



Harms of
FUTILE
ACTIVITIES

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at-tazkiyah

Every act that brings no benefit in this world nor the Hereafter is, in the terminology of the Sharī‘ah, ‘Lā ya‘nī’ (futile). Although lā ya‘nī itself is permissible, its borders are dangerously close to impermissibility. This is why Nabī ﷺ said, “It is from the excellence of an individual’s Islām that he leaves lā ya‘nī” (At-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah). The likes of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ؒ and Imām Abū Dāwūd As-Sijistānī ؒ were of the opinion that this ḥadīth is one of those that if acted upon, makes the practicing of Dīn easy and as a result, secures success in both worlds.

In this day and age, there are so many ways in which a person can become involved in lā ya‘nī. I wish to draw attention to a few aspects of lā ya‘nī as examples, so that we can pay attention and abstain from them, in order to perfect our Islām.

1. Mobile Phones. The mobile phone was initially devised as a tool for only communication: calls and text messages. Now, with the introduction of ‘smartphones’, they have become much more. Emails, social networking, instant messaging, games and the internet can all be accessed from the convenience of a hand-held device, with no strings attached.

Through our phones, how many futile activities do we indulge in every day? How many calls do we make that are unnecessary? How many emails, text/instant messages or tweets do we send that we could have done without? How much time do we spend just surfing the internet, sending or forwarding useless media, or engaged in futility all day?

What is even more concerning is that these actions of ours do not remain futile for long; they lead us into ḥarām and impermissible actions, which are more destructive than lā ya‘nī. Firstly, many of the topics addressed in our activities when interacting through

these mediums are impermissible, like backbiting, slander, etc.

Secondly, these things impact the other tenets of our Dīn, for example ṣalāh, recitation of the Qur'ān, the correct upbringing of our children and many other things. Remember, if due to the mobile or any other form of lā ya'nī our Dīn suffers, then what we are doing is impermissible and we will be answerable for it in the Court of Allāh ﷻ.

2. The Internet. The points mentioned under mobile phones also relate to the internet, because now there is little difference between what you can do on your mobile or on your computer, except for the difference in screen size. Hence, it can also become a tool of lā ya'nī. Access to information and media has become much easier with the aid of the internet, but we need to be careful not to fall into lā ya'nī or sin. We need to remember that when we are reading an article, watching a video, or listening to audio, we are actually in the company of the author, producer or speaker. The principle of good company and bad company applies in these cases also, so we should endeavour to stay within the limits set by our Dīn.

3. Game Consoles. These have always been a problem for the youth, and an increasing one. Those who grew up playing on such consoles have now become adult gamers, and the amount of time wasted playing on them is shocking. Children are allowed to play games that they are legally not permitted to, which is ḥarām, and the parents do not put any restrictions on them. This obviously hampers the moral and educational progress of children. Again, like the mobile and the internet, if video game consoles have a negative impact on a person's Dīn, then the person is committing a sin.

There are many more modes of lā ya'nī, e.g. wasting time talking to people unnecessarily in person. What we now need to do is to

make a resolution to perfect our Dīn and put a stop to lā ya'nī. In the way the mobile phone has turned smart, we need to be smarter and restrict our dependence and usage of our mobiles. We should set principles for ourselves, like not using our phones at certain times, e.g. when in the masjid or whilst we are talking to people, at work, whilst eating or in the toilet. Better still, we should allocate a reasonable amount of time in which we will sit on the internet and spend time to read and respond to our text/instant messages, emails, tweets, etc. Allāh ﷻ says:

And whatever thing you are given is [no more than] an enjoyment of the worldly life and its decoration, and that which lies with Allāh is much better and far more lasting. So do you not use reason? (28:60)

But you prefer the worldly life, while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable. (87:17)

In these verses, explaining the transient nature of the pleasures of this world, Allāh ﷻ compares it to the everlasting and unimaginable pleasures of the Hereafter that He has prepared for His pious servants. He then finishes with questioning the reasoning of the one who indulges in worldly pleasures whilst disregarding the ones of the Hereafter, which are far better.

May Allāh ﷻ save us all from the harms of all forms of futility and make us all perfect believers in preparation for the Hereafter. Āmīn.

Taken from Riyādul Jannah, Vol. 22 No. 4, Apr 2013

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