

## **How Can Our Scriptures Assist Us in the Prevention of HIV/AIDS?**

HIV/AIDS is a behavioural disease and not a non-communicable disease. It is linked with sexual relations between persons, regardless of gender, community identification, ethnicity or age groups of persons involved. This essentially means that as preventative measures, there has to be some measurable control on chastity. The breach of the greatest trust which can be imposed on any male or female person, which ruins families, destroys household peace and casts social slur upon themselves by the wider communities, is through illegitimate sexual relations.

Chastity as a virtue has lost its touch in modern civilised society and accordingly, social vices such as adultery and prostitution are not considered as serious non-societal activities any more; and further, many society leaders do not take strong preventative action against those sinners. The Holy Qur'an is not only an exemplary religious scripture, but a reference book towards proper and respectable code of ethics and lifestyles for betterment to the wider society.

It has been seen in many societies, that once HIV/AIDS affects people, there is societal rejection of those affected persons and this then leads to social rejection and loss of decency.

The Ministry Health in Fiji and UNICEF has been sending out signals of authority of what should not be done and which would worsen the spread of HIV/AIDS. In this same regard, the Qur'an makes clear that public must follow directions given by those in authority. The Holy Qur'an states at 4:59 "O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger (Head of State), and those in authority from among you...."

The Qur'an states further at 16:90 " Surely God enjoins justice and doing of good (to others)...and God forbids indecency...."

The Holy Qur'an requires society to take a hard stand against those active in adultery and states the injunction at 24: 2 "The adulteress and the adulterer , ... and let not pity for them detail your obedience to God, if you believe in God and the Last Day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement."

The Qur'an states further at 24:10. "And were it not for God's grace upon you and His mercy – and that God is Oft-returning to (mercy) Wise!"

The Qur'an clarifies at 24:26 "Unclean things are for unclean ones and unclean ones are for unclean things, and good things are for good ones and good ones are for good things; these are free from what they say. For them is forgiveness and an honourable sustenance." The meaning of this whole passage is made clear by the words that nothing impure can be attributed to the pure ones, and they are free from what the impure ones say. In order to contain society into good well-behaved culture and not leading into breach of peoples' personal privacy and, which could lead into illegitimate relationship, the Qur'an states the injunction at 24:27-31. "O you who believe, enter not houses other than your own houses, until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates. This is better that you may be mindful." "28. But if you find no one therein, enter them not, until permission is given to you; and if it is said to you, Go

back, then go back; this is purer for you. And God is knower of what you do.” “29. It is no sin for you to enter uninhabited houses wherein you have your necessities. And God knows what you do openly and what you hide.” “30. Say to believing men that they lower their gaze and restrain their sexual passions. That is purer for them. Surely God is Aware of what they do.” “31. And say to believing women that they lower their gaze and restrain their sexual passion and do not display their adornment except what appears thereof. And let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms. And they should not display their adornment except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers’ sons, or their sisters’ sons, or their women or those who their right hand possess, or guileless male servants, or the children who know not women’s nakedness. And let women not strike their feet so that the adornment that they hide may be known. And turn to God all, O believers, so that you may be successful.”

The Holy Qur’an is mindful that some people may be unmarried and warns at 24:33.” And let those who cannot find a match keep chaste, until God makes them free from want out of His grace. And those of your servants who ask for a writing (of freedom), give them the writing, if you know any good in them, and give them of the wealth of God which He has given you. And compel not your servant girls to prostitution when they desire to keeping chaste, in order to seek the frail goods of this world’s life. And whoever compels them, then surely after their compulsion God is Forgiving, Merciful.”

The Qur’an reminds society at 24:42 of Supremacy and accountability to God “And to God is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to God is the eventual coming.”

The Qur’an warns parents and society elders at 24:59. “And when the children among you attain to puberty, let them seek permission as those before them sought permission. Thus does God make clear to you His messages. And God is Knowing, Wise.”

The Qur’an warns society at 24:64 about God that they cannot escape His monitoring “Now surely to God is whatever is in the heavens and the earth. He knows indeed your condition. And on the day when they are returned to Him, He will inform them of what they did. And surely God is knower of all things.”

Another contributing factor which leads people into becoming out of their control and so onto sinful behaviours is the consumption of alcohol and narcotic drugs. The Holy Qur’an prohibits the consumption of both. Drunkenness and effect of narcotic drugs and usage of infected syringes and needles leads people into falling victim of HIV/AIDS.

The Qur’an states at 5:90 “O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance....are only uncleanness, the devil’s work; so shun it that you may succeed.” Once a person is out of self-control, then that person descends to the lowliness of material frailties of this world, including indulging into matters, which invariably lead to both mental and physical diseases, such as acquiring HIV/AIDS.

It becomes lucidly clear that God warns society, that they must walk the correct path of virtue and righteousness, and which would not steer people into doing wrong and sinful things; and so lead to such situations as HIV/AIDS, the treatment of which not only leads to very expensive procedures but also places the victims to certain undesirable stigma.