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Themes 5: Our Youth ... The Shariah View

Fun and Pastime in their True Extent

What may be said to youths who view the state of youth as a time when they must engage in fun, chatting into the late hours, horseplay, and the like?

We would like for youths to meditate deeply on the following questions:

What is pastime?

What is horseplay?

What is lust—be it sexual, related to food, drink, or other bodily instinct or craving of human beings?

We call on youths to stop at these lusts and to ask themselves: What is their true scope?

The scope of one of these transitory lusts is a mere moment. Sexual lust is that moment of sensation. The lust for food is for having it in the mouth, and so too lust for drink and the other items. For a person may have cherished visions about these lusts before experiencing them, but when he starts to do so, he feels himself at a road's end. For these are the *needs* of a person, and not everything; not his craving or desire. If, therefore, the person becomes obsessed with sex, then he will quickly become bored with it, and may even suffer from repulsion after repetition. And when he is obsessed with food and drink, he becomes vile-smelling or asphyxiated.

Without exception, all this reflects aspirations which do not enrich the stage of youth, but rather give this stage sensations of lust and happiness which, if he were to meditate on them, would in reality have to eschew them after becoming satiated with them.

Therefore, we say to youths, Your youth represents the strength of life, responsibility in life, a wonderful bounty from all the bounties of man. We do not say to them "Do not respond to your needs", but " answer

your needs at the level which your body requires without any negative effects.

And when responding to these physical needs, you must understand that the issue of youth in life, and the issue of life in youth, are more far-reaching, widespread, and responsible than everything you are obsessed about. In your pursuit of empty activities, there will be boredom and monotony, meaninglessness, and the feeling that you are squandering your life."

For life is not simply body and flesh, nor is it without hope and life and aspirations. For there is God, the Independent, Who-when human beings stand in front of Him and live for Him-is felt as if there is no wall or barrier, but a reality which expands and keeps expanding infinitely. Thus, we say to youth, "Open your hearts to God who has created you and enriched your youth with every vitality and activity, and you will find that opening your hearts thus will give you more spiritual and physical pleasure, as well as the pleasure of life with all the good, beauty, freedom, and openness in it."

Sports: The Preferred Hobby of Youth

There are those who consider some types of sport as a waste of time, and restrict sports activity to javelin throwing, horse-riding, and swimming. How do we look at this area, which commands the attention of youth?

Some people freeze before the narrated *hadiths* which show the Prophet Muhammad ruling on a case of training in youth. One such example is the *hadith* "No competition except in camels, arrows, or horses" which speaks of training in archery, and horse and camel-racing, etc. There are also other *hadiths* which stress horse riding, swimming, and archery.

On studying these terms, and the normal needs of the situation prevailing then, we find that the *hadith* indicated an example of needs in time of war. By extrapolation, the *hadith* shows that training was a means for waging war. With progress and change, the arrow becomes a gun or a cannon; the four-legged animal (a horse or a camel) a car, a war tank, a plane and so on. When we speak of swimming and riding horses, it is possible to change them, or to add to them that which may strengthen the body, to develop the mind, and to obtain positive results in the major issues that fill the spare time of youths.

As such, sport is not merely a means to fill empty time. It is a means to develop the body. And if we add to a sporting spirit, which controls the sporting milieu, it may become a means to train the competitive spirit to the point where it can calmly accept defeat, without adding on top of that competition a mental struggle.

We must study these issues (sports and other forms of entertainment) in terms of the positive aspects which they bring; and which may be developed with the passing of time, either with respect to means, the event, or the environment created in this area.

The Concern with Sports

In the field of sports, there are those who, encouraging it, pay special attention to matches and clubs. Some see this as a bad practice. What do you have to say about this?

I do not find a negative point in any of the above issues, if the general atmosphere does not become one of such personal veneration, alien to the results aimed at by organizers in the social field and the positive effects which they hope to see on youths.

Becoming totally immersed in the games per se may mean that the games that attract interest surround youths in a way by which the more important concerns are lost; or more important happenings relating to societal, political, functional and cultural aspects of reality are dismissed.

If the interest in sports does not reach the level outlined above, no negative issue is involved. However, when it changes into an obsession, we must object, since it becomes larger than human concerns and surpasses the positive results intended from it.

We notice that many organizations and international organs of corruption take advantage of this condition to distract youths for their own political agendas.

This is what we wish to caution against. We have noted that immersion in this atmosphere, especially in some advanced countries like America and Europe, people place such great value on these games that that games demand all their attention, to the point where political and social concerns are of lesser concern.

Many leaders of Third World countries try to prevent youth from facing great problems that may have severe repercussions on these rulers. Society does not pay attention to these problems, since they are so attentive to games that they are detached from current events.

It is known that horse-racing is used for gambling and betting. What is the ruling on strictly the entertainment side of the sport, namely, looking and attending?

One of the things that I would like for horse racing is that it be an activity that encourages nurturing. Observing its results at several levels, this sport by nature used to strengthen the faculties of people in the face of war or similar situations. However, this has changed to gambling and betting. Thus it touches *haram* and leads to the negative consequences that gambling usually causes.

There is no doubt that betting is wasteful in this type of sport or competition. If a person wagers with another that such-and-such a horse will beat another horse, the situation implies the presence of a childlike personality which does not reflect on what competition between one person and another humanly means.

Attending these events and looking at the race in one form or another, makes it possible for the person to experience this atmosphere. It encourages him after that to be a participant, seeing wagering and betting as a natural part of horse-racing. He then takes a very active part in it.

Therefore, we do not accept that our believing youth should attend these sports, even if they do not wager. There is a *hadith* which states, "The forbidden things are the protection of God, and whoever hovers around a forbidden thing is likely to fall into it."

Many see problems in modern dress and modes. What reliable criteria allows us to judge the permissibility of this or that style?

I feel that involving the *Shariah* in these matters is to do so in an area in which no negative view has been given. When the social life of people is reflected by their form of dress, in this or that shape, Islam has no problem with that.

Some people may perhaps speak of "*kafir* dress" or of a woman who dresses in the clothes of *kafirs* [non believers]. Upon careful consideration of this topic, we find that this idea stems from an historical period when a way to distinguishing Muslims, who were a tiny minority, from the non-believers, who were an overwhelming majority.

In *Nahj al-Balagha*, there is a *hadith* where Imam 'Ali was asked about the words of the Prophet "Change your gray hairs with dye, and do not appear like the Jews." 'Ali had been asked: "Must we dye our gray hairs?" The Imam responded, "That was when Islam was in a minority." When the number of Muslims increased, there was no problem in distinguishing them from others.

Some jurists probably noted that the *hadith* narrated from the Prophet—"Clip your mustaches and spare the beards, and do not appear like the Jews"—did not appear in the context of an established legal ruling for all time, but came at a particular stage when some demarcation between Muslims and Jews was desired, for social reasons. Now, however, after the Muslims have become numerous in the world, the issue is no longer one of appearing like Jews or Magians, but one of choice, of letting people choose what they wish.

The Woman's Hijab

Regarding the woman's *hijab* (the *Shariah* covering), there are those who do not view that this widely-worn covering these days as adequate. They say the *hijab* is the *chador* or the *abaya*.

The *hijab* reflects *Shariah* issues, the essence of which consists of two points:

1. The body which God has forbidden to be revealed to the non-mahram (i.e. those with whom marriage is allowed).

2. Forbiddance of wanton display and drawing attention.

This means that it is obligatory that the woman's dress be of a type which, in mixed company, neither shows her body nor signals sexual license that might expose her to the ogling of a man. Therefore, any clothing which falls under these two headings is considered within the limits of the *Shariah*.

We do not stress the *chador*, *abaya*, or any particular style, because these are things that the people have made through imitation as a result of a specific environment or of specific preferences. The issue, then, is that the woman should, on the one hand, go out in a decent manner within the limits of the *Shariah*; and, on the other, appear as a dignified woman, not a sexual object. But there is no stress on any special form or type of clothes.

Hijab that Matches the Current Modes

While the *hijab* may fulfill all the conditions of proper covering, some women mix *hijab* with modern women's fashions.

This may lead the sisters to turn the *hijab* into something intended for appearance instead of decent dress. Accepting these modern airs in clothing suggests that something is lacking mentally in this or that woman; and so for attraction she goes out in a manner that draws the eyes of youth upon her. This mental and intellectual backwardness, develops to a stage where the *hijab* is in essence changed rather than enhanced.

Notorious Clothes

What is meant by "notorious clothes" and why are they not allowed?

By "notorious clothes" is dress which people are not accustomed to wearing—depending on the social situation. A man cannot wear the dress of a woman or vice versa, according to what is customary for either of them. Pants now no longer count as solely men's clothing; both men and women wear them. However, wherever a type of clothing is specific to women, or to men, then neither one of them should wear the dress of the opposite sex. This is based on the *hadith* that a man should not wear woman's clothing and that a woman should not wear man's clothing.

If we inquire into the wisdom of this, it would consist of maintaining the social balance by preventing the confusion of psychological states.

The Qualities of the Islamic Hijab

What are the Islamic qualities of the woman's *hijab* (or *Shariah* covering)?

There are two main purposes for the *hijab*. The first is "to cover"—that is, the woman must cover her

body, save the face and the hands. Some scholars opine that as a precautionary measure the face and hands must also be covered. However, we concur with most *'ulama* that the permission to show them is based on the words of God: "

And they should not display of their beauty except that which ordinarily appears" (*al-Nur, 24:31*).

It is necessary that the woman cover her entire body by wearing clothes which fill this function, displaying nothing that is covered.

The second purpose is "negation of wanton display." God has said:

"...and do not display your finery like the displaying of the age of ignorance" (*al-Ahzab, 33:33*).

It is impermissible for the woman to go forth in *hijab*, covering whatever must be covered, and then to appear wanton through makeup adorning her face or hands, or through other items of beautification she might wear.

This includes the items of clothing which make the body appear attractive in a particular manner and so forth. All this is considered wanton display, which shows the femininity of the woman in a suggestive manner rather than her normal humanness in public.

We are unable to put any specific limit on beautification; general custom may determine what is ornamentation and what is wanton display. The latter is an unnatural appearance whereby the woman displays herself and her beauty to the stares of the men.

Islam wants the woman to go forth in her specific clothing in the same way that a man goes forth in his specific clothing. The mixed public should not be a showroom of fashions, beauty, or suggestiveness.

This is the *Shariah hijab* in its proper context. There is a third aspect which is related to *hijab* in meaning if not in appearance—"hijab of the voice", if one may use the expression. Islam does not forbid the woman from speaking to a man, to converse in front of a man, to address political or public gatherings which call for some opening up, to scream in situations which call for screaming.

