

On Akhlaq

Once A man asked the Holy Prophet: “What is the best of all actions”? The Holy Prophet replied: “Akhlaq”.

Akhlaq is an Arabic word meaning behavior or character or, more accurately, “moral character”. The Holy Prophet himself was praised by Allah because he possessed all the virtues and qualities of highest moral character. God said: “Indeed thou art at the highest peak of good manners”.

The Holy Prophet has also said; “You should create within yourselves the Akhlaq (behavior) of Allah”. For example, Allah is merciful: we should be merciful to others. Allah is forgiving; we also should forgive others when they are at fault. Allah treats even his enemies with love and magnanimity, we also should do likewise.

And herein lies the basic difference between an “Akhlaq” based on love of God and the modern “Akhlaq”, based on self-interest. Today nations have progressed materially to level which was undreamed of even 50 years ago. Contacts between man and man, and nation and nation, have increased due to trade, industry and commerce. There is exchange of students, scholars and technicians. The size of the earth has been reduced by modern aircrafts.

Now, motivated by the instinct of self-preservation, nations are trying to evolve international moral codes. But these codes are observed more by violation than by adherence. Why?

The answer in simple words is one and only one. We have built these codes on a wrong foundation. We have tried to build our moral behavior (which requires some “sacrifices”) on self-interest (which allows for no sacrifice). The only way to emancipate mankind from moral bankruptcy is to restore our faith in Allah, and believe in the life hereafter.