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Home > Jurispudence Made Easy > Dialogue on enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil

Dialogue on enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil

I reckon now that you have attained an adequate and diverse level of knowledge of your religion, thanks to the journey we made together into the complex world of jurisprudence. It could be said that you now know the demarcations of right and wrong, halal and haraam, wajib and mustahab. Therefore, the time has come to act upon the injunction of God Almighty,

"And among you there should be a group who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and these it is that shall be successful". (3/104).

- * How should I do it?
- Invite people to good deeds and make them stop committing the acts that you know are wrong.
- * What has this to do with me, i.e. meddling in other people's affairs? Does it not suffice that I adhere to what is required from me by the Islamic injunctions?
- Beware, o son! You shouldn't say that. In certain circumstances, this obligation is a collective one imposed on the Muslim community (wajibun kifa'i, by contrast to wajibun aini the obligation that falls on every adult Muslim i.e. individual duty): In other words, when you, I, and others do not discharge such a duty, all of us shall be rendered sinners. If only one of us takes it upon themselves to uphold the obligation, the rest shall be absolved of the responsibility.

Beside the clear injunction contained in the Qur'anic verse I have just recited, it has been reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "My umma 'Islamic community' shall be in good condition they enjoin that which is good, forbid that which is wrong, and co-operate in righteousness. If they hesitate, they shall be denied bliss, be dealt high-handedly with each other, and will have no helper on the earth, nor in the heavens!".

In this regard too, Imam Ali (a.s.) has been quoted as saying, "Do not abandon the obligation of enjoining right and forbidding wrong. If you do, your bad folk shall reign supreme over you, and then you

will implore God's grace, yet your prayer would not be answered".

And finally, probably you are aware of the Prophetic hadith, "You, all, are charged with the responsibility and should, therefore, take care of those who are in your charge".

- * Yes, I am aware of this tradition.
- You are, therefore, a responsible person. As such you have certain duties and rights; the task is very grave. Since this is the case, I do not think you can still cling to your earlier notion of "not meddling" in other people's affairs, for upholding this religious ritual cannot be described as poking one's nose in other people's business. This obligation is akin to prayer, fast, hajj, and khums.
- * However, I am not a clergyman so that I can advise people to do good or encourage them to abstain from committing bad deeds.
- Who told you that the discharging of this obligation is the exclusive domain of the clergy? It is the duty of every one of us, irrespective of our backgrounds.
- * Well, when would this obligation cease to be wajibun kifa'ie, (i.e. so long as there are other Muslims who take it upon themselves to discharge it), and become the responsibility of every individual Muslim (wajibun aini), in the same way prayer is?
- In certain circumstances, enjoining good and forbidding evil becomes obligatory. It could explicitly be demonstrated by your aversion to the actions of those who disregard this obligation to desist from committing sins. On this occasion, I recall Imam Ali's words, "The Messenger of God (s.a.w.) ordered us to face up to (avowed) sinners, through expressing our disapproval of their wrongdoings".
- * Is upholding this divine obligation paramount at all time?
- No, certain conditions must be present:
- 1. The person exercising the obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil must be aware of what is good and what is bad, albeit in a general manner.
- 2. The probability that his advice shall be heeded. Conversely, there is no point in trying to guide those who you know will not take your advice. Having said that, [it becomes obligatory at times that you show indignation at their flagrant commissioning of evil deeds and turning away from that which is good].
- 3. The wrongdoer, or the one turning away from good, must be intent on committing the act. In the event, however, of even a glimpse of hope that they may ameliorate their stance, they must be counselled accordingly.
- * If the person was not bent on commissioning the act?

- they should not be counselled.
- * How should I know that a person is intent on committing the vile deed?
- If you are aware of any indication that may lead you to believe they have mended their ways, this is a proof that they are no longer intent on committing the misdeed.

Should they abandon the action, or show remorse after they had done it, this is a sufficient confirmation that they are no longer bent on habitually committing evil deeds. You are, therefore, not required to tell them off, or urge them as the case may be.

