

# Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

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\*Lutfullah Saqib

\*\*Muhammad Amjad

\*\*\*Usman Rafiq

## Abstract

All significant treatises, both divine and non-divine, have been founded, no matter their subject matters were and what they seemingly profess, on the sole fact that in man, the negative nature has reigned supreme, since the time of his inception. Simultaneously, these books, both ancient and recent, have reserved substantial portions for devising ways and means to cure the evil side of man. Each of these books, from the dawn of human civilization till the present day of miraculous technology, including the Holy *Qurān* and the works of as great literary giants as those of William Shakespeare, testifies to this unalterable fact. Both *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and the works, chiefly, the four tragedies of William Shakespeare show that, besides many other vices, human nature is primarily blighted by the moral and psychological diseases of lust, gluttony and greed. However, at the same time, they discuss and offer cures to these moral illnesses in the form of chastity, temperance and love. All these cures may be rightly called Islamic legal ethics. The present study, one of its kind, attempts first to point out the vices, and second, to pinpoint their cures in the shape of Islamic legal ethics. The methodology adopted in this paper is qualitative in nature that exploits the content analysis technique for the exhaustive examination of the secondary data, painstakingly collected from both the works.

**Keywords:** Human, *Sharī'ah*, Legal Ethics, *Qurān*, Islamic Law, Jurists, William Shakespeare, Nature, Tragedies, Human Nature.

## Introduction:

God, the ultimate Architect of this magnificent universe, creates every human being, male or female, in His own image and, thus, endows them with a part of Himself – *fitrāh*<sup>1</sup>. This divine part, like a precious jewel, snuggles in the core of every man until the worm of corrosion starts gnawing at it with man's first exposition to the external environment, often pullulated with the evils of lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, pride and envy<sup>2</sup>. The divine element in man called *fitrāh*, therefore, begins to get corrupted,

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\*Associate Professor (Law & Shariah), University of Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

\*\*Bacha Khan University, Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

\*\*\*Teaching/Research Associate, Faculty of Sharī'ah & Law, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

<sup>1</sup> *Abdullah Yusāf Ali*, in his translation of the Holy *Qur'ān*, defines *fitrāh* as the divine pattern on which *Allāh* (SWT) has created man. It is divine and is, therefore, unchangeable (*Al-Qur'ān, Ar-Rum: 30*). In other words, it maintains that though the good human nature is corruptible and fallible, yet its core is unchangeable and unalterable. This is man's redeeming quality that hoists him on the highest position.

<sup>2</sup> The list of seven deadly sins has been adopted from Christian writings as the list is clear and focused. However, it is not claimed that it is an absolute list, excluding the possibility against the existence of any other vices in human nature. There are other vices which are not included here but do exist and carry far more reaching deadly effects. For instance, betrayal, ungratefulness, etc. are

resulting in man's loss of the divine attributes of chastity, temperance, love, diligence, patience, humility and compassion<sup>3</sup>. If neglected and left uncured, these evils, more often than not, take up permanent rooting in human personality and, hence, develop into serious moral and psychological disorders. Despite today's unprecedented material development and advancements in physical sciences, the aforementioned menaces are on constant rise as the sciences have badly failed to offer any substantial solution to these spiritual problems. This entire scenario suggests that the cure lies somewhere else and not in/with the sciences.

God, the sole Creator, has created man (and whatever on this earth),<sup>4</sup> He, therefore, knows man's potential for good and evil. Given that, He sent, from time to time, his messengers to man with His messages in order to cure his bad nature and to help him maintain the good one in him. This is mainly done through the mechanism of *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law). This is how the Holy *Qur'an*, being a primary source of Islamic law, confirms the same notion: "*Allāh verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who reciteth unto them His revelations, and causeth them grow, and teacheth them the Scripture and wisdom ...*".<sup>5</sup> The preceding verse shows that, apart from other sacred responsibilities, the man job of the messengers of *Allāh* was the *tazkiyāh*<sup>6</sup> (purification) of human nature. While discussing the meaning of *tazkiyāh*, the reverend author of *Tafsīr-al-Bahrul Mohīt* says, "*Al-Hasān says that those whose deeds are good and pure*"<sup>7</sup> possess moral order and soundness. Similarly, Abil Qasim Mehmood, in his renowned book, *Kashāf*, explains *tazkiyāh* in these words: "*purifying man of idolatry and other sins*".<sup>8</sup> Some other holy verses even further establish the same idea.<sup>9</sup> It can now be concluded that all religions, predominantly Islam, that is

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not listed here but have been playing strong roles in the life of man and can, therefore, serve a topic of a separate research work of the same or even greater magnitude.

<sup>3</sup> Like the list of deadly sins, the list of divine virtues adopted here, is also borrowed from Christian texts only for the sake of convenience and not for implying that it is the only or final list of virtues. There are virtues like charity, etc. though not included in the list yet exists.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, in the Holy *Qur'an*, *Allāh* (SWT), in this regard, says, "*O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who hath created you and those before you, so that ye may ward off (evil)./ Who hath appointed the earth a resting-place for you, and the sky a canopy; and causeth water to pour down from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you. And so not set up rivals to Allāh (SWT) when ye know (better).*" (*Al-Qur'an*, *Al-Baqarah*:21,22). These and numerous other holy verses confirm that *Allāh* (SWT) is the sole Creator and Sustainer of this universe. He, therefore, is aware of the innermost workings of the human nature because He is All-knowing and All-seeing and, hence, nothing can escape His observation.

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Qur'an*, *Al-Imran*:164

<sup>6</sup> The entire discussion on *tazkiyāh* in the Sacred *Qur'an* and holy *Hadīth* establishes the fact that the main responsibility of all messengers, from Adam to the last Prophet (SAW), and all divine scriptures, was to purify man of cardinal sins and to inculcate virtues instead. As is known that goodness is the result of conscious efforts and the scriptures and the messengers of *Allāh* (SWT) hint at those ways which lead to the purification of one's soul of all sins. However, inspired by the scriptures, there are many literary artists who perform this sacred responsibility of purifying the distracted souls, in their capacities and with their specific techniques.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Bin Yūsuf, *Tafsīr-al-Bahrul Mohīt*. (Beirut: Darul Kotub Al 'Ilmiya), Vol-8, 454.

<sup>8</sup> Abil Qasim Mehmood, *Kashāf* (Al-Maktabal Taufiqiyah, name of place), Vol-4, 806.

<sup>9</sup> *Allāh* (SWT) sent His messengers to different peoples of the world in order to make man more virtuous and God fearing. The series of messengers continued till the last prophet Muhammad (pbuh) because man, as is in his nature, would soon deviate from the right path. This is how the Holy *Qur'an* sheds light on the point: *Our Lord! And raise up in their midst a messenger from*

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

why, since time immemorial, have identified the defiling evils in human nature and offered, in their respective capacities, cures to them. *Sharī'ah* has enumerated, in various contexts, all the ills of man, especially, lust, gluttony and greed, and, in the same breath, has offered cures and treatments of the same in the form of chastity, temperance and love. Also, works of great literary merit, though radically different in their primary purposes<sup>10</sup>, invariably, moralize, explicitly or implicitly, in their own way. In other words, literature - directly or indirectly influenced by religion or its moral code – has failed, despite its predominantly secular nature, to disassociate and disentangle itself, even to this day, from moralizing and didacticism<sup>11</sup> – the bound job of religion and religious scripts. It is true, especially of drama as it took its origin from church performances in England<sup>12</sup>, where the writer, though scarcely resorting to direct moralizing like the scriptures, instructs and educates the audience through action and the application of different theatric conventions and dramatic techniques such as soliloquy<sup>13</sup>, aside<sup>14</sup>, foil<sup>15</sup>, plot<sup>16</sup>, etc. William

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*among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, Wise. Al-Qur'ān Al-Baqarah::129.* This set of verses shows the function of the messengers of *Allāh* (SWT) to instruct man in the ways of the Lord and to give them divine wisdom.

