce

anything. Islam teaches that mourning period must be short and without any complication. It is usually three days except where a woman lost a husband that she observes the *iddat* – widowhood. For Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) was reported to have said:

> *It is haram for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to mourn for a deceased person for more than three nights, except for the husband (for whom the period of mourning is) four months and ten days (Bukhari).*

Obviously, the longer the mourning period the severer the psychological strain imposed and more devastating its impact. The three days recommendation is medically beneficial to the mourners. People suffering from bereavement may have many depressive symptoms and experience them for a sufficient duration to meet the criteria for a depressive episode. The Islamic approach to alleviate the inner turmoil and melancholy suffered by the mourners is potent and efficacious. Nevertheless, such patients manifest symptoms considered to be normal reaction; without proper handling the condition could acceleratedly prove fatal. Further, the symptoms are usually self–limiting, clear spontaneously over time, and do not respond to anti–depressive medication.[1] Thus Islamic attitude is bereavement period facilitates the rate of recovery and ward off any complication that might set in, so that uncomplicated bereavement results in the shortest and quickest time. Islam, however, gives (rightly) a special consideration to a widow, and accords it a period. But where a husband is lost the situation becomes complicated; the widowhood period takes care of it.

Widowhood Period

Islam introduced what is known as *Iddat* or mourning period for the widow. When a husband dies, there is a mourning period to be observed by his wife as stipulated by Allah (s.w.t) in his Final Revelation where He said: "If any of you die and leave widows behind; they shall wait concerning themselves four months and ten days." From the medical point of view this period has a number of health benefits.

This *Iddat* of widowhood – a mourning period of four months and ten days has social, psychological and medical relevance. The period is to give honour and respect to the deceased husband as well as to allow the widow

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[1] Nancy C. Andrease and Donald W. Black, *Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry, American Psychiatric* Press. Inc. Washington DC, (1991), p. 216

enough time to regain her composure. Otherwise, she might unwittingly give consent to a man or she might, under normal circumstances, refuse his overtures. Since during her *Iddat* it is forbidden for her to re-marry, she is protected against opportunistic men who might take advantage of her emotional turmoil to get her in wedlock. And within this time span, if there is any pregnancy from the deceased husband, it will be evident since absence of menstrual cycle of four months, except for other causes, is a clear manifestation of pregnancy. If she is infected of a disease the husband died of, this period is likely to reveal it. Time heals and the *iddat* is a healing time for the widow.

There are certain norms and values that a woman must observe in her *Iddat* widowhood, all of which are primarily for her own good and for the good of her community. When a widow marries immediately after the death of her beloved husband, she might inevitably end up later in a divorce because she was psychologically unprepared. She might also remarry with her deceased husband's early pregnancy. For these and other reasons any move toward marriage is prohibited until after the *Iddat* period. So all suitors must be kept at bay and the widow must not do anything to attract them. Islamic mourning period in this very delicate moment of the life of the widow helps to engender good health and avoid unnecessary social crisis that often occurs from a variety of causes. Dr. S. M. Darsh had elaborated on some of the do's and don'ts of a widow in her *Iddat* widowhood. He wrote that in addition to expressing grief and feelings of great loss for dear ones who were lifelong companions, especially at a time when every person needs their spouse most to keep the flickering candle of life alight, a wife has to avoid four things:

- Perfumes of any kind. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "She should not touch any perfume except after purification after her courses."
- Beautification in any of the following forms:
  a. Any form of bodily make-up, such as powder, collyrium, or removal of facial hair, (however, she is allowed to cut her nails; and remove unwanted hair, using non-perfumed soap; and to wash and comb her hair).
  b. Wearing colourful clothes
  c. Wearing jewellery

  The Prophet said "She should abstain from adorning herself."

He also said, "She must not wear a dyed garment, except a little perfume or incense when she has been purified after the courses" (Both related by Muslim v. 2, p. 777).

- Covering the face with any sort of veil. She is like one who is in the state of ihram of umra or pilgrimage. Neither of these cover their faces.[1]
- Leaving the house in which they were living, even though it is a rented house. If she is afraid of any real danger or hardship, then she is allowed to leave and go to the safest place.
- These requirements are to be observed by the wife of a deceased Muslim whether she is herself a Muslim or not. After the above-mentioned period she is free to lead a normal life and to marry again if she so desires.
- The period of mourning for a pregnant woman, with all its requirements, terminates with delivery any time after the death of the husband.[2]

All these measures are not harsh but medically sound, aimed at achieving a specific purpose. In this *Iddat* widowhood she is not to make herself very attractive to be susceptible to early marriage or sexual overtures. Moreover, in this time of deadly sexually infectious diseases, four months is a reasonable good period for observation as to whether she may show overt manifestation of certain diseases, which perhaps had claimed her husband. In areas where pre-marital screening for infectious diseases is not practicable, this mourning period helps to prove or otherwise that she is of sound health. However, the absence of symptoms during the period does not preclude the presence of disease. This is because the incubation period can be quite longer.

Social Support

This is viewed as a protective factor in health promotion and for assisting individuals and families to cope with stressful life events. The widow and members of the bereaved family do enjoy all the necessary hospitality accorded to them by sympathizers, relations and friends. Because of their state of emotional turmoil, it is recommended that neighbours and friends of the bereaved prepare food for them. This is based

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[1] *Publishers note*: The Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not prohibit mourning women from veiling their faces.

[2] Ibid.

on the Prophet's injunction. On the occasion of Jafar's death, his uncle, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) made this recommendation applicable to all the Muslims that: "Make food for Jafar's family, for they have been occupied by what has befallen them," (Ahmad, Tabrani, Ibn Majah). Quite unlike other cultures, mourning period is not a time of sumptuous festivals where people come in troops to partake in *Joei de vivre,* a custom that is very expensive and a source of financial profligacy, a mere conduit of huge economic drain to the family. The Islamic attitude is lauded by many non-Muslims, who often have to sell most of their belongings to meet up the cost of funeral ceremony. Sometimes the dead is left in mortuary for months until sufficient amount of money is gathered for giving a "befitting burial" for the loved ones. Many decried this habit of neglecting the elderly parents while they were alive only to give them an expensive burial after their death.

Islam recognises that the bereaved family may suffer a lot of economic problems especially when the breadwinner is lost. So they should be given social support that would help them navigate through the tragedy that befell them unscathed. It, therefore, encourages Muslims to show solidarity and spirit of partnership in health, disease as well as in sorrow, to the bereaved family. So people from all walks of life throng to commiserate with the mourners, thereby demonstrating a unique sense of brotherhood, which transcends ethnic, geographical or national barriers. A friend in need is a friend indeed, goes the saying. This is the crucial time when the bereaved family needs all support. So many people help them with food and financial assistance not because of poverty but because they are so emotionally disturbed to fend for themselves in this psychologically traumatizing period, especially within the first week of the great loss.

Islam allows three days of mourning and four months and ten days for *Iddat* widowhood. In addition to material and financial support sympathizers also offer prayers for the soul of the deceased and for the prosperity of the family at grief. They offer kind, soothing words through personal visits, telephone calls, letters, cards and emissaries, etc. Which all combined to help the bereaved family to whether the storm, and to pass the mourning period uneventfully. The potency of this Islamic sense of psychotherapy is incredibly high as well as very effective. As usual Islam has left a legacy to the modern world on the question of health of the widow.

Widowhood Health

Islam was apt to recognize the plight of the widow, and accords to her certain rights and privileges to mitigate the pangs of widowhood. As a credit to the faith, it was at a period of time when even the rights of women were unknown therefore they were trampled upon. Widows were brutally pushed out into the cold before the advent of Islam. Since then there had been a series of researchers in this area stimulated by the Qur'an and advocated by the educator of mankind. Thus widowhood health becomes a subject of interest in the western world *albeit* recently. This was at a time when marriage as an institution was recognized and respected and regarded as beneficial to human development. As a result, it was accepted that the dissolution of such a relationship generally challenges individual functioning and autonomy. Unlike divorce and separation, the experience of widowhood does not imply conflict in conjugal relationship. Thus the loss is much more likely to be seen as both painful and overpowering, particularly for people married for long periods of time.[1] The Prophet (s.a.w), the pace setter of all times paved the way for others to follow to salvage the bereaved widow.

The conceptual understanding of this overwhelming hardships and calamities which have befallen a widow and the attempts made to disburden her, resulting into widowhood health as an entity in the modern medical philosophy, is an Islamic legacy to the medical science. Widowhood is a recognizable period of a psychic affliction with devastating effects. Other forms of marital dissolution offer opportunities, however, limited to modify or alter the course of the relationship. The sense of both finality and fatality of widowhood however, spur what many term a life crisis, commonly accompanied by adverse effects (Vachon, 1976). Islam recognized this life crisis and its deleterious effects several centuries earlier and accorded a period of 4 months and 10 days, the *iddat* widowhood, through which she is helped to weather the storm. The health benefits of this injunction have given it universal recognition and acceptance.

Lopata (1973) noted that women engaged in husband sanctification; they remembered and focused upon the positive qualities of the man after death. Perhaps because the grieving process is structured to elicit positive verbalisations about the deceased, the effect of widowhood may bring compensations, but initially, at least, the profound sense of loss seems to

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[1] Kariako S. Markides and Gary L. Cooper (Eds.) *Aging, Stress and Health* John Wiley and Sons Ltd. (1991) p. 69

implode on the self. When one considers older adults facing widowhood – after many years of marriage – the individual is also faced with massive changes in lifestyle and daily activities. The West learns the social and medical benefits of *iddat* widowhood and the social support attached to it from the *primordial tradition* of Islam. This account underscores the importance *iddat* widowhood prescribed by Islam, which aims at mitigating the tension and the inner turmoil caused by the event. It also shows that although the rules and regulations governing the lifestyle of the widow during this crucial period were revealed over 14 centuries ago, they are startling for their modernness as well as their therapeutic effects. Hence Islamic rulings are appropriate and are in tandem with every phase of human civilisation.

It was Islam that first recognised, identified the plights of all widows and called upon to share their grief in solidarity as well as in partnership. Today the world now learns from the wisdom of the great health teacher of all times.

Importance of Social Support

Grief and melancholy follow a loss of life or property. The grief and melancholia relate directly with the degree of what is lost and the psychological trauma it evokes. The loss of a very dear person can be devastating, to say the least. However, the social support provided can no doubt help to mitigate the pangs of the misery and grief in what many social psychologists have described as social support. Social supporters are indeed partners in grief.

The Muslim widow, however, has an added advantage over any non-Muslim widow because her faith lifts up from the vagaries psychic trauma and apathy. Allah (s.w.t) said: "Nay, seek (Allah's) help with patient, perseverance and prayer" (*Baqara*, 2:45). And Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said: "Allah will replace worries of the one who abides by asking Allah's forgiveness, by relief, his suffering by comfort and would grant him graces by unexpected means." These soothing balm coupled with social support from fellow Muslims, consistently buoyed up her spirit, boost up her courage to navigate through the inner turmoil very successfully.

According to some scholars, familiarity with one's surroundings is more important to older than younger people. Thus widowhood is a time of tremendous transitions which challenge ontological security and lifestyle. These transitions have been propitiously regarded within the framework of

a stress process.[1] Owing to the benefits of Islamic worship, however, many a widow pass through this transition unharmed and to quickly emerge with uncomplicated bereavement. Whereas many a non–Muslim of the same age and environment relapse into chronic psychosomatic illness. Many are traumatized for life because they lack the ontological security, which Islam offers. Undoubtedly, the *iddat* widowhood preserves and maintains widowhood health status. A Muslim is best prepared to annul any stress. When afflicted with any traumatic life event he or she cries unto Allah (s.w.t) with *inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun* and then picks up the gauntlet to move forward. When he is down he or she bounces up higher, a *Muslimat* widow, therefore, has no time sulking over what Allah (s.w.t) had decried. She is not to be enveloped by grief but shows fortitude and forbearance. In the face of life event Islam confers on the believer a "cosmic religious feeling." And this feeling was described by Albert Einstein, the celebrated scientist of the 20th century. He said:

> *The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought. Individual existence impresses him as a sort of prison and he wants to experience the universe as significant whole.*[2]

Islam provides to the believer ontological security in the face of any kind of stress through the provision of this "cosmic religious feeling." It is also unsurpassed in social support. In attenuating the stress of widowhood both are called to play to preserve widowhood health irrespective of social standing. As posited by Eisdorfer and Wilkie (1977, p.228), age factor plays a crucial role in this stress. They discovered that with increasing age, there is presumed to be a loss of physiologic adaptability and the older person is reported to be less able to cope with a stress or environmental change. This is applicable, however, to non–Islamic society lacking in cosmic religious feeling and social support amongst other factors. It is also recognised that mortality risk following widow is greatest for men during the first six months of bereavement.[3] This impact is also masked by the Islamic methodology of annulling stress through prayer and Islamic social support. Muslims show a deep sense of partnership in grief; provide effective social support, in an interpersonal relationship unexampled.

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1 Kariako S. Markides and Gary L. Cooper (Eds.) *Aging, Stress and Health*, p. 69
2 Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, Rupa and co, New Delhi (1984) p. 38
3 Kariako S. Markides and Gary L. Cooper (Eds.) *Aging, Stress and Health*, p. 69

The major avenue for attenuating the adverse effects of widowhood in the Western conception is through social relations that offer some form of support. Several researchers have noted that close interpersonal relationships buffer the adverse effects of life events or normative crises (Berardo, 1970; Parkes and Brown, 1972, Vachon et al, 1982). Islamic system of social support as mentioned before was the best evolved, effective, practicable and simple, it recommends social support backed by prayer. What then is social support? Although now social support has been an omnibus concept, taking on a variety of meanings, there are two general dimensions of support that are of crucial interest in assessing the buffering hypothesis: "structure of social networks and commodities exchanged." The two are no doubt related but each may play an important role in assessing the buffering hypothesis. Let us scrutinise both and see how they fit in the Islamic dimension of social support.

In the *Structure of Social Networks*, Walker *et al* (1977) defined five characteristics that are relevant for studying life events:

- Size refers to the number of people with whom some social contact is made.
- Strength of ties refers to the amount of time spent together, emotional, intensity, and intimacy. The strength of tie is probably the best predictor of the commodities exchanged therein.
- Density refers to the proportion of people in a person's network who know and contact one another.
- Homogeneity of membership is the extent to which network members share attributes.
- Dispersion of members is the difficulty encountered for network members to make face to face contact.[1]

Islam is a religion with a deep and unsurpassed sense of collectivism. A faith where "we" replaces "I", as a symbol of fraternity as expressed in the daily prayer, "Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek." Communal or congregational prayer is encouraged. It fosters an abiding sense of solidarity in health and disease, in prosperity and adversity, as well as in success and in failure. In all these events, a Muslim should find his fellow Muslim a brother and a dependable ally. One can, therefore, estimate the size and strength of Muslims in support of their members in grief. It encompasses his community and far beyond; when the population is high the proportion of people who form a network of contact will equally be

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[1] Kariako S. Markides and Gary L. Cooper (Eds.) *Aging, Stress and Health*, p. 78

high. Islamic community is characteristically homogeneous where ethnic and racial barriers are paled into insignificance. The dispersion of members is equally high because Islam as a super – civilisation has no boundary. For widowhood, according to these findings, size of social network is probably not very important in itself, but strength of ties is critical.[1] Islamic social support establishes a highly efficient structure of social networks. In expounding *Islam and Social Relation*, Syed Musawi Lari, stated:

> *...This programme has been prepared in such a manner as to develop a collective ethos while simultaneously strengthening the individual spirit, so that individualism is reconciled with cooperativeness, and the individuals constituting society neither become hollow and devoid of personality nor self-centred and indifferent toward one another. Social cohesion in an Islamic society is related to the bond between the individual and God. The people encourage one another to benevolence, piety, and worthy deeds and cooperate with one another in generating and sustaining an environment in which the young generation cultivates the love of virtue, benevolence, and goodness in the light of a pure faith. This helps mobilise all the constructive energies of the people toward general welfare and good, not toward corruption and vice. In this way, the goals and activities of the members of society are harmonised, their sense of cooperation awakened, and their individual and collective energies set to work for the service of mankind. Since Islam essentially requires a cooperative and sympathetic society for the establishment of its prescribed social duties, and as benevolence and benefaction form the basis of the ethical code and programme, it warns that anyone who is not concerned with the service of society is not a Muslim.*[2]

The Holy Prophet, may God bless him and his household, declared: "One who wakes up without the feeling of concern for the affairs of Muslims is not a Muslim."

Islam offers a social supporting system that in terms of size and strength of ties encompasses all the affairs relating to society and the individual. The strength of the social ties is fortified by the prophetic injunction that stipulates every Muslim to be deeply and emotionally concerned with the affairs of fellow Muslims in prosperity and adversity. Since it is a religious

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1 Kariako S. Markides and Gary L. Cooper (Eds.) *Aging, Stress and Health*, p. 78
2 Sayyid Mujtaba Musawi Lari, *Ethics and Spiritual Growth*, pp. 186 - 187

duty, which de–emphasises selfishness as expressed in individualism but stresses the cultivation of collective ethos in the spirit of *ummatism*. Thus in terms of social network or density of people involved in the care and support, the range is incredibly large and effective. Although the social support is largely homogenous in that all members or participants are guided by shariah, benevolence and benefaction of Islam transcend cultural, religious, racial or geographical barriers. It involves humankind in general; this is because of the eternal message that appertains to the educator of mankind: "We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures", (*Al–Anbiyaa*, 21:107). Therefore, in terms of dispersion, the network involves members to make intimate and direct contact with the person in distress with a view to relieving the stress, through various ways. The buffering mechanism of Islamic social supporting is highly effective because everybody is a partner in grief. The Muslims give their best collectively in terms of "commodities exchange", especially to women in their *iddat widowhood*.

Commodities exchange refers to any items given or received which possess value to those who participated in the relationship. These items may be very practical such as warm meals or housework, or relatively intangible things such as spending time together or listening to the complaints and grievances of the bereaved with sympathy and practical assistance. The latter are sometimes referred to as informal care giving tasks and have been noted to play an extremely potent role (Walker et al., 1977). Thus the medical benefits of this Islamic culture in its care of families in bereavement and women in widowhood can now be more discerned, especially when it is realized that the social system was evolved over 14 centuries ago. Cooperation and assistance as Islamic praxis are viewed as high ethical values. Syed Musawi Lari, in a beautiful analogy described the social supporting system in this way:

> *Since social states are manifested in members of the society from many points, we may compare the social structure to the human body, for just as the human body consists of various members that are naturally related to each other and on which the survival of man relies, society also consists of different parts which make it whole. Thus, each member of a society should know his vital basic duties and perform them to the best of his ability so that society can flourish. The members should explore all their material and spiritual talents, and exploit them for the sake of their society, all the time remembering to keep in the framework of abilities and social life.*

> *Nevertheless, collective tranquillity and security for the society, and overcoming difficulties can be achieved only if a sense of cooperation prevails over people's relations with each other. Life is sweeter, actions are fruitful, and the wagon of society advances on the path of excellence, only with cooperation.*[1]

Islam is a religion of collective cooperation; it also advocates generosity and abhors miserliness. The two can demur meaningful and effective group solidarity. Generosity is an Islamic virtue because it is the expression of the essence of human feeling and dignity. It is not in the character of a Muslim to be stingy but generous in mutual cooperation and collaboration. "Islam does not resent a thing," said the Prophet (s.a.w), "more than miserliness." A Muslim must be altruistic, righteous and God–fearing, as Allah (s.w.t) commands in *Surah Baqara*:

> *It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers, to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat, to fulfil the contracts, which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God–fearing (Baqara, 2:177).*

In his explication of this sacred verse Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali stated that warning against deadening formalism are given with a beautiful description of the righteous and God–fearing man. Man should obey salutary regulations but fix his gaze on the love of Allah and the love of his fellow men. Both are sacred duties enjoined upon every God–fearing man, he then enumerated his characteristics;

- Our faith should be true and sincere;
- We must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow man;
- We must be good citizens, supporting social organisations; and
- Our individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances.

The Islamic social support scheme is comprehensive, practicable, easy and efficacious. The support of a bereaved family is only a part. The

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[1] Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari, *Youth and Morals*, pp. 207 - 208

bereaved families benefit immensely from Islamic support system and are assisted assiduously to weather the storm of the psychic trauma that befalls them. Further, every Muslim must be firm and patient in adversity; it is the hallmark of people of truth and God-fearing.

Islamic social support system is founded on faith and exchange of commodity, a sacred duty incumbent on everyone, where practical deeds of charity are of great value because they proceed from love of Allah *ta'ala* and from no other motive. It is through this system that widowhood health is preserved for centuries without any sequelae. In this, there is immense benefit of Islamic worship. A religious duty, therefore, is not a respecter of person, or gender, all are equal and must abide by the sacred injunction.

Stroebe and Stroebe (1983) considered status characteristics as another major difference in how people cope with widowhood. This is based on the status of the individual involved. In this respect, it is helpful to consider the social position of the bereaved in the understanding of special needs and the livelihood of success for interventions designed to help widowed people.[1] Among the status characteristics considered none has received as much attention as gender. The evidence is equivocal but men probably suffer more.[2]

However, implicit from the verse quoted above is this issue of status – characteristics. Whatever the personality of the person afflicted the injunction is: "to be firmness and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic." This divine injunction helps to build in man and woman a stress resistant personality. So that status and gender characteristics become ostensibly insignificant. What is required of all is firmness and steadfastness in the face of every psychic affliction during the periods of panic, "such are the people of truth, the God-fearing." Here the word "people" refers equally to both male and female alike.

