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Introduction

Prophet Muhammad (S) said: “I have not been sent except to perfect the ethical system (*makrīm al-akhlāq*).”^{[1](#)}

One's actions, when performed out of choice, are due to knowledge, belief and habits. For example, suppose one is thirsty, knows that water is near him and knows that water will relieve his thirst. In this case he will drink water because of his knowledge.

There are also examples of habits. For example, a stingy person will not want to help a needy person, even if he realizes his need, while a generous person will help a needy person without thinking about it. His generosity pushes him towards helping the needy person.

There are rules found in Islam with the purpose of obtaining correct beliefs and habits. The blessings of good habits are found in one's actions.

There are many traditions from the infallibles (a) that claim that good ethics were the Prophets' most important trait. They said that Allah gave them these high traits and that they encouraged mankind to obtain these high traits.^{[2](#)}

Muhammad (S) Had The Best Ethical Traits

Prophets were chosen by Allah and ordered to guide mankind and better humanity. The leader of the Prophets is the seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (S). He was raised by Allah. In the Qurʾān it says that Allah taught him what he did not know.^{[3](#)} The Qurʾān says that he had the best ethical traits in order for him to be able to improve his nation until the Day of Judgment.^{[4](#)} The Qurʾān says that he is high in every ethical trait.^{[5](#)} The Qurʾān also says that his mission was to teach and better humanity.^{[6](#)}

Imām ‘Alī (a) said the following about Prophet Muhammad (S): “Allah sent his highest angel to show Muhammad (S) the right path and correct ethical traits from the time he breastfed.^{[7](#)}

With this said he would ask Allah to give him good ethical traits and to be safe from bad ethical traits.^{[8](#)}

Allah Purifies (Spiritually) Whoever He Desires

It is clear that 'muzakka' is Allah's purifying ability found in the verse: “**..Allah purifies whomever He wishes.**”⁹ Nobody can purify his own self; instead he must follow the Islamic laws which would result in purification. How is one able to purify himself when it is necessary to have complete knowledge of one's self and complete knowledge of how to correct one's self?

Man only has surface knowledge of himself. The Qurʾān even says that man has been given only a little bit of knowledge.¹⁰

Obtaining Correct Ethical Traits

Man, from childhood, begins to be attracted to certain things, for example milk and toys. Eventually, he becomes attracted to money and he finds a sense of self-love. A child struggles to get what he wants, delicious food or interesting toys, and shows a negative reaction when denied what he wants.

Purifying Comes Before Teaching

The Qurʾān mentions two verses¹¹ regarding the Prophet's duties. The word purifying has been mentioned before teaching in these two verses. The reason for this might be that one must build the foundation before he can fill the house with knowledge.

A person who has knowledge, but does not act upon it, is, as the Qurʾān says, like a dog.¹² The Qurʾān also likens him to a donkey that carries books.¹³

Theoretical And Practical Ethics

One can obtain good ethical traits by both theory and practice. One who wants to rid himself of bad ethical traits and obtain good ethical traits must know what good and bad characteristics are. After he knows the good and bad traits he should take advice from the best ethical teachers, Prophet Muhammad (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

A point that must be mentioned is that Allah is the one who purifies people. So, one must ask Allah for help in obtaining these traits. Imām Sādiq (a) said: “Whoever has these great ethical traits should thank Allah, and whoever does not have them should ask Allah for them.”¹⁴

The Importance That Shah ʿĀd Dastghayb Gave To Lectures On Islamic Ethics

The martyr had a special desire to help the seminary students purify themselves. He would teach Islamic

ethics every Thursday. He would tell them that they would have to be the role models of the Islamic ethical system in the society and that the more they worked on themselves, the more they worked on society. This is because one must guide people with their actions and manners before their words.

After Imām Khomeini (r) talked about the importance of unity between the university and the religious seminary, Shahīd Dastghayb invited university students to his Thursday lectures as well. Many young men and women accepted his invitation and took part in his lectures every week.

Thirteen lectures were given and then the class was cancelled due to summer vacation. Shahīd Dastghayb wanted to continue them, but the hypocrites took him away from us.

This book is a collection of these lectures.

- [1.](#) Shaykh 'Alī Namāzī, Mustadrak Safīnat al-Bihār, volume 1, page 410.
- [2.](#) Shaykh Kulaynī, Usūl al-Kāfī, volume 3, page 95.
- [3.](#) Refer to 4:113.
- [4.](#) Refer to 93:6.
- [5.](#) Refer to 68:4.
- [6.](#) Refer to 3:164.
- [7.](#) Shaykh 'Alī Namāzī, Mustadrak Safīnat al-Bihār, volume 1, page 415.
- [8.](#) Shaykh 'Alī Namāzī, Mustadrak Safīnat al-Bihār, volume 1, under the word 'khalq'.
- [9.](#) 4:49.
- [10.](#) Refer to 17:85.
- [11.](#) Refer to 3:163 and 62:2.
- [12.](#) Refer to 7:176.
- [13.](#) Refer to 62:5.
- [14.](#) Shaykh Kulaynī, Usūl al-Kāfī, chapter Makarim al-Akhlaq.

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