<sup>10</sup> “Literature consists of [those] books [...] of general human interest [...] in which [...] the element of form and the pleasure which form gives are to be regarded as essential. A piece of literature differs from a specialized treatise on astronomy, political economy, philosophy, or even history, in part because it appeals, not to a particular class of readers only, but to men and women as men and women; and in part because, while the object of the treatise is simply to impart knowledge, one ideal end of the piece of literature, whether it also imparts knowledge or not, is to yield aesthetic satisfaction by the manner in which it handles its theme.” (See for further details: William Henry Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Harrap, 1965), 10.

<sup>11</sup> (Gr. ‘teaching’) Didactic literature is designed to instruct or to persuade. Its purpose is not purely or primarily imaginative, though many didactic works are prodigious works of the imagination, in which the imaginative material is ordered to illustrate a particular doctrine. ... Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* are examples of didactic literary works, based on or inspired by the scriptures. (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 89.

<sup>12</sup> First the deed, then the story, then the play; that seems to be the natural development of the drama in its simplest form. The great deeds of a people are treasured in its literature, and later generations represent in play or pantomime certain parts of the story which appeal most powerfully to the imagination. Among primitive races the deeds of their gods and heroes are often represented at the yearly festivals. To act a part seems as natural to humanity as to tell a story; and originally the drama is but an old story retold to the eye, a story put into action by living performers, who for the moment ‘make believe’ or imagine themselves to be the old heroes. To illustrate the matter simply, there was a great life lived by him who was called the Christ. Inevitably the life found its way into literature, and we have the Gospel. (See for further details: William James Long, *English Literature its History and its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*, (India: A.I.T.B.S Publishers, 2007), 115-16.

<sup>13</sup> (Lat. ‘to speak alone’) A curious but fascinating dramatic convention, which allows a character in a play to speak directly to the audience, as if thinking aloud about motives, feelings and decisions. The psychological depth which the soliloquy gives to Shakespeare’s tragedies, particularly *Macbeth* (c. 1606) and *Hamlet* (c. 1601), is inestimable. Part of the convention is that a soliloquy provides accurate access to the character’s innermost thoughts: we learn more about the character than could ever be gathered from the action of the play alone. (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 267-68.

<sup>14</sup> An aside is a common dramatic convention in which a character speaks in such a way that some of the characters on stage do not hear what is said, while others do. It may also be a direct address

Shakespeare<sup>17</sup>, the great Elizabethan<sup>18</sup> dramatist, though not a moralist or man of the pulpit, adopts the same technique of instructing and educating his spectators and readers in his own distinct way. There are numerous examples in single plays where he exposes and offers cures simultaneously to the negative nature of man.

Taking human nature as a two-fold reality, the divine and the animal<sup>19</sup>, both *Sharī'ah* and the works of William Shakespeare offer means and ways for the cure of the ailing nature of man by calling them back to the right path of God. If, on the one hand, *Sharī'ah* and censures the moral disease of greed, thus: “*But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent, / And disbelieveth in goodness; / Surely We will ease his way into adversary./ His riches will not save him when he perisheth*”<sup>20</sup>, it (*Sharī'ah*), on the other hand, extols and celebrates love in these words to counter greed in human

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to the audience, revealing the character's views, thoughts, motives and intensions so as to create dramatic irony. Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 35.

<sup>15</sup> In novels and plays a minor character may be introduced simply to illustrate by contrast aspects of a more significant character. Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 120-21.

<sup>16</sup> (Old English ‘small piece of ground, plan, outline’) The plan of a literary work, especially of dramas and novels. To reveal the plot of a novel involves something more than simply explaining the sequence of events: ‘plot’ suggest a pattern of relationships between events, a web of causation; this happens because of that, and so on. Aristotle in his *poetics* (fourth century BC) called the plot of a tragedy ‘the imitation of the action’. He too stressed the necessity of events relating to each other. [...] He] provided names for certain common features of the dramatic plot, which can still be useful. Reversal of the hero's or heroine's fortune, or *peripeteia*, in which he or she either suffers failure (in tragedy) or success (in comedy), usually occurs at the climax or crisis in the plot; at such moments the protagonist may also experience *anagnorisis*, the sudden discovery of the truth of an experience: ... (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 221-22.

<sup>17</sup> William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616), the great Elizabethan playwright was born at Stratford-on-Avon, a town in Warwickshire (Central England) started his dramatic career as an actor. Later, he took to rewriting the existing plays sometimes in collaboration with other dramatists like Giles Fletcher the Elder (1549?-1611). His 37 plays can be grouped as comedies, tragedies, tragicomedies and romances. Of these, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear* are the best known tragedies. He also wrote sonnets and narrative poems such as *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*. After an eventful life, starting as an obscure wretch in a county in Central England ended on 23 April, 1616 as one of the greatest depictees of human nature So far, William Shakespeare has been one of the greatest playwright who delineated human nature so precisely which is unsurpassed even today. See for details: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 523-25.

<sup>18</sup> [Belonging to] Elizabeth I's reign (1558-1603). Her times are one of the great ages of English literature, especially in drama: its chief writers include Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe, Sidney, Spenser and Bacon. (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 98.

<sup>19</sup> D.A. Palmer, “*Spirituality, Religion and Social Change*”(2015). available at: <http://cchu9014.weebly.com/>. (accessed March 17, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> *Qur'ān*, 92: 8, 9, 10, 11. While explaining the same verses for the same point, *Tafsīr-al-Jalālayn* puts it thus, *But as for his niggardly, with what is due to God, and deems himself self-sufficient, without need for His reward, / and denies the best (word), / We shall surely ease his way, We shall pave for him the way, to hardship, to Fire; / And his wealth shall no (mā is or negation)avail him when he perishes, in the Fire*. This interpretation by one of the most authentic commentators bares the idea to the bone and leaves no ambiguity, whatsoever, in it. In simpler words, it can be said that the hoarder, who rebels against the Lord, will go confirm to hell.

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)  
nature: “Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): if ye love Allāh, follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. / Say: Obey Allāh and the Messenger ...”.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, William Shakespeare, in his works, especially tragedies, provides panacea to almost every ill in human nature, though, as said, in a different way. This is how he disparages greed in his plays in ironical terms: “With this grows / In my most ill-composed affection such / A stanchless avarice (greed) that, were I king, / I should cut off the nobles for their lands, / Desire his jewels and his other’s house: / And my more-having would be as a sauce / To make me hunger more; that I should forge / Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal, / Destroying them for wealth”.<sup>22</sup> As a counter to greed, Shakespeare, like *Sharī'ah*, is all praise for love in these terms: “If thou be’st valiant – as they say base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them – list me”.<sup>23</sup> These selections along with all those occurring later confirm that if, on the one hand, *Sharī'ah* and William Shakespeare expose and disapprove the dark side of man’s nature, on the other, both works try to afford solutions, though exploiting different techniques, to these ills in order to reinstate man to human dignity. *Sharī'ah*, oftenly, inculcates these cure in its legal system i.e. Islamic law. ,

The present study, one of a kind, upholds the notion that *Sharī'ah* and the works of Shakespeare build their respective discourses, mainly, on man and his nature. As one starts reading these divine and non-divine works, the reader begins to detect the hinted moral diseases of lust, gluttony and greed, followed by their recommended remedies such as purity, self-restraint and love. This study has, therefore, been initiated with the objective to highlight the commonalities regarding these moral diseases and their respective cures present in both *Sharī'ah* and the tragedies<sup>24</sup> of William Shakespeare. It is not at all beside the point to mention that various research studies have so far been carried out on human nature by the renowned research scholars of the field; however, no exhaustive study, similar to the present one in intent and content, has ever been initiated on the issue from the proposed perspective.