In short, expressivity as a cultural *norm* may predispose women to do more active grief–work and thereby avoid some of the widowhood's deleterious effects. One study examining sex roles and adjustments to widowhood found that androgynous widows fared better (Solie and Fielder, 1987). The word "androgynous" suggests lesbianism. This evilness does not make a homosexual better equipped to cope with the travails of bereavement. In fact, they fared far worse, this is because homosexuality and lesbianism are usually associated with pathological love and affection. Forceful separation like sudden death of a spouse therefore triggered off a

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1 K. S. Markides and G.L. Cooper (Eds.) *Ageing, Stress and Health*, p. 79
2 Ibid

cascade of series of events that might finally lead to the death of bereaved lover. Lesbianism devoid of religious backing is extremely sensitive to life event. This however is applicable to societies bereft of medical benefits of Islamic worship. Besides, Islamic abhorrence to androgyny and the evils it breeds such as homosexuality in the society are indescribable.

Islamic societies, therefore, provide the decided exception; studies which considered the social status of widowed people also found that those with more education and income fared better. Being higher up on the socio-economic ladder has repeatedly been found to offer advantages: better health, larger social networks, and more coping resources. Intervention, therefore, should be geared to address the less fortunate ones on the socio-economic scale.[1] These studies misconstrue the fact that those with wealth and high social status especially those without religious moorings are more adversely affected by life events, especially where religious faith is lacking. Affluence is harder on man to cope up with than adversity. Islam, however, provides every believer with cosmic religious feeling and an efficient social support system that will enable the believer to weather the storm of his or her affliction or stressful life event.

In conclusion, Islamic response to death and funeral arrangement are full of medical benefits; not only that even in the pre-antibiotic era it was free from all chances of spreading infection but it safeguards the family and the community from all forms of harm. Life cannot be regulated in the proper manner in the absence of stable and unchangeable injunctions inspired by Allah (s.w.t) the Creator of man, whose knowledge encompasses all things. Scientific world is now forced willy-nilly to accept this reality. Therefore, shariah is the ultimate guide and path to health and prosperity because it is the only right way to religion. It is the worldview that considers cleanliness as half of faith, not without valid reasons. Islam is a fundamental necessity to every human being who cherishes good life in the real sense of it. Its role in the life of a meaningful civilisation cannot be over looked nor over-emphasised. Summing up, Victor Segesvary pointed so eloquently:

> *All civilisations are linked to a certain worldview that is imparted to the people of that civilisation by its religious moorings. The recent history of Europe is an exception to that rule: there is no modernity in the orbit of any other civilisation, in the specific sense in which we understand it, that is, a scientific, secularised*

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[1] K. S. Markides and G.L. Cooper (Eds.) *Ageing, Stress and Health*, pp.79-80

(disenchanted or decasualized) and consequently, materialistic culture, centred round the dominant idea of the individual.[1]

Be that as it may, the Western civilisation dehumanises man as he progresses; and this is inimical to good health, social well-being and happiness.

Islam considers purification half of faith as well as a key to prayer. Without this key, prayer cannot be entered because the gate is keyed and clocked. The importance of cleanliness is considerable and it is to the credit of Islam which recognised, identified, elevated and popularised this very important human habit. It is also a key to good life and longevity; Islamic purification guards the individual and the community against the wrath of deadly microbes.

This good habit is important from medical, social, spiritual and aesthetic points of view. It is through purification that transmission of faecal-borne diseases is drastically reduced. The human excreta of a sick person or a carrier of disease is a major source of infection. It contains the disease agent, which is transmitted to a new host through various ways such as water, fingers, flies, soil and food, etc. Then Islam came with the principles of *attahara* and purification to break the disease transmission cycle at these vulnerable points, thereby, saving humanity from pestilences. It raised sanitation to a high premium equating it with half of faith to serve as a barrier to transmission of faecal borne diseases, e.g. cholera, typhoid, dysentery, etc.

Islam in its ever epoch-making contribution to humanity establishes the only epistemic community in the world. The expression "epistemic community" was first coined by Michael Foucault in his the *Order of Things* (1973). However, it was Burkhart Holzner and John H. Marx who provided the benchmark definition that is now in vogue, in their *Knowledge Application* (1979). They defined epistemic communities as:

...those knowledge-oriented work communities in which cultural standards and social arrangements inter–penetrate around a primary commitment to epistemic criteria in knowledge production and application.[2]

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1 Victor Segesvary, from illusion to Delusion: *Globalisation and Contradiction of Late Modernity*, p. 6

2 Association of Muslim Social Scientists, (AMSS) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Herndon USA. P. 15

Islamic societies remain the benchmark of epistemic communities. Islam is the only worldview which idealises and seeks to establish a knowledge-oriented work society; it has a unique concept of knowledge, and its high premium.

Islam, a founder of modern age, believed that modern civilisation could not thrive when cities remained in pestilential states. It makes cleanliness a religious duty to break disease cycle and to freed all nations from the ravages of epidemics and pandemic diseases. It was due to this monumental contribution to humanity that the world's population has today reached 6 billion people. Hence purification is a key to prayer in Islam, because it opens the gate of Islam, which is the only religion that gives health in this world and in the hereafter. This important key opens the gate to *wudu*.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HEALTH FACTOR IN WUDU

The "Age of Bacteria"

For more than 3 billion years, micro-organisms, especially bacteria, have ruled earth. As Stephen Jay Gould said, "We live now in the **Age of Bacteria**, Our planet has always been in the Age of Bacteria ever since the first fossils, and bacteria of course, were entombed in rocks more than three and a half billion years."[1] These were the remarks made by Dr. Gerald N. Callahan, an associate Professor of immunology at the Department of microbiology, immunology, and pathology, Colorado State University fort Collin. And he pointed that bacteria have done more than any other living group to alter the character of this earth. According to immunologist:

> *It has been estimated that more than 10^{29} bacteria live on this planet and as many as 10^{14} live on each one of us. Through all of history, we humans have waltzed with bacteria and the rest of the microscopic world. We had no choice, bacteria outnumber, out-weight, out-travel, and out-evolve us.*[2]

We are, however, rendered powerless before these unseen enemies with the naked eyes. We have a lot of choices in dealing with them either as friends or as foes. No doubt they pose serious and lethal dangers to our existence of this planet they have dominated but many are useful to us in many ways what we notice today, however, is what has been aptly described as, "revenge of the microbes." Man has used many germicides and antibiotics to decimate them in billions. But many have developed multiple resistances to many of these conventional antibiotics. Infections today from viral to bacterial have posed serious threat to the existence of man in this planet than at any other time. Today, far more people died of AIDS than perhaps of plagues of the Dark Ages despite the monumental achievements recorded in science and technology. Obviously there is a Germ Warfare.

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1 *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 9 No.8 August (2003), p. 1020
2 Ibid.

Dr. Callahan, however, thought otherwise, He said; that bacteria cause many human diseases is not astounding. It is astounding that so few bacteria cause human disease. Pathogenic bacteria are merely the microscopic tip of the largest of all biologic icebergs. How fortunate, we imagine, but fortune many have little or nothing to do with our survival. Billions of years of confrontation rather than luck were likely our benefactor. Through those confrontations and those eons, nearly all of us learned to coexist peacefully. Neither humans nor micro organisms benefit fully destroying the other. Fatal infections seem, biologically at least, short-sighted. And even a brief course of antibiotic is enough to remind us that a world without bacteria would be a poorer world. This is not a war, as it has often been described, even though we have mustered an impressive array of weapons – bactericidal cribs and mattresses, toilet cleaners and counter tops, blankets, deodorants, shampoos, hand soaps, mouth washes, toothpastes. This is not a war at all, if it were, we would have lost long ago, overpowered by sheer numbers and evolutionary speed. This is something else, something like lichen, something like a waltz. This waltz will last for all of human history. We must hold our partners carefully and dance well.[1]

This is campaign for dirt eating, a guile or deception to make us under estimate the lethal harms of an enemy that outnumbered us and who ostensibly decimate our population. Not all the 10^{29} bacteria are bad. It is also agreed that not all the 10^{14} load of bacteria that each one of us carry are bad. But those microscopic tips of the ice-berg that are pathogenic have forcefully made us to keep away from dirts. So we would not dare to hold our partners (bacteria) carefully because if we dance well with them they would sooner than later set in the process of putrefaction in our bodies, so fast and quick that we would not even live to realize it. Hence we say no to all the prophets of filths and their campaigns to eat bacteria (dirt). This is because each of us is battling with 10^{14} enemies in a Germ Warfare. Thus we must add purifications in our weaponry to our foods, body, clothes and place, to be on the edge against our lethal enemies.

Germ Warfare

The microbes or germs come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They are deadly, invisible killers. Some are shaped like rods (bacillus) and curved or spiral rod (vibiro, campylobacter, spirillum and spirochete). Some are spherical in shape (coccus). The microbes that also possess different sizes are minute organisms that cannot be seen with the naked eye, typical cocci

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[1] *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 9 No.8 August (2003), p. 1020

are about 1Φm in diameter. Most rod-shaped or bacilli are 2-5Φm long and 0.5-1.0Φm 0.5-1.0Φm wide. Within these general categories there is great diversity.[1]

Organisms capable of causing disease in man are derived from three sources: Human beings (the most important source); lower animals (much less important) and inanimate nature (relatively unimportant).[2] *Wudu* or ablution is essentially concerned with the cleanliness of the human beings, the most important source of infection. These germs are ubiquitous. Everywhere you look, they are waiting – for you. Waiting for the moment they can jump on board and bury themselves in a pore, a cut a crevice, almost any little niche at all.

They're not really fussy, some don't even wait for you to pick them up, some can hitch a ride on the breeze. A movement of air tickles over the counter top, along the floor, around the door knob, over the telephone, through the bathroom, across an aisle, and drops them all, dead or alive, over every inch of your body until you are covered. Layered, smothered with what? With germs, bacteria, viruses and other microbes that all have one thing in common: the ability to make you sick, very sick.[3] In this germ warfare they take advantage of number, size and shape to wreak havoc. More than a million bacteria can inhabit one square inch of skin with room to spare. But what they do to your body has little relationship to their size.[4] Bacteria are responsible for such life threatening diseases as tetanus, tuberculosis, syphilis and toxic shock.

Bacteria can also contaminate your food, causing severe food poisoning or even deadly botulism. Viruses are responsible for diseases like from influenza, hepatitis, poliomyelitis, rabies, AIDS and some types of cancer. The only thing that helps adherents of Islamic is wash ups is general body cleaning through regular baths and frequent *wudu* or ablution. Remember that you are covered, layered and smothered with invisible killers. Each one of us is loaded with 10^{14} bacteria. The exposed parts of your body are more covered with the invading germs. Thus bacteria out-number, out-weight, out-travel and out-evolve us.

Wudu is an effective protection and counter-force against the germ warfare. Its simplicity should not be taken for infectiveness against germs. The body bacteria de-loading is provided by regular *ghusl* or bath. The exposed parts are taken care of by ablution. In *wudu*, the hands that are

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1 C.G.A Thomas, *Medical Microbiology*, Balliere Tindal (1988), p.8
2 Ibid. p.56
3 The Editors of Prevention Magazine, Lifespan-plus, p. 214
4 Ibid p. 215

always layered with bacteria are washed more than fifteen times a day. The mouth smothered with bacteria, is regularly cleaned with *siwak* or chewing stick and washed thoroughly. The nostrils, which are covered with bacteria and viruses and transmit infection by sneeze are also washed regularly more than fifteen times a day. This reduces the incidence of droplet infection so cut the disease cycle at this vulnerable point:

> *In normal breathing few or no organisms emerge into the air from the nose or mouth. In quiet conversation the number is usually small; in shouting the number is greater. Compared with the vast numbers of organisms, even in sneezing, are derived from the nose.*[1]

Wudu is your defensive wash up strategy against the deadly germ warfare, is waged overtly and covertly against man. This is a remarkable gift of mercy from Allah (s.w.t). It is a solid block in sanitation barrier.

Performance of Wudu

Wudu is using clean water for partial purification, during which the exposed parts of the body are washed. Total body purification or bathing is called *ghusl*. *Wudu* is the final part of this "key to prayer." In Islamic worship spiritual reward goes hand-in-hand with health promotion. Before each Muslim says his prayer, he must be clean and pure. This is because the Holy Qur'an says:

> *Truly Allah loves those who turn to Him and those who care for cleanliness. Primarily, it is only in this condition to purity that a Muslim may perform the salat.*

Purification could be seen not only as a key to prayer but "germ repellent" as well as defensive strategy against the germ warfare. Because *wudu* keeps germs away from most of the exposed parts of the human body, as it regularly washes the dirts away; to reiterate it is an act of mercy from Allah (s.w.t) who says:

> *O ye who believe! When ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows; rub your heads (with water); and wash your feet to the ankles. If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity bath your whole body. (Q.5:6)*

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[1] C.G.A Thomas. *Medical Microbiology*. p. 63.

In his commentary on this religious cleanliness. Dr. G.M Khan, stressed a point eloquently, in his booklet *Personal Hygiene in Islam.* He said:

> *One fact which emerges from the above is the emphasis placed on the use of water for maintaining cleanliness and ritual purity. This emphasis is all the more pronounced when one remembers that the instructions were given first to a people who lived in the desert in a place where there was little water, not sufficient even for the cultivation of crops; for a Muslim these instructions are turned into a habit from early childhood even in the simplest Muslims homes.*[1]

Muslims with clean attitude well cultivated by *wudu* emerged from the Arabian desert to the nations of the world hygiene and cleanliness. This was indeed a miracle wrought by Islam. A Muslim performs *wudu* at least 5 times day; gives no chance for uncleanliness.

Every act of Islamic worship throbs with absolute mercy from the Lord of the worshippers and it radiates throughout. The exposed parts of the body namely the face, hand, arm, head, feet and ankles, being exposed and in continuous, contact with the surrounding are required to be washed during *wudu* because they contain impurities. However, when the impurity is extensive like a state of *janabah* bathing the whole body is mandatory. This habit of regular wash up promotes infection protection. The *ghusl* takes care of ceremonial impurity or sexual pollution. A. Rahman Doi, an Islamic scholar and author mentioned that ablution is performed as a constant purification of the body, and purity of body is a prelude to the purity of the soul. Islam demands for the purity of both. Thus, ablution begins with clean water; *salat* is performed with clean body, clean dress and clean mind in a clean environment. Undoubtedly, with these "cleans" put in place, only then can the prayer be performed. Obviously, all these preconditions laid down before the performance of *salat* are practices that are beneficial to health. There has never been any culture with emphasis on this scrupulous attitude to hygiene in all its ramifications, like *Din-il-Islam.*

After intention or the *niyyat,* ablutions begins in the following order:

- Washing of the hand up to the wrist three times starting with the right hand first.
- Washing the mouth three times.
- Washing the nostrils by *inhaling* and *exhaling* water three times.

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1 G.M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam,* p. 5

- Washing the face three times (from the forehead to the chin and from the right ear to the left).
- Washing the arms up to the elbow three times, starting with the right arm first.
- Wiping the head with wet hands starting from the forehead and ending towards the back of the head and doing the same from the back of the head to the forehead.
- Rubbing the outside of the ears with wet fingers and the inside of the ear with the wet thumbs simultaneously.
- Washing the feet up to the ankles three times starting with the right foot and then the left.[1]

Islam Protects

The fact that the washing of the hands is started first, shows that ablution, among other things, is to get rid of all dirt from the body, especially the most exposed parts. This introduces a health factor in *wudu*. It is with clean hands that other parts of the body are scrupulously washed thrice. This further indicates that Islam is a faith of science. The washing of each part three times is to ensure that the objective of purification is achieved.

In the hadith of Uthman (r.a) recorded by Bukhari and Muslim, *Uthman* reported that "the Prophet (s.a.w) washed each of the parts three times." This also ensures purity. And it is maintained throughout the day because with each prayer *wudu* is performed. Washing of the hands is the first step taken to personal hygiene, which is an integral component of sanitation barrier.

Islam left this legacy to all nations to teach their children to cultivate the Islamic habit of: washing your hands before meals and after using the bathroom is a good habit, especially if you want to prevent infections since germs on your hands tend to end up in your mouth, a quick rinse with only water is okay, but if you have soap available, use it.[2] *Wudu* helps you to ward off infection. It improves infection protection. Islam protects the worshipper against infections. Further, where Islamic wash ups were lacking pestilence became home-grown.

There are also non-obligatory or superegatory acts of *wudu* which potentiate the obligatory acts in health promotion as well as in infection

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1 A. Rahman Doi, *The Cardinals* of Islam, p.59.
2 Editor of Prevention Magazine, *Lifespan Plus*, p. 223

protection. The medical uses of *wudu* in improving the health status of the votaries are more discernible in the light of modern medical sciences today. Though revealed in the 7th century Arabia, it anticipated the science of modern hygiene by over one thousand years. In fact, Islamic hygiene was the precursor of modern hygiene. Thus these practices that are compatible with health practices could never have been "created" from the perceptive imagination of anybody but they were "revealed" by the Creator of all things. These indicators of Divine revelation could be seen to be threaded throughout the acts of Islamic worship. The cleansing power of ablution can never be overemphasised and is very relevant to our modern world of neatness, aesthetics and fashion, where a clumsy, dirty and stinking individual finds no place. Moreover, these acts of Islamic worship groom the believer to be a modern fashionable man and woman, in a culture where cleanliness is considered half of faith. Every Muslim who regularly performs ablution washes away his sins or spiritual dirt as well as dirt or the physical sins. He or she, therefore, reaps the medical benefits of *wudu* immensely. For example, a medical doctor noted the benefits of washing hands:

> *The hands are used for multifarious purposes and become dirty very quickly. Washing the hands regularly therefore is a must and the practice of wudu ensures that this is done. Attention must also be paid to the nails of the fingers, dust accumulated under the nails is difficult to get rid of. Surgeons when washing up for operations devote much time in tropical countries as it is in non-tropical but industrialised countries. Muslims - because of the habit of eating with their hands which incidentally has much to recommend it as against the use of the knife and fork – are used to washing their hands before eating. The Prophet of Allah also taught Muslims to wash their hands after rising from sleep. This principle of hygiene is perhaps not appreciated even by teachers of hygiene.*[1]

Use of Safe Water

Much of the ill health which affects humanity, can be traced to lack of safe and wholesome water. This is described in Islamic hygiene as *mutlaq* water, i.e water which is clean and cleanses. This awareness came to the west only a century ago. Islam recognised several centuries ago that there can be no state of positive health and well-being without *mutlaq* water. This

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[1] G.M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, p. 5

water is now described as safe and whole some water. It also recognised that water intended for ritual purposes like *wudu* and *ghusl* must be fit for human consumption. It must be both safe and wholesome. Today *mutlaq* water has been defined as water that is: (a) free from pathogenic agents, (b) free from harmful chemical substances, (c) pleasant to the taste, i.e, free from colour and odour and (d) usable for domestic purposes.[1] These are essentially the quality of *mutlaq* water recommended for religious and domestic use centuries ago.

In *wudu* emphasis is placed on using clean and cleansing (*tuhoor*) water upon certain body parts as Allah *ta'ala* has prescribed and explained (*Maidah* 5:6).[2] The water used for purification in Islam must possess all the qualities of pure water. Some of the qualities, to reiterate for the sake of emphasis, include:

- Its colour should be pure.
- It should be odourless.
- Its taste should be delectable and soft as the Nile and Euphrates' water.
- It should be light and tender.
- The water course should be clean.
- Its source should be far.
- It shouldn't be hiding under the ground so that the sun and wind should reach it.
- It should be sufficiently abundant in order to repulse its impurities.
- It should flow from North and West to the East.[3]

In arriving at this standard quality, the common properties of water, its source and distance from any pollution were taken into consideration.

At the outset, Islam aimed to achieve "health for all" as it concerns with the establishment of a healthy environment through healthy lifestyle. At a time when the concept of hygiene was largely unknown it launched an ambitious universal coverage of water supply and sanitation services that was far ahead of its time. It made hygiene and integral component of worship achieve compliance and steadfastness on general cleanliness. The first step in any health programme is the elimination and protection of sources of water supply.

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1 *Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, p. 483.
2 Fahd Ibn Abdir-Rahman Ash-Shuwaib, *Sifat Wudoo in Nabee*, p.2.
3 Aljawziyya, *The Prophetic Medicine*, p.452.

The qualities of safe and wholesome water were described in the arid region of Arabia in the 7th century that remained to date and forever in perfect accord with modern science. It also ensured that water pollution was minimised to the barest because without ample and safe drinking water, health of the individual and community could be jeopardised. If this occurred its lofty ideal of providing "health in this world and health in next world" could be put to test.

The puritanical demand of Islam on water for domestic and ritual purposes, Islam protects Muslims against diseases associated with water. These diseases are today described as water–related diseases. They are broadly classified into five epidemiological groups:

- Group I: water-borne infections (e.g cholera, typhoid, infective hepatitis)
- Group II: Water–shortage diseases (e.g. skin infections, trachoma)
- Group III: Water–impounding diseases (e.g. schistosomiasis, guinea worm).
- Group IV: Water–arthropod diseases (e.g. malaria, oncholcerciasis).
- Group V: Chemical constituents, either excess or shortage (e.g. fluoride).[1]

Islam insists upon the use of water for *wudu* to be safe and wholesome; when this health is appropriately exploited a Muslim can be protected against most if not all the water–related diseases. This is more so when it is realised that the water that is unfit for consumption is equally unfit for *wudu*. Thus a Muslim is left with the alternative of using good and safe water.

Sunnah boosts the purification in addition to obligatory acts of *wudu* thereby improving the infection protection efficacy. They include the following;

- To recite the *basmala* when entering the restroom and when beginning to make ablution.
- To wash the hands including the wrists three times.
- To rinse the mouth three times by using new water each time, this is called *madmada*.
- To wash both nostrils three times, taking fresh water each time, this is called *istinshaq*.

