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Clemency and Suppression of Anger

Clemency and suppression of anger stand for self– possession in situations that arouse anger. They are noble traits they indicate self–excellence and result in affection and amicability:

"(Among) the servants of the Beneficent Allah are those who walk gently on the earth and when addressed by the ignorant ones, their only response is, "Peace be with you."" (25:63)

"Virtue and evil are not equal. If you replace evil habits by virtuous ones, you will certainly find that your enemies will become your intimate friends. Only those who exercise patience and who have been granted a great share of Allah's favor can find such an opportunity." (41:34–5)

"And who also harness their anger and forgive the people. Allah loves the righteous ones." (3:134)

Pursing this, The Ahlul-Bayt (a) advanced their instructions:

As he noticed that Qanbar was about to answer with revilement the man who had reviled at him, Amirul–Mu'minin (a) said: "Slow down, Qanbar! Leave him who reviled at you plunging in humility so that you will please the Beneficent Allah, annoy the Shaitan, and punish your enemy. I swear by Him Who split the seed and made the soul, nothing like clemency for the believers to achieve the satisfaction of the Lord, nothing like silence for them to annoy the Shaitan, and nothing more punishable than leaving the foolish alone 1."

"The first remuneration that one can gain for showing clemency is people's being his supporters against the ignorant2."

Imam al-Bagir (a) said: "Allah does like the modest and the clement3."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: When a quarrel takes place, two angels attend there. They say to the foolish party, "You have said such and such. You are worthier of that which you have said. You will be punished for it." For the clement party, the angels say, "You have stood and showed clemency. Allah will forgive you if you accomplish it." If the clement party answers the other, the angels leave the place4.

"Allah will certainly increase (His bestowals to) the servant who suppresses his anger, and will reward him. Allah says: And who also harness their anger and forgive the people. Allah loves the righteous ones. (3:134)5"

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said: "Be steadfast against the enemies of the graces, for your best retaliation for those who acted disobediently to Allah against you is to act obediently to Allah with them6."

Once, he (a) gathered his sons and said: "Sons, I will lead you to an instruction that saves you from deviation if you adhere to it. Accept the apology of him who reviled at you in your right ear, and then turned to your left to make an apology and claim that he had not said anything bad7."

The foolish may regard clemency as signs of weakness, while the intelligent regard it as signs of nobility, high standards, and honor.

When man's prestige mounts, his traits become nobler he holds fast on clemency and pardon. Hence, he becomes the matter of admiration and praise.

It is related that a wise man answered those who asked him why he had not replied the one who had reviled at him: "I will not engage myself in a war the triumphant of which is eviler than the loser."

When al-Ma'mun, the Abbasid caliph, asked Imam ar-Rida (a) to recite some poetic verses, the Imam composed:

If he whose ignorance befell me is lower than I am in position, I will reject for myself to answer him by means of ignorance.

If he enjoys the same position of intelligence that I have, I will adopt for clemency so that I will not be likened to him.

If he is higher in position than I am, I will respect him from his preference.

As he heard these verses, al-Ma'mun showed his admiration and asked about the one who composed them. The Imam (a) answered: "He is one of our men8."

The Prophet and the immaculate Imams (a) were the ideal examples of clemency:

Imam al-Baqir (a) narrated: When the Jewess who served the Prophet (S) a poisonous meal was brought before him, he asked her a reason for her deed. "Well," she replied, "I said that the poisoned meal would not affect him if he was real prophet. But if he was only an ordinary king, the meal would save people from him." The Prophet pardoned her.

The Prophet (S) also forgave many individuals after he had outlawed and ordered to be killed.

Habbar Ibn al-Aswad Ibn al-Muttalib was one of those individuals. The Prophet (S) outlawed him after

he had frightened Zainab the Prophet's daughter- and caused her to terminate her pregnancy.

It was related that this man came to the Prophet and said: "We, God's Prophet, were polytheists, and God guided us to the right by you and saved us from perdition. I beseech to you to overlook my ignorance and that which I had committed, for I confess of my ill deeds and sins." The Prophet (S) answered him:

"I will forgive you. Allah has done you a great favor when He guided you to Islam. Islam cancels that which was done before the embracement of it."

Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubaari is another one. He used to satirize the Prophet (S) in Mecca so extremely. When the Prophet (S) conquered Mecca, Az-Zubaari fled it. After a period, he came back and apologized for the Prophet who accepted his apology.

Wahshi, the killer of Hamza (a) is a third one. When he declared being Muslim, the Prophet asked him to narrate how he had killed Hamza; his uncle. The man did and caused the Prophet to weep. He (S) then asked Wahshi not to appear before him any longer9.

Amirul–Mu'minin (a) was another ideal example of clemency and pardon.

When he captured Abdullah Ibn az-Zubair, Marwan Ibn al-Hakam, and Saeed Ibn al-Aas who were the most mortal enemies that rallied people against him, he pardoned them and did not retaliate.

He (a) also could kill Amr Ibn al-Aas who was more dangerous than an equipped army, but he left him because Amr unveiled his anus in order to save himself from the Imam's strike!

During the battle of Siffeen, the troops of Muawiya prevented Amirul–Mu'minin (a) to reach the springs of water there and told that they would not give him a single drop of water. When he (a) raided on them, he dropped them away from these springs. But he allowed them to drink from them, just like his troops.