There are some inbuilt objectives of the present research supposed to guide the researchers throughout the work. The study, first, intends to outline the moral disorders of man, enumerated in *Sharī'ah* and the four renowned tragedies of Shakespeare. Secondly, it aims at pinpointing the common disorders enlisted in both *Sharī'ah* and the tragedies of Shakespeare, i.e. *Hamlet*<sup>25</sup>, *King Lear*<sup>26</sup>, *Macbeth*<sup>27</sup> and *Othello*<sup>28</sup> and to thoroughly study

<sup>21</sup> *Al-Qur’ān, Al-Imran*:31, 32

<sup>22</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4, Scene 3. Lines 76 – 84.

<sup>23</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1968: Act 2, Scene 1. Lines 208 – 11.

<sup>24</sup> (Gk. ‘goat song’) ... Basically a tragedy traces the career and downfall of an individual, and shows in his downfall both the capacities and the limitations of human life. (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 290 – 93.

<sup>25</sup> *Hamlet*, a tragedy by Shakespeare, probably produced before 603-4, relates the story of young man named Hamlet who seeks vengeance on his uncles who has allegedly killed his father, the king, and married his mother, the queen. The drama ends with all the main characters killed. See for more detailed: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 243.

<sup>26</sup> *King Lear*, a tragedy by William Shakespeare performed in 1606, is the story of Lear, King of Britain, and his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. Lear, intending to divide his kingdom among his daughters according to their affection for him, therefore, bids them say which loves him most. Goneril and Regan make profession of extreme affection, and each receives one-third of the kingdom. Cordelia, self-willed, and disgusted with their hollow flattery, says she loves

them with the help of translations and exegeses of the Holy *Qur'an* i.e. M. M. Pickthall's and Abdullah Yusāf Ali's and *Tafsīr-al-Jalālayn*. Thirdly, the research endeavors to explore the type/s of cure recommended by both the works. Fourthly, the paper focusses on bringing to light the moral disorders which are cured and, ultimately, converted to virtues and, therefore, to moral strengths.

### Evidences on the Topic:

By and large, man has proved to have unambiguous propensity towards evil, to which the entire body of divine scriptures and literary works alike serve as a solid testament. One can clearly see that all the divine scriptures stress the ever-existing evil side of man while discussing human nature and, at the same time, propose cures for it. The proposed cures are workable and, therefore, appealing to man's reasonable self. These cures, as is evident from these scripts, do not work until man tries to do good as it is the result of conscious efforts to be good.<sup>29</sup> This shows, by logic, that man by nature is weak<sup>30</sup> and is, therefore, swept by lust, gluttony and greed; nonetheless, he can defeat and curb these evils by consciously exercising chastity, temperance and love. This is how *Sharī'ah* differentiates between the common lot of humans with frail nature and the true believers – the men who take pains to maintain their virtuosity and be ever good:

*Surely We have created man in the best of stature / then We reduced him to the lowest of the low, / Save those who believe and do good works, and theirs is a reward unfailing".*<sup>31</sup>

The preceding pick shows that, though *Allāh* (SWT) has created man with *fitrāh*, yet, he is fallible. It is a common observation that man, at times, reduces himself to the state of brutes<sup>32</sup> as he has more leaning towards evil than good, to which the entire

him according to her duty, no more nor less. Infuriated with this reply, Lear divides her portion between his other daughters. ... the king of France accepts her without dowry. Soon after, Goneril and Regan reveal their heartless character by grudging their father the maintenance that he had stipulated for, and finally turning him out of doors in a storm. Later, Lear, whom rage and ill-treatment have deprived of his wits, is conveyed to Dover by the faithful Kent in disguise, where Cordelia receives him. At the end Lear dies of grief after all his daughters die of natural and unnatural deaths. (See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 310.

<sup>27</sup> *Macbeth*, a famous tragedy by William Shakespeare based on the story of treason and murder of one Thane (a feudal lord in Anglo Saxon England [prior to about 1100 AD]) Macbeth, the hero of the play, is obsessed so much with greed that he satisfied it with the blood of Duncan, the king of Scotland. Though became the king of the country, however, he had to pay dearly for it. (See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 348.

<sup>28</sup> *Othello, The Moor of Venice*, a tragedy by Shakespeare, is a story of love, intrigues and jealousy that devours Othello, the Moor, Desdemona and others. (See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 427-28.

<sup>29</sup> Burton Watson, trans., *Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 157.

<sup>30</sup> No doubt, man by nature, is weak and frail the view upheld and maintained by both divine and non-divine works. The Holy *Qur'an* puts the same in these words: *Allah (SWT) would make the burden light for you, for man was created weak. Qur'an*, 4: 28. Modern writers like William Golding (1911 – 1993) shows the degenerated human nature in their works.

<sup>31</sup> *Al-Qur'an, At-Teen*:: 4, 5, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Man is the best of creation until he is not degenerated by sin. Once he falls into the quagmire of vice, he reduces himself to the state of brutes. The Holy *Qur'an* puts the idea in these terms: "*Had*

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

scenario of the world holds a testimony. In such situation he tends toward the commission of crimes and , thus, breaches the law. In short, man is evil-driven rather than good-driven as he is sluggish by nature and goodness demands on him efforts which are sometimes too arduous for his laziness. However, *Allāh* (SWT) is All-knowing, enumerates ways and means in the Holy Scriptures to redeem man. If, on the one hand, *Sharī'ah* alludes to the frail nature of man, on the other, it gives the good tidings to him that his nature can be cured of all evils only if man acts according to the prescriptions given by *Allāh* (SWT) in the Holy *Qur'ān*. However, reclaiming his lost treasure – the *fitrāh* – needs laborious efforts with strong belief in *Allāh* (SWT) on the part of man. The following holy verse expresses the same notion in clearer and more vigorous terms:

*“So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright – the nature (framed) of Allāh, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allāh’s creation. That the right religion, but most men know not –“.*<sup>33</sup>

This choice tellingly says that, notwithstanding the immense corruption and damage, the nature of man, originally created as upright<sup>34</sup> by *Allāh* (SWT), retains the potential to be good again and can, therefore, regain its native character but, as was said earlier in the previous set of verses, with tireless efforts. That is why the Holy *Qur'ān*, at numerous places, suggests ways and means to man to be good again.

William Shakespeare, one of the greatest wizards of world literature, is still read and enjoyed by all and sundry for his universal themes – man and his nature. He, the master artist of human nature, has touched upon the perennial themes of humanity and has, thus, perpetuated himself in the pages of world literature. Though there is no comparison between *Sharī'ah* and the works of William Shakespeare<sup>35</sup> at any level and at

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*We willed We could have raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his own lust. Therefor his likeness is as the likeness of a dog; if thou attackest him he panteth with his tongue out, and if thou leavest him he panteth with his tongue out. Such is the likeness of the people who deny Our revelations. Narrate unto them the history (of the men of old), that haply they may take thought.“* *Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'raf*: 176. And some other verses from the Holy *Qur'ān* say the same notion yet in different terms. The verses go like this: *“Already have We urged unto hell many of the jinn and humankind, having hearts wherewith they understand not, and having eyes wherewith they see not, and having ears wherewith they hear not. These are as the cattle – nay, but they are worse! These are the neglectful. Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'raf*: 179. These detailed holy verses support the idea that man can reduce himself to the state of brutes when he indulges in base desires.

<sup>33</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Ar-Rum*:: 30

<sup>34</sup> Since man is the best of all God's creation because he possesses, besides other distinct characteristics, good nature gives him superiority over other creatures of *Allāh* (SWT) otherwise he lowers himself as low as brutes, as is evident from this verse: *“Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low ...” Qur'ān, 95: 5.* It is also indicates man by nature is weak and frail and is inclined towards evil. However, those who safeguard themselves against the powerful evil can elevate themselves in the esteem of *Allāh* (SWT).