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[1] A.O Lucas and H.M. Gilles, *Textbook of Public Health Medicine for Tropics*, p. 292

- It is *sunnat*, not *fard* to wet the invisible parts of the skin under the eyebrows, the beard and the moustache. It is *fard* to wash their exterior surfaces. If the hair is scanty and the skin can be seen, it will be *fard* to wet and wash the skin.
- To wet the section under the two eyebrows when washing the face.
- To apply *masah* on the hanging part of the beard. In the Hanafi *madhhab* it is not *fard* to wash it. In Shafi'i, it is *fard* to wash the skin below the chin and the hanging part of the beard too.
- To comb the hanging part of the beard with the wetted fingers of the right hand. The face is from the upper edge of the forehead to the end of the chin, and from one to the other front borders of ears.
- To rub and clean the teeth with something.
- To apply *masah* on the whole head.
- To apply *masah* (to wipe) on both ears once. It is *fard* to wash the parts between the ear and the cheek.
- To apply *masah* on the neck once with three adjacent fingers of both hands.
- To wash (*takhlil*) between the fingers and the toes. For washing between the toes, the little finger of the left hand is inserted between the toes under them in succession, beginning with little toe of the right foot, and after finishing with the right foot, carrying on with the big toe of the left foot.
- To wash every limb three times which is to be washed, at each washing every part of the limb must be moistened. It is *sunnat* not to pour water three times but to wash it completely three times.
- To intend through the heart when beginning to wash the face.
- *Tartib* in other words, to wash the two hands, the mouth, the nostrils, the face, the arms, then apply *masah* on the head, on the ears, on the neck, and then to wash the feet successively, and not to change this order.
- *Dalk*, to rub the limbs washed.
- *Muwalat*, to wash the limbs one right after another quickly.[1]

Islam is a faith of science where performance of every *ibadah* is standardised. The *sunnah* acts of *wudu* as we have seen potentiate its infection protection to enhance its health factor. It also has its etiquettes or *adab*.

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[1] Seadet – Ilebediyye. *Endless Bliss*. Fourth Fascide Seventh Edition, pp.17-19.

Etiquettes of Ablution

It is clear that by the time a worshipper goes through the obligatory acts of *wudu* or *fard* and the tradition of the Prophet in *wudu* or *sunnah*, he is exquisitely clean. It is also expected that this science of *wudu* ensures that every dirt or *najasat* on the skin, clothing or place of worship is thoroughly cleaned up. There are additional measures taken to further enhance the cleansing power of ablution. This broad group of acts is called *adab* of ablution. *Adab* in this context means an act or etiquette which causes additional blessings when performed but it is not a sin when it is, however, omitted. But it has an added value to the purification. The *adab* of ablution are;

- To make ablution before it is time for salat, if this is not possible it must be done at the appropriate time.
- When cleaning oneself in the toilet, the qibla must be on one's right or left side. It is an adab to squat down with the feet wide apart.
- If the private parts have not been smeared with najasat, it is an adab to wash them with water... There is no prescribed number of washing. It is necessary to wash until it is cleaned. One does the cleaning with the inner surfaces of one or two or three fingers of the left hand. In essence, whether the private part is stained with faeces or not it is to be washed, due to adab, sunnah or wajib. This regular clean up ensures that the private part of a Muslim remains free from faecal stains and malodorous smells all the time. And while cleaning the faecal stain, two to three fingers of the left hand are to be used, and not the entire hand. This makes it much easier to scrub and wash the fingers thereafter.
- To wipe oneself dry with a piece of cloth after washing. If there is no cloth, one must wipe with his hand. The Prophet (s.a.w) because of his meticulous personal hygiene used handkerchief to clean his fingers (after licking) immediately after his meals. He used cloth or towel to mop his body after wudu and also used handkerchief whenever the need to use it arose. Although he lived in 7th century Arabia, his body upkeep and sense of personal and environmental hygiene were startlingly ultra modern. Hence the use of handkerchief to maintain body cleanliness has been a part of a Muslim culture several centuries before the habit became acceptable and spread to all cultures. Therefore this use of towel and handkerchief were the Prophet's legacy to the modern world.

- To cover oneself right after the cleaning is completed. It spoils the adab to uncover unnecessarily at isolated places.
- Not to ask for help from anybody, but to perform the ablution by oneself. If someone pours water for one without being asked, it will be permissible.
- To turn towards the qibla when making ablution.
- Not to talk while making ablution.
- To recite the kalmat–i-shahadat when washing each limb.
- To recite the prescribed prayers (du'a) of ablution.
- To put water in the mouth with the right hand.
- To put water in the nose with the right hand.
- To clean the nose with the left hand.
- When washing the mouth, brush the teeth with a miswak. While the fingers of the right hand are stretched, the thumb and the little finger hold the miswak on the lower side and the other three fingers hold it on the upper side, then the miswak is rubbed gently on the teeth, three times on the teeth on the right side and three times on the ones on the left side. It should not be rubbed hard lest it will damage the teeth. When rubbed softly it strengthens the teeth and the gums. Miswak is a span long piece of stick cut from a branch of a tree of Erak (Peelo) which grows in Arabia. If there is no Erak branch, branches of olive trees or others can replace it. But not a pomegranate branch because it is bitter and causes the things to eat and drink to taste bitter. If one cannot find any miswak, one may use between the fingers by inserting (tahlil) from the lower sides of them on the right hand side and with the index–finger to rub the ones on the left. It is not shar'an (canonically) makruh to use someone else's miswak or comb with his permission, but it is tab'an (medically) makruh. Also, smoking is tab'an makruh.
- When washing the mouth, rinse it if not fasting, it is always makruh to gargle in the throat (glottis).
- When washing the nostrils, to draw the water almost up to the bone.
- When applying masah on the ears, insert each little finger into each ear hole.
- To use the little finger of the left hand when washing between the toes by inserting (tahlil) from the lower sides of them.
- To shift the ring when washing the hands, it is necessary and fard to shift a tight ring.

- Not to waste water though it may be plentiful.
- Not to use so little water so as to appear rubbing with oil, during each of the three washings, at least two drops of water must fall from the place washed.
- After using a container for ablution, to leave the container full of water. One should put the ewer in its place with its mouth pointing towards the qibla. Any other traveller who wants to perform the namaz can easily determine the direction of the qibla by way of the ewer's mouth.
- To recite the prayer (du'a) "Allahummaj'alni minattawwabin..." after or during the ablution.
- To perform two rak'ats (units) of namaz called Subha after ablution.
- To make an ablution though one has an ablution. In other words after performing namaz, renew your ablution for the next namaz.
- To clean the inner corners of the eyes and clear away the dried mucus in the eyelids when washing the face.
- When washing the face, the arms, and the feet, wash a little more than the compulsory amount. When washing the arms, we must fill our palm with water and then pour it towards the elbow.
- When performing ablution, do not let the water used splash back on the body, or the clothes, etc.[1]

Islam is highly scientific in the application all acts of worship. This is necessary because act of *ibadah* is rewarded according to its *niyyat* or intention as well as whether it is performed according to the laid down rules and injunction. The devotee is guided by the rules of every act to maximum spiritual rewards and health benefits which usually accrue to the devoted Muslim. To consolidate the gains of *wudu* the following are prohibited. These prohibitions help to dignify personality and improve infection protection of *wudu*.

Prohibited Acts in *Wudu*

Doing them is either *haram* or *makruh*. However, they infringe on the health factor of *wudu*. They are as follow:

- When relieving oneself or urinating in the toilet or outside, one should not turn one's front or back towards the qibla. It is makruh

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[1] The Adabs of ablution written in the book Halabi – I sager as quoted in *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, pp 19 – 21.

also to stretch one's feet towards the qibla or the Qur'an. If the Qur'an is above one it will not be makruh. One can enter the toilet with the Qur'an or an amulet which is wrapped up with a separate cover.

- It is haram to open one's private parts near someone in order to make taharat.
- One should not make taharat with one's right hand.
- When there is no water, it is makruh to make taharat (to clean oneself) with food products, manure, bones, animals food, coal, someone else's property, a piece of flowerpot or tile, reeds, leaves, a piece of cloth or paper.
- One must not spit or throw mucus into the pool where one makes ablution.
- One should not wash one's limbs of ablution much more or less than the prescribed limit, nor wash them more or less than three times.
- One must not wipe one's limbs of ablution with the same cloth used for taharat.
- While washing the face, one must not splash the water upon one's face, but pour it from the upper forehead downwards.
- One must not blow upon or over the surface of the water.
- One must not close one's mouth and eyes tightly; even if a tiny part of the outward part of the lips or the eyelids is left dry, the ablution will not be acceptable.
- One must not expel mucus from the nose with one's right hand.
- One must not make masah of one's head, ears or neck more than once after moistening the hands each time. But it can be repeated without moistening the hands again.[1]

Tayammun: When Water Cannot be Used

Islam gives a wide latitude to worship under all condition without any hardships imposed upon the devotees. For it caters for their health and salvation in every possible way. It envisaged a situation when it is either impossible to obtain water or it is just enough for drinking is available. Its use may even be injurious to health because of illness. In such situations *tayammun*, or dry ablution is performed, since for health reasons especially water cannot be used, even if available, for *wudu* or *ghusl* then dry ablution

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[1] *Endless Bliss*, Fourth Fascicle, pp 21 - 22

is the only recourse. There are seven conditions under which one is unable to find or, if present, to use the water for making the ablution or *ghusl*:

- He who is one mile away from some water makes a tayammum, provided he makes the proper intentions; one mile is equal to four thousand zra, which equals 1920 metres. It is always fard to look for water when you are in a city.
- A sick person can make a tayammum if it is understood that having ablution, ghusl or moving will cause him worse and delay the healing, either by his own experience or by the words of a specialized Muslim doctor who does not commit sins openly.
- If a person is too ill to make a ghusl or ablutin or does not find anybody to help him even for money, he will make a tayammum. He who cannot make a tayammum even with help does not perform the namaz, but he performs it when he recovers. It is not wajib for a husband and wife to help each other in making an ablution.
- If there is the danger that a person may die or get sick when he makes a ghusl, if he does not have the money to go to a bath and has no other alternative, even if he is in a city, he makes a tayammum instead of a ghusl and makes an ablution with water.
- If water is close but there is an enemy, a wild or poisonous animal, a fire or a guard near the water, or if he is imprisoned, or if someone threatens him with death or takes away his possessions if he makes an ablution, he makes a tayammum instead and performs the namaz. But since these are caused by creatures, he has to perform his namaz again after he makes a ghusl and ablution.
- If a traveller has extra water which is needed by him and his comrades to drink, to clean themselves of najasat or to give to their animals, he makes a tayammum. If he makes a ghusl with the water and performs the namaz with najasat on his clothes it will be accepted, but he will be sinful. If he first makes a tayammum and then removes the najasat, he will have to make a tayammum again. For one cannot make a tayammum while there is water. If a person who is junub finds enough water to wash his body partly or to make an ablution, he makes one tayammum for ablution and ghusl. If his ablution breaks after the tayammum, he makes an ablution with the water, when the water poured on the body in ablution and ghusl falls down somewhere (not on one's clothes), it becomes foul and one cannot drink it. But it can be given to animals to drink. A person who is about to die from thirst buys water from someone

who has extra water. If the latter will not sell it, the former takes it by force, by fighting or threatening. Water used for ablution cannot be taken by force.

- If a person cannot find a bucket or a rope to lift water out of a well, or a person to go down a well for money, he makes a tayammum, and does not have to perform his namaz again when he finds water.

Islam is devoid of any hardship, it is always on the side of the worshipper in the face of illness, hardship or difficulty. It allows the worship to follow the path of least resistance. It recommends dry ablution in a number of conditions described. Procedure begins with *niyyat*, ring is removed and then he is to:

> *Begin with the name of Allah, strike both palms on sand, or anything containing sand or dust, like a wall or a stone, etc. Pass the palms of the hands over the face once. Strike the sand etc, again with the palms, rub the right hand with the left palm from the wrist to the elbow and similarly for the left hand with the right palm. Finish with the kalimatush – shahada as for wudu.*[1]

Islamic worship is simple, practicable and highly sympathetic to the worshipper. Obviously, the health factor in *tayammum* is a mercy to believers: "I have been sent," said the Prophet (s.a.w), "with what is straight and easy" (Ahmad).

Action According to Capacity

Islamic acts must be devotional and pure for the love of Allah (s.w.t), must be performed according to the laid down rules and must be performed in *parri passu*, with strength and capacity of the devotee. It is a mercy unto humankind; it follows a middle course between two extreme ends. When ritual acts of worship are rigorous, rigidly enforced with no latitude for accommodation it fails to take human weakness into account. Thus Islam is not a rigid religion; it empathises with the worshipper and shows much consideration in his health, sickness and infirmity or when on a journey. It is a religion with human face where necessity dictates exception.

Unless there is a strong necessity, the following eleven rules must be obeyed:

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[1] Sallah, *The Muslim Prayer*, p. 6

- A person with both arms paralysed cannot make taharat. Instead he makes tayammum by rubbing his arms on some soil and his face against a wall. If there is a wound on his face, he performs the namaz without ablution in order not to miss, namaz.
- If a person is sick, his wife, jariya, children, sisters, or brothers may help him perform his ablution.
- Making taharat with stones and the like takes the place of making it with water.
- If a person who went mad or fainted did not recover within twenty-four hours, he would not have to perform his missed prayers of namaz when he recovered. He who loses consciousness by taking alcohol, opium or medicine must perform each omitted prayer. A person, who is so heavily ill that he cannot even perform the namaz by moving his head while lying down, even if he is conscious, is exempted from performing prayer. However, this state must go on for more than twenty-four hours.
- It is mustahab (a source of blessing) to use special baggy trousers and to cover the head when entering the toilet.
- When entering the toilet one must not hold something in one's hand containing Allah's name or pieces of writing from the Qur'an. It must be wrapped up with something or it must be in one's pocket. The case is the same with an amulet.
- One must enter the toilet with one's left foot and go out with one's right foot.
- In the toilet one must open one's private parts after squatting and one must not talk.
- One must not look at one's private parts or at the waste material or spit in the toilet.
- In the toilet, one must not eat or drink anything, sing, whistle, or chew gum.
- One must not urinate into any water, on a wall or a mosque.[1]

Certain acts vitiate or nullify ablution. The wudu, since its advent in the 7th century had spread both within the Muslim Ummah and far beyond due to its simplicity, practicability and immense health benefits. Peoples of all nations have learned to wash their face, clean their hands, teeth, etc. having taken the lessons from ablution of hygiene.

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[1] Sallah, *The Muslim Prayer*, p. 12

CHAPTER TWELVE

GLOBAL IMPACT OF WUDU

Ablution is a means by which a Muslim regularly keeps himself clean and like a tonic on wilting plant, it rejuvenates all the body organs. Regular *wudu* is, hence, the simplest and practicable way of personal hygiene which Islam provides. According to a medical doctor:

> *Personal hygiene in Islam is therefore just one but important ingredient in a well-integrated scheme of physical and spiritual cleanliness. A Muslim, when adopting and carrying out the principles and injunctions of Islam, does so with the conviction of their usefulness and supreme benefit, and also with the feeling of moral obligation that they must be carried out. This attitude ensures that the principles are moulded into a set pattern of habits and behaviour and ensure high standards of personal hygiene.*

Regular *wudu* changes the personal standards of hygiene of the Muslims. In turn they change to that of the word. Even centuries prior to the evolution of Western concept of pure water, Muslims knew the science of water, its qualities and what preserves it. Islam demands the use of clean and cleansing water because not all apparently clean water retains its cleansing property. Thus water used for Islamic rituals must have cleansing properties or *Tuhoor* because Islamic faith engenders health benefits. Evidently, good body hygiene cannot be achieved nor maintained without the use of this type of water.

Islam gave the world an important legacy, the culture of personal as well as environmental hygiene aptly described as public health. It directs that human excrement must be buried when passed in the open place, and one must not pass excreta in rivers or pools or in shade where people sit or along the road. It is now we know that leaving excrement exposed to flies can increase the incidence of water and food-borne diseases and the death of many people. And when it contaminates food or drinking water, an outbreak of these diseases occurs. All these hygienic rules had anticipated modern discoveries by many centuries. In a bid to preserve his *wudu*, a

Muslim strives assiduously to observe hygiene rules strictly. As a result, cleanliness becomes the benchmark of a Muslim.

Europe, for example, prior to the Islamisation of its barbaric culture, was devoid of these teachings and it was devastated by many epidemics especially in the Dark Ages. It was only in 1546 when Hieronymus Fracastorious (1483-1553) propounded his *De Contagione,* that the cause of diseases began to be understood. It was a theory that suggested epidemic disease was due to the transmission of an infective agent from one individual to another, spread by contact, by articles handled by the patient through the air from a distance. These agents of diseases, Fracastorious referred to as *seminaria* or germs of disease and believed that they could multiply and propagate their like.[1]

While the rest of the world was languishing in diseases, due to poor personal and environment health, the Islamic society was not only a disease free zone but had reached an advanced stage of preventive medicine. "An ounce of prevention," the Prophet said, "is better than a ton of treatment." The practice of regular and frequent *wudu* helped in great measure in warding off infectious diseases and their spread in the Muslim communities. The rules governing *attahara* and *wudu* combined to constitute a public attitude on personal and environment cleanliness.

Islam insists that cleanliness is half of faith. A stain of urine, sewage or sullage vitiates ablution; for this reason a Muslim takes up cudgel against filth in all its varieties. No one treats half of his faith with levity. The result is that a deep sense of personal hygiene is moulded into a set pattern of habit and conscious behaviour which views a filth deadlier than a snake. What do you do when you meet a snake? You kill it quickly before it harms or kills you. This briefly describes a Muslim's attitude to filth.

> *This attitude to health by the slow process of acculturalisation has become universal. This indeed was a veritable global impact of wudu. The pail or bucket system of toilet in which fresh faeces are carried about is an anathema to Islamic culture. It was a system that the British introduced to the Muslim countries during the colonial era. The system was discredited as repugnant and unhygienic even in England. It was reported from Leeds in 1868: "the stench in Leeds from 10pm to 4am, ...the pails, though more hygienic, were unsightly; besides it was embarrassing to leave pails out for collection, rather as we leave milk bottles out today.*[2]

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1 C.G.A. Thomas, *Medical Microbiology*, ELBS, 6th ed., p.1.
2 Lionel Rose, *Health and Hygiene*, p. 67

The pail system of latrine in spite of this horrendous description, yet, it qualified as "more hygiene." The horrible nature of other methods of sewage disposal is better left to be imagined. This scenery in England was typical of the rest of Europe. The West had resolutely resisted the Islamisation of its culture until it was forced by the deadly siege of deadly microbes. In an unprecedented attacks by the microbes two – thirds of Europe was exterminated by pestilences. Finally, by the end of the 19th century, Europe had no option left but to be Islamised. Today the positive impact of *wudu* can be seen conspicuously. Wash ups have become a part of European lifestyle.

The Islamic society with its strict adherence to hygienic principles of regular *wudu* and *ghusl* did not subscribe to the then prevailing concept of supernatural cause of disease or superstition. It did not, however, negate the concept of supernatural cause of disease, but showed the way out: "cleanliness and good hygiene." Islam, therefore, insists that both hands must be wrapped with cloth (like hand glove) to bathe a deceased Muslim before burial. The cloth used must also be buried along with the corpse. And the attendants must thoroughly wash their hands and garments immediately. Islam reasons that the deceased must have died of some disease whose spread could be prevented by the application of strict hygienic rule. Islam, therefore, was the first to advance the use of hand-glove in preventive medicine. And a Muslim washes his hands up to the wrist, and also washes the forearm up to the elbow a minimum of 15 times a day. Hence, even a surgeon is surpassed in hand care or hygiene who also washes his hands and forearm before undertaking a surgical operation. Has impact of *wudu* now being felt in modern surgery?

Wudu in Modern Surgery?

The surgeon and his operating theatre room are required to be meticulously neat and tidy especially during a surgical operation. The theatre as we all know is always kept clean and sterile through various sterilisation processes and the use of disinfectants. The surgical equipment are similarly sterilised through the use of many modern aseptic techniques. The operating staff which include the anaesthetist, the nurses and theatre attendants must also be scrupulously clean. A condition analogous with the purification in *wudu*, the surgeon(s) who leads the surgical team must also be aseptic in body and clothes. All these measures are taken to safeguard the patient from iatrogenic infections. When strict personal and environmental hygiene are not observed especially during the operation, it

might be successful but the patient may die due to operative and or post-operative infections. The health factors of *wudu* can be seen to be fully exploited in the surgical theatre. In fact, an analogy can be made between a Muslim in his preparation and state of prayer in the mosque with that of the modern surgeon. The common thing between the two is *wudu*, i.e. purification and cleanliness, the difference is in degree. Here wudu is employed to save life. It thus suggests very strongly that body hygiene can never be achieved without the introduction of some elements of wudu.

Many non-Islamic societies suffered from various pestilence and epidemics due to ignorance of preventive medicine which *wudu* practically teaches. The importance of washing of the hands is very vital in preventive medicine. For instance, in the middle of the 19th century, medical personnels in Europe would go directly to the dissecting room where they handled cadavers with the bare hands to take deliveries or to conduct obstetric examinations in the maternity wards without washing their hands. This was a direct contradiction to the laid down Islamic hygiene rules. In consequence, infections spread in the maternity wards due to deadly bacterial and viral germs. The deadly infection spread to the mother and her baby from cadavers and mothers and their babies died in thousands. The wisdom of Islam and the Prophetic teaching of preventive medicine were largely unknown or ignored. The incident pointed strongly to the infection protection of *wudu*.