- * At times it occurs to me that a person may be in the process of committing a sin, or turning away from good, is it incumbent on me to act to thwart their bid or urge them to join in what is good as the case may be?
- Yes, you are duty-bound to prevent them from doing that which is vile and sinful, and extol them to embark on that which is good and rewarding.
- 4. The person committing the sin or turning away from what is virtuous should not be unmindful of the nature of their action, in that they are not aware what they are doing contravenes the sublime injunctions of religion. Otherwise, giving them advice is not compulsory.
- 5. The person giving the counsel should not fear the consequences of his word or deed, be it to his person, honour, property, or fellow Muslims. Conversely, championing the obligation can be waived, except if the thing enjoined or forbidden falls within those grave matters in the eye of the Divine Lawgiver. In those circumstances, striking the right balance, between the expected action and the core injunction, becomes paramount. Accordingly, the obligation may or may not be discharged.
- * If I want to practise the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil, how should I go about it?
- It could be done in levels; the first is expressing your innermost irritation and revulsion for the violation.
- * Is there a particular way of demonstrating my anger and resentment?
- This could take many forms of reactions, showing disapproval of the wrong act that was being committed. You could turn away from the person who committed it, showing your fury at their deed; and you could stop talking to them.

The next level is that you go about propagating enjoining good and forbidding evil by word.

- * How should I go about this type of action?
- By counselling the wrongdoer, reminding him of the severe punishment Allah, the Most High, has in store for those who disobey His injunctions; you could advise him of the reward God has promised those

who obey His commandments.

The third level is taking practical action to enforce this divine injunction.

- * Could you expand on that?
- It is by physically punishing the transgressor of the bounds of Allah, the Omnipotent, such as wrenching his ear, and smacking or interning him, in a bid to make him desist from future violations.

However, for every type of the aforesaid actions, there must be room for manoeuvre commensurate with the circumstances prevailing at the time of committing the sin.

- * Do I have to adopt these methods in the same order of priority, i.e. in the way you have just explained?
- Not at all, you could start with the type of response, you believe would yield good results. You should not, though, lose sight of the fact that you should, at the outset, resort to using the manner that is least harmful or insulting.
- * Should this prove fruitless, can I use a tougher approach?
- You may move to the ultimate stage. That is after you have secured the permission of the Marji'. You should, however, start with the action that is least harmful, without endangering the wellbeing of the person being reprimanded, i.e. barring inflicting a wound or a fracture on him, let alone endangering his life in any way.

However, commands and interdictions are two obligations that become more demanding to enforce, if the person who is turning away from what is good, or committing the sin is among your household.

You may find some members of your family who are apathetic towards discharging certain obligations, or committing cardinal sins, lying, encroaching upon other people's rights, and this or that of vile deeds.

- * Suppose, I found such a lacking conduct, what should I do?
- Then, your duty shall be to uphold the obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil in the same manner we discussed earlier..
- * What if the situation did not warrant an obligatory action?
- It shall be mustahab to act upon. If you so did, you shall be rewarded. Should you abandon it, you shall not be penalized. The criterion here is that he who leads to good deeds is in the same rank of the doer.
- * Despite all this detailed discussion on enjoining good and forbidding evil, can I have one more request, in that I am still not fully aware as to all aspects of the subject. In short, could you dot the i's and cross

the t's?

- Of course; I must stress, though, that I have one condition?
- * What is it?
- I shall identify certain actions that are good, and that you should heed or practise and encourage the others to do so, be they mustahab or wajib; and other actions that are either forbidden or reprehensible, and that you should refrain from doing and frustrate the attempts by the others to commit them.
- * I promise.
- Good. As for good deeds, they may include the following:
- 1. Trust in God.

Allah, the Omniscient says in His Glorious Book,

"... And whoever trusts in Allah, then surely Allah is Mighty, Wise". (8/49).

Commenting on this verse, Imam Mousa al-Kadhim (a.s.) was quoted as saying, "Trust in God is of varying degrees. Trusting in God in all your affairs comes on top. Whatever He allotted to you, you should wilfully accept, in the knowledge that you know He shall not wrong His servants. So, entrust Him with your affairs".

2. Holding firm to Allah.

Allah has stated in His Holy Book,

"And whoever holds fast to Allah, he indeed is guided to the right path". (3/101).