<sup>35</sup> The Holy *Qur'ān*, a divine scripture, is the last book of guidance for man where man is educated on the *dos* and *don'ts* of life. It takes man in the context of the world. In other words, it takes man in totality who is beset with the affairs of life ranging from personal to state life. It is more comprehensive than any other divine book because it is solely didactic affair meant for man in the world. As compared to it, other works of human efforts, especially literary works like those of William Shakespeare, are far less limited in range and are partially didactic, primarily meant for entertainment. In short, the purpose of divine scriptures is to instruct, having almost no room for



Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

One is the Word of the Lord and a book of morality, while the other is a book of literature written by a mortal. One addresses man directly and explicitly highlights the evils in him, while the other presents the same evils through action and dramatization. However, as is said earlier, their grand purpose is the same i.e. to better the human beings. The following discussion consists of passages selected both from *Sharī'ah* and the four tragedies of William Shakespeare with the view, firstly, to highlight the main evils in human nature and, secondly, to suggest ways and means for their cure and treatment.

### **Lust, the Disease: Chastity, the Cure!**

God, in fact, created man with desires and emotions. To be more precise and concentrated over the issue, He created man with sexuality but not with lust<sup>39</sup>; with desire but not with greed; with appetite but not with gluttony. He created the first divine attributes, while the world yoked the other bodily pair with them. In other words, man took the divine characters to excess and, thus, transformed them into moral and psychological diseases. The blessings, God willed man to possess, were turned into curses that confirmed man's eternal damnation. Lust, the top most and, at the same time, the most powerful and deadly contestant on the list of the seven deadly sins,<sup>40</sup> took its birth from sexuality, desire, and appetite, the permissible divine attributes in man. It, in return, bore many offspring, mothering and fostering many others, like power lust, food lust, greed and licentiousness and the likes. In his dictionary of emotions, Nelson, a renowned lexicographer, defines lust as an “*intense sexual desire or appetite; an overwhelming want or craving (e.g., lust for power); passion; to covet*”.<sup>41</sup> As said earlier, desire is permitted by Islamic law until and unless it is contained within certain limits and maintained in accordance with the commands of *Sharī'ah*. Sex, as per prescribed by Islamic law, is not the problem—lust is the problem<sup>42</sup> as it trespasses into a new domain, termed a legal moral disease. Islamic law has prescribed *Had* punishment for such disease. The point can be elaborated further by adding that desire is not the problem – greed is; appetite is not the problem – gluttony is. In other terms, it should be remembered that the main goal of man is to rescue his sexuality, desire and appetite, from lust, greed and gluttony, so that he can experience it the way *Allāh* (SWT) intended.. *Sharī'ah*, therefore, guides man into the intensions of *Allāh* (SWT) regarding the permitted desires. The Holy Book of *Allāh* provides an idea of the excesses of human emotions and their cures, putting bars on it because it and its brood surely lead to social disasters. The philosophy of objectives of *Sharī'ah* comes to an action at this particular stage. In this verse, *Allāh* (SWT) points out man's over-indulgence in vain desires: “*And Allāh would turn to you in mercy; but those who follow vain desires would have you go tremendously astray*”.<sup>43</sup> This verse sturdily establishes the fact that indulgence in vain desires is surely a moral disease and, if not cured, deteriorates with every passing day. Other forms of base desires including lust are condemned with the same vigor in the Holy *Qurān*.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Joshua Harris, Preface to *Sex is not the Problem (Lust Is)* by J. Harris (New York: Multnomah Books, 2003), 12.

<sup>40</sup> Lars Wilhelmsson, "THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS." *NOTES* 79: 80.

<sup>41</sup> Bradley Nelson, *The Emotion Code* (Mesquite, NV Wellness: Unmasked Publishing, (2007), 04.

<sup>42</sup> Joshua Harris, Preface to *Sex is not the Problem (Lust Is)* by J. Harris (New York: Multnomah Books, 2003), 12.

<sup>43</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, An-Nisa:27*

<sup>44</sup> Like the other religions, Islam also condemns any sexual relations apart from marriage and lashes at them sternly. This is how the Holy *Qur'ān* denounces adultery and prodigality: “*And come not near adultery. Lo! It is an abomination and evil way.*” *Qur'ān*, 17:32 “*O Children of Adam! Look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but be not prodigal. Lo! He loveth*

As previously said, *Sharī'ah* first points out a moral disease and then comes up with a solution for that particular ailment. Lust is left unharnessed in the modern world despite its solution highlighted in the Holy Scriptures, like the Holy *Qurān* and the Holy Bible; it has, therefore, landed many societies into unpredictable disasters. *Allāh* (SWT) proposes a way in the forthcoming verses, recorded in the Holy *Qurān*, can surely cure lust:

*“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms,... And admonition unto those who ward off (evil)”*.<sup>45</sup>

It is pertinent to note that the instruction in the first part of these verses is also for men folk. As this selection shows, simplicity, in any form, is the most powerful shield against many evils. Adornment, done both by men and women beyond the permitted bounds, leads to several social and moral problems. For instance, exposed parts of body and inviting eyes, especially of women, function as a strong temptation and lusting and , thus, prohibited by Islamic law. The same idea is presented by the Holy Bible in clearer terms: *“For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world”*.<sup>46</sup> *Allāh* (SWT), the Scribe of Scriptures, orders men and women to keep their gazes lower and avoid displaying their adornment, indicating that the physical purity guarantees spiritual and mental purity.

William Shakespeare, sharing the perennial themes with *Sharī'ah*, also criticizes lust as vigorously and comes down as strongly on it in his plays. His every play throbs with passages and acts where lusting and licentiousness are exposed to the bone and, thereafter, suggestions and solutions are presented for their treatment and cure. Being a true Christian, Shakespeare is supposed to follow the teachings of the Holy Bible and put its teachings in the most effective way, exploiting man's reasonable self. This verse from the Holy Bible provides an insight into the issue of lust: *“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul”*.<sup>47</sup> William Shakespeare, being the delineator of human nature, dramatizes the aspects of human nature in such a forceful way that they leave an everlasting impression on the audience. The preceding lines resonate well in the forthcoming lines, picked from *Hamlet*:

*“O most wicked speed, to post With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not nor it cannot come to good But break my heart, for I must hold  
my tongue”*<sup>48</sup>.

These lines show that lust, when at work, blindfolds the affected one, never allowing him/her to see the reality. Shakespearean plays, particularly tragedies, are replete with similar numerous passages which pinpoint lust and other moral diseases in their virulent forms followed by their cures. There are numerous examples from the four

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*not the prodigals. Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'raf:31.* These verses clearly show that such abominable acts like adultery incur the wrath of *Allāh* (SWT) on the sinners.

<sup>45</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Al-Nur:31, 32, 33, 34*

<sup>46</sup> John 2:16

<sup>47</sup> G. H. C. MacGregor, "The Acts of the apostles." *The Interpreter's Bible.* New York: Abingdon (1954). Peter 2:11

<sup>48</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1971: Act 1, Scene 2. Lines 156-59.

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

tragedies of William Shakespeare which are sufficient to solidify the claim.<sup>49</sup> This bulk of solid evidences, however, does not justify that William Shakespeare highlights only the sins in his plays. His plays carry passages where cures and solutions to particular moral infirmities have been afforded in a dramatized way that could hardly miss their target i.e. guiding the audience towards the solution. As chastity cures lust, Shakespeare in his plays, upholds the virtue against licentiousness and lechery. The next selection, chosen from *Othello*, shows, like the one furnished previously from the Holy *Qurān*, that chastity, “*a form of temperance which excludes or moderates the indulgence of the sexual appetite*”<sup>50</sup> is the most successful and effective cure against lust. Though alluding to a different point, it confirms the notion that lust is warm and welcoming while chastity is cold and indifferent, especially, when it comes to contact with people of the opposite sex:

*When we shall meet at compt. This look of thine will hurl my soul from  
heaven And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl, even like thy  
chastity”.*<sup>51</sup>

As is needed, chastity lacks the warmth of lust and is cold and refuses to provide the warmth and conduciveness where lust flourishes and strikes roots in the hearts of two persons concerned. It can be concluded that, since Shakespeare knows the strong temptation of lust, he, therefore, comes up with even stronger cure in form of chastity and purity. It also confirms the notion that people of frail nature easily submit themselves to base desires while those with strong nature stand against the same powerful temptation of lust and defeat it successfully with conscious effort. They are always at war with their base desires and they continue to purge themselves of the evils during this combat<sup>52</sup>.