Subsequently, the medical world perhaps in recognition of healthful benefits of *wudu* was forced to adopt the Islamic habit of hand washing as one of the disease preventive measures as thousands continued to die. Anti-septic solution was then used for this purpose. An important landmark in the struggle to overcome the high incidence of sepsis and death following surgical operations and childbirths were made when the emphasis on the contagious nature of puerperal fever was made by Oliver Wendell Holmes (1843) in Boston. Similarly, the demonstration by Semmelweiss (1847) in Vienna that the incidence of this disease could be dramatically reduced by insisting that the students coming from post-mortem room should *wash their hands* in a solution of chlorinated lime before examining the women.[1] The mortality rate in the maternity ward felt drastically with the introduction of this simple basic hygiene. The habit of washing of the hand for whatever reason was, hitherto, considered unhealthy.

Ignaz Phillipp Semmelweiss (1818-65) and Oliver Wendell Holmes of Boston, working independently proved the efficacy of hand washing

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[1] C. G. A Thomas, *Medical Microbiology*, p.183.

against the spread of communicable disease infection in the maternity. It was in the middle of the 19th century when it was becoming recognised that it was possible to be the carrier of germs and spread them to other people causing them the infection. This was observed as the cause of high mortality rate of mothers and their babies in their confinement. The feverish illness of these mothers was called puerperal fever and it was reported that out of 9886 pregnant women who were confined in the maternity hospital in Paris between 1861 and 1864, 1226 died of this disease.[1] Wendel Holmes of Boston in 1843 went further to show that puerperal fever was caused by germs on the hands of physicians and midwives carried into the bodies of these unfortunate women during internal examinations. This thinking was in line with that advanced by the great health Teacher who introduced the ethics of hand washing and also emphasised that even on waking up from sleep, a Muslim must wash his hands obviously for hygienic reason because as he said, he might not know where the hands fell during sleep. This thinking is good and was revolutionary.

However, Holmes postulation that medical personnel traffic germs in their hands received much opposition, for the medical profession resented the implication that physicians were not clean, and his warning was not heeded in America. Semmelweiss taught the same principle in the maternity in Vienna and was similarly ignored. This was not surprising when even the great health Teacher who re-established the science of hygiene and laid down the principles of purification and cleanliness was also ignored for centuries in the West.

However, what Holmes and Semmelweiss had independently taught western medical officers was the introduction of the principles of wudu in medical, surgical and gynaecological practices. The implication of their postulation was the obvious introduction of hand washing into the health practice, a habit that was then perceived as symbolic of Islam. Further, it was meant to mean that every physician or surgeon must perform wudu before examining his patient and wudu after the examination for hygienic reason. Little wonder then their theory was ignored, it ran parallel with that of the great health Teacher who also said "perform wudu before eating your meal." It means wash you hand before and after eating your food. This same revolutionary idea was, however, brought to the West. "Wash your hand before and after clinical examination of the patient." This prophetic principle of hygiene is now practised in hospitals all over the world.

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[1] Peter Baldry. *The Battle Against Bacteria.* p.11

It is ironical, Semmelweiss who introduced Islamic ethics into the medical practice in the west had to die of frustration. The man who made it a strict rule that all medical students should wash their hands in a solution of chloride of lime before carrying out internal examinations, and obviously to wash their hands afterwards was scorned, persecuted and forced to resign.

This action was not unconnected with Islamaphobia due to which, hand washing and bathing, which were symbolic of Islam were vehemently opposed in the West until sanitary reformers intervened. But Islam is a mercy to mankind, thus when you reject it countless would die of pestilence. When he resigned his position as professor, Semmelweiss then moved to Budapest in 1861 where he published his book, *The Cause and Prevention of Puerperal Fever,* but he never convinced his critics.[1] This was because his crime was not medical but religious, which Semmelweiss himself was not aware of the implication of introducing hand washing into medical practice. The resentment of Islam and what it preaches is still strong and forceful in the West to date.

The impact of *wudu* was crucial to the evolution of personal hygiene amongst all nations of the world. In Europe regular bath also was incorporated as part and parcel of lifestyle. *Wudu* becomes a second, nature of a surgeon.

Surgeons Perform Wudu?

Ever since Simmelwers in mid 19th century prescribed hand washing to medical personnel to prevent iatrogenic infections, surgeons have gone beyond hand washing. They perform *wudu* to effect maximum infection protection which is vital and necessary for safe surgical operations. The surgical ritual of hand washing and scrubbing; the use of cap, gown and boots strike a striking resemblance with *wudu* rather deviously.

Sterile is the state of being free from all living organisms. In this sense the presence of a single organism renders an object non–sterile. The process of achieving this objective is termed sterilisation.[2] This is what a surgeon seeks to achieve prior to surgical operation; to strictly maintain during the course of his operation, in the interest of both the surgeon and his patient.

Whereas when an object such as a properly cleaned eating utensil while safe, is generally not sterile. The term sanitation is a term, which describes

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1 Peter Baldry, *The Battle Against Bacteria,*
2 L.P Gephard, *Microbiology*, p.76

a state in which an object is rendered sanitary. In the course of sanitation of an object, not only are the pathogens killed but most of the non-pathogens are destroyed.[1] A Muslim seeks to achieve a sanitary conditions through purification method prior to and during his state of worship to his Lord in the interest of his health and salvation. The primary aim of Islamic worship is to achieve healthful life after death. A healthful life in this world is, secondary. However, both are inseparable and mutually interdepended. Without a sound health, worship cannot be performed to achieve salvation. And a sound health without a religious worship is meaningless. Thus purification in Islam is a key to both Health and Salvation.

The washing of hands is an Islamic act of worship, now surgeons wash not only their hands, but up to their elbows as well before undertaking any operation – an application of Islamic principles in action! It also ably demonstrates the health factor in *wudu*. The hidden corollary *wudu* is life saving in this world and in the hereafter.

When Islam insists that the devotees must flush their nostrils regularly during *wudu*, it is now that the medical benefits of doing so which have become known to the world. Certain viruses and bacteria are transmitted from person to person by infected nasopharyngeal secretion. The first stage of infection of these germs is absorption to muco-protein receptors on the upper respiratory tract. Regular flushing through inhaling and exhaling some water reduces the growth of these germs and enhances the bactericidal activity of the normal nasal secretions. The vibrissae or hairs in the nostrils are washed to clear up the trapped particles. And douching the nose helps to clean it from inside while washing the face cleans it from outside. Although the surgeon does not wash his nostrils and his face, he puts on surgical mask to protect himself and his patient against the transmission of disease through sneezes and or spitting of saliva, from the doctor to the opened chest, abdomen or tissues of patient with disastrous consequences – obviously, the outbreak of iatrogenic fulminating infections. The hidden corollary is also that washing of the mouth and rinsing of the nostrils during *wudu* have immense health benefits. The wisdom behind it is being employed and exploited in full in the surgical theatre where everybody must put on surgical masks. Moreover, the health benefits of wiping the head and putting on a surgical cap in male or tying of a surgical scarf in the female is equally employed in the surgical theatre. Islamic ablution demands frequent wiping of the hair of the scalp with water, a hygienic habit which the surgeon improves and puts in use to

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[1] L.P Gephard, *Microbiology*, p.76

minimise the spread of infection in the theatre. No surgeon or his assistant is allowed into the theatre without putting on his or her surgical cap or scalp. This consistently indicates the veritable health factors in ablution.

The health benefit of washing legs is also ably demonstrated in the theatre. It is mandatory to put on surgical boots when inside the theatre. Thus, all the health benefits of *wudu* are practically demonstrated in the surgical theatre through: washing and scrubbing of the hands forearms up to the elbows; putting the surgical mask on to cover nostrils, mouth and face, surgical cap and surgical boots to prevent spread of germs and infections especially the exposed parts of the body, which *wudu* protects. In short, a surgeon performs *wudu* prior to operation. Although he does not take *ghusl,* he uses surgical gown instead, he uses surgical boots instead of washing his legs up to the ankles. The use of clean boots suffices. A Muslim, on the other hand, regularly washes these areas 15 times a day. If they are no health benefits they could not have been employed by the surgeon in the theatre directly or indirectly.

It is expected that after the *ghusl*, your body remains neat and tidy but for the exposed parts of the body that are in direct contact with the outside environment. The function of *wudu* is to keep these parts clean so that the physical purity of the body is maintained in wholeness and absolutely. These exposed parts are the head, the hands and the legs.

The head which the surgeon covers during operation is the most vulnerable part of the body that is constantly exposed to deadly germs. And through its openings; the eyes, the nose, the ears, and the mouth, it is even made more precarious. The head contains and protects the brain, stet while *wudu* prevents the bacterial invasion of the most important organ in the body. The acts of *wudu* keep it against germs through the mouth, nostrils eyes and ears. *Wudu* essentially washes away the germs regularly, thereby, preventing them from multiplying and getting entrance into the brain. The consequences of which could be dangerous to life and normal living.

Humran (r.a), a companion of the Apostle, reported that Uthman called for water to make *wudu* and washed his hands three times then said: "I saw *Rasulullah* (s.a.w) make *wudu* just as I have made *wudu*" (Bukhari and Muslim). By washing the hands three times regularly, the bulk of the bacteria is also regularly reduced. The infective dose is also similarly reduced, thereby giving the Muslim an edge over the harmful agents in the germ warfare. Thus *wudu* is of cardinal importance in the microbial de-loading.

However, a critic might ask: "how clean is clean?" "One square inch of freshly washed skin may contain a million of bacteria", wrote editors of

Prevention Magazine. "Remember that the next time you give your hands a quick rinse."[1] This argument however fails to distinguish between "clean" and "sterile." The two are poles apart, the former reduces the number of bacteria insignificant level while the former eliminates them totally. Further, the phrase "give your hands a quick rinse" cannot be a description of hand washing in *wudu*, which entails scrubbing rather than a single quick rinse. It is repeated at least 15 times in 24 hours. Finally, the Editors agreed that washing your hands before meals and after using the bathroom is a good habit, especially if you want to prevent infections since germs on your hands tend to end up in your mouth. Here the recommendations cleanliness sterility, a quick rinse with only water is okay, but if you have soap available, use it, the editors concluded. This introduces us to de-loading of bacteria in infection protection. Reducing the number of bacteria regularly up to 15 times or more a day is medically significant.

Wudu and Bacterial De-Loading

Every time one washes his hands, even with ordinary water, the number of bacteria or germs is significantly reduced. This reduction relates directly with the frequency with the frequency of the wash ups. Bacteria multiplies very rapidly under conditions favourable for their growth as can be seen in the diagram below:

*	**	****	**********
Only 1	After 20 minutes 2 bacteria from first one	After 40 minutes, 4 bacteria from the first one	After 3 hours 500 bacteria from the first one

Each bacterium is multiplying at the rate of 500 times per 3 hours. At this fast rate: 500 x 500 = 250,000 bacteria in another 3 hours for every single one.[2] This means that the bacteria will multiply in the next three hours – 250,000 x 250,000. With favourable condition the bacterial multiplication continues unhampered. The act of washing the hand in *wudu* does not check the growth of the bacteria but its continuous mopping checks its number. In what can be described as "Bacterial De – loading."

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1 Editors of Prevention Magazine, *Lifespan-Plus*, p. 226

2 Mina W. Lamb and Margarette L. Harden, *The Meaning of Human Nutrition*, pp. 86-87.

This shows the medical importance of *wudu* in de-loading bacteria regularly. The washing of the hand 15 times a day reduces the population of bacteria. It is, therefore, a factor that affects bacterial multiplication and growth, especially on the exposed and delicate parts of the body that are in direct contact with the external environment. Other factors include:

- Degree of contamination – number of organisms present.
- Temperature – keep cold food cold; keep hot food hot to reduce growth.
- Food medium – acid and sugar foods do not support the growth rate that other foods do.
- Duration – length of time involved is a major significance in total number of organisms in the food eaten.[1]

Evidently, *wudu* not only reduces the bacterial load or number, but also shortens the duration of time of exposure. At roughly the multiplication time of bacteria, reaching a harmful number, *wudu* is performed to wash away these germs from the vulnerable parts of the human body. But number is not a factor in determining the virulence or infectivity of a germ. Its reduction, however, helps very strongly. *Wudu* indirectly arrests bacterial growth by washing off the materials which conduce the growth. It is therefore a natural measure to keep common bacterial infections at bay. Further, its infection protection capacity remains impressive.

The surgeon is second to the Muslims in the habit of scrupulous washing of the hands and its upkeep and care. At least a Muslim washes his hands 15 times a day. The surgeon washes his hands only when the need arises that is operation. However, with the use of antiseptic the surgeon's hands are sterile while those of a Muslim are clean. In addition, the Muslim washes his hands when he wakes up from sleep because he might not know their condition during sleep. The hands might have been soiled by filth from rodents, cockroaches, etc., and in -advertently by the sleeper scratching his anal and perianal regions. Abu Huraira (r.a) reported that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said:

"When one of you wakes from sleep then let him not enter his hand into the bowl/vessel until he washes it three times. A Muslim is unique in his culture of wash ups and cleanliness of the surrounding. *Wudu* introduces regional purification in the regular wash ups.

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[1] Mina W. Lamb and Margarette L. Harden, *The Meaning of Human Nutrition*, p.87

REGULAR WUDU PREVENTS DISEASE AND IMPROVES HEALTH

Steps in performing wudu (ablution):



Step 1: To wash both hands with clean water 3 times each. This is about 15 times a day.



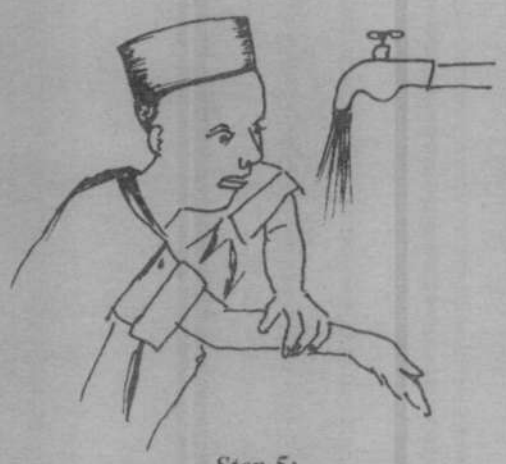
Step 2: To wash the mouth 3 times. This keeps the teeth and delicate structures in the mouth clean.



Step 3: A Muslim douches his nose 3 times in each wudu. This washes away dust particles, dry mucus and pollen grains to keep the lower nasal cavity clean.



Step 4: To wash the face 3 times. This provides cooling effects to the brain, prevents facial infection and improves facial beauty.



Step 5:
To wash the forearms 3 times each. This keeps the arm clean and prevents infection.



Step 6:
To wipe away the scalp with wet hands 3 times. This prevents accumulation of dust and airborne particles.



Step 7:
To wipe away with wet hands, the external and outer ear 3 times. This prevents the accumulation of wax and injurious particles in the ear.



Step 8:
To wash each foot 3 times. This keeps the legs free from dust, bad odour and infection.

Wudu and Hand Care

The hands in each *wudu* are washed regularly and thoroughly. Both hands are washed up to the wrists three times, ensuring that every part including between the fingers is wetted and washed. The nails and the fingers where dust accumulates are washed thoroughly to ensure their cleanliness. The regular hand care, which *wudu* introduces is simple, easy and practicable everywhere in the world. Even in the cold countries where the use of water can be difficult due to the extreme cold temperature. The uses of warm or hot water make it healthful.

The use of hot or warm water in the process of this hand care has an added advantage. It improves blood flow to the extremes, particularly to the finger and toes. Application of warm water causes the blood vessels of the hands and feet to dilate. This increases the blood flow and supply to the extremities. It obviates the complication of gangrene in frostbites due to extreme cold temperature. Hand washing is followed by mouth wash.

Wudu and Mouth Region

The mouth, also known as the oral cavity, is formed by the cheeks, lips, hard palate and soft palate. The vestibule of the oral cavity is the depression between the cheeks and lips externally and the gums and teeth internally. The opening of the mouth or oral cavity is referred to as the oral or orifice, and the opening between the oral cavity and the pharynx is called the faeces. *Wudu* is, however, concerned with the care of the superficial structures of the oral cavity, and its external surface.

The cheeks form the lateral walls of the oral cavity. They consist of outer layers of skin, subcutaneous fat, facial muscles that assist in manipulating food in the mouth and the inner linings of smooth moistened surface. During ablution both the outer and inner surfaces of the cheeks are washed and scrubbed thoroughly. The remnants of ingested food and the food debris lodged in between the teeth and crevices of the mouth are washed off. The lips are fleshy, highly mobile whose main function in humans is associated with speech. They are also involved in suckling, manipulating and keeping food between the upper and lower teeth. Thus because of repeated exposure to a variety of things they remain dirty and very vulnerable to a variety of infections. They also contain numerous sensory receptors that aid in determining the temperature and texture of food. Ingested food is changed into a bolus by the mechanical action of

teeth and by the chemical action of saliva. In view of this vital function, the mouth must always be kept clean. There is no culture which puts a lot of emphasis on oral hygiene like Islam; *wudu* provides the simplest and effective means of achieving and maintaining the general cleanliness of the outer surface and the superficial structures of the oral cavity. A Muslim is expected to use *siwak* (chewing stick) or tooth brush to regularly clean and mouth everyday. In each *wudu* he must perform *al-madmadah*, that is washing the mouth and moving the water around and within it vigorously. This is performed at least 15 times a day. It flushes out food debris lodged in the vestibule and the oral crevices.

Aisha (r.a) in her description of Prophet's *wudu* reported that he said: "When you make *wudu* then wash your mouth" (Al-Baihaqi)

The culture of mouth hygiene becomes well entrenched amongst the Muslims from the 7th century *sine die*. The *al madmadah* ensures that all food debris in all the corners of the mouth are, after scrubbing, washed away. The principle has been moulded into a set pattern of habits a Muslim rinses after eating anything. The tongue as a digestive organ is also most frequently in touch with eating foods and other substances so *wudu* is its opportunity to be washed. Its function is to move food around the mouth during mastication (chewing) and assists in swallowing food. It is also essential in producing speech. A Muslim is motivated to regularly use *siwak*. It is desirable to use it very often. It was a Prophet's habit to use *siwak* at every prayer before reading the Holy Qur'an and before sleeping and after waking. He (pbuh) also used it when the breath changed – whether during fasting or not – or whether at the start of the day or in the afternoon.[1] Thus it is never in the character of a Muslim to have dental care, halitosis due to bad oral hygiene. The educator of mankind had emphasised in strong terms the regular use of chewing stick. He almost made it compulsory.

> *Abu Huraira (r.a) narrated that Rasulullah (s.a.w) said: if I had not feared to cause hardship to my Ummah I would have ordered them to use siwak with every wudu (at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud)*

The use of *siwak* regularly is an effective way of keeping the teeth clean. The condition is known as halitosis or bad or foul smelling breath; dental carry or tooth decay is prevented by regular *wudu*. The use of chewing stick to improve cleanliness is particularly stressed. The *siwak* is the stick, a span long usually of Erak, which grows in Arabia. A stick from any suitable tree

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[1] Fahd Ibn Abdir-Rahman Ash-Shuwaib, Description of the Prophet's (Pbuh) Wudu, pp. 25-26

suffices. Human beings must cultivate this Prophet's habit because they have heterodont dentition. This means that they have various types of teeth; incisors, canines, premolars and molars. Hence the use of *siwak* in ablution will give a healthy, strong set of teeth for a lifetime.

Oral Hygiene

Aisha (r.a), the loving wife of the Prophet (s.a.w) reported that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said: "When you make *wudu* then wash your mouth" (Baihaqi). Another hadith declares: "The *salat* which is performed after using *miswak* is seventy-fold superior to the *salat* without a *miswak*."

Purification is central to *wudu* because washing of the hands precedes that of the mouth, this indicates an important recognition crucial to its set objective that dirty hands cannot wash the mouth but contaminate it. Hence the use of clean finger to brush the teeth immediately after *al-madmadah* – washing and gargling some water in the mouth. When performed regularly, it is an excellent way of oral hygiene. The mouth is the major gateway into the body. It is a route to a variety of infections. Hence, it is recognised as such as oral-faecal, water borne and food borne diseases; the infectious agents of these ailments all pass through this important route.

The mouth is the major gateway of bacteria or microbial infections not only to the stomach, intestines, brain, but the entire body in general. It must, therefore, be thoroughly washed and kept clean. The importance of this act becomes more glaring from the words of Antony Van Leeuwenhoek (1683) who is now known as the Father of Microbiology; he had shown his discovery pointedly:

> *But what if one should tell such people in future that there are more animals living in the scum on the teeth in a man's mouth, than there are men in a whole kingdom...*[1]

Leeuwenhoek was able to see the millions of bacteria living in the scum of the teeth of man with the aid of the microscope. There are billions of bacteria living in the mouth. He saw them with the aid of lenses of his own making. He became the first to see (but not to claim or suspect their existence) the new world of animalcules (germs) in the seventeenth century. Because the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) centuries earlier, and without the aid of any lenses or microscope, had made several allusions to the existence of germs and their potential of causing diseases. He was quite aware of this world of germs in the human mouth and its complications. He

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[1] C.G.A Thomas, *Medical Microbiology*, ELBS, 6th ed., p.1.

recommended the most effective preventive measure or cure against their growth and harmful effects – the use of *miswak* or chewing stick to the Muslims in particular and the world in general. He said:

> *If I had not thought this to be an unbearable hardship for my followers, I would have prescribed the use of miswak before every prayer (Bukhari and Muslim).*

Obviously, the saviour of humanity must have been strongly motivated to make such a declaration. Today, we have identified the medical exigency that underpinned the Prophetic exhortation. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w) would not have made this statement without a reason and the reasons was then not obvious because it was ahead of its time. It was only after several centuries that today we are aware of the fact that dirt in and around the teeth contains billions of germs. To popularise the habit of using chewing stick he declared that: "The *salat* which is performed after using a *miswak* is seventy fold superior to the *salat* without a *miswak*." This same hadith was reported by at–Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud as quoted earlier. This emphasis is a strong foundation of oral hygiene and a war against the germs in the mouth, it was a battle he single-handedly waged against the invisible killers – the world of germs. It was this invisible world that Leeuwenhoek saw with microscope. The great health teacher introduce *khillala* or tooth – picking to improve that of *siwak*.

