

Chapter 1: Features Of The Islamic Concept Of Social Relations

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Openness in Social Relations

The Islamic concept of social relations—as taught by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)—highlights openness or social accessibility and expansion in building social relations and associations as opposed to seclusion, aloofness, and monasticism. It focuses on the naivety of human nature and directs it towards perfection in this important aspect. Human nature pushes man in the direction of associating with others, establishing strong ties with them, seeking their help in needs, and getting to know them more closely.

This natural inclination can be inferred from the Holy Qur'an in its discussion regarding the creation of spouses:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ {21}

One of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them,

and He put between you love and compassion. Most surely, there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (30:21)

More evidently, the Holy Qur'an has stated that the purpose behind driving people into kinships and tribes was to create familiarity among people and to establish social relations:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ {13}

O humankind! We have surely created you of a male and a female and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely, the most honorable among you with Allah is the one who is most careful of his duty. Surely, Allah is Knowing, Aware. (49: 13)

Furthermore, there are many Qur'anic texts confirming the naïve nature of human beings.

As for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), reported instructions of the inclination towards social relations has been confirmed by them through their precepts and directives to their followers. For instance, according to a validly reported tradition, Murazim has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ وَحُسْنِ الْجَوَارِ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِقَامَةِ الشَّهَادَةِ وَحُضُورِ الْجَنَائِزِ. إِنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لَكُمْ مِنَ النَّاسِ. إِنَّ أَحَدًا لَا يَسْتَعِينِي عَنِ النَّاسِ فِي حَيَاتِهِ، وَالنَّاسُ لَا بُدَّ لِبَعْضِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ.

Always offer prayers in the mosques (of the non-Shi'ah Muslims) and show good neighborliness to people. Testify for rightful parties and attend their funeral ceremonies. Verily, you can never manage without other people. No one can manage without others throughout life, since people are in an indispensable need of each other. [1](#)

Making brethren-in-faith

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), underscoring this trend in social relations, directed their followers towards making as many friendships and associations as possible.

In this respect, Imam al-Ridha ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ اسْتَفَادَ أَحَا فِي اللَّهِ اسْتَفَادَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ.

Whoever makes another their brother-in-faith has in fact won a house in Paradise. [2](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said:

أَكْثَرُوا مِنَ الْأَصْدِقَاءِ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَإِنَّهُمْ يَنْفَعُونَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ. أَمَّا فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَحَوَائِجُ يُقُومُونَ بِهَا، وَأَمَّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ (فَإِنَّ أَهْلَ جَهَنَّمَ قَالُوا: مَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِينَ. وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ).

*Make friends with as many people as possible in this world, for they shall benefit in this world and in the Hereafter. In this world, they may set right your worldly needs. In the Hereafter, the inhabitants of Hellfire shall say, "So now we have neither intercessors nor a true friend. (26: 100–101)"*³

Confirming this instruction, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said:

إِسْتَكْتَرُوا مِنَ الْإِخْوَانِ فَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ دَعْوَةً مُسْتَجَابَةً.

Make brothers-in-faith with as many people as possible, for each faithful believer has answered prayers.

إِسْتَكْتَرُوا مِنَ الْإِخْوَانِ فَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ شَفَاعَةً.

Make brothers-in-faith with as many people as possible, for each faithful believer will be granted [the] right to intercede.

أَكْثَرُوا مِنْ مُوَآخَاةِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَإِنَّ لَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَدًا يُكَافِيهِمْ بِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

*Make brothers-in-faith with as many faithful people as possible, for they will have some privilege with Almighty Allah by which He shall reward them on the Day of Resurrection.*⁴

Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), is reported to have composed the following poetic lines:

عَلَيْكَ يَا إِخْوَانَ الصَّفَاءِ فَإِنَّهُمْ

Try to win pure-hearted brothers, for they become

عِمَادٌ إِذَا اسْتَنْجَدْتَهُمْ وَظُهُورٌ

Your trust and support when you seek their aid

وَلَيْسَ كَثِيرًا أَلْفٌ خِلٌّ وَصَاحِبٌ

A thousand associates and friends are not many,

وَإِنَّ عَدُوًّا وَاحِدًا لَكَثِيرٌ

But a single enemy is much too many!

Warning against aloofness and hostility

With respect to the trend of building good social relations with people, the Holy Imams (‘a) warned their followers against aloofness, incurring the hostility of others, and disputing and arguing, as such things damage social relations.

One of the Infallible Imams (‘a) is reported to have said:

الْإِنْفِصَاضُ عَنِ النَّاسِ مُكْسِبَةُ الْعَدَاوَةِ.

*Detachment from people provokes hostility.*⁵

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have quoted Imam ‘Ali (‘a) as saying:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْمِرَاءَ وَالْخُسُومَةَ فَإِنَّهُمَا يُمْرِضَانِ الْقُلُوبَ عَلَى الْإِخْوَانِ وَيَنْبُتُ عَلَيْهِمَا النِّفَاقُ.

*Beware of engaging yourselves in contention and dispute because these two matters poison your hearts towards your friends and act as a fertile source of hypocrisy.*⁶

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is also reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَا كَانَ جِبْرِئِيلُ يَأْتِينِي إِلَّا قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، اتَّقِ شَحْنََاءَ الرِّجَالِ وَعَدَاوَتَهُمْ.

*Every time (Archangel) Gabriel visited me, he would say to me, “O Muhammad, beware of the hostility and animosity of others.”*⁷

Indulgence

Another indication of the trend of the Holy Imams towards building good relations with others is that they instructed their followers to gratify others by treating them leniently in matters of humor and disposition. According to an authentic tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

أَمَرَنِي رَبِّي بِمُدَارَاةِ النَّاسِ كَمَا أَمَرَنِي بِالْفَرَائِضِ.

My Lord ordered me to accommodate people with the same fortitude that He ordered me to have in obligatory (religious) duties. [8](#)

Isolation and Monasticism

On the other hand, there are some traditions that can be taken to mean that secluding oneself and steering clear of social activities and associations with people could be the most preferred course one might adopt.

In his book of *Rawdhat al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a valid chain of authority on the authority of Hafs ibn Ghiyath that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) delivered the following instruction:

إِنْ قَدَرْتَ أَنْ لَا تَخْرُجَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ فَافْعَلْ، فَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ فِي خُرُوجِكَ أَنْ لَا تَغْتَابَ وَلَا تَكْذِبَ وَلَا تَحْسِدَ وَلَا تُرَائِي وَلَا تَتَصَنَّعَ وَلَا تُدَاهِنَ... نَعَمْ صَوْمَعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِ بَيْتَهُ، يَكْفُفُ فِيهِ بَصَرَهُ وَلِسَانَهُ وَنَفْسَهُ وَفَرْجَهُ.

If possible, you should never leave your house, because if you leave your house, then you must stop backbiting, telling lies, envying others, showing off, boasting, and sycophancy... How excellent a hermitage is a Muslim's house wherein he casts his sight down and controls his tongue, his self, and his private parts... [9](#)

In the famous book of *tafsir* (i.e. exegesis of the Holy Qur'an) that is ascribed to 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), is reported to have said:

طُوبَى لِمَنْ لَأَزَمَ بَيْتَهُ وَأَكَلَّ كَسْرَتَهُ وَبَكَى عَلَى خَطِيئَتِهِ وَكَانَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ فِي تَعَبٍ وَالنَّاسُ مِنْهُ فِي رَاحَةٍ.

Blessed is he who confines himself to his house, eats the least food possible, weeps for his sins, tires himself, and others are free of his annoyance. [10](#)

Following the course of the author of *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah* who commented on such traditions, we can interpretively say that these instructions are restricted to exceptional situations when one finds oneself too weak to resist the surrounding pressures and seductions; one can adopt seclusion cautiously when it becomes too difficult to avoid the disadvantages of association with others. As another interpretation, we may also say that these instructions stand to educate and warn people about the necessity to behave correctly when associating with others in society.

Almighty Allah has created man to attain perfection by undertaking responsibility and preferring right over wrong and good over evil within his circumstances in the universe and the progress of society. Thus, fleeing this divine trial and test—by fleeing from social life and obligations—will never achieve

such perfection.

Considering these two interpretations of the seemingly contradictory traditions, it is unfeasible to adopt the second group (of traditions mentioned) because the traditions of the first type (i.e. emphasizing good social relations with others and playing active roles in social life) are congruous with the instructions of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Sunnah. In addition, these traditions are considerably more in number than the traditions of the second type, more reliable in chains of authority, more familiar with the scholars of the virtuous community, and more applicable to the deeds and manners of scholars and righteous people.

