

Khutba

Friday 16.07.10

English

Temptations of Summer Holidays

Dear Muslims,

Every summer, a discussion about a very important issue arises. People from all over the world with different interests have discussed the positive and negative aspects of this issue, because it is a very important topic. Many people have commented on this through various means such as magazines, Mosques, clubs and other media, and from many different points of view. This issue is that of summer or yearly vacations, which has become an indispensable event for many people. Everyone would agree that this event has become a part of our lives and cannot be ignored. It has imposed itself to be a part of the fixed yearly plan. Despite of that, these holidays, in most cases, are unorganized and poorly planned, although people feel that it is a necessity. When people think of their vacation, they do not seem to have the proper objectives, and their plans seem to have many limitations in term of time and place, let alone the adherence to the Islamic guidelines that should define what can and cannot be done during them.

Only an arrogant or ignorant person would deny the fact that people need to rest after long periods of hard work, and that they need to relax after stress. Islam does not oblige people to make all their words as those of the remembrance of Allah, nor to make all their time be occupied with acts of worship. Rather, Islam has permitted rest and relaxation within defined limits. As a matter of fact, when a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) by the name of Handhalah Ibn 'Aamir, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Prophet (PBUH) complaining that the strength and level of his Faith decreased when he returned home and played with his wife and children (as opposed to the time when he was with the Prophet (PBUH)). The Prophet (PBUH) replied to this by saying: *(A time for this and a time for that)* (**Bukhaari & Muslim**) which means an hour for worship and increasing ones Faith, and an hour for living ones life within the limits and boundaries of Islam, which would also help one increase their Faith.

Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, may Allah have mercy upon him, narrated that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "**Relax your hearts and find some means of entertainment for them, because they become apathetic just as bodies get tired.**"

Ibn Al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "**I have observed that man has shouldered many difficult responsibilities and obligations. Amongst the heaviest of burdens is controlling himself and persevering through that which he likes and dislikes, and it seems to me that the correct thing to do is interrupt that with something that entertains.**"

This is how we should understand mixing seriousness with amusement and hard work with relaxation. There are important questions regarding the behavior of many Muslims during vacations that must be asked. How far does amusement go during vacations? What is the ideal way of utilizing our time and maintaining our priorities? What should be our real understanding of vacationing? Is it too much sleep? Is it holding expensive and extravagant weddings? Is it switching days into nights and nights into days? Or is excessive TV and internet viewing? These are questions which come from the heart of every believing man and woman, who have a conscience and are deeply concerned by the manner in which our youth are spending their time and utilizing their health.

This topic requires a detailed research, so that objectives can be set for the fruitful utilization of time, and limits can be set for people so that they remain within Islamic boundaries. Such a research can be conducted by studying all available entertainment programs and evaluating their pros and cons, establishing a strong link between them, Islamic guidelines and people's customs and traditions; This could be in the form of a study that finds inventive ways of accomplishing relaxation, entertainment and other benefits along with the pleasure of Allah during peoples vacations, and which analyses people's actions and reactions based on Islam, in light of people's interests and hobbies. This would be a study that discovers the benefits that vacations give, such as reviving people, energizing them and increasing their productivity, which will reflect on their communities and benefit them in this life and the Hereafter.

In order to identify how mature and responsible communities, who are concerned about their individuals and the utilization of the wasted human resources within their ranks, have developed, we should look at how they deal with the holiday issue. We must observe what their stance is regarding vacations and holiday periods, as well as the serious researches that they conduct in order to find solutions for the negative and unsavory aspects of vacations and compare it to our communities.

Indeed if we were to attempt to go into detail about the negative practices that take place during vacations in many of our communities, it would take too long a time. Therefore, we will mention just a few examples.

One of the most dispraised practices during vacations is when people switch their days into nights and vice versa; people stay up all night with useless talk and incorrect behavior. Sometimes this even involves sinful words and actions. Some people spend their nights dancing or listening to music, and then when the day comes they spend it sleeping, heedless of the remembrance of Allah and His worship. Such practices make people heedless of the fact that Allah made nights to rest in and days for working, and that the alternation of the day and night is one of the signs of the greatness of Allah. In fact, when Allah wanted to give the disbelievers an example of His might and power He mentioned the alternation of the day and night, as He says: ***“Say: ‘Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the night continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you light? Then will you not hear?’ Say: ‘Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the day continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you a night in which you may rest? Then will you not see?’ And out of His Mercy He made for you the night and the day that you may rest therein and [by day] seek from His bounty and [that] perhaps you will be grateful.”*** *Al-Qasas: 71-73.*

Another example of the incorrect practices which frequently occur during vacations and for which people in general and women in particular long for, are the evil practices which occur during weddings. In preparation for such events people spend excessive amounts of money and concentrate all their efforts in this, they spend ridiculous amounts on renting the halls where the event is to be held and boast to others about doing so. They go to ridiculous lengths in shopping for the event, and women expose their adornment during these times. All of this happens prior to the wedding, as well as huge amounts of money spent on clothes, food and drinks – solely for the purpose of boasting and showing off. Dowries are so high that it seems as if many couples are living in separate eras, the husband in one which has passed and the wife in one which is yet to come, so how can these two eras be reconciled?