But Islam does not want the woman to intimate suggestiveness by lowering her voice, making it musical as to be suggestive and intended to rouse instincts. This is what the Qur'an says:

"And do not lower your voices in speech, so that he in whose heart there is sickness may be filled with desire" (*al Ahzab, 33:32*).

Lowering the voice in speech adds to the quality which seductively attracts the male, suggesting corruption. As such, the jurists have said: "It is not permissible to beautify the voice, to make it sweeter, to soften it in a manner suggesting seduction." This is what we mean when we say "the *hijab* of the voice".

Societal Hijab

If we wish truly to understand the Islamic atmosphere surrounding the *hijab*, we must turn to the social *hijab*. Islam dislikes that a woman should be with a man in private situations which pose a danger to her morals and virtue. This is because it may suggest certain fantasies, notions, or feelings which are incompatible with the morals of man and woman together.

We know that being in private, especially with romantic settings, may suggest things that are morally improper, even if virtue should not be absent. This is what Islam hates for both the man and woman. There may be a *Shariah* prohibition because such a situation may lead to *haram*.

The *hadith* about the two sexes being in private shows that Islam has not made the forbiddance of privacy a fundamental principle. Islam forbids the privacy which leads to corruption and moral decay, and hates the privacy which may suggest negative connotations at the level of morality.

Thus, if we do not find the issue of being alone realistic for our times, believing and observing Muslim society is requested to place limits which help distinguish between the privacy which leads to corrupt practices and the privacy which has positive or, at least, not many negative aspects.

The summary of what we wish to suggest through this discourse is that it is incumbent on the woman that *hijab* be reflected in her inner personality, so that she puts in her mind and emotions, her thoughts the specific guidelines which make her aware of the realities of life or the reality of man in a manner that disallow any corrupt ideas, or which might influence her mentality. She must not permit her way of life with the other group to stray from ethical guidelines.

The Mentality of the Fornicator

This is what we have observed with expressions like "fornication lies in the ogling eye," "fornication lies in the receptive ear," or "fornication is in the roving hand"—all of which suggest that a person may have a fornicating mentality without actually indulging in the sexual act. This holds true for many who exercise abstinence from the sexual act but contradict their abstinence in their ethical conduct.

There are those who live the spirit of the fornicator even if they do not actually indulge in the sexual act; and there are those who live the spirit of the deceitful even if they do not actually cheat. For in dreams and hopes, they function on impulse—a problem they need not endure—except in conditions of temptation tending towards the impropriety created by the inner workings of the mind.

Mental Hijab

Hence the man, much like the woman, may require a condition of "mental *hijab*" to protect him from perverse thoughts. In this sense we may feel that the functional method of achieving this result is to

distance both of them from every place and every element of possible seduction, every erotic reading or viewing material.

Here, Islam protects against erotic films, stories, or sights, as they create a mental state in person who may normally be in control of himself whereby he can destroy his inner inhibitions. When exposed to an external incitement around him, his behavior quickly gives way to perverse acts.

When Hijab Loses its Meaning

The Muslim woman must not perceive the *hijab* in its purely concrete and imitative sense, restricting it to a matter of form. What we have observed is that many of those who observe the *hijab* began in a manner that changed their physical *hijab* to a condition which seems far from its true meaning.

This is because they select flashy, gaudy, eye-catching colours which beautify the body in a particular way, which make the woman experience her sexuality even while in *hijab*—in much the same manner as one who does not wear it.

Islam then, does not cast aside her sense of femininity, since it is a normal condition for her. It desires her femininity to be expressed within a special sphere. This sphere neither, on the one hand, influences the humanness of the woman at a moral level; nor, on the other hand, adversely affect the moral values of her society.

The Western Perspective on Hijab

Western societies accuse Islam of going too far in the matter of the *hijab*, that the woman who neither observes *hijab* nor make a wanton display of her charms has no seductive influence on men.

This sort of logic is not realistic perception because of one reason—the femininity of a woman clearly attracts the man, even in a form that does not remotely resemble fornication or seduction. By the same token, the man attracts the woman. This is because the naturalness of the consuming impulses causes the man to be instinctively attracted to the woman—and many of these elements which he finds attractive may be focused in instincts that culminate in a blind rush to express themselves.

We assume, too, that the natural femininity of the woman gives her an intrinsic beauty, and the same for the manliness of the male. Therefore, the claim that the matter does not pertain to the *hijab*, but rather to wantonness is not entirely correct. We feel that wanton display gives the woman a beauty that is different from the beauty given to her by the *hijab*. The hair has its own beauty which adds to the beauty of the body, in the same way that bodily parts like the legs do with their beauty. They produce a special bodily effect, and this is what we know from the advertising media, which constantly draw attention to the hair and the legs.

On the one hand, sentiments go against this. On the other hand, the matter imposing itself in the West is

that belief is expressed as one value, while another value is practiced. In the Western mind, liberty is absolute, and may find expression in sexual license between the man and the woman, in which case the *hijab* is meaningless. This is because the *hijab* is a means of creating the atmosphere of control and balance, of circumventing the factors that lead to perversity.

If, however, we operate on the basis of the idea that the man has freedom over his body and the woman has freedom over her body; and that the *hijab* in this sense is incidental to the life of both sexes, because nakedness is the natural state—then, according to the philosophical notion on freedom, there is no prohibition.

The Principle of Virtue and its Effects

The issue for Muslims stems from the principle of virtue enjoined upon both men and women. This principle is intended to function within the guidelines of actuality. In this way, it prevents the man, no less than the woman, from falling under the influence of the "abundant fuel" that fans the flames of instincts.

Another issue which we must address is the ethical principles of the East and the West. Does ethical principle give man and woman complete freedom as to what they could do with their bodies, or does it lay down certain guidelines for them—and this decides the path of wantonness or *hijab*.

The problem for many Easterners is probably that they continue to rely on the value of virtue and honor in their moral relations between man and woman, at the same time following Western customs with respect to suggestive display, beautification, and so forth.

This causes them to endure a dichotomous situation that ruins their lives when they face a perverse man or woman in some such atmosphere. To save honor, they wash the naked person and perform other similar practices. In this situation, the words of the poet are appropriate:

They went to sea, and shackled and fettered he was thrown: Don't, don't let water bother you...

The Hijab and Repression

The gist of another misconception indiscriminately included in this matter is that the *hfjab* creates a state of repression for the man which subjects him to intense influence by the slightest thing.

When we wish to speak of repression, we must realize that it is not a result of the *hijab*, but rather of denying the instinctive needs of a man. It is caused by a situation that runs contrary to his inner mental and instinctive state, which seeks expression in one form or another. Reality clashes with it and prevents it from expression. Repression may result when the woman refuses to observe the *hijab* in the presence of a man.

The matter then boils down to the fact that there is a difference between the repression that result from

problems and the repression that stems from the realities of regulated society. We believe that every social, political, and moral rule may cause problems in the mind of the human being who is prevented from obeying his inner urges. If we were to understand the workings of repression negatively for actual society, with its imposition of limits, then we may as well call for anarchy, so that no human being may face the problem in any way.

Certainly every society must follow a specific moral model, and this model may not be related to sexual ethics, but rather to economics or society. Sexual ethics may not relate to what man or woman wear, but to what the man wants from the woman and what the woman needs from the man.

If we claim that the *hijab* in its Islamic form causes repression, what must we say about uncovering in its general social appearance; does it not cause repression? Does the youth not like to look upon a woman's chest and different parts of her body? Would a man not feel the pleasure of beauty of every part of this body, its suggestions, in the same way that a woman would the male body?

When the issue transcends that of nudity, the discourse—in the West—will center on the amount of clothes a woman must wear. In this sense, the proponents of *hijab* simply add another item to the apparel of the Western woman, who does not wear the *hijab*. And repression is repression, whether in part or in whole.

That Which Naturally Appears of Beauty

What is meant by the words of God, "***What appears thereof***" (*al-Nur*, 24:31)—i.e., the permissible display of beauty?

"What appears thereof" refers to the face and the two hands, the latter being essential to social function. Perhaps the clearest proof that God does not wish for the woman to cover her face and her hands is that it is forbidden for her to do so in a state of *ihram* during pilgrimage. However, the state of pilgrimage is one of worship which may necessitate the *hijab* on the woman to spare the other pilgrims exposure to suggestive stimuli.

We may add that in some narratives the expression refers also to some visible ornamentation like rings worn on the hand, light substance over the eyelids, normally a cosmetic for women.

Based on the above, is beauty that which the woman beautifies herself with or is it a natural distraction?

It covers both.

What is Forbidden Glance Regarding the Woman

When we study the Qur'anic text which deals with the issue of looking, we find that the idea we derive from the Book is that God (Exalted) wishes that the senses and feelings which the believing man has towards the believing woman, and vice versa, be pure. This means that they do not have any evil

blemish which may distance them from morality.

Senses and feelings must not cause the believing man or woman to be in a situation which beckons to future corruption. This is because God wants humankind to live a life without sin in the mind, in thoughts and concepts; and that this sinlessness should be a way to attain functional freedom from sin, since deeds spring from ideologies, feelings, and perceptions.

We read, then, the wonderful verse,

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their glance, and guard their private parts; that is purer for them. Indeed God is well aware of all that they do" (*al-Nur, 24:30*).

We understand from the term "purer for them" that God wants the human being to have a purity of mind which transforms to purity of action.

Again, the words of God:

"Say to the believing women that they must lower their gaze and guard their private parts" (*al-Nur, 24:31*).

And the text on how a woman should speak to a man:

"Do not lower your voice in speech; perchance he in whose heart is sickness may cherish a longing" (*al-Ahzab, 33:32*).

Here we see that God wants woman to speak to the man in a natural manner. If she were to address him with gentle and melodious tones, that may suggest to others that they can pursue their own corrupt purposes towards this woman.

The Deceitful Look

From all of the above, we see that a man must look at a woman in a natural manner, so that there is no untoward thought associated with his look—that is, glancing at the woman in a way that expresses a desire to do that which *is haram*, etc. This is known as "the deceitful look" and is mentioned in the Qur'anic verse:

"He knows the stealthy looks and what the hearts hide" (*Mumin, 40: 19*);

and the supplication of the one who says, "O my Lord, purify my heart from hypocrisy, and my deeds from showing off, my tongue from lies, my eyes from deceit; for you know the deceitful look, and what the hearts hide."

The deceitful look is the glance which stems from a feeling which has deceit at its core. This is another

expression for the desire of what is forbidden, and which starts the person, even afterwards, towards corruption.