Commenting on this point, 'Allamah al-Tabrisi, in his famous (book of) *tafsir* entitled *Majma' al-Bayan* says:

*“Traditions warn against seclusion, detachment from people and communities, monasticism, and aloofness.”*¹¹

Confirming this fact, the Holy Qur'an says:

{رَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا} 27

The Monasticism, which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them. We prescribed only the seeking of the pleasure of Allah, but that they did not foster, as they should have done. (57:27)

Monasticism—in the sense of fearing Almighty Allah and worshipping Him in private—was prescribed only to save those mentioned in the verse from being killed or from being forced to abandon the religion of Almighty Allah, but they did not promote monasticism as it was meant to be. Instead, they turned it into detachment from society, abstinence from legitimate matrimonial union, forsaking obligations and responsibilities, making it a profession in the end.¹²

Reinforcing the Social Structure

The second purpose behind social relations is to reinforce the foundations of Muslim society and strengthen the social structure to maintain continuous progress towards social perfection. Correct social relations also help gain access to platforms of power, justice, welfare, and reconciliation, and help Muslim society face and solve various problems arising from social, political and economic practices. Social relations also aid in spirituality and self-perfection within the movement of humankind towards Almighty Allah.

Reinforcing the social structure depended on a number of essential principles mentioned below.

The Principle of Mutual Support and Aid

Muslims in general and faithful believers in particular are required to support and aid each other. As has been previously cited, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is authentically reported to have said:

الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ؛ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ وَلَا يَخُونُهُ. وَيَحِقُّ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْإِجْتِهَادُ فِي التَّوَاصُلِ وَالتَّعَاقُدِ عَلَى التَّعَاطُفِ وَالْمُوَاسَاةِ لِأَهْلِ الْحَاجَةِ وَتَعَاظُفِ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ حَتَّى تَكُونُوا كَمَا أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، رُحَمَاءَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَتْرَاحِمِينَ مُعْتَمِينَ لِمَا غَابَ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ عَلَى مَا مَضَى عَلَيْهِ مَعْشَرُ الْأَنْصَارِ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Muslims are brothers of each other. They neither wrong, nor disappoint, nor betray each other. The duties that are incumbent on Muslims towards each other are to exert effort in communication, agree on mutual sympathy, treat the needy as they treat themselves, and empathize with one another. If you abide by this, you will be exactly as Almighty Allah has ordered you to be: compassionate towards each other, merciful towards one another, regretful about missing any opportunity to help a brethren-in-faith, just like the conduct of the Ansar during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (S). [13](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَنْ سَمِعَ رَجُلًا يُنَادِي يَا لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ، فَلَمْ يُجِبْهُ، فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْلِمٍ.

Whoever hears someone calling for the help of Muslims but fails to respond to him, is not actually a Muslim. [14](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَهْتَمَّ بِأُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْلِمٍ.

He who does not care about the affairs of Muslims is not Muslim. [15](#)

Enjoining the Right and Forbidding the Wrong

In its capacity as one of the greatest divinely commissioned obligations and the highest and most honorable duties, the principle of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong has been defined and introduced by traditions as:

سَبِيلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَمِنْهَا جُ الصُّلَحَاءِ.

...The course of prophets and the manner of the righteous.

فَرِيضَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ بِهَا تُقَامُ الْفَرَائِضُ وَتَأْمَنُ الْمَذَاهِبُ وَتُحَلُّ الْمَكَاسِبُ وَتُرَدُّ الْمَظَالِمُ وَتُعْمَرُ الْأَرْضُ وَيُنْتَصَفُ مِنَ الْأَعْدَاءِ وَيَسْتَقِيمُ الْأَمْرُ.

It is a great duty through which other duties are carried out, routes are secured, earnings are made legal, aggressions are warded off, lands are nurtured, enemies are retaliated, and all affairs set aright. [16](#)

The Principle of Thinking Well Of Others

Another principle of social relations is having good thoughts about others, assuming the best about the conduct of ones brethren-in-faith, closing one's eyes to their flaws, and concealing the defects of others to bind the social structure and prevent any cracks from appearing in it. On the authority of his infallible fathers, Imam al-Baqir ('a) has quoted Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), as saying:

ضَعُ أَمْرَ أَخِيكَ عَلَى أَحْسَنِهِ حَتَّى يَأْتِيكَ مِنْهُ مَا يَغْلِبُكَ، وَلَا تَظُنَّنْ بِكَلِمَةٍ خَرَجْتَ مِنْ أَخِيكَ سُوءاً وَأَنْتَ تَجِدُ لَهَا فِي الْخَيْرِ مَحْمَلاً.

Assume the best possible about the deed of your brother-in-faith unless you see in him something that tears down your assumption. Never deem evil any word uttered by your brother-in-faith as long as you can find an acceptable excuse for it. [17](#)

Abu-Basir has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

لَا تُفْتِشِ النَّاسَ فَتَبْقَى بِإِلَّا صَدِيقٍ.

Do not scrutinize people lest you remain friendless. [18](#)

Al-@ahhak ibn Mukhallad has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

لَيْسَ مِنَ الْإِنْصَافِ مُطَالَبَةُ الْإِخْوَانِ بِالْإِنْصَافِ.

It is unfair to demand friends to be fair (with you). [19](#)

The Principle of Consultation

Social relations in Islam are built up by seeking the counsel of other Muslims and making use of their experience and opinions and by sharing your experiences and affectionately advising them about

performing certain acts.

Abu-Hurayrah has reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying:

إِسْتَشِرُّوا الْعَاقِلَ وَلَا تَعْصُوهُ فَتَنْدَمُوا.

Seek the guidance of the reasonable and do not disregard their advice, lest you regret. [20](#)

Sulayman ibn Khalid has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

إِسْتَشِرِ الْعَاقِلَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ الْوَرِعِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَأْمُرُ إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ، وَإِيَّاكَ وَالْخِلَافَ فَإِنَّ مُخَالَفَةَ الْوَرِعِ الْعَاقِلِ مَفْسَدَةٌ فِي الدِّينِ
وَالدُّنْيَا.

Seek the advice of reasonable and pious men, because they order you only towards good. Beware of defying them, because to defy reasonable and pious men brings about corruption in religious and worldly affairs. [21](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مُشَاوَرَةُ الْعَاقِلِ النَّاصِحِ رُشْدٌ وَيَمْنٌ وَتَوْفِيقٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا أَشَارَ عَلَيْكَ النَّاصِحُ الْعَاقِلُ فَإِيَّاكَ وَالْخِلَافَ فَإِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
الْعَطْبَ.

Seeking the counsel of wise well-wishers is a sign of judiciousness, blessing, and guidance to success by Almighty Allah, so if a wise well-wisher gives you advice, beware of defiance lest you come upon destruction. [22](#)

The qualifications of a true advisor specified by the Holy Legislator are rationality, piety, confidentiality and soundness of character.

Al-Halabi has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

إِنَّ الْمَشُورَةَ لَا تَكُونُ إِلَّا بِحُدُودِهَا، فَمَنْ عَرَفَهَا بِحُدُودِهَا وَإِلَّا كَانَتْ مَضْرُوبَةً عَلَى الْمُسْتَشِيرِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ مَنْفَعَتِهَا لَهُ.
فَأُولَئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ الَّذِي تُشَاوَرُهُ عَاقِلًا، وَالثَّانِيَةُ أَنْ يَكُونَ حُرًّا مُتَدِينًا، وَالثَّلَاثَةُ أَنْ يَكُونَ صَدِيقًا مُؤَاخِيًا، وَالرَّابِعَةُ أَنْ
تُطْلِعَهُ عَلَى سِرِّكَ فَيَكُونَ عِلْمُهُ بِهِ كَعِلْمِكَ بِنَفْسِكَ، ثُمَّ يَسِرُّ ذَلِكَ وَيَكْتُمُهُ. فَإِنَّهُ إِذَا كَانَ عَاقِلًا انْتَفَعْتَ بِمَشُورَتِهِ، وَإِذَا كَانَ
حُرًّا مُتَدِينًا جَهَدَ نَفْسَهُ فِي النَّصِيحَةِ لَكَ، وَإِذَا كَانَ صَدِيقًا مُؤَاخِيًا كَتَمَ سِرِّكَ إِذَا أَطْلَعْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا أَطْلَعْتَهُ عَلَى سِرِّكَ
فَكَانَ عِلْمُهُ بِهِ كَعِلْمِكَ بِهِ تَمَّتِ الْمَشُورَةُ وَكَمَلَتِ النَّصِيحَةُ.

