

## Best Values

The Islamic moral values have been divided into two broad categories viz. ‘good characteristics’ and ‘noble characteristics’. Those relationships and behaviours which are related to the social and public life are called as ‘good characteristics’ and those things which are a cause of a person’s spiritual, religious and humanitarian perfection are called ‘noble characteristics’. Ameerul Momineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) says:

ذَلُّوا أَخْلَاقَكُمْ بِالْمَحَاسِنِ وَ قُوِّدُوهَا إِلَى الْمَكَارِمِ

*“Master your manners by high traits and drive them towards the nobilities (of character).”<sup>1</sup>*

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said:

بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

*“I have been raised for the perfection of morals.”<sup>2</sup>*

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about good morals. He (a.s.) replied:

مَا حَدُّ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ؟ قَالَ تَلِينُ جَانِبِكَ وَ تَطْيِيبُ كَلَامِكَ وَ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِبِشْرٍ حَسَنِ

*What is the boundary of good morals? He (a.s.) said: “Be polite with the people, talk respectfully and meet your brother in a cheerful manner.”<sup>3</sup>*

These are morals which are necessary and essential for everyone. The human society cannot exist without these. If we cannot be polite, are unable to talk courteously and respectfully and cannot meet people in a cheerful way then how can our society be called a human society?!

Noble characteristics are even higher than this. A person said to Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.), “O the son of

the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.)! Tell me about noble characteristics.’ Imam (a.s.) replied:

أَلْعَفُوْ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ وَ صِلَةُ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ وَ إِعْطَاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ وَ قَوْلُ الْحَقِّ وَ لَوْ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

*“Forgiveness to the one who has oppressed you, maintaining relations with the one who breaks relations with you, bestowing the one who has prevented for you and speaking the truth even if it is against you.”<sup>4</sup>*

Good morals are not only related to the spiritual life of a human being but being patient in times of increase or decrease in sustenance and a disturbed and troublesome life are also impacted by good morals. Ameerul Momineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) says:

فِي سَعَةِ الْأَخْلَاقِ كُنُوزُ الْأَرْزَاقِ

*“The treasures of sustenance lie in the increase of (good) morals.”<sup>5</sup>*

Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) said:

لَا عَيْشَ أَغْنَىٰ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ

*“There is no life better than (one with) good morals.”<sup>6</sup>*

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says:

الْبِرُّ وَ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ يَعْزِمَانِ الدِّيَارَ وَ يَزِيدَانِ فِي الْأَعْمَارِ

*“Goodness and good morals prosper the towns and (cause) increase in lifespan.”<sup>7</sup>*

The following incident highlights how good morals affect our worldly life, deliver us from hardships and free us from prison.

Ali Askaafi says: I was the secretary of the Governor of Baghdad for a very long time. Once, my conditions deteriorated and my entire life changed. The governor was displeased with me and he removed me from my position, seized my entire movable and immovable properties and imprisoned me in a humiliating way. I was living an utterly degraded and troublesome life in prison until I was informed that the chief of Baghdad Police, Is’haaq ibn Ibrahim Tahiri, had come. I was certain about my death. Despaired of life, I went to him and followed the required code of conduct for greeting. Is’haaq looked at me and started smiling. He said, ‘My brother Abdullah Tahir has written to me from Khorasaan and recommended to release you. The governor has accepted it, ordered for your release and also returned

all your property to you. Now you can go home.’ I thanked Allah and started crying out of joy. I came home and started to streamline my scattered life.

One day I went to meet Is’haaq ibn Ibrahim. I prayed for him and said that I had never met Abdullah Tahir. I have never helped him. Then how did he recommend for me?

Is’haaq said: “I received a letter from my brother a few days ago. He said that ‘the letters which I used to receive from the Governor earlier were full of love and respect, resulted in strengthening of relations and the relationship was profound and warm. The letters from the secretary were full of dignity and respect. Since the past few days, the nature of these letters has changed. Unlike earlier, there is no love and respect now. It seems that the Governor has changed his secretary, imprisoned him and someone else has replaced him.

Since the former secretary was courteous and behaved with dignity and respect hence, it is impolite and immoral to leave him in this state. You go to the Governor, ask about the former secretary’s crime and recommend for his release on my behalf. If his crime is pardonable then forgive him and if there has been any misappropriation in accounting then repay it from my account and reinstate him to his position.’ I conveyed my brother’s message to the Governor. He accepted his recommendation and released you from prison and also returned your entire properties to you.”

Is’haaq immediately gave me ten thousand dirhams. After a few days, I got my position back and I became busy in my work. I regained my lost reputation. All problems were solved and difficulties were eased.

