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Q Contemporary challenges of Muslims and their solutions according to the teachings of the Quran.

Ans. This question necessitates a discussion on the new world problems being faced by Muslims and requires us to ponder upon the various ways their impact may be alleviated, or completely eradicated.

There is an old saying, 'Satan hates sharp and pointy edges. He strives to dull the edges until the sharpness fades, or can no longer appear. In a similar way, in recent times, the distinction between the truth and falsehood has become aberrant. The Muslim Ummah in today's time have been struck with several contemporary challenges.

The Prime one is receiving backlash for speaking of, or viewing the aspects of social life from a religious point of view. But one must remember, receiving backlash/criticism for promoting or even following religious principles is a form of charity. One should always observe patience in such instances. As mentioned in Surah Baqarah, "Indeed Allah is with the patient." But one must take into account, tyranny shall not be allowed to ascend on the pretext of 'Adab'. The prophet had not only been accorded with adab of the finest form, but he had also been granted the boldness to straight in the face of falsehood. As Surah Baqarah further accentuates, "Fight in the way

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of Allah." The purpose here is not to say that Adab is of less significance, but is rather to understand the words a spiritual authority once said, Adab is to sharpen your sword so that when you cut a limb, it does not hurt.

The second contemporary challenge is lacking the courage to stand up and criticise the fallacies of our time. It has become easy for us to point out the lack of hygienic facilities in a Madrasah, but our courage seems to diminish when asserting that modern educational institutions are far more deadly for the souls within which Faith or 'Imaan' resides. Surah Al-Baqarah provides a solution for this as well. It says, do not mix or conceal the truth with falsehood. Providing objective criticism of the modern world would be one way to go. As the Persian proverb goes, "As long as the root of the plant is in the water, there is still hope."

Another challenge is existentialism. It is philosophical belief that an individual alone is responsible for creating purpose and meaning of life. It puts forth that the true definition of life cannot be found if the presence of God is acknowledged. The Quran is clear in this regard. It unequivocally sets that a man is not created without purpose. He cannot act according to his own will, and must follow the teachings of Allah. A man's creation is not useless. The purpose of life is to worship Allah. As Surah Al-Zariyat accents, "And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve me". This makes it clear that the challenge

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of Existentialism should not affect us Muslims. We have been bestowed a purpose that we must fulfill.

Fourthly, the belief of life being predestined. A man is born free, and he lives free. But he must remain within the ambit of the will of Allah. One can change their life provided sufficient strive and struggle is made. This has been established in Sahih Ra'id, "Allah never changes the condition of people unless they strive to change themselves."

The prime-most challenge out of these is science. It is often claimed that science alone can introduce a man to the secrets of this universe and life. It concludes that science is the truth, all else is falsehood. Although science is the truth brilliant and provides an objective outlook but such statements often overlook that the inadequate instruments of science cannot be the very reason to rule out beliefs such as there is <sup>such thing</sup> not human soul, or life after death, or any possibility of having any contact with the unknown. These belong to a high-order and not within the bounds of a man's observation. Often a man fails to properly distinguish this, and as a result, suffers from 'enlightened ignorance'. The Quran has been very clear that it is Allah who is the creator of everything.

This discussion concludes that Islam freed mankind from the tyranny fourteen hundred years ago, it can once again shake off the shackles of evil and free men spiritually. One must note though, its realisation is not easy to come by. Victorious emergence out of present ideological warfare is the only guarantee of a man's salvation.

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