No Passion and No Lust

The look, therefore, must not be one of lust, where the man ogles the woman to enjoy her beauty. It leads to negative results even if it occurs only ten percent of the time. This is because there is a difference between looking lustfully at a beautiful woman and looking at ordinary sights with appreciation.

This is because appreciating the beauty of a woman sets into motion urges which lead to sexual feelings; these, in turn, spur the man to pursue the woman. In view of this, it leads to negative results; whereas appreciating ordinary sights does not cause any of these effects.

For this reason, the jurists have ruled that looking at what is permissible should not be in lust or passion. The poetic verse of the prince of poets, Ahmad Shawky, is perhaps one of the most exquisite attestations on this matter:

A glance, a smile, and then talk;

a greeting, an appointment, a date.

By those words, he meant the glance which sets into motion what is to come: the passionate or lecherous look. We may understand from the expression "the first look is for you, and the second is against you" that generally, the first glance is something natural and spontaneous. When it leads to a second and third look, then something in the mind pushes the person to keep looking again and again, but with different feelings.

Lowering the Glance is a Preventive Condition

Often the passionate glance may be involuntary, and the person may be in a situation which forces him to look at his female companion at work or study. Through personal contact and meetings, feelings are generated.

The familiarity between a man and a woman may create a condition of close friendship, causing the man to look at her differently from the way he did at first. There is a difference between looking normally at a woman in the course of working (which requires that you look at her or that she should look at you) and the look which stems from your feelings or desire for her. A glance in that instance is not considered natural, but a condition which creates a mental state which may change into a situation leading to something not natural.

From here, God wants the believers to lower their gaze, as a precaution against negative consequences.

By the same token, it is better for a believing woman to lower her gaze. One may construe from this that it is necessary for believing man and woman to be in a state of caution when having to deal under these situations.

Of course, the discourse here has to do with permissible looking. What is not permissible to look at, Islam has put limits—particularly, looking at the private parts of a woman—in the same way it has put limits on woman looking at the private parts of the male. The purpose of this is to avoid any basis for suggestiveness which, because of mental conditioning regarding sexual relations, may be in the mind of one of them. Thus, some sociologists state that platonic friendship between a man and a woman is unlikely.

The Shariah Limits in the Permitted Look

What, then, is the philosophy behind the permissibility of looking at certain non-*mahram* female?

The *fatwa* which the question raises entails two others. The first *fatwa* is that the glance is towards those who remain uncovered after being asked to cover, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims, although some *ulama* enjoin that, based on caution, one ought not to look at such Muslim women.

This is because there is a legal understanding where a *hadith* suggest that the matter of looking at a woman implies the issue of respect for the woman. She may cover part of her body, but then the man's glance seems to undress her and to assault her honor, on the premise that this is the area she wants to cover. She does not wish anyone to look at that part, and were she to find a person sneaking a glance at her, she would rebuke and harshly scold him.

Respecting the Veil Leads to the Respectful Look

A person covers those parts of the body which he/she wishes not to expose. Therefore, the issue of looking at that which should be covered is fundamentally alien to any consideration of attraction or lack of attraction. According to this, if the woman does not place any restriction on her body, and displays all her charms, then there is no restricted area on her body which the man should not look at. As such, it is allowable for him to look at her without any lust or passion.

This is one angle. From another angle, the difficulty is allayed when the person faces a social situation where the woman goes out without covering, making it impossible for the man to lower his gaze from her. The *hadith*, it states, "It is not forbidden to look at the hair of the women of the protected minorities (*dhimmis*)."¹ In this case, the stipulation is removed because, in the West, for example, it represents a hardship for the man. This is because the woman is the one who abandoned respect for herself in this matter. However, on the condition that the possibility of passion and lust is absent.

The Glance at the Photo of a Woman

The second *fatwa* is related to the matter of photographs. There are *fatwas* which state that it is not forbidden to look at the photograph of a woman. Some *'ulama* deny such permission in the case of a veiled woman who does not wish that anyone should look at her body, even if it be through a photograph, since her photograph was taken by a *mahram*, for example.

The scholars place a cautionary prohibition on looking at the photograph of a covered woman, if the person looking knows the identity of the subject. That would violate her covering, because if she wants to cover herself, and goes to this length, such a look is tantamount to an infringement of her freedom and honor.

Beyond the scope of this scenario, however, if the woman were unknown to us, or is one of those who do not observe the *hijab* and is uncovered, *'ulama* hold that the prohibitions about looking applies to looking at the woman in person, and not through a photograph.

They focus the issue on the fact that there was no passion or lust in the look. From this we can see that the foregoing *fatwa* does not apply to looking at pornographic films, since that would enter the realm of passion and lust, and does not detach itself from a mental state that could cause a morbid condition in the person who is in the habit of looking at these films.

The Look in Specific in Medical Situations

From the medical point of view, is it possible for the man to look at the body of a woman?

There is no objection for a man, in such a scenario, to look at the sex organs of a woman whom he does not know, there being no objection from a scientific viewpoint. A doctor is allowed to look at the patient, and the female doctor is allowed to look at any organ of a male patient if treatment and cure must be decided on such observation.

It has been stated that if a woman can derive more benefit by being treated by a man than by a woman, she is allowed to expose herself to him, and he is allowed to look at something otherwise forbidden in normal situations. In a *hadith* related from Imam al-Baqir—in response to a question—the narrator said, "I asked him about a Muslim woman whose body has been injured, either by a fracture or a wound in a place where it is not allowable to look at. If a man is more qualified than women to treat it, is he allowed to look at it? He said, 'If she is compelled to do so, then he may treat her if she wishes.'"

There is a *hadith* from Imam Musa al-Kazim, reported by his brother 'Ali b. Mar, which states thus, "I asked him about a man, the back of whose thigh has an injury. Is it allowable for a woman to look at it and to treat him?" He responded, "If it is not a private part, there is nothing wrong with that."

Guardianship Over the Female Youths

What are the limits of the guardian over his female ward?

There is no guardianship over the girl who is mature, sane, and able to conduct her affairs; just as there is no guardianship over the youth who is mature, sane, and able to conduct his affairs. This is because when a person has attained puberty, and is of sound judgment, then he has the right to conduct his own affairs:

"Test the orphans until they reach the age of puberty; then if you find in them maturity of intellect turn over to them their property" (al-Nisa, 4:6).

The matter here is not restricted only to the orphans, but to anyone under such conditions.

According to some jurists, based on some *hadith*, there are restrictions, which dictate that a virgin must seek the counsel and permission of her father or grandfather. This is not because guardianship is implied in the general meaning of the word, since neither the father nor grandfather has the right to marry her off without her consent. Nor do they have the right to marry the minor boy or girl who has not yet attained puberty without her consent.

Rather, the young woman must consent if they are to be allowed to marry her.

Precaution in the Case of the Virgin Young Lady

There are some precautions for the virgin in view of her lack of experience, or the possibility that she may be duped or cheated. From this perspective, her seeking the permission of her father counts as a way to protect the young lady in her marriage relation with any man. Moreover, because of this there is no requirement that permission be sought from the father or the grandfather, if she is no longer a virgin.

It is likely that some people may not see the issue as being restricted to this aspect, but as including respect for her father or grandfather, according to the traditions of Mediterranean Islamic societies. Since the girl is not married except by the permission of her father or grandfather, it would seem that the issue includes social respect for the father or grandfather, who must have a say in the affairs of his daughter. The premise is that a bad position for her reflects badly on her father, and a good position for her reflects well on him.

From here, the jurists do not feel that if the father and grandfather is dead, anyone's permission should be sought, indicating that the matter is not one of her inability to exercise judgment, but is related to a precautionary measure for the future of the girl, or to showing respect to the father and grandfather.

There is another view which says that it is not obligatory for the girl to seek the permission of her father or grandfather regarding her spouse, that she is free to make this decision.

The Independent Young Woman

As for my own view, the girl is independent regarding her personal affairs and property, if she normally exercises good judgment.

Why, then, is the matter restricted to a woman and not a man?

This is because the man in society may have more experience in matters of marriage and a general understanding of marriage. He has more opportunity to do so than the young woman.

This is one angle. From another angle, the matter may be explained on the basis that the man, if he is deceived in marriage, has the right to issue a divorce; whereas Islam has not given the woman the right of divorce. This means that the woman must be cautious not to fall into a situation from which she cannot escape except with great difficulty.

The Young Lady Who May Look After Her Affairs (Raashida)

How may we determine the age of maturity and guidance—meaning when can the young woman look after her own affairs?

There is no specific age, for we may find a responsible young lady who may be only eleven or twelve years old, and we may find a girl who is in her twenties and unable to conduct her own affairs.

What is the communal understanding of responsible for conducting her own affairs?

The communal understanding stems from the mental level of the young man and young lady have which enables them to look after their financial affairs in a way that is not considered as sign of foolish behavior.

Exhorting to Good (Al-Amr Bi-I-Maruf) is Different From Guardianship

In a situation where the young lady is married, does her father's guardianship over her terminate?

Basically, there is no guardianship of the father over his daughter once she attains puberty and can conduct her own affairs. But as we have said, it is simply to protect her in the issue of marriage. Except for this, the father has no guardianship in any other area. If we imagine that he has a daughter, then he has no guardianship over her education, her *jihad*, and her financial conduct—except when she becomes corrupt. In that case, it is not an issue of the father in relation to his daughter, but one of a believer with

respect to a believing woman in that area where the good must be commanded and evil forbidden (*al-amr bi-l-maruf wa-n-nahi ani-l-munkar*). Therefore, the father has no guardianship over his daughter, either before or after marriage.

Is it not the father's right, for example, to force his daughter to observe hijab?

Not in the context of being a father or a husband, but in the context of his being a Muslim—ordering that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong. When a young lady obeys her father by observing the *hijab*, she does not obey him because he is her father or that fatherhood dictates this, but rather because he exhorts and guides. It must be realized that the process of coercion may create negative repercussions which may create a greater problem than the one being solved. The *Shariah* guidelines then must be followed when commanding the good and forbidding the evil.

Confusion Between Custom and Shariah Law

Custom is sometimes given precedence over *Shariah* law. However, it cannot be given precedence over *Shariah* in any situation. The role of custom is based on the understanding drawn from the religious texts of the Qur'an and *Sunna* in this area. The matter may be one of natural difference in object per se as opposed to difference in a perceived custom.

