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Lesson 9

4-8-10 The Open School Class: Explanation of Forty *Ahadith* Text: Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. Sharh al-Arba'in al-Nabawwiyah. Arabic edition 1987, pages 432-435.

Summary

As said before, children are the future. *Insha'Allah* (if God wills), one can raise a child in a proper manner to become a good mature member of society. The age of maturity may be relative to the society in which one lives. For example, in the United States, the age of eighteen seems to be the threshold of maturity. In Islam, however, the legal ages of maturity for males and females are identified by jurists,[1] and, also, physical features may be considered when determining maturity. When a child reaches maturity, what is his or her role towards society?

A person will become independent in thought and will have to identify his or her role in society. For example, a person will start thinking about what profession he or she should pursue. However, despite whatever the person chooses, bringing peace and safety to one's society is the main goal. A person in a society wants to be in a safe and peaceful environment to live his or her life and raise a family, and so that person's role should be to promote stability and peace.

Through our professions and way of living, we should contribute to society and make sure our actions foster a positive environment. For example, how should we live here in the United States? Should we go around breaking laws? If we do, we will be put in jail and disrupt not only the society but our families as well. This does not mean we agree with everything the government does or that we like every law.

However, we can try to change laws and attitudes through rational processes and techniques. Islam is a religion of reason, and the objective is peace and security. Yes, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) fought in wars, but a study of those wars will show the necessity of such for defense and to fight against oppression.[2]

You see, the objectives of war can be to protect and vanquish oppression so that peace and security may be established. The objective of terrorism, on the other hand, is only to instill fear. And even if one

argues that terrorists may use fear only as a means for whatever they want, that is not Islam.

Extremism is not the middle road or the straight path of Islam. This is evident by the beautiful acts of the Prophet of Islam towards the different peoples and even his enemies. For example, by studying the agreement between the different inhabitants of Madinah after migration as well as the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, one can see that Islam guides people towards peace and security.[3]

Actually, Shaykh Ja'far Subhani in his biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) mentions that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him and his family) stated, "No event during the life of the Prophet of Islam was more useful than the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah."[4]

Accordingly, whatever path a person chooses to walk, that person should have the goal of bringing or inviting peace and security to that society. If you are a good neighbor and live peacefully with people, then people tend to like you and accept you. However, if you do not bring peace to a society, people will not like you. That is why terrorists are rejected by society. There is no valid system in the whole Universe that does not aim at establishing security and peace. Islam has certain guidelines for establishing these goals.

For example, one can start by having good manners, *akhlaq*. By people and families exhibiting good manners, the society can run peacefully in a positive way. These good manners or practice of virtue may deal with all parts of one's life (*e.g.*, how to talk, walk, sit, joke, treat people, etc.). One can learn about these manners from the numerous books of *akhlaq*. Also, the Wise Qur'an has verses dealing with good manners.

For example, the **Qur'an (24:27-28)** states:

O you who have faith! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have announced [your arrival] and greeted their occupants. That is better for you. Maybe you will take admonition. But if you do not find anyone in them, do no enter them until you are given permission, and if you are told: „Turn back,' then do turn back. That is more decent for you. And Allah knows best what you do. *The* ***Qur'an (58:11)*** *further states, inter alia,* ***"O you who have faith! When you are told, „Make room,' in sittings, then do make room; Allah will make room for you."*** (*See Jalali, page 432*).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *the best of you is the person who has the better akhlaq*. (Jalali, page 433). Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (peace be upon him and his family) said that *associate with others so that when you die people will cry for you and when you leave them people will miss you*.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him and his family) said that *you should curb your tongue* (including not delving into personal matters of others) *and do not talk rubbish*. Imam Ja'far (peace be upon him and his family) also said that *a person who cannot control himself when angry is not a Shi'ah* (follower of *Ahlul Bayt*, the People of the House). We have to deal with all people in the proper manner

regardless of their race, color, sex, etc.

However, one should always consider a person's *taqwa*, God-consciousness. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *there is no scale except taqwa*. (Jalali, page 434). There are good people and there are bad people. There are good Indians, and there are bad Indians. There are good Arabs, and there are bad Arabs. We should not generalize. Look at a person's character. However, just because someone does not display good character does not mean we should lower ourselves and treat him or her inappropriately. No, we should always act with decency and proper behavior (which may be relative to the situation).

Yet, sometimes avoiding or dissociating from someone that displays bad character is the proper thing to do. Also, we should not only focus on the character of other people, but we should first try to achieve and maintain a high level of *taqwa* ourselves. The **Qur'an (49:13)** states, *inter alia*,

"Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

1. For example, Sayyid Ali Sistani and Shaykh Yusuf Sane'i indentify the age of fifteen as the legal age of maturity for a boy (absent any prior physical signs of maturity), but Sayyid Sistani identifies the age of nine (see www.sistani.org [1]) as the legal age of maturity for a girl while Shaykh Sane'i identifies the age of thirteen (see www.saanei.org [2]) as the legal age of maturity for a girl (absent any prior physical signs of maturity). Please note that the ages discussed herein correspond to lunar years.
2. See Subhani, Ja'far. The Message. Trans. Muhammad Fazal Haq. Islamic Seminary, 1984, pages 366-506. 41
3. See Subhani, pages 340-344 and 529-530.
4. Subhani, page 536. 42

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