By Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi

Q 1. What is the Islamic position on Muslim's participation in the political process of a non-Muslim country? Are Muslims allowed to take part in the election, run for political offices or take key government positions in non-Islamic states? (Masood Khan, Irvine, CA)

A 1. The Shari'ah does not forbid Muslims to live in non-Islamic states. There are more than four hundred million Muslims in the world (almost one third of the total population) who are living as minorities in non-Islamic countries. Some of them are the natives of these countries and some of them have migrated to these countries for better educational, economic and other reasons. Most of the Muslim countries today are also not ruled totally by the rules of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. So what should Muslims do? They are supposed to practice and preach their faith, but at the same time they must protect their lives, their properties and their rights to live in peace. In order to protect their own rights and to promote the good things in the society, if it is necessary for them to participate in the political system of non-Islamic states, then it is their duty to do so. It is in the best naslaha (welfare) of Muslims to participate in the system to safeguard their own interests and to establish good in the society.

In the Qur'an we have the story of the Prophet and his people. The Prophet openly criticized the un-Islamic beliefs and practices of his people but he participated in their tribal system and did benefit from it. He lived in that system as long as it allowed him to live there. After the death of his wife and uncle he went to Taif seeking the Jiwar (a pre-Islamic custom of protection) of the chiefs of Taif. When they refused and it was impossible for him to live in Makkah, then he migrated to Madina.

It is true that Islam stands for the sovereignty of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and Allah's rules are not limited to the acts of worship, they also include social, economic and political matters. By participating in a non-Islamic system, one cannot rule by that which Allah has commanded. But things do not change overnight. Changes come through patience, wisdom and hard work.

I believe that as Muslims we should participate in the system to safeguard our interests and try to bring gradual change for the right cause, the cause of truth and justice. We must not forget that Allah's rules have to be established in all lands, and all our efforts should lead to that direction.

Q 2. I understand that our Prophet-peace be upon him-forbade men and women to change their shape. Does it mean that Muslims are not allowed to have liposuction or other types of cosmetic surgeries? Are these surgeries haram in Islam? (A. Ahmad, Houston, Texas)

A 2. The general rule in Islam is to avoid any act that is harmful or brings unhappiness. However, it is permissible to remove unwanted hair if it is done through safe methods. Past Muslim jurists allow (al-nawrah) or some other method (they are safe for the skin) permissible. It is a Sunnah to remove unwanted hair through patience, wisdom and hard work.

Q 3. To remove unwanted hair are permitted methods recommended by the Prophet? I know that past Muslim jurists allow (al-nawrah) or some other method (they are safe for the skin) permissible. It is a Sunnah to remove unwanted hair through patience, wisdom and hard work.

A 3. All safe methods recommended by the Prophet are permissible. It is not necessary to follow the Prophet's exact methodology, but the intention is important.

Q 4. I had an argument with my husband about wearing a ring. I said that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference. I know that wearing a ring is haram because it is against the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet-peace be upon him, but he said that there is no difference.