The selections from both *Sharī'ah* and the tragedies of William Shakespeare strongly indicate that they preach chastity against lust. Both are of the opinion, and rightly, that lust is the mother of many evils and is, so, devilish. Both the works warn man of the divine wrath preceding man's lusting. They, therefore, recommend chastity as a cure against it.

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example, William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4, Scene 3. Lines 60 – 66, *Othello*, 1968: Act 2, Scene 1. Lines 249 -50, *King Lear*, 1952: Act 4, Scene 6. Lines 111 – 119, *Othello*, 1968: Act 5, Scene 1. Lines 36, *Othello*, 1968: Act 2, Scene 3. Lines 346 – 52, *Hamlet*, 1971: Act 1, Scene 5. Lines 42. 57, 1968: 3.3. 335, *Hamlet*, 971: Act 2, Scene 2. Lines 583 – 84, *King Lear*, 1952: Act 3, Scene 4. Lines 85 – 95, *King Lear*, 1952: Act 4, Scene 1. Lines 67 – 69.

<sup>50</sup> Jackson Melody, *Chastity*. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908).

<sup>51</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1968: Act 5, Scene 2. Lines 271 – 74.

<sup>52</sup> There are numerous stories in divine and otherwise that show the moral strength of man with the help of which he defeats the all-powerful lust and come out triumphant. The story of Joseph is a good example that goes like this: “*And when he reached his prime We gave him wisdom and knowledge. Thus We reward the good./ And she, in whose house he was, asked of him an evil act. She bolted the doors and said: Come! He said: I seek refuge in Allah (SWT)! Lo! He is my lord, who hath treated me honourably. Wrong-doers never prosper. / She verily desired him, and he would have desired her if it had not been that he saw the argument of his lord. Thus it was, that We might ward off from him evil and lewdness. Lo! He was of Our chosen slaves. / And they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt from behind, and they met her lord and master at the door. She said: What shall be his reward, who wisheth evil to thy folk, save prison or painful doom? / (Joseph) said: She it was who asked of me an evil act. And a witness of her own folk testified: If his shirt is torn from before, then she speaketh truth and he is of the liars.” *Qurān*, 12: 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. This story of Joseph shows that no matter what the circumstances are, one should as strongly resist the strong temptation of lust and, therefore, defeat it successfully.*

### Gluttony is tempered by Temperance:

Intemperance or overindulgence in things, ranging from eating, sleeping, working, earning and spending money to fulfilling one's desires, is risky and, therefore, proportionate to moral instability. Gluttony or greediness is the second deadliest sin on the list of vices because it breeds lust, sloth and greed. With it comes loss of self-control and indiscipline which escort man to moral and physical degeneration, connoting lust, greed, laziness, obesity, depression and heart related diseases, proved right by the modern science. Gluttony or excess also culminates in the wrath and displeasure of *Allāh* (SWT) because it is equivalent to wasting of *Allāh* (SWT)'s blessings and, hence, rebelling against Him. As appetite grows by eating so does the base desires and excesses. Man must eat to live, and not to live to eat! *Sharī'ah*, for this reason, forbids man to be prodigal and, instead, teaches him moderation in ways of life in these terms: "*O Children of Adam! Look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but not be prodigal. Lo! He loveth not the prodigals*".<sup>53</sup> This verse shows that *Sharī'ah* allows man to eat and drink out of bounties but forbids him to be guilty of excess in any way.

The Holy *Qurān* not only catalogues the moral diseases of man but also offers the way out of these diseases so powerfully that even an illiterate person with meager knowledge of the Book easily grabs the intended message. It never happens that a moral disease being discussed by the Holy Book goes uncured and untreated. The afore-cited verse from the Holy *Qurān* implies a solution to gluttony or greediness when it forbids man against prodigality: "... *but not be prodigal. Lo! He loveth not the prodigals*".<sup>54</sup> It crystal-clearly tells that prodigality is a moral disease and the solution is simply to stop being prodigal. Another example will further elucidate the point through an analogical deduction which goes as follows: "*Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice. Lo! The harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass*".<sup>55</sup> This sample tellingly shows that the Holy *Qurān* is a book that offers instructions metonymically with the potential to be generalized through the method of *qiyās*<sup>56</sup> (analogical deduction in Islamic law) in Islamic Jurisprudence. This, and many other illustrations,<sup>57</sup> show that *Sharī'ah* teaches human beings to be moderate in every walk of life, ranging from food to lifestyle; from habits and acts to natural resources of energies. In short, being a complete guidance book, the Holy *Qurān* conducts and educates man in every sphere of life and offers cures for and guards against every moral illness that has either besieged or about to assault him. Having all these in mind, legislation can be made for bringing moderate attitude in every aspect of life. Legal action, therefore, can be taken against those who are wasting various resources i.e. water, gas, electricity, food and etc.

<sup>53</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'raf*:31

<sup>54</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'raf*:31

<sup>55</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Luqman*: 19

<sup>56</sup> *Qiyās* is an established source of *Sharī'ah*. It technically means an extension of a rule, prescribed by the Holy *Qur'ān* or *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (SAW), to a new case or situation owing to the fact that the latter has the same effective cause. The effective cause is technically called '*Illah*'. As the authority of this typical source of *Sharī'ah* can be traced back from various verses of the Holy *Qur'ān* or *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and, therefore, can be used effectively for giving judgments regarding the new emerging issues in the perspective of Islamic law. It is a kind of personal *Ijtihād* which is explicitly approved by the Holy Prophet (SAW) in a renowned *Hadīth* of Mu'āz Bin Jabal....(For further authentic details of the concept please see Abū Bakar Muhammad ibn Abī Sahal Sarakhsī) *Usūl-al- Sarakhsī*, (Beruit: Dar-al-Ma'rifah), vol.2, 155-170.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, *Al-Qur'ān, Al-Furqan*: 67.

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

William Shakespeare, one of the greatest chroniclers of human nature, is well aware of gluttony in human nature and exposes it in his plays<sup>58</sup>. He knows that shows strong inclination towards base desires, both of the belly and loins; however, Shakespeare is never pessimistic about man and shows in his plays that the same man, suffering from a moral disorder, can redeem himself but with a little effort. Pointing out the moral strength and inner conflict of man, St. Paul famously said, “*Although I delight in the laws of God, I see another law in my bodily members warning against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin existing in my bodily members.*”<sup>59</sup> Shakespeare seems to have the same notion of vice and virtue. The saying, if closely observed, clearly shows that temptation of sin tempts even the mightiest of the mighty. One should, therefore, not belittle the power of evil. As already said, gluttony engenders lust, sloth and greed that sabotage and disrupts an individual as well as the collective discipline and order of a society. The following excerpt refers to man’s prodigality in terms of eating, drinking and lusting:

*“Men so disorder’d, so debosh’d, and bold, That this our court, infested with their manners, Shows like a riotous inn; epicurism (gluttony) and lust Makes it more like a tavern or a brothel Than a grac’d palace”*<sup>60</sup>.

These lines from William Shakespeare’s tragedy *King Lear* show that orgy holds great fascination for man which robs him of every sensibility. Nothing occurs and happens in isolation. Gluttony bears lust, chaos, disorder, promiscuity, etc. and, therefore, uproar and mess. Excess, the moral and physical disease, finds ample place in Shakespearean plays<sup>61</sup> and incurs the wrath both of the Creator and virtuous men. Himself a reformer, Shakespeare, in his plays, addresses greediness in the lowest possible terms and makes fun of those characters who suffer from this disorder. However, as always, he does not let go any vice in human nature without suggesting a solution to it. The following example taken from *Hamlet* teaches the audience moderation and temperance:

*“... Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent ... you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion ... to split the ears of the groundlings...”*<sup>62</sup>.

