



REAL VALUE

Consider a person with the following profile:
Age: In the prime of life. **Health:** Super fit.
Beauty: Outstanding. **Wealth:** Multi billionaire. **Qualifications:** 7 PHDs. **Social Standing:** Among the most influential people in the country

Two days later he passed away. His re-written profile now reads:

Age: Dead. **Health:** Not applicable. **Beauty:** Body decaying. Eyes have disappeared leaving empty sockets. Hair and teeth have fallen off. **Wealth:** Left empty handed. **Qualifications:** Soul did not qualify in anything. **Social standing:** Besides a few people everyone has largely forgotten him and are not concerned about him in any way.

This is the reality that faces one when death strikes. One is stripped of all external valuables, denuded from one's branded attire and wrapped in plain sheets of cloth, dispossessed of one's wealth, distanced from one's home and luxuries, divested of one's titles and even deprived of one's name – one is now referred to as “the deceased, “the *mayyit*” or “the *janaza*”. But... there is some wealth, beauty and strength which will go along with one to the grave. The wealth of *Imaan*, sincerity, compassion, forgiveness and maintaining family ties; the beauty of *hayaa*, simplicity and good character; the strength of *tawakkul* (trust in Allah Ta'ala) and contentment – all these and other such inner values will accompany one to the grave. They will be one's companion on the day of Qiyamah (judgement) and will pave the way to Jannah. Therefore, while making a moderate effort to earn a halaal living, the focus of one's heart and mind must be towards acquiring real values.

REAL WEALTH

In many Ahadith Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has drawn our attention towards acquiring true values and discouraged us from focussing towards the perishable wealth of this world. In one narration Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: **“One does not become wealthy by having much material possessions. True wealth is the wealth of the**

heart” (Bukhari #6446). The “wealth of the heart” is a broad concept. In this context it primarily refers to having contentment. A content person is truly wealthy. A poor person is one who does not have “enough”. Without contentment nothing is “enough”. For a discontent person “enough” is a very deep pit which only bottoms out in the grave. Thus the “wealth of the heart” is to be acquired. This is really valuable — more valuable than all the gold mines on earth.

REAL BEAUTY

Likewise, true value is in inner beauty, such as the beauty of *akhlaaq*. Even when age has wrinkled a person's face, discoloured his hair, weakened his limbs and sapped away his energy, the beauty of his or her *akhlaaq* will still shine and attract like a magnet. In fact, even in one's youthful years, the external beauty is superficial. If the heart is not adorned with sincerity, love, affection, compassion, kindness and selflessness, the beauty of the face and body will not be able to compensate for the ugly character that will emanate from the ugly heart. Diamond rings cannot be a substitute for sincere love and affection. Gold bangles cannot be a substitute for true compassion. Treating the spouse to exotic holidays will not compensate for lack of tolerance and regular outbursts of anger. Trying to use money to fill the gap created by poor character is like trying to fill a swimming pool with a cup of water.

One of the vital aspects of real beauty is *hayaa* (modesty and shame). Our most beloved master, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), urged his followers to adorn themselves with this value when he said: **“Immorality will debase and degrade whatever it is found in, while hayaa will be a source of adornment wherever it is found”** (Tirmizi #1974). Dressing in shameless tight-fitting or revealing garments does not make one beautiful. It degrades

(Cont. overleaf)

INSIDE...	Novel Company.....	Page 2
	Question: Indecent Dressing.....	Page 3
	Whose jeans?.....	Page 4

REAL VALUE

(FROM PAGE ONE)

and debases one. It soils one with the filth of immorality.

REAL STRENGTH

While scores of people are obsessed with cosmetics to enhance their physical beauty, an equal number are in the gym trying to improve their strength. Maintaining one's physical health and strengthening the body is most commendable, provided the means used are within the limits of Shariah. Yet again, the real strength is inner strength. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: **"A strong person is not one who can wrestle others down. Instead a strong person is he who can control his anger"** (# Bukhari 6114). Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is also reported to have said: **"The most beloved gulp in the sight of Allah Ta'ala is the gulp of anger which one gulps down (suppresses)"** (#Tabrani 7282). Being able to do a hundred push-ups is fine, but can one also push one's anger down? The latter is real strength. This is the value which we have to make an effort to acquire.

There are numerous examples of inner values which Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has exhorted us to acquire. These inner values make one truly valuable. The external values will one day become dust. In any event one will have to leave all the external valuables behind when one is himself laid in the dust.