For example, there is a *fatwa* which states that: "*It is not permitted for a man to wear women's dress, nor is it permitted for a woman to wear men's clothing.*" If we assume that a certain dress was initially male garb, and its usage has become so widespread that it is an item for both sexes (such as trousers), then the precedence of customary practice with respect to the changed status of this garb has changed the issue. When a woman today wears trousers, she is not seen as imitating a man, since the trousers are worn by both sexes.

Custom may be applied to the change in particular aspects of the scope of a *Shariah* ruling, but may not change the *Shariah* ruling itself as long as the general scope of the subject holds.

The General Customary Perception of Temporary

While we are discussing customary practice, let us go to the subject of *muta* or temporary marriage—for customary practice in several societies regards this as putting down the woman, since she is treated sometimes as a fornicator.

We cannot, as a basic principle, respect the view of customary perception on this subject. This is because Islam came to change perceptions. When custom rejects and considers something wrong which Islam perceives as natural, we cannot yield to custom. However, the negative view of custom may

lead, in cases such as these, to dislike the act. A hostile view towards the practice may cause it to be seen as dishonoring the man and the woman, and a person may not wish to put himself in this dubious position.

Therefore, the position we take is strong dislike of temporary marriage for virgins, even if the father and grandfather are not present, since this may lead the woman to be dishonored in social circles.

We may note that custom is quite prevalent in the area of dishonor. Some tribal societies may consider that a woman who is married outside of her family, or to someone other than her cousin to be dishonorable. This negative view may also apply to the marriage of a divorced woman or a widow.

Islam came to correct the perception of custom. But if custom plays a role where it is seen as a second criterion of judgment, then the *Shariah* ruling follows this new criterion, which may regard something as disliked [*makruh*] or even forbidden [*haram*], etc.

Muta is a Protection Against Corruption

Has Islam legislated temporary marriage (*muta*) as a natural right of a person to whenever he wishes, or is it legislated for a specific situation or as a solution to a specific problem?

The Qur'anic text which the proponents of *muta* refer to is:

"And those of whom you seek content (istamtatum) [by marrying them], give to them their due" (*al-Nisa*, 4:24).

We find this text unconditional. When we analyze the subject of *muta*, however, we find that it may be an answer to an emergency; it may deal with a particular need; or it may deal with a desire. Permanent marriage, throughout history and in every religion and civilization, did not solve this problem for humankind, nor restrained people, as in the case of the people of Lot.

For fornication in illicit relations went side by side with permanent marriage. This was because permanent marriage may not be the solution for a man who has a stronger libido than his wife; as such, Islam allowed him to marry four and allowed him *muta*, as he wishes in order to protect himself from corruption. The matter then is not restricted to a particular time.

Polygyny

Is the plurality of wives natural? Was it intended to solve a problem? Is it possible for a man to marry, from the outset, four wives, or is it an opening for him to solve certain marital problems?

It appears the issue is unconditional with respect to pressing problem or lack thereof, since the requirement for the man who wishes to engage in polygyny, is that he possess the means of support.

There are those—as in Europe—who problematize the issue of polygyny as one which causes tension and confusion within the family.

We believe that abundant confusion in married life has become normal in America and Europe, and in places around the globe; although illicit relationships are far more frequent than polygyny, with all its tensions.

Naturally polygyny has negative aspects, just as monogamy has negative aspects. There is no legislation which does not have a negative side. The issue, however, is that when the positive aspects outweigh the negative, it becomes permissible. When the negative aspects outweigh the positive aspects, it becomes forbidden.

We believe that polygyny, with all its negative aspects, still has several positive, mitigating factors.

Desirability of Early Marriage

There are several views on early or delayed marriage. There are those who prefer early marriage and those who prefer later.

In Islam, early marriage is desirable, since a person is required to protect himself and to avoid falling into *haram*. There is no doubt that early marriage allows the person to satiate his sexual instincts, the cravings of which, may otherwise lead to deviant behavior.

We also note that Islam has not presented a clear text on this, but rather sees marriage as a personal relationship which allows a person to pursue his desires or to satisfy his instincts, among other things. If early marriage presents problems for the two spouses, these problems may be solved by those around them—in the same way that delayed marriage presents a problem to the community.

Smoking is Forbidden

The fundamental rule is that things are permissible if there is no mention of their prohibition in scriptural text. I, however, lean towards the view that there is an excellent argument for the prohibition of smoking, according to what can be derived from the noble verse: "

They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In them both is great evil and good for people, and their evil overcomes their good" (*al-Baqarah, 2:219*).

If we interpret the term "evil" as "harm", or that which causes harmful effects—since it is on the principle of prohibition of that which has more harm than good—then the rule is that everything which causes more harm than good is forbidden.

As all doctors testify, the harm caused by smoking outweighs its benefits. Therefore, one may incline

towards its prohibition. Even if the issue is not one of prohibition, it certainly calls for caution.

There is the point that if the person knows that smoking will most probably cause a terminal illness, even if after twenty years—doctors show that smoking may cause death—then it becomes *haram*.

We say to any person who wishes to take up any habit that he must study its nature and particulars, its benefits compared against its harmful effects. If he sees evil instead of benefits, the logical conclusion is that he ought not to take up this habit. If he has already taken it up, he should leave it, since the thinking person does not put himself in harm's way, nor does he permit himself to continue in that which is harmful.

When we study the problem of smoking, we see that it is a practice, and therefore a habit which necessitates that one stay away from it. A person must resume control of himself if he has already taken up smoking.

If a person stands in front of a chimney and opens his mouth to inhale the smoke, don't you see that people will think him crazy? Taking smoke through the mouth is not normal. There is no difference between this and inhaling smoke into the body through the use of a cigarette!

What is the Islamic ruling on drugs?

Drugs are forbidden since their influence on the mind and health is worse than ordinary intoxicants. The reason for the prohibition of intoxicating beverages is drunkenness, which causes a person to lose his mental capacity. This is what happens with drugs, added to which is the physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual harm caused in the person's life.

What about certain types of drugs like opium and the like?

I do not have precise information on the drug qualities of these two items, but if they possess similar effects as the better known drugs, they are forbidden.

What do the jurists mean by the term "non-liquid intoxicant"?

That the product is from the hashish which the jurists see as an intoxicant.

What about the issue of cultivating it?

If it is forbidden, it is impermissible for selling, trading, and growing for the purpose of selling.

Cinema and Television

What are the limits of permissibility regarding cinema and television?

Cinema and television are two information media, and judgment as to their *halal* or *haram* is contingent on the nature of the information provided. If the material relates to lust, moral corruption, and incitement to crime, then it is forbidden; if it does not, it is permissible.

There is No Prohibition on Shaving The Beard

I have concluded that there is no prohibition, since the basis of prohibition is the *hadith* which states: "Clip the mustache and spare the beard, and do not appear as the Jews." If then, the ruling is predicted on a consideration of appearance for the purpose of differentiating between Muslims and Jews, then this is specific to the situation where the Muslims are a minority and others a majority which calls for some demarcation.

When Imam 'Ali was asked about the words of the Messenger of God: "Change your gray hairs by dyeing them; do not appear as the Jews do," he responded, "He said that when Islam was a minority, but now it has become known and widespread, so let the person do what he chooses."

It is understood from the *hadith* that the prohibition of shaving the beard was contingent on a time-related issue at the beginning of the Islamic message. Afterwards, however, the shaving of the beard became a matter of appearance. If people wanted to make an example of a person and ostracize him, it was said: "Shave his beard"—the same way that the head is now shaved as a form of punishment.

There are some jurists who seek proof in the biographical accounts of the Prophet and the Imams. But biography is not a proof for prohibition, since their conduct may have been the result of opinion, or a natural state of affairs where shaving of the beard was unknown amongst the Muslims.

Are there jurists who allow its shaving?

Al-Sayyid al-Khui disallowed shaving on the basis of obligatory precaution and not as a prohibition.

Shaking Hands With The Opposite Sex

The basic rule is that a man is not allowed to shake hands with a woman who is not his *mahram*. It was narrated regarding the pledge of allegiance to the Prophet that when the women came to him, he said "I do not take the hands of women," and he placed a bowl of water, wherein the woman would put her hand at one end, and he would place his hand at the other end, and took the pledge in this manner.

It was narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt that "a man does not shake hands with a woman who is not his *mahram*, except from behind a piece of cloth."

If, however, such a situation threatens to cause great harm or to lead to a crisis that do not normally correspond to the circumstances, then it is permissible.

The other person may feel that you wish to humiliate him if you do not return his handshake.

It is possible in this case for a person to clearly understand the issue. The important thing is that a person must first be in an extremely difficult situation, whose circumstances he cannot bear; for God has said,

" **[God] has not caused you difficulty in your religion**" (*al-Hajj*, 22:78).

How one determines what is difficulty differs according to the persons and the place. One person may be so insecure that, if he does not shake hands he may be imprisoned; or be accused of belonging to some particular party, as in the countries which seek to impugn and to test Islamic activists and followers through this method.

Purity (Taharah) of The People of The Book

I rule on the purity (*taharah*) of every human being, regardless of whether he is a non-believer or a Muslim, for there is no impure (*najis*) person in his essence. He may be impure in his beliefs, in his feelings or perceptions, but there is no proof, in my analysis of the *Shariah*, for the impurity of any person *qua* person. The believer and the non-believer both become impure by known impurities.

The martyr Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr saw purity in every human being, but he was cautious about the nonscriptural non-believer because of the consensus (*ijma*) on this issue.

What about the ritual impurity (najasah) indicated by the Qur'an?

The "impurity" meant here is the impurity of polytheism, the (mental) defilement of polytheism, and the proof for this is:

"**Verily the polytheists are impure, and they may not come near the Sacred Mosque**"(*al-Tawba*, 9:28).

If intrinsic uncleanness were intended, the impurity is achieved by fresh moisture; without this there is no impurity. Even those who propound the uncleanness of the non-believer, state that we do not use this verse as proof of uncleanness, since the meaning here is abstract.

Good enough—but what about eating their meat?

No, the premise being that it is stipulated the name of God must be invoked. The prevalent opinion is that the slaughterer must be a Muslim. However, we find that the ruling on the legality of meat from a person of the People of the Book is similar to the view of the Shahid II. We thus feel that the ruling of prohibition in the assumed scenario is based more on precaution, as is the position of the martyr Sayyid al-Sadr.

Music...The Lawful and The Unlawful

Views clash concerning music, and it is the same regarding singing. Is there a juridical view that puts this controversy to rest?