Surly, seeking of advice must be within limits; therefore, if one ignores (or violates) these limits, the harm

will be more than the benefit. The first of these limits is that the consultant must be wise. The second is that he must be honorable and devout. The third is that he must be a brotherly friend. The fourth is that when you tell him about your secret, he must understand it exactly as you have explained and then he must keep it in confidence. If the advisor is wise, you will then benefit from his advice. If he is honorable and devout, he will make all possible efforts to give you the best advice. If he is your brotherly friend, then he will conceal your secret after you reveal it to him. If he understands your secret as you do, then he will give perfect counsel and advice. [23](#)

Substance of Social Relations

Equality and Fraternity

The third aspect of social relations is that they must have sound foundations based on reality and values on the one hand and be a constituent of the social structure on the other.

Islam views as the best social relations based on equality. People are originally equal and each one is the counterpart of the other; therefore, no one can excel another in origin. Hence, the Holy Qur'an declares:

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا} 13

O Mankind! Surely, We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. (49: 13)

The Holy Prophet (S) has also declared:

كُلُّكُمْ لِآدَمَ وَأَدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ.

All of you belong to Adam (equally), and Adam was created of dust. [24](#)

However, differences and privileges arise due to extraordinary factors that ensue from the movement of man, both individually and socially. Some privileges are real—such as piety, knowledge, education, and practice of virtues like patience and charity—while others are false and unreal (having riches, many children, material wealth and influence). A third category of privileges arises from talents divinely bestowed on certain individuals or the divine selection of certain individuals.

The nature of social relationship must be Islam-based and faith-based, which automatically becomes a relationship of equality among the individuals of a society ruled by the doctrines of Islam.

As a result, Muslims are brothers of one another. They are equal and comparable in spiritual values.

Their ties and relations are similar to those who have the same father and mother. Islam has placed social ties and relations among people of the same faith on the same level and of similar worth and significance as blood ties and relations.

According to many validly reported traditions, this concept is corroborated by marriages performed at the time of the Holy Prophet (S). For instance, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in his book, *al-Kafi*, has validly reported the story of the marriage of Juwaybir to the daughter of one of the chiefs of the Arab clans.

Juwaybir—an ugly, short, dark skinned, needy man from al-Yamamah—who embraced Islam devoutly, was ordered by the Holy Prophet (S) to betroth the daughter of Ziyad, a chief of the clans of al-Madinah. He said:

يَا جُوَيْرُ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ وَضَعَ بِالْإِسْلَامِ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ شَرِيفًا، وَشَرَّفَ بِالْإِسْلَامِ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَضِعًا،
وَأَعَزَّ بِالْإِسْلَامِ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ ذَلِيلًا، وَأَذْهَبَ بِالْإِسْلَامِ مَا كَانَ مِنْ نَخْوَةِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَتَفَاخُرِهَا بِعَشَائِرِهَا وَيَأْسِقِ
أَنْسَابِهَا. فَالنَّاسُ الْيَوْمَ كُلُّهُمْ أبيضُهُمْ وَأَسْوَدُهُمْ وَقَرَشِيُّهُمْ وَعَرَبِيُّهُمْ وَعَجَمِيُّهُمْ مِنْ آدَمَ، وَإِنَّ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ طِينٍ.
وَإِنَّ أَحَبَّ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَطْوَعُهُمْ لَهُ وَأَتْقَاهُمْ.

O Juwaybir, Almighty Allah, by means of Islam, has verily humbled men who were esteemed in the Era of Ignorance (jahiliyyah) and, also by means of Islam, has honored others who were lowly in that era. In addition, by means of Islam, Almighty Allah has imparted nobility to men who were humble in that era and, by means of Islam, He has eradicated the baseless zeal of that era when people used to take pride in their clans and their lineages. Today, all people; the white and the black, the Qurayshite, the Arab, and the non-Arab, belong to Adam, and Adam was created by Almighty Allah from clay. Verily, the dearest of people to Almighty Allah on the Day of Resurrection shall be the most obedient to Him and the most pious.

To Ziyad, the father of the betrothed woman, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

يَا زِيَادُ، جُوَيْرُ مُؤْمِنٌ، وَالْمُؤْمِنُ كُفُوُ الْمُؤْمِنَةِ وَالْمُسْلِمُ كُفُوُ الْمُسْلِمَةِ. فَزَوِّجْهُ يَا زِيَادُ.

O Ziyad, Juwaybir is a faithful believer, and every faithful male is the match of every faithful female and every Muslim male is the match of every Muslim female. So, give him your daughter in marriage. [25](#)

Respect of Man in General

Although Islam considers faith to be the basis of social relations among Muslims, it does not dispense with the human side of these relations; rather, it considers the human side in the totality of its theory. The meaning becomes clear in Imam ‘Ali’s following words to Malik al-Ashtar:

وَأَشْعِرْ قَلْبَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ لِلرَّعِيَّةِ وَالْمَحَبَّةَ لَهُمْ وَاللُّطْفَ بِهِمْ، وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْفًا ضَارِيًا تَغْتَنِمُ أَكْلَهُمْ، فَإِنَّهُمْ صِنْفَانِ: إِمَّا

أَخُ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ أَوْ نَظِيرُكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ.

Develop in your heart the feeling of love for your people and let it be the source of kindness and blessing to them. Do not behave with them like a barbarian, and do not appropriate to yourself that which belongs to them. Remember that the citizens of the state are of two categories. They are either your brethren in faith or your brethren in kind. [26](#)

This trend can also be distinctly seen in the traditions that encourage courtesy in general with all people. Such traditions require preserving good social relations with people at the human level unless exceptional circumstances oblige one to disavow or rupture relations with certain people.

Suma'ah has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

مُجَامَلَةُ النَّاسِ ثُلُثُ الْعَقْلِ.

To behave courteously with people is one-third of wisdom. [27](#)

Abu-Basir has reported Imam al-Baqir (or Imam al-Sadiq) to have narrated that a Bedouin from the Banu-Tamim tribe came to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked for an advice.

Giving his advice, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

تَحَبَّبْ إِلَى النَّاسِ يُحِبُّوكَ.

Try to endear yourself to people and they will certainly love you. [28](#)

Another indication of this trend is the attitude of Islam towards unbelievers, as confirmed by the Holy Qur'an. It makes a distinction between the unbelievers and foes who adopted an aggressive political or military attitude against Muslims and unbelievers who did not adopt aggressive attitudes. As is mentioned in *Surah al-Mumtahanah* (Surah 60), the Holy Qur'an has warned against showing loyalty to and love for the former but it has permitted treating the latter with charity and fairness. Hence, it reads:

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ {8} إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَتَوَلَّوهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ {9}

Allah does not forbid you to show kindness and deal justly respecting those who have not made war against you on account of your religion and have not driven you forth from your homes. Surely, Allah loves the doers of justice. Allah only forbids you to make friends with those who

made war upon you because of your religion, drove you forth from your homes and backed up others in your expulsion. Whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust. (60:8-9)

A third indication of this trend can be deduced from traditions confirmed by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) on the significance of calling to the "way" of Almighty Allah by means of conversations characterized by rationality. They insisted on maintaining general social relations with the non-believers and non-Muslims as well as all categories of people without discriminating between Muslims and non-Muslims through wise and excellent communication skills.

A fourth indication can also be observed in the texts of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Sunnah that warn against reviling unbelievers and aggravating them with unconstructive attitudes because they would naturally respond to such revilement with similar insults.

Islam has presented fraternity among Muslims as the content of social relations within the Muslim community. Islam has lined itself up with fraternity, which is a mixture of mutual loyalty, backing one another up, and social rights characterized by shared love, affection, humanitarian feelings and sentiments.

Levels of Social Relations

The fourth aspect of social relations is that Islam has not overlooked the tangible realities that exist—despite the fact that it has adopted the principle of equality for all human beings and the principle of fraternity for the Muslim community—in the various extremes of social relations.

Islam has defined two main levels arising from social realities and has based relations on the mental, spiritual, and intellectual conditions of the parties involved.

The first of these levels is the general relationship that is imposed by the nature of man's existence in society wherein man connects with the individuals of his society and becomes part of it within the general frame of social relations.

Islam views the unity of the Muslim community as the common factor among all the extremes of this relationship.

Through this level of relationship, blood and property are saved from being shed or confiscated and covenants and pledges are fulfilled. In addition, public participation and contribution to social responsibilities is maintained, such as enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, attending the common prayers and funeral ceremonies, visiting the sick, and trying not to miss social ceremonies like marriages and the like.

