

## Self Making

The Man of Islam is constructive. He builds himself and his environment. His success in building his environment depends on his success in self-making and vice versa. In other words his success in improving the environment of his life paves the way for his self-improvement.

In view of this strong reciprocal relationship between man and the environment of his life he must pay his utmost attention to an all-round improvement of himself on a wide scale commensurate to a Muslim's broad outlook on the world and man.

In this respect Islam has extensive teachings which are related to all the aspects of human life and cover all human needs, whether material or spiritual, individual or social, cultural or economic and so on. The sum total of these teachings constitutes the program of Islamic training. It includes important provisions regarding cleanliness, sound nutrition, hygiene, physical and mental health, etc.

### Cleanliness

Islam has given so much importance to cleanliness that it has been considered to be an objective of the faith. The Qur'an recommending purity and cleanliness says:

***"Allah does not intend to inconvenience you, but He intends to purify you and perfect His favor to you, so that you may give thanks". (Surah al-Maidah, S: 6).***

***"Truly Allah loves those who ask for forgiveness and strive to keep themselves clean".  
(Surahal-Baqarah, 2:222).***

The holy Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that cleanliness is a part of faith.

Islam has in more than one ways exhorted the people to the cleanliness of utensils, clothing, body, hair, teeth, drinking water, water used for ablution and bathing, dwelling places, streets, public places, food and every other thing in human use. A number of the sayings of the Prophet and the imams ascribe to the devil everything which is loathsome or causes a disease (e.g. microbes), and describe all such things as a cause of poverty and misery. We reproduce below some such sayings from the book entitled Wasail al-Shiah:

The holy Prophet has said:

- "Everybody who chooses a dress, must keep it clean".
- "Had it not been inconvenient I would have enjoined upon the Muslims to brush their teeth before every prayer".
- "Keep the compound and the front part of your house well-swept and clean".
- "He who sweeps a masjid is rewarded by Allah as if he manumitted a slave".
- "The dossier of the man who abstains from spitting and blowing his nose in the masjid, will be in his right hand on the Day of judgment".
- "Either take proper care of the long hair of your head or clip them".
- "Do not grow long moustaches, for the devil finds a shelter in them".

Imam Ali (P) has said:

"It was the practice of the Holy Prophet to rinse his mouth, throat and nose with water. It makes one's mouth and nose clean".

"Remove cobwebs from your house, for they cause poverty. "

"The removal of the hair of the arm-pits is a part of cleanliness. Doing so destroys bad odour of that part of the body".

Imam al Baqir (P) has said: "Cleaning of the house banishes misery".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Brushing the teeth is a tradition of the prophets". "To trim the finger\_nails was a practice of the holy Prophet".

Some one said to Imam al Sadiq (P) that his friends had told him that the moustaches and the finger\_nails should be trimmed on Friday. The Imam said: "Trim them whenever they grow". The holy Prophet has forbidden cutting the nails with the teeth.

"If possible, your bath\_water should be so clean that you may even drink it".

Imam al Kazim (P) has said:

"To take bath every second day makes a man healthy and strong".

Other traditions forbid urination and excretion on the banks of a river, in front of a masjid, on the streets and roads, where the travellers stay, in the graveyard, under the fruit trees, in a standing position, with face or back towards the qiblah (direction of Ka'bah), on hard ground, in the dens of animals, within public view, in front of a house or a thoroughfare etc. (The topic of cleanliness and purity has been discussed at length in the book ISLAM – A Code of Social Life. ISP, 1980).

On the whole, there are many Islamic injunctions in connection with health, hygiene and nutrition and about the cleanliness of air and environment. We give below a few examples:

- Wash fruit before eating it.
- Do not eat food while it is too hot.
- Observe regularity in regard to food.
- Do not gulp water in one single draught. Drink it slowly.
- Do not puff up water or hot food.
- Take small morsels of food and chew them well.
- Wash your hands and mouth before and after every meal.
- Do not take food without having appetite and stop eating a little before the stomach is full.
- Keep food and water covered.

- Massage your body regularly.
- Use perfume and rub oil over your body and the hair of your head.
- Comb and dress the hair of your head.
- Wash your head and face after a hair-cut and wash your hands after clipping your finger nails.
- Do not take injurious food or drink.
- Take bath or perform ablution, as the case may be, for offering prayers and observe all the rules concerning them.
- Offer prayers with clean body and pure clothes.
- Go to bed early and rise early.
- Keep your head out of the covering while sleeping.
- Have a walk in the morning.
- Choose an open environment and a vast compound for living.

Special religious instructions exist as to which things are legally clean and which are unclean. We reproduce below some of these instructions from the book entitled '**Articles of Islamic Acts**'.

### Some unclean things are as follows:

The urine and the excrement of man and all the animals, the meat of which is legally inedible, and which have gushing blood (that is their blood gushes forth when they are slaughtered or a vein of theirs is opened). The semen, the dead body and the blood of man and every animal having gushing blood, irrespective of the fact whether its meat is or is not legally edible. (Only human corpse becomes clean after having been washed ceremonially).

The dog and the pig which live on land. Their hair and all the fluids secreted by them are also unclean.

Wine and all other intoxicants which flow automatically.

If a clean thing comes in contact with an unclean thing while one or both of them are wet and the

dampness of either percolates through the other, the clean thing also becomes unclean. The unclean food cannot become clean by heating or boiling.

It is forbidden to eat or drink an unclean thing. It is also forbidden to feed it to someone else, even to a child.

It is forbidden to make unclean a sheet of paper on which the name of Allah or a verse of the Qur'an is written. If it gets unclean, it should be purified with water immediately.

It is forbidden to make unclean the floor, the ceiling, the roof and the walls of a masjid. If any part of a masjid is found to be unclean, the filth should be removed forthwith.

The dress of a person offering prayers must be:

(a) clean, (b) lawful, (c) not containing any part of a dead body in its texture, (d) not containing any part of an animal legally inedible, (e) not made of pure silk, and (f) not containing gold filaments. (The last two conditions apply to males only who must not adorn themselves with ornaments made of gold).

A man having a wound, festering boil or ulcer can offer his prayers with his body or dress stained with blood, till such time that the wound, boil or ulcer heals up, if it is troublesome for most of the people in such circumstances to wash the wound or to change the dress.

Cleaning agents if body or clothes become unclean, they may be rendered clean in several ways. The best way is to clean them with water.

***"Allah sends down water from the heaven upon you, that thereby He may purify you "*** (Surah al-Anfal, 8:11).

Here are some important points connected with cleaning agents:

One Kur of water is approximately equal to 384 litres.

One Kur or more of water does not get unclean by coming into contact with anything unclean unless its colour, smell or taste changes. Moreover, anything unclean may be rendered clean in this water.

A utensil or any other unclean object should be washed thrice with under-kur water to render it clean (in this manner that water should be poured on the unclean object from the container etc.) and it is sufficient to wash it once with kur water or running water. Of course, it is necessary that these washings should be performed after the original impurity has already been removed. But if a dog has licked a utensil or eaten

or drunk out of it, it should, in the first instance be rubbed with clean clay and then washed with kur water; running water or underkur water.

If it rains on an unclean object which does not contain any original impurity, it is rendered clean.

If as the result of walking on unclean ground the sole of the foot or the shoe gets unclean, it may be rendered clean by walking on clean and dry ground till the original impurity is removed and it is not necessary to wash it.

If the ground, a building, a door, a window or any other fixed object gets unclean, it becomes clean again after the original impurity is wiped and the unclean place, if moist, is dried by the direct rays of the sun.

If an unclean thing is transformed into a clean thing; for example an unclean piece of wood is turned into ash after being burned or an alcoholic beverage is turned into vinegar automatically it becomes clean.

If the body of an animal is soiled with some original impurity like blood or with something which has become unclean, for example unclean water, it becomes clean again as soon as the substance is eliminated from it. The same is the case with the inner parts of human body such as the mouth and the apertures of the nose. They get clean with the removal of original impurity.

## Ablution

It is obligatory to perform ablution (wuzu) before prayers. As such every Muslim has to wash and cleanse the outer parts of his body several times a day and to keep his face, hands, head and feet clean.

The following is the brief discription of wuzu. While performing wuzu it is obligatory to wash the face, the right hand and the left hand in succession and to wipe the front portion of the head, the right foot and the left foot with wet hand.

The face is to be washed from the usual line of hair above the forehead to the end of the chin. Breadth wise the portion of the face washed must at least be equal to what can be held between the middle finger and the thumb.

After the face, the right hand and then the left hand should be washed from the elbow to the finger tips. Then the front portion of the head should be wiped with the right hand moist with wuzu-water. It is not essential that the moisture reaches the skin of the head. To pass a moist hand on the hair growing in the front part of the head is enough. Then the hands moist with wuzu-water should be passed over the feet from the tops of the toes to the ankles.

Performing wuzu with the water acquired illegally or the water about which it is not definitely known whether its owner is or is not agreeable to its being used, is invalid and unlawful.

## **Bathing**

Consequent on the state of major ceremonial impurity caused by sexual intercourse or the ejaculation of semen it is obligatory to take bath before offering prayers or performing any other act of devotion requiring ceremonial purity. In this case the whole body including the portions covered by hair should be fully washed.

Before taking bath every kind of dirt and filth and anything which may prevent water reaching the skin should be removed. The bathing water should be clean and as far as possible clear. In fact a perfect ceremonial bath cleanses the whole body. The prescribed process of bathing is as under:

There are two kinds of bathing:

(1) **Tartibi** (Sequential) and (2) **Irtimasi** (by Immersion).

In the case of the first, a person should wash his head and neck with the intention of taking a ceremonial bath. Then he should wash the right half of his body and after that the left half. To ensure that all the three portions are washed fully, he should, with each portion, wash the other portions also partly.

In the case of bath by immersion, he should plunge his whole body into water. If his feet are rested on the ground, he should lift them up.

During her menstrual periods a woman is not allowed to offer prayers, or to observe fast. In the case of prayers, she is not required, even after her periods are over, to complete what has lapsed. But in the case of fasting she has to make up for the omission.

After the menstrual period of a woman is over, it is obligatory for her to take a ceremonial bath in order to offer prayers and to perform other acts of worship for which purification is a pre-requisite.

The rules which apply to a woman during her menstrual period also apply to her during a few days after delivery.

A person in the state of major ceremonial impurity and a woman with her periods on, are forbidden to do the following:

(1) To touch the text of the Qur'an or the name of Allah or of the prophets or Imams with any part of his/her body.

(2) To stay in a masjid or the sanctuary of the prophet or of the Imams or to enter them to put something there. Anyhow there is no objection to passing through a masjid other than the Masjid al-Haram at Mecca and the Masjid al-Nabi at Madina. Similarly one is allowed to enter a masjid other than the above two to take out something from there.

(3) To recite anyone of the Qur'anic Surahs in which obligatory sajdah occurs (Surahs 32, 41, 53 and 94).

One must perform bathing if one touches a dead human body after its cooling and before it has been washed ceremonially. The same rule applies to the touching of any section of the body having a bone, which is separated from a living person.

With a view to maintain human dignity and in keeping with hygienic considerations, Islam gives certain instructions in regard to the dead human body.

It is the duty of every Muslim, obligated to observe the religious precepts, to wash, shroud and bury a Muslim after offering prescribed prayers for him. If some people discharge this duty, others are absolved from their responsibility.

A dead body should be washed thrice, first with the water mixed with berry (Sidr) tree-leaves, then with the water mixed with camphor and finally with pure water.

## Tayammum

If pure and lawful water is not available, or washing with water is feared to be injurious, or the time is so short that the prayers are likely to be missed wholly or partly if wuzu or bath as the case may be, is performed, tayammum may be performed instead.

Tayammum should be performed on the clean earth. As far as possible earth should be used for this purpose. Failing that sand, lump of earth and stone may be used in the same order.

To perform tayammum one should have the intention of performing it. Then he should strike both his hands on earth and then pass them on his forehead from the hair line to the brows and the upper part of the nose. Then he should pass his left palm on the entire back of his right hand and his right palm on the entire back of his left hand. For the purpose of *tayammum* substituting 'bathing' one should place his hands twice on earth. Once for passing on the forehead then for passing on the back of his right and left

hands.

## Food

Man requires food for the continuity of his life and the growth of his body. For this purpose many kinds of vegetables, fruits, other varieties of agricultural produce and meats have been put at his disposal.

***"We have established you on the earth and there have provided you with a livelihood". (Surah al-A'raf, 7: 10).***

***"He produced you from the earth and settled you there". (Surah Hud, 11:61).***

***"He it is who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk in the paths thereof and eat of His providence". (Surah al-Mulk, 67: 15).***

Many significant points are related to the question of food such as the right of the common people to make use of the Divine gifts, the role of human labour in making the raw material usable, various aspects of material needs of human life and how to ensure the supply of the essential commodities and their equitable distribution. Anyhow at present we are concerned only with the question as to what food is lawful and what is unlawful.

Islam does in no way forbid the partaking of tasty food and the drinking of healthy and pleasant beverages. In fact the holy Qur'an has encouraged the utilization of the Divine gifts.

***"Muhammad say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and to use the good things of His providing? Say: These on the Day of Resurrection will be only for those who were faithful in the life of this world". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:32).***

Hence it should not be construed that a pious and faithful person should abstain from sumptuous food and drink. All good things have been created for man, and hence should naturally be used by the faithful.

***"O you messengers! Eat of the good things and do what is right". (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:51).***

At another place the Qur'an says:

***"O you who believe! Eat of the good things with which We have provided you, and give thanks to Allah . . . . .". (Surahal-Baqarah, 2: 172).***

The Qur'an reproaches those persons who deprive themselves of good things without just cause and make unlawful for themselves the lawful foods and blessings:

***"O you who believe! Do not forbid the good things which Allah has made lawful for you". (Surah al-Maidah, 5:87).***

The general criterion for the foods and beverages being lawful is their being 'good' i.e. wholesome, delicious, clean and pure.