When we study legal texts which count as the basis for the prohibition of music, we find that they rely on the verse,

"There are those people who pay for mere pastime of discourse, and detract from the path of God without knowledge" (*Luqman*, 31:6); or,

"And shun false talk" (*al-Hajj*, 22:30)–

which are said to corroborate the prohibition on singing. There are also *hadiths* which classify singing as having no foundation; and another *hadith* about a man who was listening to some maidservants who were singing at a corner of his house; he was ordered to seek forgiveness.

We understand from the foregoing that the *Shariah* ruling on singing and music is based on two issues: First, that the singing should be distracting, interrupting the remembrance of God, and having some influence. We do not intend here to present the basic jurisprudential proof, because that requires long research. Our view is that music which does not fan the impulses; does not lead to entertainment which alters the normal state of the person; and has nothing which may lead to lust must be seen as permissible, by virtue of all this.

If what is called classical music falls within these parameters, it is permissible; likewise for symbolic or inspirational music, the kinds that raise spirits, calm the nerves, soothe the mentality, etc.

Perhaps the jurists who had ruled on singing by prohibiting it were referring to the illicitness, wantonness, and evil of the people of corruption.

Its Tune or Its Ancillaries?

There are those who explain that singing is prohibited because it is accompanied by music.

The prohibition of singing—in the prevalent view of the jurists—stems from the natural melody of song; and if singing covers some illicit aspects, then those things are another *haram*.

Another jurist (Mulla Muhsin al-Kashani) who ruled that the prohibition on singing pertains to what singing entails and its ancillaries, not its melody *per se*. The overwhelming majority of jurists, however, do not agree with this. When we study the issue of singing, we see that its influence is due to the melody that underlies it, even though its ancillaries do enter the picture.

I do rule in favor of abstinence in this area, which perhaps agrees with what the above mentioned jurist has opined, namely, that when music deals with prophetic praises, or poetry, or what is close to a melodic Qur'anic recitation which grabs the attention, then we do not see this as a waste of time or a wrong. This is because the melody and its ancillaries in this respect do not convey a meaning in the mind that is deeper than if it were delivered in a normal way.

Using Musical Instruments in a Halal Manner

What about the prohibitions on musical instruments?

There are *hadiths* which speak about the prohibition on the use of musical equipment, but they refer to the entertainment and amusement that are *haram*. There are scholars who view the prohibition of instruments used predominantly for *haram* purposes, even when they can be used for halal purposes. However, we see no problem in using these same instruments for *halal* purposes, whether they are predominantly or equally used for *haram*.

Instruments of Plaintive Melodies

What about instruments which produce plaintive notes, such as the flute?

The issue lies not in the joy or the sadness, for a person may be moved to experience delight in sadness— which causes a type of prohibition in this field in the prevalent view of some jurists.

The qasidas of knowledge are often love verses—what about their recitation?

If the *qasida* provides deeper knowledge, but its delivery is that of a *ghazal* and its general ancillaries, so that people understand only the *ghazal* content, then it does not fall within the parameters of *halal*, its intent being to influence the mind.

Classical Music

I do not have such a music background that I can differentiate between the types of music. But it is well-known that classical music suggests intellectual thought more than simple amusement or delight. If this, indeed, is the case, then one may rule on its permissibility.

In case of doubt concerning a melody—is it halal or haram—what is the solution?

Where there is doubt, the ruling is for permissibility—on the premise that everything is permissible until you know for certain that it is forbidden.

Can we define what is meant by "tunes of the people of immorality?"

The "tunes of the people of immorality" refers to those tunes which suggest dancing, delight, or lust.

A Woman Singing For Her Husband

Is it permitted for a woman to sing for her husband?

It is not allowed for her to sing forbidden songs, meaning that if the song is not permitted, or if it falls within the category of illicit songs (consisting of lies or deceit) then she is not allowed to sing, even to herself.

Singing At Weddings

It appears that there are *hadith* which make an exception for weddings, but there is no mention of the use of musical instruments. The *hadith* which points to the permissibility of singing at weddings is not restricted to the conditions we have so far mentioned. It is to be expected that the lyrics should not be *haram*, although they may be amusing and the tunes delightful.

A Woman's Reciting At Men's Gatherings

Is it allowed for a woman to recite Islamic *qasidas* to non-*mahram*?

There is a verse which says:

"Do not lower your voice, for he in whose heart there is sickness may be moved with desire" (al-Ahzab, 33:32)–

which means that trilling and liting the voice by the woman in front of non-*mahram* men is forbidden according to the *Shariah*, on the premise that it might lead to the negative consequences indicated by the verse.

The Problem Lies in Influence

Is this view always unconditional?

The issue is connected to influence—for were the woman to recite poetry or verses, but non-suggestively, it would not constitute haram. The problem arises then in respect of the effect of the woman's speech. But she may recite verses without any suggestiveness. Some women have a naturally melodious voice, where any rise or drop in tone is suggestive, and this is what we construe from the verse "***Do not lower your voice.***"

There Is a View That States "The Voice of a Woman Is Private"

We do not say this because women used to speak with the Prophet and the Imams. Moreover, the biographies show that women sought out and questioned *‘ulama* without this eliciting a prohibition from any religious authority regarding the voice of the woman.

The proponents of the above view claim that a woman may speak to a man only in emergencies. We believe that the biographies referred to issues which bear little relation to emergencies. On the contrary, they arise under normal circumstances, for why else would it be transmitted from the time of the Prophet that the women behaved in straightforward manner; that they came to him to pledge allegiance and emigrated to Medina, and God ordered the Muslims to test the women "of their right hand"? We find no basis for stipulating the condition of emergency in this area.

The Prophet used to go forth with the women to treat the wounded, to give water to the thirsty, and so forth. This required mixing and speaking to them.

The Ruling on Chess

The Hadith that Speak about Chess

When we study the *hadiths* that have surfaced among Shia and Sunnis on the subject of chess, we find that there are narratives which suggest of prohibition ("it is sinful"; "do not approach it!"). There is the *hadith* on this subject where a person asked about chess and was told: "If God classified it between truth and falsehood, where would it be?" He replied, "With falsehood." He said: "What is it with you and falsehood!" Another person asked about chess and he said: "There is no good in it."

Another *hadith* states: "The one who indulges in chess is like one who indulges in pork." He asked "What

should he do?" The answer was, "He must wash his hands to cleanse himself of it."

These *hadiths* suggest dislike more than they do prohibition. But we also find *hadiths* which explain the words of God,

"Eschew the abominable from the idols" (al-Hajj, 22:30).

In some exegetical works [tafsirs] the reference is to chess. What is clear, however, is that there is no clear proof for the prohibition, only a scenario where play is wagered in some form. Considering chess as gambling points to this, and gambling is understood to encompass wagering.

Chess in a Halal Setting

Should we refrain from accepting the view on the permissibility of chess?

Imam Khomeini ruled on the permissibility of chess on the grounds that the view of its prohibition depended on chess being regarded as a tool of gambling. He felt that it has come out of this classification and entered the realm of the permissible. This is confirmed by some *hadiths* which insist that "certainly chess is gambling" but they do not attach the meaning of gambling to chess in the absence of specific features of gambling.

There must be a bet and winnings in gambling. If we are able to understand from the *hadith* that chess was forbidden, on the view that it was used as a gambling apparatus, then we must concur with the Imam's view on permissibility. If we cannot do this, we must reserve judgment on the position that it is *halal* or *haram*, since the issue calls for more research. But permissibility does not seem far from the truth.

And dominoes . . . ?

In our scholarly research (*ijtihad*), playing with gambling equipment or whatever resembles it is not forbidden where there is no gambling involved. We do not agree with scholars who state that playing with gambling equipment is *haram*, even in the absence of betting, on the judgment that mere play is forbidden.

My view is in favor of the permissibility of playing with gambling equipment and their similar modern inventions; and on this basis, play money and the like is not forbidden. In this view, I side with the ruling of a great Iranian scholar, the dear departed Ayatullah Sayyid Ahmad Khwansari.

What is the view on visiting places where there is gambling and

the like?

Visiting these places may be considered under certain aspect—the person may be attracted to gambling while there; there may be other illicit activities, the honor of a believer may be sacrificed there or his reputation tarnished. In all these cases, the ruling is that it is forbidden.

Yes, if there is some need for him to visiting these places—such as to speak to a person, without this leading to any accusation or loss of honor and reputation—then there is no objection.

Fortune Telling and Reading The Future

Magazines circulate abundantly among the youth. Some focus on predicting the future—through the signs of the zodiac, palmistry, and teacup reading. There are two questions on this subject: What is the view of Islam on this; and what is the connection between predicting the future and the unseen through magic?

There is no basis whatsoever that these are a means to know the unseen future, since there is no relation between them and the actions of people or cosmic occurrences. It is possible that the issue of the zodiac and the planets stemmed from some ancient non-Islamic beliefs. In older times, some people felt that the stars had an effect on human affairs and the universe. This caused them to associate signs with certain planets in order to gain some idea of the future—whether in terms of personality traits, under this or that sign, or some such thing.

Horoscopes In Newspapers and Magazines

This custom has become so dominant in our society that many magazines and newspapers dedicate special pages for this pastime, where it is assumed that such-and-such a person under such-and-such a sign has specific traits and that a particular event may occur at some point in time. However, we do not find any Islamic basis for this. Rather we see traditions which forbid learning astrology to predict the fixture. Indeed, one of the Imams of the AN al-Bayt asked some people who dealt with this kind of information, "Do you predict?" They said: "Certainly." He said: "Burn your books."

As for teacup reading or summoning the spirits, those who indulge in these practices have no basis for associating them with any reality. We have no wish to deny categorically, nor do we possess any extensive study for their refutation. However, the experiences which the people speak about do not suggest any truth in this area. If we have doubts, we should deem them fantasies and hallucinations.

If some of these predictions have some truth, the truth does not result from the means, but is coincidental—in exactly the same manner as the people predict several things at the beginning of every year: some things come to pass, others prove to be false. The people do not pay attention to those things that fail to happen but to those that take place.

In this respect, the *hadith* "The stargazers lied even if they told the truth" perhaps indicates this point—which is that the truth one finds is not a truth which stems from the rules attached to truth itself; they are coincidental.

There are things which these practices discover and they are true, ascertained then and there

I assume that some people do not think that some of these things are general and evident for the persons concerned. There are people who have intuitive perception, realizing things from the personality of a person. Someone who indulges in this practice may also be experienced in reading indications and clues relating to this or that type of people, or whatever can be ascertained from single or married individuals. As such, the words may be delivered in a way that suggests to the listener some basis of truth in them.

We do not deny these things—as we have said since denial requires proof, but in what is before us on this matter we find nothing that could confirm what the practitioners claim.