Importance of Siwak and Khillala

The Prophet (s.a.w) by linked the importance of the use of *miswak* or chewing before each salat had single-handedly advance the use of chewing far more than nay other person in history. Chewing sticks were once used by the Babylonians and later by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. These small wood "toothbrushes" were also common in pre-Islamic Arabia.[1] It was improved and revolutionaries by the founder of modern civilisation in the 7th century. The use of chewing stick makes a prayer superior to the one that was offered without the use of the chewing stick. Thus the Prophet (s.a.w) gave a boost to the habit of keeping the mouth clean with fresh-breaths. Thus oral hygiene was widely accepted and practised several centuries before the West recognised its importance and value.

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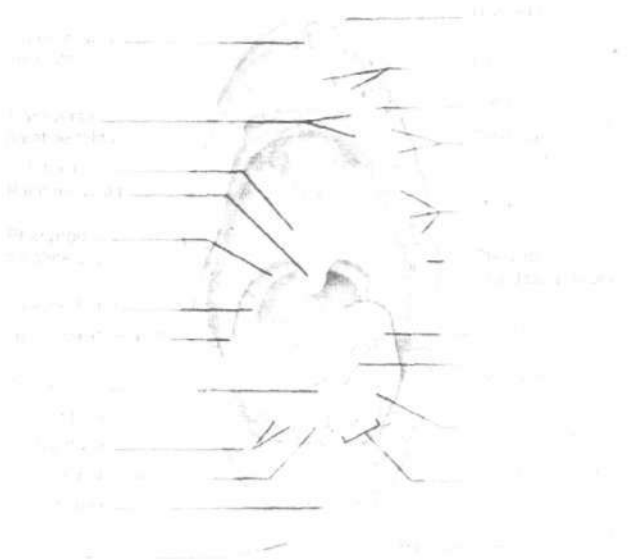
[1] *Awake!* Magazine September 8, p. 21



Regular and frequent washing of the hands, forearms and feet in wudu improve the functional integrity of the tiny lymphatic and blood vessels. The tiny microscopic vessels are shown in the diagrams above.



The regular use of *siwak, madmadah* and washing of the mouth keep the teeth and delicate structures (as shown in the diagram above) in the mouth clean and hygienic.

Source: Kent. M. Vander Graff, *Human Anatomy.*

The chewing stick fell out of favour with Europeans about 300 years ago, at a time when it was still popular in parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.[1] In fact, amongst the Muslims the use of chewing stick is almost a religious duty, thus there was never a time when oral hygiene ran out of favour.

However, 300 years ago, Europeans were faced with the serious problems of Great Unwashed, Great Stench and Great Unswiped. When the entire person, house and street stinker horribly fetid mouth odour feel into insignificance, the popularisation of the use of chewing sticks or oral hygiene was largely dependent on the office of Islam for centuries. Today many nations use different species of trees and shrubs to make chewing sticks. How does the stick clean teeth? When the stick is chewed, the fibres at the end become loose, forming a rough "brush." Continued chewing dislodges particles between the teeth and stimulates blood circulation in the gums. Chewing also increases saliva production, which acts as a natural mouthwash that rinses away bacteria and creates an inhospitable environment for them to flourish.

But the chewing stick is more than a mere brush. Twigs and roots of some plant species contain chemical compounds that slow the formation of plaque. Extracts of some sticks have been shown to have antibacterial and antifungal properties. The twigs of the toothbrush tree – salt brush, can even help prevent ulcers. In Namibia, sticks taken from a plant known as *muthala* inhibit the growth of pathogens that cause decay, gum diseases, and sore throats. This natural dental device can prevent cavities as well as strengthen roots and gums. Some companies now make tooth paste that contains fibres and resins extracted from such plants.

Some of course, prefer to use a traditional toothbrush, whether you choose to do so or to use a stick, as the ancients did, one thing is certain: Dental hygiene is an importance part of personal health care.[2]

There is another thing which is more certain that Dental hygiene as it stands today, was an Islamic legacy to the modern world. Without the crucial role of the great Health Teacher, the use of chewing stick with its health benefits would have been lost in the murk of time. But he single – handily championed the use of chewing sticks. Obviously, he would not have done so without realizing its value and importance to oral hygiene a reflection of personal hygiene.

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1 *Awake!* Magazine September 8, p. 21
2 Ibid.

Even today, with advances made in modern dentistry, the Prophet's prescription of using chewing stick has not been faulted. In fact, its importance is increasingly coming to light. Daily use of chewing stick is known to increase teeth's glistening whiteness, improve their strength, stimulate gingival growth, and give fresh breath free from bad smell. The washing of the mouth and moving the water around and within it is referred to as *al-madmadah.* Frequent gargling of water in *wudu* helps in clearing dirt and food debris in the vestibule of the mouth. The efficacy of both *miswak* and *al-madmadah* in the care of the mouth cannot be faulted by modern dentistry. Thus the science of oral hygiene was scientifically established in the 7th century Arabia. The educator of mankind, the founder of the modern oral hygiene had popularised this culture through the use of many motivating incentives. The great exemplar himself was tireless in the use of chewing stick to keep his mouth thoroughly clean and tidy. Aisha (r.a) reported that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said: *"The siwak is a means of cleansing the mouth and pleasing the Lord (Bukhari").* Every Muslim is to endeavour to please his Lord by keeping his mouth clean, with glistening white teeth. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) taught by precepts and practical examples. He was very scrupulous and regular in the maintenance of his mouth hygiene. The use of *siwak* had been part of his habit. Ash-Shuwaib made this clarion call. He wrote:

> *It is Mustahabb (desirable) to use siwak at many different times as it was established from the Prophet (pbuh) that he used siwak at every prayer, and before reading the Qur'an, and before sleeping and when waking, when the breath changes – whether fasting or not – or whether at the start of the day or in the afternoon, and it is a form of worship which is easy, therefore observe it, O my Muslim Brother.*[1]

When chewing stick is used in accordance with this prophetic tradition dental caries due to poor oral hygiene will vanish completely in the Muslim community. It will also eliminate tooth decay. It is superior to the modern toothpastes and tooth brushes in vogues today. Further, it conserves the money wasted in their purchase, of expensive tooth brush and ever increasing variety of toothpastes, thereby, adding an economic advantage to the followers of Prophetic tradition.

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[1] Fahd Ibn Abdir-Rahman Ash-Shuwaib, *A Description of the Prophet's (pbuh) Wudoo,* Translated into English by Dawood Burbank Al-Britanee, International Islamic Publishing House (1992), pp.25-26.

African, a continent of beautiful teeth yet few commercially manufactured toothbrushes, How can that be? For many, the secret behind a bright, smile lies in a simple piece of wood – the chewing stick! Doubtlessly, the use of chewing stick is following a tradition of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w), otherwise, the practice would have died with the devastations of the Age of ignorance of the 5th and 6th centuries. But he championed its course to the modern age. The most common chewing stick he used was made form *Arak* tree, Arabia. The most common source of the chewing stick in the Middle East is the salt-brush, otherwise known as the toothbrush tree. In West African, lime and orange trees are used while *neems* are a main source of chewing sticks in the Indian subcontinent. In East Africa nearly 300 different species of trees and shrubs to make chewing sticks.[1] Today all nations follow the Prophetic tradition in using *siwak* or modern toothbrush to keep oral hygiene.

Dr. H. A. Kareem of Department of Biochemistry, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, in his work on chewing stick had made this keen observation in the following words:

> *The fact that Africans, particularly Nigerians, possess well-set, clean and enviable sets of teeth when compared with Caucasians could, presumably, be traced to the use of chewing sticks by the former. One is therefore tempted to speculate on the possible role an esterase can play in one of the commonest diseases of the teeth known as the dental caries.*[2]

In addition to its cleansing power, some chewing sticks have medicinal values as well. For example, the root of *fagara zanthoxyloides* commonly used as chewing sticks help to prevent sickle cell crisis in patients with sickle cell disease. Therefore, it could be of value to sickle cell patients because of its observed anti-stickling property in the blood. Dr. Hakeem, who made some biochemical analysis of this chewing stick, concluded that: "the bark of *fagara* may be of nutritional value since many people who clean their teeth with the chewing sticks swallow their saliva as well during the process of chewing."[3] "Those who do not swallow their saliva," he said, "are advised to do so since substantial amount of protein is consumed in the process."[4] This negates Islamic principle of hygiene, it disallows swallowing of picked out food debris and the saliva accumulating during

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1 *Awake!*September (8) 2003, p. 21
2 A. Sofowora and a. I. Sodeye (eds), *Fagara and the Red Blood Cell*, p.56.
3 Ibid., p.49.
4 Ibid.

cleaning of the teeth. The saliva contains numerous bacteria that could be harmful in the stomach or gastro–intestinal tract. Many research works now emerge to support the prophetic prescription of the use of chewing stick. Islam is a faith of science, so scientific facts are in accord with its established religious principles.

Furthermore, the Biochemist cited a report presented by the National Institute of Dental Research of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1970. Three causative factors of dental caries were given as follows:

i. *The mouth must harbour certain types of caries-producing organisms.*

ii. *The diet must contain carbohydrates which the bacteria consume and ferment to form acids which dissolve the enamel of the tooth.*

iii. *The teeth must be susceptible to the action of the acid.*[1]

Chewing sticks of different variety contain many anti-microbial agents such as the enzyme esterase. So they are very effective against dental caries and other diseases of the mouth. It was discernible from the steps taken by the saviour of mankind; he was quite aware of the harmful microbes that exist in the mouth and prescribed the most effective means of getting rid of them through the regular use of *siwak*. It is the simplest method of eradicating dental carries in the world. Since then this has become *sunnah*, and has saved the Muslim *Ummah* from the horrible bad mouth odour and premature loss of teeth due to devastating dental caries.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) then prescribed, in addition, the use of toothpick, to completely dislodge the remnant of food and meat sticking in-between the teeth so that the bacteria might not thrive to produce acids that would dissolve the teeth and the gum. This practice is known as *khillala*. He targets the "scum on the teeth in man's mouth", which Leewenhoek saw several centuries afterwards. The Apostle of God said: "Whosoever eats should pick bits and pieces from in-between his teeth." He prohibited swallowing of these bits and pieces as well as the saliva that accumulated in the chewing process. Whenever the mouth is gargled the water must be poured out. His keen insistence on the practice of chewing stick and tooth picking had helped to revolutionize oral hygiene and modern dentistry. The practise was later carried to Europe, where it was improved with the production of "dental floss" and "chewing sticks." *khillala* or dental

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[1] A. Sofowora and a. I. Sodeye (eds). *Fagara and the Red Blood Cell*, p.56. p.56.

flossing is now an internationally accepted form of oral hygiene. In fact, every restaurant in towns and cities makes toothpick readily available to customers. The use of dental floss or chewing stick was a Prophet's legacy to the modern world.

Muslims take lightly the use of *siwak* because they have just fallen prey to the guile of commercial advertisements of the manufacturers of various types of toothbrush and toothpaste, which have flooded their markets. These manufacturers through the gimmicks of a variety of salesmanship strategy have succeeded in making the use of chewing stick irrelevant not for any medical but economic reason. To ensure that shops and markets are flooded with these foreign products, they successfully substituted the use of chewing sticks with the use of toothpaste and toothbrush, through nothing but salesmanship skills. Yet, no one can challenge the efficacy of this prophetic method that was modestly prescribed to the Muslims by the seal of the Apostles. Chewing sticks and toothpicks are simple, available, practical and cheap to maintain regularly.

Preventing Dental Trouble

The Prophet (s.a.w) was the foremost advocate of oral hygiene, far more than any great physician in history. He showed practical meticulous care in the care of his own teeth, a habit he passed on to his family, his companions, his followers and the world in general. Aisha (r.a) the loving wife of the Prophet (s.a.w) reported that: "whenever Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) entered his house, he used the tooth-stick first all" (Muslim). He was totally averse to *halitosis* – bad-breathe and dirty carious teeth. The modern world must be indebted to him, for his popularisation of the use of *miswak* (chewing stick), tooth pick or *khillal* in the 7th century, at a time when such things were generally unknown. Mouth care, his own tradition is now accepted worldwide as oral hygiene, which is the only way of preventing dental trouble. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w) also used to brush his teeth before retiring to bed and when he awoke in the morning. He was the only person in the world at that time with this habit of modern oral hygiene.

Furthermore, the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) was tireless in his habit of cleaning and washing his mouth that he used the miswak at the time of every wudu. Although this may appear too laborious but he was comfortable with his habit so that he never smell a bit either from his mouth or body. His habit of the use of perfume was not to suppress body odour as was the case in Europe up the end of the 19th century. But to compliment his perfect personal hygiene and exception Dental Care. The

companions of the great Health Teacher had cultivated this important habit. For example, Ibn Abbas (r.a) said that the *miswak* clans the cavity of the mouth ritually and pleases Allah. Radiates the face. Brightens the eyes (Tabrani).

Obviously, the face of a person with good white teeth, fresh breath and free from dental problems would look bright. It gives any person self-confidence. Through the teachings of an Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) the use of miswak became commonplace amongst the Arabs in the 17th century. The healthful habit spread fast across the world. And with the rise of oral hygiene, the incidence of dental carriers declined precipitously. Subsequently, many scholars wrote treatise on the use of *miswak,* which further increased the habit of maintaining clean bright teeth among the Muslim *Ummah.* According to Jama Kabeer:

> *The use of* Miswak *develops oratorical capability, cleans the mouth cavity, strengthens the gums, cleans the phlegm from the throat, it removes the humility, sharpens the eye-sight, belates the old age, straightens the back, enhances the reward and facilitates the agony of the death, reminds the holy Kalima Shahadet at the death time,. Digest the food, cast slur on the forehead of the devil, widens the scope of earning, removes the toothache, invigorates the stomach, sharpens the intelligence, cleans the heart ritually, the face and body and cures the diseases.*[1]

At the time when the Muslims developed this awareness of good oral hygiene which was necessary for spiritual and physical health, such a notion was unknown in Europe and the rest of the world. The use of miswak was identified to prevent toothache was also a notion of advance dentistry and dental hygiene. When the pace of Dental Care was set in Arabia in the 7th century, Europe followed the pace slowly and steadily. Today the West is the foremost champion in Dentistry with great stride made in developing preventive measures against Dental Trouble. The Prophetic teaching of oral hygiene grew progressively with advances in medical science. However, with the rise of Western medicine, spiritual aspect of health care was de-emphasised and subsequently expunged from the body of health science. But all in all, the tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w) remains the cornerstone of prevention of Dental Trouble. It is with this in

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[1] Ahmad Saeed Dehlvi, *Prophetic Medical Sciences.* translated by Badr Azimabadi (M.A.), Saeed International, New Delhi (1997), pp.27-28.

mind that the modern concept of oral hygiene is to be viewed. It consists of diet and oral hygiene. Thus according to medical experts:

Diet is important at any age, the ideal diet for health should be:

- Well balanced and adequate so that general health is maintained
- Chewable enough to stimulate the gums
- Low in sugar content to reduce acid attack.[1]

Nutrition is an important aspect of human life and existence such that dietetics is also held in high premium in Islam. Allah (s.w.t) loves His creation so much that He revealed to mankind some cardinal principles of nutrition and dietetics in the Qur'an and Sunnah. "O ye people!" said the Qur'an," Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good." (al-Baqara, 2:168). The food that is good is that which is balanced. The injunction is that we should not provide the body with "junk foodstuff." This would not produce tough bones, strong muscles, a good pump (heart) and good efficient blood vessels. Thus Islam teaches that balanced diet produces strong healthy teeth and prevents Dental Trouble. It also put emphasis on oral hygiene. "Teeth should be cleaned at least twice a day," wrote medical experts, "after every meal is beast." It is then added:

This polishes the teeth, removes debris, and inhibits acid attack. Brushing also stimulates the gums and cleans effectively. Methods of cleaning vary from culture to culture to use toothbrush effectively, experts advised to apply backward and forward strokes are good for the tops of the molars and the back of the teeth; for the side teeth, brush sideways repeatedly in one direction – upward on the bottom, downward on the top one. In addition to brushing the teeth, toothpicks made of soft wood can be used to dislodge food.[2] It should be noted that there is little to the Prophetic teachings of oral hygiene in the 7th century Arabia. It could be postulated that the Prophet (s.a.w) used to rush his teeth at least seven times a day. As he woke up, with each wudu (5 times daily) and at bed time. This frequent brushing, picking up of food debris lodged in between teeth, gargling with water and washing given no chance at all for acid attack. This meticulous oral hygiene shown by the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) was unequalled as well as unsurpassed even in modern times. It gave no chance for bacterial accumulation as well as deposition of plaque. Thus the teeth of the great Health Teacher and the men around him were glistering white as well as exquisitely cleaned. This habit he ultimately taught the world.

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1 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, p.199.
2 Ibid.

However, where the Prophet's teaching on oral hygiene does not take sway or is largely ignored poor oral hygiene, becomes the common habit. And with it fetid mouth odour, dental caries and toothaches become common. Thus it is not in the character of a practicing Muslim to allow the deposition of plaque on his teeth due to poor oral hygiene or to suffer the agony of dental trouble due to bad oral hygiene, this obviously, stands in contradiction to the Prophetic tradition. And where plaques are formed their removal become necessary.

It is important to remove plaque, or tartar, which is a sticky deposit that forms on the surface of teeth and causes decay by harbouring bacteria and encouraging acid attack. If not removed, it hardens to form a coating around the neck of the tooth. Plaque can be removed by brushing the teeth with specially shaped brushers.[1] The development of this ugly condition is the practical negation of the prophetic tradition with respect of oral hygiene. It is an unhealthy habit that the Prophet (s.a.w) fought serious against it, and many of the men around him joined the crusade that could aptly be described as "to keep the mouth clean is a task that must be done." A Muslim is motivated to keep his mouth clean with such incentive as by so doing is "pleasing the Lord." "Brushing one's teeth with *miswak*," said the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w), "is a good hygienic practice that purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord." This if a Muslim could not observe this simple prophetic habit to please his Lord, he would inevitably suffer from acid attack, plaque deposition and dental trouble, when that acid attacks the teeth, it erodes their roots, makes them look ugly and dysfunctional, they fall off one by one.

In removing plaque disclosure tablets are now used to show the extent to which it is deposited. A tablet is chewed and so spread by saliva on to all tooth and gum surfaces. After rinsing with water, all areas of plaque are stained red. The plaque can be removed by brushing. In addition, dental floss or tape should be used regularly to clean and remove plaque from between the teeth. Hence, anyone who brushes his teeth with chewing stick or toothbrush follows the tradition of the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) of Islam. This is because without his contribution of oral hygiene to the modern world, billions of people in the world would have been suffering from fetid mouth smell, loss of teeth and dental troubles. This is prevented by the simple use of chewing stick introduced by the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w). Doubtlessly, he is the Saviour of humankind of all times.

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[1] The Diagram Group. *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, p.199.

Thus, it is obvious to discern the healthful and spiritual benefits of "whatever the Holy Prophet prescribes to us is beneficial to us and whatever he forbids us, obviously, is injurious to us." Hence, the hidden corollary is: "accept that which he has prescribed and reject what he has forbidden." Then you will be saved in this world and the next, as this is the best way to play safe. The medical science involved in Islamic nose care is excellent, simple to practise and very healthful.

Wudu and Nose Region

Washing the nose is *wajib* or an obligatory act in *wudu*. It is performed in such a way that it is not injurious to health. This is one of the wisdoms of ablution because the nose region is delicate and washing it with water has serious potential risks. But *wudu* provides an effective means of cleansing the nose which is devoid of any risk of asphyxiation of water. Abu Huraira (r.a) in his description of *wudu* reported that the Prophet (s.a.w) said: When one of you makes *wudu*, then let him enter water into his nose, then expel it. (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud).

The nose region is part of the face, so both are washed diligently. The surface anatomy of this area, however, must be marked out, along with that of mouth or oral region. The nose region has the following parts:

Structure	Comments
Root of nose (*nasion*)	Superior attachment of the nose to the cranium
Bridge of nose (*dorsum nasi*)	Bony upper framework of the nose formed by the union of nasal bones.
Alar nasal sulcus	Lateral depression where the ala of the nose contacts the tissues of the face.
Apex of nose	Tip of nose
Nostril (*naris*)	External opening into the nasal cavity
Wing of nose (*ala*)	Lateral expanded border of the nostril
Philtrum	Vertical depression in the medial part of the upper lip.
Lip (*labium*)	Upper and lower anterior borders of the mouth
Chin (*mentum*)	Anterior portion of the lower jaw.[1]

This region, with all its structures are kept clean with regular *wudu*. This improves the facial care and its hygiene. Maintenance of beautiful facial appearance is one of the benefits of Islamic worship. The faces of those habituated with regular *salat* are "marked out faces." They possess unique faces which irradiate beauty and coolness.