You must have noticed that it was the good character of the secretary which resulted in his freedom or else it was quite possible that he would remain imprisoned for the rest of his life. The secretary used to write letters with dignity and respect. He used to strengthen the relations, encouraged socializing and friendship. Ameerul Momineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said:

رُبَّ عَزِيزٍ أُنْذِلَهُ خُلْفُهُ وَ دَلِيلٍ أَعَزَّهُ خُلْفُهُ

*“Often a respectful person is disgraced due to his (bad) behavior and often a disgraced person is respected due to his (good) behaviour.”<sup>8</sup>*

The reason for the adversity of today’s material life is stooping character. Our ears are longing to hear honourable and respectful things. People do not treat each other with respect even under normal circumstances, forget while in anger. Respectful words are very rare in today’s life. It seems as though these words are not found in the dictionaries at all. Disrespectful words are being used even to call out to people. Since words have their own effect, noble and respectful words develop a sense of dignity and honour in the heart, they increase love and affection. Now that words are devoid of honour and respect, even life is devoid of any honour and respect. Since good morals were a treasure–chest for sustenance

and the cause of living an independent life, now that these causes fail to exist the blessings from sustenance have vanished and life is being surrounded by needs and requirements.

Forgiveness and pardon, forbearance and patience, tolerance and politeness, dignity and respect, gratitude and gratefulness, maintaining relations and good behavior, taking care and enquiring about each other, visiting the sick and offering condolences, greeting and saluting... are no longer found and even if they are, then only superficially. Hearts adorned with good character and etiquette, the tones embellished with respect and within the boundaries of respect, polite speech, prayers which affect the heart, special affection to the young, rightful respect to the elders, etc...are indeed uncommon.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَصَّ رَسُولَهُ بِمَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ فَأَمْتَحِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَتْ فِيكُمْ فَأَحْمَدُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ وَإِنْ لَا تَكُنْ فِيكُمْ فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ وَارْغَبُوا إِلَيْهِ فِيهَا

*“Surely Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, honoured His Messengers with good morals. You all should examine yourselves. If it (good morals) is present in you then thank Allah and know that surely this is from the goodness. And if you do not have it, then sincerely ask Allah for it and turn towards Him for it.”*

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The world today believes in ‘tit-for-tat’. Why do you not go to their house? Do they come to our house? Why do you not ask for their well-being? Have they ever asked? Say ‘Salaam’ to them... Why? Who are they? They are elders. So what? Forgive them? Why?

The language used in newspapers and television these days, the way in which morals and etiquette are disappearing from schools and colleges are even worse, the people whom the next generation considers as their ideals, their public life is completely devoid of morals, let alone their personal lives. These immoralities are becoming a culture so rapidly that they are not even considered as immoral anymore.

If there’s anything that can save this world from this whirlpool of destruction and change the world, save it from poverty and hunger, scarcity and inflation, wars and conflicts, destruction and devastation, it is the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Ahle Bait (a.s.).

The Holy Quran states:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي فِيكَ إِلَىٰ الَّتِي فِيكَ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾  
﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا ۚ إِلَّا الَّذِي يَنْصَرُّوا ۚ وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا ۚ إِلَّا نُوًا حَظِيًّا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾

***And the good and the evil are not alike. Repel (evil) with what is best, then the one between whom and you there is enmity would be as if he were a warm friend. And none are made to***

**receive it but those who are patient and none are made to receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune.”<sup>10</sup>**

It means that in order to reach the peak of good morals patience is necessary and it also requires divine grace (taufeeq). It is not possible to reach that stage without Allah’s Grace. This was the teaching of the silent Quran. Now let us see what the speaking Quran has taught concerning this. Let us see how close is the relation between the Noble Quran and Ahle Bait (a.s.). Imam Zainul Aabideen (a.s.) says:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ، وَ سَدِّدْنِي لِأَنْ أَعَارِضَ مَنْ عَشَّنِي بِالنُّصْحِ، وَ أَجْزِي مَنْ هَجَرَنِي بِالْبِرِّ، وَ أُتَيْبَ مَنْ حَرَمَنِي بِالْبَدْلِ، وَ أَكْفِي مَنْ قَطَعَنِي بِالصِّلَةِ، وَ أَخَالَفَ مَنْ اغْتَابَنِي إِلَى حُسْنِ الذِّكْرِ، وَ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ الْحَسَنَةَ، وَ أُغْضِي عَنِ السَّيِّئَةِ.

*“O Allah! Bless Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny (a.s.), guide me*

☞ *So that I may counter whoever acts dishonestly towards me with my good advice*

☞ *So that I may make amends with whoever parts company with me*

☞ *So that I may reward whoever deprives me with generosity*

☞ *So that I may recompense whoever cuts himself from me with union*

☞ *So that I may oppose whoever slanders me with excellent mention*

☞ *So that I may give thanks for good and*

☞ *So that I may shut my eyes to evil!” <sup>11</sup>*

**May Allah bestow us with the best morals by the blessings of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and the progeny of Muhammad (a.s.) and characterize us with those esteemed attributes which are essential for the service and servitude of our master, Hazrat Vali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.).**

**Amen, O Lord of the Worlds!**

1. Tuhaf al-Uqool, p. 224
2. Mishkaat al-Anwaar, p. 243
3. Ma’aani al-Akhbaar, p. 253
4. Al-Amaali of Shaikh al-Saduq (r.a.), p. 280
5. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 77, p. 286
6. Mustadrak al-Wasaael, v. 8, p. 444
7. Al-Kaafi, v. 2, p. 100
8. Safinatul Behaar under the root of ‘kh-l-q’
9. Al-Kaafi, v. 2, p. 56
10. Surah Haa Meem Sajdah (41): 34-35

[11.](#) Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah, Dua-e-Makaarem al-Akhlaaq

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