***"They ask you what is lawful for them, Say: All good things are lawful for you": (Surah al-Maidah, 5:4).***

Of course certain things have been prohibited, but that has been done just to save the Muslims from their evil effects and not to deprive them of any good thing. Only foul things have been prohibited, foul in the sense that they are obnoxious, harmful and impure.

The Qur'an summarizing the teachings of the Prophet of Islam in this respect says:

***"He declares the good things to be lawful and bad things to be unlawful". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:157).***

Islam prohibits the eating and drinking of the following: All the foul things as mentioned above, such as the carrion, blood etc. and every food and beverage polluted by such things.

All dirty and obnoxious things such as clay, mud, polluted water and putrid and rotten food.

Dog, pig and other predatory animals like lion, wolf, bear, jackal etc.

Invertebrate animals like snake, scorpion, wasp and worms.

Birds which possess hooked beak and talons and are treated to be predatory birds, like eagle etc.

The birds that usually soar in the air without flapping their wings and flap the same much lesser.

The fish that have no scales.

Some other animals such as elephant, rat, monkey, frog and tortoise.

All alcoholic beverages. As a general rule everything intoxicant or narcotic which is definitely injurious for human health comes under this category.

Experience and medical research have proved that alcoholic beverages and narcotic drugs are injurious to health and undermine physical and mental fitness. From moral and social point of view also they are the source of many evils. A drunken man loses the control of his senses and is liable to foolish action and undignified behavior. Such a person may even commit crimes. These poisonous stuffs have ruined many a family. People get addicted to them just to seek momentary exhilaration and false satisfaction. These things not only do not resolve the worries of their life, but also make them further complicated. Instead of making life happy they cause infatuation and frustration.

## Slaughtering of animals

The animals, the meat of which is allowed to be eaten, such as sheep, goat, cow, camel, deer, domestic fowl etc. have to be slaughtered in the prescribed manner. Otherwise if they die their natural death or are killed by beating, wounding or in any way other than the prescribed one their flesh is not lawful.

We here reproduce the legal method of slaughtering from Articles of Islamic Acts (ISP, 1982).

An act of slaughter to be legal must satisfy the following five conditions:

- (1) The person who slaughters must be a Muslim.
- (2) The animal while being slaughtered should be facing the Qiblah.
- (3) He must utter the name of Allah when slaughtering.
- (4) He must cut the throat of the animal with a sharp implement made of iron in a way that the jugular artery, jugular vein, oesophagus canal and trachea are cut.
- (5) It must move after having been slaughtered.

In the case of a camel the only prescribed method of its slaughter is *Nabr*, which means thrusting a knife or any other sharp implement into the cavity between its neck and chest. Other conditions are the same in this case also. As for the fish the rule is as under:

If the fish having scales is caught alive and dies after having been taken out of water, it is lawful. But if it dies inside the water it is unlawful. The fish having no scales is unlawful, even if it is caught alive and dies out of water.

The meat of the lawful wild animals and birds killed with hunting weapons is legally edible provided the

following five conditions are observed.

- (1) The weapon must be incisive or sharp, and must not be of the nature of a net, a stick or a stone.
- (2) The hunter must be a Muslim.
- (3) He should normally utter the name of Allah at the time of using his weapon. Anyhow, if he forgets to utter it there is no harm.
- (4) The weapon must be used with the intention of killing the game. If it is killed accidentally, its flesh is not lawful.
- (5) When the hunter reaches the game, it should be already dead. If it is caught alive and there is sufficient time to slaughter it must be slaughtered in the prescribed manner stated above.

An eatable or drinkable stuff is lawful only if it is not ill-gotten, i.e. the stuff itself or the money by which it has been purchased must not have been acquired by unfair, dishonest or fraudulent means, such as theft, bribery, usury, swindle, embezzlement etc. Anything ill-gotten, even if proper and lawful in itself, is not lawful and the person concerned is accountable for it, as its use involves encroachment on the rights of others. The Qur'an says:

***"Believers, do not devour each other's property among yourselves unlawfully, but rather trade with it by your mutual consent, and do not kill each other". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:29).***

The question of lawful and unlawful property forms an important subject of the economics of Islam. But due to its being outside the scope of our present discourse, we skip over it.

### **Wastage of food**

Even the food-stuff which is come by through fair means is not to be wasted or over-consumed. Its over-consumption is not only against the principles of economic justice, but is injurious to the health of the consumers themselves. It is very unfair that a few well-to-do persons may waste and over-consume food-stuffs while many others starve. The Qur'an says:

***"Eat and drink but be not prodigal". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:32).***

## Spiritual Health

To maintain his physical health and satisfactory growth of his body, man requires, among other things, sound nutrition, necessary health care, healthy climate and safety from pollution and other disease-generating factors.

In the same way the human soul also needs sound nutrition and proper health care for its healthy development. Otherwise it degenerates and inclines towards corruption. Of course the food of the soul is different from that of the body. Similarly the spiritual diseases are also of a different character.

Knowledge and faith are the food of the soul. They nourish, develop and invigorate it in the same way as good and healthy food nourishes the human body.

Similarly ignorance and dishonesty are the scourge of the soul and culminate in many moral ailments.

This is the main subject of the Islamic ethics which points out what habits and qualities are necessary for the soundness and safety of the soul and what habits and qualities deprave it. It also suggests both preventive and curative measures in respect of each spiritual disease.

## Balanced growth

As we stated earlier man has two aspects: One physical and the other spiritual. His growth in both these directions should be balanced. If he pays his attention only to his soul and forgets his body, he will become weak and will feel run down. He will not only be deprived of physical fitness and material pleasures, but will also be left with no conveyance at his disposal for making the spiritual journey. With feeble body there is very little chance of his soaring very high spiritually.

In the same way a man, whose entire life is devoted to eating, drinking and merry-making is left with no scope for the manifestation of his humanity. He cannot rise above the level of the quadrupeds.

There are certain ways and means of attaining development both materially and spiritually. One should identify them and keeping them in view, should chalk out a program of his life so that his development may not cease or become imbalanced. For his physical development man needs a variety of food factors and vitamins within a certain limit. Our excessive consumption of only one kind of food is as injurious to our health as the under-consumption of any food factor.

For the maintenance of health it is necessary to be active and diligent. Inactivity and sluggishness enfeeble the body. At the same time rest is also necessary. Incessant hardwork ruins one's health just

as lethargy and prolonged idleness make him dull.

The same is true of spiritual development. Compassion and sympathy are the requisite qualities of man. One must be sensitive to the hardships of others and should always be ready to help them. But his sympathy must not be so excessive as to prevent one from punishing a traitor or giving a blow to the enemy.

To look at things from all angles is one of the most important features of Islam. It calls for all that helps in the all-round development of man and forbids all that hampers such development. That is why the Islamic morals have a constructive role and ensure complete spiritual health.

### Moral criteria

Do the moral principles have any real basis and fixed criteria or are they only a cover to conceal the personal and class objectives of some groups and individuals?

Have the rich and powerful classes of society, with a view to exploit the masses, invented and raised such questions as those of patience, contentment, regard for the rights of others, tolerance etc. so that they may utilize the under-privileged classes for their own ends, compel them to total submission and keep their mouths shut in the name of adherence to moral principles?

Have the under-privileged classes invented such moral conceptions as love, charity, justice, modesty etc. with the intention of gaining the favor of the ruling classes?

Or have the moral principles any real basis and firm infra-structure?

There is no doubt that some of the moral teachings have been and are still being put to misuse in various ways. Those who are bent on self-aggrandizement, especially if they have power and influence, do not hesitate to employ any possible means to achieve their ends. As scientific research, in spite of its firm basis, is used sometimes for the purpose of oppression, tyranny and torturing the working classes, in the same way moral concepts are also misused. How often freedom is taken away in the name of freedom and injustice is done in the name of justice and equality! Every good and beneficial thing can be put to misuse. Anyhow, there is no doubt that howsoever the name of justice is misused, it cannot become the same thing as injustice. They will always remain two different things. Similarly, howsoever it is misrepresented, true freedom cannot be equal to slavery.

So it is no wonder if the Islamic teachings have been exploited for personal or class interest or have been imposed on the under-privileged classes in a distorted form. That does not mean that they are spurious or worthless. On the other hand, this position demands a vigilance on the part of society so that

it is not defrauded and values are not misused by the exploiters to serve their own selfish ends.

In fact morals are deeply rooted in human nature. In spite of his animal propensities, man by nature wants to possess such qualities as are in keeping with his human dignity. All the exponents of the moral principles such as the prophets and the philosophers have set them forth only for safeguarding the interests of the entire mankind and not for the benefit of any particular class and to the detriment of another class.

Those who hold that the moral principles are only conventional, point to the difference of opinion in regard to them and ask, if these principles had any firm basis, how the views differ about them.

In this connection it may be said that the diversity of views about any point does not prove that it has no firm basis. We see that difference of opinion exists in regard to most of the questions. Views differ even about such questions as the freedom of will and the universal human rights. Divergent views exist about the nature of life and the nature of existence. In all these cases there has been a difference of opinion over the ages. But does that mean that in all these cases real infra-structure does not exist. Even in regard to physical phenomena and medical questions which are perceptual, observable and experimentable, wide differences have existed over thousands of years, although physical phenomena and medical questions are actually governed by decisive and unalterable principles.

Furthermore, the difference between morals and the rules of conduct should not be over-looked. Morals are related to the discipline and promotion of a quality of feelings, emotions and tendencies, whereas the rules of conduct are the practical rules of behavior which are subject to a number of other considerations and conventions, though of course, sometimes they conform to the moral criteria. For example, self-respect, perseverance, boldness, piety and the like are moral qualities. They were good qualities thousands of years ago and they are still so. On the other hand the conventional rules of eating and wearing dress are mostly local and relative. They are not directly linked to the spiritual and moral systems.

Thus neither the wrong exploitation of the moral teachings, nor the divergence of opinion in regard to them, can be advanced as an argument to prove that they have no firm basis. The same is true of the diversity of the traditions and rules of social life existing among various peoples.

Anyhow, though the moral principles are universal and stable, they are more or less flexible.

For example, truthfulness is an indisputable moral principle of Islam. But in case telling a truth endangers the life, property or position of anybody, that truth should be over-looked. Anyhow, the existence of exceptional cases when one finds oneself in a moral dilemma does not diminish the value of a principle. On the whole truthfulness is an excellent moral and spiritual quality. Normally one must not

deviate from the rule of telling the truth unless there is a clash with some other moral principle. We all know that prayer is a devotional act obligatory on all. But still its form is reduced and simplified in the case of travel and illness. Fasting is another act of devotion obligatory on all. But there are circumstances when it is no longer binding to keep fast.

If some such thing is meant by the relativity of morals, it may be said that Islamic moral teachings are also relative. Anyhow, that does not mean that on principle morals have no firm basis, and that they are merely conventional.

Morals have been defined as good thinking, good saying and good doing. Is this definition adequate?

Many acts are moral and desirable from the view-point of certain schools, but they are immoral and undesirable from that of others. For example, a moral school recommends submission in the face of force and regards it a moral duty. It says that if anybody slaps you on your right cheek, turn the left one to him. But there is another school which says that if anybody does you any harm, check him and give him tit for tat. Both the schools regard the action suggested by them as good. In spite of all the divergence of their views, every school calls the attitude or quality recommended by it as 'good saying' or 'good doing'. Hence if moral action is defined by 'good doing', that definition will not be self-explanatory.

Sometimes it is said that it is the moral qualities on which human perfection depends. But still the question remains what constitutes human perfection?

Does man gain perfection by acquiring wealth and material comforts? Does he gain perfection by attaining physical power, by acquiring knowledge, by obtaining social position, by securing personal pleasures or by doing social service? Or does he gain perfection by having all these things together? Or does perfection mean something else?

That is why the most important point discussed by ethics is the determination of criteria and the true infra-structure of morals.

## **The real criteria of morals**

From the Islamic point of view the true criteria of morals are two: (a) Regard for man's dignity; and (b) Seeking proximity to Allah.

## (a) Man's Dignity

The holy Prophet is reported to have said that he was sent to perfect the dignity and honor of man.

According to another tradition, Imam al Sadiq (P) has said: "Allah, the Almighty endowed the holy Prophets with noble qualities. Anybody who is blessed with these qualities, should be thankful to Allah; and anybody who does not possess them should pray that he may be endowed with them".

The narrator of this tradition says that he asked the Imam what those qualities were. He said: "Piety, contentment; tolerance, gratitude, patience, munificence, bravery, self-respect, moral rectitude, truthfulness and honesty".

Self-respect means that while working for his well-being and the fulfilment of his desires, man should regard the acts which humiliate him and lower his position, as inconsistent with his human dignity and consider those acts which develop his spiritual personality and enhance his position, to be a matter of pride.

For example everyone knows that an envious and begrudging person only mortifies and humiliates himself. A begrudging person cannot bear the progress and prosperity of others. He repines at their achievements. His only reaction is to do his utmost to cause damage to others and upset their plans. He does not feel contented unless others are also deprived of their good fortune and become like him. Everyone knows that to have such feelings is sheer meanness. A person who cannot tolerate the success of others is a worthless fellow and has no personality.

The same is true of stinginess. A stingy person is so enamoured of his wealth that he is not willing to part with it and spend it even for his own welfare or the welfare of his family. He does not spend money for any charitable purpose. Obviously such a man is a captive of his wealth. He finds himself degraded in his own eyes.