DEDICATED EFFORT

To the extent that inner values will be lacking, accordingly one will suffer from various spiritual maladies. The lack of contentment will make way for greed to enter the heart. The lack of tolerance and forgiveness will make space for malice. To the extent that hayaa decreases, indecency and shamelessness will sneak in. Thus the need of the moment is to acquire the true values of Imaan. This requires dedicated effort and commitment. Without effort even the perishable things of this world cannot be acquired. How can we then expect to acquire the everlasting values without effort?

All the efforts of *Deen* are focussed in the same direction. *Da'wat* and *tabligh*, *ta'lim* and the effort of *tazkia* (inner-self rectification) are all focussed towards improving one's *Imaan* and acquiring true value in one's life. It is imperative that we link ourselves with the efforts of *Deen* and become truly valuable.

NOVEL COMPANY

A beautiful parable in the hadith compares a good friend with a perfume seller and a bad friend with a blacksmith. The least benefit one will acquire in the company of a perfume seller is that one will certainly get the beautiful scent of perfume, which will freshen the mind and heart. Likewise, a good friend will always be a means of benefit. Merely being in his company will incline the heart towards good. On the contrary the least harm in the company of a blacksmith is that one will breathe the toxic smoke that will be all around his environment. Likewise the company of a bad friend is spiritually toxic. Merely being in bad company will influence one towards evil and sin.

STORIES SHAPE LIVES

While human companionship will generally have the greatest effect and influence on one, the company one keeps is much broader than being in the company of friends and associates. Many people spend long hours in the company of novels. Novel addicts can read a thick novel of a few hundred pages in a night or two. "Reading cannot harm you," exclaim novel readers. The question is: Does a novel really have no effect on the reader? Scientists believe otherwise. According to Dr. Gregory S. Berns, director of Emory University's Center for Neuropolicy in Atlanta, **"Stories shape our lives and in some cases help define a person."** Berns says their findings **"suggest that reading a novel can transport you into the body of the protagonist."** Using MRI scans, the investigators noticed heightened connectivity in an area of the brain (of their subjects) which is associated with making representations of sensation for the body. They explain that, for example, when we merely think about running, we can activate neurons in the brain that are associated with the actual physical motion of running. "

In the light of the above consider the contents of the vast majority of novels read by young and old alike. If merely thinking of running activates the neurons in the brain associated with running, which will make one want to start running, what happens to a person reading a novel whose entire plot is intertwined with materialism and illicit relationships? If **"stories shape our lives"** as scientists have found, what happens to the mind (and body) of the person reading the lurid scenes of zina in almost every novel? The minimum disastrous effect that this will most likely result in is that the heart and mind of the reader will regularly become engaged in zina – Allah forbid. When the

(Cont. On page 4)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

INDECENT DRESSING?

Q *I often wear jeans and other western attire indoors. If I leave the home, I always don an abaya over my clothes and also wear hijab. My husband is ok with my dressing but my mother keeps fighting with me that my dressing is indecent. I do not see anything indecent in how I dress, especially since it is only indoors. Please advise. (summarized).*

A There are several aspects in your question. We will briefly deal with some of them in point form.

• It is most commendable that you don the abaya and hijab when leaving the home. May Allah Ta'ala keep you steadfast and enable you to progress further towards adopting the true spirit of hijab.

• You have raised the issue of "indecent" dressing. "Indecent dressing" has been defined as "dressing in a way that will offend or shock." The question is that WHO will it offend or shock? There must be a standard upon which to judge what is offensive and shocking. Tragically, due to erosion of Imaani values, Western influence, exposure to media brainwashing and especially the departure of shame, many "modern" Muslim women will also not be shocked by someone dressed in skin-tight clothing, or "dressing" in a manner that half the body is totally naked. So what then is the standard? The only standard is the Qur'an and Sunnah. This standard is mirrored in the lives of the Sahaba (R.A.). Would the queen of Jannah, Sayyidah Fatima (R.A.), be shocked to see you dressed, even indoors, in jeans and other western garb? If your mother finds it indecent, one can well imagine what the reaction of the Queen of Jannah would have been if she could have been here to witness it! (May Allah Ta'ala bless your mother. The number of mothers who can see the indecency in such dressing is fast dwindling. They don it themselves, so what hope is there in them guiding their daughters???) Therefore, always judge your dressing against this standard and keep trying to get closer to it.

• Another crucial aspect to ponder over is: Why western garb? Why jeans? (see separate article on jeans in this issue). Why do you not prefer, for example, the flowing dresses of some African communities, or other communities that have modest clothing? This brings us to the heart of the issue – that generally the hearts have become greatly Americanised. This is reflected in one's choice of clothing. To understand it a little differently, it is as if

to say that "I am a Muslimah outdoors and a follower of the Yهودiyah indoors", or "on the top I am a Muslimah but inside ..." or "on the outside I am "Madinah Shareef" [a follower of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)] and on the inside I am New York and Paris"!!!.