It has been narrated from Imam as–Sadiq (a.s.), "Allah revealed to David (a.s.): Whomsoever among My servants held fast to Me, to the exclusion of My servants, I shall know that. And if it so happened that the heavens and the earth, and those in them, plot his downfall, I shall extricate him from such a situation. Conversely, should anyone of My servants put his trust in another of My creation, I shall know his intention, cut him off heavenly sustenance, and sink the ground under his feet; thereafter, I do not care where he perished"

3. Thanking God for His countless bounties.

"My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Thy favour which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as You are pleased with, and make me enter, by Your mercy, into Your servants, the good ones". (27/19).

Tradition has it, "Thanksgiving for God's favours, irrespective of their magnitude, is weightier than the

favour itself".

4. Having good opinion of Allah, the Most High.

Quoting the Prophet (s.a.w.), Imam Ali (a.s.) has said, "By Him, the Only and One God! Not a single believer, who has been favoured with the best of the riches of this life and the hereafter, has achieved such favour, except with his good faith in Allah, his good opinion of Him, and his good character".

5. Trust in what Allah has decreed of means of living, life, and profit and loss.

"Whatever benefit comes to you (O man!), it is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself..". (4/79).

Imam Ali (a.s.) was quoted as saying, "Not a devout Muslim shall taste the true flavour of Iman (faith), unless he is satisfied that what has been allocated to him will not go to any other person, and that which has escaped him shall never be his".

6. Fear of, and hope in, God Almighty.

Describing true believers, Allah, the Exalted, has this to say,

"Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them. So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did". (32/16,17).

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq said, "Have hope in Allah, the kind of hope that shall help you refrain from trespassing upon His bounds, and fear Allah, in such a manner that shall not make you give up on His mercy".

- 7. Patient perseverance and self-restraint.
- ".. Only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure". (39/10).

God, the Exalted, also revealed,

"Those who spend (benevolently) in good and bad days, and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and Allah loves the doers of good (to others)". (3/134).

The Apostle of God (s.a.w.) was quoted as saying, "Among the most favoured avenues that may bring the servants closer to their Lord are their reactions in two situation – a burst of irateness, checked by restraint, and a tribulation responded to by patient perseverance".

8. Shying away from that which Allah, the Exalted, has declared haraam.

It has been narrated from Imam Ali (a.s) thus, "Endurance is of two types - The first is that exercised at

times of affliction which is good. And better still is restraining oneself from transgressing against His injunctions, especially that which He deemed haraam". The Imam also said, "Fear God, against wrongdoing, especially in secret, for the Witness is the Judge Himself".

9. Justice.

Allah, the Most High, said in His Book,

"Surely, Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful". (16/90).

It has been narrated from Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq (a.s.) thus, "Three categories of people will be the closest to God, the Most High, at the Day of Reckoning: A person who, at an angry moment, chose not to use his upper hand in dealing a blow to his adversary; a second who befriended two others, yet, throughout this friendship, he did not lean to one side at the expense of the other; and a third who told the truth, albeit against himself".

10. Following one's reason rather than his desires.

"Yearnings for women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well bred horses and cattle and arable land, is made to seem fair to men; this is the provision of the life of this world; and Allah is He with Whom is the good goal (of life). Say: Shall I tell you of what is better than these? For those who guard (against evil) are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and pure mates and Allah's pleasure; and Allah sees the servants". (3/14, 15).

The Messenger of God (s.a.w.) said, "Blessed is he who forsook a pleasurable moment for an unseen promise".

11. Humility.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) was quoted as saying, "The person who is most loved by, and the closest to, me at the Day of Judgement, shall be the one with the best moral credentials and the most humble." From the famous book of prayers of Imam as–Sajjad is this quotation, "O Lord! Bless Mohammad and his household, and do not elevate my rank among the people, unless You have suppressed my soul by the same measure, and do not bestow on me public honour, unless You create in my soul a humiliation by the same measure".

12. Leading a reasonable lifestyle.

"O children of Adam! attend to your attire (and looks) at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely, He does not love the extravagant". (7/32).