Thus we find that the feelings of self-respect and self-consciousness are true human feelings. We feel elated when we perform any such act as charity, tolerance, chastity, perseverance etc. There are other acts such as lying, hypocrisy, flattery, jealousy and stinginess. When we commit any of them, we feel humiliated. This is our inner feeling and is not subject to any teaching or the customs and habits prevailing in our particular society. Islam has severely denounced such qualities, and strictly forbids their cultivation.

Certain qualities like tolerance and self-sacrifice are matters of honor and the signs of large-heartedness and greatness of soul. A man ready to make sacrifice exercises such a control over himself and is characterized with such a personality that he foregoes his own interests for the sake of

others and for securing a desired objective.

Humility in the sense of respecting others and recognizing their worth and not in the sense of self-effacement or submission to force, is also a noble quality and a matter of human dignity. This quality is possessed by those who are exercising self-control, are not self-centered and realistically recognize the good points of others and respect them.

These qualities, which form the basis of lofty character, are a part of high Islamic morals. We have innumerable specimens of these qualities and it is possible that all ethical questions may be regarded more or less as being related to human dignity. That is why the great Prophet of Islam, summing up his ethical mission, has described it as perfection of noble characteristics of mankind.

### **(b) Proximity to Allah**

Only those acts that bring man closer to Allah are desirable. In other words, man should promote and possess those excellent qualities which we mentioned while discussing the attributes of Allah, viz. He is Knowing, Powerful and Competent. All his actions are well-calculated.

He is Just, Compassionate and Forgiving. All enjoy His blessings. He likes the good and dislikes the bad. And so on and so forth. A man is close to Allah in proportion to his possessing these qualities. If they are ingrained in him and become his second nature, it may be said that he has acquired the Islamic morals.

The holy Prophet has said: "Mould yourselves according to the attributes of Allah".

So the two criteria of Islamic morals are: regard for human dignity and proximity to Allah.

The man of Islam, irrespective of the personal advantages and disadvantages which he finds to accrue from a certain act or habit, is always keen to know whether or not that particular act or quality is in keeping with his human dignity and whether or not it helps him in his march towards Allah. He regards as desirable only those acts and qualities that add to his human dignity and bring him closer to Allah. Similarly he regards as undesirable and abstains from those acts and qualities that are detrimental to his human dignity and weaken his relation to Allah. He knows that the observance of these two criteria automatically excites a man into enthusiasm to work consciously for the interests of himself and the humanity at large.

## Improper Traits of Character

The man of Islam must purge himself of those traits of character which are detrimental to his perfection and dignity so that he may foster constructive and pure habits attain the maturity necessary to be a better man and gain proximity to Allah.

Now we propose to mention a few undesirable traits of character which degrade man, are repugnant to his dignity, and cause great harm to human society.

### 1. Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy means double-facedness. A person guilty of hypocrisy says what he does not mean and feigns what he is not. Hypocrisy in the field of faith poses a big threat to Islamic society. A person pretending to be a member of the Muslim nation while he is not actually so, is just like a spy who falsely gives himself out to be the supporter of a nation, whereas in fact he is its enemy and is bent upon betraying it.

In other fields also hypocrisy causes damage to many members of the society. For instance, if a person pretends to be a friend and well-wisher of another person, the other person, believing him to be his sincere friend, confides his secrets to him, consults him in his affairs and may even associate him in his business etc. But if that man is not sincere, he, instead of doing him any good, divulges his secrets and betrays him. The holy Prophet has said:

"A hypocrite is like a crooked palm trunk which cannot fit in anywhere while thatching a roof. Its owner has no choice but to burn it, for it has no other use".

Those who pretend to be the champions of the cause of the people and to be the protectors of faith and society, but always have their own axe to grind and do not hesitate to let down others, prove more dangerous if they attain position and influence, for people place confidence in them and entrust their affairs to them taking them to be their sincere well-wishers, but ultimately suffer a loss and come to grief.

The Qur'an has severely criticized the hypocrites. It has denounced them on 35 occasions. The tone of the Qur'an in respect of them is so violent that on some occasions it has included them in the category of the infidels (Surah al Tawbah, verses 69 and 74) and on some other occasions it has promised them the lowest class of Hell.

From the Qur'anic point of view the hypocrites are a threat to society, for they spread evil and hinder

what is desirable. The Qur'an says:

***"The hypocrites, whether men or women, are alike. They exhort to evil, restrain from what is good and keep their hands shut. They have forgotten Allah; so He too has forgotten them. No doubt the hypocrites are wicked". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:67).***

They do their utmost to hinder the advancement of truth:

***"When it is said to them: Come to be judged by what Allah has revealed and accept the arbitration by the Messenger, you see that the hypocrites turn away from you giving no heed to you". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:61).***

They do not even hesitate to exert economic pressure on the believers with the intention of weakening their morale and turning them away from the right path:

***"They it is who say: Spend not on behalf of those who dwell with Allah's Messenger that they may disperse (and go away from you), when Allah's are the treasures of the heavens and the earth; but the hypocrites do not comprehend " (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:7).***

Still they are very much afraid lest their villainy should be exposed:

***"The hypocrites fear lest a Surah should be revealed concerning them, exposing what is in their hearts. Say: Scoff as much as you please. Allah is surely bringing to light what you dread". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:64).***

They are always scared, and take every voice coming to them to be something said against them:

***"The hypocrites deem every shout to be against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them ". (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:4).***

To hoodwink others and in an attempt to prove their own innocence they resort to swearing:

***"When the hypocrites come to you, they say: We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's Messenger. Allah knows that you are His Messenger all right; but Allah testifies that the hypocrites are liars". (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63: 1).***

However, as soon as they are caught, they deny their misdeeds and still pretend to be the well-wishers of the Muslims:

***"How would it be if a misfortune befell them on account of what they have committed with their***

***their own bands? Then they would come to you, swearing by Allah that they intended nothing but benevolence and conciliation". (Surah al-Nisa, 4:62).***

When they are called to co-operate, they make glittering promises, but when the time of action comes, they simply go back on their word and betray:

***'And some of them made a solemn promise to Allah saying: If He gives us of His bounty, we will give alms and will live like virtuous.' But when He gave them of His bounty, they became niggardly of it and went back on their promise, ignoring their pledge". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:75 – 76).***

Hypocrisy is a source of trouble for the hypocrite as well as for others. These characteristics are a sign of his meanness, gloominess of his soul, his remoteness from Allah and his being devoid of personality. Multiple personality means lack of it. A hypocrite has no human dignity and he is far removed from Allah.

***"Surely! the hypocrites seek to beguile Allah, but it is Allah who beguiles them. When they stand up to offer prayers, they stand up sluggishly. They offer it merely for the sake of ostentation. They remember Allah, but little. Wavering between this and that, and belonging neither to these nor to those. You cannot find a way for the one whom Allah abandons to go astray". (Surah al-Nisa, 4: 142 – 143).***

As regards the hypocrites Imam Ali (P) says:

"O people! I urge you to piety and warn you against the hypocrites. They have gone astray, and misguide others. Their ways are wrong and misleading. Every moment they put a new colour upon themselves and change their appearance. They exploit you to their own benefit. Everywhere they attack you by surprise. Their hearts are diseased, though their outer appearance is glamorous. Their approach is surreptitious. They cause disease and talk of cure. They begrudge the fortune of others and create trouble for them. They smash hopes. It is because of them that many people have fallen. They pretend to be well-wishers of others and shed crocodile tears on their misfortune. They praise others in the hope of being praised by them. If they ask for anything, they insist on their demand. If they pick a quarrel with anyone, they calumniate him. They give wrong judgment, invent a falsehood to counter every truth and lay a trap in the way of every investigator. They have appointed an executioner for every living person. In order to secure their vicious ends, they have made a key to open every door and a lamp to give light in every dark night, so that they may upset the plans of others and may win popularity for their own good. When they speak they deceive. When they explain, they stupefy. They ensnare people to co-operate with them and then close the way of their escape".

## 2. Arrogance

False pride and arrogant behavior result either from holding too high an opinion of oneself or from inferiority complex: Imam al Sadiq (P) is reported to have said: "Arrogance means belittling others and not being just".

On another occasion he said that arrogance and deprecation of others are the result of one's own inferiority complex. Arrogance is a sign of the lack of common sense.

Imam al Sadiq (P) says:

"One's practical wisdom decreases exactly in proportion to the increase in one's arrogance".

He who can realistically assess his own value and position is always just to others. He readily admits their good points and accepts the truth. He is never arrogant. One who shows superiority is actually suffering from inferiority complex. He knows that he has many short-comings, and he feels distressed on that account. But instead of making efforts to make up his deficiencies, he tries to conceal them and in order to relieve his complex he puts on airs and shows haughtiness. The fact is that all greatness belongs only to Allah. It is He alone who possesses infinite perfection. It is He who is All-powerful, All-knowing, Supreme and the Absolute Sovereign.

Hence it befits Him alone to describe Himself as great and show Himself as great, for He is really Great. But it is not becoming of the others who have been created and reared by Him, are controlled by Him and have nothing of their own, to consider themselves to be greater or to parade themselves as great. They can of course earn comparatively real greatness by acquiring knowledge, gaining spiritual excellence, cultivating excellent moral qualities and seeking proximity to Allah. But they should not put on airs despite being devoid of all virtues.

Imam al-Sadiq (P) has said:

"Arrogance is a characteristic of the wicked. Greatness is a garment which suits Allah alone. Allah simply debases him who tries to rival Him in greatness".

The proud are the scourge of the society. They are so egoistic that they believe that only what they think is correct. Practically they are concerned only with their own interests and they respect only their own personality. As they think that all merits are reserved for them, they attach no importance to the rights and position of others. They expect everybody else to be submissive and obedient to them. They tolerate only those who bow before them and say yes to all what they wish. Such arrogant people gradually become despotic. Then they do not hesitate to commit any excess and regard themselves as

the masters of the life, property and the honor of the other people. This position is diametrically opposite to the educational and social principles of Islam.

Islam believes in the equality of all men. They all being the creation of One Allah, have common rights. From the Islamic point of view encroachment on the rights of even the weakest member of the society is not to be tolerated. Nobody has a right to consider himself to be a superior being or a master of others.

A despotic and arrogant man not only does wrong to himself and abridges his own value and human dignity, but also estranges and alienates others from himself. He not only infringes the rights of others, but also wages a war against Allah and challenges His might and greatness.

***"They (unbelievers) will be told, Enter the gates of Hell and stay in forever. YVhat a terrible dwelling place the arrogant shall have!" (Surah al-Zumar, 39:72).***

***"Musa said, "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant tyrant who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning". (Surah Mo'min, 40:27).***

***"Thus Allah seals the heart of every arrogant tyrant". (Surah Mo'min, 40:3 5).***

### **3. Slander**

Slander means maliciously repeating a tale or a report heard about a person, often with the idea of creating misunderstanding and hostility between two old friends or two families. It is the height of meanness to kindle the fire of enmity and malice between two fellow-citizens and incite them to be at daggers drawn with each other.

The Qur'an urges us not to listen to such mischief-mongers going about with slander. It says:

***"Yield not to any mean oath-monger, backbiting slanderer". (Surah al-Qalam, 68:10 - 11).***

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"The biggest sorcery is tale-bearing which estranges friends from each other and brings about enmity among them. It causes bloodshed and ruins the families. As the result thereof secrets are divulged and people are exposed. A slanderer is the worst man on the earth".

Several other sins go along with slandering as pointed out by Imam Hasan al Mujtaba (P) who said:

"If a person comes to you and speaks ill of someone else, you should know that he is actually speaking.

ill of you. It is worth-while to regard such a person as your enemy and not to trust him, for lying, backbiting, trickery, treachery, deceit, jealousy, hypocrisy, duplicity and creating dissension go hand in hand with slander.

Imam Ali (P) has said:

"The worst of you are those who slander and create discord among friends. They find fault with the innocent".

A decent Muslim will never indulge in slander. He refrains even from listening to and believing in the tales of a slanderer.

The holy Prophet has said: "A slanderer will not enter Paradise".

#### 4. Lying

Lying may be regarded as the root of many evils such as calumny, duplicity, fraud, trickery, perjury, wrong judgment, hypocrisy etc.

The holy Prophet has said: "There are three signs of a hypocrite:

(1) When he speaks, he tells a lie;

(2) When he makes a promise, he goes back on his word;

(3) When some property is placed in his possession for safe custody, he misappropriates it".

A lie misleads many individuals. Those who trust a liar and believe him, go astray. If the falsehood which he utters pertains to the domain of dogma, he impairs the thinking power of the people and undermines their essential beliefs.

A liar loses the confidence of the people. A liar cannot conceal his lie forever. One day the truth must come out. Then the liar is exposed and his image is ruined.

A liar betrays himself as well as others. He is always in conflict with his own conscience, for he says contrary to what is in his heart. He is in conflict with the realities of the world as well, because he tries to distort them.

Imam Ali (P) has said:

"A Muslim should abstain from having friendly and brotherly relations with a liar for (eventually he loses all credit in the eyes of the people, because) he continues to utter falsehood till people cease to believe him even if he says something true".

Imam al Sadiq (P) quotes Imam Ali (P) as having said:

"One who often tells lies ruins his prestige and reliability". It is evident that a liar utters falsehood either because of fear or because of his covetousness. In either case it is a weakness repugnant to human dignity. Lying spoils spiritual purity and chastity of conscience, and is inconsistent with all the criteria of Islamic morals mentioned above.

In contrast, truthfulness and frankness are the signs of man's personality, his dignity and greatness. A man who is known for his truthfulness is trusted and held in respect by all. Not only his conscience remains satisfied, but he also enjoys social prestige. Both Allah and people are pleased with him. In fact truthfulness is a clear sign of faith. A liar cannot regard himself as a true Muslim.

