

# Human Nature And Sources Of Entertainment In An Islamic Society, An Analytical Study

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## Abstract

To serve humanity is the basic purpose of a religion. For this reason, every practice or commandment is imposed on people according to their approaches (physical/psychological). One of distinctive qualities of Islam is, it prefers the middle way in every ritual practice. Islamic Shari'ah shows great harmony to human nature. This quality attracts people of any region or religion. This magnetic strategy keeps people refreshed and energetic also. Having harmonious nature to human being, Islam presents different sources of enjoyment and entertainment to remove people's boredom. Exhibition of chivalry activities, games for fitness purposes, out-door sitting or walking in a greenery and singing in some festivals (conditional) are some entertaining sources of Islam. This paper is to highlight the Islamic sources of enjoyment and entertainment. The main objective of this study is, to highlight the Islamic ways which remove people's boredom. The basic question of this study is, How Islamic Shari'ah keep its followers refreshed and joyous? A descriptive research method has been used for this study.

**Key Words:** Enjoyment, Entertainment, Moderation, Human Nature, Boredom.

## I. Introduction to the Study

Every commandment or ritual practice of Islam is highly congenial to human nature. In Islamic Shari'ah, even a single order or activity has not been imposed on its followers that can be inaccessible for them physically or mentally. "There is not one of you but shall approach it."<sup>1</sup> (Q, 19:71) Further, Islam preferred lenient, easy access-able or human approachable practices. In some special conditions, even an obligatory aspect is waved to make followers facilitated. To

offer prayer has been declared an obligation and basic pillar of Islam but in many exceptional cases many relaxations have been given. Fasting has been declared obligation and also another basic pillar of Islam but for a patient or passenger has been relieved. Hajj and Zakat have been imposed on only those people who are economically strong. Further, every preacher and governor was advised by prophet to provide facilitations for people. "Gladden people and do not scare them; make things easy and do not make them difficult."<sup>2</sup> Another distinctive policy of

Islam that attracts people is its preference of moderate practices. It is preferred in many cases. Between low and high level, middle level has been advised to adopt. Against extremism a balanced way has been chosen in Islam in every kind of worship or juristic matters. This strategy leads Islam and its teachings toward universality and eternity. This quality minimizes boredom and creates personal interest in every commandment. To keep its followers joyed and fresh, Islam also gives some kinds of entertaining exercises. These are quite different from other religions or societies.

For this purpose, the basic concept of Islam to facilitate people (about every eatable) that everything is Halal. Also, every social aspect which has not been disallowed in Islamic Shari'ah, is acceptable in an Islamic society. "Prophet (PBUH) and sent down His Book, marking some things lawful and others unlawful; so, what He made lawful is lawful, what he made unlawful is unlawful, and what he said nothing about is allowable."<sup>3</sup> It means one can adopt every activity of other society or culture that has not been prohibited in Islam. For entertaining purposes, every entertaining or enjoyable activity can be practiced or adopted by everybody in an Islamic society that has not been prevented in Islam. These may be sports activities, social festivals, educational tours, food festivals or regional ceremonies which must not have some elements of prohibited or banned elements of Islamic Shari'ah. As, mix gathering of both male and female genders have been disliked in Islam. So, co-education or in other social functions this type of gathering should be discouraged. Music which is generated with musical instruments have been declared Haram in Islam so in every kind of function, it should not be used. The things those are not permitted to eat cannot be used in any food festivals for selling purposes. Anyhow, the basic standard to judge a thing, action or belief is Islamic Shari'ah so, every activity, function, festival and ceremony if permitted in Islam, can

be adopted and if that is not allowed then that will be rejected.

## 2. Problem Statement

Generally, a religion is considered just a set of ritual practices. In it is true in some ways but Islam focuses on both spiritual as well as on worldly matters. Every Islamic commandment or a practice is highly congenial to human nature and appealing for a common man. To make its followers refresh and entertained, a lot of practices and sources are there in Islam. So, Islam does not only advise to enhance spirituality but it makes one's world better. In routine life, to remove depression, stress, boredom and anxiety, Islam permits to adopt many entertaining activities.

## 3. Literature Review

For this study, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall translation has been used. Many Ahadith have been quoted and their English translations have been taken from online sources; <http://sunnah.com>. Mohammad Hashim Kamali wrote a book named, "The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam" this book contains a brief discussion on Islamic aspect of moderation. Between highest and lowest levels, Islam advises middle level. Islam rejects extremism in every ritual matter. Philip Dorrell explained about the difference between music and song. What is music actually? It has been elaborated by Dorrell in logical and scientific ways. His all discussion can be retrieved from the following websites. <http://whatismusic.info>. David Bruce Gerhard compiled date on song and music, its harmony and differences. He Computationally Measured Differences between Speech and Song. He submitted his thesis to get Ph. D degree in the school of computing science, Simon Fraser university in 2003. David D. Harnish and Anne K. Rasmussen, Divine Inspiration, (Oxford Press Inc, 2011), 18. Gonul Donmez Colin wrote a book titled "Women Islam and Cinema" this

book reveals the women entertaining aspect. The role of Muslim women in Cinemas as well as in media have been discussed in this book. Mona Siddiqui wrote a book on Islamic ways of Hospitality. She named his book, "Hospitality in Islam, this book was published in London and got fame in Islamic as well as non-Islamic Societies. For a guest, the manners and advices of Islam have been compiled.

