

## Following Another's Example

Following the example of another is nothing more than what has been bestowed upon the spirit at its origin, when the light of time was mixed with that of eternity. Following a model, however, does not consist of adopting the marks of outward actions and claiming descent from the awliya<sup>1</sup> of the faith from among the wise and the Imams. As Allah said,

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

***The day when We will call every people by their Imam.*** (17:71)

that is, whoever follows someone with effacement is pure. And elsewhere,

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

***So when the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of relationship between them on that day, nor shall they ask of each other.*** (23:101)

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Souls are a drafted army. Those who know each other are intimate, and those who do not know each other differ from each other.' Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah was asked who had taught him good manners, and he replied, 'My Lord taught me manners in myself. Whatever I find to be good in people of intelligence and insight I follow and use; whatever I find ugly in the ignorant I avoid and forsake forever. That has brought me to the path of knowledge. There is no sounder way for the astute believer than to follow the example of others, because it is the clearest path and soundest goal.' And Allah said to Muhammad, the greatest of His creation,

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدَهُ

***These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance.*** (6:90)

Elsewhere He said,

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

***Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one.*** (16:123)

If the faith of Allah had had a path straighter than following a model, He would have recommended it to His prophets and His supporters.

The Holy Prophet said, 'There is a light in the heart which is illuminated only by following the truth and intending towards the right path. It is a part of the light of the prophets which has been entrusted in the hearts of the believers.'

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