

Aadab-E-Islami

THE ISLAMIC ETIQUETTES

VOL-1

A PART OF THE CURRICULUM DEvised
BY
SHAUBA E TADWEEN E NISAB
OF TANZEEM AL MAKATIB

TRANSLATED FROM URDU
BY
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*In the Name of Allah (SWT), the Most
Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

We are happy to bring to you printed version of volume one and two of Islamic etiquettes. This is a translation of “Aadab e Islami” published by “Tanzeemul Makatib” from Lucknow, India in Urdu. The translation of verses from the Holy Quran is taken from Br Ali Quli Qarai ‘s translation. The Traditions cited in this book have been translated by Br Abdul-Rahman Cherri a senior student in Qum. The English translation of the contents was done by my friend Br Tahir Bilgrami of Hyderabad. I have received several hours of help to edit by my friend Nasir Abbas Sajanlal. Others who have read and made suggestions include my mother Sabiha Jafri, my wife Syeda Jafri, my daughter Kulsoom Jafri and my aunt Khatija Akbar. Br Rameez Merchant and Tahira Abbas helped in cover design and formatting of the book. Finally, I would like to thank all momineen who have sponsored their marhoomeen in printing this book. This book will be available on website shiabooksforchildren.com. For any corrections or suggestions please email at abbas313@hotmail.com.

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Lesson One: Islam - The Creed of Society

Islam has not only taken care of the individual's personal, spiritual and psychological needs but has also taught him the norms of living with others.

It is necessary to mention at the outset that the collective wish of all human beings is to achieve excellence and success in their life. Every person wishes to be the best and to possess all superior things. He desires to hold the highest position in the world and attain the top most pinnacle of success. He wishes not to fall short of anything and that success should always remain in his reach.

It should be recognized that there is no person in the world who does not desire progress, excellence, success and achievement. This is the reason that when a momentary hurdle comes in the progress of a person, he becomes sad and morose. And this is the special trait that the ulema (scholars) of Islam have called *Hubb e Kamal*—the Love for Excellence. Therefore, there isn't any individual in the world who does not have this natural instinct in his heart or has any doubt about making efforts to achieve excellence. There is no difference of opinion about this instinct among the different creeds in the world. In fact, all the creeds have unanimously accepted this human trait and in their own way they have tried to make men reach excellence and felicity in their efforts.

But the difference exists as to what is true excellence and felicity and what is the way for achieving it. Whether they are divine creeds or worldly societies, we learn after studying them that every one of them claim that the way shown by them will take one to felicity and excellence.

We have said that along with the wish for progress and excellence, every person wants that no obstruction confronts his efforts and the progress is continuous and uninterrupted. From

this a conclusion is drawn, that in the heart of every person there is a wish for unlimited excellence and progress. If this is accepted, it is that excellence towards which Islam has invited the entire human race, which is “Qurb e Ilahi” or “Achieving nearness to the Creator” because it is only Allah (SWT) (SWT) in the entire Universe who possesses the Absolute Excellence—Kamal e Mutlaq.

In view of Islam, a human being can reach the stage of “Absolute Excellence” only when he acquires nearness to Allah (SWT). The way for this is that he fulfills the mandates and abstains absolutely from the prohibited to win the pleasure of Allah (SWT). In the Islamic concepts, besides Allah (SWT) everything else is transitory and destructible. Therefore, other than Allah (SWT) nothing else could be an answer for the human wish of “Baqaa e Dawam” or “Eternal Welfare”. Thus, those who consider power and pelf as good luck and felicity are entangled in a mirage because however much wealth they have it is limited and transitory. Men experience innumerable hardships that cannot be resolved with wealth because it cannot buy everything. Almighty Allah (SWT) is the eternal, ever living Creator of everything. The Holy Quran say: *“O mankind! You are the ones who stand in the need of Allah (SWT), and Allah (SWT)---He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable.”* ---Surat Fatir, 35:15

This means that the human being is just a beggar in-front of the “Ghani e Mutlaq” - “the Absolutely Sufficient Allah (SWT)” Imam Hussain (a.s) in his “Dua e Arafa” addresses Allah (SWT) in these words: *“O Allah (SWT)! What has he gained who has lost You; and what did he lose who has gained You!”*

In this sentence Imam Hussain (a.s) has illumined the fact, that only Allah (SWT)’s person is the perfect entity and whoever focuses on other than Allah (SWT) will be lost in the valley of depravity and waywardness. But one who remains attached to Allah (SWT), will keep moving towards perfection and reach the stage of indifference and unconcern, where he will not have any feeling of shortcoming or defect.

When Islam deemed nearness to Allah (SWT) the highest excellence and felicity the question arises how has Islam has shown the way to attain it. This question has been answered by

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Allah (SWT) in this verse of the Holy Quran: “..... So whoever expects to encounter his Lord---let him act righteously, and not associate anyone with the worship of his Lord.” ---Surat Al Kahf, 18:110

This verse shows us two ways of reaching Allah (SWT) (s.w.t):

1. By doing righteous deeds.
2. Being sincere in devotion to Allah (SWT) and abstaining from polytheism.

In view of Islam, anyone can attain true felicity when the person implicitly follows the Amr wa Naahi (Do's and Dont's) of Allah (SWT) because this will please Allah (SWT) and it is true devotion to Him. This attitude gives true freedom to the human being. When we look at the mandates of Allah (SWT) we find that they certainly have some relationship with the society and very few mandates of Shariah are there which pertain to only one individual and overlook others. Allah (SWT) has deemed devotion as the source of acquiring bountiful blessings. But this doesn't mean that with this devotion the individual stays away from others in whose company the person opened his eyes and has seen the light of the day. It is the society in which the person has grown up. Therefore, he cannot become a hermit and hide himself in the mountain caves and jungles and remain cut away from the rest of the world. On the contrary the person is required to serve others, give a helping hand to resolve their problems, and acquire mutual brotherhood. This is devotion to Allah (SWT).

There are plenty of mandates in Islam that are directly concerned with the affairs of the society. There is also a mandate for collective, congregational devotion, to the extent that Etikaf (retreat in a mosque), which is an optional devotion, is apparently meant for the individual's reform but this Etikaf will be termed right if it is done in the Jaameh Masjid, and if during the period of Etikaf the person moves out it will be void. But there are certain relaxations that permit the person to go out under special circumstances like going to inquire about a sick person or helping a believer, etc.

Secondly, the human values on which true felicity depends are mutual contacts and relationships between people. Therefore, it is necessary to say that the high human traits on which felicity depends, like selflessness, sacrifice etc. will not manifest

themselves till the individual lives with others and spends his days with them.

In the light of this discussion we will talk about certain Islamic mandates that pertain to congregations, society, and the community as a whole, and the benefits that accrue to the nation from them.

Congregational Prayers

Apparently, it is felt that salah (prayer) which is the most important pillar of devotion to Allah (SWT) is individualistic devotion because every person does perform it alone to earn the pleasure of the Creator. But in view of Islam, there is much importance for congregational prayers and therefore, it is thought that congregation itself is a real way of prayer. But because of pressing reasons one may offer the devotion individually as it is said in the Holy Quran: *“And maintain the prayer and give the Zakat, and bow along with those who bow (in prayer).”* ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2:43

Therefore, even in the battle arena, where there will be the danger of attack by the enemy from all sides and constant watch has to be maintained, the Prophet (s.a) offered the prayers in congregation.

Imam Hussain (a.s), on the Day of Ashura, despite being surrounded by the blood-thirsty enemies with arrows raining on him, offered the Zuhr prayer while his devoted companion, Saeed bin Abd Allah (SWT), protected him taking the flying arrows on his body and thus got martyred. All these sacrifices were made for the sake of congregational prayers. The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“The prayer of he who does not pray [in congregation] with other muslims in the mosque is not accepted, unless he has a [legitimate] excuse.”* ---Wasael Shia, Vol 8, P 293

This is the reason why Jurists and the Marajeh have said in their Risala Amaliya (The Books of Practices) that, absence from the congregational prayers is taboo and a muslim staying away without any valid reason isn't correct.

Similarly, when we look at the verses and supplications that are recited during the prayers we find that even if one offers his

devotion individually, he is praying for all muslims. For example, in Surat Al Fatiha: “*You (alone) do WE worship and to You (alone) do WE turn for help.*” ---Surat Al Fatiha, 1:5

We end our salat (prayers) with salutation by praying for ourselves and all the believers. This proves that even while offering prayers individually we have to remember all other Momineen.

The Friday Prayer

Islam has deemed the Friday Prayer as the substitute for Dhuhur (early afternoon) prayer and has attached great importance to it. This prayer can be offered only in congregation. There is a condition that the Imam of the congregation should deliver a sermon (Qutba) to the gathering, inviting the believers to piety and highlighting current affairs of the society, and exhorting momineen to help each other.

Amr Bil Maarooif (Inviting to Good) Wa Nahi An Il Munkir (Abstaining From Vices)

Amr bil maarooif wa Nahi An il Munkir means adoption of virtuous deeds and shunning the vicious (immoral). The Holy Quran has termed the muslims as the best nation (Umma) because of these two injunctions. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran: “*You are the best nation (ever) brought forth for mankind: you bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and have faith in Allah (SWT)....*” ---Surat Al e Imran, 3:110

There are innumerable traditions about the importance of Amr Bil Maarooif and Nahi an il Munkir which we are not quoting here to maintain brevity. But we certainly want to draw attention towards the point that these two injunctions are the commands of the Shariah to uphold the good manners of the society and protect it from vices.

Khums & Zakat

Khums and Zakat have been made mandatory for the affluent so that the Islamic Establishment is able to support the needy and indigent people and spend for common social welfare.

The Zakat is such an important tenet of Islam that the Quran has repeatedly mentioned about it. Wherever it has mentioned Salah (Prayer) it also mentions Zakat. The Holy Quran says: “*And maintain the prayer, give the Zakat, and bow along with those who bow (in prayer).*” ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2:40

“*Those who, if We granted them power in the land, maintain the prayer, give the Zakat,...*” ---Surat Al Hajj, 22:41

Islam has several mandates about the society of which we have mentioned just a few. The other mandates are Jihad, Hajj, Unity, care of the affairs of muslims, virtuousness and piety, cooperation with one other, helping the orphans and the indigent. These are all collective mandates of Islam. It can be said that Islam is the creed which has exhorted its followers to discharge their duties towards the society to achieve felicity, by maintaining strong mutual relations and adopting the way of love, help and cooperation.

If we accept these things we have to adopt two ways mentioned here:

1. In every society, all its members have some rights over each other.
2. Every society and nation has some moral and societal norms and by following them the value of the individuals is established.

Therefore, if a person overlooks these rights he will not have any value in the society and the people will look down upon him.

In the coming lessons, we will describe the rights briefly so that they could be followed.

Summary

If an individual wants to reach the highest stage of excellence, the only way in the Islamic point of view is to acquire “Nearness to Allah (SWT)”. When we believe that everything else other than Allah (SWT) is transitory only then with tawakkal (Dependence) on Allah (SWT) we can reach the excellence for which Allah (SWT) has made two conditions:

1. Amal e Saleh or virtuous deeds.

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2. Sincerity in belief on “Tawheed-Unity of Allah (SWT) (s.w.t)” and abstention from ‘Shirk-Polytheism”.

These two conditions can be fulfilled only when the individual implicitly follows the Shariah and discharges the rights of the society and does not become a lonely hermit or a recluse.

Questions

1. “Hubb e Kamal” or “Love for Excellence” is a natural instinct. What does it mean?
2. From the Islamic point of view what is the condition for attaining “Abadi Saadat—Eternal Felicity”?
3. How can we achieve Abadi Saadat only by maintaining (good) relations with others?
4. What did the Prophet (s.a) say about the importance of Congregational Prayers?
5. Talk about one verse of the Holy Quran pertaining to Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi An il Munkir?
6. Why is there importance attached to “Khums” and “Zakat” in Islam?

Lesson Two: Islamic Brotherhood

The initial steps that the Prophet (s.a) took after migrating to Medina was to promote love, affection and brotherhood amongst the Ansar (the Helpers) and the Mohajireen (the Migrants from Mecca). He declared them brothers of each other. As a result, the age-old animosity among the arab tribes was obliterated and they joined together to sacrifice their very lives at the call of the Prophet (s.a)!

In view of Islam, all human beings are equal and no nation or tribe is superior over the other. The only criterion of superiority is Taqwa (Piety) and uprightness of the person. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran: *“O mankind! Indeed, we created you from a male and female and made you, nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah (SWT) is the most Godwary among you. Indeed, Allah (SWT) is all-knowing, all-aware.”* ---Surat Al Hujurat, 49:13

Allah (SWT) informs the momineen in the Holy Quran that brotherhood and affection amongst them is a blessing otherwise, the fire of animosity and hate would have taken them to the brink of destruction.

Allah (SWT) further says: *“Hold fast, all together, to Allah (SWT)’s Cord, and do not be divided (into sects). And remember Allah (SWT)’s blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, whereat He saved you from it. Thus, does Allah (SWT) clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided.”* ----- Surat Al e Imran, 3:103

The Prophet (s.a) and the Infallibles (a.s) too have always stressed on firm brotherhood among the muslims and tried the most to keep the momineen together and had highlighted the fruits and benefits of this brotherhood in the Hereafter.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: “Whosoever takes another believer as his brother will be elevated by God in heaven to a degree that no other act of his could have made him reach.” -Haqaeq, P:318

“On the day of resurrection chairs will be placed around the Throne for certain individuals and their faces will be bright like the full-moon. On that day people will be dreadful but they will be in peace; people will be afraid but they will be fearless; they are, indeed, the vicegerents of God who neither have any fear nor grief or sorrow. When asked who these persons will be, the Prophet (s.a) said, ‘They are the persons who love one another for the sake of God.’” - Ahia al Uloom Kitab Aadaab al Sohbat wal Mua-shira.

The Prophet (s.a) has also said: “God Almighty says, ‘Verily, my love is granted to those who visit each other for My sake; to those who assist each other for My sake; to those who love one another for My sake and to those who spend their wealth on each other for My sake.’”

---Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, V 4, P 386

Imam Sadiq (a.s) has narrated that one day the Prophet (s.a) asked his companions: “Which rope of Emaan (Faith) is the firmest?” The companions replied, “God and His Messenger know best.” Some of them answered, “[Canonical] prayers (salaat)” some said, “Zakat” and others, “fasting, Haj and Umrah,” whereas some others said, “Jihad.” The Prophet (s.a) then said, “For everything you have mentioned there is some virtue. However, the firmest rope of faith is [the act of] loving for God and hating for God; it is [also] befriending God’s friends and disassociating oneself from His enemies.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, vol 69, P 242

Islam ordains that every act of the believers should be for the pleasure of Allah (SWT). In the same manner friendship and antagonism too should be for the pleasure of Allah (SWT) because this has been termed as a fountainhead of faith in some traditions and some other traditions term it as the very faith.

The Holy Quran says: “The faithful are indeed brothers” --Surat Hujuraat, 49:10

The foundation of friendship and love of the momineen is on their faith in Allah (SWT) and obedience to Him. Besides these, all other worldly standards are futile and baseless. Those who love a person because of his wealth or position, or respect him due to fear there is no firmness in this love for him. No sooner their

Lesson Two: Islamic Brotherhood

purpose is served, or the person gets deprived of his wealth and position, the very same day the love for him dissipates and in many instances, it happens that an old friend turns into a foe. However, friendship founded on Islamic norms will be permanent and it will not develop any cracks because its standard is love for Allah (SWT) in which there is no change or any shallowness.

This is the reason that the Islamic affection and brotherhood is more superior to material considerations like color, creed, wealth and pelf. Therefore, in the early days of Islam (Sadr e Islam) people had seen with their own eyes that the Prophet (s.a) used to share the same spread with the slaves to have his food.

There was a time when the Arab tribes used to be proud of their camels, off-springs and wealth. They even used to proudly talk of their dead and the number of graves and used to prefer the Arab over the outsider, white over black! But the Prophet (s.a) obliterated all these vile customs of the Days of Ignorance and included the Nubian Bilal, Roman Sohaib and the Persian Salman among his close companions and got Zaid bin Harita married to his paternal cousin Janab Zainab; or got Jubair (a mendicant from Africa) married to Zulfa, daughter of an affluent person because his edict was: "A believer is a peer and equal of another believer."

The love for Allah (SWT), for which Islam has motivated its followers, also includes love for His beloved creatures. The reason for this is that love for the Aulia (Saints) will create interest for Zikr e Ilahi (Remembrance of Allah (SWT)) because the Aulia are the manifestations of the traits of Allah (SWT) and through them nearness to Allah (SWT) is achieved.

For acquiring the pleasure of Allah (SWT), through the traits of love and hate, one has to distance oneself from Allah (SWT)'s enemies and infidels or one is required to observe Tabarra—expression of disapproval—against them as the adage goes: "A friend's enemy too is one's enemy!"

The following verse of the Holy Quran has very beautifully highlighted this: "*Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah (SWT), and those who are with him are hard against the faithless and merciful amongst themselves.*" ---Surat Al Fath, 48:29

This means, that their mutual affection is ardent and their love for Allah (SWT) has made them one, united, and because of this love, they are like a wall of steel against the enemies of Allah (SWT).

In Ziarat e Ashura this testament of Allah (SWT) has been reiterated in the following words: *“I am at peace with those who are at peace with you, and I am at war with those who have fought you, up to the Resurrection day.”* ---Mafateeh ul Jinaan, Ziarath Al-Ashura

The love for Allah (SWT) can be judged in two ways:

1. Following Allah (SWT)'s mandates meticulously and abstaining from what He has forbidden. One cannot be a true lover, who announces his love from the roof tops, but doesn't obey his beloved. Allah (SWT) certainly loves us and, therefore, He has given us umpteen blessings. We accept these blessings and offer our thanksgivings to Him and obey Him so that we give proof of our love for Him that is there in our hearts. Not only this, but after this thanksgiving, His blessings are enhanced many fold as the Holy Quran says: *“...If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you (in blessing)...”* --Surat Ibrahim, 14:7 As a consequence of this gratefulness one gets so many blessings that the person reaches success.
2. The essential aspect of the love of Allah (SWT) is that one fulfils the mandates and attends to the rights of the society and the family like obedience and care of parents and attending to their needs, maintaining good relations with neighbours, helping the poor and needy and treating them with kindness and maintaining distance from Allah (SWT)'s enemies. This is the reason that the Holy Quran has fixed the standards of friendship and enmity as to who deserves love and affection and who should be abhorred:
 - *“The faithful should not take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful...”* ---Surat al e Imran, 3:28
 - *“O you who have faith! Do not take My enemy for friends...”* ---Surat Al Mumtahanah, 60:1

Such verses reflect the greatness of Islam and those who depend on the foundation of the belief of Unity of Allah (SWT) which is faith.

Summary

The Prophet (s.a), immediately on migrating to Medina, proclaimed the covenant of brotherhood between the migrants (Muhajireen) and the Ansar (The Helpers). The result of this was the creation of a Islamic society based on unity and amity, which brought about an atmosphere of mutual love and togetherness.

Allah (SWT) has deemed Taqwa (Piety) and temperance as the standard of superiority and set the yardstick of basing mutual relations between men on the love they have for Allah (SWT). The love of Allah (SWT) can be judged by the way a person follows the mandates and abstains from the prohibited (the muharramat). The other yardstick is the love a person has for the men of piety and keeps away from Allah (SWT)'s enemies.

Questions

1. What is the standard of superiority in Islam? Talk about a verse from Surat Hujurat!
2. Describe a tradition of the Prophet (s.a) about importance of brotherhood amongst momineen.
3. According to the Prophet (s.a) what is the strongest rope of Emaan (Faith)?
4. For what purpose has Islam exhorted us to be friendly with the Aulia (Pious)?
5. What traits has the Holy Quran described about the Prophet (s.a) and his faithful companions?
6. What are the consequences of friendship with Allah (SWT) and enmity with His enemies?

Lesson Three: The Rights & Privileges of Parents

Islam is a congregational and societal creed. Its followers move forward only for acquiring the pleasure of Allah (SWT), and to this end they maintain relations and contacts with one other.

Islam has very well acquainted us with the principles of living in a society so that by putting them into practice we can acquire Allah (SWT)'s pleasure and as a result, be the recipients of felicity in this world and in the Hereafter. Therefore, if we wish to discharge our duties and rights towards others, it is binding on us to know their rights and duties for which we are responsible.

In the coming lessons, we discuss the rights and privileges that the momineen have over each other but in this lesson, we shall discuss the duties of children towards their parents.

Treating The Parents Well

In Islam the parents' rights over their children are deemed very important. This is the reason that Allah (SWT) has talked of good treatment of parents and devotion to Him in the same breath:

“Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship any one except Him, and (He has enjoined) kindness to parents. Should they reach old age at your side---one of them or both---do not say to them, ‘Fie!’ And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words (.) Lower the wings of humility to them, out of mercy, and say, ‘My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was (a) small (child)!’ Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts (.)”

---Surat Isra, 17:23 to 25

In these verses while Allah (SWT) has mandated His creatures to worship Him, He has also, at the same time exhorted them to treat their parents well. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has explained the meaning of the word “Ehsaan-Kindness”, in Verse 23, as follows:

“Being ‘kind’ [to the parents means] accompanying them in a good manner, and not to allow them to request something from you which they are in need of (i.e. to provide them with it before they request it), even if they are self-sufficient.”

Someone asked the Prophet (s.a) *“What rights do the parents have over their children? He (s.a) said, “[Know] that they are your Heaven and your Hell.” ---Al Targhib wal Tarheeb, 3/316*

This would mean that in the hereafter a person would reach Heaven or Hell through the (wish of) parents as the felicitous tradition points towards this fact: *“Heaven is beneath the feet of the mothers.”---Kanz al ‘Ummal, Hikayat 45439*

There are umpteen traditions about the rights of parents over their off-springs. There is much stress over the mothers’ rights and privileges as Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) says in his Risalatul Huqooq (“Treatise of Rights”): *“The right of your mother is that you know that she carried you where no one carries anyone, she gave to you of the fruit of her heart that which no one gives to anyone, and she protected you with all her organs. She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate, if she was thirsty as long as you drank, if she was naked as long as you were clothed, if she was in the sun as long as you were in the shade. She gave up sleep for your sake, she protected you from heat and cold, all in order that you might belong to her. You will not be able to show her gratitude, unless through God’s help and giving success” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74, Chapter 1*

After this, Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) described the philosophy of the rights of fathers in the following words: *“The right of your father is that you know that he is your root. Without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself which pleases you, know that your father is the root of its blessing upon you. So, praise God and thank Him in that measure. And there is no strength save in God.” --Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 74, Chapter 1.*

The picture of the kindness of the mothers presented by Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) brings forward the mothers’ affection before us which is an example of Divine Blessings because, the lap of the mother is replete with love and affection that is beyond our comprehension.

Abstention from Misbehaviour

The least reaction that one makes, with regard to any unpleasant talk is that the person utters ‘fie’ and this is the sound that emanates from a person’s mouth in times of trivial unpleasantness. Almighty Allah (SWT) doesn’t bear even the minimal disapproval of persons against their parents. Therefore, He has forbidden *momineen* from even uttering ‘fie’ as the Holy Quran says: “.....do not say to them ‘Fie!’ and do not chide them, ...” ---*Surat Al Isra, 17:23*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “*The lowliest level of insolence [to one’s parents] is his saying: ‘Fie’ [to them], and if God knew of a lowlier act then He would have used it [instead].*” *Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 74, P 6*

Therefore, when at the outset, one is prohibited from even saying ‘fie’ to the parents, if someone talks ill of them or addresses them in loud tone or chides them, what would be the consequence? One should remember that even saying ‘fie’ to the parents is a major sin.

Therefore, after this major sin when Allah (SWT) takes account of the major sins and inflicts severe retribution on them it should not be surprising.

The Prophet (s.a) says: “*The gravest of the major sins in the eyes of God on the day of Ressurrection are: Ascribing a partner to God, unjustly killing a believer, fleeing from a battle which God has ordained, and insolence to ones parents.*” ---*Al Targhib wal Tarheeb, vol 3, P 327*

In another hadith, the one who has been disinherited (*aaq*), will be told to do whatever he desires but will not be forgiven. In brief, the result of getting disinherited (*aaq*) will result in getting deprived of Allah (SWT)’s forgiveness and the privilege of going to heaven. But it should be borne in mind that getting disinherited is a sin like other sins and the doors of repentance are always open and, therefore, one can earn the pleasure of the parents by making amends for the past misbehavior.

At this stage it is necessary to point towards two more points:

1. In some traditions there is mention of persons getting disinherited because of their misbehaviour with parents, as the Prophet (s.a) has said: “*He who upsets his parents has been insolent to them.*” *Kanz al Ammal, Hadith 45537*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Of insolence [to one’s parents] is to look at his parents with a sharp gaze.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 74, P 61

The problem of getting disinherited becomes much more delicate when parents had been unjust to their off-springs. The Shariah demands that one shouldn’t look angrily at the parents as it might become the cause of disinheritance.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“If a person looks at his parents with a look of hatred, God will not accept even one prayer of his, even if it was they [his parents] who oppressed him.”* ---Previous reference.

2. It isn’t necessary for the parents to be muslims for the muslim off-spring becoming disinherited. The muslim off-springs are bound to obey all the commands of the non-muslim parents other than polytheistic orders.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran: *“We have enjoined man concerning his parents. His mother carried him through weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me is the return (.) But if they urge you to ascribe to Me as partner that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them. Keep their company honorably in this world and follow the way of him who turns to Me penitently. Then to Me will be your return, whereat I will inform you concerning what you used to do.”* ---Surat Luqman, 31: 14 & 15

Zakaria bin Ibrahim was a Christian who embraced Islam at the hands of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s). One-day Zakaria told the Imam (a.s) that his parents were Christians and his mother was blind and that he shared the food utensils with them and wanted to know the rulings regarding such action? The Imam (a.s) asked, *“Do they eat pork?”* Zakaria replied, *“My master! They never eat it!”* The Imam (a.s) rejoined, *“Do eat with them and treat your mother gracefully.”*

---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 7, P 374

Therefore, Zakaria went back to Kufa and took good care of his mother. He used to feed her with his own hands and he washed her clothes and took good care of her hygiene and cleanliness. The mother was surprised at the good treatment and one day she asked, *“O my son, when you were following our Creed, you didn’t treat me so well and now, I find you are more affectionate towards me.”* Zakaria told his mother, *“The Islamic ethics and manners require this attitude and the Prophet (s.a)’s son has given*

Lesson Three: The Rights & Privileges of Parents

me this guidance.” His mother asked, “Is he a prophet?” Zakaria replied, “No! But he is from the progeny of the Prophet (s.a).” The mother said, “But this seems prophetic guidance and thought!” Zakaria replied, “He isn’t a prophet but is the progeny of Prophet Mohammed (s.a) and is an Imam (a.s).” Then his mother said involuntarily, “O my son! You keep following that Creed because that is the best of creeds!” Then she asked him to teach her the tenets of his Creed. Zakaria related the Islamic teachings and beliefs to his mother. His mother immediately embraced Islam and learned how to offer Salah (Prayers). When the time for the Zuhr prayer arrived, she offered that prayer followed by Asr prayer and after the sun-set she offered the Maghrib prayer followed by the Isha prayer. It was Allah (SWT)’s wish that the lady demised the same night and offered her spirit to the Almighty! She left this transitory world as a momina and all the muslims joined her funeral procession. She was interred according to Islamic rites in the Islamic grave-yard.

Affection & Kindness

At the beginning of this lesson we have recited the following verse: “*Lower the wings of humility to them out of mercy,.....*” ---Surat Isra, 17:24

The Imam (a.s) says: “In the verse 24 of the same Surat the meaning of the words ‘Akhfizlahuma---lower the wings of humility to them’ connote that one should be most considerate and humble with the parents.”

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has interpreted these verses in the following words:

“*Do not fill your eyes by looking at them [your parents] except with mercy and affection, and raise not your voice over theirs, nor your hand over their hand, and do not walk ahead of them.*” ---Bihar al Anwaar, vol 74, P: 39 & 40

Then the Imam (a.s) explained about the verse: “*...but speak to them noble words.*”---Surat Al Isra, 17:23,

It means that even if they reprimand or beat you, you should say to them, *'I ask God to forgive your sins.'*" --The previous reference and *Usool e Kaafi, Vol 2, P 158*

Summary

Islam is a congregational and social religion and its followers maintain amiable relations with each other for the pleasure of Allah (SWT). Therefore, it is our responsibility that we recognize others' rights over us and are able to easily discharge them.

Among these rights are the rights of the parents about which Allah (SWT) has mentioned along with the mandate to obey Him; and the Prophet (s.a) too has deemed good treatment of parents as our prime responsibility when he (s.a) said: *"They are your Heaven and your Hell."*

Therefore, it is our responsibility that we give exemplary treatment to our parents whether they are muslims or not!!

Questions

1. What does the Quran say about "Ahsaan (Good Treatment) of parents?
2. While describing the rights of others what did Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) say about the rights of one's mother?
3. Mention a tradition of the Prophet (s.a) about a person getting disinherited (Aaq)?
4. In the light of the traditions under what circumstances would the children become liable for disinheritance (Aaq)?
5. What did Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) say about the interpretation of Verse 25 of Surat Isra?

Lesson Four: Sila e Rahm—Kindness Towards One’s Relatives

The societal rights that Islam has ordained are binding for the muslims and among them is good treatment of, and keeping amicable contacts with relatives which is termed as Sila e Rahm or kindness towards one’s relatives.

Therefore, it is necessary for a muslim to keep meeting his relatives and friends to inquire about their welfare, to maintain good relations and if they are needy, help them. Cooperate with the relatives in matters of piety and if one is having problems, provide him assistance to tide over them. If their actions are not proper, in a constructive manner guide them to correct their faults. Generally, relatives are the back bone and in difficulties one turns towards his relative for help.

Imam Ali (AS) has said: *“O people! No one (even though he may be rich) can do without his kinsmen and their support by hands or tongues. They alone are his support from rear and can ward off from him his troubles, and they are the most kind to him when tribulations befall him. The good memory of a man that Allah (SWT) retains among people is better than the property which others inherit from him!”* ---Nahj al Balagha, Sermon No:23

Imam Ali (a.s) has also said: *“Behold! If any one of you finds your near ones in wants or starvation, he should not desist from helping them with that which will not increase if this help is not expended, nor decrease by thus spending it. Whoever holds up his hand from (helping) his kinsmen, he holds only one hand, but at the time of his need many hands remain held up from helping him! One who is sweet tempered can retain the love of his people for good.”* ---Nahj al Balagha, Sermon No: 23

Imam Ali (a.s) has very eloquently described the ill-effects of one not rising to help his kinsmen. By not helping someone he

might lose several well-wishers in the bargain. The Imam (a.s) has also indicated that good treatment and help to kinsmen would accrue their love and affection to the person.

Certainly, every big family or tribe will have lots of people whose capabilities, qualifications and aptitudes will be different. You will find among them scholars, downright rustics, rich, poor, healthy and otherwise; persons of status as well as non-entities.

What is it that can make a society powerful, developed and a balanced society? Certainly, stability of mutual relations and contacts, sense of responsibility for helping each other and cooperation to develop are the things that would help us achieve that end. The way for doing it is that the affluent persons in the society give a helping hand to the poor and uphold the right of the downtrodden brethren and stand up for them. No doubt any nation, or society, with this spirit of help and cooperation can become strong economically.

This is the reason that Islam encouraged mutual brotherhood among its people and insisted on not negating it in any circumstances.