In an authentic narration, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab to have said that he once asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a), "What should we do with respect to relations with our people and with

others whom we come in contact with?”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

تُوَدُّونَ الْأَمَانَةَ إِلَيْهِمْ، وَتُقِيمُونَ الشَّهَادَةَ لَهُمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ، وَتَعُودُونَ مَرْضَاهُمْ، وَتَشْهَدُونَ جَنَائِزَهُمْ.

You must safeguard the trusts that they deposit with you, bear witness for or against them, visit the sick among them, and attend their funeral ceremonies. [29](#)

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) rarely put conditions regarding maintaining this level of social relations, except for some general constraints, such as avoiding relationships that bring ill repute and associations with heretical people and those publicly known for corruption and deviation, as well as those who work in forbidden occupations. Details of these categories will be cited in the second part of this book.

Al-Faji’ al-’Aqili has reported that Imam ‘Ali the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) instructed his son, al-Hasan (‘a) saying:

إِيَّاكَ وَمَوَاطِنَ التَّهْمَةِ وَالْمَجْلِسَ الْمَظْنُونِ بِهِ السُّوءِ، فَإِنَّ قَرِينَ السُّوءِ يَغُرُّ جَلِيسَهُ.

Beware of presenting yourself in situations that bring about ill reputation and sessions known for evil, for a wicked friend may seduce him who sits with him. [30](#)

‘Umar ibn Yazid has reported Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) as saying:

لَا تَصْحَبُوا أَهْلَ الْبِدْعِ وَلَا تُجَالِسُوهُمْ فَتَكُونُوا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ كَوَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ. وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْمَرْءُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ وَقَرِينِهِ.

Do not keep company with heretical people and do not participate in their sessions, lest you be equated with them in the eyes of people. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said, “Man follows the religion of his friend and companion.” [31](#)

Hammad ibn ‘Amr and Anas ibn Muhammad have reported on the authority of Anas’s father that Ja’far ibn Muhammad (al-Sadiq) (‘a), on the authority of his fathers, quoted that the Holy Prophet (S) instructed Imam ‘Ali (‘a) saying:

يَا عَلِيُّ، مَنْ لَمْ تَنْتَفِعْ بِدِينِهِ وَلَا دُنْيَاهُ فَلَا خَيْرَ لَكَ فِي مُجَالَسَتِهِ.

O ‘Ali, it is worthless to keep the company of one whom you will not benefit either from his faith or his

A warning against associating with such categories of people means to avoid befriending or sitting with them. However, if we consider this warning general (i.e. to include all states of association), we can understand the reason behind it is that such social relationships might develop into friendships, even if at the minimal level, and it is better to avoid falling into any situation of suspicion that might tarnish one's reputation.

The second level is that of private relationship, conventionally called friendship (i.e. making friends with some people).

This level shares the general results, consequences, and commitments of the first level of relations but differs from it in certain additional conditions, rights, and duties, such as some financial and cultural rights. Discussing, teaching, and learning about religious affairs as well as some political affairs, like discussing general situations of the community, especially when the issues are very controversial, are permitted only among real friends.

Khaythamah has reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) told him:

أَبْلِغْ مَوَالِينَا السَّلَامَ، وَأَوْصِهِمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالْعَمَلِ الصَّالِحِ، وَأَنْ يَعُودَ صَحِيحُهُمْ مَرِيضَهُمْ، وَلْيَعُدُّ غَنِيَّهُمْ عَلَى فَقِيرِهِمْ،
وَأَنْ يَشْهَدَ حَيْثُهمُ جَنَازَةً مَيِّتِهِمْ، وَأَنْ يَتَلَقَّوْا فِي بُيُوتِهِمْ، وَأَنْ يَتَفَاوَضُوا عِلْمَ الدِّينِ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَأَمْرِنَا، رَجِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا
أَحْيَا أَمْرَنَا.

Convey my compliments to my loyalists and advise them to show reverence to Almighty Allah: the rich among them must help the poor, the powerful must help the weak, the living must attend the funeral ceremonies of the dead, and they must assemble at their homes and discuss issues of religion, for such meetings keep our work alive. May Allah have mercy upon a servant who keeps our work alive. [33](#)

Shaykh al-Kulayni, through a valid chain of authority, has reported Maysir as saying:

Imam Abu-Ja'far (al-Baqir) ('a) once asked me, "Do you (Shi'ite groups) often seclude yourselves in special meetings and exchange discourses and freely say what you have in mind?"

I answered, "Yes, I swear it by Allah. We often withdraw to exchange discourses and say freely that which is on our minds."

The Imam ('a) commented:

أَمَا وَاللَّهِ لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ تِلْكَ الْمَوَاطِنِ. أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأَحِبُّ رِيحَكُمْ وَأَرْوَاحَكُمْ، وَإِنَّكُمْ عَلَى دِينِ اللَّهِ وَدِينِ
مَلَائِكَتِهِ، فَأَعِينُوا بِوَرَعٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ.

By Allah I swear, I do wish I were with you on some of these occasions. By Allah I swear, I do love your fragrance and your souls. You are verily following the very religion of Allah and the religion of His angels. Follow (us) by means of piety and diligence. [34](#)

Fraternity for Allah's Sake

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) endeavored to develop such spiritual and intellectual relations that people would soar to their highest levels and exceed blood fraternity in human, social, and spiritual aspects. On achieving this, love and affection would be purely for Almighty Allah's sake and the outcome would be that one would love for his brother-in-faith whatever he loves for himself (i.e. equality in desires and hopes) and even consider one's brother-in-faith before himself.

A tradition reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) describes this perfective sphere of relations among the individuals of the virtuous community.

In his book, *al-Majalis*, al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Tusi has reported that, on the authority of his fathers, Imam al-Baqir ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُسْمِعُ آخِرَهُمْ كَمَا يُسْمِعُ أَوَّلَهُمْ فَيَقُولُ: أَيَّنَ جِيرَانُ اللَّهِ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ فِي دَارِهِ؟ فَيَقُومُ عُنُقٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَتَسْتَقْبِلُهُمْ زُمْرَةٌ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، فَيَقُولُونَ: مَا كَانَ عَمَلُكُمْ فِي دَارِ الدُّنْيَا فَصِرْتُمْ الْيَوْمَ جِيرَانَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي دَارِهِ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: كُنَّا نَتَحَابُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَنَتَوَازَرُ فِي اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. قَالَ: فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: صَدَقَ عِبَادِي. خَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ. فَيَنْطَلِقُونَ إِلَى جِوَارِ اللَّهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

On the Day of Resurrection, a spokesangel will cry out with a call heard by the last of the crowds in the same volume heard by the first. He will call out, "Where are the neighbors of Allah, the Majestic, in His abode?" Then, a group of people will stand up and will be received by a group of angels. "What were your deeds in the worldly abode due to which you are now the neighbors of Allah, the Exalted, in His abode?" The angels will ask. "We used to love each other for Allah's sake and help one another for His sake, too," they will answer. An angel will say on behalf of Allah, "True are the words of My servants. Clear the way for them." Then they will walk into the neighborhood of Allah in Paradise without (their deeds) being accounted.

Commenting on this, Imam al-Baqir ('a) said:

فَهُؤُلَاءِ جِيرَانُ اللَّهِ فِي دَارِهِ، يَخَافُ النَّاسُ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ، وَيُحَاسِبُ النَّاسُ وَلَا يُحَاسَبُونَ.

These are verily the neighbors of Allah in His abode. When people will fear, these will not fear, and when people are stopped for settling their accounts, these will not be faced with it. [35](#)

In his book of *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni, reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) to have quoted the Holy Prophet

(S) as saying:

سِتُّ خِصَالٍ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَعَنْ يَمِينِ اللَّهِ... يُحِبُّ الْمَرْءَ الْمُسْلِمَ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِعَزِّ أَهْلِهِ، وَيَكْرَهُ الْمَرْءَ الْمُسْلِمَ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يَكْرَهُ لِعَزِّ أَهْلِهِ، وَيُنَاصِحُهُ الْوَلَايَةَ... إِذَا كَانَ مِنْهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمَنْزِلَةِ بَنَتْهُ هَمَّةٌ فَفَرِحَ لِفَرَحِهِ إِنْ هُوَ فَرِحَ، وَحَزِنَ لِحُزْنِهِ إِنْ هُوَ حَزِنَ، وَإِنْ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مَا يُفَرِّجُ عَنْهُ فَرَّجَ عَنْهُ، وَإِلَّا دَعَا لَهُ... قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنْ لِلَّهِ خُلَفَاءُ عَنِ الْعَرْشِ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَجُوهُهُمْ أَبْيَضُ مِنَ الثَّلْجِ وَأَضْوَاءُ مِنَ الشَّمْسِ الضَّاحِيَةِ. يَسْأَلُ السَّائِلُ: مَا هُوَ لَئِي؟ فَيُقَالُ: هُوَ لَئِي الَّذِينَ تَحَابُّوا فِي جَلَالِ اللَّهِ