#### **4. Moderate Nature of Islamic Shari'ah**

Islam is a religion which was revealed by Allah on Holy Prophet (PBUH) with a lot of distinctive qualities. Moderate nature of Islam is one of many basic qualities. Among more than one option, a balanced and middle way has been preferred in Islam. This was not only preached by Holy Prophet (PBUH) theoretically but also was adopted practically in their life. For this reason, the followers of Islam were called balanced people by Allah. "We have appointed you a middle nation."<sup>4</sup> (Q2:143) This term has Arabic root. For moderation, the word in Arabic has been used in Qur'ānic text as "Wastiyah" or "Wast" in Urdu language "I 'tidal" word is used in this sense. "Moderation is often used interchangeably with "average," "core," "standard," "heart," and "non-aligned."<sup>5</sup> The basic meaning of this word or term is to take an action between extremity and weakness. An action that is not top high level or not at bottom level that should be at the middle of both these levels.

#### **5. Sources of Entertainment in Islam**

Having universal and cosmopolitan nature, Islam gives many ways to keep its followers joyed and entertained. To preach everywhere, every time and every person was forbidden by Holy Prophet (PBUH). To keep away from boredom it was advised to preach people a single day in one week and it was forbidden to preach people at the time when they were doing their work. Mostly, preaching was preferred when people demand or

they want to attend a meeting or class to get some knowledgeable things. They ought to be delivered a lecture or set of instructions when they give positive gesture to learn something. Many other ways can be derived from the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) those make people happy, joyed or entertained. These aspects make people fresh and minimize their boredom mentally as well as physically.

#### **3.1 Family Entertainment by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)**

To make somebody's family entertained or joyous there are many examples which have been quoted from the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the life of pious caliphates. In last hadith narrated by Hazrat Aisha (R.A) when Holy Prophet (PBUH) entered two girls were there those who already were singing a song with Duff. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) didn't stop them. This shows that Hazrat Aisha (R.A) had listening them already. This Hadith also shows that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to make his family entertained and joyous had allowed his family with singing already. A point can be drawn for those women who are working as house wives and are limited to their houses in these days can sing a song or listen a song (conditionally) that is not against the values or culture of Islam. The above Hadith also shows the moderate environment of home and entertaining aspect of house wives. It was an environment in which women could enjoy and entertain themselves with available sources.

In another incident when on Eid day a Negroes man used to display some tricks with his spears. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked for his wife (Aisha) if she want to watch his performance. "It was the day of `Id when Negroes used to play with leather shields and spears. Either I requested Allah's Apostle or he himself asked me whether I would like to see the display. I replied in the affirmative. Then he let me stand behind him and my cheek was touching his cheek and he was saying, "Carry on, O Bani Arfida (i.e.,

negroes)!" When I got tired, he asked me if that was enough. I replied in the affirmative and he told me to leave."<sup>6</sup> This incident shows that women can watch the tricks and activities of armed forces but under cover. The condition of having with a person of blood relation is necessary. In this way women will be saved. For wives, Holy Prophet (PBUH) in his house, made an environment of loving, caring and equality. To make their wives happy, he used to give different types of gifts and presents. He used to assist in their (wives) working especially cooking. Whole the life, Holy Prophet (PBUH) never scolded, hurt or tortured any wife. In some kind of journey or to go to out from house, Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to bring His family with him. In many official journeys Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) kept His wife with Him. It is also a way to entertain oneself as well as for one's family. Further, during the journey, many entertaining activities have been quoted in the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Two times during journeys, the race competition between Prophet (PBUH) and his beloved wife Hazrat Aisha (R.A) were held. All this was told by Hazrat Aisha (R.A) in such a way. "Narrated Aisha, Ummul Muminin: while she was on a journey along with the Messenger of Allah, I had a race with him (the Prophet) and I outstripped him on my feet. When I became fleshy, (again) I had a race with him (the Prophet) and he outstripped me. He said: This is for that outstripping."<sup>7</sup>

### 3.3 Fun with Followers or Sub-Ordinates

The attitude of Prophet (PBUH) with his followers and people who were working under his supervision was very polite. This politeness attracted the people those who were his enemy in their mission. Without humiliation, Holy Prophet (PBUH) also used to make fun with his followers. In his fun or joking, He did not let someone down or humiliate anyone. Also, his fun had no falsehood or fabricated wordings or expressions. Once, an old woman asked for Holy Prophet