In the holy traditions Sila e Rahm has been emphatically propagated as Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has quoted this tradition of the Prophet (s.a): *“It is my will and advice to the present population of my Ummat; those who are in the loins of men and the wombs of the women and also those who will be born till the Day of Reckoning to do Sila e Rahmi, or extend help, to their relations and others in the society even if they reside at a distance of travelling in a year because this is a part and a requirement of the creed (religion)!”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 74, Chapter: Sila e Rahm

Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) too quoted this tradition of the Prophet (s.a) and said: *“One who wishes that Allah (SWT) prolongs his age and increase his subsistence should do Sila e Rahm or kindness towards his relations and friends because Rahm (or good treatment of relatives and friends) would become vocal on the Day of Judgement and say, ‘O Allah (SWT)! You should establish contact with one who harnessed me and break contact with him who kept away from me!’”* --Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74 Chapter; Sila e Rahm

Lesson Four: Sila E Rahm—Kindness Towards One’s Relatives

Imam Raza (a.s), through his ancestors, has quoted from the Prophet (s.a) that he said: *“The person who promises to me one thing, I shall guarantee four things for him---if he does Sila e Rahm with his relatives Allah (SWT) will:*

- *Hold him dear.*
- *Will expand his sustenance.*
- *Enhance his longevity.*
- *Will admit him to Heaven that has been promised to him!”*

---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74, Chapter Sila e Rahm

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) says: *“Sila e Rahm renders the actions pure and enhances the wealth; it dispels calamities and postpones the death!”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74, Chapter; Sila e Rahm

The Imam (a.s) also said in a sermon: *“What all is there in Sila e Rahm?!---It has Faith, Creed, longevity, Allah (SWT)’s love and pleasure. It is Sila e Rahm that gives to one affluence in this world and guarantees the Heaven in the Hereafter and Allah (SWT)’s pleasure is above all! This means that one who does Sila e Rahm would get a good life in this world and a bright fate in the Hereafter!”*

After understanding the great importance of Sila e Rahm is our attitude right that we cannot maintain relations due to long distances or a busy life? Especially if one of your relations is a victim of oppression? Is this permissible?

The Prophet (s.a) and the Imams (a.s) have indicated such a radiant path to every momin that Allah (SWT) will be pleased with everyone who adopts this path. It is mentioned in the traditions that a person complained to the Prophet (s.a) that the people of his tribe were giving him trouble and that he thought it is better to break relations with them. The Prophet (s.a) told him: *“Allah (SWT) will be unhappy with you if you do this.”* Then he asked Prophet (s.a) for guidance. The Prophet (s.a) said, *“One who deprives you; bestow him! One who cuts away from you; establish contact with him! One who is unjust with you; forgive him! If you do this, Allah (SWT) will be your help friend and helper!”* ---Ahya al Uloom, Kitab al Shauba wal Muashira

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“Do Sila e Rahm with relatives even if they break relations with you.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74, Chapter: Sila e Rahm, P: 404

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “Kindness towards relatives and good treatment to them would ease the person’s accounting (On the Day of Reckoning). These acts also protect the person from committing sins. Therefore, you should be kind to relatives and friends, do good to brothers even if this is to the extent of good treatment, greeting them warmly and reciprocating their greetings as well!” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 74 Bab Sila e Rahm, P: 404

The Prophet (s.a) has said: “Treat your relatives well even if it is through the act of greeting them” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74, Bab sila e Rahm, P 404

It is also narrated from the Prophet (s.a) that he has said: “Treat your relatives well even if it is through a drop of water and the best way is that you don’t cause any torment to relatives and friends.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 71

One can clearly understand from the above quoted traditions that Sila e Rahm plays its role in strengthening good relations and contacts with one’s relatives and friends. One may not be able to meet them because of living away from them but even a letter would play its part in expressing your affection and care for the person. As you greet your friends and relatives warmly when you meet them, so will your letter to one far away, play the same role. Sila e Rahm can be offering a tumbler of water to anyone or even not upsetting anyone. The Prophet (s.a) has termed this attitude as the best of Sila e Rahm!

Qata E Rahm Or Terminating Relations With Relatives And Friends

Now we know that in our Religion Sila e Rahm and good relations with relatives and friends is very important. Therefore, it would be good to know the consequences of a muslim terminating relations with his relatives and friends.

In the Holy Quran Allah (SWT) says: “May it not be that if you were to wield authority you would cause corruption in the land and ill treat your blood relations.” ---Surat Muhammed, 47:22

In another verse Allah (SWT) says: “---those who break the covenant made with Allah (SWT) after having pledged it solemnly, and sever what

Lesson Four: Sila E Rahm—Kindness Towards One’s Relatives

Allah (SWT) has commanded to be joined, and cause corruption on the earth—it is they who are the losers.” ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2:27

In these verses Allah (SWT) has termed Qata e Rahm as causing corruption on earth and has drawn attention to the fact that terminating relations with relatives and friends would be like the spreading of unrest and strife. After this how can one expect to acquire felicity and forgiveness when Allah (SWT) Has mandated maintaining mutual brotherhood and to strengthen relations through Sila e Rahm.

Neglecting relatives and shying away from them might bring about serious consequences and the traditions referred hereunder throw light on this aspect:

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“A nation that has people who keep away from their relatives and friends will not be blessed.” ---Kanz al Amal, Hadith 6978*

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“We have seen in the book of Prophet (s.a) that when relations between believers are broken(people do Qata e Rahm) then affluence and wealth goes into the hands of malicious persons.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 70, P 369*

The Imam (a.s) also quoted the saying of Imam Ali (a.s) that: *“If a person does three things he would not die till he bears the consequences of committing them: 1. Rebellion. 2. Qata e Rahm—Shunning relatives and friends. 3. Planning opposition of Allah (SWT) through false promises. (This, in fact, is fighting with Allah (SWT)).” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 71, P 134 & Vol 72, P 274*

According to the traditions the persons who break relations with relatives will not be bestowed with blessings and if this disease becomes endemic in any society the bad elements will dominate them. It is evident that the benefit of relations is that brotherhood becomes strong. If this is broken and one does not care for the other and does not feel responsible then the bad elements will dominate the believers.

Therefore, Qata e Rahm is among the vile acts the consequences of which a person experiences in his own lifetime. The results of breaking of relations among relatives and momineen will soon be apparent. Doing Qata e Rahm is like sowing thorns which will

result in reaping thorns! Similarly, by sowing evil and bad deeds can one hope to harvest anything other than regret and loss?

Summary

Among the social rights in Islam one important right is to maintain relations with relatives and momineen.

Sila e Rahm means cooperating with one another and providing help to needy and thus giving impetus to a progressive society.

Qata e Rahm (neglect of relatives and friends) would bring nothing more than regret in the Hereafter.

Questions

1. What is meant by Sila e Rahm?
2. Explain Sila e Rahm in the light of the traditions.
3. Relate Imam Raza (a.s.)'s tradition about Sila e Rahm.
4. Relate the Prophet (s.a.)'s saying about Sila e Rahm
5. Mention a verse about Qata e Rahm.
6. Relate Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s.)'s version of Imam Ali (a.s.)'s saying about certain bad actions of people.

Lesson Five: The Rights of The Neighbors

Islam has emphasized to the muslims the rights of the neighbors.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“It is incumbent upon a muslim to treat his neighbours well as God has ordained that he does.”*
---Bihar Al Anwaar, V 69, Chapter: 38, Hadith:11

The reference made towards Allah (SWT)’s mandate by the Imam (a.s) appears in the following verse of Surat Al Nisa:

“Worship Allah (SWT) and do not ascribe any partners to Him and be good to parents, the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the near neighbor and the distant neighbor, the companions at your side, the traveler and your slaves. Indeed, Allah (SWT) does not like anyone who is a swaggering braggart.” ---Surat Al Nisa, 4:36

The Prophet (s.a) advised his companions to take care of their neighbors and warned them of the retribution in the Hereafter for neglecting them. He said:

“Gabriel continuously commends me to care for my neighbor to the point that I began thinking he will inherit me.” --Kanz al Amal, Hadith 24013

Imam Ali (a.s) has said in his will and testament that *“By God, care for your neighbors for it is of the Prophets counsels. He has repeatedly emphasized it to the point that we thought that he would include them in our inheritance”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 71, Page 153

Read the following traditions of the Prophet (s.a) about the rights and privileges of the neighbors:

1. *“Treat your neighbor in the best of manners, for if you do, you will be regarded as a believer.”*
2. *“The sanctity of the neighbor is similar to that of the mother.”*
---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 74, Page 153
3. *No sanctity has been emphasized upon as much as that of the friends and neighbors* --Mizan al Hikmah, Chapter 638

4. The Prophet (s.a) was asked, “O Prophet of God, are there any other obligations in property other than Zakat?” The Prophet (s.a) replied: *“Yes, caring for your relatives when they distance themselves from you and maintaining ties with your neighbor; for a person who sleeps while his muslim neighbor is hungry has not believed in me.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 71, Page 151
5. Before buying a house a person approached the Prophet (s.a) to get his advice. He said, *“Concern yourself with your neighbor over your own home, and with your [travel] companion over your journey.”*
6. It is narrated that the Prophet (s.a) asked his companions whether they knew what are the rights of their neighbors? They replied that they weren’t aware of them; The Prophet (s.a) said, *“If they call you for help, you should reach them to provide it! If a neighbor wants a loan from you, give it! If he is needy, fulfil his need! If there is any happy event in his house, congratulate him, if he fell ill go visit him to inquire about his health; if he is facing troubles, sympathize with him and attend his last rites when he expires. Don’t raise the wall of your house so much that it obstructs the sunlight and air circulation for his house is affected unless he himself permits you to do it. If you buy fruits send some to your neighbor. If you cannot do this, then bring home fruits secretly to your children and they should not take them out so that your neighbor’s children may not feel deprived. Don’t make your neighbor feel deprived by ordering preparation of rich fragrant foods. If you do it, send some to your neighbor.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, V 79, P 93
7. Imam Zayn al Abidin (a.s) has described the rights of the neighbors in his “Treatise of Rights” as follows: *“As for the right of your neighbor, is that you guard him when he is absent, honor him when he is present, and aid him if he is oppressed. You do not pursue anything of his that is shameful; if you know any evil from him, you must conceal it. If you know that he will accept your counsel, then you must counsel him in that which is between him and you. Do not forsake him in the times of difficulty. You must lift him up when he is down, forgive his*

Lesson Five: The Rights of The Neighbors

wrongdoings and treat him in a noble and generous manner.”
---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 71, Ch: Jawameh al Huqooq

8. Imam Hassan (a.s) has said that on the night of every Friday he used to see his mother in the night prayers (Salat al Layl) raising both her hands and offering prayers for each of her neighbors. One day he asked her, “O mother! Why don’t you pray to God for your own self?” She said, “O son, the neighbor comes before one’s own home.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 43, P 81, Vol 86, P 313

Certainly, the Ahl al Bayt (a.s) are the role models for treating neighbors through our speech and action and they have also informed us of the advantages that accrue because of this through their words and actions. Therefore, Amir al Momineen (a.s) has said: “Those who treat their neighbors well will be [blessed] with assistance [in his own affairs] by many.” ---Gharar al Hakm, P:437. He has also said: “Those who treat their neighbors well will have more neighbors (acquaintances).” ---Gharar Al Hakm, P: 437

The human history is witness to the fact that one who maintains good relations with neighbours and extends help to them, they too reciprocate and try to compete with each other to serve him and thus the person’s circle of contacts grows.

There are many other benefits of treating the neighbours well like enhancement in sustenance and longevity and the avenues of progress would open up! Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “Meting out good treatment to the neighbours enhances the person’s sustenance!” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 71, P: 53

The Imam (a.s) also said: “Treating ones neighbors well increases ones provisions [from God].” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol 2, P: 667 Chapter: Haqq al Jawar

Causing Harm to Neighbors

While Islam exhorts muslims to treat their neighbors well, it prohibits them from causing any harm to their neighbors and maintaining amicable contacts with them that this is one of the parameters of measuring their Emaan! The Prophet (s.a) has said:

“He who believes in God and the hereafter should not harm his neighbor.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 3, Chapter: 3, P:61

One person from the Ansar went to the Prophet (s.a) and said: "O Prophet of God, I have purchased a house but I don't expect any good from my neighbor nor feel secure from his malice." The Prophet (s.a) summoned four persons (Imam Ali-a.s., Hazrat Salman, Hazrat Abu Darr, Hazrat Miqdad) and instructed them to loudly announce in the mosque: *'When a neighbor doesn't feel secure from the malice of a person, such a person isn't a believer.'* ---Wasael al Shia, Vol 12, P 125

One person complained to the Prophet (s.a) about his neighbor and he (s.a) advised him to remain patient. When the person complained a second time he was again asked to be patient. When he complained the third time over, the Prophet (s.a) asked him to bring out his household goods and squat on the road and when people asked him about the act he was advised to mention the malicious attitude of the neighbour. When the ill-behaving neighbour saw this he felt that his reputation was at risk, asked the person to pardon him and take back his paraphernalia into his house! He also promised that he wouldn't trouble him anymore.

Besides asking the muslims to treat their neighbours well the Infallibles (a.s) have exhorted them not to remain unconcerned with the condition of the neighbours to the extent of not knowing who is suffering from hunger and who is content and satisfied! Therefore they have warned against neglect of neighbours.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: "A person who sleeps on a full stomach whilst his neighbor is hungry isn't a believer." Kanz al Amal, H 24929

Imam Ali (a.s) has narrated the following tradition of the Prophet (s.a):

"A person has not believed in God and the hereafter if he sleeps on a full stomach whilst his neighbor is hungry."

Then the companions expressed, "O Prophet of God, we will perish then."

The Prophet (s.a) replied, *"You can extinguish the anger of God with the surplus of your dates, wealth, garments and good manners. ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 77, Ch: 7*

In this Hadith, care for the poor and deprived neighbours has been emphasized to the degree that atleast the clothes and food

Lesson Five: The Rights of The Neighbors

that is in excess needs to be shared with your needy neighbours. This action will instil love for you in their hearts.

A question arises as to what distance from one's house will be his neighbours? The answer to this question is there in the following tradition of Amir al Momineen (a.s)

“The sanctuary of a mosque extends to forty arm lengths and one's neighborhood is the circumference of forty houses.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 77, Chapter 7

Many of our Ulema following the way of the Prophet (s.a) and the Imams (a.s) have set very good examples of manners and behaviour and the care of their neighbours! One example is given here:

The great Faqihh, Syed Jawad Amili describes his experience in these words:

“One evening I was having my food when someone knocked the door. When I opened it I found the servant of my mentor, Bahr al Uloom. He said, ‘Bahr al Uloom wants you to visit him immediately. He will not have his food till you reach him!’ Therefore, I got ready immediately and reached his residence hurriedly. When I saw him I noticed signs of anger on his face. As soon as he saw me he said, ‘Don't you fear Allah (SWT)! Surprised, I said, ‘I don't know what mistake have I committed!’ He said, ‘Your neighbor didn't get food for a week and he has taken the inferior dates from the shop on credit. Because of the mounting loan the shop-keeper has refused even to give to him the very inferior quality dates and this night the person and his family are hungry this evening’ I said, ‘O master! By Allah (SWT)! I am absolutely unaware of this! If I had the slightest inkling I would have helped him!’ The mentor said, ‘I am disappointed that you don't know about the condition of your neighbor how his family spent a week without proper food! If you had known their predicament and even then, you hadn't helped them, then you wouldn't anymore be a muslim but be counted as a Jew’ Then the mentor asked his servant to pick up a tray of food and asked me to go with him to my neighbor's house and tell him that you are visiting him to have food with him. He also gave me some money to quietly put under the pillow of the neighbor.”

This incident is a proof that Syed Bahr al Uloom not only kept track of his own neighbors but even his students' neighbors as well!"

Summary

Islam is strongly asking muslims to treat the neighbours well and this is an important aspect of Aadaab e Islami (Islamic values)!

The Prophet (s.a) and his Progeny (a.s) too have stressed on this aspect and have said that good treatment meted out to neighbours would prolong his age and increase the sustenance of the person; the houses and neighbourhoods would flourish and they will remain on the path of progress!

It is said in the traditions that causing hurt to the neighbours, or even neglecting them, will attract Allah (SWT)'s ire and a person who harms a neighbour isn't a momin!

Questions

1. Mention one tradition of the Prophet (s.a) about good treatment to the neighbours.
2. What benefits of good treatment of neighbours are mentioned by Imam Ali (a.s)?
3. Mention one tradition condemning ill treatment of neighbours.
4. What did Allama Bahr al Uloom say to his student being unaware of the predicament of his neighbour?

Lesson Six: The Norms of Living In A Society

For maintaining contacts with others in the society certain norms and rules are essential to be followed to present oneself as a role model. If one is successful doing this, others will desire to establish relations and the person's status will be elevated. The other thing is that we recognize others' rights and abstain from infringing on them.

These rules are of two types: There are certain characteristics on which we shall have to act while dealing with others and there are some undesirable traits and habits from which we shall have to abstain. In other words, we have certain moral responsibilities which Islam has ordered us to follow and certain other things that it requires us to abstain from. Therefore, if we don't abide by these requirements we shall not be able to have a better social existence.

All the moral norms that we keep in view during our societal life and the undesirable habits that we abstain from are termed as 'Social Ethics' or 'The Norms of Social Life'. In the next few lessons we shall deal with these norms one by one

Husn E Khalq-Good Manners

Every person in a society wishes that others respect him and deal amicably with him. This wish will be there in every individual. Human nature is to avoid loneliness. A person's needs depend on interaction with others and a recluse cannot satisfy these needs. He therefore develops a feeling of deprivation which makes him sad and he feels forced to establish contacts with others. While he interacts with others he manifests to them his good traits and thus achieves higher levels of excellence.

The best way of winning over hearts and gaining affection from others is to behave with them with pleasant manners and treat them well. Not only good manners are a way of winning others'

hearts but are also the axis of many a virtue. When good manners are absent, the other good qualities of the person would not be accepted. For example, if with magnanimity there are no good manners it will not be welcomed by others. Similarly, if there is bravery and valor in a person accompanied with bad manners, it will appear like malice and enmity. As a result, one will not differentiate between friend and foe! Therefore, if with good actions one manifests good manners the person's dignity and status would enhance.

The scholars of ethics say about the definition of good manners that it is the state of human psyche which takes a person towards behaving amicably with others.

A tradition of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) upholds this definition that he said: *"Having good manners means to be humble and speak kindly to others, in addition to having a smile when encountering others."* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 71, P 171

When the Imam (a.s) said 'to be humble' he meant that one should treat the brethren softly and with humility and abstain from harsh attitude. A momin is allowed to be angry with infidels as opposed to momineen where he should deal with them with love and affection.

The felicity of good manners in this life and the Hereafter have been highlighted by the Prophet (s.a) and the Imams (a.s) in several of their sayings. We are mentioning a few of them here:

The Prophet (s.a) said: *"The best among you are those who have exemplary manners and character; those who mutually respect each other and keep their doors open to others."* ---Usool e Kafi, Vol 2, P 102, Chapter: Husn e Khalq

The Prophet (s.a) also said: *"The reward granted to a well-mannered person is similar to that rewarded to a person who fasts and spends his night in prayer."* ---Previous Reference, P: 100

The Prophet (s.a) further said: *"The first thing to be placed on the balance of deeds on the day of resurrection will be a person's well behavior."* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 385, Chapter: Husn e Khalq

He (s.a) also said: *"There is nothing weightier in one's balance of deeds on the day of resurrection than his good manners."* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 385, Chapter: Husn e Khalq

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In another tradition, instead of the word *athqal* (Weightier) the word *ahsan* (Best) has been used. In one more tradition the word *afdal* (Excellent) has been used.

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“Those of you who carry the best manners will be the nearest and most beloved to me on the day of resurrection.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 66, P: 409

In this regard Imam Ali (a.s) said: *“The best companion a person could have is good manners.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 392

The Imam (a.s) also said: *“The title of a believers ‘scroll of deeds’ is his good manners.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 68, P: 386

Imam Hassan (a.s) has said: *“The best of good deeds is good manners.”*---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 372

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“The believers who are most complete in their faith are those who have the best of manners.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 372

These are a few examples of the thoughts of the Infallibles (a.s) about good manners that we have presented to you. But above everything Allah (SWT) praises His Prophet (s.a) saying: *“...and indeed you possess a great character.”* ---Surat Al Qalam, 68:4 and: *“and most certainly thou standest on sublime morality.”* ---- Surat al Qalam, 68: 4

In another verse Allah (SWT) says: *“(O Prophet) It is by Allah (SWT)’s mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hard hearted, surely they would have scattered from around you...”* ---Surat Al e Imran, 3:159

Among all the Companions and Ansar, Imam Ali (a.s) was the closest to the Prophet (s.a) and none else comprehended the Prophet (s.a) more than him! He described the qualities of the Prophet (s.a) in the following words: *“He was the most generous of heart, truthful of tongue, softest in disposition, and noble in relationship. He who first set eyes upon him feared him, but he who associated with him loved him. Those who described him would say: ‘I have never seen before or after him anyone like him, peace be upon him”* (pg.80) ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 16, P: 231

Imam Ali (a.s) gives one example of the prophet’s exemplary manners as follows: *“The Prophet (s.a) owed some money to a Jew. The person came to him and made a demand for repayment. He (s.a) told him,*

'Presently I don't have money to pay you back' The Jew said, 'I shall not leave you till you settle my debt!' The Prophet (s.a) said, 'Fine! I shall keep sitting with you!' He offered the prayers for Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha and the Fajr prayer the next morning in the company of the Jew. Seeing this the Prophet (s.a)'s Companions chided the Jew and the Prophet (s.a) said, 'Why are you ill-treating him in this manner?' The Companions said, 'We didn't like his keeping you captive in this way!' The Prophet (s.a) told them, 'Allah (SWT) hasn't sent me to be cruel and unjust with others! The next day at the time of Zuhr-Asr Prayers the Jew uttered the Two Kalimas---Laa Ilaha il Allah (SWT) Mohammadur Rasool Allah (SWT)—and declared that he had embraced Islam! He then told the Prophet (s.a), 'By Allah (SWT)! I did what I did to test your character. I had read in the Torah that—the place of birth of Allah (SWT)'s Prophet Mohammed (s.a) is Mecca and the place he would migrate to is Medina. He is neither surly nor angry of disposition; neither loud nor of harsh disposition.---I also bear witness to Unity of Allah (SWT) and that you are His Prophet (s.a) and I offer my funds to you as a trust! These are all my funds and you have full rights to dispose them as you wish.'

We have quoted this incident so that we get awareness of the Prophet (s.a)'s exemplary manners and comprehend the purport of the following Verse *"In the Apostle of Allah (SWT) there is certainly for you a good exemplar..."* ---Surat Al Ahzab, 33:21

There are several such incidents in the life of the Prophet (s.a) and the Imams (a.s) recorded by the history that most persons who were attracted to the fold of Islam was because of their exemplary character and behaviour.

The Results Of Good Manners

There are plenty of benefits of good manners and some of them are so obvious that there isn't a need for mentioning them. However, we are mentioning some of the benefits in the light of the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s) Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said: *"Good manners increase one's sustenance."* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 396

Imam Ali (a.s) said: *"Good manners increase a person's sustenance and bring joy to his companions."* --Gharar al Hakm, P: 255

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The Imam (a.s) also said: *“He whose manners are good will be more loved by others and people will feel amicable when they’re in his company.”* ---Gharar al Hakm, P: 255

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said: *“Good manners enhances one’s home and prolongs one’s life.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol:68, P: 395

Then the Imam (a.s) also said: *“Verily, good manners melt away faults as the sun melts ice and bad manners destroy actions in the same manner that vinegar spoils honey.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 68, P: 395

You have observed that the Infallibles (a.s) have stressed on good manners highlighting their good effects and also warned against bad manners and their ill effects.

The Prophet (s.a) says: *“Ill-manners are an unforgivable sin.”* --Mizan al Hikama, Chapter 1115

In this regard see below Imam Ali (a.s)’s sayings:

1. *“Ill-manners are the worst [of] companions”* ---Gharar al Hakm, P:264
2. *“Bad manners render life bitter and are a torment to the soul.”* ---Gharar al Hakm, P: 264
3. *“Bad manners turn a person into a wild creature and destroy love and affection.”* ---Gharar al Hakm, P: 264
4. *“Bad manners make close acquaintances uncomfortable and repels those who are distant.”* ---Gharar al Hakm, P: 264

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“Two traits cannot be in a believer: Stinginess and bad manners.”* ---Meezan al Hikma, Chapter: 1115

We have learned very well, in the light of these traditions, the benefits of good manners that they provide peace of mind and how bad manners would be the source of trouble.

Summary

Maintaining good relations with others and regard for the norms of ethics and abstention from bad manners are necessary. Good manners are essential part of the ethics of the society and maintaining relations with others is highly regarded.

Questions

1. What is the definition of good manners given by scholars of ethics?
2. What has Allah (SWT) said in the Quran praising the Prophet (s.a)?
3. Give an example of the good manners of the Prophet (s.a).
4. Mention two effects of good manners.
5. What has the Prophet (s.a) said about bad manners?

Lesson Seven: Tawazoh- Humility Or Affability

Tawazoh (Humility) is an important moral responsibility for spending life with others. While Allah (SWT) relates the important traits of His select creatures in the Quran, He mentions about Tawazoh as very important: *“The servants of the All-beneficent are those who walk HUMBLY on the earth, and when ignorant address them, say, ‘Peace!’”*---Surat al Furqan, 25:63

In this verse Allah (SWT) describes the first trait of His favourite persons that their way of walking reflects humility. Therefore, by observing the movements and the way a person comes, sits and departs it can be gauged whether he is humble of disposition or is he arrogant. Therefore, when Imam Ali (a.s) described the qualities of Muttaqeen, the men of piety, he said that they walk humbly. He (a.s) said: *“Their movement is of humility.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol. 67, Ch: 14, Narrative: 50

Similarly, Allah (SWT) has informed momineen in another verse that if they turned averse to their Creed then He would bring another nation in their place who will be humble and considerate with momineen and they will be stern against the kuffar:

“O you who have faith! Should any of you desert his religion, Allah (SWT) will even bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, (who will be) humble towards the faithful, stern towards the faithless....” ---Surat al Maidah, 5:54

The Prophet (s.a) has termed Tawazoh or Humility as the foundation of exaltation and greatness of the human being. He (s.a) said: *“Verily, humility and modesty elevate the status of a human being. Thus, be humble so that God may elevate you.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol 18, Ch:4, Narrative: 2

Then the Prophet (s.a) said: *“God elevates he who is humble before Him; in himself he only sees weakness, but in the eyes of others he will be exalted.”* ---Kanz al Amal, Vol:3, P:113, Hadith: 5737

In this regard Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *“Luqman told his son, ‘Respect is preserved only for he who is servile before God and status and exaltation is preserved only for he who is humble for the sake of God.’”*

---Mishkat al Anwaar, P: 226

Then the Imam (a.s) said: *“There are two angels in the heavens who are appointed for the creatures of God. Thus, they elevate whoever is humble for God, and demean whoever is arrogant and conceited.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 59, Ch: 23, Hadith: 50

About the felicity of humility there are innumerable traditions of the Infallibles (a.s). We are presenting a few of them here:

Imam Ali (a.s) said:

1. *“The ornament of a noble person is humility.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 51, Hadith: 11
2. *“Humility is the charity (zakat) of honor.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 51, Hadith: 11
3. While making his will to Imam Hassan (a.s), Imam Ali (a.s) said: *“Be humble for it is of the greatest forms of worship.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 51, Hadith: 11

Imam Hassan Askari (a.s) says: *“Humility is a blessing about which people will not be jealous.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 78, Ch: 29, Hadith: 1

Tawazoh or humility means respecting every person commensurate with his status and honour. One shouldn't rate himself higher than others. Here it is necessary to highlight certain aspects: The first is that according to the traditions, the standard of Tawazoh (humility) is that one should be humble only for the pleasure of Allah (SWT) and not to show off to people. This is the reason that Tawazoh is essential with Momineen and not permissible with the polytheists and infidels.

Secondly Tawazoh, or Humility, has relationship with Emaan (faith) and piety. Therefore showing humility to the rich just for craving of wealth from them is prohibited.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) narrates from the Prophet (s.a): *“When a person behaves humbly in front of an affluent person in expectation of material gain from him, two thirds of his faith is destroyed.”* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 73, Ch: 122, Hadith: 58

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“How good will it be if the rich behave humbly with the indigent because of the rewards and blessings they receive from*

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God and it is even better that the indigent keeping trust in God don't pay attention to the rich." ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 72, Ch: 94, Hadith: 57

Therefore, expressing humility in front of anyone should be only in consideration of his Emaan and piety or devotion to Allah (SWT) and not because of the person's position and wealth. The standard for respect in Islam is based on the person's piety!

Thirdly, while behaving humbly one shouldn't commit any excess and it is necessary to be moderate because excess would demean the person as it would appear that he is a flatterer. When someone neglects being humble he might give an impression of being proud and conceited. One should also abstain from excess of humility. It is said that: "Showing pride to a proud person too is humility! Therefore, in front of a proud and conceited person showing Tawazoh (humility) isn't permissible and a momin who does it is getting insulted unnecessarily and this also enhances the arrogance of the proud person." ---Al Narjia

The Limit of Tawazoh (Humility) & Its Signs

To know the quantum of humility in a person one should know the limits described by the Imams (a.s): "*Imam Redha (upon whom be peace) was once asked about the definition of humility. He answered, 'To give others from yourself what you would like to receive from them.'*" ---Bihar al Anwaar, V: 71, Ch: 63, Hadith: 11

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: "*Humility is to be pleased with a position [of seating] in a gathering even if it was lower than your status; it is to greet those who you meet, and to abstain from quarrels even if the truth was on your side. The head of virtue is humility.*" ---Bihar Al Anwaar, V: 75, Ch: 51, Hadith: 20

In another Hadith Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) indicated the way of recognizing Tawazoh that, "*one shouldn't like to be praised by others for his piety.*" ---Bihar al Anwaar, V: 2, Ch: 17, Hadith: 20

The Consequences & Benefits of Tawazoh

One benefit of Tawazoh (humility) is that Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s) has deemed it the source of acquiring knowledge and wisdom. The Imam (a.s) said: "*Wisdom flourishes in the heart of a humble person*

but does not in that of an arrogant person because God has made humility the instrument of the intellect while He made pride the instrument of ignorance.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 14, Ch: 21, Hadith: 17

Similar to Imam Moosa Kazim’s (a.s) saying a story of Hazrat Isa (AS) is as follows: *“One-day Hazrat Issa (a.s) addressed his companions saying, ‘I shall mention to you a wish of mine if you promise to fulfil it?’ The companions said, ‘You order and we are ready to abide by it!’ Hazrat Issa (a.s) got up and started washing the feet of his companions which caused them embarrassment; but they had promised to abide by his wish and kept silent. Hazrat Issa (a.s) washed the feet of all the companions one after another. The companions said, ‘You are our mentor and our hearts wish that we wash your feet rather than you wash ours.’ Hazrat Issa (a.s) said, ‘I did it to show to you that the most deserving of serving others is the man of learning. I have done this because I wished to practice Tawazoh (humility) and give you a practical lesson in humility. When you teach and guide others after me you too should make Tawazoh (humility) your habit. And also remember that wisdom flourishes in the field of Tawazoh (humility) and not through arrogance; the same way as the greenery grows on soft soil and not on rocky land.”*

Imam Ali (a.s) describes the benefits of Tawazoh (humility) in these words:

1. *“The fruit of humility is love and affection while that of arrogance is insult.” ---Gharar al Hakm, V: 3, P: 327*
2. *“Humility yields peace and safety.”---Bihar al Anwaar, V: 75, Ch: 51, Hadith: 11*
3. *“Humility gives you the raiment of respectability.” --- Bihar al Anwaar, V:77, C: 14, Hadith: 1*

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“God has revealed to me: ‘Be humble so that no one feels superior over others nor perpetrates tyranny and hardships onto others.” ---Kanz al Amal, V: 7, P: 110, Hadith: 5722*

Therefore, we can sum up by saying that wisdom, affection, welfare, superiority, peace, contentment, status and position are all the consequences and results of Tawazoh!

It is said about the Holy Prophet (s.a)’s character that once he halted with his companions during a journey for the mid-day meal. It was decided to slaughter a goat for cooking. One companion offered to slaughter the animal. Another said that he would

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remove its hide and skin. The third one said that he would cook the meat. In this manner the companions divided the different tasks amongst them. The Prophet (s.a) said, *"I shall go into the wilderness and fetch fire-wood for cooking."* the companions said in one voice, *"Oh Prophet, please do not trouble yourself, we shall accomplish all the tasks."* The Prophet (s.a) said, *"I know that you can take care of everything! But Allah (SWT) will not like it that His creature (s.a) projects himself as superior to his other companions!"* Saying this the Prophet (s.a) went to the forest and brought sufficient quantity of firewood!