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[1] Kent M. Van De Graaf, *The facial care and its Hygiene*, Hygiene Anatomy, p. 295

Nasal Hygiene

During *wudu* all these external parts of the nose and mouth are thoroughly washed. The mentolabial sulcus, a groove between the lower lip and the chin, philtrum and the lips, the likely lodging place of dust and other airborne particles are regularly washed. The philtrum a depression on the upper lip which allows a pooling of mucus is regularly kept neat and tidy. Similarly, the bridge of the nose, its apex and wings are meticulously scrubbed and washed to rid them of all dirt. The nostrils and the fine hairs surrounding their internal surfaces are maintained clean so that clean air is breathed in and out without any contamination from the passages. The cardinal importance of this aspect of *wudu* can easily be appreciated from the exposition of an Anatomist:

> *The moist, warm vascular lining within the nasal cavity is susceptible to infections, particularly if a person is not in good health. Infections of the nasal cavity can spread to several surrounding areas. The paranasal sinuses connect to the nasal cavity and are especially prone to infection. The eyes may become reddened and swollen during a nasal infection because of the connection of the nasolacrimal duct, through which tears drain from the orbit to the nasal cavity. Organisms may spread via the auditory tube from the nasopharynx to the middle ear. With prolonged nasal infections, organisms may even ascend to the meninges covering the brain via the sheaths of the olfactory nerves and pass through the cribriform plate to cause meningitis.*[1]

What regular *wudu* does is to assiduously prevent this infection by protecting the nasal cavity through improved hygiene. It also prevents facial infection which might lead to the dangerous development of cavernous sinus thrombosis. Thus, infections in the special organs – the eye, the ear, and the nose are reduced significantly through this simple but efficacious means of purification. Furthermore, the importance of all these wash ups in *wudu*, would be more appreciated, especially when the functions of the nasal cavity and its contents are understood, such as: the nasal epithelium covering the conchae serves to warm, moisten and cleanse the inspired air. The nasal epithelium is highly vascular and covers an extensive surface area. This is important in warming the air but unfortunately also makes humans susceptible to nosebleeds. Nasal hairs called *vibrissae (vi-bris'e)*, which often extend from the nostrils, filter

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[1] Kent M. Van De Graaf, *The facial care and its Hygiene,* Hygiene Anatomy, p. 295.

macro particles that might otherwise be inhaled. Dust, pollen, smoke, and other fine particles are trapped along the moist mucous membrane lining the nasal cavity.[1]

The science of ablution as mentioned earlier takes care of *vibrissae* and helps in the proficient filtration of the macro-particles and prevent their inhalation. The *istinshaq* and *istinthar* are of crucial importance from the following standpoints. First, they provide an excellent hygienic care of these fine hairs, rid them and the surrounding nostrils of dust, pollen and other airborne particles. Secondly, the washing of the nose with a handful of cold water regularly helps to modify the warming of the air in the cavity. This moderating effect of the temperature within this chamber can be expected to improve the integrity of the lining of the capillaries, thereby, reducing the incidence of nose bleeds. Thus from the hygienic point of view as well as temperature control, *wudu* is of cardinal importance. When the inner nasal chamber temperature is high there is increased blood flow to this high vascular area. This is accompanied with a decrease in the vascular integrity. This leads to nose bleeding especially from the "little area." Regular *wudu* reduces the risk of nose bleeding by decreasing the temperature in the nasal cavity. It regularly modulates the temperature fluctuation towards normal.

With infection and nose bleeding reduced through the agency of regular *wudu*, the olfactory function of the nasal cavity is facilitated. The olfactory (sense of smell) epithelium lies in the upper medial portion of the nasal cavity. This area is concerned with the sense of smell. Regular *wudu*, therefore, improves the quality of this faculty. It sharpens the sense of smell, in like manner; with the nasal cavity kept clean, and rid of mucous and other macro-particles its third function is enhanced. The nasal cavity also affects the voice by functioning as a resonating chamber. This function is indirectly enhanced by regular *wudu*. The air-conditioning effect of *wudu* is more prominent in the paranasal sinuses. Regular wudu also helps to improve self-cleansing of the nasal passages.

Nasal Self-Cleansing

The nose, the accessory air sinuses and throat are all parts of a complicated cavity situated in the face, and this cavity has passages leading to it from the orbits, the ears and the trachea and oesophagus. The mucus membrane is well supplied by with blood vessels, and in most parts contains many glands, and in most parts contains some mucous glands,

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[1] Kent M. Van De Graaf, *The facial care and its Hygiene*, Hygiene Anatomy, p.855

some "goblet cell" in type and some tubulo alveolar, which opens on its surface.

The mucus secreted by these glands keeps the membrane moist. The surface layer of cells in the respiratory tract is mainly columnar and ciliated. These cilia are microscopic projections from the surface of the epithelial cell, and, in health are in constant motion. They act in sections, moving forward quickly and backward slowly, from eight to twelve times a second. With strong forward movements, the cilia brush along the mucus, with which is entangled dust and bacteria.[1] This delicately intricate mechanism of cleaning the nasal passage internally is improved by regular wudu. The forward rhythmic movement of these cilia or microscopic hairs help to push out entangled dust, bacteria and allergens. They move quickly outward, and slowly inward. Outward to help flush out these injurious substances and harmful germs. They more backward slowly so that they do not traffic harmful agents inwards. Allah the Exalted, had created this system perfectly to help in the health preservation of man. He recommends wudu to help the system externally to function more efficiently. This nasal cleansing effect also improves its physiological function, e.g. sense of smell..

Improves Sense of Smell

It is estimated, and exploited by the perfume industry, that we can distinguish more than 10,000 different fragrant chemicals. A great deal has been discovered about how we sense light and sound, but our sense of smell is one of the biggest puzzles in biology. Scientists have made the surprising discovery of a huge family of genes that appears to encode odour perception in the nose. This is the crucial first link in the process which suggests that the sense of smell is quite different from other major senses. How the smell process turns simple molecules in the environment into perceptions can teach us how the brain functions. Odours are detected by tiny tubular extensions on nerve cells high in nasal cavity. Thus by regularly cleaning the lower cavity through wudu, the upper cavity is protected from germs and injurious substances. These extensions, called cilia, are believed to be the location of the molecular receptors. Odour molecules are thought to fit into certain receptors as a key slips into a lock.[2]

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1 Sussana Marshall, *Ear, Nose and Throat Nursing*, pp.3-4.

2 *Islacoms International*, An International Islamic Mag. On World Views, September – December, 1997, Vol. 1, No. 1, p.56.

This explanation is necessary for understanding the crucial health benefits of isthinthar and istinshaq in wudu. When the tiny hairs inside lining of the nasal passage forcefully push out injurious substances they are washed away during the ablution. This function is independent of that of hairs in the nostrils which traps and prevent the entrance of airborne particles. These cilia or tiny microscopic hairs lining the inside of the nasal passages appear to look like in the diagram below.

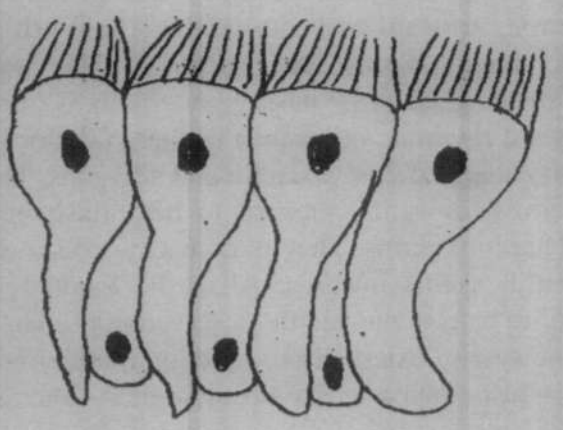

Diagram showing mucous membrane from the lining of the air passage.

In the nose, the mucous is propelled toward to the pharynx; in the bronchial tree the direction is toward the glottis. The hairs in the nostrils filter the large particles of foreign matter from the inspired air, and the cilia complete the important cleansing function.[1] This function is, however, facilitated by wudu. Its mechanism mimics that of the ciliary function.

During douching in wudu, it is recommended to inhale water slowly (cf. slow backward movements of the cilia). This is referred to as istinshaq. It is flowed immediately by forceful exhalation of the water (cf. strong forward movement of the cilia). This is referred to as istinthar. Thus, the cilia lining of the air passage work in synergism with wudu. The objective is to prevent the entrance of harmful substances. All must be expelled outward.

According to Marshall:

> *The cilia may continue to beat strongly in the presence of infection and pus, and are commonly regenerated with the epithelium following damage to the membrane. They are slowed*

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[1] Sussana Marshall, *Ear, Nose and Throat Nursing*, pp.3-4.

> *with cooling and overheating but recover when the normal temperature returns. Drying, however, is quickly fatal to them. In chronic inflammation such as that of the paranasal sinuses, the epithelium becomes so damaged that cilia disappears. This interferes with the normal self-cleansing function, and operations have often to be performed to allow the pus which accumulate to escape.*[1]

The medical importance of wudu can be understood from the following standpoints. First, it physically helps to get rid of the trapped particles of dust, pollen grains and germs. It prevents drying of the air passages around the nostrils, a situation that is injurious to the cilia and lastly, wudu regularise the internal temperature of the nasal passages and paranasal sinuses toward normal. When the weather is cold, warm water is used for wudu and vice versa. Thus, regular wudu helps to enhance the self-cleansing function of cilia and the vibrissae. Regular wudu is also important in preventing and improving respiratory infection.

Wudu and Respiratory Infection

Most respiratory and many other diseases begin with common cold, spread by droplet infection, that is, micro-organisms from one person's nose and throat are projected in a fine spray of saliva to the mucous membrane of a second person. He is infected when the person is susceptible, they penetrate and multiply in the infected person. According to Marshall:

> *Many types of viruses are responsible – that is, the nasal irritation, the dry sensation (generally in the naso-pharynx), the sneezing, followed in a few hours by profuse discharge of watery mucus, and general malaise. After a simple virus infection, there is a gradual return to normal in three to seven days. In ordinary life the individual is exposed to other pathogenic bacteria, such as Neisseria catarrhalis, streptococcus, pneumococcus and haemophilus influenze. It is the increase of thee organisms that appears to be responsible for the more advanced symptoms of a cold – the purulent nasal discharge, the sore throat, and bacteria. Sometimes, anatomical abnormalities, such as the deviation of the septum so alter air currents inside the nose that they impinge on one spot in the posterior nerves and so cause drying.*[2]

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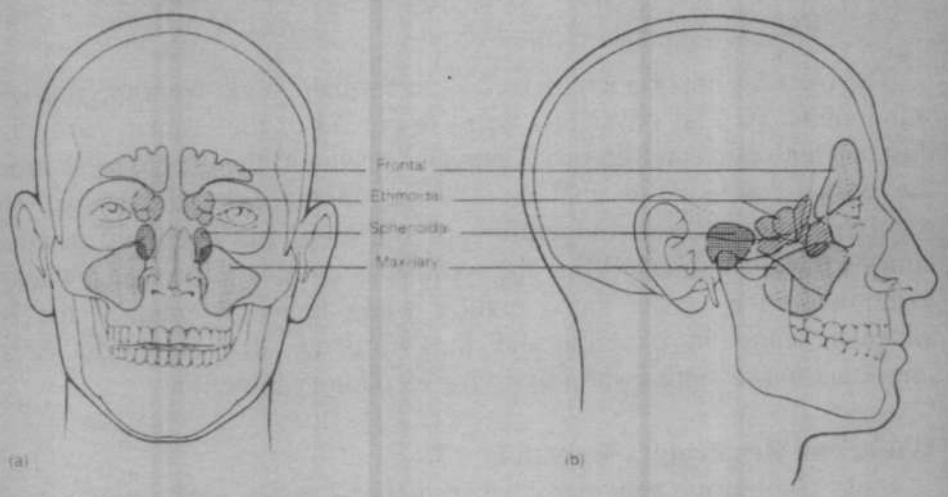
1 Sussana Marshall, *Ear, Nose and Throat Nursing*, pp.3-4.
2 Ibid., p.6.



Regular wudu improves the ear conditioning effects of the 4 paranasal sinuses located in the face as shown in the diagram above.

Source: Kent. M. Vander Graff, *Human Anatomy.*

When working in an over-heated office or room, the tendency to causing the dryness of the mucosal lining of the nose and mouth increases with time. But a Muslim is interrupted at certain interval of time by the adhan or call to prayer. He is forced to leave the room or office to perform wudu. He wets the drying lining mucosal tract to improve the function of the cilia and nasal hairs. He also removes the crust inside the nostrils and the accumulated pollen grains, dust and other harmful particles. In this way, regular wudu helps to facilitate recovery from respiratory infection of the common cold origin.

There areseveral known predisposing factors. In overheated rooms, the air tends to dry the film of mucus covering the nasal and oral cavities. The cilia, which move the mucus, and with it, the dust and germs, then become less active. The dried mucus forms crust inside the nostrils, and there, especially if the nose is picked with the fingernail, is a potential site for the entrance of pathogenic sinusilis.

The nasal discharge can be very disturbing and often very copious and foul smelling. The secretions is infectious. The great health Teacher, it could be recalled, recommended the use of handkerchiefs to improve personal hygiene and minimise cross transmission of infection especially during cough and sneezing. Further, it could also be seen that regular wudu improves this hygiene. It also improves the defence against infection.

Air-Conditioning of Paranasal Sinuses

Paranasal sinuses are paired air spaces in certain bones of the skull. They are named according to their bones of location; and they are four in number namely: ethmoidal, sphenoidal, frontal and maxillary sinuses. The air sinuses help to decrease the weight of the skull without compromising structural strength.

The sinuses are, however, located in such a way that they can be influenced by the regular conditioning effects of *wudu*. It improves the moisturising and resonating functions of the air spaces. This air conditioning is particularly significant in the s*phenoidal sinuses* which contained together with *sella turcica* in the body of the sphenoid bone. The sella turcica houses the *pituitary gland*, a rounded pea-shaped gland which has an endocrine function. It is a very important gland with a variety of functions. It releases a number of vital hormones that are crucial to the well–being of man. It is structurally and functionally divided into an anterior portion called the *adenohypophysis* and a posterior portion called the *neuro hypophysis*. This very important organ by virtue of its location

benefits from regular *wudu*. When the airspaces become warmer due to increased external temperature, the internal organs surrounding the airspaces also become warmer. Increase in local temperature especially in the brain and other vital organs impair normal function. The chemical, neural and hormonal function of the brain, are delicately sensitive to temperature changes.

However, with regular *wudu* which involves the use of cold water (in hot weather or hot in cold weather) helps to decrease the rising temperature. Similarly, in cold weather when *wudu* is performed with warm water, the local temperature is raised to the optimum body temperature in the paranasal sinuses and their surroundings. Thus in these ways regular *wudu* provides an excellent and efficacious mechanism of air conditioning. Hence the paranasal sinuses may help to warm and moisten the inspired air. The importance of air-conditioning effect of wudu to the pituitary gland and other vital organs of the face cannot be overemphasised. By regularly washing away allergic air borne particles *wudu* helps to mitigate allergic sinusitis.

Improves Sinusitis

Regular ablution may also help in the prevention of paranasal sinus infection. Infection of a sinus is known as *sinusitis*. It causes headache and persistent, thick, purulent discharge from the nose. The maxillary sinus is the most commonly involved. It may be infected from the nose or from a carious tooth.[1] A situation that is prevented due to the hygiene provided by regular *wudu*, frontal sinusitis, which can produce a brain abscess in the frontal lobe, ethmoiditis, may result from similar abscess. The inhaling and exhaling of water during *wudu* may also help improve the ciliary's function of the fine hairs lining the nostrils. The trap air borne macro-particles prevent their entrance into the delicate area. However, as soon as these harmful particles accumulate *wudu* gets rid of them effectively.

A consultant ENT Surgeon pointed out some of the salubrious functions of *wudu*, stated eloquently:

> *The Prophet (S.A.W) instructs Muslims to clean their noses by douching after rising from sleep and every time they make wudu. An ordinary face wash only cleans the outer part of the nose. Douching the nose is the only way to clean it from inside. This helps to wash away the dried secretion stuck to the lining inside the nose. The inner of the soft part of the nose is the skin which*

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[1] B. D. Chaurasia's *Human Anatomy*, Volume 3, 3rd ed., p.315

> *has hair follicles. These hairs trap the dust particles going inside and the secretion blowing out through the nose. They can thus become coasted with the nasal secretion and dust. Rubbing the inside of the nose with little finger – which is ideally situated opposite the thumb – is the only way of making sure that the area is cleaned. Muslims also regularly trim the air inside the nose.* [1]

The mouth is an opening in the body which harbours many harmful agents. The prophetic tradition of the use of *siwak* is an effective preventive measure against the development of a carious tooth. It also helps to prevent sinusitis indirectly. *Wudu* as we have seen is the best and simplest method of oral hygiene. The nostrils are also very vital openings of the human body. They have a direct link with the lungs, the throat and other delicate organs. Like the mouth, the nostrils are constantly exposed to other numerous germs that can easily be transmitted from one person to another. Thus the *wudu* provides a means of good nasal hygiene to mitigate nasal transmission of infections.

Abu Hurairah (r.a) reported that the Prophet (s.a.w) said: "When one of you makes wudu then let him enter water into his nose, then expel it" (Bukhari and Muslim and Abu Dawud).

The catchword 'expel it,' indicates that the health of the devotee was taken into account. The recommendation of inhaling and exhaling some quantity in a manner that is not injurious to health, is a strong pointer to the fact that *wudu* was "revealed" and not "created", otherwise, washing of the nostrils rather than the gently inhaling and exhaling of water would have been the recommendation. And washing of the nostrils would have as expected brought along with it serious discomfort and danger and veritable danger to health. It would subsequently be re-evaluated and adjusted to be congenial to health as well as an efficacious means of nasal hygiene. But being a revealed injunction, it is devoid of any harmful effects. The entire process of *wudu* is faultless. Its perfection indicates its divine origin.

Douching of the nose, an important act of *wudu* is so delicate, it has been described precisely as *istinshaq,* taking water into the nose and breathing it into its backmost part; followed immediately by *istinthar,* expulsion of water from the nose after *istinshaq.* It also prevents the retrograde introduction of water containing bacteria and harmful particles. This safeguards protection against harm arising from asphyxiation by water. This has proved that Islamic acts of worship were revealed rather

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[1] G.M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam,* p.6.

than created. Otherwise, serious lapses could not have been avoided. The perfection of all acts of *wudu* constitutes a testimonial evidence that it was revealed rather than formulated. Thus there is no contra-indication in all the acts of Islamic worship. And act, however, can be applied sparingly when necessity dictates. If it were created, washing the ears instead of wiping; washing the nose instead of douching it could have been the injunctions. Subsequent, edition or correction of fault (or error) characterised formulated or created injunctions. This is because of the limitations of human perception and ability. Human laws and injunctions evolve through trial and error. *Wudu* is completely devoid of any defect because it is not man-made but divine. However, these were not the case. *Wudu* like all other Islamic injunctions revealed complete and perfect. These acts did not achieve their perfection by trial and error over time but they were revealed in their perfect forms. In addition, they subserve two functions: spiritual reward and health benefits. They remain congenial to every phase of human development.

Its Medical Importance

The nostrils are so delicate and crucial to health. In fact, the nose is involved in the passage of over 10,000 litres of oxygen taken in over 16,000 breaths per day. This calls for a delicate balancing in its upkeep and function. Thus *wudu* provides this important regular maintenance. Those, therefore, necessitated the careful application of *istinshaq* and *intinthar* simultaneously. It is important to use right hand in the *istinshaq* and the left hand in the *istinthar* – to expel it with help of left hand. Islam is strictly hygienic, it specifies the role of right and left hand to minimise self or autogenously infections. The expelled water contains dirt and germs.

The nose is second only to the mouth for having constant influx of dust, pollen grains, vapour and the efflux of mucous all of which contain millions of germs. Regular *wudu* is a process of which the bacterial load is continuously and effectively expelled from the body. The nose is also the second gateway to the ear and throat, thus, infection from it can quickly spread not only to these areas but to the brain leading to diseases like meningitis, encephalitis and brain abscess that will ultimately lead to death. And it is also prone to allergic infections such as rhinitis, sinusitis, so also vulnerable to bacterial infection such as furunculosis or boils. It is rich in blood supply so that chronic catarrh and other forms of infection can cause bleeding from an area rich in blood vessels referred to as "little area," located inside the nose leading to intractable nose bleeding. Thus, in all

respects, the nose is vital to the general health of the body. And its function is improved with regular ablution.

Many common infectious diseases are acquired by breathing contaminated air, the organisms being trapped by the moist surfaces of the naso-pharynx and lower respiratory tract. Through sneezes, droplets containing millions of germs are dispersed into the surrounding air. The infection is rapidly spread. This is the mechanism of transmission of such diseases as streptococcal, sore throat, diphtheria, meningococcal meningitis, whooping cough, pulmonary tuberculosis, pneumonic plague, measles, influenza, and the common cold. The source of the organism is usually the infected secretions of the respiratory tract of another individual.[1] The tiny hairs or whiskers lining the nostrils help to prevent the entrance of dust particles as well as many pathogens; carry a large number of these harmful agents. This reduces the number of the infectious agents entering the host through inhalation.

The inner lining of the soft part of the nose is hairy whose function is to trap dust particles and pollen grains, preventing them from getting entrance into the delicate interior causing diseases of various types. These hairs are also frequently coated with the nasal secretion coming from the inside outward through the nostrils or the openings of the nose. The secretion usually becomes dry in and around the hair and form crust along the nasal lining, especially in the hot tropical sun or the cold humidity of the non-tropical countries. The care of the nose during *wudu* is, therefore, of immense medical importance. Thus, washing the nostrils by inhaling and exhaling water three times per *wudu* help to soften the delicate part of the upper respiratory tract; it also helps to debulk the viral and bacterial load and to clear the dried mucus particles which improve the mucosal cells and hence clear the passage. The regular douching of the nose with cold water helps in a great measure in the prevention of many diseases and allergic condition. The outer surface of the nose is also washed during the act of washing the face. It has now been proven that diseases can be transmitted through sneezing and nasal droplets; however, *istinshaq* and *istinthar* reduce the chances by significantly reducing the number of the attacking pathogens, *wudu* improves breathing.