• The cornerstone of western attire is "maximum exposure" — exposure of the shape of the body as well as ever-increasing exposure of skin. Thus garments keep getting tighter and skimpier. This is exactly the agenda of shaitaan which the Qur'an has clearly warned us about.

• Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has commanded us to observe *hayaa* for Allah Ta'ala. Unnecessary exposure of the private areas of the body, even by wearing tight-fitting garments that expose the shape, is against the dictates of this hayaa.

BEHAVIOUR WILL MATCH DRESS

• Even scientists have discovered that what you wear affects your behaviour. The summary of a scientific study states: "One interesting aspect of dress is that what you wear can affect how you behave. One study observed behaviour at a roller rink. On nights with a strict dress code, there were fewer accidents and less noise. In an old article in the Academy of Management Review, scientists theorized that exhibiting actions not in line with the expectations of how one would behave when wearing that clothing creates a psychological conflict called cognitive dissonance. And to relieve the conflict, **people will change their behavior to match their dress.** Of course, this is all going on without us explicitly being aware of it" (<http://quickbase.intuit.com>). Thus dressing modestly within the guidelines of the Sunnah will accordingly impact on one's actions and behaviour. Dressing as "New York" will make one behave in that decadent and shameless fashion.

May Allah Ta'ala make us true Muslims outwardly and inwardly – in body, heart and soul.

NOVEL COMPANY

(FROM PAGE TWO)

mind and heart will be repeatedly engaged in zina, what next? Novel-reading is also among the major contributors towards the shameless behaviour that is becoming the norm (merely to highlight this, a non-Muslim librarian expressed his "confusion" to his Muslim friend as to how come so many Muslim girls and young women donned in purdah borrow such "racy" novels. May Allah Ta'ala save us all from such shamlessness).

Among the greatest calamities of novel-reading is that such people are very often deprived of reciting the Qur'an Shareef. For every hundred pages of a novel read, not even one page of the Qu'ran Shareef is recited. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raajjoon!* This is borne out by the confession of many novel-readers who repented from this evil "past time". It is thus not a novel idea to keep a novel as company. (The same applies to the modern-day version of novels — the endless BLOGS blabbing away their fictitious tales). One should read good authentic Islamic books after consulting with an experienced Aalim. Most of all, daily recite the BOOK OF ALLAH TA'ALA. No book can ever be better company than His book.

From the advices of ...



FAQIHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of *Faqihul Ummah* Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*Rahmatullahi Alaihi*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Islahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is an answer to a question posed to him.

WHAT WRONG HAVE I DONE?

Bismihi Ta'ala

Respected Mufti Saheb

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuh

I am in severe problems and difficulties. I cannot even think why these difficulties have come upon me. What wrong have I done that I have been taken to task in this manner? Kindly make dua for me.

Summary of Reply:

Bismihi Ta'ala

Respected Brother / Sister

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuh

I wholeheartedly make dua for you that Allah Ta'ala must remove your difficulties. May you be exonerated and freed from your difficulties in a most respectable manner.

Furthermore, I wish to draw your attention to another aspect. Never consider yourself as blameless and sinless. Daily we commit sins and still think that we have been taken to task despite being blameless. However the reality is that there is a mountain of blame upon us. This can be understood by the following example: A light switch is switched on in one place and at a distance the bulb lights up. However, the connection between the two by means of the wiring is often not seen (but the link is certainly there). Likewise our sins have "switched on" the problems (though we cannot see it - translator). May Allah Ta'ala forgive our sins. May He keep us with respect and safety and save us from sins. (Tarbiyatut Taalibeen pg.179)

WHOSE JEANS?

The excerpts below (taken from various websites) about the history of jeans reveal some noteworthy points:

⊙ "Starting in the 1950s, jeans, originally designed for cowboys and miners, became popular among teenagers especially members of the Greaser subculture. Greasers were a youth subculture that originated in the 1950s in north eastern United States. Their style became popular as an expression of rebellion. Jeans are particularly identified with American culture, especially the American Old West."

⊙ "After James Dean popularized them in the

movie *Rebel Without a Cause*, wearing jeans became a symbol of youth rebellion during the 1950s (*this is the effect of movies – Alhaadi comment*). Because of this, they were sometimes banned in theatres, restaurants and schools."

Among the noteworthy points are:

- Jeans was introduced by the American West. It is part of American-wear, not Madina Shareef-wear.
- From its early days it found acceptance among a rebellious culture.
- Muslims are leaders. They should not become followers of the Greasers.