As can be viewed, these lines of Shakespeare’s tragic hero, *Hamlet* echoes the lines of the Holy *Qurān* where excesses were criticized in harsh terms and, instead, moderation was suggested and recommended. Likewise, Shakespeare, through the mouth of *Hamlet*, instructs both the players of the play and the audience to be moderate and temperate in their words, intonation and expressions. To him, too much indulgence in things, from food to emotion, is a moral disorder that bears negative results not only for the sufferer but also for the general masses. Temperance, a virtue pouring from the plays of William Shakespeare<sup>63</sup>, gives lessons of self-control to the audience – a strong echo of

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<sup>58</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4, Scene 3. Lines 66- 69, *King Lear*, 1952: Act 1, Scene 4. Lines 224-25.

<sup>59</sup> Giuseppe Butera. "Thomas Aquinas on Reason's Control of the Passions in the Virtue of Temperance." (2001).

<sup>60</sup> William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 1952: Act 1 Scene 4. Lines 251-55.

<sup>61</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4, Scene 3. Lines 66- 69, 1952: Act 1, Scene 4. Lines 224-25.

<sup>62</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1971: Act 3, Scene 2. Lines 1 – 14.

<sup>63</sup> William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 1952: Act 4, Scene 7. Lines 22, 23, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 2. Scene 3. Lines 105 – 08, *Hamlet*, 1971: Act 3, Scene 4. Lines 140-44.

the teaching of the biblical verse which says: “*Make every effort to add to your faith . . . self-control ...*”<sup>64</sup>. It can be logically inferred that moderation or temperance is self-control and cures excesses of desires and lusts. It is an effort to strengthen and complete one’s faith and belief in God and the Divine will.

In brief, both *Sharī’ah* and William Shakespeare, keeping in view their style and technique along with objectives, teach and support temperance, self-control and moderation against prodigality, intemperance, epicureanism and gluttony. Islamic law incorporates all these factors in its legal spectrum by one way or another.

#### **Greed, the Disease, Love, the Panacea:**

Greed, also called avarice and covetousness, a first cousin of gluttony and second of envy, can be explained as moving from limited needs to unlimited wants, as *Allāh* (SWT) has provided enough to satisfy the former but not the latter. It is a matter of general observation that the modern world is manipulating man through his greed as he wants things he does not need. The new corporate world has fueled his “*desire to have more*”<sup>65</sup> and, therefore, “*man shall not live by bread alone*”<sup>66</sup>. As a result, man is not ready to accept the divine principles or even the legal rules to live a contented life but, instead, has chosen the principles of want to live a discontented one. All this can be attributed to materialism – a pre-occupation with, “*or tendency to seek after or stress material rather than spiritual things*”.<sup>67</sup> *Sharī’ah*, for no other reason, addresses the evil of ‘never-being-satisfied’ in these words:

*“But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent,/And disbelieveth in goodness;/ Surely We will ease his way into adversity. / His riches will not save him when he perisheth”*<sup>68</sup>.

These sacred verses, categorically, show that man is inclined towards greed and hoarding, despite *Allāh* (SWT)’s immense wrath over his greediness. The unconsummated avarice in man’s nature and his hunger for more are even stronger than ever in the modern day world. It was the all-pervading greed of the modern day man that drove Gandhi to lament, thus, “*Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed*”.<sup>69</sup> It has attained extraordinary proportions as a moral disease in the modern times because every person and society is indulged in greed deep up to their chin.

However, regardless of the ever-growing greed and covetousness in his nature, man is not all evil and, as a part of the divine existence, he still has the redeeming quality of love – the capacity to raise himself out of the disintegrating pit of greed and install himself on the highest pinnacle of moral seat. It is a divine attribute in man that he inherited from his Creator. The following selection, regarding the issue, shows that only love can redeem man and save him from eternal damnation as it is the panacea for greed and is potent enough to convert this rotten vice into positive energy. The Holy *Qurān* is

<sup>64</sup> 2 Peter 1:5-6.

<sup>65</sup> William Edwy Vine, *Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Lulu. com, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Luke 4:4.

<sup>67</sup> *Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*

<sup>68</sup> *Al-Qur’ān, Al-Lail*: 8,9, 10, 11

<sup>69</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, “Earth provides enough to satisfy every mans need, but not for every mans greed.” *Praise be to Allah for his blessings which has been bestowed on me in completing my work with success. I have no adequate words to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Rifaqat Ali Khan Rao for his invaluable guidance and suggestions, which greatly helped me to come out from difficulties faced during the work.* (2008).

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

full of verses where either greed is condemned in strong words<sup>70</sup> or love is celebrated in happy terms as the only cure for greediness. The following excerpt clearly indicates that *Allāh* (SWT) has ingrained the heart and nature of man, especially of true believers, with infinite love. Also, the verse says that nothing else can install love in the heart and nature of man but *Allāh* (SWT):

*“An (as for the believers) hath attuned their hearts. If thou hadst spent all that is in the earth thou couldst not have attuned their hearts, but Allah hath attuned them. Lo! He is Mighty, Wise”*<sup>71</sup>.

There are, no doubt, numerous other verses in the Holy *Qurān* regarding love<sup>72</sup> as an effective antidote against greed in human nature. However, besides curbing greed outright, *Allāh* (SWT) offers many other ways and means to uproot the evil of covetousness from human nature that has many manifestations such as hoarding and accumulating wealth, envy, swindling, etc. One such way is the imposition of *Zakāt*<sup>73</sup> by *Sharī'ah* on every Muslim whose wealth reaches the rate of *nisāb*<sup>74</sup>, with the aim to control the excessive greed in human nature. The state, according to Islamic law, can take action against those who are not paying it. The same practice is encouraged even in Christianity specified by what Paul pleads in the Holy Bible, saying that we should give to others because “no one is to be hard pressed”.<sup>75</sup> Though not a book of psychology, the Sacred *Qurān* knows the workings and functions of human mind and, therefore, adopts means and ways to persuade the believers to do good or dissuade them from committing a vice, as the case may be. Sometimes, it warns man against pitfalls, by announcing severe punishment for him through the legal system, and sometimes, by convincing him with an incentive to be good and virtuous. The holy verse, “Lo! Those who believe and do

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<sup>70</sup> Greed, in any manifestation, has always been condemnable. Those have been greedy “and hoarded (wealth) and withheld it” (*Al-Qur’ān, Al-Maraj*:18) won the wrath both of the Lord of man.

<sup>71</sup> *Al-Qur’ān, Al-Anfal*:63

<sup>72</sup> The Holy *Qur’ān* cures every vice it mentions included greed. Love and spending one’s wealth for *Allāh* (SWT) are the two main ways through which one can neutralize the greed in human nature. The following selections from the Holy Book underline the importance of love and charity: “Spend they wealth for the cause of *Allāh*, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! *Allāh* loveth the beneficent”. *Al-Qur’ān, Al-Baqarah*:195, “And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect”. *Al-Qur’ān, Ar-Rum*:21. Being generous and loving are the two divine attributes which fight the devilish greed in human nature.