The Prophet of Islam is reported to have said:

"None can have a true faith unless he has a true heart and none can have a true heart unless his tongue is truthful".

Imam Ali (P) said:

"Nobody tastes faith unless he abstains from lying whether seriously or jocularly".

## **5. Backbiting and calumny**

Imam al Riza (P), is reported to have said: "It is not backbiting, if a person speaking of another in his absence levels a charge against him which is true and the people are aware of it. If however, the charge is true, but the people are not aware of it, then it is backbiting. If the charge is false, that is calumny".

Backbiting is a sin and a foul act, because it defames and humiliates a person, and also because to give publicity to the evil deeds and undesirable acts means to popularize them and to mitigate gradually their indecency in the eyes of the people.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"He who mentions an evil deed of a Muslim before others, whether he saw it being committed with his own eyes or heard about it from others, will be reckoned with those about whom Allah has said: ***Surely those who love to spread scandals against the believers, shall receive a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter***". (Surah al-Nur, 24: 19)..

If hidden sins and faults of the people are not unnecessarily exposed, not only the honor of the man concerned is saved, but also evil deeds do not spread out among the general public. Islam has so much denounced backbiting that the Qur'an has likened it to the eating of the flesh of one's own dead brother:

***"You should not backbite each other. Does anyone of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You surely detest that"***. (Surah al-Hujurat, 49: 12).

Islam insists on deep friendly and brotherly relations among the people. It does not like that any ill-feeling should develop among them. It wants that nobody should play with the honor of anyone else. That is why it has so severely denounced backbiting.

As a first step to check backbiting it is necessary that we should not lend ear to what a backbiter says. By doing so not only we will discourage him, but will practically intercept his evil-speaking. A speaker is naturally disheartened if the listener shows distaste for what he says. On the other hand the credulous listeners induce the backbiters to tell their tales in a more pompous style and even to go a step further and fabricate false and malicious stories. That is why Islam looks upon the listener of backbiting as an accomplice of the backbiter.

Though as a general rule backbiting is inconsistent with the moral principles of Islam, sometimes social considerations demand that a misdeed should be reported. We here reproduce with some further explanation what Shaykh Bahai has said in this connection.

The Muslim scholars (ulema) regard the disclosure of the faults and sins of others as lawful in the following circumstances:

#### **(a) Evidence**

When in a criminal case an Islamic court calls someone as a witness, he should state before the court exactly what he knows about the crime. No doubt he has to disclose the sin and the fault of the accused against his wish, but justice demands that he should make a frank statement according to his conscience keeping in mind that Allah knows what he says.

### **(b) Restraining from evil**

As we know it is the duty of a Muslim to prevent others from committing crimes and sins. The preventive action has several degrees, some of them being more severe than the others. Should there be a case that an offender wishes to commit a crime secretly and is not willing to give up his plans unless he is exposed, it is necessary to disclose his evil intentions to prevent him from proceeding with his harmful action.

### **(c) Complaint**

If a wrong is done to anybody, he has a right to defend himself and make a complaint against the offender.

### **(d) Guidance and consultation**

If a person wants to marry another person, associate him in his business, travel with him or enter into any other kind of contract, he will naturally make enquiries about the other party. In such cases all those who are consulted should tell the truth exactly as they know it. But they should be careful not to speak ill of anybody unnecessarily or maliciously and thus harm the interests of the parties concerned.

### **(e) Exposing the false evidence**

Exposing the lie of a person who has given false evidence, fabricated a false report or expressed a wrong opinion or view is allowed.

### **(g) Grading**

Grading of the scholars and the professionals for the information of general public, to enable everybody to find out a suitable physician, craftsman or scholar.

## **6. Jealousy**

Usually in every society are found some individuals, who by dint of their efforts or talents have acquired some such distinction as extraordinary knowledge, above average technical proficiency, commendable children, high lawful income, educational achievements and the like. The reaction of the people to such individuals varies: Some remain indifferent and for them the question has no importance. Some others feel happy that some one is well-off or has achieved a distinction.

Still some others start thinking why they themselves should not have similar achievements and, in the spirit of constructive rivalry, endeavour to make progress and secure what they do not possess. But they do not begrudge others.

Still there are some who cannot tolerate the well-being of others. They wish to have themselves everything good to the exclusion of others. The progress of others makes them uneasy, and they, instead of making any efforts to make progress themselves, express their uneasiness by speaking evil of others and trying to harm them. Such reaction is called jealousy, which is an offensive and objectionable quality, but unfortunately quite common among men and women, young and old. Even some of those who themselves hold high positions feel offended by the progress of others. So long as jealousy is not accompanied by any corresponding action, it causes inconvenience only to the jealous person himself who feels uneasy in his heart. But as soon as it is translated into action it takes the shape of evil-speaking, backbiting, calumniating etc.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"A man who has three undesirable qualities is devoid of faith. They are greed, jealousy and timidity".

"The root of jealousy is the blindness of heart and contention with divine blessing. These are the two wings of infidelity".

"A jealous person always comes to grief and falls into a jeopardy from which there is no escape".

Imam Ali (P) has said:

"It is enough punishment for a person jealous of you that he is sad when you are happy".

"I have not seen any oppressor who may be resembling an oppressed person more than a jealous person. He is always sad, dejected and unhappy".

Imam al-Naqi (P) has said:

"A jealous person does more harm to himself than to others".

Jealousy is in fact a sign of a number of deficiencies and diseases viz:

(a) A jealous person is selfish and wants everything for himself to the exclusion of others.

(b) He is narrow-minded; otherwise he would not have reacted in this way to the progress made or the

distinction achieved by another person.

(c) He is short-sighted. That is why he cannot think that others also have a right to secure some position.

(d) He is an aggressor, for he is ready to give a blow to the other party and endanger his position and peace of mind with a view to relieve, according to his thinking, his own complex.

### **Combating against jealousy**

The effective way to combat against jealousy is that the jealous person himself should make positive efforts to achieve some success and gain some distinction. Naturally a man busy with himself has little time to begrudge others. In most cases gradually his broad-mindedness and extroversion are revived and he comes out of his shell. He begins to take others also into account, and feels that he is closely connected with other human beings. His sense of fellow feeling and love of mankind is reawakened. He not only does not grieve at the prosperity of others, but also finds himself willing to make sacrifice for them.

We have seen that jealousy is a spiritual disease and a sign of narrow-mindedness. It causes inner discomfort to the jealous person and deprives others of their peace. It is a scourge which must be eradicated. But all that does not mean that we should take no action against those who commit any kind of aggression, deprive others of their lawful rights or occupy by underhand means a post for which they are not fit. To take action for the restoration of rights and curbing injustice and deceit is not jealousy. That is something else. Injustice, discrimination and aggression, in whatever form they may be, should be resisted and opposed in an effective manner. Indifference and silence in such cases is in itself a mortal sin.

Hence it is not jealousy to criticize a person who has acquired wealth by unfair means. It is also not jealousy to shake a person off a position which he does not deserve. We should not be indifferent to the seizure of power and honor by unlawful means, but should try to put an end to injustice and see that the deserving man gets his due.

### **How to Purge Soul of these Pollutions**

The principles of Islamic education aim at the purification of man and the purging of his soul from pollutions. Naturally it is not easy to eradicate an evil trait, especially if it has taken root and already become a habit. Anyhow, this mysterious being known as man abounds in capabilities. Even to change a habit is not an impossible thing for him. It is not only possible but practicable also. At the most it is

necessary that for this purpose all the potentialities of man should be harnessed and all the environmental conditions made favorable.

First of all man should take the help of his own inner self. For a successful self-reform there are two things which are important: one is the correct attitude which may give a new turn to his desires, and the other is a strong will. A strong will and surging enthusiasm are necessary to make and implement a resolute decision to bring about changes. If a strong will is accompanied by correct attitude the process of reform is bound to begin as the Qur'an says:

***"Allah never changes the condition of a people unless they change what is in their hearts". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13: 11).***

That is why Islam holds that self-consciousness and a strong will play an important role in self-reform.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"You are your own physician. You know your disease as well as its cure. Now it is to be seen how far you are prepared to rise to the occasion and take care of yourself". He also said: "Allah does not allow him to be consigned to Hell who always exercises self-control, whether he is in the state of enthusiasm, fear, passion, pleasure or anger."

A self-controlling man who can always think aright and can take a correct decision and does not succumb to agitated emotions, transitory passions or old habits can keep himself safe from all troubles and can save himself from the fire of Hell.

Islam does not say that you should only suggest to others to do good things, nor does it say that you should compel anyone. It tells us to do something to awaken the self-consciousness of man and to eradicate his ignorance and narrow-mindedness with a view to enable him to think aright and take an independent decision. Imam al Sadiq (P) has said: "The enemy (devil) will mount on the neck of a person who is neither blessed with self-preaching nor has a companion to guide him".

Hence freedom and honor of man depend on self-criticism and having an inner adviser.

The Qur'an swears by this inner faculty of self-criticism which is necessary for self-building. It says: "*I swear by the Day of Resurrection, and I swear by the self reproaching soul*". (Surah al-Qiyamah, 1 – 2).

Other verses of the Qur'an concerning self-building show that this Divine Book regards self-criticism as one of the cornerstones of self-making.

Islam wants the feelings and conditions of man to be under his control and in his service.

Imam al Sadiq (P) says:

"Turn your heart into a virtuous friend and a dutiful son and turn your knowledge into a father to be obeyed by heart. Regard pollution of your soul as your enemy against whom you are fighting".

## Piety

Such a man is pious. He is careful. He observes the restraints imposed on him by his love for Allah and truth. He enjoys complete freedom but is subservient to Allah. It is this subservience which protects him from the slavery of others. Before doing anything he first thinks whether his action will please Allah or will displease Him.

He can put up with the displeasure of anyone else, but the displeasure of Allah is unbearable for him. He abstains from everything that may displease Him. This abstinence and abiding by the due restraints constitute piety.

A pious person cannot be compelled to commit a sin by any threat nor can he be allured by money, power or lust. The role of piety is so important that the Qur'an has regarded it the only criterion of man's value:

*"The noblest of you before Allah is the most pious of you"*. (Surah al-Hujurat, 49: 13).

Nobility of man depends on his purity and self-control. He who is the more pious is the more noble.

There exist many verses and traditions on the subject of piety. We quote below the translation of a portion of the well-known sermon delivered by Imam Ali (P) on piety at the request of one of his companions named Hammam:

"The pious are the virtuous people. They speak truth. Their dress is moderate. They walk unpretentiously. They refrain from what Allah has forbidden them. They listen attentively to enlightening useful information. They are as hopeful in distress as in prosperity. Allah has so manifested Himself in the depth of their hearts that they attach no importance to anything else.

A pious man is staunch in his faith. He is gentle and far-sighted. His faith is strong and accompanied by conviction. He yearns for knowledge. He is independent, but moderate. He is submissive while worshipping. He maintains his dignity even in poverty. He shows patience in hardship. He seeks lawful means of livelihood. He is full of enthusiasm for the right path. He keeps totally clear of avarice. He has

no objectionable desires. He keeps his anger under his control. All expect him to be good to them; none fears that he will do him any harm. He does not speak evil. He talks softly. He does not do anything objectionable. All he does is desirable. He is calm and composed in disturbed conditions. If he is well-off, he is thankful. He does not commit a sin for the sake of a friend. He never offends others by calling names or defaming them. He does not do wrong to his neighbor. He suffers hardships, but others have nothing to fear of him. He strives for gaining salvation in the Hereafter, but does not harm anybody. If he keeps away from some one, that is because he is care-free. If he comes close to anyone, that is because of his love and kindness. He does not keep himself away from anyone because of vanity, nor does he befriend anyone to cheat him". (*Nahj-al-Balaghah*, Extract from sermon 191 – This master-piece work of Imam Ali entitled Peak of Eloquence is published by Islamic Seminary).

### Strengthening of will-power

From the foregoing discussion we come to the conclusion that man in his evolutionary movement should first of all draw strength from his inner force, the blooming of which mostly depends on two things: one of them being his will-power and the other his self-consciousness and broad-mindedness.

To strengthen his will, he should undertake necessary practice and should make use of suitable exercises. It is one of the important and valuable roles of every dogmatic school to turn men into responsible individuals by inculcating in them a firm habit of abiding by the principles and rules of correct life which lend support to their will-power so that they may not succumb to selfishness, passions and the tendency of lack of restraint. The Islamic injunctions of offering prayers five times a day, taking care of the cleanliness of the body and the clothes, ensuring that the place where prayers are offered is not a misappropriated one, the observance of the direction of the *qiblah* and the special month-long program of keeping fast, are all intended to give man a sense of responsibility and to provide a firm basis for the regularity of his life.

### Relation between fast and strengthening of will-power:

We already know that it is obligatory on all adult and sane Muslims., men and women, provided they are not traveling, ill, too old or infirm, to keep fast during the month of Ramadhan, that is to abstain from eating, drinking, coition, plunging head into water, swallowing thick airborne dust and all other acts invalidating fast.

This holding out against passions, enduring hunger and thirst and resisting sexual desire awaken and arouse the dormant and unblooming inner force, provide an exercise in self-control and enable man to resist and not to succumb easily to the base desires like the outburst of lust, anger and selfishness.

Man is always subject to being overwhelmed by a number of misleading desires such as acquiring wealth by unlawful means, indulgence in illicit sexual contacts, licentiousness, succumbing to temptations etc.

There are many desires, passions and temptations which often flare up and give a blow to the dignity and position of man. It is, however, possible that he may increase his power of resistance and self-control, show perseverance against every evil, not succumb to every temptation and not respond to every call. At the time of the outburst of an unlawful desire he should exercise self-restraint, use his common sense, look into the future and keep the final result in view so that he may not sacrifice himself to a transient passion.