Imam Hassan Askari (a.s) has said: *"One who is humble for his brethren in this world will be, in the eyes of God, among the truthful ones and will truthfully be from among the true Shia (followers) of Ali b. Abi Talib (upon whom be peace)." ---Bihar al Anwaar, V:41, P: 55, and V:72, P: 117*

There is another incident about the Seerat e Amir al Momineen (a.s):

One day two persons were the guests of Imam Ali (a.s) of whom one was the father and the other the son. When they arrived Imam Ali (a.s) stood up, received them, made them sit at a prominent place and sat in front of them. After the meal, Hazrat Qamber brought a pitcher of water and a basin and towel for washing their hands. Imam Ali (a.s) got up and took the pitcher from Qamber to wash the hands of the guests! Ashamed, the father fell on the feet of Imam Ali (a.s) and said, 'Maula! Do you wish Allah (SWT) to see that you wash our hands!' The Imam (a.s) said, *'Sit down and get your hands washed that Allah (SWT) is seeing you and also this brother of yours who doesn't consider himself better and superior than you and is serving you so that in the Heaven he will get served ten times more than this.'* Then the person sat down and the Imam (a.s) said, *'I draw your attention to the greatness of my right, about which you know, and because of that you are showing so much respect, that the Tawazoh (humility) that you manifested for Allah (SWT) for which He will reward you and by the thing because of which Allah (SWT) motivated me to serve you and you sat comfortably and got your hands washed as you would sit when Qamber would wash your hands!'* Then Imam Ali (a.s) put water on the guest's hands. When the Imam (a.s) completed washing the person's hands he gave the pitcher of water to his son, Hazrat

Mohammed Hanafiah, and said, *‘If the child had come alone as my guest, I would myself have washed his hand but Allah (SWT) doesn’t want that the father and the son get similar respect! Therefore, the father washed the hands of the father and the son should wash the hands of the son! Then Hazrat Mohammed Hanafiah washed the hands of the youth.’*

After quoting this incident Imam Hassan Askari (a.s) said: *‘Whoever follows this attitude of Imam Ali (a.s) is the true Shia!’---Bihar al Anwaar, V: 41, Ch:105, Hadith: 5*

Summary

Treating people with humility and affability is a very good trait which has been termed by Allah (SWT) as the trait of His select creatures. Tawazoh (humility) enhances maturity, wisdom, love, friendship and status of the person.

Questions

1. Describe Tawazoh (humility) and modesty.
2. What trait of Allah (SWT)’s select creatures has been described in V 63 of Surat al Furqan?
3. What did Imam Raza (a.s) say about Tawazoh (humility)?
4. What are the fruits and benefits of humility?

Lesson Eight: Keeping Promises

Keeping promises too is included in the principles of morality on which muslims have to act in their societal and collective lives. In the Quranic verses and the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s) much stress has been laid on this moral trait. The truth is that if a person gives a word to anyone about anything, in the view of Quran fulfilling it is binding on the person. Allah (SWT) orders fulfilling the promise, “...And fulfill the covenants; indeed, all covenants are accountable.” ---Surat Al Isra, 17:34, “O you who have faith! Keep your agreements.” ---Surat Al Maidah, 5:1.

And on the other hand, the persons who break promises have been severely reprimanded and the act is termed as enmity towards Allah (SWT): “O you who have faith! Why do you say what you do not do? It is greatly outrageous to Allah (SWT) that you should say what you do not do!” ---Surat Al Saff, 61: 2 & 3

One glaring example of difference between intent and action is that a man makes promises to others and does not fulfil them.

Therefore, it must be borne in mind when a muslim makes a commitment to others, it is binding that one abides by it; whether the other party is muslim, Momin, hypocrite or infidel; whether the covenant is between individuals or groups of persons. Allah (SWT) addresses the Prophet (s.a) in the Quran and says that if he, Prophet (s.a), has made an agreement with the hypocrites and they had not violated the agreement then he too should abide by the terms for the specified period: “So fulfil the treaty with them until (the end of) its term.” ---Surat Al Tawbah, 9:4

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says in this regard: “There is no excuse for anyone in three things:

1. Returning the trust of a person whether he is a virtuous person or is vicious.

2. *Fulfilling the commitments to a person whether he is righteous or evil.*

3. *Being good to parents whether they are good or not.*

---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol:74, Ch: 2, Hadith: 46

It is necessary to give attention to the basic point that after making agreement on any matter in the society it is binding to implicitly follow its terms and conditions because the welfare and order in the society will depend on it. For example, someone takes some valuable from a person and he doesn't return it. In that event the entire society would be affected and people would stop trusting them. The consequence will be that none would come forward to help anyone in times of need and only the powerful persons would be able to safeguard their interests. Therefore, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said:

“With regard to three things no excuse would be acceptable:

1. *Returning the trusts.*
2. *Compliance of agreements*
3. *Good treatment of parents.”*

When Imam Ali (a.s) nominated Malik e Ashtar the governor of Egypt he wrote a letter to him saying:

“But, if under the peace treaty you have accepted any obligations, discharge those obligations scrupulously. It is a trust and must be faithfully upheld and whenever you have promised anything, keep it with all the strength that you command, for whatever differences of opinion might exist on other matters, there is nothing so noble as the fulfilment of a promise. This is recognized even among non-muslims, for they know the dire consequences which follow from the breaking of covenants. So never make excuses in discharging your responsibilities and never break a promise, nor cheat your enemy. For breach of promise is an act against God, and none except the positively wicked acts against God. Indeed, Divine promises are a blessing spread over all mankind. The promise of God is a refuge sought after, even by the most powerful on earth, for there is no risk of being cheated.” Nahj al Balagha, Imam Ali's letter to Malik e Ashtar.

The Importance of Fulfilling Promises

It has been made clear in the previous discussion that keeping promises is very important and we have also learned that when Muslims make a covenant, whoever the other party may be, fulfilling it is binding. Now it is necessary to know what is the importance of abiding by covenants in Islam and its importance in the Islamic norms.

Certain facts must be considered in this regard:

1. After assuring Mومينين of success in Surat Al Mومينون, the traits of the Mومينين have been mentioned. One of these traits is standing by the promises as the Quran says: “..... and (Mومينين are) those who keep their trusts and covenants,....” ---Surat Al Mومينون, 23:8. Almost the same is the purport of the Verse 32 of Surat Al Ma’Arij. The Prophet (s.a) says in this regard: “Whoever believes in God and the Day of Judgement should ensure that he abides by the promises he makes.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol:77, Ch: 7, Hadith: 1. Imam Ali (a.s) too said: “Fulfilling one’s promises/pledges is a sign of faith.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol:17, C: 14, Hadith: 11 Imam Ali (a.s) also said: “The main foundation of religion is fulfilling ones promises and pledges.”
2. Similarly, in another verse Allah (SWT) describes the traits of Hazrat Ismail (a.s) saying: “And mention in the Book Ismail. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and an apostle and a prophet.” ---Surat Maryam, 19:54. In this verse the salient trait of Hazrat Ismail (a.s) that is mentioned prior to talking of his prophethood is abiding by the promises he made. Imam Redha (a.s) narrates through his father the following incident about the Prophet (s.a): “One day a person promised to meet the Prophet (s.a) at a place and time when the heat of the sunlight was intense. The Companions requested the Prophet (s.a) that it would be better if he moved under the shade. The Prophet (s.a) said, ‘I have promised to meet the person at this place. If he doesn’t arrive to meet me here I shall remain here till the end of my life!’”
3. Imam Sadiq (a.s) has termed the fulfilment of promises among the rights the Mومينين have over each other that he said: “A believer is the brother of another believer and is like his eye and

- guide. He does not betray, deceive or cheat him nor does he break his promises made to him.” ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 16, Hadith: 7
4. Imam Ali (a.s) has said: “O people! Surely loyalty (fulfilment of pledge) and truthfulness are twins. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realizes the reality of return (to the next world) never betrays. We are in a period when most of the people regard betrayal as wisdom. In these days, the ignorants call it excellence of cunning. What is the matter with them? Allah (SWT) may destroy them. One who has been through thick and thin of life finds the excuses to be preventing him from orders and prohibitions of Allah (SWT) but he disregards them despite capability (to succumb to them and follows the commands of Allah (SWT)), while one who has no restraints of religion seizes the opportunity (and accepts the excuses for not following the commands of Allah (SWT)).” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, P: 96, Hadith: 21. As you have noticed Imam Ali (a.s) in this sermon of his from Nahj al Balagha says fulfilling promises as truthfulness and being cunning as opposite of it. He stopped people from considering breaking of promises as craftiness and that it is a prohibited act. Such acts are committed only by persons of weak faith. In fact, when a momin breaks a promise he cannot put forward any moral excuse for the act. This was the reason that the Prophet (s.a), despite facing all the troubles from the hypocrites, remained firm on his promises unless Allah (SWT) negates such commitments as in: “(This is) a (declaration of) repudiation by Allah (SWT) and His Apostle (addressed) to the polytheists with whom you had made a treaty.” ---Surat Al Taubah, 9:1. After revelation of this and the following verses the covenant that the muslims had made with the polytheists was abrogated. But those polytheists weren't included in this abrogation who hadn't gone against their promise and didn't mobilize to fight against the muslims.
5. While the Prophet (s.a) and the Ahl al Bayt (a.s) have on the one hand, given such importance to fulfillment of promises and included it as an important aspect of the faith, the Prophet (s.a) has termed breaking of promises as a sign of hypocrites: “There are three signs of a hypocrite:

Lesson Eight: Keeping Promises

- *When he speaks, he lies.*
- *When he makes a covenant, he breaks it.*
- *When he is entrusted with something, he betrays!*

---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 72, Ch: 106, Hadith: 6

Imam Ali (AS) says to Malik e Ashtar “So, do not make any promise and break it ... for breaking a promise invites hatred and displeasure from both God and the people. God Almighty says, ‘It is most hateful in the sight of God that you say that which you do not.’” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, P: 96, Hadith: 21

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “A promise made by a Momin to another Momin is like a Nazr (Offering) for which there is no Kaffara (Expiance). If he goes against the promise he has first acted against Allah (SWT) and created reason for His wrath as Allah (SWT) says, ‘O people with faith! Why do you say something on which you don’t act?! In view of Allah (SWT) it is the cause of much displeasure that you say that on which you don’t act’” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 2, P: 362

In view of this saying of the Imam (a.s) and the harsh consequences of breaking of promises a person should make a promise only when he has the capability to fulfil it. Imam Ali (a.s) says: “What you cannot fulfil, don’t make a promise with anyone that you will do it.” *The Imam (a.s) said, “A thing about which you are not certain that you can accomplish it, don’t promise to do it!”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 20, Ch: 558

Summary

Fulfilling promises is also among important norms of morality. The Holy Quran describing the qualities of a good person has termed fulfillment of promises as their important trait.

It is the duty of a muslim that the agreement that he makes with others he should certainly abide by it, whether the other party is a muslim or momin or a polytheist or an infidel.

Questions

1. What has Allah (SWT) said in the Quran about breaking of promises?

2. What has Imam Ali (a.s) communicated to Malik e Ashtar about abiding by the covenants?
3. What is the status of abidance of promises in Islam?
4. In making commitments what is the condition that is essential in view of Imam Ali (AS)

Lesson Nine: Tolerance & Forbearance - Part-1

In their societal lives people must deal with many persons like them and have to maintain mutual relations. Every individual will have his own ways; style of maintaining contacts, way of communication, thinking, habits and way of life. It is quite possible that certain of a person's habits and traits may not be likeable to another individual and may cause hurt. In human traits, there can be several unwelcome habits. Now we shall have to consider what we can do to deal with such unwelcome behavior.

One way is that if the traits and habits of some persons aren't good the contacts are severed with them and one meets only those whose traits are good in all respects so that the person lives peacefully. But practically this isn't possible because finding such ideal companions is next to impossible. Fundamentally people are different in their manners and behavior. This difference is seen everywhere. We can rarely find people who are similar in every way in their manners and disposition. Besides this, the human requirement in the society cannot be accomplished limiting contacts with the choice few. If we keep away from others, they too may not keep contact with us. Therefore, this selective attitude isn't practical.

The other way is that for every act of rudeness we reciprocate rudely and even go to the extent of picking up a quarrel, and fight, that the opposite feels ashamed of his behavior and refrains from committing such acts in the future. It is probable that in the beginning this attitude may seem right but it will be beneficial only if it is adopted only once and thereafter the opposite party refrains from being rude. Or if one picks a quarrel with a rude person he doesn't plan to take revenge. Only in such a situation people can live peacefully. But this will be impossible because it is evident from the histories of different nations that when the angst of people is

raised the conflicts reach such a stage that several occasions of fights and blood-shed happen. If such a conflict ends in a defeat of one group and the fire of rancour and malice gets buried even then when an occasion arises hostilities arise again. Because of the furious natures of the contending parties the situation becomes repetitive and conflicts take place again and again.

The other matter that needs attention is that if the response to the ill-behaviour of the opposite party has to be attended with anger then it is also expected that if in other's eyes we behave wrongly, they will also have the right to respond in a similar fashion. As a result, no one will be safe from vengeance and anger and conflicts will be common in society. Life will be difficult for everyone.

The Solution?

For such circumstances Islam has presented a solution to be worked through patience and forbearance. To comprehend it, clarification of three points is necessary: In view of Islam the right place and occasion for anger and the correct utilization of Quwatul Ghazabia (Quality of anger) has to be understood. The importance of tolerance and forbearance in Islam and the requirement to control anger? Examples and incidents involving control of anger.

IRE & FURY: In several narratives anger and fury have been talked of as bad traits and muslims have been exhorted to abstain from it. In certain narratives *anger has been termed as the key to all ills.* ---Bihar al Anwaar. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: "*Anger is the key of every evil.*" 73, Ch: 132, Hadith: 4

Listed below are these traditions of Imam Ali (a.s) on the subject:

- "*Anger is a malice which if let loose will create desolation.*" ---Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 53, Hadith: 13376
- "*Anger destroys he who expresses it and exposes his faults and failings.*" ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 2, P: 31
- "*Anger reveals the hidden rancor and malice.*" ---Gharar Al Hakm, P: 155

Lesson Nine: Tolerance & Forbearance - Part-1

- “Anger is inflamed fire. One who controls it has put to it off and one who allows it to remain will be the first to be consumed by it.” ---Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 153, Hadith: 13376
- “Safeguard yourself against anger for it is one of the contingents of the army of Satan.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 33, Ch: 29, Hadith: 707

In other narratives anger is termed as the flames of fire. The Prophet (s.a) has said: “Anger is a coal from Satan.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 73, Ch: 132, Hadith: 15

In some narrations anger is termed as a part of madness that Imam Ali (a.s) said:

- “Abstain from anger for its beginning is madness and its end regret.” ---Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 53, Narration: 3376.
- “Anger is from insanity because he who is angry feels regret, and if he doesn’t feel remorse then his madness is confirmed.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 73, Ch: 132, Hadith: 33.
- “Anger ruins the intellects and distances a person from righteousness.”

Similarly, Imam Sadiq (AS) narrates, “He who cannot control his anger has also lost control of his intellect.” Now we know that in the annals of Islam anger has been recognized as unpleasant and a bad trait and the capability to control anger is termed as a good habit. Therefore, Imam Ali (a.s) has said: “The best of treasures is to have control over one’s anger.” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 4, P: 302 and the Imam (a.s) said:

- “One who overpowers his anger overpowers Satan and the one whom anger dominates will be dominated by Satan.” ---Gharar Al Hakm, P: 246, Vol: 4, P: 301
- “The person who is most capable of conforming with truth is he who does not get angry.” --- Gharar Al Hakm, P: 246
- “Anger is your enemy, thus don’t allow it to take over you.” ---Mustadrak, Vol: 12, P: 11
- “A person who is dominated by his anger and lust will be counted among four-legged animals.” ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 5, P: 362

In certain traditions one who controls his anger is termed the most powerful person. Therefore, the Prophet (s.a) says: “The standard of strength isn’t physical prowess but rather it is he who is powerful who controls his self in times of anger.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol:

77, Ch: 17, Hadith: 1. The Prophet (s.a) also said: “A strong person is one” The Prophet (s.a) repeated this thrice— “who gets angry, his face turns red and his body shakes but he defeats his anger.”

Imam Ali (a.s) says: “The strongest among people is one who controls his anger.” Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) says: “There is no strength greater than controlling anger.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 22, Hadith:

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The history records an incident from the times of the Prophet (s.a) that a bedoin Arab came to Medina and requested the Prophet (s.a) to sermonize and guide him. The Prophet (s.a) said: “Control anger!” and said nothing else. The person did not ask any further and left. When he reached his home, he heard that some persons of his tribe, in their ignorance, appropriated assets of another tribe that created a fight between the two tribes and some men received injuries. As soon as he heard this, he unsheathed his sword and prepared for battle. At that moment he remembered the Prophet (s.a)’s words: “Control anger” He started thinking why all the preparation for battle? He then went to the chief of the other tribe and said, “Whatever loss you have suffered, I shall make it good for you. We needn’t have any more bloodshed” When the opposite tribe heard him, their anger was quenched as well and he said, “We too are not any lesser in nobility and valour! We forego our loss!” Thus, the Prophet (s.a)’s brief utterance of wisdom quenched the fire of fierce battle which could have destroyed the two tribes”

Therefore, these incidents provide to us two things:

- The ill effects of anger.
- Appreciation of controlling anger.

But in certain other narrations we learn about another aspect of anger that in these narrations people have been encouraged to be angry and the persons who got angry had been praised. But you will find from the narratives that the anger was for specific purpose and was for upholding of the truth! Imam Ali (a.s) says for this specific purpose:

“One who sharpens the sword of his anger for God will gain further strength to annihilate the strong warriors of falsehood.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 71, Ch: 89, Hadith: 6

Lesson Nine: Tolerance & Forbearance - Part-1

The Imam (a.s) also says: *“One who is against transgressors in the way of God and gets angry in His way, God will be angry for his anger and will be pleased with him on the day of judgment.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 68, Ch: 89, P: 348, Hadith: 17

When Hazrat abu Darr was banished and Imam Ali (a.s) went to bid farewell the Imam (a.s) said: *O Abu Dharr! You became angry for the sake of God; therefore, have hope in Him for Whom you became angry. The people feared you with regards to their worldly matters while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they feared you and get away from them taking with you what you fear them about. How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you. You will shortly know who the victor is tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) and who is more enviable. Even if these heavens and earths were closed upon some individual and he feared God, then God will open them up for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions they will have loved you and if you had shared in it they will have granted you asylum.* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 22, Ch: 12, Hadith: 30

In one of his supplications Hazrat Moosa (a.s) asks Allah (SWT): *“My lord! Who are those creatures beloved to You who You will take under the shadow of the Firmament on Your Day when there will be no shadow other than Yours?”*

Allah (SWT) replies: *“Those persons who become angry like a wounded tiger after seeing the acts I have forbid being practiced.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 13, Ch: 11, Hadith: 42

One has to accept in the light of these narrations that Allah (SWT) has granted the trait of anger to humans so that they protect the honor of their religion by using it. Therefore, this trait must be used when we see the enemies attacking our religion and honor because a muslim feels indebted to Allah (SWT) for His blessings and from Allah (SWT) he received the wealth of honor, respect. As a result, truthfully the enemy of Allah (SWT) is our enemy. An attack on Allah (SWT)'s religion is in fact attacking the person's honor and respect. Hence, whenever there is any attempt on Allah (SWT)'s Shariah, it is necessary that the muslims express their anger. This is the reason that Allah (SWT) has ordered the Prophet

(s.a) to deal strictly with the hypocrites and infidels and deal with them with anger: “O prophet! Wage Jihad against the faithless and the hypocrites and be severe with them.” ---Surat Al Tawbah, 9:73

Similarly the Quran mentions a trait of the Momineen that they will have strict attitude towards the infidels: “Muhammed, the Apostle of Allah (SWT), and those who are with him are hard against the faithless and merciful amongst themselves.” ---Surat Al Fath, 48:29. But expressing anger against brothers in Islam has been deemed prohibited as it has been indicated in the verses quoted at the beginning of this lesson that Allah (SWT) has warned the Momineen to abstain from enmity and opposition against their brethren.

Summary

In community life contact with others is very important. If the contacts are with anger and fierceness, one must understand that the attitude is because of some trivial problem. If the opposite party tries to wreak vengeance, then there will be likelihood of conflict and bloodshed. Islam has offered a solution for such a situation that the people exercise tolerance and forbearance.

Questions

1. What is the meaning of tolerance and forbearance?
2. Why traditions speak of anger as a disgraceful and mean trait?
3. What does Imam Ali (a.s) say about controlling anger?
4. What did Imam Ali (a.s) say about anger while bidding farewell to Hazrat Abu Dhar on his banishment?

Lesson Ten: Tolerance & Forbearance – Part 2

Now that we are aware that anger is allowed only against the enemies of Allah (SWT) and that it isn't allowed against the Momineen, then a question arises as to the attitude of Islam about the rude behavior of muslims with brothers in Islam and friends?

As we have said in the previous lesson Islam strongly advocates tolerance and forbearance and invites people to shun anger that many differences, conflicts and misunderstandings can be resolved with forbearance without going to the length of fights, revenge or legal action.

While Islam mentions tolerance and forbearance as a superior trait it also attracts attention towards the benefits that accrue from this trait.

Allah (SWT) has termed controlling anger and practice of forbearance as the trait of muttaqeen (pious) believers in the Holy Quran: *"....and suppress their anger, and excuse (the faults of) the people, and Allah (SWT) loves the virtuous,"* ---Surat Al e Imran, 3:134

In another verse Allah (SWT) is urging that a foul act shouldn't be reciprocated with a similar action but the reaction should be with forbearance: *"Good and evil (conduct) are not equal. Repel evil with what is best. (If you do so) behold, he between whom and you were enmity, will be as though he were a sympathetic friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient, and none is granted it except the greatly endowed."* ---Surat Fussilat, 41: 34 & 35

Therefore, Allah (SWT) wishes that treatment should be attended with politeness and forbearance that enmity turns to friendship because revenge is only for the satisfaction of emotions and not to ward off enmity.

It is narrated that one day a person insulted Imam Ali (a.s)'s slave, Qamber, in his presence. To quieten the person Hazrat

Qamber moved towards him. At that moment, the Imam (a.s) said, “Qamber! Stop! Don’t react. In this way Allah (SWT) will be pleased with you and Satan will be disappointed that you have virtually punished your enemy. By Allah (SWT)! Who made the grain grow and created the human being. No person can please Allah (SWT) more than with forbearance and cannot displease Satan controlling his anger and an ignorant person cannot be punished more severely than by ignoring him totally.”

Now we shall see how the Infallibles (a.s) consider tolerance and forbearance. The traditions that we are presenting reflect a special aspect of these two traits. Therefore, one must ponder over the meaning and purpose of each of these traditions.

Traditions About Tolerance & Forbearance

Imam Ali (a.s)’s sayings:

- “Clemency is a curtain against calamities.” ---Nur al Haqiqa, P: 213
- “Clemency is a light, the reality of which is wisdom!” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 5, P:286
- “There is no greater honor than clemency.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch:93, P: 32
- “Acquire clemency because it is a believer’s companion and advisor.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch:16, Hadith: 140
- “Be tolerant because it is the fruit of knowledge.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch:93, Hadith:35
- “One who adopts tolerance and clemency has become a leader.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch:8, Hadith:1
- “Peace and harmony are the result of tolerance/clemency.” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 1, P:227
- “The first return of the tolerance of a tolerant person is that people side with him against an ignorant person.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith:68
- “One who took the assistance of tolerance and forbearance against you will dominate you and have superiority over you!” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 5, P: 451

Imam Mohammed Taqi (a.s) says: “Forbearance is the raiment of a scholar and, therefore, you should not remove it.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 3, Hadith: 2

Traditions About Controlling Anger

The Prophet (s.a) says: “God will fill the inner self of he who controls his anger with faith.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 69, Ch: 38, Hadith: 44

Imam Ali (a.s) said: “One who suppresses his anger, God will conceal his defects.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 132, Hadith: 11

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) says in this regard: “One who suppresses his anger despite his position of power, Allah (SWT) will fill his heart with calm and Faith on the Day of Reckoning.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 7, Ch: 15, Hadith: 62

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) reports from the Prophet (s.a): “One who controls his anger and acts with tolerance and forbearance despite having the ability to express it will be given the reward of a martyr by God.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 10

Prophet (SA) said: “The most cautious person is the one who has the most control over his anger.”

The Imam (a.s) states: “Controlling anger is the result of clemency.”

The Imam (a.s) relates a tradition of the Prophet (s.a): “Controlling anger is the result of humility and tolerance.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 55

Someone asked Imam Hasan Mujtaba (a.s): “What is forbearance?” The Imam (a.s) said: “Controlling anger and having command over one’s self.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 19, Hadith: 2

Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) said: “I like the person who is overwhelmed by humility and forbearance in times of anger.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 13

The narrations also reply to the question about one controlling anger over misbehaviour of others and humility and whether forbearance on such occasions is indignity or insult? One person went into the presence of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) and said, “Differences have cropped up between me and a group of persons about a matter and I wish that it shouldn’t turn into a dispute. But people say that if I don’t fight with them I will be subject to insult and ignominy. What is your advice?” The Imam (a.s) said: “It is he who is ignominious who is unjust.” ---Mohjat al Baida, Vol: 5, P: 313

All these narrations indicate that the Imams (a.s) wished to promote love and affection between the momineen and dispel

disputes advising them to control anger despite the misbehavior of others making access to humility and forbearance. They also explained to them the benefits and rewards in this world and the hereafter. It is certain now that being humble and forbearing despite misbehavior of others is good to the extent that they don't trample our rights and to stop them from such activity, fighting isn't the right reaction and we have to adopt the procedures the Shariah has outlined.

Akhlaq E Halima- Affable Manners

In this discussion, we shall talk of examples of the affable manners of the saintly persons (The Buzurgaan e Din). First, we shall mention an incident from the life of the Prophet (s.a) as to how he acted when differences cropped up in the Ummah.

Aws and Khazraj were two tribes who were ever at logger-heads during the Days of Ignorance. They used to go to the extent of killing men from each other's tribe. When the Prophet (s.a) migrated to Medina a truce was established between the two tribes with Allah (SWT)'s Grace! They started living together peacefully. One day an old Jew of Medina, Shas bin Qais, noticed the men of the tribes sitting together. He didn't like this togetherness and felt jealous. Therefore, he devised a stratagem to create rift between them. He asked a Jewish youth to go and participate in their discussions. He asked him to remind them about the "Day of Ba-aat" when the two tribes fought a severe battle and many of them were killed. The youth did as he was told and the two groups got so enraged that they wanted to fight---kill or get killed! Therefore, both sides started bringing out their arms. This news spread all over the city and other men from the two tribes assembled at the place. When the Prophet (s.a) heard about it, he immediately went to the place and spoke in a loud voice:

"O muslims! Have you gone back to the ways of the Days of Ignorance although I am still amongst you and although Allah (SWT) has given you instructions in Islam and has endowed to your superiority because of Islam by dispelling your ignorance and

established brotherhood amongst you! Will you again revert to the ways of infidelity?”

Hearing the talk of the Prophet (s.a) the men of both the groups regained their senses and their anger dissipated. They threw away their swords and expressed their regrets to the Prophet (s.a) for their behaviour. Thus, the intrigue created by the Jew was dispelled.

There is also another incident of the days of the Prophet (s.a). One day a bedoin Arab came to Medina and visited the Mosque to get some money from the Prophet (s.a). When he reached the Mosque the Prophet (s.a) was seated with his companions. The Arab talked of his need and the Prophet (s.a) gave him some money. But the man wasn't satisfied with the amount given and he talked disparagingly about the Prophet (s.a). The Companions got angered and they tried to dissuade the Arab from his tirade. But the Prophet (s.a) stopped them. Then he took the Arab to his house and gave him some more money. The Bedouin Arab had an impression that the Prophet (s.a) must be living like a king in luxury! But when he saw him from close quarters he understood that this thinking was wrong. He profusely thanked the Prophet (s.a) who said:

“You talked ill of me in the presence of my Companions but now you are thanking me! I am afraid my Companions might trouble you! It is better you express your gratitude in their presence.” The Arab agreed to the Prophet (s.a)'s suggestion.”

The next day the Prophet (s.a) took the Arab to the Mosque and told: *“This person is agreeable with us now! Isn't it like this?!”* The Arab talked in acceptance and thanked the Prophet (s.a) in the presence of the large group. Then the Prophet (s.a) talked to the gathering: *“My and this person's example is like the man whose camel had run away and people ran after it and shouted. But because of this shouting the camel ran faster. Therefore, the owner of the camel told the men, ‘You needn't try to catch my camel and I shall myself find a solution for it!’ Then he picked up some grass and without making much noise he put it in front of the camel. When the camel got busy munching the grass, the man caught its reins and started on his journey. If I hadn't stopped you yesterday the*

person would have received beatings from you. But amicably I brought him round!”

The third incident is about the life of Imam Hassan Mujtaba (a.s). One day a Syrian saw him going and started talking ill of him. The Imam (a.s) remained quiet and didn't reply. When the person stopped speaking the Imam (a.s) went near him, greeted, smiled and said: *“O Sheik! I presume you are a traveler and, perhaps, you have some misunderstanding! If you have any need, tell me that I try to fulfil it? If you need guidance, I can give you guidance! If you need help I can provide it! If you are hungry I can provide you food, if you need clothes, I can provide you clothes! If you are away from home, I can give you refuge! If you have any other need, I will fulfil it.”*

When the person heard the soft talk of the Imam (a.s) he felt ashamed and cried, *“I bear witness that you are Allah (SWT)'s Caliph on the earth! Allah (SWT) knows where to keep His leadership! You and your father were, till now, the worst of the human beings in my view. But from now you are the most beloved person for me!”* In this manner Imam Hassan (a.s) due to his soft and forgiving attitude turned his sworn enemy, who was under the influence of Bani Omayya's propaganda, into his friend and beloved!

Summary

Allah (SWT)'s select creatures, the Aulia, have presented very high examples of mutual and social relations and contacts. Particularly they maintained humility and forbearance in their treatment of others. They preferred control of anger and gave good treatment to enemies instead of being harsh with them. This attitude endowed to them more heights in the moral standards. No doubt humility and forbearance play a very important role in human relationships.

Questions

1. What are the effects of tolerance and forbearance in a society?
2. Why did Imam Ali (a.s) exhort people to acquire the knowledge of practicing tolerance and forbearance?

Lesson Ten: Tolerance & Forbearance – Part 2

3. What is the connection between tolerance and control of anger?
4. Give some examples from history and traditions about tolerance and forbearance.

Lesson Eleven: Forgiveness & Overlooking

From the previous lessons we have learned that if someone treats us poorly the best remedy in view of Islam, is to adopt humility and forbearance. The essence of forbearance and soft-heartedness is to forgive and overlook the fault of the opposite party.

Forgiveness is an important aspect of Islamic morality as we have discussed in the 9th Lesson. In every society generally, because of several reasons, the rights of some people are trampled like ridiculing or lampooning someone, insulting the person etc. It is also a fact that such rights, generally, are ordinary such as causing disturbance, skipping your turn to get something and others. If in such situations we never forgave people society would not advance forward and every day we would be faced with new disputes which will make life bitter for everyone. Therefore, Islam requires muslims to overlook others' errors and, to the extent possible, forgive and forget such events.