<sup>73</sup> *Zakāt* is an ‘Arabic word which literally means ‘purification’. In *Sharī'ah*, it is financial obligation on those Muslims who are having a minimum amount known as *Nisāb*. A Muslim is required to pay such amount from his savings and his possessions (retained by him through the year). In *Sharī'ah* too much importance is given to *Zakāt*, by declaring it the most important religious obligation after *Salāt*. The amount collected through the channel of *Zakāt* is distributed, predominantly, among the poor segments of the society. In view of some scholars, like *Imām Soyūtī*, the intention for the payment of *Zakāt* must be the one which is recognized by *Sharī'ah*. . . .see for further details Jalāl Uddin al Soyūtī, *Mu’jam Maqālīd ul ‘Alīm fī al Hudūd wa al Raūm*, (Maktabah al ‘Adāb al Qāherah Misr, First Edition.2004), p.51

<sup>74</sup> According to the Muslim jurists, *Nisāb* is that minimum amount from which *Zakāt* should be paid. . . Al Rūmī al Hanafī, *Anīs ul Fuqahā fī Ta’rifāt al Mutādawelah byin al Fuqahā*, (Dar ul Kutub al ‘Almyah, Edition.2004), 46.

<sup>75</sup> 2 Co 8:13-15.

*good works, the Beneficent will appoint for them love*<sup>76</sup> clearly indicates Allāh (SWT)'s promise of His love and the resultant love in the hearts of man.

The world, since time immemorial, has suffered much at the hand of greed. It has bred and fed nothing but hatred and revenge in the heart of man to which the entire history of man is an eye-witness. William Shakespeare is one such relator of man's excessive greed and covetousness. Greed and its nuances, therefore, cannot escape his keen eye and have, therefore, received, in his plays, severe whipping and thrashing. Be it his comedies<sup>77</sup>, tragicomedies<sup>78</sup>, tragedies and narrative and lyrical<sup>79</sup> poetry, he is always busy in unveiling this vice as the greatest enemy of human tribe. The up-coming pick points out the unappeasable greed of man:

*“With this there grows  
In my most ill-composed affection such  
A stanchless avarice (greed) that, were I king,  
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,  
Desire his jewels and this other's house:  
And my more-having would be as a sauce  
To make me hunger more; that I should forge  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
Destroying them for wealth”<sup>80</sup>.*

Greed, here in this quote, is shown to obliterate every sign of love and good in the heart of the speaker of these lines. His greed, like an ever-gaping monster, finds no consummation and satiation as it is unappeasable and unsatisfied. Greed is an obsession with Shakespeare and that was the reason that it occupied the central place in his works.<sup>81</sup> Not only this, he has actually woven entire plays round this curse. *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, besides many, can be taken as handy examples. However, as always, his plays end with a new set of moral revelations and regeneration. These plays are not just tales of greed, but literary pieces of education, carrying great cathartic<sup>82</sup> merit. Shakespeare,

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<sup>76</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Maryam: 96*

<sup>77</sup> (Gk. 'merry-making, comic poet') 'Comedy' is used most often with reference to a kind of drama which is intended primarily to entertain the audience, and which ends happily for the characters. (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 62-64

<sup>78</sup> As the word implies, 'tragicomedy' is a mixture of tragedy and comedy. William Shakespeare wrote the hybrid literary form with master hand when other artists of high caliber avoided. His *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) and *The Winter's Tale* (c. 1611) are tragicomedies. Various modern plays, such as Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) or Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) may also be termed tragicomedies ... (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 293.

<sup>79</sup> In Greek verse, a song to be accompanied by the lyre, a harp-like instrument. The word 'lyric' is still applied to the words of a song. A lyric, to be more particularized, is a poem, usually short, expressing in a personal manner the feelings and thoughts of an individual speaker. (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 164-66.

<sup>80</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4, Scene 3. Lines 77 – 84

<sup>81</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4, Scene 3. Lines 57 – 59, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 1, Scene 7. Lines 27-28, *King Lear*, 1952: Act 3, Scene 4. Lines 94 – 95, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 4. Scene 3. Lines 86-88.

<sup>82</sup> Derivative: Catharsis (Gk 'purgation') Aristotle (384-322 BC), the Greek philosopher, uses the word in his definition of tragedy in Chapter VI of *Poetics*, and there has been much debate (still inconclusive) on exactly what he meant. The key sentence is: '*Tragedy through pity and fear effects a purgation of such emotions*'. So, in a sense, the tragedy, having aroused powerful feelings in the

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

through his dramatic style, implicitly teaches his reader to be good and virtuous. He helps his audience see and realize the bright side of human nature by juxtaposing it against the dark one. In other words, his plays carry passages of great literary worth, possessing invaluable messages of love and mercy, such as this one from *Othello*:

“If thou be'st valiant –  
as they say base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures  
more than is native to them – list me”<sup>83</sup>.

This passage succinctly testifies to the fact that love, the divine attribution in man, can redeem and elevate even the basest nature to moral dignity. Love, undoubtedly, is the only therapy of greed and avarice and is, therefore, capable of defeating greed, the fiercest and the deadliest adversary of man. Shakespeare, in his plays, has given us the message that no matter how deep-rooted is the evil of greed in man's nature, love destroys it. Owing to this fact, Shakespeare, the upholder and preacher of love, has bedecked his plays with passages<sup>84</sup> of love and devotion.

The above discussion concludes with solid evidences that both *Sharī'ah* and works of Shakespeare appeal to love in human nature. Their sole aim and objective is to turn the world, presently in the clutches of the forces of greed and evil, into a place of enduring peace and joy. To them, only love can put an end to the evil of greed and can cure man of this curse which, right now, has reduced man into a never-being-satisfied beast.

#### **Implications of the Research:**

Every research takes its birth out of an issue and exercises a considerable influence, sometimes, within a restricted circle; however, there are some others which are destined to carry multiple and widespread implications, effectual both at social, legal and academic levels. Social implications, to begin with, denote those hinted suggestions which a research reaches at, occasioning insights into the issue being investigated. Given that the society as a whole benefits from it in social, moral, and intellectual spheres. The academic implications, hinted at in an achieved study, on the other hand, are exploited in intellectual and academic research pursuits with the aim to pave the way for future research in a particular area.

The present study, a rare species, discusses the evil of lust, gluttony and greed and, in the same vein, offers treatment to them, predominantly, from *Sharī'ah*. It is not irrelevant to supplement that these characteristics, necessary for normal life, are innate in human nature and cannot be completely eradicated even from the legal spectrum. Greed, as is seen, is the main impetus in life as almost every worth mentioning aspects owe their existence to greed. Being ambitious men, Vasco de Gama and Columbus left behind their native lands and explored uncharted and undiscovered regions of the globe. Voraciousness can be seen in children. They always crave for things and more things. Nevertheless, this much of craving is permissible as it is beneficial for the well-being of a society and is something normal until they are not harmful for the general peace and

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spectator, has also a therapeutic effect; after the storm and climax there comes a sense of release from tension, of calm. J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (England: Penguin Books, 1991), 124.

<sup>83</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1968: Act 2, Scene 1. Lines 208-11.

<sup>84</sup> See for details: William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 1952: Act 1, Scene 2. Lines 107-14, *Hamlet*, 1971: Act 2, Scene 1. Lines 99-103, *Othello*, 1968: Act 3, Scene 3. Lines 187-190, *Macbeth*, 1967: Act 2. Scene 3. Lines 106-08).

welfare of human kind as a whole. They are also considered normal when they are not violating any provision of Islamic law. When these characters are contained in limits, there is nothing to worry about. However, when this characteristic exceeds the limits in human nature and the permissible becomes impermissible, it becomes dangerous and instrumental both for the individual as well as the community. At this very point they are considered illegal. It is here that things start turning up badly and need solution which can be found, besides other scriptures and literary works, in *Sharī'ah* and the works of William Shakespeare. Not only this, they not only mitigate the effects of the sins but, on the contrary, engender virtues like chastity, temperance and love in man.

Moreover, the implications of the study would be great due to the spiritual affiliations of the Muslims with the Holy *Qurān*. Likewise, the Christian world reveres William Shakespeare as a prophet and value every word of his work as sacred as a word from the divine scriptures. This shows its wide implications as the study not only highlights and identifies the evils in the texts of the Holy *Qurān* and the four tragedies of William Shakespeare, but also, it pinpoints passages which provide practicable suggestions for curing them. This aspect really broadens the scope of the present study and hoists it at a coveted and exalted position.