To develop this resisting power gradually one must have an occasion to fight against his desires and personal pleasures. Fast provides such an opportunity. It renders the required help in the development of this resistance. The Qur'an describes the creative role of the fast in these words: *"Believers, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who have gone before you, so that you may practice piety (and remain firm against sins and slips)".* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:183).

### Return to the right path – Repentance

A sinner gets polluted with his sin. He is on the verge of fall. All the same, he can start fighting against his bad habit. It is he who has so far been committing a sinful act and it is he who should now take a decision to change himself.

Man has the potentiality of returning to the right path of purity. Allah has also kept the way of return open to him. He never turns a sinner from His Door. This invitation of Allah, the Compassionate, is always open:

*"Say: Slaves of Allah! You who have committed excess against your own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah forgives all sins (that you have committed heedlessly and have now sincerely repented of them). Surely Allah is the Forgiving, the Merciful".* (Surah al-Zumar, 39:53).

This call for repentance and the possibility of being forgiven are very encouraging, and inspire one to reform himself at the earliest and return to the right path. They are not meant to lethargize.

Some people are under the impression that the way to repentance being always open, one can continue to commit sins so long as he likes till he eventually avails of an opportunity to repent. Had it been so, the promise of granting pardon would have been tantamount to the inducement to be permanently plunged in sins. The fact is that the more one gets habituated to sin, the weaker his power of decision becomes. His soul gets gloomier, and as a result thereof his desire to return to the right path totally dies out.

Furthermore, how can one know that the opportunity to return will continue to exist? As the time of the death of any person is not known, who knows how long he will live and what will be his future circumstances?

True repentance means that a person should feel ashamed of what he has done and should be keen to reform himself.

He should take the earliest practical steps to treat himself in the same way as a patient afflicted by poisoning or a bacterial disease should. If such a patient instead of undergoing a full course of treatment for poisoning or taking antibacterial injections immediately, puts off his treatment thinking that some sort of cure is after all existing, his disease may become chronic and eventually incurable.

The holy Prophet has said: "Every disease has a cure and the cure of the sins is repentance".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"As soon as a believer commits a sin, Allah grants him a respite of seven hours. If he asks for pardon and repents within this period, his sin is not written against him. But if this period lapses and he does not repent, the sin is recorded against him".

The holy Prophet was asked as to who were the good people? He said: "Those who feel happy when they do something good. If they commit a sin, they ask for pardon and repent. If anyone renders them any service, they are thankful to him. If they are afflicted by a distress, they endure it with patience. If they are annoyed with anyone, they forgive him".

If a man feels repentant about a sin, it means that his faith is alive, and he still distinguishes between what is good and what is bad. If he feels happy at a good act and feels uneasy about a bad one, it is clear that he can still be reformed.

Imam al Sadiq (P) said:

"He who feels pleased by his good acts and regrets his lapses, is a believer".

This feeling is an incentive which brings man to the right path and protects him from throwing off all restraints.

Imam Ali (P) has said:

"Repentance of a sinful act compels one to give it up".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

If a man commits sin and sincerely feels sorry for it, Allah forgives him before he asks pardon for it. If Allah bestows a favor on anyone and he feels that Allah has been kind to him, He forgives him before he expresses gratitude.

This sub-conscious feeling of regret is sometimes called 'shame' (haya) which is regarded by Islam as a great virtue.

Imam al Sajjad (P) has said:

There are four qualities which, if possessed by man, make his faith perfect, and purge him of sins. These qualities are: Abiding by the commitments made to others, truthfulness, having a sense of shame with regard to acts which are sinful in the eyes of Allah and the people and being well-behaved and polite to one's family.

According to Islamic traditions, Allah said in the Psalms of Daud:

"O Daud! Listen to what I say, for I tell you the truth. I say: whosoever comes to me with a feeling of regret for the sins he has committed and possesses the quality of shame, I forgive him. And as regards those who persist in their sins, I forget them".

This shows that the burden of the sins of those who abstain from making their sins public is lighter, because they feel somewhat ashamed of their evil-deeds and do not also encourage others to emulate their bad example.

Anyhow repentance must be real, and one must be determined to eschew sins in future.

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:

"He who repents of his sin is like a man who never committed the sin. But he who asks for pardon but does not avoid sinning, is like a man who ridicules himself".

On being asked to explain the verse: "*O you who believe! repent before Allah sincere repenting*" (Surah al Tahrir, 66:8).

Imam al Sadiq (P) said:

"Sincere repenting means that one should regret one's sin and never commit it again".

## **Creative Role of Sentiments**

External factors sometimes stimulate a mental feeling such as fear, hope, love, hatred etc. This feeling is called 'sentiment'.

Sentiments play a very effective role in human life. They give it freshness, colour and variety, and save it from boring monotony. They provide a powerful incentive for a number of creative activities and sometimes they stimulate man's will to action in such a way that no other factor can withstand it. Sentimental efforts are marked with vehemence and ardent decisiveness, and encourage one to make sacrifice and bear hardships zealously as if he relishes them. Our life abounds with the interesting and attractive instances of these sentiments. A real mother possessing kind feelings keeps awake with pleasure night after night to look after her newborn. A dutiful son takes pleasure in serving his parents and does not hesitate to exert himself in any way. A devoted wife and a loving husband are always keen to do their best to ensure the comfort and welfare of each other. If anything endangers their family life, they heroically struggle to avert the threat. A gallant Muslim sacrifices even his life for the defense of the land of Islam and is not afraid of anything. In all these cases the incentive is a powerful sentimental feeling which very often prevails over the calculating reasoning and compels man not to allow reason to touch his sacrificial acts.

## **Real sentiments and artificial sentiments**

Man's sentiment is one hundred per cent natural in all those cases in which it is related to his personal desires. When a man feels sad following a bitter incident involving his personal loss or when he feels happy because of a success gained by him, his sentiments of sorrow and joy and love and hatred are fully natural.

But what about the cases in which his child, father, mother, wife, brother or sister meets with a loss or an injury? In such cases also man normally feels sad. But the intensity of his feeling and the reason behind it are not the same in the case of all individuals and societies.

In the case of some individuals this feeling of sadness emanates from a sort of real attachment which one finds between himself and his children, his parents, his spouse, his brothers and sisters or his friends. This attachment is so real and basic that one feels that the loss or injury sustained by one's child has been sustained by oneself. In this case again we come across a real and true sentiment.

In this state one goes above one's ego. His personality expands and embraces his child, his father, his mother, his wife, his brother, his sister, his relatives and his friends. Hence this kind of sentimental feeling is in reality a sort of growth and expansion of the personality of a man. But in the case of certain individuals the position is different. Their relationship with their father, mother, child, wife, brother, sister, relatives and friends is based on self-interest. A person whose love is of this kind likes his father because he gives him money and meets his expenses. He likes his mother because she nurses him when he is out of health. He loves his child because he gives him company or he hopes that in time of need he will help him.

He likes his spouse because she (or he) meets his domestic, economic or social needs. In all these cases the love shown for others is not real. It has no comparison with the beautiful, ardent and pure love which the parents normally have for their children. A person who has only artificial love does not feel uneasy if his father, mother or spouse is grieved. He loves them only so long as they benefit him. If a day comes when they are no longer of use to him, he treats them worse than the strangers. Years pass and he does not even enquire about his parents or relatives and friends. This is nothing but the soulless and mechanical morality of materialism.

### Artificial sentiments

The mechanical-material morality does not believe in love for others as a fundamental principle. It only looks at it as a means of making one's own personal life successful and organizing one's relations with others on the basis of drawing the maximum personal benefit. According to it we should, of course, behave toward others politely, should observe the customs and manners liked by them, should shake their hands warmly, should abide by the conventional rules of personal behavior, and should always be respectful and smiling; but why? Not because we actually love them and take pleasure in their friendship, but because we want to ensure a better social position for ourselves and because we want to utilize their friendship and co-operation for achieving our own ends. This kind of morality is a sort of exploitation.

It may be compared to the welfare services provided to the worker in industrial complexes, which are made available not because of any real respect for his rights, his humanity and his family but in order to draw the maximum profitable work from him. Look at the manager of an industrial unit. He behaves towards the workers of his factory politely and mixes-with them warmly. He gives them an increase in their pay, visits them when they are ill and helps them in different ways. But he does not do all that for the sake of Allah or for love of humanity. Nor does he do that because he believes in justice and equality. He simply wants to be popular with his workers in order to be able to extract work from them.

In such cases attention is paid to other people not because they are fellow human beings, but because they 'serve my purpose'. So it is just another instance of the shameful manifestation of selfishness and

egoism. It is because of my 'ego' that I like to be regarded a very efficient manager and want an increase in my pay and rank. Or if I am managing a unit which I have set up myself, I want higher profits and that is why I give importance to good relations between me and the workers of my concern.

In these circumstances the reaction of the workers will also be of a similar nature. On meeting the manager they will display for him artificial respect accompanied by more artificial love. But in his heart of hearts they will not have the least regard for this so-called efficient manager. They show him artificial courtesy and for each act of courtesy they expect a fresh reward.

This kind of infra-structure of social relations is totally unacceptable, for in this case everything revolves round selfishness and self-interest. If a day comes when a self-centered man finds that his interests are not served by love for others, he does not hesitate to be indifferent or even cruel to them, if his purpose is served that way. In such circumstances oppression and harshness becomes the principle of his life.

In our own times there are nations which are known for high ethical values and just human relations in their own lands. But we find that whenever the interests of these very so-called moral nations demand the utilization of the natural resources of others or capturing foreign markets for their industrial products, they exert pressure on other countries, wage sanguinary wars, cause devastation, indulge in massacres and commit heinous crimes. This is so because the foundation of their sentiments and the real motive of their friendship and hostility are nothing but egoism and self-interest.

We find that these very nations after fighting a barbaric war change their cloak, wear a sympathetic face and start making amends for the losses caused by the war. They send aid and rehabilitation teams. But in fact all their aid and services are a complementary part of their war. Even their sending of food-stuffs for the starving people of another country is not due to pure humanitarian motives. It is just like fuelling the power-generating machine of a factory so that it may *continue to* operate and produce the maximum quality of goods for the benefit of its owner.

### Real sentiments

From Islamic point of view the artificial sentiments as explained above, cannot be called human and Islamic.

A man came to the holy Prophet and requested him to tell him a way of life which might entitle him to Paradise. The holy Prophet said: "Behave toward other people as you like them to behave towards you. Do not like for others what you do not like for yourself".

As such, according to the Islamic teachings, one should not consider himself to be at the head of all others and the axis of everything. He should give the same status to others as to himself. This is the

teaching based on the Islamic philosophy of equality, according to which all men are equal.

The holy Prophet has said:

"The highest virtue is to be just in your judgment even if it goes against you. Regard your brother\_in\_faith as your equal, and remember Allah in all circumstances".

This is the quality which is the criterion of faith and a matter of honor to man and human society.

The holy Prophet has also said:

"Remember that Allah will not enhance but the honor of the man who observes justice in all cases arising between him and others. A true believer is he who observes equality between himself and the needy persons in the matter of his money, and makes himself a model for his behavior towards others".

Just as one wants that others should respect him, should tell him the truth, should help him, should be faithful to him, should observe his rights and should be polite to him, he also should behave towards them in the same way. He also should respect them, should be truthful to them, should help them, should be faithful to them, should observe their rights and should be polite to them, because, in fact, there is no difference between him and others.

Similarly as he does not like that others should abuse him, speak evil of him, accuse him, block his way to progress or be arrogant to him, he also should not behave towards them in a bad way. He should refrain from every act of transgression, and should realize that others also are human beings like him. Their joy and grief should be shared by him.

Imam al Baqir (P) was asked to explain the Qur'anic verse: "*You shall speak to men good words*". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:83). He said: "Tell the people what you like most that they should tell you".

According to the Islamic teachings, ethical is all that brings man closer to Allah and procures His pleasure. Look into this tradition: The holy Prophet was asked whom Allah loves most? The Prophet said: "Him who is the most useful to other men".

Hence usefulness to men and service to society are the criterions of nearness to Allah.

Another saying of the Prophet may be regarded as a principle of the Islamic teachings on social relations:

"All human beings are the family of Allah. Allah loves him most who does service to His family".

If we ponder over these Islamic expressions, we find that on principle social sentiments should extend from self to society. As all human beings have been created by One Allah and are His slaves, they all are equal. They should serve one another and every one of them should look upon others as he looks upon himself. In view of the fact that the basis of Islam is belief in the Unity of Allah, he should be the fountain head of all human activities, fears and hopes.

Service to humanity is the way to seek His pleasure. The gist of the Islamic teachings is the worship of Allah and service to humanity. Islam wants to produce men who may regard service as the foundation of truth and purity.

No doubt one can render service to others and be polite to them from purely philanthropic motives also. But in this case if his services are not appreciated, he feels disheartened and his enthusiasm for them disappears. On the other hand if one renders service to others for the sake of Allah, his attention continues to be concentrated on seeking His pleasure and attention. That is why the man of Islam earnestly loves to do service to others. He is keen to do whatever he can whether others appreciate it or not. He often prefers to do his service secretly so that it may not be polluted with hypocrisy or ostentation and the person to whom service is rendered, may not feel insulted.

The man of Islam renders sincere service because of his love for humanity and his ardent devotion to Allah. He makes sacrifice for society and devotes his time and other potentialities to the service of the under-privileged. He takes delight in his sacrifice because he makes it for the sake of Allah who knows his intention and his performance, both secret and open.

As such, the man of Islam is a lover of mankind. His love having a valuable basis, gives a pure and earnest tone to his philanthropy and brings into existence a stable bond of superior quality between him and others.