The Holy Quran has exhorted the Momineen in several verses to overlook the faults of others as it says: *“Adopt (a policy of) excusing (the faults of people), bid what is right, and turn away from the ignorant.”* Surat Al A'Raf, 7:199

“The Prophet asked Gabriel about the matter. Gabriel replied that he does not know and must ask the “Knower” (i.e. God) for the meaning and the Almighty answered by saying that “O Muhammad! God commands you to forgive anyone who does injustice to you; to give he who deprives you, and to maintain ties with he who cuts them with you.” Bihar Al Anwar, Vol 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 4

In another verse of the Quran forgiveness is termed as the best trait of a pious person *“.....and suppress their anger, and excuse (the faults) of the people.....”* Surat Al e Imran, 3: 134

In other verses too instead of seeking revenge over the enemy it is ordered to forgive and one who forgives is assured of Allah (SWT)'s blessing for the act: *".....and let them excuse and forbear. Do you not love that Allah (SWT) should forgive you? And Allah (SWT) is all-forgiving, all-merciful."* Surat Al Nur, 24:22

".....And if you excuse, forbear and forgive, then Allah (SWT) is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful." Surat Al Taghabun, 64:14

In the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s) too there is great emphasis on adopting forgiveness. The Prophet (s.a) has said on multiple occasions regarding forgiveness and overlooking on various accounts such as:

- *"God is very forgiving and loves those who are very forgiving."* Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, P: 373, Hadith: 7019
- *"One who forgives the fault of a muslim, God will forgive his faults on the Day of Reckoning."* Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, P: 372, Hadith: 4019
- *"You must forgive for it enhances the dignity of a person thus forgive others so that God will increase your dignity."* -Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 5
- *"The age of he who forgives abundantly will be prolonged."* Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 81, Hadith: 74
- *"Forgiveness is the crown of virtues."* ---Gharar Al Hakm, P: 245
- *"It is not possible to assess the reward of two things: forgiveness and being just."* -Gharar Al Hakm, P: 446
- *"The worst of people is he who doesn't forgive the fault of others and doesn't hide their defects and weaknesses."* Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 6
- *"Paucity of forgiveness is the worst of vices and haste in taking revenge is the gravest of sins."* Gharar Al Hakm, P: 465

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) said in this regard: *"Regretting after pardoning someone is better than regretting after taking revenge."*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *"The dignity of us, the Ahl al Bayt, is that we pardon those who do injustice to us."*

The Imam (a.s) also said: *"Three things are of highest rating in the virtues of this world and for the Hereafter: i) Pardon one who has been unjust to you. ii) Keep relations with one who severs contact with you. iii) Treating he who treats you ignorantly with clemency."* -Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 94, Hadith: 3

The Difference Between Forgiveness (Afʻv) Pardoning and Overlooking

After acquainting oneself about forgiving and overlooking, as advised by the Infallibles (a.s), we should also give attention to the word 'Safh' used in the Islamic Literature as we have translated this word as 'totally overlooking' or 'closing our eyes to something' in translation of the verses of the Quran (Surat Al Nur, V-22, Surat Taghabun, V-14 at the beginning of this lesson). But the meaning of 'Safh' is slightly different from the meaning of 'Afʻv'. 'Safh' means totally overlooking someone's mistakes as if it never happened. Therefore, if someone's mistake is proved and we don't punish him it will be 'Afʻv' or forgiveness but if we totally overlook the mistake and don't give any attention to it, it is 'Safh'.

In other words, 'Afʻv' is pardoning a mistake and 'Safh' is deeming the mistake not requiring any attention as the Quran says: *"The requital of evil is an evil like it. So, whoever excuses and conciliates, his reward lies with Allah (SWT). Indeed, He does not like the wrongdoers."* Surat Al Shura, 42:40

In another verse 'Safh' (overlooking) Allah (SWT) says: *"So forbear with a graceful forbearance."* Surat Al Hija, 15:85

"So, disregard them, and say, 'Peace!' Soon they will know." Surat Zukhruf, 44:89

In the first verse (42:40) Allah (SWT) has fixed punishment for every evil deed. But He has also emphasized on excusing the person. Therefore, inference can be drawn that access is made to 'Afʻv' where mistake is proved and punishment is not given. But the two verses with the word 'Safh' (44:89 and 15:85) Allah (SWT) is ordering the Prophet (s.a) to close his eyes to the guilt of the polytheists without talking of their acts and to deal well with them. Imam Raza (a.s) has said interpreting Verse 15:85: *"Pardon the person in such a manner that there is no reproof or censure."* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 56

Pardoning Despite Having Power to Wreak Vengeance

In Islamic traditions, much importance is attached to pardoning a wrong-doer despite having the capability of avenging the wrong. Here are a few examples of such traditions:

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“He who pardons from a position of strength will be forgiven by God on the day of judgment.”* *Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, P: 377*

The Prophet (s.a) also said: *“One who has the maximum strength to punish is the most entitled to pardon.”* *Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 68, P: 420*

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“When you are able to overpower your enemy; pardon him as thanksgiving for the dominance over him.”* *Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 76*

The Imam (a.s) also said: *“Forgiveness is the charity of capability.”* *Gharar Al Hakm, P: 342*

Imam Hassan (a.s) has said in this regard: *“The greatest pardoner is he who forgives from the position of strength.”* *Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 28, Hadith: 41*

Imam Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Forgiving from the position of strength is of the practices of the prophets and sages.”* *Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 93, Hadith: 62*

The biggest victory of the Prophet (s.a) --- The conquest of Mecca—took the Islamic contingent to the pinnacle of power and its opponents, the polytheists to abject defeat. At this time when the contingent entered the precincts of Mecca its commander, Saad bin Ibada, raised a slogan: *“Today is the Day of Battle! Today even women will be imprisoned!”* *Shara Nahj al Balagha, Vol; 17, P: 272*

When The Prophet (s.a) heard this slogan he was angered and he said to Imam Ali (a.s): *“Take the standard of the contingent from Saad bin Ibada and depose him from the position of the Commander.”* and the Prophet (s.a) added: *“No! No! Today is the day of having mercy.”*

The Occasions of Pardon & Forgiveness

It is necessary to know about pardon and forgiveness as to what is the right occasion for them? Who should be pardoned and who shouldn't be pardoned? It is therefore necessary to be knowledgeable of such conditions. In personal matters, it is good

Lesson Eleven: Forgiveness & Overlooking

to forgive and pardon. But in matters of faith and societal rights one cannot just forgive anyone unless the step is beneficial for society. If someone has over stepped the Rights of Allah (SWT), and crossed the mandated limits, then only Allah (SWT), His Prophet (s.a) and his Progeny (a.s) can pardon with Allah (SWT)'s Mandate. Therefore, history is witness that although the Prophet (s.a) was a paragon of pardoning but whenever he found that social rights were over-stepped he never relaxed his stand. We can mention the example of Hazrat Umme Salama's slave girl the day she stole goods of some people and they appealed to the Prophet (s.a) to punish her. When Hazrat Umme Salama tried to intervene on the slave's behalf, the Prophet (s.a) said, "*These are the matters of the penalties prescribed by Allah (SWT) and there cannot be any relaxation in the matter!*" He (s.a) ordered the slave girl to be punished.

Similarly, when Imam Ali (a.s) got intelligence that one of his governors was misusing the funds of the Bayt al Mal, he harshly reprimanded him. "*Fear Allah (SWT) and return to these people their properties. If you do not do so and Allah (SWT) grants me power over you I shall excuse myself before Allah (SWT) about you and strike you with my sword with which I did not strike anyone but that he went to hell. By Allah (SWT), even if Hasan and Husayn had done what you did there would have been no leniency with me for them and they could not have won their way with me till I had recovered from them the right and destroyed the wrong produced by their unjust action.*" *Nahj al Balagha, P: 413, Letter: 41*

Therefore, forgiveness and overlooking of deeds is permissible in personal matters but misusing the rights of Allah (SWT) and the people cannot be condoned and in the lives of the Prophet (s.a) and the Infallibles (a.s) we do not find any examples, whatsoever, of their giving such concessions to any individuals.

We shall also consider the value of forgiveness and overlooking in circumstances where the person pardoned realizes the value of the forgiveness and does not repeat such acts.

Imam Ali (a.s) has said the following in this regard: "*Pardon and forgiveness reforms a good-natured person to the same degree that a mean and lowly person gets further depraved.*" ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 15, Hadith: 4*

Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) has said: *“The right of him who does evil to you is that you pardon him. But if you know that your pardon will harm him, you defend yourself. Allah (SWT) says, Whosoever defends himself after he has been wronged - against them there is no way (42:41).”* Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 1, Hadith: 1

Summary

Forgiveness and overlooking is an important part of Islamic Moral Norms. Forgiveness is right and appreciable when the person has the capability and power of avenging the harm and overlooks the mistakes of the enemy.

Forgiveness is better in personal matters but when the rights of Allah (SWT) or society are compromised, it is not permissible.

Questions

1. What is the difference between ‘Af’u’ and ‘Safh’?
2. What did Imam Ali (a.s) write to his governor who misused the funds of Bayt al Mal?
3. Why are pardon and forgiveness right only in the matters of people of good character?
4. Mention some traits that Imam Sadiq (a.s) has termed good for this life and the Hereafter?

Lesson Twelve: Justice

Justice and being fair are the pillars of moral and societal norms in Islam. Justice and fair play in society means that whatever we deem just, we must follow it even if it brings loss to our own self.

To run a society properly and consider the rights of all people certain laws have to be devised and followed which don't discriminate between different groups in society and are fair to all.

The real difficulty is that talking of rights and putting them into action particularly when it goes against the person are two different things.

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *"A right is very vast in description but very narrow in equitability of action."* Nahj al Balagha, P: 332, Sermon: 216

This means that generally people talk tall when they discuss the 'Truth' but when it comes to delivering someone's rights, they make some lame excuse to escape, or deliver the rights unwillingly.

Because of this attitude Islamic Books have stressed much on justice and fair play and stressed on establishing justice in society. The Holy Quran has pointed towards a very delicate stage of justice and equity when persons have to be just in treating their own near and dear, next of kin. In such situations people become shaky as the Holy Quran says: *".....And when you speak be fair even if it were a relative; and fulfil Allah (SWT)'s Covenant."* ---Surat al An'Am, 6:152

In another verse Allah (SWT) says: *"O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah (SWT), even if it should be against yourselves or (your) parents and near relatives, and whether it be (someone) rich or poor, for Allah (SWT) has a greater right over them. So do not follow (your) desires, lest you should be unfair and if you distort (the testimony) or disregard (it), Allah (SWT) is indeed well aware of what you do."* Surat al Nisa, 4:135

In this verse Allah (SWT) has pointed towards two important things, besides justice and equity. The first is that the person might have to cause a loss to his own relatives and in such a situation, to

protect the interests of his relatives he may not act with justice and fair play. Secondly, while passing a verdict one might consider the status of the contenders. He might take pity on the poor person and give him a thing over which he doesn't have the right. Or in the greed for the wealth of the rich person he gives a verdict in his favor although he doesn't have right over it. Therefore, the verse warns that one should not give verdict in favor of any person who doesn't have the legitimate right.

Allah (SWT) says on the same subject in another verse: "O you who have faith! Be maintainers, as witnesses for the sake of Allah (SWT), of justice, and ill feelings for a people should never lead you to be unfair. Be fair; that is near to God wariness, and be wary of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) is indeed well aware of what you do." Surat al Maidah, 5:8

In this verse attention is drawn towards the fact that because of other's faults one shouldn't deviate from the truth. Generally, it happens that a person, because of others' defects and personality to take revenge, abandons justice and equity and in such a situation doing justice becomes very difficult.

In this regard there are many traditions of the Prophet (s.a). We are quoting a few of them: *The Prophet (s.a) said: "The most just person is one who likes for others what he likes for himself and disdains for others what he disdains for himself."* Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 35, Hadith: 1

Similarly, he (s.a) says: "One who helps the poor and does justice to others with regard to himself is a true believer." Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 35, Hadith: 5

Imam Ali (a.s) deemed justice as the cause of honor and distinction as he says: "One who does justice to others with regard to himself will only increase in honor by God." Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 35, Hadith: 25

According to the definition of justice given at the beginning of this lesson you will very well understand the proofs of justice and equity in the following tradition: Imam Ali (a.s) wrote to Imam Hassan (a.s) in his will: "My dear son, so far as your behavior with other human beings is concerned, let your 'self' act as scales to judge its goodness or wickedness. Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you. Whatever you like for yourself, like for others, and whatever you dislike to happen to you, spare others from such happenings. Do not oppress and tyrannize

Lesson Twelve: Justice

anybody because you surely do not like to be oppressed and tyrannized. Be kind and sympathetic to others as you certainly desire others to treat you kindly and sympathetically. If you find objectionable and loathsome habits in others, abstain from developing those traits of character in yourself. If you are satisfied or feel happy in receiving a certain kind of behaviour from others, you may behave with others in exactly the same way. Do not speak about them in the same way that you do not like others to speak about you. Do not speak on a subject about which you know little or nothing, and if you at all want to speak on anything or about anyone of whom you are fully aware, then avoid scandal, libel and aspersion as you do not like yourself to be scandalized and scorned in the same manner.” Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 35, Hadith: 21

In several narrations justice has been termed as ‘Insaf an-nas min al nafs—Justice to men from the spirit. This meaning of justice has appeared in one of the traditions of the Prophet (s.a) and similarly Imam Ali (a.s) has said: “When you sit in judgement over yourself and someone else, then consider yourself in his place and at that moment you think you have right over something and you will consider that the other person too has a similar right! When you decide a warning or punishment for a person imagine that in a similar situation you too should be meted out a similar punishment, lest you keep thinking that you are always on the right and when a fault of yours is detected, you make an excuse and save your skin.”

This clarification illustrates well that the advice given by Maula Ali (a.s) to Imam Hassan (a.s) is the exegesis of “Insaf al nas min al nafs.” Similarly, when Maula Ali (a.s) sent his famous writing to Malik e Ashtar when he was appointed the Governor of Egypt, saying: “Do justice to yourself, your kith and kin and the people you deal with. If you don’t do this, you will be unjust and one who does injustice to Allah (SWT)’s creatures, his enemies will not be human beings but it will be Allah (SWT) Himself. One whose enemy is Allah (SWT), all his arguments will be futile and will be deemed as the opponent of Allah (SWT) unless he repents his injustice and craves forgiveness!” Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 33, Ch: 30, Hadith: 774

In certain sayings of Imam Ali (a.s) the social benefits of justice and fair play have been discussed: “Because of justice (fair play) love remains.” “Justice creates affection in the heart.” “Justice eliminates

differences and gives birth to closeness and love.” “Justice creates peace and tranquility.” “With justice the relations become everlasting.” “A just person will have many friends and acquaintances.” Gharar al Hakm, P: 394

A Moral Reminder About Justice and Fair Play

Conclusion is drawn in the light of the verses and traditions that equity for others in one’s own rights is termed as justice. But its consequences become evident only when all the people follow all the rules and regulations and no one evades them. This would mean that everyone considers one’s self equal to others and, according to the saying of Imam Ali (a.s), peace, tranquility, and brotherhood will prevail in such circumstances. But some human beings treating themselves equal to other human beings is rather difficult because in every person’s spirit there is love for the self and, therefore, he wishes to acquire everything for himself. This desire is so tenacious that getting rid of it is very difficult. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“The most difficult obligation that Allah (SWT) has mandated on His creatures is doing justice to fellow human beings!” Bihar Al Anwar, Vol. 72, P: 27*

In a narrative it is said that Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) received a letter from some of his Shias seeking clarification on some matters. The letter was carried to the Imam (a.s) to Medina by Abdal Aala. The Momineen also requested him to verbally find out about the rights of the Momins.

Abd al Aala says that he presented the letter to the Imam (a.s) and then asked about the rights of the Momineen. The Imam (a.s) answered all the queries in the letter but didn’t reply to the question asked orally. The day on which Abd al Aala was departing from Medina he met the Imam (a.s) and said that his verbal question had remained unanswered. The Imam (a.s) said: “I am afraid if I mention to you the rights of Momineen you wouldn’t be able to act on them and thus will get expelled from Islam”. Then the Imam (a.s) added: *“From the things that Allah (SWT) has made mandatory the following three are very difficult to follow:*

Lesson Twelve: Justice

- *Doing justice to all the Momineen; which means dealing with other muslim brethren the same way as the person himself expects to be treated.*
- *Making the Momineen partners in personal wealth and assets.*
- *Remembering Allah (SWT) every time.*

But this doesn't mean taking Allah (SWT)'s name (Alhamdu Lillah, Subhan Allah (SWT)) all the time but when one thinks of doing a prohibited act he should remember Allah (SWT) and shun that act!"

In short, according to the sayings of the Infallibles (a.s) justice and fair play are very difficult and for it Jihad un Nafs (Struggle with one's spirit) is necessary. Only after this, will one be able to give preference to others over self without hesitation.

Summary

Justice or considering others equal in personal rights. With justice and fair play peace and brotherhood would prevail in the society and this would result in mutual love and affection.

The trait of justice and fair play has been termed by the Infallibles (a.s) as the most difficult to practice.

Questions

1. Why an unjust verdict should not be given when a person is poor and indigent?
2. What did Imam Ali (a.s) mention as the standard of justice in his will to Imam Hassan (a.s)?
3. Describe some effects and results of justice.
4. Why is it difficult to consider others equal to oneself?
5. What has Imam Sadiq (a.s) termed as most difficult mandates of Allah (SWT)?

Lesson Thirteen: Cheerfulness Or Smiling Countenance

Meeting people with a smile and cheerfully is a part of Islamic morality. The Prophet (s.a) and the Imams (a.s) not only gave specific instructions about this, but also set an example, as the Prophet (s.a) said: *“You cannot possibly provide support to mankind with your wealth thus greet them with a smile and a cheerful countenance.”* Bihar Al Anwar, Vol 74, Ch: 38, Hadith: 37

This means that however much wealth you have, you cannot solve everyone’s problems. Therefore, treat them well.

In one of the traditions, Imam Ali (a.s) has deemed a smiling countenance as the quality of momineen. The Imam (a.s) said: *“The happiness of a believer is reflected on his face while his sorrow is hidden in his heart.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 67, Ch: 14, Hadith: 37

This means that everyone in this world experiences good and bad circumstances and a person will be morose when he faces difficulties. But a momin, is identified from his happy appearance despite all the difficulties and his face will not reveal his inner sadness. If every person becomes downcast with difficulties, then the entire society will have a cloud of gloom over it. This is why Imam Ali (AS) has said that a momin should always have a smile on his face and, Allah (SWT) forbid, if he faces any difficulty or personal loss, he should try to hide it, so that others don’t see it easily.

Benefits of Cheerfulness:

There are several traditions about a happy countenance and cheerfulness.

The Prophet (s.a) said:

- *“Cheerfulness repels resentment.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 10, Hadith: 41

- *“Cheerfulness is the garland of love.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 12
- *“Greet them pleasantly and the grudges will be dispelled from their hearts.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 21
- *“When you meet your brothers, greet them cheerfully and express happiness, so that when you bid farewell, no burden remains on your mind.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 19
- *“The thing that creates love and affection in the hearts of relatives and near ones and their grudge is removed when you meet them with a smiling countenance. If they are not available inquire about their welfare and if they are around treat them with a smile”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 7, Ch: 8, Hadith: 83
- *“Your cheerful countenance is proof of the nobility of your soul/ character.”* Gharar Al Hakm, P: 434

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“Pleasant countenance and a cheerful face earns you love and proximity to God; but a person with a fretful face invites aversion and distance from God.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 8, Hadith: 83

The referred traditions highlight the worldly and social effects of meeting people with a pleasant countenance. Another tradition mentions the advantage of a smiling countenance for the hereafter.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“If one of the three things is done for God, He will guarantee heaven for the person: i) Being charitable, even if he is himself in poverty and indigence. ii) Meeting everyone with a smiling countenance. iii) Being just when one deals with others, on matters concerning himself.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 10, Hadith: 28

Laughter/Good Humour

When we discuss regarding smiling countenance, laughter and joking also come up. Therefore, it is necessary to know whether Islam has permitted laughter and humor.

A short answer for this question is that there are two types of traditions about it, In some they not only permit joking but term it a sign of the momineen. But there are other traditions that totally prohibit it. We shall quote both types of traditions for clarity.

A: Traditions That Deem Humour As Permissible:

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“A believer is of humorous and playful nature, whereas a hypocrite is of a bad and angry nature.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 77, Ch: 7, Hadith: 1

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“I do laugh and joke but I don’t say anything other than the truth.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 16, Ch: 10, Hadith: 2

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“God loves those who laugh and are humorous provided there is no wrong in it.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 71, Ch: 80, Hadith: 18

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has mentioned three ways the momineen entertain themselves and one of them is laughter and humour with friends.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *“In every believer there is a ‘Duaba’. He was asked what is ‘Duaba?’ The Imam (a.s) said, ‘The sense of humour.’”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 76, Ch: 106, Hadith: 13

One of the companions of the 6th Imam, Younus Shaybani, says, The Imam (a.s) asked me: *“How is the relationship of humor and cheerfulness amongst you?”* I said, *“Very little!”* the Imam asked, *“Why is it very little? Humor and cheerfulness are part of good manners. You can please your believing brothers with it. When the Prophet (s.a) wished to please anyone, he used to be humorous with him.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 16, Ch: 10, Hadith: 2

The Traditions That Criticize Joking And Laughter

The Prophet (s.a) told Imam Ali (a.s): *“O Ali! Do not joke lest your glory fades away; and do not lie lest your light extinguishes.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 77, Ch: 3, Hadith: 10

The following are the traditions from Imam Ali (AS):

- *“A person can never reach the true state of faith until he forgoes lying, joking, quarrelling and arguing, even if he is right.”* *“Joking creates grudges.”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 77, Ch: 3, Hadith: 10
- *“Everything has a seed and the seed of hostility/enmity is joking.”* Gharar Al Hakm, P: 436
- *“The lesion of dignity is joking.”* Gharar Al Hakm, P: 222
- *“He who jokes is belittled [by others].”* Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 77, P: 237

Similarly, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said:

“Don’t joke that people would dominate over you.” Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 76, Ch: 106, Hadith: 10

“Do not joke lest people step over you.” Wasael ash Shia, Vol: 12, P: 118

“Beware of joking because it will ruin your respect and dignity.” Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 73, P: 60

An inference emerges from these traditions that Islam doesn’t give freedom for all sorts of humor but has prescribed restraint because practical-jokes and insults reduce a person’s respect. Joking on the other hand, for livening up the gatherings of momineen, with good humor, is permissible within the limits of decency. So excessive joking is condemned.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“Excess of joking diminishes one’s honor.” Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 2, P: 665*

Imam Ali (a.s) has said regarding this on several occasions:

- *“Excess of joking negates one’s dignity.” Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 4, P: 591*
- *“Excess of joking negates one’s honor and creates enmity.” Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 4, P: 597*
- *“He whose joking increases, his honor decreases.” Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 5, P: 293*

Therefore, humor and laughter are legitimate if there is no excess in such activity and the limits required by piety, morality and gentleness are not crossed. For instance, one shouldn’t insult or lampoon (publicly criticize) a momin as an act of humor. If the humor is within the limits of decency, it will certainly increase affection and nearness among the momineen and the Islamic society will remain happy.

After studying the lives of the infallibles (a.s), one can say to what extent humor is approved. As we have mentioned in the beginning of this lesson, the Prophet (s.a) said, that he did make access to humor, but he said nothing other than the truth. As examples, we are mentioning here a few of the humorous incidents from the life of the Prophet (s.a).

“One day an old woman met the Prophet (s.a) when he (s.a) said, ‘No old women would go to Heaven!’ Hearing this, the woman cried. He (s.a) added, ‘While going to Heaven you will no more be an old woman!’

Lesson Thirteen: Cheerfulness Or Smiling Countenance

Then he (s.a) recited the verses: 'We have created them with a special creation, and made them virgins (young).' Surat Al Waqiah, 56: 35 & 36

Similarly, one day a lady, Umm e Aiman, went to the presence of the Prophet (s.a) and said, 'My husband has some work with you!' He (s.a) asked, 'Is he not the person who has some whiteness in his eyes?' (She thought that from whiteness the Prophet (s.a) meant it was cataract). She therefore replied, 'God forbid! He doesn't have any opacity in his eyes!' The Prophet (s.a) said, 'Your husband does have whiteness in his eyes!' Again she said, 'By Allah (SWT)! No!!' The Prophet (s.a) smiled and said, 'There is no human being in the world who doesn't have whiteness in his eyes around the pupils!'

It is also reported that a Bedouin from the desert sometimes brought gifts for the Prophet (s.a) but then he demanded something in exchange which made him (s.a) smile. Therefore, whenever he was in sorrow he would say "I wish, the Bedouin visited me today".

Another incident is reported that a person asked the Prophet (s.a) to help him mount a camel. He (s.a) said, "I shall mount you on the kid of the camel!" The person said, "The small camel wouldn't be able to bear my weight!" The Prophet (s.a) said, "Isn't it true that every camel is a kid of some camel or other."

Such jokes have been recorded in the profiles of the Infallibles (a.s). Thus, one feels that in their lives, humor was very limited and in that they observed care that nothing nonsensical was uttered. All these things are a very clean standard in front of us on which we can judge our own sense of humor.

Summary

Cheerfulness and a smiling countenance are an important aspect of Islamic morality. This reflects good treatment of people, and affection and love between them. The grudge from their hearts is obliterated and friendship prevails.

Also, joking and laughing too is an aspect of good humor. But it is good if it isn't in excess and one does not cross the limits of decency.

Questions

1. What is the effect of cheerfulness on the society in the view of the infallibles (a.s)?
2. Under what conditions is humour permissible?
3. What did Imam Ali (a.s) say about cheerfulness?
4. Relate a tradition about the consequences of cheerfulness in the hereafter.

Lesson Fourteen: Co-operation

In the second lesson we discussed that all momineen should live like brothers and help each other when needed. If one is facing a difficulty, it is a difficulty for the entire extended family. One's sorrow is everyone's sorrow. Just as everyone was with him in his good and bad times, everyone expects him to be with them in their difficulties too. He should feel for their difficulties just as they felt for his. The Prophet (s.a) has said in this regard: *“Verily, the believers, in terms of their mutual affection, are like one body. If any part of the body has pain, the other parts feel it equally.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, P: 234

Cooperation between momineen is certainly beneficial for society. If all momineen consider their brethren in faith as part of their own body then they will always be there for one another.

Every person faces problems in daily life and may look to others for help. But a self-respecting person feels shy to approach others for comfort. Brotherhood between momineen can be beneficial when they treat each other with what the Qur'an enunciates as 'Ta-aa-wun'—cooperation.

“.....Cooperate in piety and Godwariness.” ---Surat al Maidah, 5:2

The most essential thing for cooperation is the spirit of helping each other. When this spirit isn't there in any society, then they will not feel the suffering of others., The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“He who wakes up and has no concern for the affairs of the muslims isn't a muslim. And he who hears the call of a muslim and does not answer it isn't a muslim.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 120

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“He has not believed in God, Muhammad or Ali, who does not greet his brother in faith with a smile on his face, if he came to him with a need. Furthermore, if he was able to fulfill his need, he would do it hastily, and if he cannot, he would send him to someone who can help him. If a person is different than what I have described then there is no relation/companionship between us and him.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 12

If someone doesn't help his momin brother and doesn't provide relief for him from his own resources, then according to traditions, he will get Allah (SWT)'s retribution. He will spend such resources on wrong causes, for Allah (SWT)'s enemies, and qualify for retribution on the Day of Reckoning.

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“A person who withholds, from helping his brother in faith and is stingy when it comes to fulfilling his needs will be involved in supporting those who will squander his funds on sinful acts and will not be rewarded for his acts.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 8

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“If any person from our Shi'a (followers) seeks a man from his brothers for help in fulfilling his need and does not assist him, God will involve him in fulfilling the needs of our enemies and punish him for it on the day of judgment.”* --Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 21

Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s) says in this regard: *“If a person has been sought by a brother of his in order to fulfil his need and he does not assist him, despite being capable of doing so, he would have severed the tie between himself and God Almighty.”*--- Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 59, Hadith: 21

Not only this, but in one of the traditions of Imam Sadiq (a.s) it is mentioned that delaying help to momineen will be like breaching the trust of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (s.a). The Imam (a.s) says: *“Any believer, who refuses help to another believer, despite being capable of doing so himself or through others, will be raised by God on the Day of Reckoning with a black face, his eyes swollen, and his hands tied to his neck. It will then be said, ‘This is the traitor who betrayed God and His messenger.’ He will then be ordered to hell.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 7, Ch: 8, Hadith: 83

In this tradition this point is worth, a thought that, on occasions of providing help to momineen it isn't sufficient if one is not in a position to help personally he should not think that his responsibility is over. He has to try to make all efforts to get help from other sources, otherwise he would be included in those who don't help momineen.

The famous Islamic Scholar, Waqadi, says: *“I had two friends, one of them was a Hashimi. Our friendship was so firm that the three of*

us were considered as one. One year my financial condition wasn't good and I faced shortage of funds. Around the time of Eid, my wife told me that the two of us can face the difficulty but when the children will see the neighborhood kids in new clothes they will feel it very much. Therefore, she asked me to arrange for a loan from someone so that the kids could celebrate their Eid in new clothes.

Therefore, I wrote to my Hashemi brother, asking him to lend me some Dinars or Dirhams (money). He sent me a sealed pouch and wrote that it contained a thousand Dirhams. I had not yet opened the pouch when I got a note from our other friend seeking financial help. Therefore, I sent the same pouch to him, and to hide my face from my wife, I went towards the mosque. On the way I met my Hashemi friend. I noticed that he had the same pouch in his hand. He asked me what I had done with the Dirhams he had sent to me? I related to him the entire episode. Surprised he said that I had sent back the money I had borrowed from him. He said that when he sent the pouch to me he suddenly needed money urgently and wrote to the third friend seeking a loan from him. Since, the third friend didn't have any money he requested for help from him and sent away the pouch to him and thus the pouch came back to me! Now we shall divide the amount into three equal parts and all three of us would use for our requirements."

This incident relates about true friendship the three of them had with such high spirit of sacrifice and cooperation.

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: "A friend is not a true friend unless he takes care of his brother in three ways:

- *In difficulties.*
- *In his absence.*
- *After his death.*

---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 10, Hadith: 28

The Holy Quran relates the mutual contacts of momineen in following words: *".....but prefer the (immigrants) to themselves, though poverty be their lot..." ---Surat Al Hashr, 59:9*

Imam Ali (a.s) said: "Helping a believer, for the pleasure of God, enhances one's sustenance." ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 28, Hadith: 22

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said regarding this on several occasions:

- *“If someone asks me to fulfill his need, I answer his request immediately because I am afraid that if the person’s requirement was fulfilled by someone else, I would lose the opportunity of helping him.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 28, Hadith: 22
- *“Acquire nearness to God by helping your brothers.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 28, Hadith: 5
- *“When a person fulfills the need of his brother, God will fulfill a hundred thousand needs of his on the Day of Judgement. The first one will be entry into heaven and also his relatives and friends will also get admittance provided he is not one of our haters (Naṣṣābi).”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 90
- *“No muslim fulfills the needs of another muslim except that God addresses him, ‘Your reward is upon me, and I shall not be satisfied with anything less than heaven for you.’”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 8

The Imam (a.s) also quoted this saying of the Prophet (s.a): *“By God! Fulfilling a believer’s need is more rewarding than a month’s fasting and Itikāf.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 6

A companion of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said that, one year he went to perform the Haj and on his return he visited the Imam (a.s) who asked him, *“Where have you been?”* The person said, *“Maula! I went to perform the Hajj.”* The Imam (a.s) asked, *“Do you know how much reward a Haji gets?”* The person said, *“Unless you say, how would I know?”* The Imam (a.s) said, *“When a person goes for the Hajj and circumambulates the Kaaba and offers the prayer of Tawaf (Circumambulation), does Sa-ee between Safa and Marwa; Allah (SWT) records 6,000 good deeds in his account, pardons 6,000 sins and provides him 6,000 times elevation in his felicity and thus fulfils 6,000 of his worldly needs and also preserves further 6,000 deeds for his Hereafter.”* The person said, *“This is great felicity!”* The Imam (a.s) said, *“Do you wish to know about a felicity bigger than this?”* He said, *“Why not!”* The Imam (a.s) said: *“Fulfilling one need of a believer is better than performing a Hajj, a Hajj, and a Hajj, and counted it ten times.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar. Vol: 74, Ch: 2, Hadith:4

This means that fulfilling a need of a momin is better than performing the Hajj ten times. We have seen the traditions about

Lesson Fourteen: Co-operation

providing help to momineen. Insha Allah (SWT), in the next lesson we shall shed light on other aspects.

Summary

All men are like one body. Resolving the problems of the momineen and helping each other pleases Allah (SWT) and there is much felicity and reward in this. If someone does not help a momin the retribution for that person is severe.

Questions

1. Why does the Prophet (s.a) deem a person not a muslim who doesn't care for the affairs of the muslims?
2. What does the Holy Quran say about the mutual relationships of the momineen?
3. What are the benefits of helping momineen and resolving their problems? In the light of traditions mention some instances.
4. What did Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) say about providing help to momineen?

Lesson Fifteen: Peace & Amiability Between Momineen

In the previous lesson we discussed the sayings of the Infallibles (a.s) about extending help to the momineen and resolving their difficulties and fulfilling their needs. Therefore, every momin should make efforts to help other momineen. In this lesson, we will shed light on ways to make momineen happy. Someone asked the Prophet (s.a): “What action is most praiseworthy in view of Allah (SWT)?” The Prophet (s.a) said: “Seeking to please the believers.”