After the Battle of the Camel, Amirul–Mu'minin (a) visited Mistress Aisha<u>10</u> and saw her off so honorably and sent with her caravan a number of individuals whose mission was to serve and protect her<u>11</u>.

Like his father and grandfather, Imam al-Hasan (a) was another ideal example of clemency.

Al-Mubarrad and Ibn Aisha narrated the following:

A Syrian man went on reviling at Imam al-Hasan (a) who was riding an animal. The Imam kept silent until the Syrian man finished. He then approached him and answered with handsome smiling: "Old man! I think you are foreigner. You might have been wrong. If you had admonished us, we would have satisfied you. If you had asked us, we would have given you. If you had sought our guidance, we would have led you. If you had asked us to load something on your riding animal, we would have done. If you had been hungry, we would have supplied you. If you had been naked, we would have dressed you. If

you had been needy, we would have given you. If you had been fugitive, we would have succored you. If you had needed something, we would have settled your needs. I now hope you would drive your riding animal towards our residence so that you will be our guest until you determine to leave. This will be better for you. We have a large residence, a remarkable position, and an abundant fortune."

As he heard the words of the Imam, the Syrian man wept and said: "It is surely that God is the most knowledgeable of the worthiest of conveying His message. Previously, your father and you were the most hateful creatures of God to me. But now, you are the dearest creature to me." He then turned towards the residence of the Imam and was his guest until he left. He embraced the affection for The The Ahlul–Bayt (a).

Thus was al-Hussein Ibn Ali (a):

A servant of Imam al-Hussein committed a mistake that caused him to be punished. The Imam therefore gave the orders of beating him.

"Master," said the servant, "(Remember God's saying) those who refrain the anger."

The Imam ordered to release him.

"Master," said the servant, "(Remember God's saying) and those who forgive people."

The Imam forgave him.

"Master," said the servant, "(Remember God's saying) and Allah loves those who do good."

The Imam said, "Go, you are free for the sake of Allah. I will also double your payment 12"

As I have read the life accounts of The Ahlul-Bayt (a), I found them unique modes and ideal examples in the field of morality.

Narrators reported the following story about the unparalleled scope of Imam as-Sajjad's clemency:

One of the servants of Imam as–Sajjad tried to serve the guests of his master with the grill. He was so hurried that one of the skewers fell down from his hand to kill one of the Imam's sons. The servant was so confused, but the Imam (a) said to him: "Now, I set you free, because you did not intend to kill the boy." Then, the Imam held the funeral ceremonies of the boy13.

Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (a) was called Al-Kadhim the one who suppresses his anger--, because of his great clemency for the sake of God.

A narrator reported the following story in this regard: In Medina, a descendant of one of the caliphs used to hurt Abu al-Hasan Musa (a) whenever he would meet him. Moreover, he used to revile at Ali and the Imam. The Imam's retinue asked him to allow them to kill that man. The Imam ordered them not to do

so. As he asked about that man, the Imam was told that he had a ranch in Medina. The Imam rode on a donkey, went to the ranch, saw the man, and entered that ranch with his donkey. "Do not tread on our yields," shouted the man. But the Imam did not pay attention to his warning, and drove his riding animal to tread on the yields until he approached the man. He, then, rode off, sat with the man, spoke with him kindly, smiled in his face, and asked: "How much did I cause you to lose as a result of treading on your yields?"

"About one hundred dinars," said the man.

"How much do you expect to gain from it?" asked the Imam.

"I cannot tell of the unseen," answered the man.

"I only asked how much do you expect," said the Imam.

"I expect two hundred dinars," answered the man. The Imam (a) took out a bag of three hundred dinars and said to the man "This is for the yields, and Allah may give you that which you expect."

The man stood up, kissed the Imam on the head, and asked him to forgive his past wrongdoings. The Imam smiled and went away.

When the Imam entered the mosque, that man was sitting there. As soon as he saw him, he shouted: "It is surely that God is the most knowledgeable of the worthiest of conveying His message."

The man's associates jumped to him with astonishment and asked, "What is the matter with you? We used to see the opposite of this."

"Well," said the man, "you have heard my new situation," and went on praising and praying to God for the Imam (a). That situation made him lose those associates.

When the Imam went back home, he said to the company who had asked him to kill that man: "Which one is the best your intention or my deed? I could guide that man to the right as much as you saw, and I could save myself from his evils14."

- 1. Quoted from Sheikh al-Mufid; al-Majalis.
- 2. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
- 3. Quoted from al-Kafi.
- 4. Quoted from al-Kafi.
- 5. Quoted from al-Kafi.
- 6. Quoted from al-Kafi.
- 7. Quoted from Al-Arbali; Keshf ul-Ghumma.
- 8. Quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq; Me'aani al-Akhbar and Uyounu Akhbar ir-Redha.
- 9. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1.
- 10. Mistress Aisha was the Prophet's widow who mutinied and led an army against Amir ul-Mu'minin (a) and rode a camel due to which that battle was called the Battle of the Camel. She, however, lost that battle and was captured by Imam Ali's

army.

- 11. Quoted from al-Aqqad, Abbas Mahmoud; The Genius of Imam Ali.
- 12. Quoted from al-Arbali; Keshf ul-Ghumma.
- 13. Quoted from al-Arbali; Keshf ul-Ghumma.
- 14. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 11 as quoted from l'lam ul- Wara and al-Irshad

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