### **Family sentiments**

Besides the love of mankind, which is a general sentiment having a vast field, every man by nature has a special feeling for his parents, his children, his brothers and sisters and to a lesser degree for his other close relatives. This feeling which is a natural sentiment constitutes a stronger bond within a narrower realm. An interesting specimen of this sentiment is mother's love for her child.

Islam attaches great importance to this constructive force and has always tried to guide it in the right direction.

One of the companions of Imam al Sadiq (P) asked him what acts were more virtuous. The Imam said:

"To offer prayers on time, to be good to one's parents and to fight in the path of Allah".

Another companion of his says: "One day I told the Imam that his son, Ismail behaved towards him very well". The Imam said: "I already liked him, but now I love him more".

Then the Imam added: "One day the foster-sister of the holy Prophet came to see him. The Prophet felt very happy. He spread a rug for her and asked her to sit on it. He continued to talk to her warmly till she rose and bade good-bye. A little later her brother came, but the Prophet did not show him the same respect and love."

The companions of the Prophet asked him how it was that he did not receive that man as warmly as his sister! The Prophet said that as his sister was more dutiful to her parents, she deserved more respect and regard.

According to another tradition, Imam al Sadiq (P) was asked about the meaning of 'kindness' occurring in the Qur'anic verse: *"Show kindness to your parents"*.

The Imam said: "Kindness means that you should talk with them with courtesy, and that you do not compel them to ask you for what they needed although they may be independent basically. In other words, as soon as you feel that they require a thing, provide them with it. Don't you know that Allah says:

***"You cannot attain unto piety until you spend out of that which you love". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:93).***

The Imam said further:

Allah has said:

***"Lower unto them the wings of submission through mercy". (Surah Bani Israel, 17:25).***

It means that you should never frown at them but should on the other hand look at them with kindness and sympathy. You should not raise your voice above theirs. Your hand should not be above their hand (while you are giving them something or taking something from them). While accompanying them you should not walk ahead of them.

We postpone the elaborate discussion of the reciprocal rights and obligations of the parents and the children to some other occasion. Anyhow, briefly it may be said that the responsibility of the children covers financial and legal matters as well as the mode of their behavior towards their parents and the observance of love and respect for them. Especially if the parents are old and infirm, the children have greater responsibility. Even after their death, the parents are not to be ignored and the tie with them is not to be severed.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"What prevents you from doing good to your parents, whether they are alive, or dead? Each one of you should offer prayers, give alms, perform pilgrimage and keep fast on behalf of his parents. Allah will reward them as well as you. He will also bestow an additional reward on you for being good to your parents".

## Being good to kindred

The Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (P) has said: "Maintain your relations with your kindred at least by greeting them. The Qur'an says:

***Be careful of your duty to Allah. That Allah towards whom and towards your kindred you are responsible. Surely Allah is ever a watcher over you". (Surah al-Nisa 4:1).***

The Qur'an also says:

***"(Such are) those who join that which Allah has commanded to be joined, and fear their Lord and dread an awful reckoning". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:21).***

Being good to relations produces valuable and constructive effects on one's own life.

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:

"Maintaining good relations with the relatives improves one's morality, makes him generous, purifies his soul, expands his means of livelihood and prolongs the span of his life".

It is evident that good relations with the relatives have two aspects: firstly, moral love and affection and secondly,

financial help and other kinds of support and assistance. Both these aspects go directly against selfishness and as such produce a constructive effect. These sacrifices are a campaign against personal selfishness and produce a constructive effect and ensure purity of soul.

When a man shows love to others, naturally they also love him and do service to him in process of time. This help and support enable him to obtain better facilities for securing prosperity and progress. Thus the expansion of the means of livelihood and the prolongation of life are ensured.

Furthermore, the prolongation of life in consequence of being good to the blood-relations may possibly be a sort of those spiritual effects with which Allah has invested all good deeds.

Even if we let alone these worldly effects, there can be no doubt about the reward in the Hereafter.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Maintenance of good relations with the kindred and doing good to them facilitates rendering one's account in the next world and protects him from committing sins. Hence you should have good relations with your kindred and should do good to your brethren at least to the extent of greeting them warmly and returning their greetings".

In contrast, severing relations with the kindred is as bad as breaking a covenant of Allah and creating mischief in the world. It has very bad consequences. The Qur'an says:

***"Those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it and sever that which Allah ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the earth. Those are they who are the losers". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:27).***

## Love for neighbors

Those who live in the neighborhood of each other, have a bigger claim on each other. There is no doubt that in this case any natural or family bond does not exist. But the fact that they live close to each other, meet often and get acquainted with each other, creates a right. Besides, the neighbors have a number of such common interests as others do not have.

If the individuals living in a building create too much noise, throw rubbish outside their house, set up their roof gutter in such a way that water flows to the passage by which others pass or indulge in some undesirable social activities, it is the neighbors who suffer most as a result of their improper behavior.

Thus neighborhood brings a number of individuals and several families together and creates certain problems common to them. Therefore, these people who are bound together have some special rights and obligations in relation to one another, which they have to discharge to be able to lead a peaceful and responsible life.

The following is a part of the instructions imparted by the holy Prophet Muhammad (P) to his daughter, Fatimaht uz-Zehra (P):

"He who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, must not hurt his neighbor; he who believes in

Allah and the Day of Resurrection must respect his guest; he who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, must say a good thing or keep quiet".

We find that special attention has been paid in Islam to the observance of the rights of neighbors, and it has been declared to be a sign of faith. It is a fact that true faith cannot exist without the observance of the rights of the neighbors.

The holy Prophet has said:

"He who sleeps satiated while his neighbor is hungry does not have belief in me. Allah does not look favourably upon the people of the land where a person goes to bed hungry".

A man from among the Ansar (Medinian) came to the Prophet and said that he had purchased a house in a street, but his next door neighbor was not a good man at all and he was afraid of mischief on his part. The holy Prophet asked Ali, Salman, Abuzar and one more person (the reporter of this incident says that he does not remember his name but possibly he was Miqdad) to go to the Masjid and proclaim as loudly as possible that:

"He whose neighbor is afraid of his mischievousness is not a true believer".

They went there and made the announcement thrice. Thereafter the Prophet made a sign with his hand and said that the inmates of 40 houses in front, 40 houses in rear, 40 houses to the right and 40 houses to the left were to be regarded as neighbors.

In view of the foregoing these moral instructions of Islam should not be taken as marginal or mere petty formalities. They are basic instructions and so interwoven with faith that their violation shakes its very foundation.

To save oneself from the wickedness of a neighbor one should, as far as possible, use discreet and peaceful methods. If they prove ineffective, only then resort may be made to more violent means, for mischief has to be resisted in any case. Anyhow care should be taken – that the mischief is not countered by further mischief.

Imam al Baqir (P) says:

"A man came to the Prophet and complained that his neighbor was causing him trouble. The Prophet advised him to be patient. He came again and complained once more. The Prophet again asked him to be patient. He came the third time and made the same complaint. The holy Prophet said:

"On Friday when large groups of people go for Jum'ah prayers, you put out the furniture of your house on the street and tell the people that you are vacating your house because such and such of your neighbors has been causing trouble to you".

The man did as he was told. A large number of people came to know of his grievance. The news reached the troublesome neighbor that the general opinion had been excited against him. He immediately came to the man and apologized. He requested him to put back his furniture into the house and assured him that he would cause no inconvenience to him in future.

## Spiritual brotherhood

According to the logic of Islam, the brotherhood of faith is the most deep-rooted unity which creates relationship and responsibility.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Every believer is a brother-in-faith of every other believer.

They are just like a body of which all parts feel uneasy, if one part of it feels pain. The souls of two believers spring from one soul. All are connected with Allah. The soul of a believer is more closely bound up with Allah than the light of the sun is with the sun.

He has also said:

"A believer is the brother of another believer. He is his eye and his guide. He never betrays him. He never cheats him; and never goes back on a word given to him".

We see that the spiritual tie between two believers should be strong enough to avert the danger of every kind of malice and treachery so that both of them may feel absolutely safe.

The religious tie revolves round the faith in Allah. If the rights of the religious brotherhood are not observed, the bond with Allah will also be severed. We observe in the following report, which is one of the hundreds on this subject, that the bond of friendship with Allah can be maintained only if the rights of the co-religionist Muslims are observed, otherwise it will be severed and nullified. This report mentions some of the mutual rights and obligations of the Muslims:

One of the companions of Imam al Sadiq (P) asked him: "What rights does a Muslim owe to another Muslim?" He said: "There are seven such rights and all of them are obligatory. A person who violates any of them, disobeys Allah and will be deprived of His favor".

"What are these?"

"I fear you may not observe them after knowing them". "I will seek help from Allah".

"The easiest of them is that you should like for him what you like for yourself and dislike for him what you dislike for yourself".

"The second right is that you should avoid to displease another Muslim and should accede to his requests".

"The third right is that you should help him physically and financially".

"The fourth right is that you should guide him to the right path. You should be his eyes and the mirror through which he may see the truth".

"The fifth right is that you should not have your fill of food and drink, while he is hungry or thirsty. You should ensure that while you are clad he should also not be naked".

"The sixth right is that if you have a servant and he has not, you should send your servant to wash his clothes, to prepare his food and to make his bed".

"The seventh right is that you should believe him when he makes a statement on oath, should accept his invitation, should visit him when he is out of health and should attend his funeral. If you know that he has a need, do your best to fulfill it before he asks you to help him. If you do so, only then you will have established your religious tie with him and strengthened friendly and brotherly relations between him and yourself".

## Companionship

Islamic teachings have recommended the establishment of friendly and cordial relations with others. In this study we shall first mention a few specimens of the instructions of the Prophet and Imams of his family in this respect, and then we shall further elucidate companionship and shall mention its negative aspects.

The holy Prophet has said:

"As my Lord has commanded me to perform my religious duties, in the same way he has ordered me to be friendly with the people".

The holy Prophet has also said:

"Companionship is a matter of pride and honor. When it departs, humiliation and helplessness arrives in its wake".

Imam Ali (P) has said:

"A believer makes friends with others. He who does not mix with others warmly and has no friends, is no good".

Imam al Sadiq has quoted the holy Prophet as having said: "Allah is the Companion. He likes companionship and encourages it".

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"A family lacking the spirit of companionship is bereft of divine blessing".

We learn from these traditions that in the program of Islamic teachings companionship occupies a prominent place. It has an equal status along with religious duties in attracting the attention and grace of Allah.

There are people who are temperamentally rigid and reserved. They neither get close to others, nor do welcome others to be close to them. The reason for this isolation may be one of the following:

(a) Sometimes it may be a sort of self-conceit and vanity on account of which one does not take others into account or does not consider them to be his equals. Hence he does not mix with them or does not become free with them. This is the same egoism and arrogance which we discussed earlier.

(b) Some individuals suffer from a feeling of personal inferiority. They fear that they may not acquit themselves well in the society, may not be able to observe the rules of etiquette, or may do or say something which may bring shame to them. For these reasons they seldom contact others. In this case one should fight against this feeling of inferiority and should try to promote self-confidence. In most cases this tendency is harmful and deprives man of many opportunities.

(c) Sometimes this state is the result of disappointments and failures in life. They so shatter a person that he loses all hope and initiative. He does not feel interested in meeting others or becoming intimate with them; or he becomes so pessimistic about the environment of his life that he does not trust anyone. He does not find anybody sincere enough to be his friend. This feeling of despair, pessimism and lack of

confidence is, of course, a dangerous disease, which produces an adverse effect on one's relations with all other people, and hence one should fight against this tendency assiduously.

(d) Some people do not like to make friends because they are preoccupied with some positive work, and feel that friendship will interfere with their important job.

In this connection it may be said that in all matters the best policy is that of moderation. Every good act is desirable only to the extent that it does not interfere with other essential activities. Companionship is good, but for its sake other duties and responsibilities should not be sacrificed.

As a matter of principle we should see what is the idea behind friendship and companionship. Does companionship mean that one should regularly waste his time? It is of course not proper to spend one's valuable time in unnecessary visits and idle gossip but at the same time it is also wrong to be detached from the people and have no relations with them, for in this case one becomes isolated and feels lonely. A friendless person achieves little success in life. As too much friendship interferes with positive activities, similarly having no friends also has harmful consequences. Many a practical achievement in various fields is due to friendship.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"He who works on the basis of acquaintance and friendship, secures the desired results".

Therefore a Muslim must have friendly and cordial relations with other Muslims, paying due attention to moderation and to the fact that his relationship with others should be fruitful.

It is also worth remembering that Islamic friendship must be sincere and heart-felt. Islam requires sincerity and truthfulness in every field – truthfulness in speech, truthfulness in expressing sentiments and showing love. A faked and superficial show of love and friendship is either a fraud or a form of hypocrisy, which has been severely denounced by Islam.

### **Choosing friends and companions**

in this connection it may also be mentioned that though Islam urges to have cordial relations with others, yet to avoid corruption and the harmful effect of the company of the wicked and the mischievous individuals, it strictly forbids every kind of contact and intimacy with them. Imam al Sajjad (P) gave the following advice to his son, Imam al Baqir (P): "My dear son! Avoid the company of five categories of people. You should neither talk with them nor accompany them nor travel with them."

Imam al Baqir (P) said, "Please tell me who they are".

Imam al Sajjad (P) said:

"Avoid the company of a liar. He is like a mirage and, portrays a false picture of things. Avoid the company of corrupt people. They will sell you for a paltry price. Avoid the company of a miser. He will bring bad name to you before you need his money. Avoid the company of a fool. He would do you harm while intending to do good. Avoid the company of a person who has severed connections with his relatives. Such a person has been denounced at three places in the Qur'an".

