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A Beginner's Journey through the World of `Islām

ABDURRAGHIEM ḤASAN SALLIE

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To all seeking an understanding of 'Islām





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ʿAllāh is One



Section ONE

Fundamentals of 'Islām

'Allāh—He is the Only One

THE NAME OF 'ALLĀH is attached to the Absolute Transcendent Reality, independent of all creation and entitled to the attributes of Lordship. No creation exists by itself and is independent of itself. Everything is dependent on 'Allāh for its existence. This name is reserved only for the Creator of the Universe.

Due to the limitations of language, no other word can comprehensively capture or substitute for the word, 'Allāh.

Shaykh Muḥammad Mustaphā 'al-Marāghī, writes in his *tafsīr*:

(الله) هُوَ الْمَعْبُودُ بِحَقٍّ لَمْ يُطْلَقْ عَلَى غَيْرِهِ تَعَالَى

[Allāh] He is the One that is to be worshipped with justification. It is a name not ascribed to anyone else but 'Allāh, the Almighty.¹

The reference to God in other faiths does not represent a Monotheistic God as understood in 'Islām.

The term God in Christianity denotes a tritheistic concept and is also used irresponsibly and blasphemously in a non-religious sense. The cautious position would, therefore, be not to refer to 'Allāh as God.

¹ Tafsīr 'al-Marāghī, Vol. 1, p 30.

The *Qur'ān* (Islamic Scripture) declares the reality of 'Allāh, His Absolute Unicity (*'al-Wāhid*), His Inaccessible Mystery (*'al-Latīf*) and His beautiful names and attributes. 'Allāh says in the Holy Qur'ān:

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

No vision can grasp Him, but He has grasp over all vision; He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware.²

The etymology of the word 'Allāh, known as *lafdh 'al-jalālah* (the designation of majesty) is a cognate of the word *'al lā ha* (أَلِه), meaning to be startled and baffled. His Indivisible Nature, Uniqueness and Majesty bewilders the limited capacity of the intellect and perplexes man. The more we try to understand Him the more His Majesty eludes our grasp.

Another cognate is the word *'a li ha* (أَلِه) bearing the meaning to be reassured, trust and to have certainty in something. Hearts find tranquillity when men and women of understanding are in remembrance of His Lordship, and souls attain peace through seeking proper monotheistic comprehension of His Majesty's Greatness.

Also linked to the word, 'Allāh is *'I la hin*. 'Allāh says:

يَتَّيَّمُهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ

لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَمُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

No son (or offspring) did 'Allāh beget, nor is there any *'ilāh* (god) along with Him; (if there had been many gods), then each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others! Glorified is 'Allāh above all that they attribute to Him!³

He who does not command the appellation of Creator, Sustainer, Controller of Affairs, Him in whom we entrust our affairs and whom we worship cannot be 'Allāh. Those in whom these attributes are absent are but the creation and not 'Allāh, the Creator.⁴

'Allāh is a neuter name—singular in essence—and is at the fountain-head of all His Majestic names. With this Divine name, He describes his *Dhāt* (Essence). He encourages humanity to call upon Him through this name repeatedly.

The Holy and Honourable names of 'Allāh, known as the *'Asma-'ul Ḥusnā* are 99 in number. Each name elicits a distinctive characteristic of 'Allāh. All names

2 'al-Qur'ān 67:14.

3 'al-Qur'ān 23:91.

4 'al-Lisān from Abī al-Haitam.

direct towards 'Allāh, the Supreme, All-Comprehensive and Most Majestic of His Divine names (*al-'Ism 'al-'Adham*).⁵ The majority of scholars from the *'Ahlus Sunnah* (adherents of the Prophetic tradition) opine that the names of 'Allāh are all established (*tauqīfiyah*). The Arabic word *tauqīfiyah*, when used, signifies establishment by 'Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ.⁶ 'Allāh says:

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ
سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to 'Allāh, so call on Him by them and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.⁷

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ
وَلَا تُجْهَرُوا بِهِ بَصَلَاتِكُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُتْ بِهِ وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١١٠﴾

Say O, Muḥammad ﷺ “Invoke 'Allāh or invoke the Most Gracious by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names. And offer your prayer neither aloud nor in a low voice but follow a middle way.”⁸