Some young men barely have enough to live on, while the parents of the young ladies they wish to marry spend wastefully; some young men just wish to get married while the parents of the fiancée simply wish to boast. Abu Hurayrah, May Allah be pleased with him, narrated that a man came to the Prophet (PBUH) seeking assistance and said: **“I have married a woman from the Ansar.”** The Prophet (PBUH) replied: *“How much did you pay? (i.e., as dowry)”* the man replied: **“One hundred and sixty silver coins”** the Prophet (PBUH) said: *“One hundred and sixty silver coins! It is as though some of you dig silver out from a mountain! - I have nothing to give you”* **Narrated by Muslim.**

Another evil practice which is widespread during vacations is the satellite television channels which prepare programs especially for the summer vacation. They prepare for these just as people prepare to face an enemy; they compete in broadcasting the most seductive programs which destroy chastity and persevere in this so that the noble manners which people might have acquired during the year are destroyed in a very short time. These channels act like a destructive hammer which destroys any trace of morality that people may have in their hearts; channels which are administered by people with no conscience that would have made them distinguish between that which is good and that which is shameless. The effect of these channels is that they break the strong bonds of the community. Moreover, some of what these channels are broadcasting may be jeopardizing the social stability and security that we currently enjoy.

Something that we must realize is that those who steal people’s minds and command their ideology are no less evil than those who steal money; both types of thieves cause havoc and endanger security and stability. We should know that it is the media that controls the minds of people and communities; it is through this that people’s ideologies are formed. The media is what should propagate issues that are of concern to the Muslims and support them, or, it could be the cause for facts to be altered or caused to disappear. If anyone wishes to know whether a nation is serious or careless, all they have to do is observe their media and the issues that it regards as important, because this is what will affect its community, both in a positive and negative manner.

Dear Muslims

There are two other important issues which are not any less significant than what has already been mentioned regarding evil practices during vacations, and these are travelling to the lands of the disbelievers and to Muslim countries which are in essence not much different from the disbelieving countries.

It is a well known fact that anybody who is serious and fears their Lord, Who has bestowed His bounties upon him, would never spend anything on that which would result in his destruction. On the other hand, there are others

who have gone to ridiculous extremes in their entertainment and have begun to think that they are imprisoned in

their homes and countries. They have slighted things which they used to consider as serious and vital, and this has got to the point where these people have become accustomed to vacationing with no apparent consideration of whether this entails seeing shameless things which Allah has prohibited, such as nudity and other disgusting matters.

Moreover, some committed practicing Muslims who are exposed to this become weaker in performing their obligatory duties, or perform them but accompanied by shame and embarrassment, as if they are stealing something; they may offer their prayers in the midst of loud music, which would destroy their tranquility and concentration.

Abu Haamid Al-Ghazaali, may Allah have mercy upon him, mentioned some types of vacationing by saying: **"Continuous vacationing and entertainment destroy the heart. Some people wish for nothing except to boast and have a fine reputation, which leads them to resemble the people of great disobedience in the way they talk, their habits, the way they perform some acts of worship and their manners. They think highly of themselves and think they are doing well. How foolish is the one who cannot differentiate between being healthy and a having a wound which is swollen; such people are despised by Allah, because Allah hates unutilized youth, and the only thing which led such people to this type of vacationing is unutilized youth".**

Ibn Al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: **"If travelling through the land is not for the purpose of seeking knowledge or propagating Islam, then it is prohibited."**

Imaam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: **"Travelling (for entertainment) is not recommended in Islam nor was it the practice of the Prophets and the righteous, because it distracts the heart" and when he was asked once about amusement, he, may Allah have mercy upon him replied: "No, rather, amusement is attained by frequently going to the mosque."**

Slaves of Allah! Fear Allah regarding your vacations and take a serious stance towards finding the proper way of utilizing and preserving your time. In order to realize the importance of this issue, we must know that everybody will have to answer five questions, which were mentioned by the Prophet (PBUH). Abu Barzah, may Allah be pleased with him: reported that the Prophet (PBUH) said: *(No person's feet will be able to move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about five things: how he spent his life; how he utilised his youth; how he earned his wealth and how he spent it; and what he did with his knowledge)* **Narrated by Al-Termithy.**

So, I urge you to fear Allah during your summer vacations and stay far away from the satanic gatherings which lead people to destruction. Avoid The Satan path follow Allah guidance to be survived in the hereafter. Allah Almighty says: ***"And do not be like she who untwisted her spun thread after it was strong ..."*** *Al-Nahl: 92.*

Amen.

Khutba by Sidi Mohamed Ould Cherif