13. Fairness.

The Messenger of God (s.a.w.) said, "The most honourable of works are those of a) being fair to others, b) giving charity to your brethren, and c) the remembrance of Allah, the Most High, in every circumstance".

14. Chastity.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "The best of acts of worship are moderation in food, and morality".

15. Minding one's own shortcomings, rather than snooping on the others.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "Blessedness belongs to him who pays more attention to fearing God Almighty than fearing human beings, and to him who is more concerned with his own faults and frailties than those of his fellow believers".

16. Claiming the high moral ground.

Describing His Messenger, Allah, the Most High, said,

"Most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality". (68/4).

Asked about who of the faithful is the most deep-rooted in faith, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "The one who has the best integrity".

17. Reason.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "Allah never bestows glory on him who is petty-minded, and never humiliates him who is mild-tempered".

Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Man can only attain true worship with forbearance".

18. Memorizing the Holy Qur'an, reciting it, and acting according to its injunctions.

Allah, the Exalted, said,

"Surely, they who recite the Book of Allah, keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them secretly and openly, hope for a gain which will not perish. That He may pay them back fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; surely, He is Forgiving, Multiplier of rewards". (35/29,30).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "The companions of the The Qur'an shall be in a very lofty rank among mankind, save the prophets and messengers". It was also related from Imam Abu Abdillah as–Sadiq (a.s.) thus, "Those, among devout youths, who recite The Qur'an, it will blend with their blood and flesh. And Allah shall place them with the virtuous noble scribes; the Qur'an shall stand them in good stead on

the Day of Judgement".

19. Paying respect to the holy shrines of the Infallibles.

Tradition has it, "Al-Hussain bin Ali (a.s.) said to the Messenger of God (s.a.w.): O father! what will be his reward such as who pays visitation to you (your tomb)? The Prophet (s.a.w.) replied: Those who pay me a visit, your father, your brother, or you, I shall be duty-bound to visit them at the Day of Judgement to extricate them from their sins, (if any)".

20. Asceticism.

The Apostle of God (s.a.w.) said, "Renounce worldly things, Allah will love you". In another tradition, he said, "If Allah chose any of His servants for His favour, He would make him relinquish the pleasures of this life for those of the Hereafter, and make him mindful of his own shortcomings, rather than those of other people". Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was quoted as saying, "Apart from knowing God, the Most High, and His Messenger, there is no deed more meritorious than shunning the glitters of this life".

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq had these words for a man who sought his advice, "I commend to you to be God-fearing, pious, and diligent. Beware of desiring that which Allah has bestowed on other people. It suffices to remind you of what He said in His Holy Book, addressing the Prophet (s.a.w.),

'Do not strain your eyes after what We have given certain classes of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and make yourself gentle to the believers' (15/88).

God Almighty also said,

'Let not then their property and their children excite your admiration..' (9/56).

And should you grow fearful, always remember the lifestyle of the Messenger of God (s.a.w.) – his staple food was barley (bread), his deserts dates, and his fire was lit with palm leaves. If a misfortune befalls you or members of your family, remember the calamities that befell the Prophet (s.a.w.), in that they were unprecedented".

21. Helping the believers, allay their fears, make them happy, feed them, and see to it that their affairs are attended to.

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "A believer who comes to the rescue of a wronged fellow believer shall get a reward that is greater than that of fasting Ramadhan, and devoting oneself zealously to the service of God in the Sacred Mosque..". In another hadith, he said, "If a Muslim looks after the needs of his brethren, Allah shall call him: Your reward shall come from Me and I shall not accept for you anything less than The Garden".

22. Being one's own guard at all time.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) counselled Abu Thar thus, "Be answerable to yourself before you are called to book, for this will ameliorate your trial on the Day of Judgement. Weigh yourself (take stock of your deeds) before you shall be weighed. And be prepared for the Grand Parade when everything shall lay bare before God".

23. Being mindful of the affairs of fellow Muslims.

In a hadith, the Prophet said, "He who has become impervious to Muslims' concerns shall no longer be counted among them. And he who heard a person calling on Muslims for help, and did not respond to his plea, is not a Muslim".