Another question was asked: “How can one please a believer?” The Prophet (s.a) replied: “If he is hungry, feed him; if he is in trouble, assist him; if he is indebted, pay out his loan.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 2

Imam Ali (a.s) told Hazrat Kumail: “O Kumayl! Order your family to go out during the day in search of good deeds and to resolve the problems of those who are sleeping. By He who hears every sound, No one infuses happiness in any heart but that God creates pleasure in his own heart which if he ever faces any hardship, will move towards him like the water running down a slope and dispel it similar to repelling strange camels.”- Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 82

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) said: “Smiling at a face of a believer is a virtuous deed and so is resolving his problems. There is no devotion to God greater than making a believer happy.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 15

Imam Sadiq (a.s) has said: “None of you should think that when he brings joy into a believer that he only brought it to him. Rather, by Allah (SWT) (swt)! He also brings joy to us, the Ahl ul Bayt (peace be upon them), and by God! to the [heart of] Prophet as well.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 19

The Prophet (s.a) said: “One who has pleased a believer has pleased me and one who has pleased me has also pleased Allah (SWT).” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 14

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “God revealed to David (upon whom be peace) that: ‘When a person presents a good deed to Me, I make heaven permissible for him [to enter].’ David then asked, ‘O God! What is that good deed?’ God replied, ‘Bringing joy to a believer’s heart even if it is with a single date [fruit].’ David said, ‘O God! He who has known you has the right not to abandon his hope from You.’” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 14, Ch: 3, Hadith: 5

The Prophet (s.a) said: “One who pays respect to a believing brother through one loving word which dispels the difficulties and sadness of that person, will remain under the shadow of God’s Mercy as long as he is engaged in that act.” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 74, Ch: 20, Hadith: 34

After a study of the referred traditions, it becomes clear, how important it is in Allah (SWT)’s view to make efforts to please the momins and that these are the most liked acts. There is no specific way of doing it and it can be done in various ways. If one is not rich, he need not make an excuse not to please a momin. The Infallibles (a.s) have said in clear terms, that a momin can be pleased with a pleasant smile, by removing a piece of straw from his cloak, offering him a date smilingly or even uttering a word affectionately.

In short, moving forward a step to resolve the problem of a momin is entering the pleasure of Allah (SWT) (Adqal e Suroor)! One who does this, his reward is reserved with Allah (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a)! Because of the great importance of “Pleasing a momin” we are describing another way of doing it.

Helping to Create Reconciliation Between Momins

To rid society of psychological ailments, it is the duty of the momineen to dispel disputes and misunderstandings between fellow muslims, by encouraging reconciliation between them. Islam considers remaining upset with one another and breaking mutual relations as prohibited acts. It is not good for two momins to fight over some insignificant matter and hold grudges against one another. The Prophet (s.a) has said: “If two muslims terminate relations with one another and spend three days in this state and don’t make any effort to reconcile, they will be rendered outcasts from Islam

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and the companionship between them will be terminated. One of the two who takes the first step for reconciliation, will be the first of them to enter heaven.”---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 60, Hadith: 5

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Two believers will never get estranged from one another but that one is (on the wrong) and deserves imprecation. It is also possible that both deserve it.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 60, Hadith: 1

In traditions, it is mentioned that creating differences between momineen is a satanic act. Attention of the momineen is drawn towards the fact that they shouldn't become victims of Satan's creation of lurking fears and apprehensions. Holy Quran says: *“Indeed Satan seeks to cast enmity and hatred among you...”* ---Surat Al Maidah, 5:91

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) said: *“Satan creates such animosity between believers to the extent that one of them abandons his religion. When this occurs, Satan will lie down and say, ‘I have succeeded.’ Therefore, may God shower blessings upon the person who brought about rapprochement between two muslims. O Believers! Live together amicably.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 60, Hadith: 6

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“As long as dissent lasts between two muslims, Satan remains happy, but when their relation mends, his (Satan's) steps falter and his joints start to disjoin and he yells out, ‘Oh! I am destroyed and ruined.’”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 60, Hadith: 7

According to these traditions, the cooperation and affection between momineen is true faith. Differences, fights and breaking of relations are satanic acts. Therefore, as far as possible, keep away from differences. It is very important that momineen maintain amicable relations with one another which has great importance in Allah (SWT)'s view:

“The faithful are indeed brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brothers and be wary of Allah (SWT).....” ---Surat Al Hujurat, 49:10

In another verse Allah (SWT) says: *“..... So be wary of Allah (SWT) and settle your differences,.....”* ---Surat Al Anfal, 8:1

In the third verse in this regard, Allah (SWT) says: *“There is no good in much of their secret talks, except who enjoins charity or what is right or reconciliation between people, and whoever does that, seeking*

Allah (SWT)'s pleasure, soon We shall give him a great reward." ---Surat Al Nisa, 4: 114

The Prophet (s.a) said: *"Should I inform you of a [form of] charity which God and His Messenger love? To arrange rapprochement between the people if they have disputes between each other and are distanced from one another."* ---Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, Page: 59, Hadith: 5488

In a tradition of similar type Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *"A charity which is liked by God is arranging reconciliation between estranged persons and when they are distanced from one another, they are brought closer together."* --- Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 76, Ch: 101, Hadith: 6

While making his will to Imam Hassan (a.s), Imam Hussain (a.s), his other children and companions, Imam Ali (a.s) said: *"I admonish you, all my children, members of my family and those who happen to see this writing of mine, that you should fear God, keep order in your works and maintain good mutual relationships because I have heard your grandfather, the Prophet (s.a), say that reconciliation between believers is greater than all the prayers and fasting."* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 42, Ch: 127, Hadith: 51

It becomes clear from the verses and the traditions quoted in this lesson that arranging reconciliation and dispelling estrangements are of prime importance in Islam. Attention must also be given to two more things: One: In view of the Imams (a.s), reconciliation between momineen is so important that Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) earmarked a separate fund for the purpose and particularly instructed Mufaddal saying: *"If you see any conflict between two of our shi'as, you may use my funds to resolve it."* ---Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 76, Ch: 101, Hadith: 8

In this regard one incident is reported as follows: *"Abu Hanifa was an admirer of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) and his pastime was to transport the Hajjis on camels during the Haj period. He says that, 'One day my brother-in-law and I had some debate about my inheritance. At that juncture Mufaddal came there and sat quietly for some time to gauge what the matter of contention was between the two of us. Then he said, 'Gentlemen! Come with me to my house!' When we reached his house, he gave us Dh 400 and effected reconciliation between us and we declared that we had reached rapprochement. Then Mufaddal said, 'This isn't my fund! Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has entrusted it to me and has ordered that when two*

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momins have a dispute I should arrange truce between them! ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 76, Ch: 101, Hadith: 9

Everyone knows that falsehood is a big sin and how severely the Quran and the traditions condemn it. But, if with discreet use of falsehood, the strained relationship of two momineen is reconciled, there is no problem in making access to it. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“One who is a peacemaker is not a liar.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 73, Page: 48

The Imam (a.s) also uttered this sentence to an admirer of his when he was sent to arrange a truce between two Shias and instructed him to talk to them in a particular manner. The person said that he would certainly convey the Imam (a.s)’s message to them but he wanted to know if he could add something on his own behalf and whether that would be deemed as a falsehood? The Imam (a.s) said: *“Indeed a peacemaker is not a liar. It is rather reconciliation, and not a lie.”* ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 76, Ch: 101, Hadith: 12

Summary

Pleasing momineen too is a part of Islamic Ethics and there are different ways of doing it. One method of doing it is to erase rancour from the hearts of momineen against each other and creating brotherhood and understanding between them.

This is of great importance in Islam and there is unlimited felicity and rewards for it. The Imams (a.s) have stressed much, on this aspect of Islamic Ethics.

Questions

1. In view of the Prophet (s.a) what action (of a momin) pleases Allah (SWT) the most?
2. Can the momineen be made happy only with monetary help?
3. Explain with reference to traditions why Satan is saddened when momineen reconcile with one another?
4. Why did Imam Sadiq (a.s) earmark funds to erase differences between the Shias?

5. Why is lying permitted to bring about reconciliation between momineen?

Lesson Sixteen: Taking Care of The Orphans And The Indigent

There are several ways to make momineen happy. One of the ways is to take the responsibility of orphans and poor children. Islam is a religion of love and affection and it wants to support children who have lost their parents and have none to support and care for them. Therefore, it is a collective responsibility of the momineen to provide support for them. The Holy Quran addresses the Prophet (s.a) in these words: “*Did He not find you an orphan, and gave shelter to you?*” ---Surat Al Duha, 93:6

Then it was emphasized: “*So, as for the orphan, do not oppress him;*” ---Surat Al Duha, 93:9

The Prophet (s.a) had lost his father prior to his birth. In his early childhood he had also lost his mother. He personally experienced the pangs of being an orphan. He had a soft and caring heart for the orphans and he always encouraged others to take care of them as is evident from the following sayings: “*The most beloved houses to God is a house which shelters an orphan with dignity.*” ---Al Jafariat, P: 167

The Prophet (s.a) said: “*Be like an affectionate father to the orphan and remember: As you sow, so shall you reap.*” ---Bihar Al Anwaar, Vol: 77, Ch: 18, Hadith: 23

The Prophet (s.a) further said: “*In heaven there is a house which is called ‘The House of Happiness’ which can be entered only by those who have made an orphan happy.*” ---Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, P: 170, Hadith: 6008

The Prophet (s.a) also said: “*One who takes the responsibility of three orphans, his status will be like that of the person who prays the entire night and fasts during the day and from morning till night his sword flays in the way of God. Moreover, that person and I will be together like two brothers on the day of judgment just like these two,*” the Prophet (s.a) showed together his middle and index fingers.” ---Sunan Ibn e Maaja, Vol: 2, P: 1213, Hadith: 3680

It is to be noted that because of the importance of caring for the orphans, Islam has allowed setting aside a part of the Zakat. Allah (SWT) has deemed people spending for relations and orphans as a virtuous act, provided it is to please Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says: *“.....and who give their wealth, for the love of Him, to relatives, orphans.....”* ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 177

When Imam Ali (AS) and the people of his household, for three days continuously, at the time of Iftar, had given away their food to the poor, orphan and destitute, the following verse was revealed in praise of these acts: *“They give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner. (Saying) ‘We feed you only for the sake of Allah (SWT). We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks.’ ”* ---Surat Dahr (al Insan): 76: 8 & 9

Therefore, in view of Islam, the collective responsibility of momineen is to support the orphans not only for food, clothing, education and upbringing but also with love and affection. This cannot be overlooked because it is also a responsibility of the momineen about which several verses of the Quran and traditions have reminded momineen not to be unkind with orphans. The momineen should neither distance them, nor speak angrily with them. All of this implies that we should not only care for their physical needs but also emotional needs and behave with them as we do with our own children.

The Quran says at another place: *“No indeed! Rather you do not honor the orphan, and do not urge the feeding of the needy,”* ---Surat Al Fajr, 89: 17 & 18

The referenced verse clearly talks about the requirement of honoring the orphan. Honoring and respecting orphans has a higher status than feeding them because it is likely that an orphan may not require monetary support. He still needs love, affection and respect from others. But the verse we have quoted talks of feeding the miskeen (the needy) and needs material help and not just verbal expression of affection. The Quran talks about this in the following words: *“Did you see him who denies the Retribution? That is the one who drives away the orphan, and does not urge the feeding of the needy.”* ---Surat Al Maun, 107:1 to 3

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In these verses the Quran has emphasized not neglecting the orphans and denying monetary help to the poor.

In the traditions much importance is attached to the feelings and emotions of the orphans and the momineen are exhorted to be extremely sensitive towards this. The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“One who puts his hand on the head of an orphan with kindness will be given for every hair that comes in contact with his hand a good deed.”* --- *Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, P: 177*

A companion of the Prophet (s.a) said that: *“One day I was in the presence of the Prophet (s.a) when a child came and said, ‘I am an orphan. I have with me my widowed mother and a sister. Kindly grant us some from the sustenance that Allah (SWT) has endowed you so that He gives you more from His treasure and you become happy.’ The Prophet (s.a) looked at the child and said, ‘Son! What beautiful words you have used.’ Then he (s.a) said to Hazrat Bilal, ‘Go and fetch whatever is there in our home.’ Bilal went and fetched 21 date fruits from the Prophet (s.a)’s house. Then the Prophet (s.a) gave the dates to the child and said, ‘Seven dates are for you, seven for your mother and seven for your sister.’ At that moment Ma-aaz bin Jabl stood up, put a hand of affection on the head of the orphan and prayed to Allah (SWT) to dispel the child’s orphanhood and render him the best inheritor of his father (the child was the son of a muslim migrant). The Prophet (s.a) asked Ma-aaz bin Jabl, ‘What is your intent in putting your hand on the child’s head?’ He said, ‘I have done it with sheer affection.’ The Prophet (s.a) said, ‘Anyone of you who takes good care of an orphan and puts his hand of affection on the child’s head will be granted good deeds by God, equivalent to the number of hair on his head. Also, bad deeds will be removed in the same amount, and he will be elevated in heaven to the same degree.’”*

In another narrative it is said: *“When an orphan cries, the heavens shake for his crying and God says, ‘Who has made the creature cry from whom I have taken away his parents during his childhood? By My Glory and Majesty! I will grant heaven to whoever pacifies him.’”* *Bihar al Anwaar, Vol: 75, Ch: 31, Hadith: 12*

In another narrative it is said that a person requested the Prophet (s.a) to suggest a cure for the hardness of his heart. The Prophet (s.a) said: *“Do you want your heart to soften? Then treat the orphans with kindness and put the hand of affection on their head and*

feed them from what you eat. Thus, your heart will soften and your wish will be fulfilled.”

There are innumerable instances of the Ahl al Bayt (a.s) treating the orphans with immense kindness. So far we have talked of the rights of the orphans. Similarly, the indigent and the needy too have rights over the affluent section of the society. Islam requires that there shouldn't be any beggars in the society. Therefore, it places the responsibility on the shoulders of the affluent section, giving them permission to spend Zakat funds for the purpose. Allah (SWT) has described the traits of the pious and righteous at two places in the Holy Quran, that they earmark a part of their funds for the poor and the indigent. Allah (SWT) says in Surat Dhariyat: “.....and there was a share in their wealth for the beggar and the deprived.” ---Surat Al Dhariyat, 51: 19

In Surat Ma'Arij, describing the true worshippers, Allah (SWT) says: “.....and in whose wealth there is a known right for the beggar and the deprived,” ---Surat Al Ma-Arij, 70: 24 & 25

In both verses, one important point is that, if we help the poor and the needy, we may have the feeling that we are giving to them from our funds and it is our favor on them. But in both these verses the use of the word Haq—the Right—stresses the point that true momins treat, what they give to the poor and needy as their right and not the property of the affluent person. Allah (SWT) has ordained, that a part of the funds of the affluent people is not theirs' and when they give to the poor and needy they are discharging their right and returning back to them what was a sort of loan from them. Therefore, the person who gives shouldn't think that he had given to the poor person anything that belongs to himself. This is the reason the Holy Quran has ordered several times, to help the poor and not to brag that the person had done any favor to them. Please see the following verse: “O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts!” ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 264

Summary

One way of pleasing momineen is to help the orphans and the poor. Guardianship of the orphans and fulfilling their monetary, spiritual and other needs is the responsibility of all the muslims. Monetary help will be provision of food, clothing, shelter and educational needs. Looking after the spiritual needs means treating them with love, affection and care. Since fulfilling their rights is the responsibility of the momineen, they shouldn't brag about what they have given.

Questions

1. What did the Prophet (s.a) stress about the treatment of the orphans?
2. Briefly describe the reward for guardianship of the orphans?
3. How can the needs of the orphans be fulfilled?
4. What has Allah (SWT) promised to the person who pleases an orphan?
5. What is the difference between the needs of the orphans and the poor?
6. Why is bragging not right after rendering help to the poor?

Lesson Seventeen: Ayadat Or Visiting The Sick

Visiting the sick to inquire about their health is a way of pleasing the momineen and it is an important aspect of Islamic Ethics. Let us now see what Islam says about it and the guidance it gives to the momineen.

In this lesson, we shall discuss all the related matters. *Ayadat* (visiting the sick): momineen have certain rights over one another and visiting the sick too is one of them. In the previous lesson, we have said, that momins have to do certain things as mandated duties and any neglect in doing them will be termed as *Khianat* or breach of trust. Since it is the right of the momineen, bragging about it after doing it isn't right. We quote a few traditions in this regard.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *"A muslim has the right over another muslim that when they meet, they greet each other; when one of them falls ill, the other must check up on him; and if the person dies, he should walk in his funeral."* ---Makarim al Akhlaq, P: 359

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *"A muslim has thirty binding rights over another muslim in which there is no exemption except through fulfilling them or being excused by the other ... visiting him when he becomes ill."* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol 74, Ch: 15, Hadith: 36

Maali bin Khanis asked Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) about the rights of one muslim over another. The Imam (a.s) said: *"There are seven incumbent rights upon a muslim for another muslim. If there is even the slightest shortcoming in performing one of them the person will be expelled from the companionship of God and would not be His devotee. I asked, "May my life be sacrificed for you, what are these rights?" The Imam replied, "O Mu'Allah (SWT)! I am afraid that you will come to know them but won't fulfill them or that you will learn them but don't practice them." I said, "There is no power save that of God's." The Imam (a.s) said, "The least right is that you like for your brother what you like for yourself,*

and dislike for him what you dislike for yourself ... and the seventh right is that you should believe his testimony, accept his invitation, and if he fell ill you should visit him, and if he dies you must attend his funeral. If it comes to your knowledge that he has an unfulfilled need, you must immediately seek out to assist him in fulfilling it.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 15, Hadith: 40

Another companion of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s), Muawiya bin Wahb, says that he asked the Imam (a.s), “What sort of treatment should we give to our relatives?” The Imam (a.s) replied, “Return their trusts, be their witness whether in their favor or against them; visit their sick and attend their funerals.” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 2, Page: 535

Such traditions indicate that when one momin goes to visit another momin, who is not well, (Ayadat) he fulfills his duty, and is satisfied that he has done with what is expected of him in Islam. The other momin, who is not well, feels happy for such an act. As a result, Allah (SWT) will be happy with him.

Emphasis on Visiting The Sick

Islam has made it binding on muslims to call on their sick brethren. It has deemed it a duty under Shariah. The infallibles (a.s) have emphasized innumerable benefits to the person who is visiting the sick. The Prophet (s.a)’s said, “When a muslim visits his sick brother, God Almighty says, ‘May you and your pathway be sanctified. You have surely earned a place in heaven.’” ---Usoole e Kaafi, Vol: 2, Page: 120, Hadith: 6

He (s.a.w) also said, “When a believer visits another believer who is ill in the morning, seventy thousand angels would accompany him, and when he goes and sits near the ill person, mercy would surround him and the angels will ask God to forgive his sins until the night falls. And if he visits him at night, it would be the same until the morning comes.” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol, 2, Page: 120, Hadith: 6

He (s.a.w) also said, “God will reprimand a person on the Day of judgement by saying, ‘O creature of Mine! What prevented you from visiting me when I was ill?’ The person would say, ‘May you be Exalted! You are the Lord of the creatures! You neither feel pain nor get sick.’ God would then reply, ‘Your brother in faith became sick and you did not visit him.

Lesson Seventeen: Ayadat Or Visiting The Sick

By My Majesty and Glory! If you had visited him, you would have found Me there and I would have fulfilled your needs and taken responsibility for them. I do this because of the dignity of my believing creature and I am the All-Merciful.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 7, Ch: 15, Hadith: 75

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“Hazrat Moosa (a.s) had asked Allah (SWT) in his supplication, ‘O Allah (SWT)! What is the reward of visiting a person who is ill - (Ayadat)?’ Allah (SWT) replied, ‘I shall earmark an angel who will visit him from the grave till the day of judgement (Mahshar)’”* --- Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 11

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“One who does Ayadat of a sick person for the pleasure of Allah (SWT), and the sick person prays for him, Allah (SWT) will certainly accept that prayer!”* ---Previous reference, Hadith: 10

It becomes clear from the referred traditions, that sins of a person will be pardoned, and wishes fulfilled, if one goes to visit the sick (Ayadat). The angels will pray for his forgiveness and he will go to heaven.

The Way of Doing Ayadat

As there are norms for doing everything else in the world, doing Ayadat too requires certain norms to be observed:

1. Present something to the sick person to please him. The Prophet(s.a) has said in this regard: *“When a person serves an ill person something that he likes, Allah (SWT) will give him the fruits of the Heaven”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 32

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s)’s companion has said that a friend of his fell ill. On the way to visiting his friend, he met the Imam. The Imam (a.s) asked him where was he going. He replied that he was visiting someone ill. The Imam (a.s) asked, ‘Are you carrying any gift like some fruits or perfume for him?’ He replied, ‘No!’ The Imam (a.s) said, ‘Don’t you know that if a gift is given to a sick person, it pleases and makes him comfortable!’” --Bihar Al Anwar , Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 39

2. The second norm for Ayadat of a sick person is that one shouldn’t sit there for a long time. Generally, a sick person suffers from pains and uneasiness and he needs more rest

and relaxation. When a visitor tarries with him for long, he might feel uncomfortable. Therefore the Prophet (s.a) said: *“The best Ayadat is one which is very short.”* ---Kanz al Amal, Vol: 9, P: 94, Hadith: 25139

Also, the Prophet (saw) said *“Visiting a sick person should be as short as the time it takes a camel to sit.”*

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“Among the people who go for the Ayadat of the sick, those who get the maximum of felicity are ones who sit with him for a short while unless the person who is ill needs the visitor or asks him to stay longer.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 1

3. Enquiring about the health of the sick person & praying for his recovery: The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“The complete method of doing Ayadat of a sick person is that the visitor should put his hand on him and make inquiries about his health and how he spent the night. To end the visit the person should gently shake hands with him.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 32
4. The Prophet (s.a) also said: *“Do Ayadat of the sick person and offer this prayer for him: ‘Alla humma ashfehi beshifaeka wa daawehi bedawaeka wa aafehi min balaeka—O Allah (SWT)! Cure him through Your curing, treat him with Your medication and protect him from distress!’* ---Previous reference.
5. Comforting the patient & strengthening his determination too is a part of ayadat, The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“When you call on a sick person give him hope of recovery. Even if this talk doesn’t improve the condition, certainly it would soothe the patient’s heart.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 33
6. Don’t expect the sick person or his family to entertain you. As far as possible, one should stop them from taking any trouble for you because the Prophet (s.a) has said that *“One shouldn’t eat anything near the sick person. If he eats something, the felicity of Ayadat will be voided!”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 4, Hadith: 41

Summary

One part of Islamic Ethics and the way of pleasing the momineen is to call on people who are ill. Islam has deemed it the right of momineen and has stressed much on its felicity.

Lesson Seventeen: Ayadat Or Visiting The Sick

There are certain norms for doing Ayadat of the ill like, visiting for a short while, taking along a small gift, inquiring about his health and praying for his speedy recovery, giving him encouragement to fight the ailment and not to expect any hospitality and entertainment from his family in return.

Questions

1. Why is *Ayadat* of a sick person a requirement for momineen?
2. If *Ayadat* is a right, what will be its result?
3. What is meant by Allah (SWT)'s *Ayadat*?
4. Briefly describe the norms of *Ayadat*.
5. Describe some benefits of *Ayadat*.

Lesson Eighteen: Participating In Occasions Of Happiness & Sorrow

It is necessary for momineen, that in times of trouble and hardship, they should help each other. They must also participate in happy as well as sad occasions of their brothers in faith. Relationship and friendship is assessed only at such times.

In one's life, events of happiness and sorrow occur when he expects others to be with him. This gives peace and tranquility to his heart. If we want others do this with us we also should participate with enthusiasm in their good and bad times.

In traditions, brotherhood between momineen is termed as a "two-way participation". Reciprocal visits of contacts are made when a person visits another person, and the latter returns the visit". Brotherhood and friendship will be successful if there is reciprocity in relationship.

We are discussing here, as an example, two instances of happiness and sorrow in light of narrations.

Acceptance of Invitation

One of the rights that the muslims have over each other is to accept a momin's invitation. In the tradition, it is deemed a right as Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: "*It is only right that if a muslim invites another, that he accepts his invitation.*" ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 89, Hadith: 5*

In another narration, refusing acceptance of a momin's invitation is termed as oppression towards him. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) narrates the saying of the Prophet (s.a) that he said: "*.....three acts are loathful acts. One of them is that when a believer is invited for*

a meal, he rejects the invitation, or that he accepts it but abstains from eating.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 11, Hadith: 5

Imam Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Among the obligatory rights of a believer over another believer is that he must accept his invitation.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 89, Hadith: 6*

In the above quoted traditions this right has been clearly mentioned. There can be various reasons for an invitation but generally invitation for Valima is termed as real invitation. It is an established fact that when someone invites people, he makes arrangements to honor the guests. He spends for the occasion and he wishes that all the invitees attend. When people attend, it pleases the host and the guest gets felicity of respecting a momin. Therefore, a momin should not turn down the invitation of another momin without a valid reason. The Prophet (s.a),has deemed acceptance of a momin’s invitation as a part and parcel of our religion: *“It is my will and testament, to everyone present and absent, that you must accept the invitation of a muslim even if the venue is at a distance of five miles (afar), because this is a part of religion.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch:89, Hadith: 7*

In another tradition, the Prophet (s.a) said: *“A person who turns down the invitation of a muslim, has disobeyed God and His Messenger. However, at a function where only rich people are invited, and the poor muslims are excluded, attending the function will be undesirable (makrooh).” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 89, Hadith: 11*

If only affluent persons are invited, then as said by the Prophet (s.a), one should turn down the invitation because Islam has rejected all class differences in the society and it doesn’t permit giving superiority to anyone because of his wealth. In view of Islam, the yardstick of superiority is piety of a person.

Therefore, if the attitude of a person reflects consideration for wealth or tribalism then in view of Islam such attitude is condemnable.

This was the reason Imam Ali (a.s) reprimanded the governor of Basra, Othman bin Hunayf who attended such a party, in a letter he wrote to him: *“O son of Hunayf! I have come to know that a young man of Basra invited you to a feast and you leapt towards it. Foods of different colors were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given*

Lesson Eighteen: Participating In Occasions Of Happiness & Sorrow

to you. I never thought that you would accept the feast of a people who turn the beggars out while inviting the rich. Look at the morsels which you take. Leave out that about which you are in doubt and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully. Remember that every follower has a leader whom he follows, and from the glory of whose knowledge he derives light. Realize that your Imam is satisfied with two shabby pieces of cloth out of the (comforts of the) world and two loaves for his meal. Certainly, you cannot do so, but at least support me in piety, exertion, chastity and uprightness because, by Allah (SWT), I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor collected any clothes other than these two shabby sheets.” - Nahj ul Balagha: Letter 45

If an invitation is not in contravention of islamic norms, a momin shouldn't turn down the invitation because it is the right of a momin and also obedience to Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (s.a).

Condolences

Another right that momineen have over each other is that, when a momin passes away, they participate in the procession of the cortege, burial and attend the Isal e Sawab (condolence) gatherings. The Imams (a.s) have made particular reference about it that, presence of the momineen at the final bath, shrouding, funeral prayer and interment of the deceased momin is Wajib Kifae (Obligatory if no one else is doing it). The importance of this is highlighted in the following tradition:

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“One who participates in the funeral rites of a believer, will receive four types of intercessions on the Day of Reckoning and whatever prayer he offered for the deceased, an angel would tell him, ‘and you too shall receive the same.’” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 80, Ch: 7, Hadith: 2*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“God will send seventy thousand angels to ask for forgiveness of a person who participates in the funeral rites of a deceased believer till the burial is done. The angels will remain in this state till he leaves the cemetery.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 7, Hadith: 1*

The Imam (a.s) also said: *“Twenty major sins of one who participates in the funeral of a believer will be forgiven.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 7, Hadith: 6

In a similar manner, the Imam (a.s) addressed Khaythamah and said: *“O Khaythamah! Convey our greetings to our followers and remind them to be God-wary and to fear Him... and also tell them that the living amongst them must participate in the funeral of their dead ones.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 81, Ch: 7, Hadith: 9

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“While giving the last bath to a deceased momin, when the mortal remains are turned during the process, the person should say, ‘O Allah (SWT)! This is the body of Your creature whose spirit You have taken away and separated them. Therefore, pardon him.’ Then Allah (SWT) will pardon his major and minor sins committed during the period of one year.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 80, Ch: 9, Hadith: 5

Imam Sadiq (a.s) has said: *‘When someone gives the final bath of cleanliness to a momin and acts with trust, his sins will be pardoned.’ A question was asked as to what was meant by acting with trust? The Imam (a.s) said, ‘Whatever he saw, he shouldn’t mention to others!’* ---Bihar al Anwar, vol: 80, Ch: 8, Hadith: 6

Imam Hasan (a.s) has reported this from the Prophet (s.a): *“When a muslim recites the funeral prayer of another momin, Allah (SWT) deems Heaven obligatory (Wajib) for him provided he isn’t a Munafiq (Hypocrite) or Aaq (Disinherited)!”* --- Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 78, 347

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) reported from the Prophet (s.a): *“A person who recites the funeral prayer of a deceased person, seventy thousand angels would offer prayer for him and Allah (SWT) will forgive all his past and future sins. And if the person stays till the interment and filling of the soil in the grave, for every step he took he will get one carat of felicity and the carat will be equal to Mt. Ohod!”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 6, Hadith: 1

The mentioned traditions highlight the felicity of attending the last rites of the deceased momins and the felicity of this is so much that it gives one the idea about the importance of the act.

There is another right of the deceased over the momineen that after the funeral they should attend the mourning functions,

provide solace to the family of the deceased and pray for the salvation of the deceased and visit their graves.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“Putting a distressed person at rest and giving condolences to him will get equal recompense and reward.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 82, Ch: 16, Hadith: 49

The Prophet (s.a) also said: *“When one offers condolences to a momin in times of trouble, Allah (SWT) will attire him in raiment of felicity on the Day of Reckoning.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 82, Ch: 16, Hadith: 49

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“One who condoles a grieving person Allah (SWT) will allot to him a place in the Firmament under His Shadow, the day in which there will not be any other shadow other than His Shadow of Mercy.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Ch: 26, Hadith: 157

Imam Ali (a.s) also said: *“Keep visiting the graves of your bygones because they will be pleased with your visits and if one has some needs, he should visit the graves of his parents and first pray for their deliverance and then pray for the fulfilment of his own needs.”* ---Bihar, Vol: 10, Ch: 7, Hadith: 1

An admirer of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) asked him: *“A momin who visits the graves of his parents or persons known to him, or even unknown persons, will the dead persons get any felicity?”* The Imam (a.s) said, *‘Yes, Why not? It is just like you receiving a gift and feeling happy about it; the dead persons too feel happy about your visit!’* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 49, Page: 64

Summary

For living in the society momineen have a right that we participate with each other on occasions of happiness and sadness. If someone expires, we must attend the last rites viz: the funeral procession, shrouding, burial, Fateha, recitation of the Quran and condolence gatherings. These will soothe the feelings of the loved ones.

Questions

1. Why is rejecting a momin’s invitation termed as cruelty?
2. In view of the Prophet (s.a), accepting what type invitation is makrooh (undesirable)?

3. What are our duties pertaining to deceased persons?
4. What sort of treatment must be given to the mourners?
5. Can a momin be pleased even after his death? What is the way of doing it?

Lesson Nineteen: Meeting People & Hospitality

Calling on each other is included in the norms of Islamic culture because according to Islamic ethics it is necessary that momineen should be meeting each other to be informed of their mutual welfare. This practice enhances love and affection. It makes sense that if the frequency of meeting between two friends decreases, they will eventually forget each other after some time. Therefore, the momineen who reside near each other should make it a practice to meet regularly. If they live at some distance they may use other means of communication to be aware of each other and express feelings of affection.

Islam encourages brotherhood, friendship, love and affection and has commanded to keep close relations with one another. Meeting one another is an important aspect of keeping relations together and with meeting the relations are strengthened further. Hence, Islam has emphasized this aspect and has reminded momineen about this to the point that in some traditions it is said that meeting a momin is like meeting Allah (SWT).