'Abū Hurairah ﷺ reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةٌ
وَتِسْعُونَ اسْمًا مَنْ حَفِظَهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ وَثَرٌ يُحِبُّ الْوَثْرَ

Truly 'Allāh; the Almighty, has ninety-nine names. One hundred except one. Anyone who memorises these will enter Paradise. 'Allāh is One Alone and loves things which are odd in number.⁹

The Majestic name, 'Allāh, is mentioned 2,698 times in the Noble Qur'ān. Added to this is the *basmalah* (I begin in the name of 'Allāh) with which each *ṣūrah* (chapter) begins. Here are some examples:

5 'al--Maqṣad al-Asnā by al-Ghazālī.

6 Abdurraghiem Hasan Sallie, A Journey through the World of Belief (Daddy's Books, 1998), p. 272.

7 'al-Qur'ān 7:180.

8 'al-Qur'ān 17:110.

9 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2677 a. Book 48, Ḥadīth 5

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

'Allāh! *Lā 'ilāha 'illā Hurwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists.¹⁰

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ

أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا

Allāh! *Lā 'ilāha 'illā Hurwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He). Surely, He will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. And who is truer in statement than 'Allāh?¹¹

Another unique feature of this name is the *Kalimah al-Shahādah* (Testimony of Faith). These words, *Lā 'ilāha 'ill-'Allāh* (none has the right to be worshipped except 'Allāh) transport a person from the world of *kufṛ* (disbelief) to the world of 'Islām. The declaration of faith consists of an absolute negation that there is no God followed by the affirmation of 'Allāh as the Only One. This resolution is not faith-based but arrived at through a sincere and personal search for guidance.

The proclamation of faith is only deemed correct when using the name 'Allāh. None of His other established names suffices in this regard. This sacred name is the essence of 'Islām. By recognising 'Allāh one enters into 'Islām and submits to His Will. This divine name is inclusive of 'Islām, 'Īmān and 'Ihsān and is quintessentially the message which each Prophet delivered to his people. It is the message of *Tauhīd*—the Oneness of 'Allāh—the fundamental and pre-eminent concept of Islamic Monotheism. 'Allāh says:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ

So know (O Muḥammad) that, *Lā 'ilāha 'ill-'Allāh* (none has the right to be worshipped but 'Allāh), and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for (the sin of) believing men and believing women. And 'Allāh knows

¹⁰ 'al-Qur'ān 2:55.

¹¹ 'al-Qur'ān 4:87.

well your moving about, and your place of rest (in your homes).¹²

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا

فَاعْبُدُونِ

And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muḥammad) but We revealed to him (saying): *Lā ilāha 'illa 'ana* (none has the right to be worshipped but I ('Allāh) so worship Me (Alone and none else).¹³

The Definition of 'Islām

The word 'Islām derives from the Arabic root *Salima* meaning peace, purity, submission and obedience. In a religious context, 'Islām means submission to the will of 'Allāh and obedience to His law.

One who accepts the faith is called a Muslim or submitter to 'Allāh's Will. A sceptic or rejector of 'Islām is known as a *kāfir* (disbeliever), pronounced kaa-fir (the *i* is pronounced as *i* in pin). The word *kāfir* is an active participle of the root *كفر* (*kfr*) which means to cover. A *kāfir* is therefore viewed as one who covers or hides the truth.

'Islām is a monotheistic religion that calls to the Oneness (Unity) of an Omnipotent Creator. It is also dubbed the religion of *Tauḥīd* (Islamic Monotheism).

A Muslim

One who accepts the religion of 'Islām by uttering the Declaration of Faith, with full conviction, is a Muslim. He who deliberately denies faith after receiving guidance is a *kāfir*.

The Declaration of Faith

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

'Ash hadu'al lā 'ilā ha 'il lal lā hu wa 'ash hadu 'an na Mu ḥam ma dar ra sū lul 'Āllāh

"I testify that there is none worthy of worship except 'Allāh and I testify that Muḥammad ﷺ is 'Allāh's servant and (Final) Messenger."

¹² 'al-Qur'ān 47:19.

¹³ 'al-Qur'ān 21:25.

The Articles of Submission

Muslims submit to five articles of submission known as the Pillars of 'Islām.