Magic Is a State of Delusion

Do you believe that there is a relation between these practices and magic?

We do not believe that magic represents reality, for God (Exalted) in the Qur'an spoke negatively of magic:

"What magic you have brought is deception, certainly God will negate it" (*Yunus*, 10:81).

God tells us here that magic is a delusion and not reality. There is also the story of the two angels, Harut and Marut:

"And they learnt from them magic by which they might separate a man from his wife" (*al-Baqara*, 2:102).

But it is not necessary that this be magic. Even if it is, who said that Harut and Marut stayed until those who are known for ignorance and backwardness in many situations had learnt from them?

Entertainment And The Needed Alternatives

The enemies of Islam employ means for which the human soul craves—singing, music, intoxicants, mixing between the sexes and the corruption that goes with that. When, calling towards God, we take a decisive, negative view of these things, without suggesting any of a number of alternatives, social consciousness will not accept this. The question then is: Do you not believe that if this state of affairs

continues, the self-destruction of character and the licentiousness will move apace?

We believe that Islam does not see any problem with harmlessly filling the spare time of our youth, creating a relaxed, happy mental state; or with opening their hearts toward the innocent Western amusements. We acknowledge that this area is wide in scope, and includes sports, swimming, symbolism, inspirational music, and whatever the jurists have ruled on as not being within the purview of immorality and sin. This means that we have not totally discarded music.

Regarding intoxicants, it is impossible to find in the youth environment an alternative to this, except certain types of fruit juices prepared in a way that attracts youths. Intoxicants do not possess special, intrinsic qualities that lure youths; youths are probably more attracted to the atmosphere that surrounds these products. Therefore, it is possible to recreate some of that atmosphere as an alternative to intoxicating drinks.

Seeking The Positive Aspects of Amusement

Are there alternatives to these types of pastime?

We need to seek out the positive aspects of what may serve as alternatives, to prevent youth from indulging in their spare time in activities which will lead to wanton pursuits.

When we speak of music, for example, we say to our youth that it is *haram*—but we must seek a *fatwa* on allowing soft music which has a soothing effect on the person, which is a balm for the emotions, a repose for the nerves; or symbolic, inspirational music and the like.

Therefore, we must find something within *Shariah* parameters for judging the permissibility of some types of music. Then, when we issue a *fatawa* about the prohibition of wanton, sexually explicit material, or what is termed "the tunes of the people of immorality", we must direct youths to soft music which deals with living issues, with human values, culture, and so forth.

When we wish our youth to stay away from things which are liable to change for the worse, we must seek equivalent forms from a different direction. We must not create a rift between the youth and his time in regards to the things that affect his feelings and perceptions. One needs to appreciate the apt words of Imam 'Ali, "Do not mold your children's ethics according to yours, for they are of a different time than yours."

These words do not address morals which may develop negatively, and which are contrary to the positive teachings of Islam, but those which speak of customs relating to a person's pastime, urges, joys, social activities, manner of eating, drink, public relations, etc.

The Problem of Inducement

Another problem which may present itself on these proposed alternatives is that they may induce youth to indulge in *haram*.

When you place lines of demarcation between the lawful and the forbidden, in order to train this person that the lawful is good for him in this life and that a free life does not mean committing unlawful deeds, you could set him on the straight path.

There may be people who exploit the issue of rendering things lawful to give license to some *haram* things. This is a deviation which we must cure. That does not mean, however, that we must prohibit the lawful out of fear that some people may use it to move towards *haram*. For we know there are those who would use religion for commercial exploitation, and who would sacrifice something of great value to gain a paltry profit.

This, however, is normal in the life of a person; when discussing our subject, we speak of the positive aspects which replace the negative ones, so that the person does not live in a void. We do not state that we must find just any alternative, issuing *fatwas* which are contrary to what God has revealed.

We state that we must seek always to think of ways which agree with guidelines of the *Shariah*, because the problem of the Islamic community is that it is not active enough, but rather thinks of a problem only when it is confronted by it. The problem may be misunderstood and the solution lost, since there was no plan for it, and it was not anticipated.

In this manner, it is possible to invent many permissible methods of amusement for youth to indulge in. If there is a jurist or a celebrated scholar who has forbidden play with gambling tools or chess, there are more recent juridical opinions which allow them. This means that the way is not closed to innocent forms of amusement which fill the spare time of our youth and, at the same time, provides them with certain benefits through play.

Certainly Islam does not wish the human being to be immobile in life. Several *hadiths* relate: "Let the heart relax hour after hour"; and, "A Muslim must have three moments: one to plead with his Lord, one to look after his livelihood, and one to delight in a matter that is not *haram*, for it is an aid to the other two times." An innocent form of amusement, then, which provides relaxation for the self—in a manner that revitalizes his activities and eases the tensions he may at times experience in worship or in his daily duties—is something required.

Bypassing Custom

We must seek to bypass social customs to make way for new norms. This must be done by taking things deemed normal and replacing them with other things. We feel that Islamic activists—whether in the social,

educational, cultural, or propagation fields—must study in the field all available options in harmony with the Islamic *Shariah* and is educational, and must invent new methods in this area. I do not feel that these new methods can be few in number. But the Islamic workers have not gone this route, for they have not paid attention to the negative influences that linger among the younger generation from both men and women—in this closed field.

Many workers who were brought up under a repressive conditions have resorted to a life of repression, with narrower social norms than is generally the case; they may be afraid to indulge in any form of amusement.

There are those who are religiously very observant and do not see this as proper or as befitting the dignity of a believer.

We find later scholars from our great religious authorities (*maraji*) are more open and analytical than these observers of religion, for we see that al-Sayyid al-Khui permitted men and women to dance with the same gender provided there is no danger of inciting lust or immoral acts. In his opinion and scholarly assessment, there was no proof for the prohibition of amusement, and thus no objection to a person taking up some form of entertainment—but only as long as there was no specific proof that it is *haram*.

That which is forbidden is the singing that accompanies immorality; but the amusement which occurs in society should be considered lawful. It is the same in the case of hand-clapping. We do not know why many are troubled when Muslims and those who are religiously observant clap their hands in praise of a *qasida*, speech, or something of this kind—as if those who indulge in applause commit some *haram*! It is possible for us to express our joy and appreciation by clapping, to which lately has been the blessings on the holy Prophet and so on.

What is important is that no problem arises regarding a matter that is legal and is seen as good by the community. While it may have several positive aspects to it, why should we reject it? We may combine the two facets in this area.

We believe that when we seek to create the opportunities that can satisfy youths' spirits, feelings, interests, and love for relaxation and amusement, youths will not depart from the Islamic atmosphere. They will instead perceive in it a richness for the intellect and the spirit; they will derive benefit from the amusement, if we may so state it.

Jealousy And The Evil Eye

What does common custom deem jealousy or "the evil eye", concerning which some supplications and prayers of refuge have been narrated?

I have perceived no detailed proof or actual instances of jealousy in this sense. Rather, we find that the situation of people of whom others are jealous do not have any effect on their person. The issue of

jealousy to be analyzed is the evil which the jealous person may cause for the person of whom he is jealous. In other words, the ill will he bears towards another may incite him to murder, assault, or confine him, as did the brothers of Yusuf.

It is possible that the supplications that have surfaced on this subject represent suggestions, whereby a person turns to his Lord while in fear regarding the issue of knowledge, or regarding the nightmares he experienced as a result of the social conditions from which he seeks protection. The assumption is that these are paranormal events which the human being cannot get rid of through normal meditation, and so resorts to his Lord to rid him of his fear. Then, he will feel convinced of God's help and protected in the entire matter.

Nor can I categorically deny that these things occur; I do not possess knowledge of every detail of the refutation. Let me state, though, that I do not find any convincing proof—for example, for the folk view on the subject. I find only reasons to reject them.

Addendum of Narrations (5)

On the Hijab

- Imam 'Ali said: "I was sitting in the Baqee with the Messenger of God one dark, rainy day. A woman on a donkey passed by, and the foreleg of the animal stumbled in a hole, as the woman fell. The Prophet turned away and the people said, "O Messenger of God! She is wearing trousers!" He said thrice "O God, cover the faults of those who wear trousers. O people, wear trousers; of all your clothing they cover best. And protect your women in them when they go out!"
- He said to his son Hasan, "Restrain them from their looks through the *hijab*, for the sterner *hijab* the better to spare you and them the blemish—and their going forth is no more severe than their coming in for those in whom you have no confidence. If you are able not to let them know anyone but you from the men, then do so!"

On Looking

- The Messenger of God said: "Beware of excessive looking, for it causes passion, and gives rise to carelessness."
- He also said: "Whoever fills his eyes with *haram*, Allah will fill his eyes with fire on the day of judgment, except the one who repents and does not repeat this."
- He said: "There is no Muslim who looks at a woman and at first glance lowers his gaze but that God [Exalted] creates for him a worship whose sweetness he will find in his heart."
- He said: "Every organ has its portion of fornication, and the fornication of the eye lies in its glance."

- He said, "Lower your gaze when you see that which pleases you."
- Jesus said: "Beware of looking at the forbidden, for they are the seed of lust and the shoot of immorality."
- Imam 'Ali said: "The eyes are the snares of Satan."
- He also said, "There is nothing in the body less thankful than the eye, so do not answer its request, for it will distract you from remembering God Almighty."
- He said: "If the eyes perceive some lust, the heart becomes blind to the aftermath."
- He said: "He who looks a lot, regrets a lot."
- Al-Sadiq counselled Abdullah b. Jundab, "O Ibn Jundab, verily Jesus, son of Mary, said to his disciples: 'Woe betide the glance, for it sows desire in the heart and causes corruption for its owner. Blessed be he who put his perception in his heart and not in his eyes.'"

On Ornamentation

- The Messenger of God said, "Certainly God loves His believing servant when he goes out to his brother, to appear nicely and to beautify himself for him."
- He also said, "The best beautification of a man is tranquillity with faith."
- Imam 'Ali said: "Woe to you, beautify yourself for people and to confront God in contumacy."
- He also said: "Ornamentation lies in the goodness of voice not in clothes."
- He said: "The ornamentation of Islam is to do good deeds."
- He said: "The best dress is that which makes you identify with people, makes you appear nice among them, and keeps their tongues from wagging about you."
- He said: "There is no decoration which one resorts to that is better than that of obedience to God."
- Imam al-Sadiq said: "It is not fitting that a woman should neglect herself, even if it means putting a garland around her neck."

On Singing

- The Messenger of God said: "Do not listen to wind instruments and singing, for they sow hypocrisy in the heart, the way water makes shoots grow."
- He also said: "Two voices are cursed in this world and the next: Flutes with joy and singing in

calamity."