Whoever has six features in his personality shall be in the presence of Almighty Allah and to His right...A Muslim, who loves for his brother-in-faith whatever he loves for the dearest of his family members, dislikes for him whatever he dislikes for the dearest of his family members, acts honestly with him in terms of friendship... If he attains this rank with his brother-in-faith, when he passes his grievances on to him, his brother-in-faith will then certainly rejoice at his delight and feel sad on his grief. If he can do anything to relieve his brother-in-faith, he will certainly do so or, at least, pray for him... The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Almighty Allah has some creatures who will be positioned to the right of the Divine Throne in the presence of Almighty Allah. Their faces will be as white as snow and as brilliant as sunlight at forenoon. When it is asked about them, the answer will be that these are those who loved each other for the sake of Almighty Allah's majesty."³⁶

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) took into consideration the different levels of this private relationship. It is therefore possible to classify such private relations into general and special friendships. This classification is based on the degree of commitment to the doctrines and principles of Islam, and the profundity and firmness of religious values and ideals in behavior and practice. On the strength of this classification, faith and loyalty to the (divinely commissioned) leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) plays an important role in firming up such relations from which result the kind of rights and duties demonstrated by the previously cited traditions.

False Friends and True Friends

Referring to another aspect in the variety of the levels of social relations, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) differentiated between two categories of people: false friends and true friends. In one's association with the earlier category, it may suffice to say one has to meet people in society and associate with them because one's existence is dependent on their existence. Such a relationship is based on kind association, mutual feelings, and sympathetic treatment, named by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as 'courtesy' with the meaning good behavior with people.

The second category, true friends, represents individuals who must be chosen carefully as friends after observing their honesty, faithfulness, and good manners. Only then is it correct to lean on such friends, put one's trust in them, and depend on them in one's private affairs because they are known to stand by their friends in good and bad times and to be holders of their secrets and trusts.

Yunus ibn ‘Abd al–Rahman has reported the following on the authority of Imam Muhammad al–Jawad (‘a):

In al–Basrah, a man stood up and asked Imam ‘Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) to define friends.

The Imam (‘a) said:

الإِخْوَانُ صِنْفَانِ: إِخْوَانُ الثِّقَةِ وَإِخْوَانُ الْمُكَاشَرَةِ. فَأَمَّا إِخْوَانُ الثِّقَةِ فَهُمْ كَالْكَفِّ وَالْجِنَاحِ وَالْأَهْلِ وَالْمَالِ. فَإِذَا كُنْتَ مِنْ أَخِيكَ عَلَى ثِقَةٍ فَإِبْدُلْ لَهُ مَالَكَ وَيَدَكَ، وَصَافٍ مِنْ صَافَاهُ، وَعَادٍ مِنْ عَادَاهُ، وَكَتْمٍ سِرَّهُ، وَأَعْنَهُ وَأَطْهَرَ مِنْهُ الْحَسَنَ. وَاعْلَمْ أَيُّهَا السَّائِلُ أَنَّهُمْ أَعَزُّ مِنَ الْكِبْرِيتِ الْأَحْمَرِ. وَأَمَّا إِخْوَانُ الْمُكَاشَرَةِ فَإِنَّكَ تُصِيبُ مِنْهُمْ لَذَّتَكَ. فَلَا تَقْطَعَنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُمْ، وَلَا تَطْلُبَنَّ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ ضَمِيرِهِمْ، وَأَبْدِلْ لَهُمْ مَا بَدَلُوا لَكَ مِنْ طَلَاقَةِ الْوَجْهِ وَحَلَاوَةِ اللِّسَانِ.

There are two kinds of friends—friends of confidence and friends of grimace. The friends of confidence are the refuge, the wings, the family and the wealth (of their friends). If you confide in a friend, you should give your wealth and help to him. You should also befriend his friend and antagonize his enemy. You should keep his secrets and defects (in confidence) and proclaim his good conduct. You should know, O asker, that the friends of confidence are as scanty as red sulfur. Regarding the friends of grimace, you gain from them only your pleasure; therefore, you should not deprive them of your pleasure. Do not ask them for any further thing. Give them a happy mien and pleasant conversation as long as they give you their happy mien and pleasant conversation. [37](#)

Faith—in the sense of believing in the divinely commissioned leadership of the Ahl al–Bayt (‘a) and loyalty to them—is one of the basic conditions in the process of choosing friends of confidence. The duties of people towards their friends, confirmed by the Ahl al–Bayt (‘a), are exclusively for this category of friends.

Referring to this classification and variety in the level of social relations as well as the general and special conditions of these relations, there is a set of traditions reported from the Ahl al–Bayt (‘a) displaying other conditions and qualifications to be observed in identifying the level of one’s social relations with others. Some traditions have mentioned the positive characteristics that encourage such relations, such as piety, devoutness, rationality, prudence, nobility, and excellent morals, while other traditions have listed negative traits that discourage building relations, such as idiocy, corruption, fabrication, and stinginess. [38](#)

More details will be cited in the second part of this book.

Special Treatment

The fifth aspect of social relations is that there are certain categories of people who must be treated in a special manner.

Although Islam, in its social concept, believes that all human beings are equal and brothers of one another, we notice that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) dedicated special treatment in the field of social relations to certain groups of people because of various tangible reasons endorsed by human nature or factual reason-based criteria founded on public interest.

These reasons are humane, religious, and political, depending on the various aspects of the Islamic concept of social relations in general or social relations in particular, placing all affairs in their natural position in the general structure of society and the categories of social relations.

On many occasions, the Holy Qur'an has referred to such special treatment, including the following:

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَيَالِ الَّذِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ
(الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجُنُبِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا) (36)

Serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him and be good to parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbor from among (your) kin and the neighbor who is a stranger and the companion on a journey and the wayfarer and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful. (4:36)

Relatives

Relatives, especially next of kin and, more especially, parents, enjoy special privileges as regards social treatment. It is thus obligatory to sustain the root of social relations with relatives and it is impermissible to cut off family ties. It is also obligatory to honor and act piously towards one's parents by means of acting obediently towards them and complying with their orders, yet within the limits of the religious laws.

Abu-Hamzah al-Thumali has reported that Imam 'Ali the Commander of the Faithful ('a) delivered a speech in which he said:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ الَّتِي تُعَجِّلُ الْفَنَاءَ.

I seek Allah's protection against the sins that hasten death.

'Abdullah ibn al-Kawwa' interrupted him, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful! Are there sins that hasten one's death?" The Imam ('a) answered:

نَعَمْ! وَيْلَكَ، قَطِيعَةُ الرَّحِمِ. إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ لَيَجْتَمِعُونَ وَيَتَوَاسَوْنَ وَهُمْ فَجْرَةٌ فَيَرزُقُهُمُ اللَّهُ. وَإِنَّ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ لَيَتَفَرَّقُونَ
وَيَقْطَعُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا فَيَحْرِمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ أَتَقِيَاءُ.

Yes, there are! Woe unto you! They are breach of family ties with one's relatives. Even if faithless, family members who gather and help each other are provided sustenance by Almighty Allah. Some family members, who are pious, separate from one another and cut off their ties; as a result, Almighty Allah deprives them (of His sustenance despite their piety).[39](#)

'Anbasah al-'Abid (the worshipper) has reported that a man came to Imam al-Sadiq ('a) and complained about his relatives. The Imam ('a) advised him saying:

إِكْظُمُ غَيْظَكَ وَأَفْعَلْ

Suppress your rage and treat them nicely.

The man said, "They do such-and-such to me!"

