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Common Courtesy

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Common Courtesy

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1– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'Performing common acts of courtesy, bringing solace to a grief-stricken person, and being hospitable to guests is the instrument of leadership.'[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 6585]

2- Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'Acts of courtesy are treasures for eternity.' [Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 980]

3– Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) said, 'Know that acts of courtesy earn praiseworthy results, and end in rewardable gains. If you were to see acts of courtesy personified as a man, you would perceive him to be good and handsome, pleasing for people to behold and transcending all the worlds. And if you were to see acts of vileness personified, you would perceive an ugly, revolting, disfigured man, whom the hearts would be averse to and whom the eyes would turn away from in disgust.'[Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v. 12, p. 343, no. 14242]

4– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'The first people to enter Paradise will be those who performed acts of common courtesy to others.'[al-Da'aawat, p. 108, no. 240]

5– Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'The people who perform acts of courtesy in this world will be the same ones to perform them in the Hereafter, for verily in the Hereafter their scales will be so laden with their good deeds that they will be able to bestow them generously on the sinners [in order to assist them].'[Amali al–Tusi, p. 304, no. 610]

6– Imam al–Jawad (a.s.) said, 'People who perform acts of courtesy towards others benefit more from them than the receptors of their kindness, for verily they have the reward for them, the [rewarding feeling of] pride for having helped someone as well as a mention. So however much good a man may do for others, it ultimately always starts by benefiting himself, such that he never seeks thanks for the benefit incurred by himself through helping others.' [Kashf al–Ghamma, v. 3, p. 137]

Enjoinment of Spreading Kindness to Both Good and Bad People

7– The Prophet (S) said, 'The peak of good reason after religious devotion is treating people with love, and doing good to both good and bad people.' [Bihar al–Anwar, v. 74, p. 401, no. 44]

8– The Prophet (S) said, 'Perform acts of courtesy to those who are worthy of them as well as those who are not worthy of them, and even if they have no effect on those who deserve them, you are at least worthy of [performing] them.'['Uyun Akhbar ar–Ridha, v. 2, p. 35, no. 76]

Circulation of Good Acts From Hand to Hand

9– The Prophet (S) said, 'He who offers charity to a poor man gets the reward befitting the action, but if forty thousand people pass the same offering from hand to hand until it reaches the poor man, they all receive a complete reward for it.' [Thawab al-A'amal, p. 342, no. 1]

10– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'If an act of charity [or courtesy] goes through eighty changes of hands, all of them receive the reward for it, without any decrease in the reward of the initiating good-doer.'[al-Kafi, v. 4, p. 18, no. 2]

Prohibition of Making Someone Feel Obliged for an Act of Courtesy

11– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'Give life to your act of courtesy by killing it [i.e. by killing your expectation of receiving anything in return].' [Ghurar al–Hikam, no. 2282]

12- Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'If an act of courtesy is done unto you, then be sure to remember it, and if you do an act of courtesy unto someone else, then be sure to forget it.' [Ghurar al-Hikam, nos. 4000-4001]

13– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'The yardstick [used to measure the goodness] of an act of courtesy is the absence of expectation accompanying it.' [Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 9724]

Completion of a Good Act

14— The Prophet (S) said, 'Bringing a good act to completion is better than [merely] initiating it.'[Amali al-Tusi, p. 596, no. 1235]

15- Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'One who does not sustain his good action loses it.' [Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 9115]

16– Imam al–Kazim (a.s.) said, 'A good turn done to a fellow believer is not considered complete until accompanied by three things: underestimation of the act, concealing it, and hastening its completion. He who underestimates his good turn to a fellow believer has esteemed his brother highly indeed, whereas he who esteems his good turn to be great has deemed his brother to be insignificant. He who conceals the good turn that he has done has honored his action, and he who hastens to fulfill his promise takes pleasure in the gift too.'[Tuhaf al-'Uqul, no. 403]

Prohibition of Holding Acts of Common Courtesy in Contempt

17– The Prophet (S) said, 'Never hold any act of common courtesy in contempt, even simply meeting a fellow brother with a face displaying pleasure at seeing him.' [Kanz al-Fawa'id li al-Karajiki, v. 1, p. 212]

18— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'Never deem any act of common courtesy that you are able to carry out as insignificant in comparing it to a greater act, for verily the simple act performed when the need for it arises is more beneficial to its receptor than the great act for which there is no need. Perform for each day good acts that befit it and you will grow on the right course.'[al-Ja'afariyyat, p. 233]

The Mark of Acceptance of a Good Act

19- Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'The best act of common courtesy is that which good people are able to benefit from.' [Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 4983]

20- Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) was once asked what the mark of acceptance of a servant with Allah is, to which he replied, 'The mark of acceptance of a servant with Allah is that his good acts reach the objects of their intention. If not, then that is not the case.' [Bihar al-Anwar, v. 74, p. 419, no. 47]

The Reward for Good Acts

ثُوابُ المَعروف

ـ رسولُ اللهِ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ): مَن قادَ ضَريراً أُربَعينَ خُطوَةً عَلى أُرضٍ سَهلَةٍ ، لا يَفي بِقَدرِ إبرَةٍ مِن جَميعِهِ21 طِلاعُ الأرضِ ذَهَباً ، فإن كانَ فيما قادَهُ مَهلَكَةٌ جَوَّزَهُ عَنها وَجَدَ ذلكَ في ميزانِ حَسَناتِهِ يَومَ القِيامَةِ أُوسَعَ مِنَ الدّنيا . مِائةَ أَلف مَرَّةٍ

21– The Prophet (S) said, 'He who leads a blind man forty steps on level ground, even if he was to be rewarded the whole world's worth of gold, it would not be enough to recompense a needle's worth of what that act deserves. And if there is a danger on the path which he averts him from, he will find that act on the Day of Resurrection within his balance of good deeds, larger than one hundred thousand times the expanse of the earth.'[Bihar al–Anwar, v. 75, p. 15, no. 8]

22– The Prophet (S) said, 'A servant [of Allah] entered Paradise because of a thorn branch that he removed from the path of fellow Muslims.'[al-Khisal, v. 32, p. 111]

23— The Prophet (S) said, 'He who builds a structure on the road affording shelter to a traveller, Allah will raise him on the Day of Resurrection mounted on a fine-bred camel made of pearls, and his face will radiate light for all the dwellers of Paradise.'[Thawab al-A'amal, p. 343, no. 1]

24— The Prophet (S) said, 'He who averts an impediment of water or fire from a group of Muslims becomes deserving of obligatory entrance into Paradise.'[al]-Kafi, v. 5, p. 55, no. 3]

25– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'I have witnessed the act of common courtesy to be exactly as its name suggests, and nothing excels the act of common courtesy than its own reward.' [Makarim al-Akhlaq, v. 1,

p. 294, no. 915]

1. The Arabic ma'aruf denotes common acts of courtesy, kindly favours towards others, good manners and general acts of goodness to people (ed.)

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