(PBUH) to pray for her, "May Allah grants her paradise" The Holy Prophet said, "No old woman will enter the Garden of Paradise!" She turned away weeping, so he said: 'Tell her that she will not enter it as an old woman, for Allah says: 'We have created them a new creation, and made them virgins, loving, equal in age."<sup>8</sup> A sense of entertaining was used but falsehood or untruth sense was not used. Hazrat Anas (R.A) was called "Du uzunain" (a person having two ears) by Holy Prophet (PBUH). "O possessor of two ears!" Mahmud said: "Abu Usama said: 'He only meant it as a joke."<sup>9</sup> Hazrat Anas (R.A) said, he used to enjoy this name because this was full of love and truth. Once, "A man sought a mount from the Messenger of Allah who said: 'Indeed, I will let you ride on a she-camel's child.' So, he said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What can a she-camel's child do?' So, the Messenger of Allah said: 'Are camels borne from other than she-camels?'"<sup>10</sup>

These types of jokes and funny comments which don't humiliate anybody and also have no sense of fabrication were used by Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself. In routine life, such types of humors create an environment of joyous and entertaining for people. Even in Islam, joking or fun to humiliate or degrade others were prohibited. As, said by Allah in Surah al-Hujurat in such a way. "O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they (are), nor let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames."<sup>11</sup> But to create an environment of moderate and frankness, an entertaining behavior or attitude is required. In these days the serials or stage dramas in which funny jokes are uttered by actors, if these are not immodest, fabricated or humiliated for others, then these dramas can be watched with family for entertaining or enjoyment purposes. For those, who are a supervisor or a commanding officers can follow these types of jokes for their subordinates or workers to create a friendly environment. To maintain or to create a happy

and frank situation, (without any humiliation) they can use such type of funny wordings.

### **3.4 Enjoyment from Chivalry, Riding and Swimming**

Special activities of soldiers for their training purpose, their firing, their physical tricks, Kungfu, tactics, parade performances, activities of air forces or naval forces and exhibitions of their weapons all these can be watched as watched by Holy Prophet (PBUH) and His wife Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) the activities of Negroes. Also from this incident, we can derive the positive gesture about the watching of the circus performances held in a place where male and female should be separate. But the performance of women can be watched by men. It is against the basic teaching of Islam. To show the power of a state for defense purposes, the instruments of armed forces or the vehicles can be shown in a parade. A competition can be held between soldiers with their special tools. Such competitions were held in the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The practices of soldiers with weapons, horses which were used for war purpose and wrestling to motivate the people to maintain health and physical power and to keep the enemy terrified. A horse race was also held in the period of Holy Prophet (PBUH). He used to manage all activities under His supervisions. Riding, archery, swimming and wrestling are not only recommended in Islam but also practically adopted by pious companions for fitness purposes. For, these are beneficial personally as well as for a society. About archery or shooting, it has been advised in Islam for everyone to learn in any condition. "Lands shall be thrown open to you and Allah will suffice you (against your enemies), but none of you should give up playing with his arrows."<sup>12</sup> It is reality that in the surrounding of Madinah, there was no place for swimming but the importance of swimming was told by Prophet (PBUH) for chivalry and for

personal body fitness. "Teach your children swimming and teach your fighters archery."<sup>13</sup>

Painting of living being has been prohibited in Islam. But one can make his painting for some natural beauty or natural scenes. Hilly areas, snow falling, rain falling, water fall and other natural phenomenon can be captured in the form of painting. "All the painters who make pictures would be in the fire of Hell. The soul will be breathed in every picture prepared by him and it shall punish him in the Hell, and he (Ibn 'Abbas) said: If you have to do it at all, then paint the pictures of trees and lifeless things; and Nasr b. 'Ali confirmed it."<sup>14</sup> Videos, movies, Cinema, theatrical performance are allowed if they would be without immodesty or fabrication. For educational purposes, for innovative reasoning and for social motivation or awareness all these institutions can be used for positive purposes in an Islamic society. Movies should be educational or for socialization purposes for children. For adult these should be for social awareness and for women these should be for helping materials. "The First Republic promoted the creation of a distinctively Islamic cinema for the purposes of spreading religious guidance. A new set of highly restrictive censorship codes were formulated, which brought film production under the tight control of the government."<sup>15</sup> In these days, the role of cinemas is negative in a society. On screens negativity against religions and social norms are shown. Negative mentality is being promoted by un-social and un-natural activities. Cinemas should be used for educational purposes of children and social awareness for public.