- Al-Imam al-Sadiq said, "Singing bequeaths hypocrisy."
- A man said to al-Sadiq, "I have neighbors, and they have some girls who sing, accompanied by the flute. When I go into the vestibule, may I prolong my sitting there to listen to them?" He said, "Do not do it." The man then said: "It is not something that I go to by my two feet, but rather a sound that comes to my ears." He said: "Fear God! Have you not heard God say:

"Verily his hearing, his seeing, and his heart—they will all be questioned" (*Al-Isra'*, 17:36).

The man said to him: "It is as if I have never heard this verse from the Book of God from either Arab or foreigner! Certainly I have abandoned it, and I seek God's forgiveness, Exalted is He."

On Magic

- From Imam 'Ali: "The stargazer is like a seer. And the seer is like a magician, the magician like a non-believer, and the non-believer is in the fire."
- It was also reported that he said: "The eye is true and the charm is true, but the contagion is not true."
- From al-Imam al-Sadiq, "Whoever learns anything of magic, a little or a lot, has committed an act of infidelity [*kufr*]. This affair rest with his Lord, and his sentence is that he should be killed if he does not repent."

On Drunkenness

- The Messenger of God said, "Stay away from every intoxicant, for every intoxicant is forbidden."
- Imam 'Ali said: "Every thinking person must beware of the intoxication of money, the intoxication of power, the intoxication of comfort, the intoxication of youth—for certainly each of these has an evil smell which destroys the intellect and negates sobriety."
- Al-Imam al-Baqir said, "If a great quantity of something intoxicates, then even a little of it is *haram*."
- The Messenger of God said, "O Ibn Mas'ud, stay away from erring intoxication, for there is intoxicant in erring just as the intoxication of drink; this is more intoxicating than the latter, for God says: **"Deaf, Dumb, and blind, they will not return to the path."**

Themes 6: On The Sidelines of Disclosure: The Experience of

Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah, The Youth

In the eventful life of knowledge and work which Ayatollah Fadlullah has lived, what are the best methods of nurturing according to him? How did he take care of himself in his youth?

I used to feel that I had to train myself to be a Muslim who lives his Islam from within, accepting God, loving Him and fearing Him. I made a serious effort to gain His pleasure and to be a true Muslim in the movement of Islam from within and without my life. I used to feel that the Muslim man has to accept his own time, to deal with it and live with it, to be part of it, to analyze his mentality and his affairs, until he is able to express his understanding of Islam in the language, mentality, and methods of his time.

I used to read everything which could possibly enrich my knowledge and help me understand my time. I was quick to understand my time; and in fact feared losing the language of the previous times. But I also sought to immerse myself in that language.

I believed that the Muslim man must be an activist, that he must think in the same terms of Islam as an *'alim*, in order to make his political, social, and intellectual contribution to Islam. He must be receptive to the activities of Islamic movements. And I was always receptive to Islamic movements—all of them—and still am. I had great hopes for them, despite my differences of opinion with some of them over certain of their negative aspects, because I have found that we cannot fill the world with Islam except through an active, dynamic Islam.

I do not wish here to speak of abandoning imitative Islam. We need it, but with the understanding that imitative Islam must be structured on the special dynamic qualities of an active Islam. And the opposite is also true, in terms of the positive aspects of imitative Islam.

The Man of Islam

I have tried in the course of my life to be a man of Islam, but do not know if I have stood up to the test. I have found that Muslim man must behave in society according to the ethics of Islam, not according to his personal ethics. Whether he calls to Islam or is a scholar, a thinker, or activist, he must keep within the overall picture of Islam, especially in ethics.

I did not see myself as being so free that I could impose on others my own problems, those reflected in the gloominess in my face, the harshness of my manner, or some other anger. I took it as my duty to suppress myself when problems impinged on my activities, manner of speech, facial expression, etc., because I think that the caller to Islam must leave his moods at home or within himself, and go forth in an Islamic mood.

This is what I have learnt from the Messenger of God. And he learned this from the Qur'an, since God taught him well. For the Messenger used to endure the worst of what a person can undergo. Despite this, he used to smile and always to be affable with people. He used to deny himself all the joys, until the members of his household were at ease or people around him were comfortable. He was not egotistical or selfish in his manner.

From here, I feel the workers of Islam—whether scholars, students, activists, or those who invite to Islam—must take the example of the Prophet's conduct. They must coexist with the people, caring for their feelings and perceptions. The Messenger of God used to love all of humankind:

"Certainly a prophet has come to you from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you fall into distress; he cares about you, and to the believers he is most kind and merciful" (*al-Tawba*, 9:128).

He used to agonize over those people who did not accept his invitation to Islam. He harbored no ill will towards them, but agonized over them. Thus, the verse revealed to him stated,

"Do not let your soul waste away in grief for them" (*Fatir*, 35:8).

I Have Loved All Humankind

I have learnt from the Messenger of God to love all human beings. I love the believing person and I identify, with him. And I love the non-believer, empathizing with him on different matters. I have not had a problem with any person in my life. Rather, I have accepted all people, whether they agreed or disagreed with me.

I have tried to conduct myself largely within the moral framework of Islam, whose message enter the hearts of people well before it does their intellects. Of course, I also underwent many setbacks. But I have tried to take the right direction, trusting that my brethren will benefit from my vast experience—in being receptive to people.

In this I have encountered great success and tremendous love even from non-Muslims. I feel that every person—no matter who—has many good and pure qualities at the core. But we must tap into his core and cause it to gush forth into his heart. We must know how to look on the bright side of his life rather than focus on the dark. We must look at the redeeming qualities of a person, not at the negative characteristics. Then we will see that people reject neither God nor Islam, for God has counseled us to exhort to the truth and patience – although some of us cannot always handle the truth, nor face challenges with resoluteness.

This Is The Way I Nurture My Sons and Daughters

I tried to be a friend of, not to impose myself on, my sons or daughters. When I noted an error on their part, I did not seek their attention through harshness or beating, but through suggestion and reference;

also directly, with gentle or sharp words that do not injure.

I want them to enjoy their lives, and I have helped them in their life choices. I used to let them be, without meddling in their affairs, until they could benefit from the experience of their mistakes, the positive and negative points of which I discussed with them.

I have attempted largely to nurture them by focusing on their humanness, rather than the surface. I have been to them—and continue to be—a friend, and have won their confidence in return; for in my home, I live in a gentle atmosphere with my older and younger children who speak to me without any reservation. I make sure that there is never any barrier between us, the father being a storehouse of the secrets of his children. They will not share their secrets with anyone else, and he must create the opportunities of trust in him.

Return To The Meadows of Childhood

Does our eminence have any recollections of this which might benefit our youth?

When I go back to my early youth, the last stages of my childhood, I was that little boy who ran about in the streets of the blessed city of Najaf, with its mosques and Alid sanctuary, and in the classes of the scholars. I found myself a boy of eleven planning with friends (and I particularly remember the martyr Sayyid Mahdi alHakim) the publication of a magazine to be called *al-Adab*.

It became a handwritten magazine, and we used to prepare the issues according to the number of subscribers. We actually began writing from that time onwards, and sought articles from some of the great personalities in Najaf.

I remember when I was fourteen I recited some *qasidas*, some of which were distributed. I feel some voids in me, for my childhood was not all one of play and pleasure. I used to go with my father to learn at a place in Najaf on the outskirts of the desert, with one of the tributaries of the Euphrates running through it. There we used to play in the gardens.

My memories of Najaf include a love for reading the supplications of the month of Ramadan to the believers, and I used to go—in the most intense heat—to the Alid sanctuary to sit there. Many of the older folk would sit around me and I would recite the supplications to them. My family used to fear for my health because of the intense heat, especially since I was fasting.

From the very outset, my life has been filled with learning, for I used to read the magazine *al-Risala* in that place, along with translated stories and newspapers. And we used to come and go at that time to the Publications Assembly, which was the first such cultural establishment to be opened in a religious circle in blessed Najaf. All my memories then are related to education and culture, and we used to stay up at night in gatherings, where students would discuss and debate about their studies. During that time, we were discovering new ideas, far beyond our years. This was the result of the abundance of

knowledge there.

Have you done any academic studies?

I have done no academic studies except at one grade. I entered the "Publications Institution" in the third grade, and left it in the fourth. My seminary studies were in concord with the education of the time.

Try To Study Us and Our Past

The final question: What would you like to say to your children who work in the cause of Islam?

What I would like to say to my brethren and children who work in the cause of Islam is that we were aware of the actual state of Islam at a time when many—especially in blessed Najaf—did not come to grips with current realities. The experience of our generation, which included the martyr al-Sadr and many *'ulama*, had been filling the needs of Muslims through a dynamic Islam. We employed the methods of the times, while guarding the basic gems and intellectual bases of Islam.

Our experience, one in which rivers of blood have been spilled, all types of injury and suffering endured perhaps an experience itself weakened by injury—was a pioneering experience, creating the conditions for the realities of Islam which people now live in. We do not wish to declare that we are the fathers of this experience, but we did help bring this experience to fruition. This experience shows that the human being, when he seeks the future, and trusts in God, has faith in Islam, expends his every effort, and avails himself of every circumstance, must succeed, even if it takes a while.

I would like to say to every member of the next generation that we were at a stage ripe with opportunities. Now you must try to study our weaknesses and strengths. Do not study us as individual personalities. Study us rather for what we have done and our ideas. You may not find the ideas we came up with then to be any longer important; you live a normal life, because an Islamic atmosphere makes these ideas something normal—exactly like the man who takes food after others have struggled to cook it. But these ideas which you take for granted emerged after much struggle in society.

Islam Is a Trust Upon Your Shoulders

I would like to say to all my beloved children that Islam is a trust placed on your shoulders, and that we must not freeze at this stage. Try to respect your historical leaders, but do not stop with them, since any leadership, no matter how great, only represents its own stage and experience. In life, there are more advanced stages and new experiences to undergo. The experiences of the past are for the past, and you must have your own experience.

I feel that this generation which you represent is one of suffering in its confrontation with the global

disbelief. We are proud of and honor this generation, and we hope that it will make as few mistakes as possible, that it will be wary of the many intrigues that others would like to sow in its consciousness and its life.

We hope that you will have confidence in God until you no longer fear anyone; that you will have such a bond with God that you no longer feel alienated by anyone; and that you will accept the Messenger of God as an example of strength, character, and for his treatment of all people, an example in all aspects of life. All this as you accept his message, which is based on what is from God.