أَرْكَانُ الْإِسْلَامِ خَمْسَةٌ ، شَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ، وَإِقَامُ الصَّلَاةِ ، وَإِيتَاءُ الزَّكَاةِ ، وَصَوْمَ رَمَضَانَ ،
وَ حَجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا

'Arkānul 'Islāmi khamṣa. Shahādatu 'allā 'ilāha 'lallāh wa 'an na Muḥam ma dur rasūlul lāh. Wa 'iqāmus ṣalāh. Wa 'itā 'uz zakāh. Wa ṣaumū ramaḍān. Wa ḥajjul bayti manista ṭā 'a 'ilayhi sabilā

*The principles of 'Islām are five:*¹⁴

- To bear testimony that there is none worthy of worship but 'Allāh and that Muḥammad ﷺ is 'Allāh's Messenger.
- To be steadfast in *ṣalāh* (five daily prayers).
- To discharge *zakāh* (alms) to the poor and needy.
- To fast during the month of *Ramaḍān*.
- To perform the *Ḥajj* (Pilgrimage) if you are by the means to do so.

The Articles of Faith

There are six articles of faith known as the *Arkān 'al-'Īmān*.

أَرْكَانُ الْإِيمَانِ سِتَّةٌ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ، وَبِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ مِنْ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

'Ar kā nul 'Ī mā ni sit tah. An tu` mi na bil lāhi. Wa ma lā 'ika ti hī. Wa ku tu bi hī. Wa ru su li hī. Wal yau mil 'ā khi ri. Wa bil qa da ri khay ri hī wa shar ri hī mi nal lā hi ta `ālā.

*The principles of 'Īmān are six:*¹⁵

- Absolute belief in the Oneness of 'Allāh
- Belief in the existence of His Angels
- Belief in all His (divinely-revealed) Books
- Belief in His Messengers
- Belief in the Day of Judgement

¹⁴ Related by al-Bukhāriy and Muslim.

¹⁵ Reported by Muslim.

- The belief that all deeds, good or evil, originate from 'Allāh. (However, we are accountable for our actions).

These principles will be dealt with in more detail later in the book.

'Ihsān—Perfection in Worship

'*Ihsān* is a Muslim's responsibility to strive for perfection, or excellence, in '*ibādah* (worship).

'Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Angel Gabriel عليه السلام joined a gathering and asked Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, “What is '*Ihsān*?” The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

To worship 'Allāh as if you see Him. Even though you are unable to see 'Allāh, know that 'Allāh sees you.¹⁶

A Muslim's entire life should be an act of '*ibādah* in submission to the Will of 'Allāh. The calibre of the '*ibādah* is dependent on one's intention and God-consciousness. For a worshipper to become 'Allāh-centric, it is necessary to live consciously by this maxim.

When the believer achieves this state of being, his actions become adorned and beautified, and he attains the *maqām* (station) of a *Muḥsin* (a doer of what is beautiful). This state is the highest grade of piety and consciousness and was the way of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Conviction, Acceptance, Chastity

Entering 'Islām with sincere conviction is a profound and meaningful experience for many. Unfortunately, joining the faith is not always due to spiritual seeking or the investigation for truth. Though this should be the primary reason for accepting the faith, many still enter for reasons other than this.

Reversion due to marriage is one of the principal motives. The *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) requires a man to revert to 'Islām when entering holy matrimony with a Muslim woman¹⁷. The Law does not command reversion when the woman is a Christian or Jew¹⁸.

Tokenistic reversion is rooted in the failure of Muslims to act by Islamic guidelines. Fraternising and socialising with the opposite sex in today's ultra-liberal societies often lead to promiscuous behaviour resulting in unIslamic courtships

16 Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārīy 50, Book 2, Ḥadīth 43.