The academic implications of the present study cannot be ruled out and are as significant as the social ones. The bulk of the work is worth the pain as much efforts have been put in in date collection and selection out of a huge quantity of material. It is strongly hoped that the present study, one of a kind, will prove to be a treasure trove of insights into the issue under probe and will hint at other promising aspects. Though limited in nature, the investigation can surely be of immense academic help to the social science and literature researchers in terms of material and inspiration for further research in the times to come.

#### **Future Study and Academic Implications:**

Human nature in itself demands a broad space and undivided attention on the part of a researcher. The present study addresses the issue of highlighting the moral ailments present in human nature and their cure hinted at by the Holy *Qurān* and the four tragedies of William Shakespeare. Since the topic is immensely broad one, no claim of exhaustiveness, whatsoever, has been made at any level of the endeavor. Therefore, only the most important and the first vices i.e. lust, gluttony and greed with their cure have been treated in the present paper due to the limited space of the same. An exhaustive academic research is required to vigorously probe into the remaining aspects of the negative human nature such as sloth, wrath, envy, and pride. Moreover, similar work be initiated on the miscellaneous aspects of human nature present in the Holy *Qurān* and the tragedies as well as other dramatic works of William Shakespeare. It is an established fact that human nature is a house to the vices of lust, gluttony and greed and has been in discussion in every divine and human work. It is therefore, suggested that similar studies must be carried out based on comparison between the Holy *Qurān* and other great English writers, like William Wordsworth<sup>85</sup>, Robert Browning<sup>86</sup>, Christopher Marlowe<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> William Wordsworth (1770-1850), one of the elder poets of the Romantic Age, other being S.T. Coleridge, Robert Southey. Together with Coleridge, he published in 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. His well-known works are *The Prelude*, *Intimations of Immortality*, etc. See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 620-21.

Lust, Gluttony and Greed as Moral Disorders – Remedies by *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) and William Shakespeare (A Possible Opportunity for the Inculcation of Islamic Legal Ethics)

and others. Similar studies can also be initiated where passages on human nature present in the Holy *Qurān* be compared with those from great Russian literary giants like Fyodor Dostoevsky<sup>88</sup>, Gogol<sup>89</sup> and others. Also, comparative study be initiated on the Holy *Qurān* and the Holy Bible to highlight passages on human nature for bringing closer the followers of both religions. If studied closely, human nature is a domain of psychology, a separate work is, therefore, suggested to be carried out to investigate as to what renowned psychologists say about these vices of lust, gluttony and greed and, as a result, what cure they offer to them.

As a tagline, it can be said that works of this nature surely add to the present repertoire of research and can be of substantial help to the endeavors of the future researchers. Of course, other effective methods and tools can be used and exploited for similar research works to arrive at excellent results and findings. As an endnote, the suggested works and the one under probe is an attempt to prepare the ground for the researchers in the future.

### **Conclusion:**

Human nature, predominantly the negative one, has been the permanent topic of debate in all major disciplines, including psychology, literature and theology from antiquity to the present day. The law itself accommodates human moral values in the shape of legal ethics. Owing to this fact, *Sharī'ah*, being an effective legal system, give a broader space to moral values in its legal spectrum comparatively to others. It has always been the discussion of the legal books and scriptures and has, therefore, fascinated the mind and soul of men of eminence. Following the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and in the light of the new discoveries made in the field of psychology and law ( in the shape of legal ethics) men of prodigious genius in literature have also depicted the negative aspects of human nature which, in return, have formulated the main topics of discussion of their works. However, most of the time, these works are not only found censuring the evils of lust, gluttony and greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride, but they also

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<sup>86</sup> Robert Browning (1812-89), a Victorian poet, the perfect practitioner of dramatic monologue is famous for ambiguity in his poetry. His famous works are: *Sordello*, *Bell and Pomegranates*, *Dramatis Personae*, etc. the characteristics of his poems were a strong psychological interest in human emotions and motives and a tendency to obscure or deliberately torturous language. His lyrics, however, are delightfully simple and musical. See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 66.

<sup>87</sup> Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 93) a playwright and one of the University Wits and a predecessor of William Shakespeare, the writer of 'mighty lines' he was killed young most probably for his atheistical opinions in a street brawl. However, he left behind a valuable body of works that include, *Tamburlaine*, *Tragedy of Dr Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, and others. He also wrote splendid poems. (See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 360.

<sup>88</sup> Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821 – 81), Russian novelist. His major novels are *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamzov*. His novels are notable for their depth of character analysis, preoccupation with abnormal psychology, and the humor of the absurd. (See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 154.

<sup>89</sup> Nikolai Vasilevich Gogol (1809 – 52), Russian writer. His masterpiece is the novel *Dead Souls* (first part). It was never finished and Gogol destroyed most of the second part. His other works are *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*, *The Nose*, *The Inspector General* (play). (See for more detail: Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1985), 225.

suggest, in the same breath, cures and solutions to them. *Sharī'ah* provide such cures to the large possible even in its legal system. Due to the wide range of literature available on negative human nature, only the first three major vices, namely, lust, gluttony and greed have been discussed in the present work. They are important because, if seen closely, they are the mother vices, engendering all other sins as their progeny. It does not mean, under any stretch of explanation, that the remaining vices are not given enough space and importance in scriptures as well as other important works. As mentioned earlier, various religion and their legal system counter these vices by their corresponding remedies i.e. chastity, temperance and love. In other words, no corruption in human nature has ever escaped in these works unnoticed without offering remedies to the vices. Since both the works take human nature as their sole theme, they have, therefore, commonalities regarding the negative side of human nature. Both these works not only highlight the vices in human nature but also propound suggestions for remedying these vices with their corresponding virtues. The Holy *Qurān*, the greatest delineator of human nature, like other great works, for example, accommodated vices and their remedies with the strongest vigor. Since these three vices top the list of the deadly sins, they, therefore, occupy the core notch in terms of their cure. At the same time, their corresponding opposite virtues, occurring in different contexts, counter these vices in human nature. Since every holy scripture, be it the Holy Bible or the Holy *Qurān*, has inspired great minds in every age, William Shakespeare, the great English dramatist from the Elizabethan Age, is no exception in the same connection. He, for instance, discusses the same vices and their remedies in his plays, especially, in his four great tragedies i.e. *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*. His readers can find several passages in his plays where he comes down hard on lust, gluttony and greed and upholds chastity, temperance and love, the ideal virtues as their remedies. Despite their different purposes and natures imbedded in their philosophical skeleton, there is no other opinion in maintaining that both *Sharī'ah* and the works of Shakespeare condemn the three vices in harsh terms and celebrate their opposite virtues in appreciative words. For instance, lust, the engenderer of other vices, occupies a core position in *Sharī'ah* and the works of William Shakespeare. Likewise, gluttony, which begets lust, is criticized and censured in both the works. Greed, too, is negatively projected in both works as a ruinous characteristic prominent in human nature. However, both the works, in their own distinct ways, offers cures and solutions to them. Chastity counters lust; temperance fights gluttony and love combats against greed in human nature. The other four vices are also criticized in both works as the first three and have offered remedies for them. There is, for that reason, a tense need of a separate academic work of similar nature in terms of identification of such vices and their remedies.

The present study is of great importance because it discusses the three main vices with all their manifestations in human nature and their remedies in light of *Sharī'ah* and the four tragedies of William Shakespeare. The current work gives an insight into the negative side of human nature and their cures through the legal spectrum *Sharī'ah*. This endeavor not only has academic implications but also carries social and legal ones. For example, the future researchers will benefit from the present study which will also bear fruits on the social level in form of the education of the masses regarding vices and their remedies. This study, further, encourages man to curb these vices in his nature and help realize a more peaceful society based on fellow-feelings and self-restraint. This aspect of the study installs it at very high academic and social pedestals.