We are the generation of a message that gives each generation something of its strength and wherewithal. Certainly, Islam needs the strength of every generation. Say: "***Work and your deeds will be seen by God, His Prophet, and all the believers...***"

Gems from the responses of His Eminence Ayatullah al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah, may God grant no end to his counsel, on youth issues

Question 1

Is obedience to parents obligatory where they impose limitations on the type of employment or type of studies for young males and females?

Answer:

This is not obligatory, because the requirement in the bond between child and parents is kindness and beneficence, not obedience.

Question 2

Is obedience to parents obligatory in the choice of a future partner (a husband or a wife)?

Answer:

This is not compulsory, but it is commendable to seek their counsel, especially since not doing so may offend them.

Question 3

What is the ruling on such expensive, exorbitant dowers (mahr) which place a tremendous onus on those who need to marry?

Answer:

There is no limit on dower in Islam. It is determined at the pleasure of the two spouses, and there is no room for interference by either family. The spouses have to decide on what is pleasing to them both, without the influence of their families.

Question 4

Some of the progeny of the purified household (i. e. the descendants of the Prophet) do not marry their daughters except to sayyids. What is your opinion on this?

Answer:

This is in no way Islamic, nor has any study of the life of the Imams of *Ahlulbayt* shown that it was their practice. In fact, their biographical studies show quite the opposite, for in Islam, there is no class-based differentiation or discrimination in marriage.

Question 5

Is it wrong for those proposing in marriage that they should stipulate the degree of beauty of the woman?

Answer:

The prospective husband has the right to stipulate certain conditions of beauty in his future wife, over and above that of religious observance, and there is nothing wrong with that.

Question 6

What is the verdict on the marriage of young girls to men who are older than them; or what is the view of Islam regarding the differences in age in marriage?

Answer:

In Islam, marrying age is not specified, for either the bride or the groom. It is essential that there be objectivity regarding the compatibility of temperaments and functions between the two parties.

Question 7

Several factors pertain to marriage: family, region, nationality, or tribe, etc. Is it allowable to disregard these factors, since they may cause problems for the two spouses?

Answer:

The *Sharjah* gives no special consideration to these types of differences between husband and wife. In fact, there is a collective repudiation of such considerations. But it is necessary that the spouses

carefully consider all internal and external factors which make for the permanency and solid foundation of their married life.

Question 8

What are the conditions that must prevail in the bridegroom, and what are those that must prevail in the bride?

Answer:

The noble *hadith* tell us that: "If there comes to you someone whose character and religion pleases you, then marry him. If you do not, there will be calamity and evildoing in the earth." And in another *hadith*, a man said to the Prophet: "To whom should I marry?" The Prophet replied, "To one who is religious." This is over and above the necessary physical characteristics and intelligence requirements that everyone seeks in a spouse.

Question 9

What is the verdict on birth control on the premise of shortage of resources, or financial stringency?

Answer:

According to the prescribed *Shariah* methods, this is permissible, but it is necessary that the believing Muslim rely, in matters of provision, on what is with God, and not to commit himself exclusively to material considerations.

Question 10

Is marriage to a woman who does not observe the limits of modesty and decorum allowed, in the hope that she will reform in the future?

Answer:

This is allowed in principle, but experience has shown that, in many cases, that lack of modesty does not give way to propriety after marriage but persists. This is because the pressure of the wife on her husband is stronger in such cases. Women differ in this regard, and it is necessary that the matter be carefully considered with respect to the actual behavior of the person involved, her characteristics, fidelity, and promise-keeping.

Question 11

What are the 'Shariah' limits for temporary marriage within the parameters of the negative results

that can sometimes result from such allowances?

Answer:

In such cases, it is absolutely necessary that each society be studied in light of the pros and cons and in the light of the specific *Shariah* stipulations that must prevail.

Question 12

What is your eminence's view on seeking refuge in or emigrating to Western countries?

Answer:

That is not permitted if it leads to the humiliation of the believer or the weakening of his religion, or if it leads his wife and children to go astray.

Question 13

Is it allowable for a father or mother to investigate the private affairs of their sons and daughters, such as opening their letters or searching their drawers, and so forth?

Answer:

This is not allowed.

Question 14

What is the meaning of "uquq al-walidain"?

Answer:

The term means causing them harm, or injuring them by harsh words or treatment.

Question 15

What is the ruling on masturbation?

Answer:

It is forbidden for the man and woman if it causes ejaculation. If it does not, then it is not forbidden, but it is still something which must be avoided because of its harmful effects.

Question 16

What is the ruling on looking at sex videos?

Answer:

This is not permitted except in cases of necessity.

Question 17

What are the Shariah limits of music listening?

Answer:

That the music should not be accompanied by dancing and its accompaniments, such as libertinism and sex.

Question 18

What are the Shariah requirements for covering on a woman or a girl, and what are the descriptions of the specific clothing for men or youth?

Answer:

The *Shariah* requires that those parts of the female's body which one is forbidden to expose should be hidden, and that no part should be of such type that merits the description of immodesty. Men's clothing should cover the private parts and should not be suggestive.

Question 19

What is the ruling on the use of gambling material in its various forms and methods of play?

Answer:

It is allowable if no betting is involved.

Question 20

What are kutub al-dalal ("books of misguidance"), and what is the ruling on them? Do contemporary books critical of Islam and Islamic civilization—both objectively and subjectively—fall under this classification?

Answer:

This classification refers to books which have nefarious objectives. Acquiring them is not forbidden unless it is feared that they will have harmful effects on the reader.

Question 21

What is the ruling on the youths who wear neck chains and bracelets made of gold or other metals?

Answer:

Men are prohibited from wearing gold, just as they are prohibited from imitating women, except in cases where neck chains and bracelets are not sex-specific. If these ornaments are made of other metals, they are allowed if there is no forbidden imitation involved.

Question 22

Are trousers exposing the private parts allowed?

Answer:

If this means that the shape of private parts is defined in detail and the suggestiveness is explicit, then they are not allowed.

Question 23

What are the restrictions on corporal punishment of students?

Answer:

This is permissible if the disciplinary action is administered with the permission of the guardian. Such discipline is limited to what is appropriate and does not involve the letting of blood or injury.

Question 24

What are the restrictions on corporal punishment of children by their parents?

Answer:

The ruling on this is the same as the one on punishment of students.

Question 25

Is one allowed to pay dues for Islamic student or youth activities?

Answer:

This is allowed with the permission of the proper authorities.

Question 26

Is one allowed to regard university students as equal to the students of the hawzas-i.e., that the same rights and privileges be given to both?

Answer:

This is permitted if the students of the universities are observing believers, aware of what agrees with the Islamic perspective on their studies.

Question 27

Is it permitted to distribute the zakat al-fitra to Islamic student activities?

Answer:

This is permitted, but the better approach is to distribute it to poor students.

Question 28

Is one permitted to listen to religious versification accompanied by music?

Answer:

This is allowed.

Question 29

What do you say on being affiliated with Islamic groups?

Answer:

This is permissible if such groups keep to unadulterated Islamic perspectives in their activities and leadership.

Question 30

Is one allowed to take a bad person as a friend with the intention of correcting him, even if this is not immediate?

Answer:

This is allowed if there is no fear that the negative influence of this person will rub off on the other.

Question 31

Is a young female permitted to work in a place where all the other employees are male?

Answer:

This is permitted in principle, on the condition that there is no negative influence on her character and reputation.

Question 32

Within the parameters of the ruling on the purity of the Scriptuary (ie., a person from the People of the Book) which you propound, is one allowed to use the tatter's utensils and other implements while they are still moist?

Answer:

This is allowed.

Question 33

Is one allowed to engage in temporary marriage (muta) with a fornicating woman?

Answer:

If she is known to be so, then the more precautionary measure is to abstain.

Question 34

Leather products manufactured in the West are numerous and sometimes absolutely necessary. Is there any license for their use, even where the leather is produced without proper slaughter?

Answer:

Use of material in which purity is not a prerequisite is permitted. Animal products regarding which there is doubt about the slaughter are permitted, even in matters where purity is a condition.

Question 35

Are we permitted to ask—in case of doubt—about whether the meat advertised for sale in a Muslim market has been slaughtered according to the Islamic Shariah?

Answer:

If such meat is obtained from the market of the Muslims, or from a Muslim, then the ruling is on its being

properly slaughtered, unless it is known that the meat was previously handled by a non-believer, and that there was no way for a Muslim to supervise that specifics of the *Shariah* had been observed.

Question 36

Is one permitted to eat the meat of animals slaughtered by mechanical means over which the name of God has been mentioned?

Answer:

This is allowed as long as the conditions of the *Shariah* prevail at the time of slaughter.

Question 37

Is one permitted to observe the congregational prayer behind any imam (ie., a non-Shia), with the intention of solidarity and unity, without repeating such prayer in private?

Answer:

This is allowed as long as the necessary *Shariah* conditions prevail and such prayer is rewarded.

Question 38

Is one permitted to criticize the al-Khulafa alRashideen and the companions as long as such criticism is objective and not vituperative?

Answer:

Objective criticism is allowed in every area open to analysis, but one must stay away from matter that foments sectarian emotionalism and damages the unity of the Muslims.

Question 39

Who in your opinion is the most learned of the contemporary scholars (maraji)?

Answer:

According to me, it is not possible to demonstrate the quality of "most learned."

Question 40

Is one permitted to use legal stratagems in markets, mail, and telephone orders—in the West—and to steal things under a premise like the permissibility of the property of the kafir for the Muslim?

Answer:

This is not permitted. A believing Muslim must always be honest in dealing with the property of every human being–Muslim or non–Muslim. A Muslim must also observe the laws of the country to which he immigrates, and should not contravene them, since the condition of residence dictates a matter of contractual observation between him and the state.

Question 41

Is a youth permitted to deny his parents when seeking refuge in Western countries?

Answer:

If the parents fear for his life or religion in such a process, then he must acknowledge them.

Question 42

What must be done if one cannot find a jurist, Islamic law manual or an authority to inform him of a Shariah ruling pertaining to an urgent matter?

Answer

He must take the path that exercises the most caution in the issue at hand.

Question 43

What is the ruling on shaving the beard?

Answer:

A beard is one of the signs of the believer, and he should not shave it except in a situation of difficulty or emergency. We have previously stated that absolute prohibition (on shaving) has not been established.

Question 44

Is there anything wrong with listening to a flute?

Answer:

There is nothing wrong with it if it produces doleful music.

Question 45

Is one permitted to listen to sad songs, those which do not cause lust?

Answer:

This is permitted if their lyrics are not foul or contain items which displease God.

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