17 Detailed in Section Two: Marriages.

18 Detailed in Section Two: Marriages.

and unintended pregnancies. 'Allāh provides Muslims with the panacea for this when he says:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them: and 'Allāh is well-acquainted with all that they do.¹⁹

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاؤِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And

O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards 'Allāh, that ye may attain Bliss.²⁰

The commandment to lower the gaze is a safety mechanism that protects both men and women from being lured down the road of carnality by their *nafs* (desires). The lust of the eyes are the windows to the appetitive base nature of man. Concupiscence of the eyes is alluded to in the Christian tradition as well. In the First Epistle of John it states:

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of God, but is of the world.”²¹

It was narrated by 'Ibn 'Abbās ؓ from 'Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ حَظَّهُ مِنَ الزَّوْنَا، أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ لَا
مَحَالَةَ، فَرَزْنَا الْعَيْنِ النَّظْرُ، وَزَنَا اللِّسَانِ الْمَنْطِقُ، وَالنَّفْسُ تَمْنَى
وَتَشْتَهَى، وَالْفَرْجُ يَصْدَقُ ذَلِكَ، وَيُكَذِّبُهُ

I did not see anything so resembling minor sins as what 'Abū Hurairah said from the Prophet, who said, “Allāh has written for the son of Adam his inevitable share of adultery whether he is aware of it or not: The adultery of the eye is the looking (at something which is sinful to look at), and the adultery of the tongue is to utter (what it is unlawful to utter), and the inner desires yearn for (adultery) and the private parts turn that into reality or refrain from submitting to the temptation”.²²

Shauqiy, the Persian poet, writes beautifully about the progression of the gaze:

نَظْرَةٌ

All evil starts with the gaze

فَابْتِسَامَةٌ

Followed by a smile

فَسَلَامٌ

Then a greeting

²⁰ 'al-Qur-'ān 24:31.

²¹ Bible, New Testament, First John 2:19.

²² Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārīy 6612, Book 82, Hadith 18.

فَكَلَامٌ

Then conversation

فَمَوْعِدٌ

Then a date

فَلِقَاءٌ

after that the rendezvous

Those who are perpetual casualties of the eyes' seduction, whether beguiled by real people or through popular media culture, may end up with destructive sexual addictive tendencies or compulsivities.

Sexual addiction has affected many Muslim households in today's culture of pornography and prostitution wherein the commodification of the body has become commonplace. This extends to the business of modelling. Mainstream art and film have fused with pornography to the extent that people no longer view erotica, sexual innuendo and the objectification of the human body as taboo.

This vulgarity's presence is no longer only found on the margins of society. With the erosion of our social and moral fabric; it has since taken permanent residence on mainstream television, film, print, advertising and all types of electronic media which in our current electronic age can easily be accessed and often for free. From this, it is evident that we are living in a pornified culture. Sadly, this normalisation leaves many with consuming the antithesis of the Islamic teaching.

Pamela Paul, author of the book *Pornified: How Pornography Is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* argues the very title of her book. In the book, published in 2005, she states that 260 million pages of pornography was available on the internet and increasing rapidly. It is scary to think what the figure is today.

We are living in an addiction culture, according to Doctor Patrick Carnes, the leading expert in sexual addiction and author of many titles on this issue. First, it starts with an impulse; then it becomes compulsive, then addictive which results in the inability to stop. Dr Carnes says that a clear pattern which leads to addiction existed before the boom of the internet. Addiction is often not volitional but induced through trauma, family dysfunction, abuse, fear and stress. The addiction is a symptom of a deep underlying problem and becomes a coping mechanism. The causative history is traceable and can easily be mapped. The internet, however, has altogether changed the face in the making of an addict, he says. Sex addicts can now emerge without having any of the aforementioned causative realities apart from the internet.

When interviewed on the Genius Network, Dr Carnes stated that the situation has reached epidemic proportions with two-thirds of children watching

pornography while doing their homework. He goes on to say that 34% of these kids continue this behaviour and become high-risk victims of severe sexual compulsivity. Internet pornography has become the crack cocaine of sexual addiction with an infinite supply of sexual stimulation at our fingertips.

Sex and drug addiction are the most destructive addictions to combat due to the way it changes the neurochemistry in our brains. Our brains and neuropathways become altered through the addictive stimulus. Rewiring of these pathways through a therapeutic and recovery process is essential for regaining health.

Addiction is not well understood. Most people have a simple understanding of addiction which, according to Dr Carnes, is the most significant healthcare issue, the number one social problem, the biggest cause of injury to children, the top reason for abuse, the main problem in schools and the largest source of crime.