The Imam ('a) said:

أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِثْلَهُمْ فَلَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ؟

Do you want to be like them? Then, Almighty Allah shall never look at you. [40](#)

In his famous Epistle on Rights, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says:

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ أُمِّكَ فَإِنَّ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّهَا حَمَلَتْكَ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْمِلُ أَحَدٌ أَحَدًا وَأَطْعَمَتْكَ مِنْ ثَمَرَةِ قَلْبِهَا مَا لَا يُطْعِمُ أَحَدٌ أَحَدًا، وَأَنَّهَا وَقَتْكَ بِسَمْعِهَا وَبَصَرِهَا وَيَدِهَا وَرِجْلِهَا وَشَعْرِهَا وَبَشَرِهَا وَجَمِيعِ جَوَارِحِهَا مُسْتَبْشِرَةً بِذَلِكَ، فَرِحَةً مُوَابِلَةً، مُحْتَمِلَةً لِمَا فِيهِ مَكْرُوهُهَا وَأَلْمَهَا وَثَقُلَهَا وَغَمُّهَا حَتَّى دَفَعَتْهَا عَنْكَ يَدُ الْقُدْرَةِ وَأَخْرَجَتْكَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ فَرَضِيَتْ أَنْ تَشْبَعُ وَتَجُوعُ هِيَ، وَتَكْسُوكَ وَتَعْرَى، وَتُرْوِيكَ وَتَطْمَأُ، وَتُظْلِكَ وَتَضْحَى، وَتُنَعِّمَكَ بِبُوسِهَا، وَتُلَذِّدُكَ بِالنَّوْمِ بِأَرْقِهَا، وَكَانَ بَطْنُهَا لَكَ وَعَاءً، وَحَجْرُهَا لَكَ جِوَاءً، وَتُدِيهَا لَكَ سِقَاءً، وَنَفْسُهَا لَكَ وِقَاءً، تُبَاشِرُ حَرَّ الدُّنْيَا وَبَرْدَهَا لَكَ وَدُونَكَ، فَتَشْكُرُهَا عَلَى قَدْرِ ذَلِكَ وَلَا تَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا بِعَوْنِ اللَّهِ وَتَوْفِيقِهِ.

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ أَبِيكَ فَتَعْلَمَ أَنَّهُ أَصْلُكَ، وَأَنَّكَ فَرَعُهُ، وَأَنَّكَ لَوْلَاهُ لَمْ تَكُنْ. فَمَهْمَا رَأَيْتَ فِي نَفْسِكَ مِمَّا يُعْجِبُكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ أَبَاكَ أَصْلُ النِّعْمَةِ عَلَيْكَ فِيهِ وَاحْمَدِ اللَّهَ وَاشْكُرْهُ عَلَى قَدْرِ ذَلِكَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ وَلَدِكَ فَتَعْلَمَ أَنَّهُ مِنْكَ وَمُضَافٌ إِلَيْكَ فِي عَاجِلِ الدُّنْيَا بِخَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ، وَأَنَّكَ مَسْئُولٌ عَمَّا وَلِيْتَهُ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْأَدَبِ وَالِدَالَةِ عَلَى رَبِّهِ وَالْمَعُونَةِ لَهُ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ فَبِكَ وَفِي نَفْسِهِ، فَمُتَابٌ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَمُعَاقِبٌ، فَاعْمَلْ فِي أَمْرِهِ عَمَلِ الْمُتَزَيِّنِ بِحُسْنِ أَثَرِهِ عَلَيْهِ فِي عَاجِلِ الدُّنْيَا، الْمُعْذِرِ إِلَى رَبِّهِ فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ بِحُسْنِ الْقِيَامِ عَلَيْهِ وَالْأَخْذُ لَهُ مِنْهُ. وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ أُخِيكَ فَتَعَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ يَدُكَ الَّتِي تَبْسُطُهَا، وَظَهَرَكَ الَّذِي تَلْتَجِي إِلَيْهِ، وَعِزُّكَ الَّذِي تَعْتَمِدُ عَلَيْهِ، وَقُوَّتُكَ الَّتِي تَصُولُ بِهَا، فَلَا تَتَّخِذْهُ سِلَاحًا عَلَى مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَا عُدَّةً لِلظُّلْمِ بِحَقِّ اللَّهِ، وَلَا تَدْعُ نُصْرَتَهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَعُونَتَهُ عَلَى عَدُوِّهِ وَالْحَوْلَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ شَيْطَانِهِ وَتَأْدِيَةَ النَّصِيحَةِ إِلَيْهِ وَالْإِقْبَالَ عَلَيْهِ فِي اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ انْقَادَ لِرَبِّهِ وَأَحْسَنَ الْإِجَابَةَ لَهُ وَإِلَّا فَلْيَكُنْ اللَّهُ آثَرَ عِنْدَكَ وَأَكْرَمَ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهُ.

The right of your mother is that you know that she carried you where no one carries anyone, she gave to you the fruit of her heart which no one gives to anyone, and she protected you with her hearing, sight, hands, legs, hair, and skin as well as all her organs. She was highly delighted, happy, eager, and enduring the harm, pain, heaviness, and grief until the hand of power saved her from you and brought you out to this earth.

She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate, was naked as long as you were clothed, was thirsty as long as you drank, was in the sun as long as you were in the shade, was miserable as long as you were happy, and was deprived of sleeping as long as you were resting. Her abdomen was your container, her lap your seat, her breast your drink, and her soul was your fort. She protected you from heat and cold. You should thank her for all that. You will not be able to show her gratitude except through Allah's help and grace of thanksgiving.

The right of your father is that you know that he is your root and you are his branch. Without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself that pleases you, know that your father is the origin of its blessing upon you. Therefore, praise Allah and thank Him in that measure. All power belongs to Allah. 1

The right of your child is that you should know that he is from you and will be ascribed to you, through both his good and his evil, in the immediate affairs of this world. You are responsible for what has been entrusted to you, such as educating him in good conduct, pointing him in the direction of his Lord, and helping him to obey Him. So, act toward him with the behavior of one who knows that he will be rewarded for doing good and punished for doing evil. In his affairs, behave with the actions of those who adorn their children with their good deeds and those who are justified before their Lord because they did well in the discipline and the custody of their sons. All power belongs to Allah.

The right of your brother is that you know that he is your hand that you extend, your back from whom you seek refuge, your power upon which you rely, and your might with which you move. Take him not as a weapon with which to disobey Allah, nor as equipment with which to wrong Allah's creatures. Do not neglect to help him against his own ill intentions and against his enemy, prevent him from joining villains, give him good counsel, and associate with him for Allah's sake. If he obeys Allah and responds to Him properly, well and good, but if not, you should prefer and honor Allah more than him. [41](#)

This special treatment with relatives involves the lineal tie, which designates the extension of man's existence and progress. It is experienced as a natural feeling, and has an ethical aspect, especially with reference to taking care of and acting piously towards parents, which is a sort of gratitude, good turn,

lenience, and mercy to the old and the weak. Hence, the Holy Qur'an says:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا
تَنْهَرهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا (23) وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا
(24))

Your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him, and be good to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them so much as “Ugh” nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up when I was little. (17:23–24)

Furthermore, special treatment with relatives has a significant social and organizational aspect related to Islam's attitude towards the general structure of society, on the supposition that family is the primary and paramount brick on which the social structure stands.

Scholars

Islam has imparted special social behavior towards scholars and people of virtue and knowledge due to certain ethical, tangible, and social considerations.

As for the ethical, tangible consideration, Islam looks upon knowledge as having realistic worth that grants man a rank of perfection and elevation. The Holy Qur'an thus says:

(يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ 11)

Allah will exalt those of you who believe and those who are given knowledge in high degrees. Allah is Aware of what you do. (58: 11)

(قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ 9)

Say: Are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful. (39:9)

As for the social consideration practically adopted by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), scholars occupy a distinguished social position represented in the leadership of the Islamic revolution in Iran and its authority over the Muslim nation.

As confirmed in their traditions, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have been the worthiest to occupy this position and

the only ones granted this authority by Almighty Allah because they possessed knowledge of an unmatched, unattainable degree.

Consequently, the leaders of Muslims must have full knowledge of Islam and be proficient enough to deduce religious laws from their sources.

Treating scholars in special ways has been advised in authentic traditions. Shaykh al-Saduq, in his book of *al-Khisal*, has reported Imam 'Ali the Commander of the Faithful ('a) as saying:

مِنْ حَقِّ الْعَالِمِ أَلَّا تُكْثِرَ عَلَيْهِ السُّؤَالَ، وَلَا تَسْبِقَهُ فِي الْجَوَابِ، وَلَا تُلِحَّ إِذَا أَعْرَضَ، وَلَا تَأْخُذَ بِنُوبِهِ إِذَا كَسَلَ، وَلَا تُشِيرَ إِلَيْهِ بِيَدِكَ، وَلَا تَغْمُزَ بَعَيْنِكَ، وَلَا تُسَارَهُ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ، وَلَا تَطْلُبَ عَوْرَاتِهِ، وَأَلَّا تَقُولَ: قَالَ فُلَانٌ خِلَافَ قَوْلِكَ، وَلَا تُفْشِيَ لَهُ سِرًّا، وَلَا تَغْتَابَ عِنْدَهُ أَحَدًا، وَأَنْ تَحْفَظَ لَهُ شَاهِدًا وَغَائِبًا، وَأَنْ تَعُمَّ الْقَوْمَ بِالسَّلَامِ وَتَخْصَهُ بِالتَّحِيَّةِ، وَتَجْلِسَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ حَاجَةٌ سَبَقَتْ الْقَوْمَ إِلَى خِدْمَتِهِ، وَلَا تَمَلَّ مِنْ طَوْلِ صُحْبَتِهِ، فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ مِثْلُ النَّخْلَةِ فَاذْهَبَتْ فَانْتَضِرْ مَتَى تَسْقُطُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهُ مَنَفَعَتُهُ. وَالْعَالِمُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ الْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَإِذَا مَاتَ الْعَالِمُ انْقَلَمَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ ثَلَمَةٌ لَا تُسَدُّ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَإِنْ طَالِبَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُشِيعَهُ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلِكٍ مِنْ مُقَرَّبِي السَّمَاءِ.