Regular wudu reduces the risk of respiratory infection. During quiet breathing the range of droplet spread is usually 2 to 3 yards, but droplets may be carried 20 yards or more by currents of air. The spread is much increased by sneezing and coughing with which so many infectious

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[1] C.G.A. Thomas, *Medical Microbiology*, pp.62-63.

diseases commence.[1] both are powerful protective reflexes. Cough is a reflex which protects the entrance of harmful injurious agents and microbes into upper and lower respiratory tracts, cough is an effort by the body to expel them. Sneezing on the other hand, protects against their entrance into nasal passages, up into the brain. Sneezing, therefore, is the most important protective reflex and is the most forceful because it guards the entrance into the brain. M in view of this vital function and other considerations, the great health Teacher taught that the believer must cover his mouth during sneezing and to say *Alhamdullahi* immediately. The act of sneezing in its complexity and effectivness in protection obviously demands devotional worship for and appreciation of this mercy from the Creator. And for the use of handkerchiefs the prophetic tradition undoubtedly helps to limit the spread of respiratory infection. The great health Teacher in his attitude towards common cold and respiratory infections appeared to be aware of the existence of a pathogenic organism which tend to multiply in the mucous membrane, in the nose and throat. Today, it has been established that many individuals harbour organisms to which they themselves are immune, but which may produce clinical attacks in others, they are the "carriers."

It is remarkable how *wudu* is indispensable to the health of man, at all times and in all places. Who can know what is good about nasal care hygiene better than a consultant: ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeon, Dr. G.M Khan had this to say professionally:

> *Cleaning the nose the manner of the Prophet (s.a.w) is thus very useful in preventing the infection of nose sinuses (cavities inside the bones of the face), boils in the hairy part of the nose and nose bleeding. Also, the lining of the nose has a tendency to set dry in hot countries and cold in humid countries. In this respect douching is needed to wet the nasal lining; cool water drawn into the nose, like cool air, shrinks the lining of the nose. It is the safest shrinking agents for blocked noses. With a clean and free nose, one can smell better than with a blocked one. Keeping the nose clean also prevents the infection of the ears and throat. The use of the handkerchief to blow the nose instead of cleaning the nose with water is not hygienic. The dirty handkerchief is carried in the pocket and while perhaps the handkerchief is changed the next day, the pocket is not! It is better to carry disposable tissues, blowing the nose properly and thus keeping it; such patients need regular douching of the nose. Although blowing of the nose might*

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[1] Sussana Marshall, *Ear, Nose and Throat Nursing*, p.8.

> *be considered an anti-social act, it is salutary to health. It is akin of cough, which is a reflex response to rid the respiratory path of irritants and harmful agents. It is therefore an important protective mechanism like blowing of the nose. What is really anti–social about cough and blowing the nose is when the public health is overlooked or deliberately not taken into cognisance. Blowing of the nose with the right hand is considered as and anti–social. Even people who instruct others to blow their nose do not do it themselves in company, so great is the social pressure.*[1]

Good nasal cares gives good breathing and ventilation, a number of people who visit the ENT surgeon with a variety of complaints who have been saved such medical visits by regular *wudu*.

Improves Breathing

An important factor in health is correct breathing. When "out of breath" after strenuous exercise one may take in supplementary air through the mouth, in quiet breathing, the tidal air should pass freely in and out of the nose. Air which is inspired through the nose is drawn through the hairs inside the vestibule. It is then warmed and moistened as it passes over the mucous surface. Air inhaled through the mouth lacks this filtration, warmth and moisture, and the lining of the pharynx on which the cold air strikes deteriorates in the attempt to react to such unfavourable conditions. A degree of inflammation is set up causing enlargement of the adenoids in children. This in turn obstructs the nasal passages so that breathing through them is impossible and the person perforce becomes an habitual mouth breather.[2] It is against this backdrop that the importance of regular wudu in the maintenance of clear nasal pathway can be discerned. It contributes to making the Muslim a health nose breather, inhaling good purified and humidified air.

The care of nose and the nose region as regularly performed in *wudu* is of cardinal importance to health. It, among other benefits, facilitates breathing and enhances oxygen uptake. Breathing charges the body with vitality, it facilitates health in the body tissues, and leads to sharpened mental ability because the brain is properly oxygenation.[3] The nasal care in *wudu*, therefore, impacts positively on the overall health status of the worshipper. This importance can never be overemphasised, especially

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1 G. M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam* p.6.
2 Sussana Marshall, *Ear, Nose and Throat Nursing*, pp.4-5.
3 *A – Z of Alternative Medicine*, p. 56

when we realise that: "Each of us breathes in and out approximately 10,000 litres of air every twenty-four hours to just survive."[1]

The nasal pathway is therefore cleaned up at least 15 times in twenty-four hours to facilitate the intake of this much volume of air. Furthermore, the health benefits of *wudu* can also be discerned from the standpoint of improved nasal functions, which the *istinshaq* and *istinthar* engender. To reiterate for the sake of clarity, the nose serves the following functions – registering smell, trapping foreign particles, filtering the air, creating mucus, moistening the air flow, and warming the air in preparation for its journey to the lungs.[2] Evidently, the nasal care in *wudu* improves the above mentioned nasal functions in many ways as clearly elucidated. Thus with every *wudu* performed the Muslim improves his health in several folds.

Breathing is improved both by the nasal care in *wudu* and the Qur'anic recitation with proper *tajweed*. The cleansing of nostrils in *wudu* supersedes quite enormously that of the *kriyas*, the Hindu technique of nasal cleansing, which involves the cleaning of the nasal passages with cotton, water, or a rubber tube and forceful expulsion of air from the lungs, bringing with it mucous and other secretions.[3] Instrumentation and the use of force in the delicate nasal pathways make *kriyas* potentially injurious to these delicate structures. So that epistaxis or nose–bleeding and asphyxiation of water are some of the potential risks. While the *istinthar* and *istinshaq* with clean water clean up the filtered particles, wash away the mucous thereby cleaning the dirty hairs in the nostrils with little or no risk of any harmful effects. The Islamic nasal care is performed at regular intervals in a day thereby safeguarding the nostrils against the accumulation of injurious particles as well as harmful germs. Hence, directly and indirectly *wudu* improves breathing.

- It thus engenders these benefits: It clears the nasal pathways to improve breathing through the nose, which helps to oxygenate all sections of the brain.
- It decreases mental tension because breathing properly can be healing to the emotions and helps control impulses of nervousness, jealousy and anger.
- It indirectly improves oxygenation (delivery of oxygen to tissues) which can therefore obviate the chest pains that signal angina pectoris, a complication of heart disease.

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1 *A – Z of Alternative Medicine*, p. 77
2 Ibid, p. 57
3 Ibid, p. 76

- It decreases the attacks of sinusitis by decreasing the allergens in the nostrils.

The nose and nasal region are so vital to the overall health status of the individual that *wudu* is recommended to regularly cater for them. Hence *wudu* and *salat* combine in a remarkable way to bring continuously new perceptions and awareness; to relax and heal the body; to make an individual become a more balanced integrated and harmonious personality. "Certainly, *salat,*" said the Prophet (s.a.w), "improves health." This timeless statement remains forever incontrovertible. *Salat* in all its acts when performed properly combines to produce a transformation of endless health benefits in a manner akin to a pebble dropped in a calm water: "The most minute transformation is like a pebble dropped into a still lake. The ripples spread out endlessly." Like the endless spread of these ripples the acts in *salat* engender healthful benefits continuously. Thus we would continue to discover these benefits as we advance in science and technology. *Wudu* provides a regular healthful care of the nasal region as it also improves the facial beauty of a practising Muslim.

Wudu and Face Region

The skin of face and neck, unlike that of the rest of the body, is one with the muscles. When an emotion is experienced, the muscles and the skin contract together, commanded by the facial nerves. Overactive nerves can cause twitches in different parts of the face, facial cramps, and even toothaches. People often speak of worry lines on their foreheads[1]. The importance of the face in the expression of depression, anxiety and joy is all well known. The regular facial wash up and the relaxation- response of *salat* is a very good combination to keep the face with its 30 muscles in good condition. The change of muscular movement and contraction of these muscles in *Quranic* recitation also improve their tone and blood supply. The trigeminal nerve and its branches control the functions of chewing, sweating and crying. Thus the importance of good facial care cannot be over-emphasised. It is important to use cold water or a face tonic to increase the revitalising effect of the massage. The fingers should slide smoothly over skin; so cover, the whole face with cream or oil, rubbing it in with upward and outward stroking movements.[2] The use of water

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1 Akbal Apol, *Feel Yourself*, p.94
2 Ibid.

regularly to wash and massage the face, is also an effective facial massage and care.

Expect virtue from the beautiful faces in Islam such an expectation from three standpoints – regular *salat*, Qur'anic recitation and *wudu*. All these combine to give a Muslim virtue and good facial outlook. A beauty that is deeper than the skin. The faces of Muslims are market out faces that distinguished them from others. On their faces are marks, says the Holy Qur'an, "(being) the traces of their prostration" (*Fat'h*, 48:29). Regular *salat* gives an aura of facial beauty. This beauty comes from within, the beauty which *wudu* confers comes from without, it is physical and veritable. It is an outcome of regular and strict application of *wudu's* principles of purification in the region of the face. The face that is regularly and frequently engaged in *wudu* and *salat*, obviously, is quite unlike the face that is kept on cosmetic appearance as an outward show that is spurred by the moment: social, economic or official engaging. The maintenance of facial hygiene is, heretofore, irregular and slap–happy.

The face is divided into four regions: the ocular region, which includes the eye and associated structures; the auricular region, which includes the ear; the nasal region, which includes the external and internal structures of the nose; and the oral region, which includes the mouth and associated structures.

The skin of the face is relatively thin and contains many sensory receptors, numerous sweat glands and sebaceous glands in certain regions. The facial skin is important because of certain dermatological problems. The facial muscles about 30 of them are also important for emotional expressions.

In view of the vital importance of the organs of the facial region, its specialisation and complexity, Allah (s.w.t) revealed wudu to provide regular and frequent care of this very important area. From the foundation of this facial care in the 7th century AD, and several centuries afterwards, the importance of the area was recognised. As a result, professional fields of specialty arose to provide special care to its vital parts. For example, *optometry* and *ophthalmology* are concerned with the structure and function of the eye. Dentistry is entirely devoted to the health, function and cosmetic care of the oral region, particularly the teeth. *Otorhinolaryngology* provides care to the problems of the ear, nose and throat. In essence, *wudu* provides excellent health preservation and prevention cares to all these areas of high specialisation. The specialists in these professional fields, however, provide curative treatments. Prevention is always better and cheaper than cure. Regular performance of *wudu*, patterned after that of the role model,

therefore, tends to make these specialists unnecessary. Hence, *wudu* is a gift of mercy from Allah (s.w.t) to the Believers.

In the description of Prophet's wudu, Humraam said: "...he washed his face three times" (Bukhari and Muslim). The face is hereby defined as the area between the margin of the scalp down to the cheeks, the chin and up to the margin of the ears and in between them and the beard. One of the cardinal importance's of *wudu* is to improve your facial looks through regular wash up.

Eye's Protective Structures

In it regular care of the face, wudu helps to preserve the functional protective structures of the eyes. So that it takes special care of the following delicate structures:

- Eyebrows – prevent sweat, water and particles of solid matter from running down into the eye from above. When dust particles accumulate they are washed away during ablution.
- Eyelids – folds of skin, close to completely cover and protect the eyes. They also forma seal that protects the eyeball from invasion by foreign bodies – the inner membranes of each eyelid is a continuation of the conjunctiva. Blinking is a protective of the eyelid, which spreads the lacrimal fluid over the front of the eyeball, thus cleaning it. Blinking is a reflex controlled by the brain. It occurs every 2 to 10 seconds, and the rate increases under stress, in dusty surroundings or when tired, and decreased during periods of concentration.[1]

It is clearly seen that the internal delicate structure of the eyeball is regularly kept clean through the action of lacrimal fluid. This cleanses the eyeball from inside. Regular and frequent wudu is to clean the structure from outside. Such that through blinking and wudu the eye's protective structures are kept clean, free from foreign body and infection.

- Conjunctiva, the transparent protective layer that covers the frond of the eyeball. It is also kept clean internally by lacrimal fluid, and also externally by regular wudu. This combination helps to reduce the chances of infection or conjunctivitis, an inflammatory condition of the transparent covering of the eyeball caused by germs or foreign bodies.

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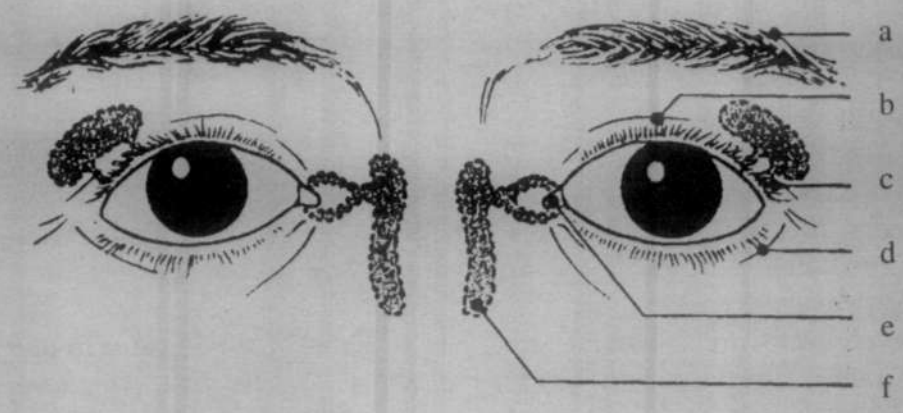
[1] The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, pp.220-221.



a: eyebrow
b: eyelid
c: conjunctiva
d: eye lashes
e: lacrimal gland
f: lacrimal ducts

Regular wudu cleans and improves the eye's protective structures as shown in the diagram above,

Source: *The Diagram Group*, 2002

- Eyelashes – long, thick hairs growing outwards from each eyelid. They prevent foreign bodies from entering the eye and trigger the protective blinking mechanism when touched unexpectedly.[1]

These eyelashes are kept regularly clean by the protective action of wudu also. It keeps away foreign bodies from getting entrance into the eyeball.

- Lacrimal glands – produce a watery, salty fluid that cleans the front of the eyeball and acts as a disinfectant. It also lubricates the eyeball so that the eyelid can move over it. The glands can produce quantities of tears – excess fluid – if irritated or stimulated by strong emotions.
- Lacrimal ducts – drain the fluid from the eye surface into the lacrimal sacs. Which lead into the nasal passage. When the ducts cannot clear the fluid fast enough, it overflows and falls down the face as tears.[2]

It was Allah, the Exalted who recommended wudu to improve the health of man. In its facial care, it regularly and frequently cleanses the eye's protective structures at an interval of time that is ideal and very important to do so. Frequent wudu helps to keep the patency of lacrimal opening or *lacrimal puncta* in the inner side of the eye. Hence, in its overall effect, regular wudu improves facial look and vision. The state of a person's mind and general body condition can be discerned through his eyes. When the body is in perfect condition, the eyes would also shine and sparkle and reflect general good health. But there are minor things that can cause irritation/discomfort to the eye such as wind, dust, smoke, smog, heavy sunlight, poorly lit places/rooms, tiredness and sleeplessness. Take care of your eyes, be regular and thorough with your wudu.

Today, the facial appearance has attracted more attention than anytime in history. The modern age has come along with it love for aesthetics and fashion. Everybody wants to have a good look; at facial beauty free from boils, wrinkles and scars. The *wudu* provides an excellent means of regular care of the face. The face contains the 'dañgerous area,' an area surrounding the nose which contains blood vessels with direct link to the brain so that any infection around it like boils can easily spread to the brain

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1 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, pp.220-221.
2 Ibid.

causing what is called cavernous *sinus thrombosis*, with fatal consequences. Islam, therefore, ensures that not only must this area be kept clean and in good shape, but must be protected from all forms of infections. Thus, the face is washed 3 times per *wudu* and 15 times per day. From the forehead to the chin and from the right ear to the left, all dirt must be scrubbed and washed away. This is well elaborated in the science of ablution.

The upper and lower eyelids, the naso-labial folds and the lips must also be thoroughly washed because they harbour dirty, oily stuff from sweating, body cream, tropical medication, from oily food and eating debris around the mouth which usually stain the area around the lips. And because the face being one of the most exposed parts is dangerously exposed to dust containing germs so it must be thoroughly washed, *wudu* provides this regular facial care. It also prevents drying of the skin so that *wudu* keeps the skin supple and minimises desiccation.

In desert and dusty atmospheres, the washing of the eyes is extremely essential, it is also essential in the industrialised societies with dirty atmospheres and artificial lighting which often produces much harmful glare.[1]

The facial hygiene, which *wudu* provides, helps to remove regularly the growing load of dangerous germs, prevent their entrance into vital areas, therefore, offers a good protection. Especially, washing the face gives a relaxed feeling, zest and elegance because it keeps people looking good and beautiful and presentable. Furthermore, a good healthy facial skin is an important organ of communication, for aesthetic reason it is an effective means of physical attraction. The profound psychological need for a healthy facial appearance often propel many people to undergo plastic surgery due to certain abnormality or large facial scarification or contractures arising from burns or facial skin diseases some of which facial hygiene could obviate. Whatever the condition of your face, *wudu* improves it.

A number of women have *acne vulgaris* or pimples, a clinical condition brought about by blockage and inflammation of the pilosebaceous follicles of the skin of the face. Acne usually disfigures the afflicted individuals by making him or her look ugly. The condition is even more severe when these pimples become infected. Regular facial washing in *wudu* helps to reduce the chances of infection as well as facilitate recovery from treatment. Hormonal and climatic factors also influence the course and extent of the lesions. Exposure to the sun and wind increases the exfoliation

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[1] G. M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, p.7

or removal of upper layer of the skin and desquamation of the follicles and causes come-done formation. Excessive heat and humidity also aggravate the acne. A regular washing of the face helps in degreasing the skin moisturises and prevents complications of bacterial infection. The inner corner of the eye is the region where secretion often accumulates. Secretion left in this region not only gives an impression of untidiness, but also a source of infection. In washing the eyes, the lids, the eye lashes, the conjunctives are washed.[1] This regular wash ups prevent eye infection such as trachoma and conjunctivitis, etc. Pimples are common among the adolescents and facial washings as prescribed in *wudu* help to prevent both the occurrence and the aggravation of this disfiguring infection. It, therefore, reduces the risk of the deadly cavernous sinus thrombosis. Islam helps you to look good because it cares for you.

Wiping the Scalp

The number of hairs on the body varies between individuals but on the average there are about 100,000 hairs on the head. Hair acts as a protective barrier. The eyelashes protect the eyes, and hairs in the nostrils and the outer ears trap and prevent the entry of foreign bodies. The eyebrows prevent sweat dripping into the eyes.[2] Hairs also act to conserve heat. Air trapped between hairs insulate the skin and stops heat loss. The straighter the hair stands the more air can be trapped. And attached to each hair follicle is a strip of muscle which makes the hair stand on end, when it contracts causing 'goose flesh.' These muscles are stimulated by cold or emotional stress.[3]

These and many other functions of the hair are improved with regular, washing and cleanliness. The importance of wudu in the care of the scalp, eyelashes, eyebrows, the hair in the ears and the whiskers in the nostrils cannot be overemphasised. It is a clear demonstration of the practical benefits of Islamic worship. As wudu is performed frequently and at regular intervals, it keeps the vital areas free from dirt and injurious substances. During wudu, the scalp is wiped regularly.

The scalp is the area of the head covered with hair. These hairs are trimmed regularly in men and allowed to flow or are plaited in women. It is the exposed part of the body that easily attracts dust. In mature women, however, the hair is always covered with a scarf. The skin of the head is

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1 G. M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, p.7
2 The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, pp.180-181.
3 Ibid.

very rich in hair follicles and so is vulnerable to a number of bacterial and fungal infections. Dusts, heat and humidity increase the chances of scalp infection in women, as well as in men. More common among women because of both the length and the density of their hairs. They are more exposed to heat and chemical irritations due to the application of a variety of chemicals in the form of hair creams to make it supple and prevent it from desiccation and breakage. Health experts pointed that this application is predisposed to a scaly condition of the scalp called pityriasis capitae (dandruff). [1] Therefore, the wiping of the scalp at *wudu* also helps to improve the condition of the hair. It dislodges the impurities and cleans up the scalp. The scalp is gently and smoothly wiped with wet fingers from the front backwards to the nape, and the reverse from the back to the fore. This smooth wiping is done with moistened hands. This helps to remove the dislodged dust from the hair.

Abdullahi Ibn Amr (r.a) gave a vivid description of the way the Prophet (s.a.w) used to perform the wiping of the head. He said:

> *...he (pbuh) wiped his head and entered his two fingers into his ears and wiped the back of his ears with his thumbs (Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah).*

Wiping the head with wet hands, from the forehead gently towards the back of the head and from the back towards the forehead is performed at least 5 times a day. This wets the dry, brittle hair and removes the dusty particles. It is reasonable to posit this is beneficial to the maintenance of the clean and healthy scalp. The Islamic teaching of using caps in males and scarf or *hijab* in the females helps to prevent desiccation of the hair and the deposition of dusty particles. It also helps to preserve both the lustre and the good condition of the hair, especially among the females after hair dressing. Application of natural oils on the hair is better than chemicals which predispose to dandruff.