Imam Ali (P) in the course of one of his sermons says: "A Muslim should avoid friendship with three kinds of persons: A shamelessly wicked person, a fool and a liar. A shamelessly wicked person paints his evil deeds as good and expects you also to follow his example. He serves you no purpose, neither in this world nor in the next. To be close to him is a misfortune, and to be on calling terms with him is disgraceful".

"A fool can do you no good, nor can you expect him to save you from any calamity. In many cases he may try to benefit you, but he will do harm to you. His death is better than his life; his silence is better than his speech; and his being away is better than his being near".

"As for a liar, life with him can never be pleasant for, you. He carries tales from you to others and from others to you. If he gives you a true report it is followed by a false one. His reputation is slurred. So much so that when he says something true nobody believes him. Owing to the enmity which he entertains in his heart for the people he estranges them from one another and creates malice in their hearts. Be careful and do your duty to Allah".

## **Cheerfulness and politeness**

Beside being friendly one should be polite and cheerful, so that other people may enjoy his company. His social behavior should be a sign of his cordiality.

The holy Prophet has said: "Cheerfulness removes malice from the heart".

He has also said:

"There are two traits of character which will, more than anything else, lead my ummah to Paradise – piety and politeness".

Once, while speaking to the Hashimites, the holy Prophet said an interesting thing:

"As you cannot win the hearts of all the people by means of your wealth, try to win them by cheerfulness and polite manners".

Imam al Baqir (P) has said:

"He who has better manners and better habits has more perfect faith.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Good manners melt the sins in the same way in which the sun melts the snow".

On being asked to define good manners, the Imam said: "Be courteous, talk in a pleasing manner and receive your brother\_in\_faith cheerfully".

"Bad manners ruin faith in the same way in which vinegar destroys honey".

Bad manners not only cause inconvenience to others, but a rude person tortures himself also.

"A man having bad manners tortures himself".

### **Abiding by rules of social behavior**

Besides the general principle that behavior toward others should be based on cordiality and politeness, certain valuable rules concerning etiquette have been mentioned by the Prophet and the Imams. We give below a few examples thereof.

The holy Prophet has said:

"If anyone of you likes a brother Muslim, he should ask him about his and his father's name and the family to which he belongs. It is necessary that he should know the particulars of his friend. Otherwise friendship is meaningless".

The holy Prophet has described one of the signs of the incompetence of a person in these words:

"That some one of you may meet a person and be inclined to know who he is and to which place he belongs, but may leave him before asking him about that".

Hence it is one of the principles of social behavior that we should introduce ourselves to those whom we meet and find out the names and addresses of each other.

When two persons talk to each other, their talk should be polite and pleasant.

The holy Prophet has said:

"He who shows respect and kindness to his brother Muslim and sets his worries at ease while talking to him, shall be blessed by Allah".

Rules of conventional Islamic behavior include handshaking, sitting respectfully and properly attending to the visitors.

The holy Prophet divided his attention equally among his companions. Sometimes he looked to this one and sometimes to that one. He never stretched his feet in the presence of others. If someone gave him his hand, he did not withdraw his own hand till the other person withdrew his. After the people came to know of his habit, they avoided to clasp his hand for a long time.

The same practice has been recommended to others. If somebody shakes hands with you, do not withdraw your hand until he withdraws his.. Similarly if somebody comes to see you, do not leave him till he himself takes leave. If somebody begins to say something to you, listen to him till he has finished.

## Reception and farewell

The holy Prophet has said: "If a visitor comes to your place, it is his right that you should receive him warmly on his arrival and accompany him at least a few steps on his departure".

It is a part of good manners to accompany the guest at the time of his parting up to the outer door of the house and thus show him respect and love.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Once the Commander of the Faithful was travelling along with a *dhimmi*, (an unbeliever under the protection of a Muslim government) who did not recognize him and did not know that at that time he was the caliph. The *dhimmi* asked the Imam where he was going. He replied that he was going to Kufah. At the time of parting of their ways, the *dhimmi* noticed that his Muslim companion was still going along with him. He said:

"Did you not say that you were going to Kufah?" "Yes, I did". "Are you not going the wrong way?" "I know my way". "Then why are you coming along with me?"

"It is a rule of good manners to accompany a companion for some distance at the time of parting. That is what our Prophet has said".

"Is it a fact that there is such an instruction in Islam?"

"Yes, there is.

"It must be because of such good manners that people readily follow Islam. Be a witness that I embrace your religion".

Then he turned along with the imam to the way leading to Kufah, and as soon as he learnt that his companion was imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, he embraced Islam in his presence.

## Humility

According to the Islamic teachings, humility is a rule of personal behavior that helps in the establishment of healthy social relations on the basis of cordiality and understanding. We have already discussed humility and learnt that it does not mean a feeling of inferiority and helplessness.

One who humiliates himself and gives a blow to his dignity, acts against the teachings of Islam.

Real humility has been described in a report from Imam al Riza (P) as under:

"Humility has several grades. One of them is that man should know his exact worth and should honestly place himself where he should be. He should behave towards others as he likes others to behave towards him. He should not ill-treat even the one who misbehaves. He should suppress his anger and should be tolerant and forgiving. Allah loves the virtuous".

The holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"Alms-giving increases one's wealth. Therefore give alms so that Allah may bless you. Humility enhances one's position. Be modest so that Allah may exalt you. Tolerance makes one honorable. Forgive so that Allah may bestow honor on you".

In the reports about the manners and behavior of the Prophet and the Imams, we come across many instances of their humility. But their manners never humbled them. They only enhanced their popularity and personality.

We find that their dress was simple. Their food was simple. They used to sit with the poor. They were

first to greet others. In the company of the Prophet there was no distinction of high and low. He and his companions sat in a circle. While walking, he did not get ahead of others. When sitting, he did not allow anyone to be standing beside him. He treated even his servants as his friends. He never allowed anyone to flatter him or to treat him as one higher than a servant of Allah. He took part in domestic work. He made his purchases himself. He had no ceremonious living and no pomp and show about him. Even the humblest could talk to him freely. He spoke softly. He was always polite and kept smiling.

## **Correspondence**

It is a part of Islamic manners to make friendly correspondence and to keep in touch with the friends away from home by writing to them.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"To keep contact with the brethren\_in\_faith they should be visited when they are at home and correspondence should be made with them when they are away". Reply to a letter is obligatory like reply to salutation.

He has also said:

"When two persons meet each other, one who salutes earlier is nearer to Allah and His Prophet".

## **Respect for Elders and Kindness to Youngsters**

"Respect your friends. Do not quarrel with each other. Do not hurt each other. Do not be jealous. Do not be miserly. Be earnestly devoted to Allah". (Imam al Baqir)

These rules of good behavior assume a special form dependent on the comparative age of the other party. If you meet a person who is older in age than you than, you must show him due respect.

Imam al Sadiq (P) has said:

"Respect for an aged person is a part of the respect for Allah".

The holy Prophet has said:

"He who holds in respect a person who has lived long in Islam and has grown old will be saved by Allah from the suffering of the Day of Resurrection".

He has also said:

"When an elder of a community comes to you, pay him due respect".

If the other party is younger, love and regard should be shown to him. The same rule applies to brothers and sisters. The youngers should respect and obey the elders and should behave respectfully in their presence. The elders should show kindness to the youngers and should love and protect them.

The holy Prophet has said:

"Respect your elders and be kind to your youngers".

## Hospitality

One of the rules of the Islamic social behavior is hospitality. In the Islamic sources we meet with abundant traditions encouraging this valuable quality. The recommendations made by the holy Prophet to his daughter, Fatimah tuz Zehra (P) included this one:

"Whoever believes in the Day of Resurrection, should treat his guest hospitably".

"The best of you is he who gives food to the people, greets them loudly and prays at night when others are sleeping".

We read in the account of the life of the holy Prophet and the imams that they took much interest in receiving guests. They frequently had guests at their meals. Some of them, such as Imam Hasan al Mujtaba (P) maintained elaborate guest-houses where they received a large number of people every day.

By receiving guests and showing hospitality to them one enhances one's sociability, increases one's circle of friends, makes financial sacrifice and shares his wealth with others and honors them. All these things are desired by Islam. Of course separate instructions exist in regard to feeding the hungry and helping the needy. These deeds have been vehemently urged in Islam.

In addition to normal hospitality, there are certain special occasions on which guests are to be invited and entertained. Such a reception is called *walimah* : The holy Prophet has said: "A *walimah* is due only on five occasions: Wedding, birth of a child, circumcision, building of a new house and return from a pilgrimage to Mecca".

## Self Making for Social Work

There is no doubt that when several forces join together, they become more effective. Many a big job cannot be accomplished by individual effort, especially during the present age when collective relations are developing and the jobs are tending to become more elaborate and complicated.

Small capital cannot compete with business giants. Divided forces are subjugated by big powers. Higher scientific research cannot be fruitful without co-operation and co-ordination. Social services and social activities on a large scale are not practicable with scattered human resources and limited capital.

Such actions as patronage of an orphan, providing food to a few needy persons, educating a few children in a modest school, or arranging some individual training or guidance might have been regarded in the past as an accomplishment, but in the modern age of competition such solitary and limited steps cannot be considered to be adequate.

In our age large scale teaching, training, scientific and co-operative organizations are required to produce any constructive effect on the society.

Hence, the far-sighted people should, besides making individual efforts, take positive collective steps and also feel a sense of responsibility. Such efforts should be made in the form of a group.

## Pre-requisites for collective work

### (1) One aim and one policy

The persons who want to work together must know clearly what they aim at by doing that work. First of all they should know what they want, and then should pursue their objective with understanding, confidence and interest. If the aim is not predetermined everyone will go his own way so as to implement his own ideas. The result will be confusion and disintegration.

To have a definite aim is not necessary only for collective work, but is necessary for individual activities also. If a person selects a subject for his education, picks up a book for study, decides to make a journey, chooses a profession or calls on certain people, he should know why and for what purpose he is doing that. Aimless activity means wastage of time and effort and confusion in life. That is the position in the case of individual activity. As far as collective work is concerned, it is far more necessary to have a definite aim, because in this case the time, energy- and capital of so many people will be involved, and as such, aimlessness will cause a bigger loss. Hence a definite and clear aim accepted by all those who

co-operate for this purpose, is essential for any collective work.

Further, the whole group of organizers must have the same policy; in the sense that they must have pre-determined the ways and means of reaching their objective and mentioned the same in the articles of association.

Suppose a social organization aims at the intellectual guidance of the society, and all its organizers agree to this aim. Still it should be known how they intend to carry out the proposed service. Will they carry it out through the establishment of schools and academies, by publishing books and pamphlets, by holding conferences and seminars etc. And in each case what will be the level of their activity and how will the work begin? On all these points the organizers must take a unanimous decision.

## **(2) Recognition of one's own limitations and those of others**

Usually people are not prepared to come out of their shell and take others into account. Everyone thinks that he understands everything and is fit to do every job. At the time of the division of responsibility, for example, election of the executive body, the chairman or the managing director, everybody thinks that he is quite fit to hold the particular post.

The holy Prophet said:

"May Allah bless him who knows his worth and his position and does not go beyond his limit".

One should be bold enough to admit that he has certain shortcomings and cannot shoulder certain responsibilities. He should admit that someone else is better than he is, and, for example, has better managing capacity, can take firmer decisions, is more industrious or has a broader outlook. Should there be such a group of people of which everyone knows where he stands and recognizes the weak and strong points of himself and others, it is easier to put every piece in its right place and distribute responsibilities on the basis of competence. In such a case the net output resulting from the mutual co-operation of that group will be far bigger.

## **(3) Just appraisal of one's own work and that of others**

A number of people may jointly achieve success in their work and may gradually build up their position. In this case it is necessary to recognize the factors effective in the success and appreciate them. It will not be proper if everyone claims that the progress is due to his initiative and ignores the efforts made and the trouble taken by others. It is also wrong to blame and criticize others for every case of stagnation or failure. One should be just, realistic and impersonal. If it is proved that he himself is

responsible for a failure, he should either improve himself and make amends for the past mistakes, or step aside and vacate the place for a more competent person. If however it is found that somebody else is responsible, his explanation should be called and effort should be made to give him better training. This judgment should be impartial even if the closest relatives or friends are involved.

The Qur'an says:

***"Believers, adhere to justice and bear witness before Allah, even though it be against yourselves, your parents or your relatives": (Surahal-Nisa, 4: 13 5).***

The constructive and effective role of the individuals should always be appreciated so that values bloom better, positive forces bear fruit and more progress is achieved.

Otherwise with the non-appreciation of efficient persons the promotion of pretenders and intriguers and the habit of taking undue credit for the work of others, the real workers will gradually be disheartened and lose interest, with the result that by and by the whole machinery will come to a stand-still and the association will disintegrate.

#### **(4) Abstention from egoism and being self-opinionated**

Egoism is a great curse for collective work. A person who pays no attention to the views of others and thinks that at the meetings he alone has the right to speak while others have to listen and endorse the decisions taken by him, will be left alone. In case he has much influence, he will make others submit to him unwillingly. In such a case, it will become the work of an individual and will no longer be a collective work. Others will only be his tools and functionaries and not his associates and co-workers.

But if everybody recognizes the right of others and respects their opinion, all ideas and forces are put to use, everyone is encouraged to take an active interest, and the work becomes truly collective.

#### **(5) Respect for majority opinion**

Whenever the individuals are required to express their opinion on a question, it is a duty of everybody to weigh properly all its aspects and then form a firm opinion. Once he has done so, he should be able to defend and explain his view. If still the result of voting goes against him, he should unreservedly submit to the opinion of the majority and should earnestly co-operate in the implementation of the decision taken. It is wrong to have a negative attitude. No doubt it is difficult to take an action against one's own inclination and opinion, but collective interest has to be given preference over individual interest so that work may not suffer.