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“When a person goes to visit his brother in faith in his home without having a specific need he wishes to be fulfilled, he will be included among visitors of God and God deems it His duty to honor His visitors.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 81, Hadith: 77

At another place, the Prophet (s.a) said: *“When a person visits the home of a believing brother, God says to him, ‘You are My guest and Visitor and it is My responsibility to receive and honor you. I have granted you heaven for your love of your brother.’”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 81, Hadith: 4

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also said, *“He who visits his brother for the sake of God, He says to him, ‘It is I that you have visited and your reward is my responsibility, and for that I will not settle for anything less than heaven.’”*

In another Hadith Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“The Prophet (s.a) said, ‘Gabriel (upon whom be peace) informed me that God had sent down an angel to earth. The angel kept walking until he reached a door which was being knocked by a person seeking permission to enter the house. The angel then asked him, ‘what is it that you are seeking from the owner of this house?’ The man replied, ‘This is my muslim brother whom I am visiting for the sake of God.’ The angel then asked, ‘You have no other reason than this?’ The visitor says, ‘This is the only reason why I came.’ The angel then said, ‘I am God’s messenger to you and He sends you His greetings and says that you have been granted paradise.’ Then the angel added, ‘God Almighty says that when a muslim visits another muslim, it is not his brother whom he visited but rather it is Me who he visited, and his reward for the visit is paradise.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 59, Ch: 23, Hadith: 39

These traditions highlight the importance of meeting momineen as indicated by the Infallibles (a.s). They termed it as seeing and meeting Allah (SWT). However, the two traditions indicate, that such meetings should be to please Allah (SWT). Therefore, when people meet others without this intention and only for some other purpose, it does not hold the same significance in front of Allah (SWT) and would just be calling on someone for a selfish motive.

In the traditions, several benefits of meeting the momineen have been indicated and Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said that when momineen meet, their hearts get invigorated: *“Continuously visit each other because with it comes the enlivening of your hearts and the remembrance of our sayings. Our sayings bring you closer to one another. If you act on our sayings you will be guided and saved, but if you neglect them you will go astray and perish. Therefore, follow our sayings and I will guarantee your salvation.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 15, Hadith: 56

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) said: *“Visit one another in your homes because it brings remembrance to our matter. May God have mercy upon those who remember our matter.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 2, Ch: 19, Hadith:

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Another point, noted in these traditions is that, our Imams (a.s) expect that when we go to meet the momineen, we should relate the traditions that enliven the religion of the Ahl al Bayt (a.s) and our hearts get illuminated.

Lesson Nineteen: Meeting People & Hospitality

There is yet another benefit of such meetings. They enhance mutual love and affection as the Prophet (s.a) has said: “*Meetings enhance love [between people].*” *Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 21, Hadith: 36*

Imam Ali (a.s) said: “*Meeting friends is very beneficial even if the frequency of meetings is limited.*” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 21, Hadith: 16*

Looking After One’s Guests and Hospitality

When a relative or a friend visits us, we entertain and take good care of him. We try to sit with him at a comfortable place and talk. Receiving guests strengthens relationships. The Infallibles (a.s) have mentioned its innumerable merits and virtues. The Prophet (s.a) has said on numerous occasions:

- “*A house where guests do not enter would not be entered by the angels.*” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 93, Hadith: 14*
- “*There is no good in a person who does not host guests.*” ---*Mahjat al Barda, Vol: 3, Page: 36*
- “*A guest brings his sustenance along with him and takes away the sins of the host.*” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 93, Hadith: 14*

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: “*Anyone who has been endowed by God with wealth should assist his relatives and be hospitable to his guests.*” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 30, Hadith: 14*

The Norms of Looking After Guests:

Islam has some norms for entertainment of guests of which some concern the hosts and some are for the guests. Here we are discussing some salient features of these.

1. The most important aspect of treating guests in Islam is taqwa (Piety). Therefore, it is proper that only God wary persons are invited as guests and also accept invitations from such persons. One should neither invite nor accept invitations of people who openly disobey Allah (SWT). The Prophet (s.a) has said in this regard: “*Eat only the food of a God-wary person and let only a God-wary person eat from your food.*” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Hadith: 86*

He also said, “Do not eat from the food of wrongdoers.” The Prophet (s.a) also said: “Serve your food and water to the one whom you love for the sake of God.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch: 4, Hadith: 2

2. Don't make any difference between the rich and the poor when you entertain people and invite only the pious believers even if they are poor. Observe this principle while accepting other invitations. It is narrated, that one-day Imam Hasan (a.s) saw some beggars sitting and eating on a hillock. When they saw him they said, ‘O Son of the Prophet (s.a), Will you like to have food with us? The Imam (a.s) said, ‘Why not? God doesn't like arrogance.’ Then he dismounted from his horse, sat with them, and shared food with them and went his way.’ ---Aiyān al Shia, Vol: 4, Page: 22
3. Similarly, one should not shrink from accepting an invitation because of long distance. We have mentioned the Prophet (s.a)'s tradition in the previous lesson saying: “Even if you have to travel a distance of five miles to attend a believing brother's feast, you must go.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 72, Page: 447
4. When a guest enters the venue, he must sit wherever he finds a space to sit and should not look for a vantage place and should not give trouble to others to accommodate him or he should sit where the host indicates to him.
5. The host should not ask his guest to perform any task as a guest of Imam Sadiq (a.s) once got up several times to perform some tasks the Imam(a.s) asked him not to do it and he himself did that work and said: “The Prophet (s.a) had prohibited making a guest perform any task for the host.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 41, Hadith: 49
6. The host shouldn't put himself and his family members to trouble for the guest as the Prophet (s.a) has asked in one of his traditions. There is a narration that a person invited Imam Ali (a.s) to his house when the Imam (a.s) said: “If you promise three things, I shall accept your invitation.” He asked, “What are the three things?” The Imam (a.s) said, “Don't fetch anything for me from outside, don't preserve anything at home for me and don't put your family members in any trouble

Lesson Nineteen: Meeting People & Hospitality

because of me.” The person accepted the conditions and the Imam (a.s) accepted the invitation. ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 91, Hadith: 4

As a rule, expensive and lavish parties are contrary to the norms of friendship and love because the financial status of everyone will not be the same. Therefore, the momineen with lesser means might feel conscious to attend such lavish parties or with the intent of rivalry, one might spend beyond his means to throw a return party. This might create distance between friends instead of enhancing love and affection.

7. After sitting on the spread, the host should start eating first and keep eating till the end. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Whenever the Prophet (s.a) had his food with guests, he would be the first to start and the last to end so that others would eat well without any hesitation.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 91, Hadith: 22*
8. When the guest decides to leave, the host should accompany him to the door and bid farewell. The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“In hospitality the sunnat (tradition) is that, when seeing off a guest, the host should accompany him to the door. Similarly, the guest should leave the venue of the party after obtaining permission of the host and when bidding farewell he should thank him with a smile.”*

Summary

Momineen meeting one other, would enhance love and affection between them, therefore the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s) stress this point.

The same is the benefit of arranging get-togethers and entertaining guests. This is the reason Islam requires inviting noble and truthful people and not transgressors (Faasiq wa Faajir). They should not also make difference between rich and the poor because the standard of superiority in Islam is piety of a person and not his wealth and status.

The host should not let the guest perform any task for him and not put himself or his family members to trouble because of the guest. When the guest is about to leave, the host should go to the door to see him off.

The host should be the first to start eating and should withdraw his hand from the food last.

Questions

1. 1. What is the status of meeting of momineen according to traditions?
2. 2. Is there any significance, in front of Allah (SWT), when meeting a momin for one's own work?
3. 3. Mention some benefits and importance of momineen meeting one other.
4. 4. What did the Infallibles (a.s) say about entertaining guests?
5. 5. Briefly describe the norms of entertaining guests.

Lesson Twenty: Greeting

Jn every nation and society, when someone meets others, he expresses his happiness and before commencing a conversation. Some special ways of greeting one another are adopted and words are exchanged. In Islamic Ethics and practice too there are norms to greet each other, shake hands and embrace each other as Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “*Salam (greetings with peace) is the greeting of our nation and a guarantee of protection.*” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 46

1. Quran has instructed muslims regarding the Islamic Way of greeting and it has shown that the Islamic Greeting is only “*Salam alaikum—May peace be on you*” as Surat Al Nur says: “*.....So when you enter houses, greet yourselves or greet your folks with a Salutation from Allah (SWT), blessed and good. Thus, does Allah (SWT) clarify His signs for you so that you may apply reason.*” ---Surat Al-Nur, 24: 61
2. “The servants of All-beneficent are those who walk humbly on earth, and when the ignorant address them, say, ‘*Salam-Peace!*’” ---Surat Al Furqan, 25: 63
3. When Prophet Ibrahim (a.s) refused to worship the idols his uncle chided him and insisted on his worshipping them and threatened him that, if he didn’t do it, he would be stoned. Prophet Ibrahim (a.s) very politely replied: “*He said, ‘Peace be to you (Salamun Alaik)! I shall plead with my Lord to forgive you!’*” ---Surat Maryam, 19:47
4. According to the same narrative, when the angels came as guests to Prophet Ibrahim (a.s) they greeted him and he (a.s) replied to the greeting: “*Certainly Our messenger came to Ibrahim (a.s) with the good news and said, ‘Peace!’ ‘Peace!’ he replied!*” ---Surat Hud, 11:69
5. In many verses Allah (SWT) talked of His truthful creatures and uttered benedictions and salutation for them: “*Peace be to*

Noah throughout the nation, Peace be to Ibrahim, Peace be to Moosa and Haroon, Peace be to Ilyas.” ---Surat Al Saffat, 37: 79, 109, 120,130

6. Similarly in many verses Allah (SWT) said that Salam (Greeting) is the way of the people of the Heaven as it is said in Surat Ra'd: "...and the angels will call on them from every door, 'Peace be to you, for your patience.' How excellent is the reward of the (ultimate) abode!" ---Surat Al Ra'd, 13: 23 & 24

In Surat Nahl it is said: "...those whom the angels take away while they are pure. They say (to them), 'Peace be to you!' Enter paradise because of what you used to do" ---Surat Al Nahl, 16:32

Besides these, several verses of the Quran discuss about Salam and particularly, in the traditions of the Prophet (s.a) and the Infallibles (a.s), there is stress on Salam (Greeting) and have talked of much felicity to those who do it. We are mentioning a few traditions here:

- The Prophet (s.a) said: "There are rooms in heaven which can be seen from inside out, and outside in. In those rooms will be those persons of my nation who talk pleasantly, feed people, and greet others kindly. In the nights, they remain awake and pray whilst others take pleasure in their sleep." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 8, Ch: 32, Hadith: 5
- Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said that one day, the Prophet (s.a) addressing the progeny of Abd al Mutallib said: "O progeny of Abd al Mutallib! Greet each other with peace. Help your needy relatives and when people are asleep offer the late night prayers, and feed the people and talk with them in a pleasant manner so that you enter heaven with peace." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 69, Ch: 38, Hadith: 74
- The Prophet (s.a) also said: "Greet those who you encounter with peace and God will increase your reward. Greet the people at home and God will endow you with more blessings." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 69, Ch: 38, Hadith: 81.
- The Prophet said "Should I not make you aware of the best manners of people of this world and the hereafter?", everyone replied, "surely make us aware O Prophet of God," he replied, "Spreading peace in the world." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 50

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- The Prophet (s.a) also said: “*Salam (Peace) is one of the names of God and therefore you should utter it and spread it amongst yourselves.*” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 84, Ch: 78, Hadith: 30
- Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “*When someone greets another person saying ‘Salam alaikum’ he will receive twenty rewards.*” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 46
- The Imam (a.s) also said: “*One way of removing one’s sins is greeting each other with ‘Salam’ and speaking well with others.*” ---Previous reference
- The Imam (a.s) said: “*It is of humility to say ‘Salam’ to who you greet.*” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 51, Hadith: 9

Since there is no exertion or inconvenience in greeting people with ‘Salam’ nor one has to spend anything for doing it, the Prophet (s.a) said: “*The most parsimonious (miserly) person is one who holds back greeting others.*” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 100, Ch: 5, Hadith: 26

The Norms of Saying ‘Salam’

Since ‘Salam’ is a virtuous act and Allah (SWT) has said: “*...So take the lead in all good works...*” ---Surat al Maidah, 5:48

Therefore, the momineen should take lead in greeting others. It is recorded in the biography of the Prophet (s.a), that whenever he met anyone, he would greet him prior to the person wishing him. Imam Ali (a.s) says in this regard: “*There are seventy rewards in ‘Salam’; sixty nine are allocated to the initiator and one for the person who reciprocates.*” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 46

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said: “*One who is the first in saying ‘Salam’ is closer to God and the Prophet (s.a).*”

The ‘Salam’ and its acceptance should be so loud that it should be audible to the one who has been addressed as Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: “*When you say ‘Salam’ to anyone, say it loudly so that you don’t claim that you greeted others but they didn’t reply to you. Perhaps it was uttered in a low voice that people didn’t hear it. Similarly, when you acknowledge anyone’s ‘Salam’, do it loudly in case the person might say that he had greeted and no one replied.*” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 2, P: 465, Hadith: 7

Before starting a conversation, one should say ‘Salam’ as the Prophet (s.a) has said: *“Don’t reply to a person who starts talking (abruptly) without saying ‘Salam’.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 6

The Prophet (s.a) also said: *“Don’t invite anyone to your spread unless he has said, ‘Salam’.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 6

Imam Hussain (a.s) has said: *“Don’t give permission to anyone for anything until he has said ‘Salam!’”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 20, Hadith: 2

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Greeting comes before speaking.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 92, Ch: 17, Hadith: 17

For saying ‘Salam’ there is no restriction of age and status. Whoever gets precedence in greeting will get more felicity. It is mentioned in the biography of the Prophet (s.a) that he used to even greet the children with ‘Salam’. He has said: *“I cannot forsake five things till my death. One of them is saying ‘Salam’ to children so that this practice becomes established after me.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 16, Ch: 6, Hadith: 37

However, the question is who should take precedence in saying ‘Salam’? Even for this there are norms as the Prophet (s.a) said: *“The practice is that the rider says ‘Salam’ to the person on foot, the person astride a horse says ‘Salam’ to a person on a pony, the youngster to the elder, the group with a smaller number of persons to the larger group, the one who is standing should precede in saying ‘Salam’ to the person who is seated.”*

In one of the narrations Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says that the inference is drawn from traditions that one for whom observing humility is more becoming should precede in saying ‘Salam’ as it is also reflected in the sayings of the Prophet (s.a).

The method of acknowledging ‘Salam’ is that it should be done in a manner better than or at least the same as the ‘Salam’ of the person who preceded greeting as it is said in the Quran: *“When you are greeted with a salute, greet with a better one than it, or return it; indeed Allah (SWT) takes account of all things.”* ---Surat al Nisa, 4:86

It is narrated that a person came to the presence of the Prophet (s.a) and greeted saying *“as salamun Alaik!”* He (s.a) replied, *“Alaik al Salamu wa Rahmat Allah (SWT)!”* Then someone else came and greeted

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'As Salamu alaika wa Rahmat Allah (SWT).' The Prophet (s.a) replied, "As salamun Alaika war Rahmat Allah (SWT)i wa Barkatuhu!" After a while a third person came and greeted, "As Salamu alaikum Wa rahmat Allah (SWT)i wa Barkatuhu" The Prophet (s.a) replied, "Alaikas salam wa Rahmat Allah (SWT)i wa Barkatuhu."

A companion who was sitting with the Prophet (s.a) had listened to the Prophet (s.a) replying to the three persons in three different ways. He asked that in the first and second responses he (s.a) added some words but to the last person the same words were repeated in the reply as the person used? The Prophet (s.a) said that the person had not left any word in his 'salam' therefore he (s.a) replied the same way as the person greeted him!

While concluding the discussion about 'Salam' it is necessary to remind that 'Salam' is an Islamic tradition which should be customary amongst the mومineen and by studying the narrations we learn that addressing 'Salam' to infidels or transgressors isn't permissible.

Shaking Hands & Embracing —Musafeha Wa Muaneqa

In Islam after 'Salam' shaking hands and hugging is very important. Imam Ali (a.s) has said: "When you meet brothers in faith you must shake hands with them and do it pleasantly with a smile. In this way when you separate your sins will all be forgiven." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 100, Hadith: 3

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has recorded this saying of the Prophet (s.a): "When you meet someone you greet him with 'Salam' and a hand-shake and when you separate do ask for God's forgiveness." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 97, Hadith: 13

Similarly, it is reported from the Prophet (s.a): "Shake hands with each other because shaking hands dispels rancour." ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch: 7, Hadith: 1

Imam Jafer Sadiq (AS) said: "when believers embrace each other the mercy of God will cover them."

The Prophet (s.a) also said: "The complete way of 'Salam' with a non-travelling-resident is, shaking hands with him and the complete way of

‘Salam’ with a traveler is that, one hugs him.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 23, Hadith: 108

It is mentioned in the traditions of the Prophet (s.a) that when he shook hands with anyone, till that person took away his hand, he (s.a) wouldn't let go of the other person's hand. In fact he (s.a) expressed his love and care for the person in this manner. In one tradition, Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has recorded that the Prophet (s.a) said: *“When believers meet and shake hands with one other, God places His hand between theirs and shakes hands with the one who has more love towards the other.”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 100, Hadith: 12

Considering this hadith, the person who wants to place his hands in Allah (SWT) hands, must shake hands with his momin brother.

Summary

The Islamic way of meeting is that, when someone meets another person he should greet with ‘Salam’ shake hands, embrace and hug. The Infallibles (a.s) have said, that prior to any talk, one should express his ‘Salam’. One should try to get precedence in saying ‘Salam’. Saying ‘Salam’ loudly and acknowledging the ‘Salam’ is a part of the norms of Islamic Morals.

Questions

1. What conclusion is drawn from the verses of the Quran about “Salam”?
2. What is the significance of making salam as an everyday practice?
3. In view of Islam who should take precedence in saying ‘Salam’?
4. How should one respond to another person's ‘Salam’?
5. What is Musafeha and Muaneqa?

Lesson Twenty-One: Honoring Rights

Allah (SWT) has ordained certain laws and rights for the human beings in this world and there are certain Hudood (Islamic Restrictive Ordinances) which must be followed implicitly. In fact, following them, one feels secure in life. These laws preserve the lives, property and position of the people and every person can live his life peacefully within those limits. When rights of others are not honored everyone will feel insecure regarding their future. If everyone transgresses others' rights of property and honor, avenues of progress of the society would close and the society would collapse in some time. As a result, Allah (SWT) established certain rights for people and has required everyone to live by them. He has also provided resources to protect these rights. The first among them is the human being himself. Allah (SWT) has taught man so that he understands others' rights and follows these and those who transgress these limits Allah (SWT) has ordered certain penalties for them.

Since, only the moral side is the concern of our discussion, we shall deal with the Hudood (ordinances) that have been devised for the people. We shall also discuss about the penalties for those who break these rules.

Personal Hudood Or Ordinances

Personal hudood means those ordinances which men wish to maintain in their personal lives and they don't want any interference in them like the domestic life, the personal room in the house etc. In this regard, Islam requires permission for other than the owner for entry into the domain as the Quran says: "*O you who have faith! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have announced (your arrival) and greeted their occupants. That is better for you. Maybe you will take admonition. But if you do not find anyone in*

them, do not enter them until you are given permission, and if you are told, 'Turn back', then turn back! That is more decent for you. And Allah (SWT) knows best what you do." ---Surat Al Nur, 24:27 & 28

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *"To enter someone's house permission has to be obtained thrice. The first call should be to let the inmates know that someone wishes to enter, the second call is to prepare the inmates to receive him and if on the third call the inmates don't respond the person should go away."* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 98, Hadith: 2

The other aspect of the ruling is that the visitor should enter the house from the main door and not by scaling the back wall. In early days of Islam, some persons used to take pride that entering someone's house by jumping the back wall was a great achievement and an expression of their profound love for the house owner. Therefore, this verse was revealed to stop the practice. *"It is not piety that you come into houses from their rear; rather piety is (personified by) one who is God wary, and comes into houses from their doors, and be wary of Allah (SWT) so that you may be felicitous."* ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 189

The other side of this ruling is that even the residents of a house should also follow rules. Even the parents and siblings of the house-owner have to follow the rule as Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Book: *"O you who have faith! Let your permission be sought by your slaves and those of you who have not reached puberty three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put off your garments at noon, and after the night prayer. These are the three times of privilege for you. Apart from these, it is not sinful of you or them to frequent one another (freely). Thus, does Allah (SWT) clarify the signs for you, and Allah (SWT) is all-knowing, all-wise."* ---Surat Al Nur, 24:58 & 59

Hiding Faults

Every person will have some faults and failings. There is no human being who hasn't committed a mistake sometime or other and it is said in the traditions that every human being commits mistakes and makes efforts to hide them. Allah (SWT) too is Sattaar al Uyoob (one who covers faults) and befriends those who hide faults of others. Therefore, exposing others' faults is a vicious trait

and it is Haram (prohibited). The Prophet (s.a) says: “He who knows about a fault of his brother and hides it will have a veil put by God which covers his faults on the Day of Judgment.” ---*Al Targhib wal Tarhib, Vol: 3, Page: 239 & Masnad Ahmed, Vol: 4, Page: 104*

It is narrated that a person told Prophet (s.a): “I would like God not to expose my faults.” The Prophet (s.a) replied, “Then you should hide your brother’s faults so that God may hide yours.” ---*Kanz al Amal, Vol: 16, P: 129, Hadith: 44154*

Similarly, it is narrated from Prophet (s.a) that: “Any person who speaks of a believer with the intent of lowering his status in front of others, God will remove him from His companionship and shift him to the companionship of Satan but even Satan won’t accept him.” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 57, Hadith: 40*

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) says: “The nearest a person can be to infidelity is when he becomes close to another person in the name of his Creed to find out about his mistakes and failings in order to reveal them one day to put him down.” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 65, Hadith: 12*

When Imam Ali (a.s) appointed Malik Al Ashtar the governor of Egypt he advised him on several matters and to hide the defects of others and said: “Keep at a distance one who peers into the weaknesses of others. After all, the masses are not free from weaknesses. It is the duty of the ruler to shield them. Do not bring to light that which is hidden, but try to remove those weaknesses which have been brought to light. God is watchful of everything that is hidden from you, and He alone will deal with it. To the best of your ability cover the weaknesses of the public, and God will cover the weaknesses in you which you are anxious to keep away from their eye.” ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 33, Ch: 30, Hadith: 744*

Trustworthiness

Among human rights, trustworthiness is a very important right. A trust can be a valuable thing or a confidential matter. When such trusts are in the possession of a trustworthy person, then it is necessary for him to protect it and return it to the owner whenever he asks for it. Not doing so is a breach of trust and returning the trust to the owner is a religious duty and any breach of trust will be transgressing Islamic law and is termed a major sin.

The Holy Quran considers trustworthiness as the important trait of the faithful: *“Indeed Allah (SWT) Commands you to deliver the trusts to their rightful owners.....”* ---Surat Al Nisa, 4:58

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“He who isn’t trustworthy lacks faith.”* ---Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, P: 677, Hadith: 8436. He (s.a) also said: *“One who breaches trust isn’t one of us.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 58, Hadith: 14

And the Prophet (s.a) also said: *“There are three signs of a transgressor (Munafiq): When he talks, he lies; when he makes promises, he doesn’t keep them; and he breaches the trusts.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Ch: 106, Hadith: 6

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *“Don’t see the prolonged genuflections (ruku) and prostrations (sujud) of a person because it may be just his habit and if he abandons it, he will get troubled. But you must see whether he keeps his word and is he trustworthy?”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 60, Hadith: 10

Trustworthiness is so important in Islam that for keeping trust the Imams (a.s) have not differentiated between the virtuous and the transgressors in the matter of trustworthiness and insisted that the trust must be returned to whosoever was the owner.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says that: *“God has sent all the prophets (a.s) with truthful tongues and trustworthiness with relation to both the virtuous and the vicious.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 11, Ch: 2, Hadith: 21

The Imam (a.s) also said: *“Return the trust to its owner even if he is the murderer of Husayn b. Ali (upon whom be peace).”* --Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 11, Ch: 2, Hadith: 21

Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“Don’t breach the trust of a person who trusts you even if he had been guilty of breaching trust with you. Don’t reveal his secrets even if he had revealed yours.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch: 6, Hadith: 1

There are several traditions about the results of trustworthiness and we are quoting a few here: The Prophet (s.a) said: *“Trustworthiness creates affluence and breach of trust brings penury.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 58, Hadith: 4

Imam Ali (a.s) has said regarding this on various occasions such as:

Lesson Twenty-One: Honoring Rights

- *“Trustworthiness generates sustenance and breach of trust causes penury.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 15, Hadith: 138.*
- *“If trustworthiness strengthens then truthfulness increases.” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 3, P: 134*
- *: “Trustworthiness leads to being truthful.” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 2, Page: 7*

At the beginning of the discussion we have indicated that trustworthiness is not only related to money and valuable things but any other thing that is entrusted to someone and he keeps it safe whether it is of value or it is a secret of the owner. Any breach of trust would bring Allah (SWT)'s retribution to the person.

Summary

Every human being has certain rights and limits which must be abided by. The lives of persons, their belongings, their self-respect, and their homes are all treated as trusts and no one has a right to enter without permission.

Questions

1. What is meant by individual Hudood (Limits)?
2. Are only strangers prohibited from interfering in the hudood of an individual?
3. In the light of the verses of the Quran what are the specific timings when people have to seek permission to enter the presence of a person?
4. Why exposing the failings of a person is termed as violation of his hudood?
5. What things are termed as trusts?

Lesson Twenty-Two: Friends & Companions – Part 1

F every individual in society will have relationships with people and some will be friends. The person will stay in touch with them and take their advice when he has any problem and advises them in their affairs. Islam has given much importance to friendship and companionship. Therefore, Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“He who has no friends, has no possessions.”* --Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 1, Page: 177. Imam Ali (a.s) also said: *“Friends are like the same spirit, in two different bodies.”* ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 2, Page: 123

Generally, a friend is closer to the person than his own next of kin and naturally the person is influenced by him. The Prophet (s.a) said: *“Human beings will follow the creed of their friends; therefore, you must see whose friend you are!”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Ch: 14, Hadith: 12. The Prophet (s.a) also said: *“Judge the person through his friends because everyone befriends the persons whom he likes.”* ---Mustadrak, Vol: 8, Ch: 10, Page: 327, Narrative: 9568

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“Everyone is attracted towards those who are like him.”* ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 4, Page: 376. The Imam (a.s) also said: *“(Generally) people befriend noble and good people and bad people prefer bad company.”* ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 6, P: 376

These narrations indicate that selection of friends requires much thought and in this lesson, we shall describe the traits of a good friend in the light of Quran and Hadith. In the next lesson, we shall describe the people from whom one should keep away.

The Holy Quran wants people to befriend those who remember Allah (SWT) and seek Allah (SWT)’s pleasure; *“Do not drive away those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening desiring His face...”* -Surat Al Anam, 6:52

This means that such people have made Allah (SWT)’s pleasure their aim and intent. In another verse the Quran says: *“Content yourself with the company of those who supplicate their Lord morning*

and evening desiring His face...” ---Surat Al Kahf, 18:28. The Prophet (s.a) advised seeking company of good persons with high morals saying: *“The luckiest is one who has contacts with generous and merciful persons.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 1, Ch: 4, Hadith: 13

In another Hadith, the Prophet (s.a) has exhorted us to befriend Godwary (Pious) persons. Someone asked him (s.a), ‘Who is the best companion?!’ He (s.a) said, *‘When you see him you remember Allah (SWT); whose talk increases your knowledge and his actions remind you of the Hereafter!’* ---Mustadrak, Vol: 5, Ch: 42, Hadith: 6173

Imam Hassan Askari (a.s) quotes from Imam Zain al Abedin (a.s) through his forbears a detailed Hadith in which the characteristics of different types of persons are described to judge between virtuous and vicious persons.

In view of Imam Zain ul Abedin (a.s) the standard of superiority and success is not good appearance, noble talk and abstinence from prohibited funds. Yes, If the person removes from his heart the love for the world, for the pleasure of Allah (SWT), faces insults stoically, and enslaves his desires to his intellect and Islamic laws, such a person deserves to be followed as a friend and companion.

In a tradition the Prophet (s.a) has exhorted people to seek the company of wise men and the Fuqara (the Poor). He says: *“Befriend the scholars, mix with the people of wisdom and sit with the poor.”* --Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 1, Ch: 3, Hadith: 5.

In another Hadith Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“Befriend the people of wisdom and sit with the scholars and turn yourself against the world so that you may reside in heaven.”* ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 4, Page: 205. The Imam (a.s) also said: *“The maximum well-being is in the company of men of wisdom and the thinkers.”* --Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 4, Page: 429

Imam Hassan Mujtaba (a.s) advising Janada bin Omayya said: *“Keep the company of the person who could be the cause of your elevation and adornment and your veneration enhances and becomes the cause of your superiority and you are able to get rid of your failings with his help.”*

Also, the Imam (a.s) said: *“Adopt the company of the person whose company elevates you. If you serve him, he would give you respect, if you ask for his help, he would willingly help you. If you say something, he would endorse your view. If you spread your hand in front of him for a good cause, he would side with you. If he noticed a failing in you, he would*

Lesson Twenty-Two: Friends & Companions – Part 1

hide it from others. If he finds a good quality in you, he would appreciate it, if you ask him for something, he would give it to you, if you have any need, he would strive to fulfill it himself and if he finds it difficult, he would feel for you.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 44, Ch: 22, Hadith: 6

If the foundation of friendship and companionship is on truth and veracity then friends will have positive effect on each other, each one will point out the defects of the other and try to get rid of the defect and not just praise one another. Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“Follow the person who makes you cry (if circumstances demand) and is your well-wisher and not the one who makes you laugh and plans to cheat you. You should know that everyone will have to return to God when everything will come to your knowledge.” ---Bihar Al Anwar. Vol: 75, Ch: 48 Hadith: 31*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *“My dearest brother is one who informs me of my defects.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 19, Hadith: 4*

The point in this Hadith of the Imam (a.s) that attracts attention is that he considers pointing out his defects by the friend as a gift and gifts are generally the cause of happiness.

Summary

Since friends and companions have a major influence, it has been stressed in narrations that one should exercise maximum care in selecting them and one should associate with such persons who are mutaqqi (pious).

Questions

1. What are the norms Imam Zain ul Abedin (a.s) has deemed insufficient for recognizing good and capable persons?
2. What standard Imam Zain ul Abedin (a.s) has deemed necessary for recognizing good and capable persons?
3. With reference to the narrations quoted in this lesson point out what sort of persons should be our friends and companions?

Lesson Twenty-Three: Friends & Companions - Part 2

In the last lesson, we learnt that one should exercise great care in selecting friends as they influence us very much and they will be a gauge of personality and character. We should make such persons our friends who will have a virtuous effect on us and become a cause of enhancing our respect in society. In this lesson, we will consider who should be our friends and who the masumeen have forbidden us from associating as friends. Remember, Allah (SWT) has not left it to our discretion to always do what we wish to do and have companionship with anyone we wish to and listen to whatever we desire.

In this regard Imam Zain ul Abedeen (a.s) says: *“You have no right to sit with whom you wish because God Almighty says: ‘And pursue thou not that which thou hast not the knowledge of; Verily, the hearing and the sight and the heart, all these shall be questioned about it.’---Surat Al Isra, 17:36*

You also have no right to speak whatever you wish because God Almighty says: *‘Don’t go after something about which you don’t have knowledge.’* And the Prophet (s.a) says, *‘May Allah (SWT) have mercy on the person who when he speaks, speaks of virtue and draws benefit from it and if he remains silent he will be safe and secure. And it isn’t your right to hear what you wish because God Almighty says, ‘On the Day of Judgement, questions will be asked about hearing, seeing and the strength of the heart.’”*

Besides this, one should know that the company of evil persons will have harmful effects and will also create hard-heartedness and it is possible that it might take the person towards vices. Thus, he becomes subject to Allah (SWT)’s wrath and gets retribution along with his evil friends.