It is the common experience of ladies in the tropics, especially during the harmattan season that strong wind usually blows dust to the uncovered head. The use of *hijab* or head scarf helps to prevent dust accumulating in the hair. Dust when combined with sweat causes serious irritation and infection of the scalp. The regular wiping of the head with wet fingers five times a day helps immensely in the preservation of the healthy hair as well as the scalp. It preserves the cosmetic hair-dressing of females. It reduces dust accumulation which if not regularly taken care of would lead to

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[1] The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, pp.180-181.

dandruff and other scalp infections. In this way, wiping and wetting the scalp may also help prevent *tinea capitis*, a skin condition due to fungal infection of the scalp, which humidity and high temperature predispose it appears as itchy, scaly ring and broken hairs. There is another fungal infection which this causes itching of the scalp, associated with exfoliation of numerous small patches of grey scales and broken hairs, in both males and females. A condition commonly referred to as dandruff is also prevented.

These scales may fall into the eyes and ears causing infection to these vital areas. Use of fresh water for wiping the head is recommended each time because the hands might contain a lot of germs, which inadvertently may be transferred to the ears. In modern hygiene, chefs and cooks must cover their heads during cooking or serving food; this underscores the vital hygienic benefits of wiping the head in *wudu* as well as the use of scarf or cap. What is recommended is wiping the scalp rather than washing 5 times a day. Had washing the head instead of *masah* or wiping the scalp been prescribed, it would have led to many health problems. Washing can be uncomfortable and might increase wetness or humidity around the scalp and despoil beautiful hair-do in females. It can reasonably be posited that the meticulous care of the scalp helps to prevent infestation with head louse or *pediculus capitis*. It is worldwide, and is found mainly in children and adults with poor hygiene.[1] *Wudu* is an effective means of prevention, it aims to keep the scalp clean, it was the tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w) to comb and oil his hair regularly. Washing the head regularly in a day is tedious and may be counter-productive. This means a towel must be used to mop the head with every *wudu* otherwise it could be a mess. The injunction however, is to wipe the head and not to wash the head. This injunction, therefore, indicates that *wudu* was revealed rather than formulated; thus Islam recommends wiping, an equally effective sanitary measure. It is a simplest, practicable means of hair care.

Hair Care

Regular wudu is an efficacious means of hair care that is in accord with the modern recommendation. According to medical experts, hair care include:

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[1] Y.M Olumide, *A Pictorial Self – Instructional Manual on Common Skin Diseases*, Cantonal Enterprises Lagos (1990), p. 28

- Keep the hair clean. Oily hair should be washed every 2-3 days, dry hair every 5-6 days. Choose the shampoo according to the type and condition of your hair.
- Ensure that the comb is clean and well made. Unclean combs spread bacteria and infection. Sharp edges damage the structure of the hair.
- Take care when hair is wet, it is more vulnerable and prone to pulling and splitting in this state. Comb gently.
- Check the condition of the scalp looking for itching, inflammation, scaling, dandruff or degeneration. Visit a physician or dermatologist if worried.
- Protein, the B Vitamins, iron, copper, and iodine are all essential for strong hair.[1]

It must be reiterated here that the hair care of today is the improved hair care introduced by the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) in the 7th century Arabia. He introduced the use of comb, the combing and oiling the hair such that it had become his Sunnah or tradition. He was at one time reported to have asked someone with dishevelled hair, "Does he have nothing with which to comb his hair?" (Abu Dawud). And when another person complied with his instruction and kept his hair neat and tidy, the Prophet (s.a.w) was afterwards happy, for he asked, "Is not this better than one should come with dishevelled hair, looking like a devil?" (Al-Muwatta). Further, Islam makes taking a bathe regularly or at least once every Friday. The Prophet (s.a.w) taught the modern world body care in the real sense of hygiene and aesthetics. It was also reported that when the Educator of Mankind saw one person looking very dirty, he asked: "Couldn't he find anything with which to wash his clothes" (Abu Dawud).

Islam strongly advocates for hair care and general cleanliness. For the Prophet (s.a.w) said: "Cleanse yourself, for Islam is cleanliness" (Ibn Hayyan). Thus wudu is a means of cleanliness of the hair. It is also a means of regularly checking the scalp for any disorderliness.

Wudu and Eye Region

The ocular region includes the eyeballs and associated structures. This area receives regular and proper hygienic care during ablution. The eyebrows which protect against potentially damaging sunlight and mechanical blows are washed regularly at least not less than 15 times a day. The eyelids which reflex close to protect against objects moving towards

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[1] The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, pp. 181.

the eye or stimuli, are similarly scrupulously washed. They can easily be infected, a situation that could be dangerous to the eye. Regular *wudu*, therefore, keeps these lids neat and tidy. Eyelashes prevent airborne particles from contacting the eyeball, and *lacrimal* secretions (tears) wash away chemicals or foreign materials. Thus what the tears do to the eyeballs, and conjunctiva (the transparent covering of the eye ball) *wudu* does to the entire facial region. It clears away the accumulated dust particles both around the eyebrows and the eyelashes. Further, it regularly irrigates the *lachrymal caryncle* and *lacrimal punctum* or opening of the tear glands, thereby preventing infection and desiccation. Blockage of the tear gland openings is a serious condition that can lead to the drying up of the eyeballs and ulceration. Corneal ulceration is a serious condition that can lead to blindness. This is prevented with regular *wudu*. Further it was observed that washing the eyes with cold water shrinks the inner of the lids and removes itching and soreness. [1]

Wudu and Ear Region

The auricular (ear) region includes the visible surface structures and internal organs that function in hearing and equilibrium or balance. The fleshy *auricle* or pinna and the tubular opening into the canal are the visible features of this region. The rim of the auricle, shaped and supported by elastic cartilage is called the *helix*. The earlobe is the inferior portion of the pinna. The *tragus* is a small projection that is partially covering the ear entrance – the external acoustic canal. At the medial end of the meatus there is a depression, the antero-inferior recess, in which wax, debris or foreign bodies may lodge. This area is kept clean through regular wudu. This canal is also protected by the fine hairs that surround the opening into this canal. They offer physical protection against air bone particles. From the standpoint of hygiene, *wudu* improves this important hairy function. Dust and other airborne particles are regularly wiped with wet fingers.

The educator of mankind described how this important ear care is to be performed during *wudu*. Abdullah ibn Amr (r.a) said:

> *Then he (pbuh) wiped his head and entered his two forefingers into his ears and wiped the back of the ears with his thumbs (Abu Dawud, an Nasai, ibn Majah).*

This method of ear-cleaning is the most effective in ensuring that both inner and outer parts of the pinnae are scrubbed and cleaned. To understand

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[1] G. M. Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, p.7.

this methodology properly, the surface anatomy of the auricular region must be described.

Structure	Comments
Auricle (pinna)	Expanded portion of the ear projects from the side of the head. It funnels sound waves into the external acoustic canal.
Helix	Outer rim of the auricle. It gives form and shape to the auricle.
Earlobe	Fleshy inferior portion of the auricle
Tragus	Small, cartilaginous anterior projection of the helix
Concha	Depressed hollow of the auricle. It funnels sound waves
External acoustic canal	Slightly S-shaped tube extending inward to the tympanic membrane. It contains glands that secrete earwax for protection.
Triangular fossa	Triangular depression in the superior part of the atihelix.[1]

Source: Adapted from Kent M. Van De Graaf, *Human Anatomy*, p.294.

All these seven important external parts of the ear are regularly kept clean by *wudu*. The Prophet (s.a.w) described vividly how "wiping the ear" is to be performed regularly with every *wudu*. His methodology turns out to be a very efficient way of cleaning the ear. With "forefingers" placed into the ears, the front of the external surface of the auricular is wiped clean by their rubbing and gentle scrubbing movements. While the thumbs wipe the backs of the ears. This wiping ensures the cleanliness of the helix, triangular fossa, antihelix, concha, tragus, external acoustic canal, antitragus and earlobe (from up downward). Thus the areas that funnel airwaves into the ear are kept clean so that dust and other airborne particles are not funnelled into the ear as well, a development that could be dangerous to the health because of serious middle and inner ear infections.

Allah (s.w.t) in His Mercy provides man with external protective strategies against these infections. The first is the secretion of cerumen or airwax, which may accumulate in the canal. It is a protective substance. It waterproofs the tympanic membrane (eardrum) and because of its taste it is thought to be an insect-repellent. In some cases, it may become impacted

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[1] Kent M. Van De Graff, *Human Anatomy*, p.294.

and require physical removal.[1] The second strategy is the regular *wudu* revealed to augment and facilitate the natural protective mechanism. Hence which of the benefits of Islamic worship will you deny?

With wet fingers, both the inside and the outside of the ears are rubbed with the wet thumb and the inside with wet index finger. Emphasis is placed on fresh water being used for the wiping of the ears. Imagine pouring some water into your ears in the name of washing, its outcome can be very devastating to health. Instead, Islam recommends cleaning of the ears. It is equally as effective as washing. Run moistened fingers through the ears the first finger of each hand going across the inside of the corresponding ear while the thumb runs across the outside. All the grooves both inside and outside are scrubbed simultaneously. The dust particles collected in the ear grooves must be wiped out, preventing their entrance into the middle ear. These ear grooves are good recesses for accumulation of dust particles.

This regular wet wiping of the ear helps remove the dust and, thereby, reduces the bacterial load. This practice of cleaning the ears during wudu reduces the prevalence of infection of the outer ear in the Muslim community as compared with that of the non-Muslim.

G. M. Khan, a renowned General Practitioner (GP), and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeon resident for years in London had observed this marked difference. He wrote:

> *...I saw fewer cases of infection of the outer ear during my two years stay in Saudi Arabia where treatment is free and the atmosphere is dusty, than I have seen during my practice in England...*[2]

Obviously, taking other factors into consideration it is reasonable to assume that the health benefits of *wudu* make the difference. And it counts. The ear is a special organ of hearing. It must be prevented from getting infected. *Wudu* helps to improve its hygiene case. Islam does not recommend the washing of the ears which can cause dangerous effect because water can easily get into the inner ear thereby causing serious infections. Instead it recommends wet wiping. This shows or rather portrays that all the acts of *wudu* are laid on sound medical scientific basis, a veritable indication of divine injunctions. Hence, it is devoid of contra-indication, which means a situation where a ritual becomes inimical to

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1 Kent M. Van De Graff, *Human Anatomy*, p.294.
2 Ghulam Mustafa Khan, *Personal Hygiene in Islam*, p.8.

health and so inapplicable. Islam is a faith of science; none of its injunction is injurious to health, so none is a contraindication. Moreover, religious acts are performed according to individual capacity. Necessity can dictate exemption. The care of the feet completes the regional care of *wudu*.

The Hands and Arms

Humran Ibn Aban reported that Uthman (r.a) called for water for *wudu* and mentioned the Prophet's way of making *wudu* – and *Humran* said: "Then he washed his right arm including the elbow three times, then the left in the same way" (Bukhari and Muslim). The hands up to the wrists are both washed together three times, ensuring that every part including in between the fingers is wetted, scrubbed and washed.

The arms up to the elbows are washed three times at every *wudu*. As one of the exposed parts of the body, they harbour a lot of germs. They are used frequently for various mechanical, white collar and houshold chores. The medical workers, engineers, mechanics, bricklayers, labourers and even office workers frequently get their arms and hands usually stained with various germs and other injurious materials. Even under the cover of long sleeve dresses, regular washing helps reduce accumulation of germs on the skin as a result of sweating. When the arm is heavily loaded with bacteria, it can easily infect the hands with which man eats his food and drink. So when dirt collects forming good breeding places washing the hand and arms de-bulk them, thereby helping in infection protection.

It is through the essential act of *wudu* that the inter-digital hands are scrubbed and washed. The importance of this act can be seen in the theatre; the surgeon before any operation scrubs his hands, the web of the hands washing extends up to the elbows. Muslims perform these "surgical aseptic" measures 15 times per day before approaching Allah (s.w.t) in prayer. The hand hygiene and its importance to the well-being of man is recognised in the Islamic world more than anywhere else, it anticipated the modern medical science by more than one thousand years.

Wudu and Care of the Feet

Man is bipedal in locomotion; he walks on his two kegs. This means both feet are in contact with the ground, and exposed to a variety of dirt. They are far removed physically from the eyes and hands so are often neglected. However, regular *wudu* draws our attention to their care. Apol observed:

> *...Feet are something we usually take for granted. They are far removed physically from the eyes and even the hands. The neglect with which we treat our feet is deplorable, especially as the feet mirror all the important organs of the body. Foot aches, blisters, bunions, weak ankles, fallen arches are caused by cramping of shoes, high heels, and the like. The tremendous boom in sales of 'support' is due to only to the fact that the condition of our feet has deteriorated over the years.*[1]

Regular *wudu* prevents feet deterioration. It requires that at periodic time the crampy shoes are removed the feet physically examined and washed. Attention is given to the two feet on which man stands to face the world. The feet, each contains 26 bones, knitted together by tendons, muscles and ligaments to make a composite and sophisticated structure composed of toes, the ball, the hollow, heel and ankle. Where *wudu* is not observed care of the feet is poor and they slowly degenerate. Apol's advice helps in this case. He wrote:

> *"Most of us must wear some kind of shoes; the big toe should have freedom to move away from the little toes. When you stand up, feet together, ankles touching, your big toes should be in contact up to their tips. Shoes should not restrict independent movement of the little toes. When you walk, weight shifting from the heel, along the outside of the foot, and then diagonally across to the toes, especially the big toes.*
>
> *Take special care of the soles of the feet. Keep the skin soft...*[2] *doubtlessly, wudu helps to maintain these and other directives to improve the care of the feet.*

Qiyam is excellent for coordination and relaxation of the feet, loosening the ankles, strengthening thigh muscles, and improving posture.

Washing the feet up to the ankles three times starting with the right foot and then the left. The inter-digits, the dorsum and the sole of the feet must be thoroughly scrubbed and washed. Laqit Ibn Sabarah (r.a) reported that Allah's Apostle (s.a.w) said: "Complete the *wudu* and wipe between the *Asaabi*" (fingers and or toes) (Abu Dawud). This is the inter-digital scrubbing, which is crucial and very important in care of the feet. It targeted the areas commonly infected by fungi to cause athlete's foot.

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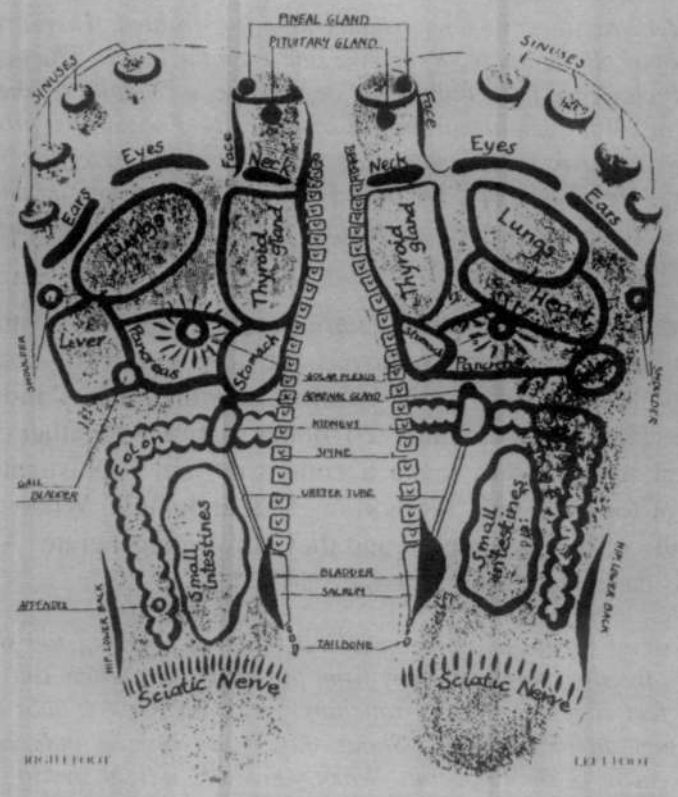
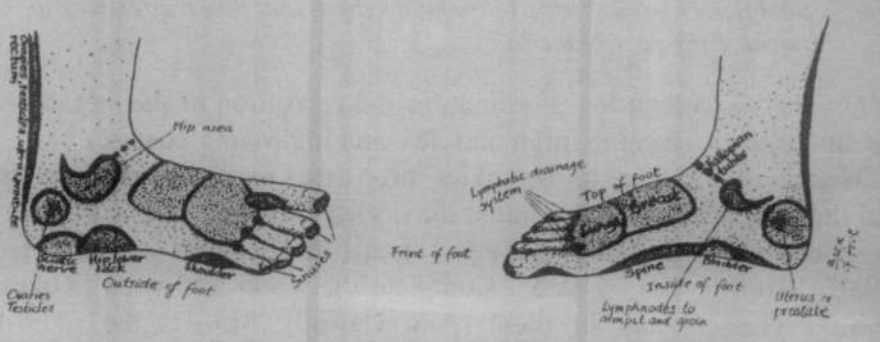
1 Ekbal Apol, *Feel Yourself*, p.24
2 Ibid.



During wudu the sole of each foot is washed 3 times. This keeps the soles clean and also stimulate therapy zones as shown in the diagram above.



During wudu, the dorsum of each foot is also washed 3 times. This keeps the soles clean and also stimulate therapy zones as shown in the diagram above.

Source: Apol, *Feel Yourself*, 1979

The feet are the most exposed part of the body to the unhygienic environment and therefore acts as carriers of the deadly load of bacteria and germs. Washing the feet up to the ankles 15 times per day no doubt helps to significantly reduce this load. It also keeps the feet clean and free from offensive smell. *Wudu* provides the opportunity to examine the nails and the inter-digital areas that are prone to fungal infection. It serves as a reminder to a busy person of the time for pedicure. The care of the feet is now part and parcel of personal hygiene and beautification.

Regular washing and scrubbing of the soles of the feet help to prevent the development of ugly fissures and infection, which are common especially among those walking on bare feet. *Wudu* also affords the worshipper the time to regularly take care of his feet and in the process activates the natural healing process of his body through reflexology. It is part of *wudu* to wash and scrupulously massage the soles of the feet. This, according to acupressure instructor, stimulates various vital centres of the body. This is, therefore, a healthful bonus of *wudu*. Note that Islam recommends washing rather than wiping of the feet. It also places emphasis on scrupulous cleaning. The dirt of the soiled feet cannot be removed by mere wiping but by washing and scrubbing. This is more beneficial to health. It also puts emphasises on inter-digital scrubbing. Al-Mustaurad (r.a) said: "When the Prophet (s.a.w) made *wudu*, he would enter the water between his toes with his little finger" (Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi). This important aspect of *wudu* has been described in the science of ablution. It prevents infection like athlete's foot as well as foot odour.

Foot Odour

Regular wudu effectively prevents foot odour. Foot odour is commonly caused by perspiration being concentrated in a constricted areas since shoes and socks create warm airless condition. Thus, it was to the credit of the Unlettered Prophet (s.a.w) of Islam who recommended that during wudu the *Asaabi* – in between toes must be thoroughly scrubbed and washed. These are the areas where bacteria build up. This recommendation is in accord with modern hygiene and most likely its precursor. According to medical experts, the preventive measures against foot odour include:

- To prevent foot odour the feet should be washed everyday thoroughly dried, especially between toes, and spread with foot deodorant.
- It is essential to change socks and shoes daily – or more often, and to wash socks and air shoes after wear to prevent build up of bacteria.

- When foot odour is a serious problem, it may be necessary to was the feet more than once a day, dust them with anti-bacterial powder and spray shoes with a shoe deodorant.[1]

One can say without fear of contradiction that today, men of all nations perform wudu regularly in one way or the other – people brush and wash their mouth, face, hands and legs because they are indispensably necessary. Thus, people of all nations benefit directly or indirectly from Islam because Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is a Mercy to all creatures. Hence, whenever you wash your hands, remember, it is an act of Islamic worship, you have just performed.

This brings us to the end of Book One. The Book Two analyses and explains vividly the health benefits of wudu. It deals with other pillars of Islam, as the central issues of discussion. The style remains analytical, comparative and discursive. And one of the central issues discussed in this volume relates to "scientific dimension of salat" and the medical importance of "salat cultured behaviour."

Alhamdu Lillah.

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[1] The Diagram Group, *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual*, p.171.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

ISLAMIC worship is established on rational and scientific basis where health and worship are inseparably integrated into a composite whole, such that as one regularly practices the religious rituals, one's general and productive health are promoted. Islamic tenets form a complete and comprehensive guide to good health, social well-being, zestful and vivacious life, and they meet the tastes of man in every phase of civilization, with two cardinal objectives in view: health in this Life and health in the Afterlife.

This work describes clearly how the Islamic concepts of *Attahara, wudu* and *ghusl* have led to the evolution of modern hygiene and the universal growth and awareness of bathing ethics as well as the habit of general cleanliness. It is the foremost ideology which emphasizes the importance of personal hygiene and its popularisation in history with such a motivation as: "cleanliness is half of faith." It is therefore the most comprehensive preventive medical philosophy in modern times. Islam as the most ideal universal culture is the seal of civilizations.

The book is an in-depth study of the medical importance of Islamic worship. It identifies and treats the basic tenets of this True Faith in the light of current knowledge, and are found to be in perfect accord with modern medical science. It is written with the general as well as the specialised reader in mind and recommends this easy-to-use volume. It gives considerable insights into the simplest and most efficacious way of keeping a healthy lifestyle.

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