

Aesthetics, elegance vital to Muslims' lifestyle

HARUN YAHYA

WE may experience numerous distressing events in the relations we establish with others. We may be distressed by some people's selfishness, by the lack of understanding of others, or by still others' obstinacy, inability to listen, mocking jokes or affectation. One issue, which most people may never think about, lies at the basis of this common unease — lack of quality.

Quality is vital in Islam. A lifestyle devoid of love, understanding, art and beauty predominates in many Islamic countries today. Although this totally conflicts with the fine and clean lifestyle that Allah describes in the Qur'an, it is still regarded as largely legitimate by those societies. Yet a lifestyle devoid of quality and a way of thinking devoid of beauty are unbecoming of a Muslim.

This lifestyle devoid of quality spreads over a wide sphere involving all of life, from the way a person thinks to their pleasures, from their goals to their conception of beauty and humor, from their deportment to their speech and what they eat and drink. When quality is not valued and when concepts such as beauty are missing from people's lives, the world literally comes to resemble hell.

The importance of quality, cleanliness and fastidiousness instead of living a coarse lifestyle is revealed with particular emphasis in the Qur'an. In the verse, "Purify your clothes. Shun all filth" (Surat Al-Muddaththir, 4-5) Allah reveals that Muslims must use all their

means to live a spotlessly clean life. Quality must therefore be one of the main features of Muslim communities.

Muslim world lacks the concept of elegance

One of the greatest problems in the Muslim world is the lack in some communities of the quality that all Muslims should possess. Of course there are sincere Muslims who apply Islamic values in the best way and attach due importance to quality, art and beauty; however, there are also Muslim societies that are deficient in that regard, either out of ignorance and lack of education or from their learning about Islam only from their traditions. Circles that wish to make anti-Muslim propaganda generally describe these communities lacking in quality as the "true Muslim model." That is why we so often encounter images stressing Muslims' lack of quality on the television, in newspapers, on the internet and in videos. Therefore, Muslims who misinterpret Islam and live in that way cause the whole world to have a badly mistaken idea of it.

Due to these false models, many people think of a 'Muslim' as someone who is loveless, joyless, with no understanding of art, who rejects science, has no sense of humor, dresses badly and rejects modernity; Distaste for music and joy, disregard for cleanliness, lack of affection and contempt for women are regarded as basic characteristics of Muslims in many parts of the world. And that inevitably leads

to unease and a counter-reaction and encourages opposition to Islam.

Some of our Muslim brothers, however, are unaware that the main reason for this reaction is those Muslims who misinterpret and thus misrepresent Islam, and accuse others of "hostility to Islam and Muslims."

Yet what people are actually reacting against is not the true Islam, but an inaccurate perception of the faith caused by the false models they see. A second reason for this reaction is the determination shown by some ignorant Muslims in defending a poor-quality, unclean, ugly and badly groomed model.

One of the distinguishing features of low-quality people is how they try to force their own lives and beliefs on others. Yet Allah has forbidden compulsion in the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an, a Muslim must be understanding, loving, speak pleasantly to other people, respect their ideas and values and create a pleasant climate, not just for himself, but for all.

Muslims must be quality-conscious

Religion means love, compassion, affection, friendship, cleanliness, goodness and loving orphans, the needy, the elderly, animals, plants and everything created by Allah. Such a lofty moral perception will of course bestow enormous quality and selectness on all of a person's thoughts and behavior. Therefore, Muslims who live by this moral concept in the Qur'an are the highest-quality and most noble people in the world.

What some Muslim societies

need to do to escape their low-quality lifestyle is to realize and accept that quality is indeed an important characteristic of Muslims and is required by the moral values of the Qur'an.

When quality prevails in art, science, politics and in all spheres of life, this negative view of Islam held by some people will vanish of its own accord. Even if the other person is irreligious, if asked what he thinks of "a climate of love, compassion, affection, friendship, good intentions, pleasant conversation and an advanced level of art and science," his answer will be, "I am wholeheartedly in favor."

That is the essence of Islam; the finest conception of all these are an intrinsic part of Islamic values.

Some people's conception of quality is very different to that described in the Qur'an. These people's idea of quality is restricted to an expensive car, designer clothes, a fine house and a good education. Of course these things, bestowed as blessings by Allah, can make one look attractive, but quality really must be lived in the soul.

Quality is one of the main adornments of life. When quality disappears, people become introverted, uneasy, selfish and insensitive and even turn their backs on religion. Most may perform their religious observances, but lack of quality makes them unhappy. Dark and gloomy homes, places devoid of beauty and badly maintained places of worship cannot make people happy. People who look ill-kempt, have no love in their faces, are apathetic, speak angry or negative words and who

take no delight in life — and who even try to destroy these things — spread throughout society. Brotherhood, beauty, love, peace and comfort vanish in such societies. Everyone distances himself from everyone else and becomes fearful. That is of course something that nobody can want.

Our Prophet lived the most aesthetic life

Although means were very limited in the time of our Prophet (peace be upon him), he attached great importance to quality and beauty. Under the harsh conditions of that time he grew roses around his house in the desert climate; even under the most difficult conditions, he tried to establish the finest and most pleasant environment. Our Prophet's (peace be upon him) person, clothing and home were always spotless and bright. He used the best-quality and most delightful scents of the time, and wore impressive clothes that suited him best. His language, the words he used and his manner of speaking were all of exceptional quality. His gait, deportment and table manners were exceedingly fine. Quality prevailed at every moment of his life.

The model that Muslims must adopt in determining their own moral understanding and way of life is therefore the verses of the Qur'an revealed by Almighty Allah and these fine moral values of our Prophet (peace be upon him).

— The writer has authored more than 300 books translated in 73 languages on politics, religion and science.

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Adnan Oktar's piece on Arab News:

<http://www.arabnews.com/news/589336>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/aesthetics-elegance-vital-to-muslims-lifestyle>