24. Generosity, noble-mindedness, and altruism.

"And those who made their abode in the city and in the faith before them love those who have fled to them, and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given, and prefer (them) before themselves though poverty may afflict them, and whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones". (59/9).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "Among the prerequisites of forgiveness are giving away food, spreading peace, and speaking gently with others".

25. Spending on one's immediate family and relatives.

The Messenger of God (s.a.w.) said, "The parable of a head of a family, going about his business to earn a living for himself and his dependants is like a mujahid in the way of Allah".

26. Repentance for sins, petty and cardinal, and showing remorse.

The following verses from the Glorious Qur'an depict vividly the effect of true penitence:

"O you who believe! turn to Allah a sincere turning; maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow.." (66/8).

"..and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful". (24/31).

".. Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those who purify themselves". (2/222).

"Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms, and that Allah is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the All-merciful". (9/104).

"Say: O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely, Allah forgives the failings altogether; surely, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful". (39/53).

It has been narrated from Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (a.s.), "The parable of a penitent is that of a sinless person, and the (parable) of him who dwells on his sin, while he keeps asking God's forgiveness, is that of a mocker".

- * What you have just numerated concerns that which is good. What about that which is objectionable?
- They are numerous. However, I will mention some of them, but with the same condition?
- * You mean I must pledge to keep away from such misdeeds, and discourage people from committing them.
- Precisely!
- * You have my word.
- 1. Wrongdoing.

"..and they who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back". (26/227).

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "The most abhorrent sin in the sight of God Almighty is that of unjustly encroaching upon the property of a Muslim".

2. Supporting wrongdoing and condoning it.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "He who volunteers to back an oppressor, knowing that he was thus, he be outside the pale of Islam". He also said, "The most wicked of people is he who sells the Hereafter at the price of this life. And the most wicked of the two is the one who bartered the Hereafter for the life of another person".

3. The evildoers whom people guard against for fear of reprisals

The Prophet said, "The most vile of people is he who is accorded respect for fear of their mischief".

4. Severing relations with one's blood relatives.

"But if you held command, you were sure to make mischief in the land and cut off the ties of kinship!". (47/22).

In a reply to a tribesman, on the best of (deeds in) Islam, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "Faith. The man said: And what comes next? The Prophet said: Being kind to your kinship. The man said: And what comes after in that order? The Prophet said: Enjoining good and forbidding evil. The man then asked: Tell me of the most vile deeds in the eye of The Creator? The Prophet said: Associating gods with Allah. The man said: What comes next? The Prophet said: Enmity among relatives. The man said: And what

comes next in that order? The Prophet said: Enjoining what is wrong and forbidding what is good".

5. Anger.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Anger is the precursor to every vile deed".

6. Arrogance.

"Therefore, enter the gates of hell, to abide therein; so certainly evil is the dwelling place of the proud". (16/29).

The Almighty also said,

"And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster". (31/18).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "The majority among the companions of Hell are the pompous".

7. Confiscating the property of the orphan.

"(As for) those who unjustly seize the property of the orphans, surely they only devour fire into their stomachs and they shall enter burning fire". (4/10).

8. Perjury.

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "He who tells a lie on purpose after solemnly pledging to tell the truth, he shall be viewed as though he was going against God, the Exalted.

9. False testimony.

Describing the pious, Allah said in His Holy Book,

"And they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly". (25/72).

- 10. Deception.
- ".. There shall befall those who are guilty humiliation from Allah and severe chastisement because of what they planned". (6/124).

God Almighty also said,

"..and the evil plan shall not beset any save those who hatched it..". (35/43).

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "Had it not been for the fact that the perpetrators of trickery and betrayal are among the companions of Hell, I could have become the most cunning among the Arabs".

11. Looking down on and taking light fellow Muslims, especially the poor.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Do not denigrate a needy believer, for he who treats any believer roughly, Allah shall treat him with the contempt he deserves, and shall maintain His dislike for him until he abandons such attitude or repent".

12. Envy.

"Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of what He has created.. and from the evil of the envious when he envies". (113/1,2,5).

Imam Abu Abdillah as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Envy eats away faith in the same way fire consumes firewood".

