

MUST WE KNOW THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC RULES?

There is a growing tendency among the upcoming generation in particular the educated class of our people to question the reasons behind certain Islamic commands or prohibitions. For example, questions are being raised as to how could listening to music be prohibited in Islam and made sinful when it is an art and essential entertainment in our daily life? Why should we have to pray daily five times during the present busy way of life? What is wrong if males were also to wear golden ornaments?

Such questions are often inspired by man's self-desires to fulfil his physical pleasures to the maximum without any sort of restriction or control over his freedom to do what and when he likes. Any religious rule that commands him to abstain from pleasures of life is detested.

At times it is the ignorance of the true aim of life and understanding of man's obligations towards his creator which causes him to pause such queries.

The question then arises as to whether we are entitled to and is it fair to raise such questions?

There are moments in life when we need and seek professional advice and follow them without raising an argument. For instance, one falls sick, he approaches a recognized physician who prescribes certain medicines to be taken at certain times and in particular dosage. He complies with the prescription without asking the physician why this and why not that. He realizes that the physician is an expert who knows better what is good for him.

Similarly the rules and regulations - the do's and don'ts of Islam are prescriptions from Allah sent through His Apostles for the betterment of our lives in this world and in the hereafter.

Unlike other religions which ask their followers to believe the principles first before understanding, the Islamic Shariat allows full freedom to argue and discuss the matters pertaining to USOOLE-DEEN - the roots of religion till one is fully convinced of their truth.

But once one has understood and convinced himself of the existence of One God and His high attributes of knowledge, wisdom and power etc and His Apostles as true and infallible, then there is no room left to doubt and question the truth and validity of the Islamic rules. We have to accept them as based on sound reason, whether we knew the reason or not or whether the philosophy of every rule is explained to us or not.

One of the aims of Islamic rules made incumbent upon us is that Allah wishes to test our faith and obedience in the short span of our life. If we were to be informed in advance of the philosophy- advantage or disadvantage behind every rule of Islamic Shariat, then our obedience would have been for the sake of our personal interest and not for the sake of obedience to the command of Allah. The purity of our intentions then would not be there.

If the reasons behind certain rules have been explained to us by the Prophet or Imam, well and good and we are thankful to them. But if not, it would not justify our doubting or objecting and we have to obey without arguments.

According to a hadith - tradition quoted in Falsafae Ahkam from Elalu-Sharai, Imam Raza a.s. is reported to have said:

"We have found that Almighty Allah has made lawful that thing which man needs and derives advantage from it whereas the thing which He has forbidden is that which man does not need and it is harmful to him."

Based on this tradition, we can say that no religious duty or rule was sent down to us without a sound reason behind it. Its advantage or harm could be either physical, spiritual, individual or social. It could be either for this world or for the next.

One of the things forbidden by Islam is the listening to music which is so common today as if it were an essential part of daily life. On deep study of the aims of Islamic injunctions, we shall find that they are aimed at producing best of characters in its followers. Therefore, Islam has forbidden those things which tend to divert attention from Allah and from man's divine duties. Music is one of those things which have toxic effect on human mind. Music is also among those things which boosts the emotions and arouse the sensual powers beyond their natural limit. Thus it is likely to promote sins and evils instead of the love and fear of Allah which promote virtues and good deeds.

The same reasons are behind the law forbidding liquor and gambling

Another item of Islamic duties at which some argue as being out of date or impracticable in the present worldly life, is the daily five prayers.

In our day to day dealings between one and another, we see that for every small or big service be it charitable or a paid for one there is an instant expression of thanks. We go shopping and by the time we come out of the shop several exchange of thanks takes places despite the services are part of business in which the motive of profit is served. Does it not therefore, behove we human-beings that we should remember and thank our creator Allah as frequent as is possible for the countless blessings He has bestowed upon us. Prayers are after all nothing else but the performance of man's paramount duty of thanks giving to Allah Who has created everything for the benefit of mankind.

Another thing which makes some wonder at is the forbiddance of the use of golden wares and the wearing of golden ornaments by male persons

Possibly the philosophy behind this could be that Islam wishes to discourage the blocking of cash money in expensive and luxury items made of gold which may boost

man's pride and ego. Instead it wishes to encourage those with surplus income to share with those needy who do not have enough to eat.

Also Islam desires males to be brave and sturdy, capable of fighting or defending himself, his society and even his religion when need be. Therefore it has forbidden man in wearing golden ornaments lest he becomes soft and luxury minded. It has permitted woman to decorate herself with golden ornaments to make her pleasing in the domestic environment. It could also benefit in the sphere of actions in life for which she has been created.

Thus as man progresses in his knowledge and research in the underlying philosophy of things, we may come to know more and of the benefit or harm in the Islamic rules. But the true beauty lies in our willing obedience of the commands of Allah and earning His grace and blessings. Let duty be performed for duty's sake.