### **3.5 Tourism; An Islamic Entertaining Aspect**

Tourism empowers a country financially as well as socially. A huge amount of money is transferred in this way with the help of tourists who travel to other countries. They spend money and purchase different items from different

places. Some cultural values are transferred or introduced by these tourists to the areas where they travel. One of basic objectives of tourism is to get entertainment by chaining the environment. In Islam for positive purposes, it is allowed rather Allah advised the people to travel in the world and watch the natural beauty. This will create love for its creator and will make a strong connection between Allah and a man. "Travel in the land and see how He originated creation, then Allah bringeth forth the later growth. Lo! Allah is Able to do all things."<sup>16</sup> (Q, 29:20) Not only in Holy Book but also by Prophet (PBUH) advised to travel in world for constructive purposes. To see the beauty of nature, to see the creation of Allah and to preach the message of Allah to the people who are unknown. This is also the obligation of a group of Muslims. "A man said: Messenger of Allah, allow tourism for me. The Prophet (PBUH) said: The tourism of my people is striving in the path of Allah, the Exalted."<sup>17</sup> To have out door meals and food items are becoming popular in our society. People having some compulsions and also for some picnic purpose use to eat out-door meals. People those who are busy mostly eat by giving orders from some kinds of hotels or branches of fast foods. Sometime to change their tastes foods of these branches are taken. In Islamic point of view, it is not disliked this is compulsion for some people and for some people to refresh them or to get some joyous moments. Only haram foods are prohibited in Islamic society. The types of foods those are not declared or not in the list of prohibition can be taken by everyone, everywhere and anytime.

Out-door eating and having food has also become a way of entertaining in these days. It has become a cause of gathering or after gathering it has become a necessary part of a meeting, function or company. "There are overlapping discourses on food as a blessing to be shared with others and food as a means of enjoying the company of others."<sup>18</sup> Social meeting or events for close friends in some free moments have

become an entertaining source in these days. People gather on a place to discuss for their running situations. They share their problems and try to resolve them by discussion or sharing the information. In this way, they try to minimize their tensions. This is also a source of refreshing somebody's mental situation. For enjoyment and entertainment this gathering helps people mentally and psychologically. Gathering for pious purposes has been admired in Islam. The practical example of gathering is prayer and gathering in a Masjid, five times in a day. Many times, Holy Prophet (PBUH) with his close friends used to gather in some place like garden where they used to talk about different topics. Sometime about the social issues, sometime current circumstances, sometime religious and sometime personal matters were discussed with his close friends. "Abu Musa al-Ash'ari reported that while Allah's Messenger was in one of the gardens of Medina, reclining against a pillow and fixing a stick in a mud, that a person came asking for the gate to be opened, whereupon he said: Open it for him and give him glad tidings of Paradise."<sup>19</sup>

This gathering gives the proof for people's get together in one place where there is natural beauty and peaceful environment away from a town. For entertaining or to remove boredom, such kind of meeting or gathering can be arranged. Also, some kinds of meals can be taken. They can discuss their personal matters and social issues. For the followers of Islam or living in an Islamic society, people can arrange picnic party and get together party or meeting to discuss their personal or social matters. For pious purposes, friends, students and workers also can arrange such type of meeting or gathering. A family, its member or more than one family can also arrange for their enjoyment and entertainment. This is another entertaining way of Islam. It is also a primary demand of a person as well.

## Conclusion

Human nature needs enjoyment, refreshment and entertainment. Islamic commandments are much too harmonious to human nature. For entertainment, Islam gives a lot of sources to entertain its followers. To keep them away from boredom, every Islamic policy holds moderate nature that is so attractive for common people especially for non-Muslims. Further for entertainment, singing (conditionally), outing, games, social functions, chivalry activities and social meetings for refreshments are allowed in Islam. Fun or humorous attitude towards friends, family and colleagues are permitted if some kind of humiliation or immodesty element is not there. Out-door picnic parties, festivals and social functions in which Islamic values are not violated, would be conditionally permitted in Islamic society. Only special cultural or religious functions of other religions or declared Haram elements are disallowed in Islamic society otherwise everything is permitted in Islamic society. In Islamic society, people are not limited or bounded to only ritual activities but are permitted to attend every social function under Islamic instructions.

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## Recommendations

Islam promotes the human nature and does not impose even a single commandment on its followers that is unapproachable or boring for them. In spite of this nature, Islam gives a lot of entertaining sources. So, every preacher or a scholar should promote these entertaining sources. About public entertainment or enjoyment, a lenient policy should be adopted by scholars, jurists and Islamic preachers. Government and mass media should propagate these Islamic entertaining ways. Islamic and un-Islamic practices should not be mixed up on the name of entertainment. To minimize the level of depression, tension or mental stress, some kind of joyous moments or activities are necessary to be practices. For this reason, the way of moderation should be adopted. Both types of practices: ritual and entertaining activities not only advised but also should be created an environment in which somebody can easily adopt these (both) types of practices.

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