One of Imam Raza (a.s)’s close companions, Sulaiman Jafri says: *“One day I heard the Imam (a.s) saying to my father, ‘Why do you*

visit Abdulrahman b. Ya'qub?' he said, 'He is my maternal uncle.' The Imam (a.s) said, 'His opinion about Allah (SWT) is wrong that he thinks Allah (SWT)'s Hudood (personal Ordinances) and traits are limited although God's traits and limits are unlimited.' My father said, 'Whatever he says I have nothing to do with it.' The Imam (upon whom be peace) said: 'Do you not fear that if retribution visits him, it might take all of you in its clutches? Have you not heard of Moses (upon whom be peace)'s companion, whose father was from the men of Pharaoh and part of the army that was chasing Moses? When the cavalier of Pharaoh reached Moses', he retreated to his father to advise him and bring him to Moses' camp. While he was going with his father and the father was trying to escape from him they both arrived near the river and when retribution struck, they both drowned. The news of his death reached Moses, where he asked Gabriel about his condition. Gabriel replied, 'May God have mercy upon him, he had drowned. He wasn't on the creed of his father but when retribution strikes, it will not spare those who are near the evil ones.'" ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 39

In view of these points, we shall study verses of the Quran, and the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s), as to who aren't right to be friends and companions.

1. First, the persons who joke about the divine verses and Allah (SWT)'s religion. We have said at the beginning of this lesson, about the saying of Imam Zain ul Abedin (a.s) and the verse 68 of Surat Al-Anam that Allah (SWT) has forbidden momineen to befriend persons who ridicule the verses of the Quran. Similarly, the verse 57 of Surat Maidah prohibits momineen from friendship and companionship of people who ridicule Islam: "*O you who have faith! Do not take those who take your religion in derision and play, from among those who were given the Book before you, and the infidels, as friends.....*" ---Surat Al Maidah, 5:57
2. The other persons are those who ridicule the Prophet (s.a) and the Infallibles (a.s) and talk ill of them. In the early days, after the annunciation of the Prophet (s.a) there was an idol-worshipper, Oqba bin Abi Moeet, who, despite being a polytheist and idolator, was very hospitable. One day the Prophet (s.a) was passing through his area when he requested

him (s.a) to partake of the meal from his spread. The Prophet (s.a) said, *'Till you embrace Islam I cannot eat your food.'* When Oqba saw that the Prophet (s.a) was making this condition he uttered the Shahadatain and embraced Islam. At that time Oqba's friend Obai was angered hearing about this and said, *'You have become an outcast from your creed.'* Oqba said, *'My guest had made a condition that till I became muslim he wouldn't partake of my food.'* Obai said, *'Either you retract back to your creed, ridiculing the Prophet (s.a) or else it will be the end of our friendship!'* On Obai's insistence, Oqba agreed. Ultimately, Oqba was killed during the battle of Badr fighting against the contingent of Islam and went to Hell! Obai too was killed during the Battle of Ohod. The verse 27 to 29 of Surat Furqan were revealed which mention about Oqba: *"A day when the wrongdoer will bite his hands, saying, 'I wish I had followed the Apostle's way. I wish I had not taken so and so as a friend. Certainly, he led me astray from the reminder after it had come to me, and Satan is a deserter of man'"* ---Surat Al Furqan, 25: 27 to 29

These verses and the event of Oqba teach us that, an evil friend will have deleterious effect on the other friend and reminds us to shun the friendship of such people, who insult the Prophet (s.a) in any way.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says in this regard: *"If you are in the company of our enemies, then you should feel, as if you are seated on a very hot stone, in a state of readiness to leave because, God detests and curses them. If you then hear them demeaning an Imam of the Imams (peace be upon them) then, immediately part from them because God's curse and retribution is casted thereupon."* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 5

The Imam (a.s) also said: *"One who sits with people who curse the friends of God has [surely] disobeyed God."* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 48

The Imam (a.s) also said: *"One who believes in God and the hereafter, should not sit with a group, in which aspersions are*

being passed on an Imam (a.s) or a believer is being ridiculed.”
---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 48

3. Thirdly, the persons who create innovations and doubts in the principles of the religion. The Prophet (s.a) says in this regard: *“If you witness, after I am gone, any person who creates doubts and innovations in [religion], then you must openly express disgust against them and condemn them as far as possible; keep talking about them and quieten them so that they have no more courage to ridicule Islam. Try to take people away from them to prevent them from learning the innovations. If you do as I have said, God will record virtues in your account of deeds and elevate you in the Hereafter.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 41

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *“Don’t befriend nor be in the company of innovators (in religion) or else people will count you among them.”* ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 2, Page: 642

The Prophet (s.a) says: *“A person’s creed follows that of his friend and companion.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 40

4. Fourth are the people who are troublesome, transgressors, sinners and disobedient to Allah (SWT). Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“A muslim shouldn’t establish relations with a transgressor because he pretends in front of a muslim, of being a man of piety and wishes that the muslim too became a transgressor like him. He doesn’t help him to improve the muslim’s life and the Hereafter. And contact with him will be demeaning for the muslim.”* --Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 12, Page: 640, Hadith: 2. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says about this: *“A muslim shouldn’t befriend a transgressor, a liar and a foolish person.”* ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: - Hadith: 3. The Imam (a.s) also said: *“A believer shouldn’t attend a gathering in which God is disobeyed whilst he is unable to do anything about it.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 38

Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“When virtuous persons sit with vicious persons, people might get misapprehensions about the virtuous and because of being with the virtuous the vicious too get mixed with them. If a righteous person gets the company of*

transgressors he too might get mixed with them. If you cannot judge how a man is, then see his companions and if they are on Allah (SWT)'s Creed, the person too would be following them. The Prophet (s.a) says, 'One who believes in Allah (SWT) and the Day of Reckoning, he shouldn't maintain brotherly relations with an infidel nor should he be in the company of a transgressor as he himself might turn towards infidelity and transgression.' "---Bihar Al Anwar; Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 31

The Prophet (s.a) has said: "Abstain from befriending transgressors because evil is attributed to evil." ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 33, Ch: 29, Hadith: 707

5. The fifth are the persons whose faith, morals, character and understanding are not strong although, they may not be transgressors, such as liars, shameless, stingy, foolish and disloyal are all included in this group. Imam Ali (a.s) says: "A muslim should not befriend three types of people: (1) the shameless, (2) the foolish and (3) the liar." ---Bihar Al Anwar; Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 43

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) also said: "My revered father Imam Zainul Abideen (upon whom be peace) told me, 'Son! Do not sit, speak nor walk with five [types of] people' I asked, 'Father! Who are these people? Identify them to me.' The Imam (upon whom be peace) said, 'Do not be with a liar because he will be like a mirage that makes a distant thing look near and a near thing distant; nor a transgressor because he might sell you for a morsel or less; nor a miser because he may not help you even when you are in dire straits; nor an imbecile because he may try to be of benefit to you but in fact causes you harm. Similarly, abstain from the company of a person who severs relations with his next of kin because the Quran has condemned thrice such a person.' " ---Bihar Al Anwar; Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 29. Then, the Imam (a.s) recited the following verses of the Quran that condemn those who neglect their relatives (Surat Mohammed- Verse:22 & 23, Surat Ra'd: Verse: 25, Surat Baqara: Verse: 27. (See lesson 4 of this book for the verses.). Similarly, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said: "..... friendship which you give to a disloyal person." ---Bihar Al Anwar; Vol:

2, Ch: 13, Hadith: 210. Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) says: “Don’t befriend nor be brothers of four types of people: a fool, a stingy person, a coward and a liar. The fool might cause you harm trying to benefit you; the stingy person would take from you but will not give in return; the coward would flee away from you [in the time of your need] and even from his parents; a liar may speak the truth but cannot be believed.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 14, Hadith: 8

Summary

In the Holy Quran and the traditions people have been warned against the company of persons whose beliefs, morals and character aren’t good as there might be a risk of momineen going wayward in their company.

Questions

1. Why shouldn’t one befriend everyone?
2. What is the harm of keeping company with those whose beliefs are not good?
3. What lesson do we draw from the event of Oqba bin Abi Moeet?

Lesson Twenty-Four: Backbiting - 1

In the sixth lesson, we have mentioned that Islam is based on certain norms. The people have to follow these norms i.e., justice, good manners, and keeping promises about which we have dealt at some length in the previous lessons.

There are certain traits and habits that Islam requires the muslim to strictly abstain from. If momineen follow these norms, then a healthy society will be formed. The first of such traits is ghibat or backbiting. It is therefore, necessary to know the following facts about this habit.

Definition of ghibat or backbiting: The meaning of backbiting in the lexicon is talking ill of a person in his absence. But in the Shariah and the discipline of ethics, ghibat means airing a muslim brother's failings and defects in his absence, in such a manner that if he heard it, he would feel offended. This defect could either be regarding the religious practice, moral or physical. Even mentioning about the defects in the person's house or other belongings are also termed as ghibat.

The Prophet (s.a) said: *“Backbiting is the act of mentioning matters of a believing brother, in his absence, which he wouldn't like.”* Someone asked the Prophet (s.a), *“Will it be considered as backbiting if the person really possessed those matters?”* The Prophet (s.a) said, *“If what you mention is present in the person then it is backbiting, otherwise it is buhtān (false imputation).”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Page: 222

It is narrated that a few companions of the Prophet (s.a) were talking about a person. They said that the particular person was so helpless. The Prophet (s.a) said: *“You have committed ghibat.”* They said, *“We have only mentioned what is true about him.”* The Prophet (s.a) said, *“If you had said something about the person which isn't true then you would have made an aspersion against him.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 7

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “*Backbiting is revealing the faults of your brother in faith, which God has kept hidden.*” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 7

It becomes clear from the definition of ghibat, and the quoted traditions, that the following are the conditions of ghibah:

First: There has to be an intention to express the hidden faults of a person. If the faults are known, then it wouldn't be ghibat. Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s) says: “*If someone, in the absence of a person, airs his shortcomings to others, which are well known to everyone, it isn't considered backbiting. But if it is something which is present in the person but is unknown to the others then it is backbiting. If that defect isn't there in the person and it is attributed to him, then it is sheer calumny (Tuhmat).*” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 6

Second: If the defects and shortcomings, attributed to the person aren't in him, it isn't ghibat, it is tuhmat.

Third: If the purpose is not to cause hurt to the person, and there is some valid purpose, then it isn't ghibat. For example, describing the person's illness to a doctor.

Fourth: If the person whose ghibat is done is a momin, it is unlawful. However, ghiba of kaafirin and mushrikeen is not.

Fifth: If the person whose ghibat is done is known to the audience it is considered ghibat. However, if the matter is about an un-known person it is not ghibat.

Sixth: Ghibat of a person who doesn't commit sins openly is unlawful. If a person commits sins openly, his ghibat is allowed (e.g. drinks alcohol openly).

Illegitimacy of Ghi'bat

Ghibat is a great sin and a forbidden act (haram) and to understand the severity the following verses and ahadith are presented below. From the ayats and the words of the Imams, we can understand how much this act is despised and results in the wrath of Allah (SWT).

To know how illegitimate the act of ghibat is we shall study the following verses: “*And do not spy on or backbite one another.*” ---Surat Al Hujurat, 49: 12

Ghibat is like consuming the flesh of the dead. Doing ghibat of a momin brother is like killing him and consuming his flesh and

the act nullifies his respectability and the effect cannot, then, be atoned. Ghibat therefore, has been deemed forbidden to preserve the respect of the momineen as preservation of their lives and properties too is essential. Therefore, as the killing of a muslim is a major sin, insulting and shaming him also is a major sin. The Prophet (s.a) says in one of his traditions: *“Shedding a muslim’s blood, taking his assets and compromising his self-respect are forbidden (haram) for another muslim.”* ---Kanz al Amal, Vol: 1, Page: 150, Hadith: 747

Since ghibat ridicules and insults a muslim, it is the duty of every muslim to protect it. And whoever executes this duty, attains the pleasure of Allah (SWT). If one who can perform this duty and does not, then he becomes deserving of Allah (SWT)’s wrath.

The Prophet (s.a) said on this topic on various occasions:

- *“If a believer is ridiculed in the presence of someone while he is capable of defending him but chooses otherwise, God will disgrace him on the day of judgment.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 1
- *“One who defends a believer brother’s dignity in his absence, God will preserve his dignity on the day of judgment.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 1
- *“When a believer defends the dignity of his brother in faith in his absence, God deems it binding on Himself to relieve him from the fire of hell.”* ---Mahjat al Baida, Vol: 5, Page: 261

The words that the Holy Quran has used to describe ghibat, reflect the severity of the act, because these words aren’t used to describe any other sin.

It must be particularly noted about the Holy verses, that on the Day of Reckoning, the person who did ghibat would be ordered to eat the flesh of his dead brother.

The Prophet (s.a) says: *“A person who consumed the flesh of his brother in this world will be brought near his victim and be told: Eat him dead as you ate him alive. He will thus eat him while screaming with fear and pain.”* ---Fath Al Bari, Vol: 10, Page: 392

Similarly, the Prophet (s.a) said: *“On the night that I ascended [to the Heavens] I passed by people who were tearing their faces with their nails. I asked Gabriel (upon whom be peace), ‘Who are these people?’ He*

said, *“These are the backbiters and accusers of others.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 1

In another tradition, the Prophet (s.a) had termed ghibat worse than adultery. Prophet (s.a) said: *“Beware of backbiting, for it is worse than adultery. A person may commit adultery then repent, and God may accept his repentance. However, he who backbites another person will not be forgiven until he, who he had backbitten, forgives him.”*

Prophet (SA) called Ghibat worst than usury. He said: *“One Dirham of usury, in eyes of God, is a sin far greater than committing adultery thirty six times and the worst of usury is shaming a muslim.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 61, Hadith: 1

Ghibat is also condemnable because it is the cause of establishing vices. In Islam, promoting vices is a major sin about which the Quran says: *“Indeed those who want indecency spread among the faithful—there is a painful punishment for them.....”* ---Surat Al Nur, 24:19

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says about this verse: *“He who relates the deficiencies of a believer, that he hadn’t witnessed with his own eyes or heard with his own ears, will be among those about whom the Quran says, ‘Indeed they want to spread indecency among the faithful’”* ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 2

When the Imam (a.s) said that the person hadn’t witnessed personally, or hadn’t heard others talk and others aren’t aware of it, and he relates it to them, it is ghibat. By that the Imam means that which you have either seen or heard but others are not aware is ghibat. Then, the above verse will apply to such a person.

In the traditions, ghibat has been termed as the food of the dogs of hell as Imam Ali (a.s) said: *“Abstain from backbiting for it is the food of the dogs of hell.”* ---Previous Reference, Hadith: 13

Imam Hussain (a.s) saw one person doing ghibat and said: *“O so-and-so! Do not backbite for it is the sustenance of the dogs of hell.”*---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 20, Hadith: 2

Imam Zain ul Abedin (a.s) said: *“Abstain from backbiting for it is the food of the dogs of hell; and know that excessiveness of he who excessively brings out the deficiencies of others bears witness, that he is trying to search in others the deficiencies that are within him.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 60, Hadith: 8

Lesson Twenty-Four: Backbiting - 1

In other words when a person himself has many failings he will search for others' defects and talks about them. Imam Ali (a.s) says in this regard: *"Those who have deficiencies, like to reveal the deficiencies of others, so that they may be excused for their own shortcomings."* ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 4, page: 38

In some narrations, it is said that one who does ghibat destroys his own faith and virtues.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *"Backbiting is made impermissible upon every muslim, for it consumes his good deeds just as fire consumes dry wood."* ---Kashf al Raiba, page: 9

In another tradition, the Prophet (s.a) says: *"Backbiting harms the faith of a muslim faster than leprosy affects his body."* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 1

In another tradition, the Prophet (s.a) says: *"A person would be brought on the Day of Judgment and will be given his scroll of deeds. He will see that some of his deeds are not there and thus objects, 'O Lord! This is not my scroll for I do not see my devotions in it.' He will be told, 'Your Lord neither errs nor forgets. However, your devotions have been erased due to your backbiting of others. Then another person will be brought forth and handed his record of deeds. He will find many deeds which he did not himself earn and thus would say: 'O Lord! This is not my scroll of deeds for I have not performed these devotions.' He will thus be told, 'Since so-and-so spoke badly about you behind your back, you have been given his good deeds.'" ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 53*

When a pious person was told that a particular person was doing his ghibat, he smiled and arranged to send sweets to the person's house saying, 'I have heard that you have sent some virtues for my nama e aamal (scroll of deeds). I am sending to you some sweets to thank you.'

Summary

Ghibat or back-biting a person in his absence is haram in Islamic law because when one does it, he insults a momin in front of others. Ghibat is a sin worse than usury, adultery and other vices.

Questions

1. Describe ghibat.
2. Mention any two conditions for ghibat.
3. Why did the Holy Quran term ghibat as one eating the flesh of his dead brother?
4. Why did the Prophet (s.a) deem protection of others' reputation and self-respect binding?

Lesson Twenty-Five: Ghibat - 2

The Reasons for Ghibat

In the previous lesson, we have learned that ghibat is a major sin and we have also seen that in the collective life it has adverse effects and destroys the hereafter of those who indulge in it. In this lesson, we shall study the causes and reasons of ghi'bat to prevent ourselves from doing it. The scholars of ethics say that people do ghibat because of eight reasons.

Taskeen E Qalb Or Self Satisfaction

Lot of people do ghibat (back-biting) and try to reveal the faults of others, behind their backs, to hide their own defects or make them appear trivial in comparison. When such persons see their own shortcomings, instead of making efforts to overcome them, they start talking about others' defects to stress that it is not only they who have defects but others too are involved in such things. If one gets involved in ghibat he adds another major sin to his record. Every individual is responsible for his own actions and character, and if he doesn't try to reform himself, while his other sins remain, he adds the greater sin of doing ghibat.

Fakhr Wa Mubahaat—Pride & Prejudice

Some persons talk of others' defects and failings with people to belittle them and thus express their own superiority, like saying that a particular person is a nincompoop, that he is good for nothing and that they themselves are very accomplished in comparison. In such situations the listener, rather than accepting what the individual is saying, gauges him as a self-praising and arrogant person.

Insult

Some back-biters air the defects of others just to demean others and denigrate them. We shall discuss this bad habit at greater length in the 27th lesson.

Envy

Another reason of back-biting can be the envy the person has against the subject of his tirade. When he feels himself weaker in comparison to others and feels that he himself doesn't possess certain superior qualities, he starts envying them and back-biting against them to lessen their respect in view of others.

Imitating Others

When people assemble with friends and family they start gossiping. Generally, either the good qualities or the defects of some persons become the topic of discussion. On such occasions, everyone will have his own opinion and to impress others they indulge in ghibat or back-biting or revealing the defects of others. Such persons think that if they don't participate they will not feel accepted as part of the group although it is certain that other's acceptance is good till the person doesn't indulge in uttering sinful talk. One displeases Allah (SWT) to please the gathering.

The Holy Quran says: *“(They will be) in gardens questioning concerning the guilty: what drew you into Hell?’ They will answer, ‘We were not among those who prayed’ ‘Nor did we feed the poor ‘we used to gossip with the gossipers.’”* ---surat al muddathir, 74: 40 to 45

Pre-Emptying

There will be some people who, when they feel that a person might say something about them, to make his talk ineffective, they pre-empt him in revealing his failings so that even if he says something it will not have any effect on the listeners.

Expressing Surprise

When a sin or fault of anyone is talked of, the listeners will express surprise and say, 'It is surprising that so-and-so could do such a thing!' This expression of surprise generally is an excuse for ghibat. The expression would be an excuse for ghibat to be able to express disapproval without taking their name. Remember, as the commitment of sins and evil deeds causes surprise, similarly ghibat too is a major sin which may be a cause of surprise for some.

Expressing Pity

Some persons are such that when there is talk of someone's sinful or evil acts they express pity for the person and say, 'I am sorry the person committed such a sin!' Although one who does the ghiba is unaware of the fact that he himself is more deserving of pity because he isn't free of failings and defects! He had indulged in ghibat, which is a sin, and had also insulted a momin the way he spoke about him. Speaking this way demeans the other momin.

Ghibat Condoned

Although Ghibat has been termed a major sin by Islam, there are several occasions when doing ghibat becomes legitimate and in such cases doing Ghibat is allowed.

Demanding Justice

If someone is a victim of oppression and approaches a qadi (judge) for redressal and he has to give a statement as to who did injustice to him he will have to perform do ghibat to obtain justice! In this regard Allah (SWT) says: "*Allah (SWT) does not like the disclosure of (anyone's) evil (conduct) in speech except by someone who has been wronged, and Allah (SWT) is all-hearing and all-knowing.*" ---Surat Al Nisa, 4:148

Therefore, Allah (SWT) doesn't like anyone ranting against anyone except the oppressed because justice is far more important than a tyrant's respect even if he is a muslim. Therefore, ghibat in such a situation isn't wrong. If such action wasn't kept away

from the purview of ghibat then others' rights would have been compromised and the oppressed persons wouldn't be able to make their case with the qadhis (judge).

Consultation

Generally, people consult others in their collective and individual lives. For example, at the time of marriages they consult about the bride and the groom. If some important responsibility is to be entrusted to a person, inquiries are made about him. In such situations, the consequence of not doing ghibat might prove detrimental. Therefore, informing the faults and failings of the concerned person isn't termed as "ghibat".

The social benefit is considered more important than an individual benefit. In this case, the social benefit will be given priority.

Warning

When it is felt that a person's activities might harm the society, and the people are not informed about it, the consequences might be detrimental for the society. If people get attracted towards such a group it would be harmful. Therefore, people must be kept abreast with activities of such persons or groups. The Prophet (s.a) has said: *"Do you refrain from mentioning the vices of a libertine, so that he may be concealed from others? You must inform the people about his wickedness, so that people may protect themselves from him."* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 1

Controlling Viciousness

Sometimes it becomes imperative to inform people, or at least those who are in key positions, about the vicious activities of some persons in the society to keep it free of the vices. In such circumstances, revealing the facts cannot be termed as ghibat because of the social impact.

Argument & Corrective Measures

The defects of the people in the society can be revealed to the court or the narrators of hadith as a mark of discretion, since their justice and trustworthiness depends on the knowledge of their behavior and moral standing. Therefore, the witnesses can necessarily relate the faults and failings of the plaintiffs because the verdict depends on the veracity of the witness.

Nickname or Appellation

There will be some persons in the society who are identified with a particular habit of theirs or a nickname. As long as their nickname or appellation is not mentioned people wouldn't recognize them. e.g: Someone is called a 'lame duck', 'one eyed jack' etc. In this regard, the first person who has attributed such an appellation to someone, he is a sinner. But when the nickname gets established, calling the persons with the nicknames isn't sinful and not ghibat.

Inventing Innovations in The Faith:

Those who introduce innovations in religion will have plans to divert the people from the Faith and identifying them isn't an act of ghibat but is, in fact, the duty of every muslim to prevent the spread of their innovations. The Prophet (s.a) says in one of his traditions: *"Whenever you see an innovator express aversion from him and reveal whatever you know about him to others."*

One Who Perpetrates Sins Openly:

According to traditions the ghibat of a group of persons is legitimate when they openly commit sins and don't care that the people are learning about their foul acts or not! The Prophet (s.a) says about such persons: *"Backbiting three persons is permissible: One who follows his desires, those who commit sinful acts openly and an oppressive ruler."* ---Durr eManthur, Vol: 6, Page: 97

And the Prophet (s.a) also said: *"One who openly commits wrongdoing has no sanctity nor is backbiting him considered illegitimate."* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 57, Hadith: 33

Giving Ear to Ghi'bat Or Back-Biting

While ghibat is a big evil and a major sin, so is he who gives ear to such talk, and the person will be subject to Allah (SWT)'s wrath and retribution. The Prophet (s.a) says: *“One who listens to backbiting is a partaker in it.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 66, Hadith: 1

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Backbiting [is a form of] infidelity and he who listens to it, and is pleased with it, is a polytheist.”* ---Mustadrak, Vol: 9, Ch: 136, Hadith: 10462

In certain narrations, it is stressed that if a momin's ghibat is done in your presence and if you are able to reply in defense (of the absent momin) you must do it because the Prophet (s.a) has said: *“God will repel a thousand doors of evil in the world of the afterworld from he who defends his brother [in faith] against being backbitten in a gathering.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 76, Ch: 67, Hadith: 30

It must be clear that if one cannot defend the person, he should then leave the place to not be considered a participant to the ghibat.

Summary:

The basic causes of ghibat are: for one's pleasure, arrogance and prejudice, intent for practical jokes, mimicking others, preemptive attack, expressing surprise, and pity. Ghibat is legitimate in certain conditions like seeking justice, doing consultations, warning someone, trying to dispel evils etc. In such situations, it is not only legitimate but is the responsibility of the momin to air them. Such situations are the exceptions when ghibat is permissible. Otherwise hearing ghibat too is as forbidden as doing it.

Questions:

1. Mention any two causes of ghibat?
2. Why is ghibat permissible while seeking justice?
3. Why is ghibat allowed while identifying the people who bring innovations in religion?

Lesson Twenty-Six: Aspersions & Suspicion

Among the wrong social traits is the habit of passing aspersions on others. In the lesson about ghibat (1) we have explained that exposing shortcomings of a person in his absence is ghibat and if those traits are not there in them it will be considered as passing aspersions.

The difference between ghibat (Back-biting) and the habit of making aspersions, i.e., false accusations, is a bigger sin than ghibat. The Holy Quran says: *“But someone who commits an iniquity or sin and then accuses an innocent person of it, is indeed guilty of calumny and a flagrant sin.”* ---Surat Al Nisa, 4: 112

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“One who casts aspersions on a believer, male or female, or accuses him/her of something which is false, God will raise him on a hillock of fire on the day of judgment until he is purified from what he had said.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 62, Hadith: 5

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said: *“The faith of he who casts aspersions on a brother [in faith] will depart from his heart just as salt is diluted in water.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 62, Hadith: 19

Aspersions can be made against any person in three different ways: 1) Adducing a defect to a person which isn't in him and just imagining that it might be there. 2) Adducing a defect to a person because of enmity knowing fully well that the defect isn't there in that person, 3) Adducing one's own failing to another person to save oneself.

We learn from this description, of the ways of making aspersions, that these are all sinful acts. However, the evil effect of the three is not similar. One should keep away from making aspersions to ensure that the dignity of everyone is safeguarded, and people feel their honor is preserved in society.

If accusing and passing aspersions against others becomes prevalent in society then everyone will start worrying about

defense against ghibat and aspersions. In such a situation, there will not be any morals in society.

To maintain amicable relations with the people in the society one has to abstain from making aspersions and also avoid company where such acts are committed. As no one has the right to make accusations against others one should try to be away from company where people indulge in false accusations.

Imam Ali (a.s) said: *“He who places himself in a position of suspicion should blame none other than himself.”* --- Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 72, Page: 91

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said: *“My father told me, ‘Son! He who befriends an evil person will never be safeguarded [against his evil]; and he who enters into evil will become subjected to accusations; and he who does not have control over his tongue will regret.”* --- Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 46, Hadith: 1

Suspicion or Distrust

In a society one of the bad traits of people is suspicion or distrust of others. Some persons due to their misapprehensions distrust every word and action of others. If this suspicion isn't based on truth it will be deemed as false accusation. On the one hand, it is a bad habit and on the other, it is the fountainhead of sins. The Holy Quran says: *“O you who have faith! Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins. And do not spy on or backbite one other...”* --- Surat al Hujurat, 49:12

Another thing is that, to inform the people about the truth, one may have to make access to ghibat. One can only know the truth by inquiring the truth from others. But suspicion is a sin and Allah (SWT) orders protecting against sinful acts. In Islam there is one precept---“Asalat e Sehat”---meaning consider every act righteous so that people don't have suspicions against one another. Ahl ul Bayt (a.s) have ordered that momineen act on the veracity of the words and acts of the momineen. Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“Consider the act of your brother [in faith] as good, until you see something proving the contrary. You should also never consider a word that your brother utters*

as negative whilst you are able to excuse him for it.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 13, Hadith: 7

The Effects of Suspicion

In the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s), the ill effects of suspicions and negative thinking are discussed: Imam Ali (a.s) says: *“He who is [overwhelmingly] suspicious will remain aloof from everyone.” ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 5, Page: 442*

A suspicious person is suspicious of everyone and imagines defects and shortcomings of others. As a result, he cannot trust anyone and he has no confidence in anyone. He is fearful of everyone and as a result, he stays aloof and away from everybody feeling lonely. Imam Ali said: *“Suspicion destroys matters and leads people towards evil.” ---Gharar Al Hakm Chapter 4: Page: 132*

There is no doubt that the biggest secret of success is in establishing confidence in the minds of others and everyone wishes that people appreciate the person’s good works and place their confidence in him. Now if, in a society, everyone looks at every other person with suspicion, then trust and confidence wouldn’t exist for anyone to make sincere efforts for success. According to the saying of Imam Ali (a.s), in such circumstances, the society would collapse and people would be drawn towards vices.

In a tradition Imam Ali (a.s) has termed suspicion as the cause of acute dissent in societies. He (a.s) says: *“One who is dominated by suspicion cannot keep good relations with his friends.” ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 5, Page: 406*

In another narrative, Imam Ali (a.s) has termed suspicion as the negation of a person’s devotions: *“ Safeguard yourself against being suspicious of others for it destroys devotion and increases sinning.” ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 2, Page: 308*

He (a.s) also said: *“Faith cannot be combined with carrying [false] doubts about others.” ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 6, Page: 362*

Suspicion is an evil act as compared to thinking positively about others which is considered a good habit. Masumeen have also emphasized this in their narrations. *“Thinking well of others is of the greatest virtues.” - Gharar al Hakam, Vol:3, Page 386. He (a.s)*

further said: *“Thinking well of others results in the tranquility of the heart and integrity of faith”* ---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 3, Page: 384. And said: *“Thinking good of others dispels sadness and relieves one from the shackles of sin.”* ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 3, Page: 385. Also said: *“He who thinks well of others, wins their love.”* ---Vol: 5, Page: 379

Similarly, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *“Giving the benefit of doubt to others, spurs from a person’s good faith and integrity of his heart.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 72, Hadith: 12

Goodness of heart, is the person’s internal condition, and that his distance from sins, determines his purity of thought regarding others.

It is said in a tradition of the Prophet (s.a): *“Think well of your brothers in faith for it yields purity of the heart and goodness of nature.”* ---Previous reference

Remember, when a person’s opinion becomes good, the hate and malice will depart from his heart. The hearts will then become illumined and the habits and actions will improve. Therefore, to spend life with momineen, one should be aware that good feelings and trust in their actions is fundamental. Remember, there is a limit to holding good opinion about people. If the limit is exceeded it cannot be counted as a good habit. Therefore, one should know, under what circumstances and with what conditions good opinion (Husn uz Zan) is correct. Based on the narrations of the ahlulbayt, the criteria defined is based on enjoining good, promoting justice and preventing oppression. Thus, in society goodness is promoted and justice prevails rather than oppression. In society, good opinion and positive thinking about each other, should be the foundation unless “Fasaad”/dissension and vices and oppression is common and it becomes difficult to identify the pious. Now, having a good opinion about everyone cannot be considered a fundamental principle.

Imam Ali (a.s) said: *“When goodness governs the world and its people and a person thinks badly of another person unjustifiably then he would have committed an act of cruelty/oppression. And if evil governs the time and its people and a person thinks positively of another person then he would be betrayed.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Hadith: 18

Lesson Twenty-Six: Aspersions & Suspicion

Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s) has said: *“When injustice is greater than righteousness it is not permitted for anyone to think good of others unless he is sure of their goodness.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 10, Ch: 16, Hadith: 11

Imam Ali Naqi (AS) has said: *“If justice supersedes injustice during an era then it is prohibited for anyone to be suspicious of others unless one is confident of their suspicion. However, if injustice is overwhelming then one should not give others the benefit of the doubt unless they are confident of their goodness.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 62, Hadith: 17

There is another condition for having good opinion and trust of others when the person has not committed breach of trust and if he has done it in the past it isn't good to keep a good opinion about him.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) says: *“It isn't right for you to trust someone who has breached your trust nor to [falsely] accuse him whom you have trusted.”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 62, Hadith: 17

Summary

Finding fault with someone falsely and unnecessarily is imputation or slander. It is a major sin which Islam has forbidden. In collective living the Muslims, should abstain from slanderous talk. This attitude will obviate ill will between people and the Mominen will thus live with love and affection. However, if apprehension dominates the society then husn-uz-zan (favorable view) isn't right unless people are sure of good deeds.

Questions

1. Define tohmat (slander) in the light of the verses of the Quran.
2. Mention the different types of tohmat.
3. What are the effects of (suspicion)?
4. What is the meaning of “Asalat e Sehat”?
5. In what conditions husn-uz-zan (gracious presumption) is considered good?

Lesson Twenty-Seven: Spreading Ill Will & Making Fun

Spreading ill will is such a dangerous social ailment that causes lot of harm to the society e.g: increases bad blood between individuals followed by malice and enmity. Therefore, spreading ill will has been listed with such mischievous ailments which can engulf the entire society and harm it tremendously. The ulema deem it a major sin.