13. Backbiting and listening to it.

"O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others.." (49/12).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "An assembly rife with backbiting is an affront to faith. Therefore, purify your hearing faculty from listening to backbiting, for both the speaker and the listener are deemed sinners".

14. Craving for wealth and clinging to this world.

"O you who believe! let not your wealth, or your children, divert you from the invocation of Allah; and whoever does that, these are the losers". (63/9).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "He, who makes this life his prime goal, shall be far removed from Allah's domain".

15. Obscenity, false accusation, and cursing.

Imam as–Sadiq had this reaction and rebuke to a close friend, when he heard him calling the mother of his slave names. Hitting his own forehead with his hand, he said to him, "God be praised! (How dare) you falsely accuse his mother (by using abusive language)! I thought you were pious and God–fearing. In which case, you are not!". The man said, "May I be your ransom! but his mother is a Sindi (from the province of Sind) and that she is a polytheist". The Imam retorted, "(And so!) do not you know that every people have their own way in conducting their marriages. Go away!". It was recounted that the Imam (a.s.) was never seen with him again ever.

16. Being ungrateful to one's parents.

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and (show) goodness 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". (17/23).

17. Lying.

"Only they forge the lie who do not believe in Allah's revelations, and these are the liars". (16/105).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "It is a great treachery to tell your fellow-human being a pack of lies, while he is not aware you are lying to him".

Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) said, "Guard against lying, be it petty or big, in any circumstance, whether in earnest or in jest, for if you lie in trivial matters, you shall be tempted to lie in grave ones".

18. Not keeping a promise.

The Originator of the heavens and the earth said,

"So He made hypocrisy to follow as a consequence into their hearts till the day when they shall meet Him, because they failed to perform towards Allah what they had promised with Him, and because they told lies". (9/77).

"If four (bad) habits characterize a person, he should be deemed a hypocrite; and if only traces of these habits were found in him, he would remain tainted, until he renounced them. These are: if he speaks, he tells lies; if he makes a promise, he does not keep it; if he undertakes a covenant, he betrays it; and if he disputes, he acts immorally", said Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.).

19. Indulgence in wrongdoing and showing no remorse.

"And those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults – and who forgives the faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done". (3/135).

20. Speculative hoarding of foodstuffs.

The Prophet said, "He who hoards foodstuffs, for more than forty days (plotting to push prices up), Allah shall deny him the breeze of Paradise".

21. Deception.

The Messenger of God (s.a.w.) said, "He who cheats is not one of us".

22. Prodigality.

"O children of Adam! attend to your attire (and looks) at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely, He does not love the extravagant". (7/31).

Allah, the All-pervading also declared,

"And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely, the squanderers are the fellows of Satan and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord". (17/26,27).

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "If Allah chose what is best for any of His servants, He would make him spend wisely, and take good care of his affairs. He would lead him away from misappropriation and prodigality".

23. Abandoning any of the religious obligations, such as prayer and fasting.

The Prophet of Mercy (s.a.w.) said, "He who deliberately abandons the observance of the obligation of prayer shall be denied refuge with God and His Messenger".

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Allah shall neither cast an eye on His servant, nor render him pure in heart, if he were to throw beyond his back any of the obligations He ordained, or commit any of the sins He prohibited".

- * Finally, my father had this to add.
- I have chosen this statement on the important topic of "Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong", by one of our luminaries, "It is incumbent on the doctors of religion, in particular, to practically apply this obligation: to wear the attire of what is good, be it wajib or mustahab, and take off the attire of objectionable actions, be they haraam or makrouh. They should arm themselves with noble morals and get rid of debased conduct, for in so doing they would set a good example to be followed by the laity. This is even more so, if they augment such deeds with good counsel, be it in the context of awakening their wishes in the good things to pursue, or checking their propensity to committing that which is haraam, as the case may be".

Thus, we finish our dialogues on specific subjects, praying to the Almighty to make the reward for the effort put into them closeness to Him. I hope that you and our brethren would benefit from them. Having said that, the forthcoming discussion shall be a general one, as you may want to enquire about any other topic we have not covered in these dialogues.

* It is a good idea.

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