Among your duties towards scholars are that you must not load them with too many questions. You must not precede them in answering. You must not insist when they avoid (answering a question). You must not impose upon them when they are tired. You must not point at them by extending a finger. You must not wink at them. You must not talk confidentially to them during their sessions. You must not inspect their flaws. You must not address them by stating opinions contradictory to theirs. You must not reveal their secrets. You must not backbite in their presence. You must support them in their presence and defend them when they are absent.

You must salute a group of people generally but greet them singly, sit in their presence, precede all others to meet their needs, and you must not become weary of long companionship with them. Verily, scholars are just like date-palm trees; therefore, you must be patient while waiting for their benefit to descend upon you. A scholar occupies the same standing of one who permanently fasts, performs acts of worship, and strives for the sake of Almighty Allah. When a scholar passes away, an irreparable crack occurs in Islam that continues up to the Day of Resurrection. Verily, when a seeker of knowledge passes away seventy thousand angels escort him and place him among the most favored inhabitants of heaven. [42](#)

In the famous Treatise on Rights, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says:

فَحُقُوقُ أُمَّتِكَ ثَلَاثَةٌ أَوْجِبُهَا عَلَيْكَ حَقُّ سَائِسِكَ بِالسُّلْطَانِ ثُمَّ سَائِسِكَ بِالْعِلْمِ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ سَائِسِكَ بِالْمُلْكِ... وَحَقُّ سَائِسِكَ بِالْعِلْمِ التَّعْظِيمُ لَهُ، وَالتَّوَقُّيرُ لِمَجْلِسِهِ، وَحُسْنُ الْإِسْتِمَاعِ إِلَيْهِ، وَالْإِقْبَالُ عَلَيْهِ، وَأَلَّا تَرْفَعَ عَلَيْهِ صَوْتَكَ، وَلَا تُجِيبَ أَحَدًا يَسْأَلُهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هُوَ الَّذِي يُجِيبُ، وَلَا تُحَدِّثَ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ أَحَدًا، وَلَا تَغْتَابَ عِنْدَهُ أَحَدًا، وَأَنْ تَدْفَعَ عَنْهُ إِذَا ذُكِرَ عِنْدَكَ بِسَوْءٍ، وَأَنْ تَسْتُرَ عِيُوبَهُ وَتُظْهِرَ مَنَاقِبَهُ، وَلَا تُجَالِسَ لَهُ عَدُوًّا، وَلَا تُعَادِي لَهُ وَلِيًّا، فَإِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ شَهِدَ لَكَ مَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهِ بِأَنَّكَ قَصَدْتَهُ، وَتَعَلَّمْتَ عِلْمَهُ لَهُ جَلَّ اسْمُهُ لَا لِلنَّاسِ.

The rights of your leaders are three: the most incumbent upon you is the right of a person who trains you through authority, then of him who trains you through knowledge, and then of him who trains you through property. Each trainer is a leader... You must honor the right of the one who trains you through knowledge, by magnifying him, respecting his sessions, listening to him, and attending to him with devotion. You must avoid raising your voice in his presence, avoid answering others by letting him answer, and avoid talking to anybody during his sessions. You must avoid backbiting in his presence, defend

him when something bad is attributed to him, cover up his defects, demonstrate his good points, avoid sitting with his enemies, and avoid incurring the hostility of one who is loyal to him. If you do these, then the angels of Almighty Allah will bear witness that you have tended to him adequately and have learnt his knowledge for the sake of Almighty Allah, and not for the sake of people.[43](#)

Neighbors

Neighbors are also worthy of exceptional treatment to bolster social relations with others throughout the geographical area and establish a sound and powerful local social structure. Emphasizing the significance of this special treatment towards neighbors in his last will to his sons, Imam 'Ali the Commander of the Faithful ('a), referred to the Holy Prophet's instructions about neighbors.[44](#)

Shaykh al-Saduq has reported another tradition carrying the same import in his books *Man-la-Yahdhuruhul-Faqih* and *'Iqab al-'amal* on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) on the authority of his fathers ('a) on the authority of the Holy Prophet (S) who said:

مَنْ آذَى جَارَهُ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ رِيحَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمَ وَبَيْتُ الْمَصِيرِ. وَمَنْ ضَيَّعَ حَقَّ جَارِهِ فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا. وَمَا زَالَ جِبْرَائِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُورِيهِ.

Whoever, harms his neighbor shall be deprived of the scent of Paradise by Almighty Allah and Hell shall be his final abode. What an evil destiny Hell is. (Archangel) Gabriel advised me in favor of neighbors so insistently that I believed that a share of inheritance would be decided for neighbors.[45](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have quoted his father ('a) saying:

قَرَأْتُ فِي كِتَابِ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَتَبَ بَيْنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَمَنْ لَحِقَ بِهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ يَثْرِبَ أَنَّ الْجَارَ كَالنَّفْسِ غَيْرُ مُضَارٍّ وَلَا آئِمٍّ، وَحُرْمَةُ الْجَارِ عَلَى الْجَارِ كَحُرْمَةِ أُمِّهِ.

In the Book of (Imam)'Ali ('a), I read that the Messenger of Allah (S) wrote a paragraph in the covenant that he wrote between the Muhajirun (Muslim emigrants of Makkah), the Ansar (Muslims of Yathrib), and the inhabitants of Yathrib, who joined them. It ran thus: Treat your neighbor as yourself; neither harm

him nor attribute any sin to him. The sanctity of one's neighbor is the same as the sanctity of one's mother. [46](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported as saying:

إِعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يُحْسِنْ مُجَاوِرَةً مَنْ جَاوَرَهُ.

Know that whoever does not act nobly concerning the rights of his neighbor does not belong to our group. [47](#)

Imam al-Baqir ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَا آمَنَ بِي مَنْ بَاتَ شَبَعَانَ وَجَارُهُ جَائِعٌ.

Whoever spends his night satiated while his neighbor is hungry has never believed in me. [48](#)

Mu'awiyah ibn 'Ammar has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about the area of one's neighborhood.

The Imam ('a) answered:

أَرْبَعِينَ دَارًا مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ.

Forty houses on each side are included in neighbors. [49](#)

The Weak

According to Islam, weak people must also be treated in special ways, including those whose weakness is due to the nature of their physical structure—such as children, women, old people, handicapped and retarded people. The human aspect in this special treatment is too clear to require confirmation.

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

وَأَرْحَمُوا ضِعْفَاءَكُمْ، وَاطْلُبُوا الرَّحْمَةَ مِنَ اللَّهِ بِالرَّحْمَةِ لَهُمْ.

Have mercy on the weak amongst you and pray that Almighty Allah has mercy on you because of your showing mercy towards them. [50](#)

This distinctive treatment also includes the financially weak, such as the poor, the destitute, the

wayfarers, and other categories of needy people.

Imam 'Ali the Commander of the Faithful ('a) has quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying in one of his sermons:

وَتَصَدَّقُوا عَلَىٰ فُقَرَاءِكُمْ وَمَسَاكِينِكُمْ، وَوَقِّرُوا كِبَارَكُمْ وَارْحَمُوا صِغَارَكُمْ، وَصَلُّوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ.