Spreading ill will means someone rants against an absent person and one of the persons who was present when the incident happened goes and reports the incident to that person. A person who spreads ill will is a psychologically sick person who never propagates the good word but talks of such things which can create malice, enmity and strife. Creating rifts between muslim brothers is such a mischief that the Holy Quran has deemed it a serious crime and sin:

- *“Mischief is more grievous than slaughter.....” --- Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 191*
- *“Mischief is more grievous than carnage.....”---Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 217*
- *“Woe to every scandal-monger and slanderer,” ---Surat Humazah, 104:1*

At another place, Allah (SWT) addresses the Prophet (s.a) directly: *“And do not obey any wile swearer, scandal-monger, tale-bearer,” ---Surat Al Qalam, 68: 10 & 11*

In the last verse quoted here, there is an indication that a slanderer is morally vile and doesn't deserve any respect, as the Prophet (s.a) too has said: *“Shall I inform you of the vilest person amongst you?” The companions responded, “O Master! Do tell us.” The Prophet (s.a) said, “The one who spreads defamation, creates rifts between*

friends and passes aspersions over people of moral decency.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 67, Hadith: 17

Kanz Al Amal, vol 16, Page 23, Hadith: 43768 paraphrased as defamation and malice cannot exist in the heart of a muslim.

“A defamer will not enter Heaven.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 68, Ch: 15, Hadith: 21

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“Beware of spreading defamation for it sows the seeds of malice and distances one from God and the people!” ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 2, Page: 296*

How to Treat the Person Who Spreads Ill Will

The way to prevent a person who spreads ill will in creating malice among the momineen is by taking the following steps:

1. Don't believe what he says because he is a known transgressor and about transgressors Allah (SWT) says: *“If a profligate (person) should bring you some news, verify it.” ---Surat Hujurat, 49:6*
2. Since spreading ill will is an evil deed, Allah (SWT) exhorted people to follow—Amr bil Maarooif wa Nahi an il Munkir- *“... Bid what is right and forbid what is wrong...” ---Surat Luqman, 31:17*
3. We should consider such a person as an enemy because he is Allah (SWT)'s enemy. It is obligatory to have enmity with the enemy of Allah (SWT).
4. Allah (SWT) has ordered not to spread ill will or anything evil as He says: *“Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins.” ---Surat Al Hujurat, 49:12*
5. On hearing something evil about someone do not investigate the person or what he had bragged about because Allah (SWT) has said: *“And do not spy on or backbite one another.” ---Surat Al Hujurat, 49:12*
6. Don't repeat the actions of the one who spreads ill will, else you will become one of those who commit these sins of spreading ill will.

It is mentioned in the profile of a scholar, that when he was returning from a journey, he met an acquaintance, and during the conversation, the person discussed about someone and tried

spreading ill will regarding that individual. The scholar felt very bad hearing it and told the acquaintance, 'Despite living away from me you have brought to me three breaches of trust:

- You have created *soo uz zan* (unwarranted suspicion) in my heart against the other person and have sown the seed of dissent between us.
- You have created anxiety in my mind while I wasn't anxious so far.
- I had trust in you and you have lost that trust and now you are untrustworthy in my view.'

Therefore, it is the duty of every person to snub a person who spreads ill will, then and there, and not attach any importance to what he says. One should always remember, that, as a person talks about others with us, he might talk the same way about us in our absence! If the one who spreads ill will is properly snubbed, three benefits can be derived from it:

- The person might feel ashamed of the act.
- He may not repeat such a thing again.
- Love and brotherhood amongst the *momineen* will persist.

Mohammed bin Fazeel, a companion of Imam Moosa Kazim (AS) told the Imam one day, 'May my life be sacrificed for you.' 'I have heard from someone else, regarding a believing brother, something this person had said about me that I did not like'. When I asked him, he flatly refused having said it, while a reliable person had related it to me.' The Imam (a.s) said, '*O Mohammed! Falsify that which your ears have heard or eyes have witnessed regarding your brother [in faith]. If fifty people tell you something under oath, reject what they have said and believe what he had told you. Don't propagate anything about him which might cause him infamy with or destroys his nobility. Otherwise, you will be amongst those about whom God has said: "Indeed those who want indecency to spread among the faithful—there is painful punishment for them..."*'-Surat al Nur, 24:19 ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 65, Hadith: 11

It is mentioned in the history that a person went to the Commander of the Faithful (upon whom be peace) and started spreading ill will against another person. The Imam (a.s) said, '*O brother! We shall investigate that which you have said. If it is true,*

then we shall be upset with you and if it is false then we must punish you. However, if you wish, I may pardon you at this moment. The person said, 'O Commander of the Faithful! Please pardon me.' ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 67, Hadith: 19

Making Fun & Practical Jokes

Making fun of someone to create laughter or mimicking the person's mental or physical defects is Haram (prohibited) because such acts insult the person and affect his self-respect. In Islam, it is binding on its followers to respect a Muslim and, therefore, anyone ridiculing a believer, is performing an illegitimate act as Allah (SWT) says: "...but for Allah (SWT) is all honor and for His apostle and for the believer but the hypocrites who know (it) not." ---Surat Al Munafiqun, 63:8

At another place the Quran says: "Indeed those who have faith and do righteous deeds -it is they who are the best of creatures." ---Surat Al Bayyinah, 98:7

The Prophet (s.a) says: "God says, 'By My Glory and Majesty! I haven't created any creature more beloved to Me than My believing creature.'" ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 63, Hadith: 75

Jabir bin Abd Allah (SWT) Ansari says that the Prophet (s.a) looked towards the Kaaba and said: "O House of God! How grand is your status and sanctity in the eyes of God? By God! The sanctity of a believer is far greater than yours, for God has protected you only in one aspect, whereas, he protected the believer in three: 1. His wealth. 2. His blood 3. Against the ill thoughts of others." ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 71, Ch: 63, Hadith: 75

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s.) said: "God has endowed the believer with three bounties: Honor in his faith and worldly state; wellness and success in the Hereafter and great respect in the hearts of the people towards him." ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 68, Ch: 15, Hadith: 21

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: "The sanctity of a believer is greater than that of the Ka'ba." ---Bihar, Vol: 7, Ch: 16, Hadith: 16

The Imam (a.s) also said: "God says, 'Let he, who humiliates one of my worshipping believers, be warned of war against him from Me, and

Lesson Twenty-Seven: Spreading Ill Will & Making Fun

let he, who respects my worshipping believer, be safeguarded from my wrath.” ---Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 56, Hadith: 12

The precepts about the respect for the momins, that are in the Quran and the traditions also, highlight the harm of showing disrespect to them, as Allah (SWT) says:

“O you who have faith! Let not any people ridicule another people! It may be that they are better than you are; nor let women (ridicule) women; it may be that they are better than others.” ---Surat al Hujurat, 49:11

Another ayat of the Quran parallels mocking of the momins to that of the ways of the hypocrites *“When they meet the faithful, they say, ‘We believe’, but when they are alone with their devils, they say, ‘We are with you; we were only deriding them!”* ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 14

“Those who ridicule the faithful, Allah (SWT) will threaten them to be faced with a situation of severe retribution, those who blame the voluntary donors from amongst the faithful concerning the charities ---and as far as those who do not find (anything) except (what) their means (permit), they ridicule them---Allah (SWT) shall put them to ridicule, and there is painful punishment for them.” ---Surat al Tawbah, 9:79

Summary

Making aspersions against momineen, and spreading ill will between others, for creating conflicts, is a vile act and it is disobedience to Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) has strictly forbidden committing such sins because, a momin is respectable in all aspects and any disrespect to him is wrong.

Questions

1. Why has Islam prohibited spreading ill will?
2. How should we treat a person who spreads ill will?
3. Relate a tradition of Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s) about the respect of a momin.
4. What are the bad effects of spreading ill will and mocking others?

Lesson Twenty-Eight: Jealousy Or Envy

Jealousy or envy is a major sin and a bad habit which has harmful effect on the relations of people. Therefore, one who indulges in jealousy, doesn't make rapid strides in his life. Jealousy also, unnecessarily, affects the progress of those who are the victims.

The Holy Quran has repeated several times that, because Satan was jealous of Prophet Adam (a.s), Allah (SWT) banished him from His blessing. It was jealousy that filled the heart of Satan with hate for Adam (a.s) and Eve. Therefore, he resolved to wreak vengeance on them, and it became the cause of Adam and Eve to be sent to the earth.

Similarly, Qabeel was jealous of his brother Habel. Satan created apprehensions in his mind and he killed his brother. If we take stock of the history of mankind, behind every apprehension, hostility, and enmity, we find jealousy lurking in the background.

Description Of Jealousy & Its Types

Jealousy is the wish for destruction of other person's material or other well-being. Generally, a jealous person makes efforts to achieve this end.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: *"A believer has benign envy, as opposed to malicious envy, whereas, a hypocrite has the latter but not the former."---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 7

Jealousy in the Light of Quran

Allah (SWT) has termed jealousy equal to Satan's destructive apprehensions that He addresses the Prophet (s.a): *"Say, 'I seek the protection of the Lord of the daybreak from the evil of what He has created, and from the evil of the dark night when it settles, and from the*

evil of the witches who blow on knots, and from the evil of the envious one when he envies.” ---Surat Al Falaq, 113: 1 to 5

Similarly, Allah (SWT) has said: *“Do not covet the advantage which Allah (SWT) has given some of you over others. To men belongs a share of what they have earned, and to women a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah (SWT) for His Grace. Indeed Allah (SWT) has knowledge of all things.” ---Surat Al Nisa, 4:32*

At another place Allah (SWT) addresses the Prophet (s.a) thus: *“Do not extend your glance toward what We have provided certain groups of them” ---Surat Ta’Ha, 20: 131/ Surat Al Hijr, 15:88*

Another verse hints towards the fact that it is because of jealousy, that the people of the Book try to misguide the Muslims against their creed, and convert them back to infidelity. *“Many of the people of the Book are eager to turn you into unbelievers after your faith, out of their inner envy, (and) after the truth had become manifest to them...” ---Surat al Baqarah, 2:109*

The jealous and jealousy in the light of Traditions: It is narrated from the Prophet (s.a) that God told Moses (upon whom be peace): *“O son of Amram [i.e. Moses]! Do not envy others for the blessings that I have bestowed upon them with my benevolence, nor should you concern yourself with them nor chase after these desires because a jealous person is angry with My distribution and wishes to deprive others of what I gave them.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 6*

In the same manner, the Prophet (s.a) addressed his companions saying: *“Do not be an enemy of God’s bounties.’ The companions said, ‘Who is it that becomes an enemy of God’s bounties?’ The Prophet (s.a) said, ‘Those who are envious.’” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith:*

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The following are a few narrations of Imam Ali (a.s) about envy:

- *Envy is the ailment in which there is no tranquility.*
- *Envy is the prison of the soul.*
- *Envy is the most dangerous disease.*
- *Envy is the peak of evils.*
- *Envy is the carriage of sorrow and difficulty.*
- *The fruit of envy is the wretchedness of this world and the hereafter.*

---Gharar al Hakm, Vol: 1, Page: 91

There are very valuable sayings of Imam Ali (a.s) about the envious:

- *“One who forsakes envy will become loved by others.” Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch: 9, Hadith: 1*
- *“One who envies much, his desires increase and viciousness multiplies” ---Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 56, Hadith: 13401*
- *“An envious person will never be happy.” -Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 4*
- *“An envious person will not be at peace until the blessing [of others] recedes.” --Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 55, Hadith: 13401*
- *“An envious person feels happy with evil and sad with good.” Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 55, Hadith: 13401*
- *“An envious person views another’s deprivation of blessings as a blessing for himself.” ---Previous reference*
- *“An envious person’s hatred is hidden in his heart whilst he expresses love through his tongue. Thus, he is a friend only by name but an enemy by character.” Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 2 Page: 139*
- *“The worst of friends is an envious one.” -Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 3, Page 253*
- *“Do not envy each other for envy consumes faith just as fire consumes timber.” -Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 77, H: 2194*
- *“Envy eliminates faith from the heart just as water melts ice.” ---Mustadrak Wasael, Vol: 12, Page: 18*
- *Imam Jaffer Sadiq (AS) has said regarding jealousy:*
- *“There is no peace for the stingy nor is there pleasure for the envious.” --Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch: 10, Hadith: 13*
- *“A jealous person harms himself prior to harming others just as Satan brought the curse upon himself and paved the way for Adam being chosen as a prophet.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 23*
- *“The foundations of infidelity are three: 1. Greed. 2. Pride. 3. Envy” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Ch: 99, Hadith: 1*
- *“The root of envy is the darkening of the heart and denial of God’s Grace both of which are the wings of infidelity. It is through envy that man falls victim to perpetual regret and perishes in a manner*

from which he can never be saved.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131

- *“The calamities of the faith are: Envy, being self-conceited, pride and love of glory.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 5*

The Prophet (s.a) has deemed envy, as the ailment, which destroys faith. He (s.a) told his companions: *“Beware! The ailment of the previous nations has penetrated into you. It is envy, that doesn’t shorten your hair, but, rather shortens your faith.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 23*

Imam Ali (a.s) says about the ailments caused by envy:

- *“An envious person is always ill.” ---Mustadrak, Vol: 12, Ch: 55, Hadith: 13401*
- *“Envy wears out the body.” ---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 1, Page: 241*
- *“It is surprising why enviers are oblivious of the sickness of their bodies.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 131, Hadith: 28*
- *“In paucity of envy lies the health of the body.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 73, Ch: 141, Hadith: 28*

Causes Of Envy

After knowing the harmful effects of jealousy, on our personal and social lives, it is important to determine its causes so that we can cure the ailment because, as long as a correct diagnosis is not made it isn’t possible to find a cure. The scholars of ethics have enumerated seven causes of envy:

1. **Wickedness:** The fountainhead of envy of lot of enviers is, wickedness of their psyches and ethical failing. Even if they aren’t inimical against any one, they take pleasure in others’ inconvenience and when they see others happy they feel unhappy. In short, such persons cannot tolerate anybody’s success and happiness.
2. **Malice:** If an envious person sees his enemy surrounded with hardships, he takes sadistic pleasure and wishes that the hardships enhance. If something contrary to this happens, he becomes sad.
3. **Love for position and wealth:** Plenty of envying people have greed for power and wealth. They like these only for

Lesson Twenty-Eight: Jealousy Or Envy

- themselves and when they see them with others, they feel envious. For example, an athlete or a businessman or a rich person, when they see someone reaching higher than him or see that others are being recognized more than them, they then get jealous and desire for their failure and dishonor.
4. **Rivalry:** This instinct is generally in those persons who compete with others for a position or reward. Since only one person would reach the winning post, the others who think that they were deserving of it, get envious.
 5. **Arrogance:** Some enviers have the instinct of (false) pride, and therefore they cannot tolerate the progress of others. Every arrogant person thinks that all others in the world remain lower than him, so that the arrogant can maintain their superiority so that the deprived behave with humility. If they supersede him, they will not follow and support him. Hence, he envies their progress.
 6. **Ego (Love of self):** Some people who envy have ego. They love the self to the extent that they cannot bear the progress of others. They fear the progress of others because if they made progress it will be insulting to their position. The difference between the arrogant and the egoistic person is that the arrogant person will have the feeling of superiority over others but the egoist does not like others to progress, and may not be interested in their own progress.
 7. **Surprise:** Some envious persons envy others because in their view other person wasn't deserving of the blessing that he received. Therefore, they get surprised as to how that person progressed and they desire for the blessing to be taken away from them and are deprived of them.

Summary

Jealousy or envy is a bad trait. This amounts to feeling jealous of others' progress. Sometimes an envier takes steps to counter the progress of the opponent. This might end in harm to the envier himself and also cause harm to the opponent.

Questions

1. Define envy and jealousy?
What are the stages of jealousy?
2. What is 'ghibta'?
3. Why do the traditions deem envy, the act of hypocrites?
4. How can envy affect the faith of a person?
5. What are the causes of jealousy?

Lesson Twenty-Nine: Lying

Lying is the worst of major sins and the meanest immoral trait. Lies destroy mutual relations. A person, who lacks truthfulness, will not command any respect of the people. God forbid, if the trait of falsehood gets established in the society, that society will become hollow and living in such a society would become difficult.

The Holy Quran and the traditions of the Infallibles (a.s) have given attention to the destructive effects of falsehood. Since uttering lies doesn't give any trouble to the person, people do lie to achieve their purpose.

Attention must be given to the fact that, for attaining their goals (halal or haram), people consider how much benefit they can achieve. In their view, only that act is good, which needs lesser effort and gives more benefit. There are very few persons who also keep an eye on the consequences of an action. Generally, people consider only the timely and worldly benefit of an action. Lying too, is a similar action. Most people do not think about the sin and retribution that might accrue to them and the long-term consequences of lying. Sometimes a person achieves his end very fast depending on falsehood. However, he doesn't consider the consequences of taking the short cut.

Definition of Falsehood

Falsehood is expressing something contrary to one's belief and knowledge! Falsehood has two conditions:

- First, what is said with the tongue and the body, is contrary to the truth.
- Secondly, the person who expresses, has the knowledge that it is a falsehood. However, if a person says something which is contrary to the truth but he thinks that he is telling the truth, then the person isn't a liar.

At this point, one must pay attention, that sometimes a falsehood is uttered, and at other times only actions convey the falsehood. For example, a person exhibits with his attitude that he is a person of importance, but he is not. This too is a type of falsehood because falsehood is expressing something that isn't true. This definition of falsehood embraces both the word and the action.

Falsehood in The Light Of The Holy Quran:

In the Holy Quran there are several verses about lies and liars and it discusses about falsehood in different ways. We mention here some verses:

- “..... So avoid the abomination of idols, and avoid false speech,..”-
-Surat al Hajj, 22:30
- “Only those fabricate lies who do not believe in the signs of Allah (SWT), and it is they who are the liars.” ---Surat al Nahl, 16:105
- “..... Indeed, Allah (SWT) does not guide someone who is a liar and an ingrate.” ---Surat al Zumar, 39:3
- “Indeed, Allah (SWT) does not guide someone who is a profligate liar.” ---Surat Ghafir, 40:28
- “..... and call down Allah (SWT)'s curse upon the liars.” ---Surat Al e Imran, 3:61
- “..... Allah (SWT)'s wrath shall be upon him if he were lying.”
---Surat Al Nur, 24:7

These verses clearly illustrate that Allah (SWT) (s.w.t) has termed falsehood equal to the worship of idols, and that lying dispels faith from the hearts and a liar will not be entitled to guidance and there will remain very scant chance of his reform. It is evident that when there is no chance of reform, the person goes wayward and his hereafter will not be good.

Falsehood in The Light of The Traditions Of The Infallibles (A.S)

The Prophet (s.a) and the Imams (a.s) have, from time to time, informed people about the dire consequences of telling lies. We mention some of these narrations.

- The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“Lying excessively eradicates one’s faith.”*
- The Prophet (s.a) also said: *“Beware of lying, for it distances one from faith.”* *Kanz al Amal, Vol: 3, Page: 620, Hadith: 8206*
- Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“Stay aloof from lying because it distances you from faith. A truthful person stands on the shore of respect and nobility and the liar on the brink of disrespect and perdition.”* *Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 77, Ch: 14, Hadith: 12*
- Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) has said: *“Lying is the destructor of faith.”* ---*Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 3, Page: 339, Hadith: 4*

This means that falsehood is the antithesis of faith. This is the reason that momins generally don’t make access to falsehood. If inadvertently they make some such utterance, they feel sorry about it. Therefore, a person who is a compulsive liar, and repeatedly uses falsehood, he should think of examining his faith.

“Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s)’s companion, Hassan bin Mahboob, says *“One day I went to the Imam (upon whom be peace) and asked, ‘Can a believer be stingy?’ The Imam (a.s) said, ‘Yes.’ I asked, ‘Can he be a liar?’ The Imam (a.s) replied, ‘No, can he be one who breaches trust.’ Then the Imam (a.s) added, ‘A believer may possess any other trait but he will never lie nor will he ever breach a trust.”* ---*Bihar al Anwar, Vol: 75, Ch: 58, Hadith: 11*

Some of the traditions indicate that the waywardness and humiliation of a person commences with utterance of lies. We are quoting two such traditions.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“Lying leads one towards vices and vices lead one to Hell.”* ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Ch: 114, Hadith: 48*

Imam Hassan Askari (a.s) has said: *“All vices have been placed in one house, the key of which is lying.”* ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 72, Ch: 114, Hadith: 48*

In some traditions, falsehood is termed as the vilest and worst immoral trait. Following are a few sayings of Imam Ali (a.s):

- *“Safeguard yourself against lying for it is [indeed] the lowest of vices and a form of lowliness.”* ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 78, Ch: 16, Hadith: 157*
- *“The worst moral vice is lying and hypocrisy.”* ---*Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 4, Page: 166*

- “There is no trait worse than lying.”---Gharar Al Hakm, Vol: 6, Page 380
- “Truth is trustworthiness and lying is breach of trust.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 69, Ch: 38, Hadith: 35
- “The worst utterance is lying.” ---Nahj al Balagha, Sermon, 84
- “The sign of faith is choosing to utter the truth when it harms you, over lying when it benefits you.” Nahj al Balagha, Kalimat Qasa 458

The Prophet (s.a) has said: “It is indeed a great betrayal, to say something to a brother of yours and he believes it while what you have told him is [in fact] a lie.” ---Kanz Al Amal, Vol:3, Page: 620, Hadith: 8210

The Prophet (s.a) also said: “The grandest of [manifestation] vice is a lying tongue.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol, 21 P: 210, Ch: 29

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “A person of intellect never lies even if it is in his benefit.” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 1, Page: 17

Truthfulness in The Light of Quran & Traditions

Now we know fully well how bad falsehood is in the view of Islamic Shariah and its harmful effects on the society in general. Therefore, we shall now discuss Islamic views on the greatness and felicity of truthfulness.

Allah (SWT) exhorts people to seek the company of truthful ones as the Quran says , “O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah (SWT) and be with the truthful!” ---Surat Al Tawbah, 9:119

In another verse, Allah (SWT) has given this message to the truthful ones, “Allah (SWT) will say, ‘This day truthfulness shall benefit the truthful. For them there will be gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them forever. Allah (SWT) is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him! That is the great success’” ---Surat Al Maidah, 5:120

The Prophet (s.a) has said: “The closest person from amongst you on the Day of Reckoning will be the person who is most truthful.” ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 74, Ch: 7, Page: 152

Imam Ali (a.s) has said: “Truth is the brother of justice.” -Gharar Al Hakm, P:217. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) has said: “God hasn’t sent any prophet but with truthfulness and trustworthiness.” ---Usool e Kaafi, Vol: 2, Page: 104

Permissible Falsehoods

Although falsehood is an undesirable and mean trait, but, in times of certain situations, Islam has permitted it.

Compulsive Situations: When it becomes a matter of life and death and there is no way other than access to falsehood, Islam permits it as the Holy Quran says: “.....*Barring someone who is compelled while his heart is at rest in faith—*” ---*Surat Al Nahl, 16:106*

This verse was revealed when the Prophet’s (s.a) great companion, Ammar Yassir (r.a) was tortured badly by the infidels of Qureish and to save his life he, perforce, uttered word of infidelity because in extremely oppressive circumstances haram things too are rendered legitimate. Imam Jafar Sadiq(a.s) has said: “*God has not forbidden anything but made permissible for he who has no other choice but to perform it (i.e. compelled).*” ---*Fusool al Mahimma, Page: 408*

Note: But it must be remembered that only such compulsions and helplessness make haram to halal which is a compulsion in the view of Shariah ---Translators Maulana Kumail Asghar Zaidi and Maulana Ridwan Hyder.

Therefore, when a person’s life, property, respect and honor are at risk because of telling a truth he may make access to falsehood to save himself.

Truce Or Treaty: If one has to make access falsehood to effect a truce between contending parties, one may use it. If sticking to the truth increases enmity between the opponents, it is haram, as the Prophet (s.a) had told Imam Ali (a.s): “O Ali! God likes lying when it is employed as a means for reconciliation between people and detests truth which creates evil.” ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 78, Page: 356, Ch: 10*

Martial Strategy: Among the martial strategies, the strategy which has been approved by Islam is to keep the enemy strategically confused, and thus weaken his resolve and preparedness. For this purpose, falsehood is permissible. Prophet (SA) has said to Imam Ali (a.s): “Deception is permissible in war.” ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 68, Page: 8, Ch: 60*

Telling Lies In Jest: Many people tell lies as an act of jesting. When asked why they do it, they say that it was just a matter of joking. Therefore, such persons should remember that mere jesting and joking wouldn't negate the seriousness of falsehoods as the Prophet (s.a) has said: *"Falsehood is neither good in seriousness, nor in jest."* ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 69, Page: 235, Ch: 114*

The Prophet (s.a) also said: *"Woe unto him who utilizes falsity during conversations in order to bring about laughter. Woe unto him, Woe unto him."* ---*Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 69, Page: 235, Ch: 114*

Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s) says: *"My revered father said many a time, 'Abstain from every falsehood, be it minor or major; seriously or in jest.'" ---Previous reference*

Being Ambiguous (Tauria): Tauria is a word that is ambiguous when the one who says it takes one meaning and the listener understands another meaning. Tauria, in fact, isn't a falsehood but the listener takes a different purport. Therefore, in circumstances where a person doesn't wish to tell the truth and also wishes to avoid uttering a falsehood, he makes access to Tauria. For instance, if a person inquires about another person and we don't wish to give him the factual information, we might make access to Tauria saying, 'I had seen him in the mosque.' The inquirer might think that he had seen him in the mosque a short while ago and in fact it had happened more than a week ago. Therefore, the inquirer might even go to the mosque to look for the person.

Summary

Falsehood is a major sin. Since it is easy to do, people make access to this bad practice. Falsehood leaves very harmful effects in society because it creates doubts and unwarranted suspicion in the minds of people. Therefore, Islam has termed falsehood as the worst social evil.

Questions

1. Define falsehood.
2. Why is falsehood a problem?
3. What does Shariah say about the liars?

Lesson Twenty-Nine: Lying

4. What do the traditions say about falsehoods?
5. In what circumstances uttering falsehoods is permissible?
6. Can falsehoods be used in sheer jest?
7. What is the meaning of *Tauria*—give an example?

Lesson Thirty: Epilogue- Summary of Our Discussions

In the previous 29 lessons, you must have comprehended well what Islam teaches us. It teaches us that when a person wishes to reach the peak of success, it is necessary for him to take good care of the mutual rights of people in the society.

We also are aware that, no other human beings, other than the Infallibles (a.s) are safe from faults and from going astray. Therefore, for reaching the pinnacle of material and spiritual progress, every individual requires the support of others. One cannot achieve everything alone and needs intellectual and practical support of others to be successful. We also know that, on one hand a person needs funds for the requirements of livelihood for which he has to struggle and on the other hand he needs the earnest support and love of others. And this he cannot achieve by himself.

When we take stock of the current conditions of the world, we find that the muslims are persecuted in many parts of the world and therefore, they must strengthen their unity and stand like a wall of steel to face the opponents.

The Prophet (s.a) has said: *“muslims are a united force against all their enemies,”* ---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 58, Page: 150

It is certain that, when people have one voice, they turn into a big force. But if dissensions arise, their strength evaporates. This is the reason that Allah (SWT) has warned the muslims against dissensions and enmity: *“And obey Allah (SWT) and the Apostle, and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone. And be patient; indeed Allah (SWT) is with the patient!”*---Surat Al Anfal, 8:46

This is the reason why the treacherous people in the world create dissensions and conflicts to weaken others and rule over them. Allah (SWT) says about this:

“Indeed Pharaoh tyrannized over the land, reducing the people to factions, abusing one group of them.....”---Surat Al Qasas, 28:4

And thus when dissensions arise in a people and they get divided into factions, their voice automatically weakens and it becomes easier to crush them and rule over them. This is the reason that Quran has warned the muslims against in-fighting and conflicts amongst themselves and referred to it as the work of Satan. Quran says: *“Indeed Satan seeks to cast enmity and hatred among you.....”*--- Surat Al Maidah, 5:91

But unity, concord and togetherness, make a nation powerful. Imam Ali (a.s) has said: *“Never has a nation arose united on one call but that its affairs and foundations became firm.”*---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 2, page: 403

This is the reason that the Imam (a.s) reflected on the peoples who lived in the past in his very famous sermon—Khutba e Qasea--exhorting people to ponder over their experiences. For further clarification we give here a transcript of a part of the sermon: *“..... You should also fear what calamities befell peoples before you on account of their evil deeds and detestable actions. Remember, during good or bad circumstances, what happened to them, and be cautious that you should not be like them. After you have thought over both the conditions of these people attach yourself to everything with which their position became honorable, on account of which, the enemies remained away from them, through which safety spread over them, by reason of which riches bowed before them and as a result of which distinction connected itself with their rope. These things were abstention from division, sticking to unity, calling each other to it and advising each other about it. You should avoid everything which broke their backbone and weakened their power such as malice in the hearts, hatred in the chests, turning away (from each other’s help) and holding offhands from one another’s assistance. Think about the condition of the people from among believers who passed before you. What distresses and trials they were in! Were they not the most overburdened among all the people and in the most straitened circumstances in the whole world? The Pharaohs took them as slaves. They inflicted on them the worst punishments and bitter sufferings. They continuously remained in this state of ruinous disgrace and severe subjugation. They found no method for escape and no way for protection. Till when Allah (SWT), the Glorified, noticed that they were enduring troubles in His love and bearing distresses out of fear for Him, He provided escape from the distress of trials. So, He*

changed their disgrace into honor and fear into safety. Consequently, they became ruling kings and conspicuous leaders and Allah (SWT)'s favors over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached. Look, how they were when their groups were united, their views were unanimous, their hearts were moderate, their hands used to help one another, their swords were intended for assisting one another, their eyes were sharp and their aims were the same. Did they not become masters of the corners of the earth and rulers over the neck of all the worlds? Thereafter, also see what happened to them towards the end when division overtook them, unity became fractured, and differences arose between their words and their hearts. They divided into various groups and were scattered fighting among themselves. Then Allah (SWT) took away from them the apparel of His honor and deprived them of the prosperity produced by His favors. Only their stories have remained among you for the guidance of those who may learn the lesson from them.” ---KHUTBA E QASEA--Nahj al Balagha, Sermon 192

From this eloquent sermon of Amir al Momineen (a.s) we understand, that the secret of the progress of every society is unity and harmony and the main cause of their downfall is dissent, schisms and mutual conflicts. This is the reason that during the time of the Prophet (s.a) the muslims were sticklers after the Islamic Norms and were on a high moral pedestal. Therefore, they were the best of friends, generous and a wall of steel against their enemies and adversaries. During that period the Islamic Society was at the pinnacle of progress and an example for the other nations in the world. About this aspect Allah (SWT) points in these verses of the Holy Quran: *“Thus, We have made you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses to the people, and that the Apostle may be a witness to you.” ---Surat Al Baqarah, 2: 143*

At another place the Holy Quran says: *“You are the best nation (ever) brought forth for mankind: you bid what is right and forbid what is wrong,...”---Surat Al e Imran, 3: 110*

High morals and habits of the people of a society only make it a role model for other societies as it is said in a tradition saying, *“Be examples to people by means other than your tongues”---Bihar Al Anwar, Vol: 67, Page: 309.* If actions are not present words do not have any impact or effect. Hence, if we want the Islamic values to spread

and proliferate, it is important that we adorn ourselves with the Islamic Norms that our morals are purely Islamic and molded in the divine spirit. Only then can we become an example for the other peoples in the world and attract them to Islam and its values.

Therefore, it is a duty of every muslim to follow Islamic morals in its entirety so that Islam is respected and visible and the enemies are in awe of its presence. Allah (SWT) has mandated us to be united and warned against conflicts and dissensions. Therefore, we can say that there are three basic purposes of the Aaadab e Islami (Islamic Etiquettes):

1. Promoting unity and brotherhood among the muslims elevating their society to a higher pedestal.
2. Inviting others, nations to Islam by setting example before them with our exemplary morals.
3. Cooperating with one another to help achieve worldly success and an eternal success in Hereafter.

These aims could be achieved only when the rights of each other are respected and brotherhood exists between muslims and they actively participate on every occasion of happiness and sorrow.

Lesson Thirty: Epilogue- Summary of Our Discussions