Unfortunately, as a culture, we are not willing to deal and recognise the gravity of this problem.

Whether religious, secular or moralist—it would be prudent to disinvest in lifestyle habits that normalise this insidious and pervasive sexual and addictive boom. All the more reason to be forever vigilant in obeying Allah when he directs us to lower our gaze and guard our modesty.

Failing to do so will diminish the light of the soul, leaving the victim without sanctifying grace.

An anonymous sex addict writes:

“I am all too familiar with the well-known axiom of each man and woman’s inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as stated in the American Declaration of Independence. I, however, conflated the search for these ideas with my pursuit of pleasure and amusement in the avoidance of the pain and funk I experienced and still experience daily. The acuter the pain, the more I would serve my passions and desires in my attempt to fill this void within me. These circuitous acts of indulgence plunge me into the depths of spiritual bankruptcy. This state of being is a dark, cold, eerie and lonely place where the self’s propensities and proclivities feed on greed, gluttony, avarice, lust, pride, vanity and revenge. Here, the possibility of losing hope in the felicity of God and His saving Grace becomes real. For many, it is the start and the end of spiritual death.”

‘Allāh says in the Holy Qur’ān:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

And come not near unto adultery. Lo! it is an abomination and an evil

way.²³

The exegesis of the afore-mentioned verse explicitly asserts that unlawful sexual intercourse is not only a shameful act but a crime against illegitimate offspring and the society.

This egregious sin unleashes and opens doors to many evils. It destroys the family nucleus and unhinges the bonds of community. The adversarial effects of this sin are so immense that `Allāh's order is not that we should not engage in illicit sex but abstain from anything which may lead to it. `Allāh further says:

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَيْشَهِدَ عَذَابُهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by `Allāh, if ye believe in `Allāh and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.²⁴

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry and but a woman similarly guilty, or an Unbeliever: nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman: to the Believers such a thing is forbidden.²⁵

Various opinions exist with regard to whether an unwed pregnant woman may get married during the term of her pregnancy.

The scholars prohibiting marriage are:

- `Imām Mālik
- `Imām `Aḥmad Bin Ḥambal

²³ 'al-Qur-`ān 17:32.

²⁴ 'al-Qur-`ān 24:2.

²⁵ 'al-Qur-`ān 24:3.

- 'Imām 'Abū Yūsuf ('Abū Ḥanīfah's student)
- 'Imām Zufar ('Abū Ḥanīfah's student)

'Imām 'Abū Ḥanīfah opines that marriage is allowed, but prohibits sexual intercourse until after the child's birth.

From amongst the Four Imams, only Imam Shafi'iy does not forbid marriage or sexual intercourse during pregnancy.

Those following the Math-hab of 'Imām Shāfi'iy should remain cognizant of the strenuous viewpoints of his contemporaries regarding this important issue aimed at fortifying the society from disintegration.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

إِذَا ظَهَرَ الزُّنَا وَالرِّبَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ فَقَدْ أَحْلَوْا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ

When *zinā* (fornication/adultery) and *ribā* (usury) manifests itself in a locality/city, then they have made 'Allāh's punishment lawful on themselves.²⁶

Reversions forged from such unions may become rooted in the Islamic ethos even though the point of departure is unIslamic.

The difficulty is that for this to happen, an environment must exist for 'Islām to flourish. Sadly, for many of these reverts, 'Islām does not become established in their hearts. This is due to the absence of a sound Islamic environment at home.

Dress Code

Contrary to common belief; Islamic dress code is not culturally oriented. Unfortunately, culture has often coalesced with 'Islām to the extent that lines have become blurred.

The universality of 'Islām is its ability to enhance and renovate culture. 'Islām acts as a filter for culture. What remains is a purified system compatible with 'Islām. Every culture has a distinctive dress sense. Maintaining a unique dress culture is achieved when applying Islamic guidelines. There is no need for imports other than Islamic *thaqāfah* (Islamic culture), rooted in the Holy Qur-`ān and the *Sunnah* (prophetic tradition).

Multiculturalism is a sign of 'Allāh's Wisdom and Generosity. Embracing and celebrating 'otherness' is one of the great gifts of enlightenment.

²⁶ Reported by Ṭabarāniy and 'Al Ḥākim.