It is obvious that the principle of abiding by the opinion of majority is valid only in the case of the questions which are subject to voting and where the opinion of the majority is not repugnant to the basic principles ratified by all members at the beginning of their undertaking. Otherwise if the majority opinion violates the basic principles, it has no value.

Suppose some persons jointly set up an industrial company and in its prospectus they lay down that their organization will take no steps contrary to the Islamic injunctions.

In this case if they decide to do a thing which is definitely against Islamic law, their decision, even if it is unanimous, will be null and void. However, if the decision conforms to all the agreed principles, but does not suit one or a few individuals, then the opinion of the majority should prevail and their decision should be implemented, for it was accepted by all members from the beginning that the decision of the majority would be enforced. In such a case nobody has a right to non-co-operate after a decision has been taken and ratified.

Elections for various posts and offices should be free from partiality and nepotism. Fitness and suitability should be the only criteria. Once free and fair elections have taken place, it is the duty of every member to co-operate with those who have been elected and give them his wholehearted support, even though the result of the election be against his personal wish.

Going minutely through the above mentioned principles we observe that the basic condition for the success of any collective work, in addition to faith in the objective and a feeling of responsibility, is self-control and fight against egoism. A self-respecting extrovert person gifted with will power can always participate in collective work. This participation will train him to be useful to himself and the society.

Once when the Muslims were back after a fierce fighting, Prophet Muhammad (P) asked them to prepare themselves for 'a major *jihad*. They cried in wonder: "Which other *jihad*!" The Prophet said: '*Jihad* against yourselves'.

## Major Jihad

The illuminant and constructive human life has no meaning other than strenuous effort and a struggle for gradual perfection, better life and the establishment of an ideal society.

Just to eat and sleep, to build and ruin, and to exert oneself day and night for the sake of one's stomach, while living under the shadow of a bayonet having no share in the light of knowledge and perfection,

culture and advancement and the development of moral faculties cannot be called an honorable human life. According to the third revolutionary leader of the Shi'ah, Imam Husayn, "Life is nothing but faith and Jihad".

*Jihad* for the sake of faith and belief; *Jihad* for freedom and independence; *Jihad* for the restoration of lost rights; *jihad* for the assistance of the helpless and the oppressed; *Jihad* for gradual perfection, culture, knowledge and virtue; and lastly

*Jihad* against one's own egoism, which is the most important and according to the holy Prophet of Islam, '*Jihad Akbar*'.

In principle the object for which the great Prophets have been raised and which constituted the mission of the holy Prophet of Islam has been the perfection of good morals, the nourishment of the human soul, intellect and will and the guidance of man towards "light", culture and advancement. In the eye of the holy Prophet of Islam the making and training of a man is of greater importance and more valuable than anything on which the sun shines. Similarly according to the holy Qur'an, greatness of man and his personality lies in his surpassing others in virtue and, piety.

From the point of view of Islam the importance of fighting against one's own passions lies in the fact that good and orderly human life depends on such a fight. Should life be moving only round material values having no share of spirituality and high moral qualities it would push man more and more towards bad luck, lack of restraint, violation of law, mental restlessness and distrust of one another and would plunge him down into the abyss of destruction.

The qualities of savagery, barbarity and aggression would develop in him, and consequently scientific discoveries, inventions and industrial development instead of being utilized for the comfort and freedom of man and the reduction of the burden of his life would become tools for the advancement of the objects and interests of the greedy and the selfish and would be utilized for enslaving and deceiving the masses and destroying the helpless nations. This situation is already prevailing in the modern world, which has based its life on materialism devoid of moral qualities and human principles.

We see that the mechanical civilization, technological advancement, discovery of atom, manufacture of satellites, conquest of space, man's landing on the moon and similar other human achievements not only have not diminished the barbarity, savagery and brutal disposition of man and have not cured any of the ailments of society, but have increased the restlessness, distress, illusionment, helplessness and perplexity of mankind. New scientific discoveries have made the demon of war and bloodshed dominate society to a larger extent as compared with the age of barbarity and cave life and have brought the world to the brink of an all-destructive war. The entire resources of the super powers are being devoted to the manufacture of improved and more sophisticated weapons.

In the past the darkness of night separated the two armies and suspended fighting, but nowadays thanks to the tremendous development of industry and mechanical civilization, the war makes no distinction between day, night month and year. The war operations are no longer restricted to the battle-field.

Whereas (according to the statement of a recent conference of the unofficial organisations for Disarmament) 800 thousand persons lost their lives in 29 wars between 1820 – 1859, the number of those killed during the last forty years of the 19th century in 106 wars reached the figure of 4,600,000 and in the first 50 years of the present century (the century of atom and the conquest of space) the number of those killed in the 117 wars fought throughout the world exceeded 42.5 millions. As compared to two million tons of bombs used during the second world war, the American Imperialists dropped seven million tons of bombs in Viet Nam alone. They used about as much ammunition and ninety thousand tons of chemical devices.

Moreover, the Russians have since intervened in Afghanistan and the atrocities being committed by them in that country are an addition to the list of the crimes of the super powers. Thousands of men, women and children have been killed and more than three million have become homeless. The deplorable conditions created by these powers in the Middle East, Africa, the Far East and Latin America are also well-known, and the well-informed and vigilant Muslims are not unaware of them.

America claims to be the champion of humanitarianism and the Soviet Union claims to support the proletariat. However, humanity has suffered most at the hands of America and the Soviet Union has done the greatest harm to the proletariat. The present day society is faced with a sort of giddiness and consternation. It is in a melancholy state, and is anxious to find a way out of the unbearable dilemma which has been created by mechanical life.

Ever-increasing cases of suicide, disturbances and crimes smacking of insanity, growing incidence of lunacy and the appearance of the bands bearing the names of betels, hippies and scores of other names and shapes confirm the fact that mechanical life based on materialism and devoid of spirituality and moral values, cannot by itself make man happy and lead him to the goal of virtue, tranquillity and mental satisfaction. It is true that the huge power of modern industry and technology can make artificial satellites, conquer space and send man to the moon, but it cannot make and nourish man.

In contrast, it strengthens sensual desires and animal propensities by leading society more and more towards materialism and glitter of life. This unbridled power, unless it is wedded to the spirituality of Islam, human attributes and moral qualities is definitely harmful to society. As you can observe, it adds to the worries and difficulties of man.

Dr Alexis Carrel says that we can very well perceive that contrary to all the hopes and expectations which humanity had pinned on modern civilization, it has not yet brought up thinkers and brave men who could guide it through the dangerous path which it has embarked upon-The human beings themselves

have not yet developed in proportion to the grandeur of the institutions they have created. In particular the intellectual and moral weakness and the ignorance of those persons in power threatens the future of our civilization. Had Galileo, Newton and Lavoisier dedicated their energies to the study of human body and soul, our world might have been quite different today. In fact, man deserves more importance than everything else, for, with his decay, the beauty of civilization and even the grandeur of the world of stars is ruined.

Besides possessing special importance for orderly and proper human life, fight against one's own base desires plays a great part in anticolonial movements also. It may be said that other sacred human struggles to a large extent depend on it, and so long as man does not gain victory in his fight against his own passions, he can hardly be successful in them. This is so because in his campaign against others (provided it is for a sacred and specific cause) he stands in perfect need of sacrifice, steadfastness, unity, confidence and other prerequisite qualities, and so long as he is not possessed of self-control it is very difficult for him, if not impossible, to acquire these other qualities. And supposing that he does acquire them they shall always be prone to give way and collapse in consequence of the smallest incident, if they are not based on a firm and solid infrastructure.

A man who cannot fight against his egoism, who cannot suppress his base desires and who cannot control his spirit of lasciviousness; in short, a man who cannot build himself, will not be able to overlook his personal gain for the sake of his ideology and faith. In other words, A Muslim:

- Should be indifferent to rank and position;
- Should abstain from selfishness, self-conceit and ostentation;
- Should refrain from underhand dealings with the enemy;
- Should not be treacherous to his companions;
- Should hold sincerity to his colleagues and the pacts made with them to be sacred;
- Should refrain from attacking his friends and comrades with the arms which should be used against the enemy;
- Should not lose heart if unsuccessful;
- Should desist from feeling puffed up and exceeding his limits in the hour of victory;
- Should not be jealous of his co-workers if they gain popularity and outpace him;

- Should not indulge in obstructionism and sowing discord;
- Should refrain from stabbing in the back;
- Should refrain from being slack in his struggle;
- Should refrain from relinquishing his position;
- Should not make a surrender;
- Should have no secret understanding with the enemy;
- Should be consistent;

And so on.

These outstanding and noble human qualities can be acquired only by character building and fighting against one's base desires. He who is not equipped and armed with these qualities, is lacking the key of success. He may be known for his boldness and bravery, but when he actually enters a battle-field, he cannot achieve real success, even if he does not meet defeat and disgrace. As has been said:

"For joining a battle it is not enough to be a revolutionary, consuming zeal and firm determination are also required". (Sugar War in Cuba, p. 145).

We know that the first step taken by the revolutionaries, the mass leaders and the guides of humanity who rose for advocating the cause of the freedom and well-being of society, the establishment of security and justice and the introduction of a perfect political and social system, has always been the formation of the units of individuals and imparting training to them. They awakened the conscience of the masses and brought into existence a class of the faith and principled persons and then utilized them as the basis and foundation of their movement and campaign.

In the beginning of his prophetic mission the great saviour of mankind, the Prophet ,of Islam, in order to nullify the faith in all false principles and dogmas, specially directed his efforts towards persuading the masses to fight against their evil desires, to develop good morals and to revive in their hearts the faith in Allah which is the fountain-head of all values, virtues and human qualities.

We are aware of the great deeds performed and the achievements made by those who received their training in the school of the great Prophet of Islam and who developed genuine faith in Allah and the

ideology of Islam. We know what glorious memories they have left behind in history. Rank and position, property and wealth, wives and children and ease and comfort could not dissuade them from remaining steadfast and making sacrifice for the cause they cherished.

History has recorded the story of those who received their training in the revolutionary school of the Qur'an. It tells us how many of them left the warm bosom of their newly-wed brides, to go to the battle-field where they willingly made supreme sacrifice for the cause of Islam. The astonishing and instructive reaction of the great revolutionary of the history, imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (P) to the rudeness shown to him by an enemy on whose chest he was mounted, makes every sensible man wonder and bow his head in reverence to him. It teaches the people a lesson in self-making, controlling one's passions and sincerity of action.

As against the impudence of the defeated enemy, Imam Ali (P), instead of pressing his sword more vigorously on his throat and severing his head in order to quench his own anger, rose from his chest and so long as his anger did not subside, he took no action to cut off the head of the enemy, for he did not want to combine his own passion with a task which he was performing for the sake of his ideological object.

He acted thus because the life-giving motto, *La ilaha ill lah* in which he believed and to make which universal he had resorted to *Jihad*, negates the association of any outside factor with doctrinal aim and declares void every action in which anything besides Allah and the ideological consideration is introduced.

*La ilaha illal lah* is a unique motto. It stimulates the followers of Islam and negates everything other than One Reality. By adopting this motto and through a fight against their evil desires and the acquisition of high moral qualities in the school of the holy Prophet of Islam, the early Muslims were able to tear asunder the curtains of ignorance and darkness and acquire knowledge, independence, freedom, advancement and culture. With a comparatively lesser strength they gained victories over two great empires of their time (Persian and Roman Empires) and provided to their captivated and suppressed nations independence, freedom of learning and knowledge, civilization and excellence.

This is the description of the man of Islam as could be given within the limited framework.

A man who is sensible, realistic, purposeful and knows nature and accepts it.

A man who believes in Allah, the Almighty, the Wise and the Merciful. He loves Him; seeks guidance from Him; and is always determined to go the way He likes.

A man who finds himself to be a being who is attached to truth and eternity. He looks at the next world, which is just a manifestation of the eternal reward of his own deeds and efforts, as his ultimate

destination. That is why he considers himself to be accountable for all his individual and collective acts.

A man who values his own thought and experience as well as those of other experienced and learned men and is also acquainted with revelation (*wahy*) a higher source of knowledge. He determines his own way of life by taking his cue from all these sources, between which he finds no contradiction.

A man who is aware of his creative role in nature and in the society, and who has learnt that the mission of 'selfmaking' is a great mission and a valuable trust which has been entrusted to him. If he wants to continue as a man he has to be watchful of this mission and trust.

A man who, while fully recognizing the effective role of the laws of society in making and moulding the individuals, knows also that man, unlike other beings, is gifted with a peerless inner upsurge and is capable of moulding himself as he wishes. In other words he is 'self-maker'.

A being whose self-making not only takes him to the best and the most valuable stages of perfection but also prepares him for reconstructing his environment. In other words his self-making and reconstruction of environment are complementary to each other.

A self-making being, who in accordance with true Islamic standards, builds his self-consciousness and by having a zealous will, a sound body, a powerful soul and good moral character, controls his egoism and his passions. To gain the pleasure of Allah he loves doing service to humanity and for that purpose he not only makes sacrifice himself but also seeks the co-operation of all those who have a common goal and common policy with him which have welded them together and turned them into an active and effective community.

The man of Islam, by making use of these standards and adopting Islamic way of life, prepares himself to reconstruct his social surroundings and to transform them into an environment illuminated by the light of Islam, filled with justice and virtue in the realms of the house, the family and the society and accompanied by a correct appraisal of moral, spiritual, cultural, economic and administrative factors.

Now it is up to you, O dear son of Islam, to grasp the real features of the Islamic society and to build yourself accordingly.

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