Give alms to the poor and the needy amongst you. Have a high regard for the old amongst you. Have mercy on the young amongst you. Build good relationships with your relatives. [51](#)

This special treatment also includes those deemed weak because of their social conditions, such as orphans, slaves, and low-wage employees whose social circumstances force them to be under the supervision and custody of others.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has reported on the authority of his fathers ('a) that the Holy Prophet (S), in his instructions to Imam 'Ali ('a) said:

يَا عَلِيُّ، أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ: مَنْ آوَى الْيَتِيمَ، وَرَحِمَ الضَّعِيفَ، وَأَشْفَقَ عَلَى الْوَالِدِيَّةِ، وَرَفَقَ بِمَمْلُوكِهِ. يَا عَلِيُّ، مَنْ كَفَى يَتِيمًا فِي نَفَقَتِهِ بِمَالِهِ حَتَّى يَسْتَعْنِي وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ الْبَيْتَةَ. يَا عَلِيُّ، مَنْ مَسَحَ يَدَهُ عَلَى رَأْسِ يَتِيمٍ تَرَحُّمًا لَهُ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَعْرَةٍ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

O 'Ali, whoever carries out the following four acts, Almighty Allah shall build for him a house in Paradise: (1) providing a shelter for an orphan, (2) having mercy on the weak, (3) having compassion for parents, and (4) treating servants leniently. O 'Ali, Paradise shall be unquestionably decided for the person who meets all the expenses of an orphan from his own wealth such that he makes him financially independent. O 'Ali, whoever strokes the head of an orphan out of sympathy for him, on the Day of Resurrection, Almighty Allah shall grant him (a piece of) light for each single hair. [52](#)

The Holy Prophet's Progeny

Exceptional treatment has been confirmed for the Holy Prophet's progeny from the descendants of Imam 'Ali and Lady Fatimah—peace be upon them—due to their relationship to the Holy Prophet (S) in order to honor him, acknowledge his right, and sanctify his standing.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

لَا يُقْبَلُ رَأْسُ أَحَدٍ وَلَا يَدُهُ إِلَّا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْ مَنْ أُرِيدَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ.

No one's head or hand must be kissed except the Messenger of Allah's or one who is considered to

represent him. [53](#)

Al-Husayn ibn Khalid reported Imam al-Ridha ('a) as saying:

النَّظَرُ إِلَى ذُرِّيَّتِنَا عِبَادَةٌ.

Looking at our progeny is (a kind of) worship.

The reporter asked, “Does this mean the Imams from your progeny or all of the Holy Prophet’s descendants?”

The Imam ('a) answered:

بَلِ النَّظَرُ إِلَى جَمِيعِ ذُرِّيَّةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ عِبَادَةٌ مَا لَمْ يُفَارِقُوا مِنْهَا جُوهٌ وَلَمْ يَتَلَوُّوا بِالْمَعَاصِي.

It includes all the descendants of the Prophet (S) who neither violated his course nor are polluted by acts of disobedience to Allah. [54](#)

[1.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:399, S. 1, H. 5.

[2.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:407, H. 1.

[3.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:407, H.5.

[4.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:408, H. 1 & 567, H. 2. Similar reports of can be found in Sections: 135 and 136 of the same reference book.

[5.](#) – Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah 10:52. The author reports this tradition from Imam 'Ali the Commander of the Faithful ('a).

[6.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:567, S. 135, H. 1.

The tradition following this one in this reference book reads that the Holy Prophet (s) said: Whoever meets Almighty Allah enjoying the following three traits will enter Paradise from any gate he chooses: (1) good manners, (2) fear of God in public and private, and (3) forsaking contention even when he is right.

[7.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:408, H. 6, S. 7.

[8.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:540, H. 1, S. 121.

[9.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:283, H. 1. (The completion of the tradition is found in the margin of this reference book.)

[10.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:284, H. 5. (Traditions of the same meaning can be found in the same chapter of this reference book.)

[11.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:285, H. 7, S. 51.

[12.](#) – Refer to the exegesis of this holy verse in Majma' al-Bayan by 'Allamah al-Tabrisi where he cites the tradition of Ibn Mas'ud quoting the Holy Prophet (s) as saying, “The monasticism of my nation is emigration (i.e. hijrah), jihad, prayer, fasting, Hajj, and 'Umrah.

[13.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:542, H. 2.

[14.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:108, S. 59, H. 1.

[15.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:559, H. 1, S. 18.

[16.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:595, H. 6, S. 1.

[17.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:362, H. 3; Shaykh al-Saduq, al-Amali, pp. 380, H. 483; 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-

Anwar 75: 196, H. 11 as quoted from the previous reference books.

[18.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:458, H. 2, S. 56.

[19.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:458, H. 3, S. 56.

[20.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:409, H. 1, S. 9.

[21.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:426, H. 5.

[22.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:426, H. 6.

[23.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:426–427, H. 8.

[24.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 73:350, H. 13.

[25.](#) – Refer to this story in Shaykh al-Kulayni's book al-Kafi 5:339–343. It actually holds wonderful lessons and wisdom.

The same lessons can also be inferred from the story of the marriage of Habib. In the same chapter of this reference book, there are other issues confirming this concept; therefore, it is recommended to have a look at them.

[26.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter No. 53.

[27.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:434, S. 30, H. 1.

[28.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:433, H. 1.

[29.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:5, H. 1.

[30.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:422, S. 19, H. 4.

[31.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:430, S. 27, H. 1.

[32.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:431, S. 28, H. 1.

[33.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:21, H. 6.

[34.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:567, H. 5.

[35.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:434, S. 15, H. 15.

[36.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:542, S. 122, H. 3.

[37.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:404, S. 3, H. 1.

[38.](#) – Refer to al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:409–432, S. 8–9, 11, 15–18 and 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 74:173–220 where you can find many traditions confirming that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) specified certain points as conditions of choosing friends of confidence and identifying friends of grimace. All are originally connected to the principles to which we have previously referred.

[39.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:347–348, H. 7.

[40.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:593, S. 149, H. 3.

[41.](#) – Ibn Shu'bah al-Harrani, Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pp. 363.

[42.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:551, S. 123, H. 2.

[43.](#) Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:134, S. 3, H. 1.

Translator's Note: According to Tuhaf al-'Uqul, this paragraph has been mentioned in the following form:

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ سَائِسِكَ بِالْعِلْمِ فَالتَّعْطِيمُ لَهُ وَالتَّوْقِيرُ لِمَجْلِسِهِ وَحُسْنُ الإِسْتِمَاعِ إِلَيْهِ وَالإِيقَالُ عَلَيْهِ وَالمَعُونَةُ لَهُ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ فِي مَا لَا غِنَى بِكَ عَنْهُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ بِأَنْ تُفْرَغَ لَهُ عَقْلَكَ وَتُحْضِرَهُ فَهَمَكَ وَتُزَكِّيَ لَهُ قَلْبَكَ وَتُجَلِّيَ لَهُ بَصَرَكَ بِرُكِّ اللِّذَاتِ وَنَقْصِ الشَّهَوَاتِ وَأَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّكَ فِي مَا أَلْقَى إِلَيْكَ رَسُولُهُ إِلَى مَنْ لَقَيْكَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَهْلِ فَالزَّمَكَ حُسْنَ التَّأْدِيبَةِ عَنْهُ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَخُنْهُ فِي تَأْدِيبَةِ رِسَالَتِهِ وَالفَيْامِ بِهَا عَنْهُ إِذَا تَقَلَّدْتَهَا، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

The right of the one who trains you through knowledge is to magnify him, respect his sessions, listen well to him, attend to him with devotion, and help him convey to you the knowledge that you indispensably need. You can do so by emptying your mind to (receive) his information, pay attention to him, purify your heart for him, open your eyes wide before him by means of abandoning the appetites and the passions. You should also know that you are considered to be his messenger when you convey the information that he provides you to the ignorant ones that you meet. Therefore, it is binding upon you to convey it on his behalf properly, and avoid betraying him when you are conveying his message and representing him. All power belongs to Allah.

[44.](#) – Translator's Note: In his will for Imam Hasan ('a) and Imam Husayn ('a), Imam 'Ali the Commander of the Faithful ('a) said:

اللَّهُ اللهُ فِي جِيرَانِكُمْ، فَإِنَّهَا وَصِيَّةُ نَبِيِّكُمْ، مَا زَالَ يُوصِي بِهِمْ حَتَّى ظَنَنَّا أَنَّهُ سَيُورِثُهُمْ (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of neighbors, because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice when he went on advising in their favor until we thought he would allow them a share in inheritance. (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 64)

- [45.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:488, S. 86, H. 5.
- [46.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:487, S. 86, H. 2.
- [47.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:489, S. 87, H. 5.
- [48.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:490, S. 88, H. 1.
- [49.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:492, S. 90, H. 3.
- [50.](#) – Abu'l-Fath al-Irbali, Kashf al-Ghummah 3: 142; 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 78:83, H. 85 as quoted from the previous reference book.
- [51.](#) – Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha 2:265, H. 53; 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 96:356, H. 25 as quoted from the previous reference book.
- [52.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 11:560, S. 19, H. 1.
- [53.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:565, S. 133, H. 3.
- [54.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 8:620, S. 165, H. 1.

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