

Right n. 28: The Right of the One Who Treats You Kindly

حق ذي المعروف

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ ذِي الْمَعْرُوفِ عَلَيْكَ فَإِنَّ تَشْكُرَهُ وَتَذْكُرَ مَعْرُوفَهُ وَتَنْشُرَ لَهُ الْمَقَالََةَ الْحَسَنَةَ، وَتُخْلِصَ لَهُ الدُّعَاءَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ، فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ كُنْتَ قَدْ شَكَرْتَهُ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً. ثُمَّ إِنْ أَمَكَنَ مُكَافَأَتَهُ بِالْفِعْلِ كَأَفَاتِهِ وَإِلَّا كُنْتَ مُرْصِدًا لَهُ مُوْطِنًا نَفْسَكَ عَلَيْهَا.

And the right of him who treats you kindly is that you should thank him and acknowledge his kindness; and spread the good word around about him, and sincerely pray for him between you and God the Praised One. Then if you do that, you have thanked him both in private and in public. Then if you are able to practically recompense him, do recompense him. Otherwise, you should be determined to do so later.

It is inherent in man to wish to recompense those who treat him kindly. If some people do not act this way, it is because of the wicked traits they have acquired which block this mode of natural behavior in them. Those who have received proper education and have attained Islamic characteristics strengthen this inner tendency to compensate for the good deeds done for them and always wait for a chance to practically reward those who have somehow done them a favor. Imam Sajjad has clearly outlined the steps to do so as follows:

- 1 – You should thank him.
- 2 – You should acknowledge his kindness and spread the good word around about him.
- 3 – You should sincerely pray for him.
- 4 – You should practically recompense him if you can. Else, you should be determined to do so later.

Goodness and Evil are not Equal

The Holy Qur'an teaches us that goodness and evil are not equal:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate! [The Holy Qur'an, Ha-Mim 41:34]

It is natural that we should do good in response to those who do some good to us. In this verse, we read that we should treat those who do us some evil with kindness. This will have a great effect, and it will attract them to us.

Response to Courteous Greetings

We read in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

“When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. God takes careful account of all things.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:86]

Greeting each other in any form is the most basic way of expressing kindness to each other. However, we can also find in the traditions that practical forms of expressing kindness are also a part of the concept of greeting. In Ali ibn Ibrahim's commentary we read the following tradition quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq : “What is meant by a greeting is verbal expression of greetings and any other practical forms of expressing kindness.”¹ In another tradition in Manaqib we read: “A slave maid brought a flower to give to Imam Hasan . The Imam returned her favor by freeing her from the bonds of slavery. When asked why, he recited the following verse:

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

“When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:86]

He then added: “Freeing her was a more courteous greeting.” Thus, we can see that this offering of a more courteous greeting is a general decree that includes both verbal and physical forms of greeting.

Good, the Reward for Good

We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

"Is there any Reward for Good - other than Good?" [The Holy Qur'an, al-Rahman 55:60]

In many of the commentaries on the Qur'an, the good mentioned here in this verse has been interpreted as unity of God, His recognition and submission to God. However, these are clear instances of good. In general, it includes any good deeds or words. Imam Sadiq said:

أَيَّةٌ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مُسْجَلَةٌ. "قلتُ: "ما هي؟" قال: "قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: "هل جزاء الاحسان الا الاحسان" جرت في الكافر والمؤمن والبر والفاجر، ومن صنع إليه معروف فعليه أن يكافئ به، وليس المكافأة أن تصنع كما صنع حتى يربى، فإن صنعت كما صنع كان له الفضل بالإبتداء"

*"There is a verse in God's Book that is unrestricted." He was asked: "Which verse?" Imam Sadiq said: "It is the Almighty God's words: **"Is there any Reward for Good - other than Good?" (55:60)** This holds true for believers, pagans, good-doers and evildoers. You must reward good for good. Whoever is done some good should respond with good. The proper compensation is not to respond with as much good as he did but with more, since if you respond equally he is ahead of you because he initiated the good deed."* [2](#)

In Al-Mufradat Raghib said: "Doing good is loftier than doing justice because in the case of doing justice you give and take as much as you are supposed to, but in doing good you always give more than you are due to give, and take less than what you deserve to get."

The Response to God's Favor

We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ

"Nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as God has been good to thee." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Qasas 28:77]

It is generally accepted that man is always hoping to receive God's Favors. He asks God for many things and expects a lot from Him. Then how can he ignore other people's needs and neglect their

requests. We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that God should forgive you?” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:22]

In other words, we can say that at times we are given great blessings all of which we do not need. For example, He gives us our intellect with which we can run the affairs of a nation. Alternatively, he gives us so much wealth with which we can implement great social programs. All these blessings do not just belong to us. In these cases, we are just God's vicegerents on Earth to transfer these blessings to others. God has given us these blessings so that we may give them to others. He has planned to run the affairs of His servants through us.

Being Friendly with Others

The verses cited clarified how important it is to be kind with others, especially those who do us favors. Next, we will cite some of the traditions in this regard. There is a chapter dedicated to this subject in *Usul al-Kafi*. The following traditions are cited from that chapter.

Abu Basir quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir that an Arab from the Bani Tameen tribe went to see the Prophet and said: “Please advise me.” The advice that the Prophet gave him was as follows:

تَحَبَّبْ إِلَى النَّاسِ يُحِبُّوكَ

“Be affectionate to people so that they love you.”³

Suma'at quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

مُجَامَلَةُ النَّاسِ ثُلُثُ الْعَقْلِ

“One third of the intellect is to be friendly with the people.”⁴

God's Prophet said:

التَّوَدُّدُ إِلَى النَّاسِ نِصْفُ الْعَقْلِ

“Half of the intellect is to show love to people.”⁵

Thus, we realize that we must treat others with kindness especially those who have done us a favor. The Noble Prophet said:

مَنْ أَوْلِيَ مَعْرُوفًا فَلْيُكَافِئْ بِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَلْيَذْكُرْهُ فَإِنْ ذَكَرَهُ فَقَدْ شَكَرَهُ.

“Whoever receives a favor should compensate it. If he cannot do so, at least he should mention it. Thus if he mentions it, he has thanked the one who has done him a favor.”⁶

God’s Prophet said:

اصْنَعِ الْمَعْرُوفَ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَإِلَى مَنْ هُوَ لَيْسَ أَهْلُهُ، فَإِنْ أَصَبْتَ أَهْلَهُ فَهُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُصِبْ أَهْلَهُ فَأَنْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ.

“Treat with kindness those who are worthy of it and those who are not worthy of it. For if you treat with kindness the one who is worthy of it, then he is worthy of it. And if you treat with kindness one who is not worthy of it, then you yourself are worthy of it.”

At last, let us consider what Imam Sajjad means by ‘him who treats you kindly’ – that is ‘Dhi’l-Ma’ruf’ in Arabic. We read in Ibn Abbas’s tradition: “On the Resurrection Day, the people who do good will enter the court. Their sins will be forgiven due to their good deeds. All their good deeds will remain on their record. Good marks are given to those people whose record shows that their good deeds are more than their bad deeds. They will thus be forgiven. They will all enter Heaven. Therefore doing good to the people will unite all in this world and the Hereafter. This is the reward of one who does good.

¹ Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.4, p.42.

² Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.5, p. 199.

³ Usul al-Kafi, v.2, pp.642-643.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Tarjume wa Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Sepehri, p. 149, quoted from Sharh-i-Shabab al-Akhbar, pp. 201 & 328.

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