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The Rights of Others

Right n. 26: The Right of the Master

حق المنعم على مولاه

وَأَمّا حَقُّ الْمُنْعِمِ عَلَيْكَ بالْولاءِ فَأَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنّهُ أَنفقَ فِيكَ مَالَهُ، وَأَخرَجَكَ مِن ذُلّ الرّقِ وَوَحْشَتِهِ إِلَى عِزّ الحُرّيةِ وأُنسِها، وَأَطْلَقَكَ مِنْ أَسْرِ الْمِلْكَةِ، وَفَكَّ عَنْكَ حلَقَ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ، وَأَوْجَدَكَ رَائِحَة الْعِزّ، وَأَخرَجَكَ مِنْ سِجْنِ القَهْرِ، وَدَفَعَ عَنْكَ الْعُسْرَ، وبَسَطَ لَكَ لِسَانَ الإِنْصَافِ، وَأَبَاحَكَ الدُنْيَا كُلَّهَا فَمَلَّكَكَ نفْسَكَ، وَحَلَّ أَسْرَكَ، وَفَرَّغَكَ لِعِبَادَةِ رَبكَ، وَاحْتَمَلَ بذَلِكَ التَّقْصِيرَ فِي مَالِهِ، فَتَعْلَمَ أَنّهُ أَوْلَى الخَلْقِ بكَ بَعْدَ أُولي رَحِمِكَ فِي حَيَاتِكَ وَمَوْتِكَ، وَأَحَقَّ الخَلْقِ بنَصْرِكَ وَمَعُونَتِكَ وَمُكَانفَتِكَ فِي ذَات اللَّهِ، فَلا تُؤْثِرْ عَلَيْهِ نفْسَكَ مَا احْتَاجَ إِلَيْكَ.

Then the right of your master who has favored you[1] is that you should know that he has spent his property for you and has brought you out of the abasement of slavery and its desolation, and has brought you into the honor of freedom and its sociability. And he has freed you from the captivity of his own possession and has released the bonds of his slavery from you.

And he has led you to smell the scent of honor, and has brought you out of the prison of subjugation, and has repelled hardship from you, and has extended to you the tongue of fairness, and has liberated you to freely move about in the whole world, and has given you ownership of yourself, and has freed you from captivity, and has given you the freedom to worship your Lord.

And for this he has suffered a decrease in his fortune. Then you should know that he is the closest creature to you after your relations of kin in your life and after your death, and that he is the most meritorious creature to receive your assistance and support, and your help for God's sake. Therefore, do not prefer yourself to him regarding any of his needs.

Here Imam Sajjad warns the freed slave about the rights of his master– a master who has expended his property to free him, and has brought him out of the abasement of slavery into the honor of freedom – freedom of thoughts and beliefs. He has brought him out of the slavery of other than god into the honor of God's servitude. He warns him that such a master has certain rights incumbent upon him.

Thus, he should realize that such a master has the right to be helped. He should realize that he should never prefer himself to his master regarding any of his needs. We have already discussed the history of slavery. We expressed the oppressions they suffered. We also stated the factors that led to their freedom. Especially we clarified how Islam gradually established the proper conditions for their freedom. Here we shall not repeat what was said before. Rather we will present other aspects of their freedom – namely ideological freedom and the freedom of ownership.

Freedom to Think

Freedom to think is the most fundamental human right. Each individual has the right to think about anything he wants. No one is allowed to control his thinking, or interrogate him about what he thinks, or set up certain conditions that will block him from thinking and understanding properly. Although one may argue that only a slave's body is under the control of his master and his mind is free, it is obvious that in reality a slave is deprived of the opportunity to think freely.

Even if we assume that he is free to think, it is not possible for him to put his thoughts into practice. Therefore when Imam Sajjad says: "…and has brought you out of the prison of subjugation, and has repelled hardship from you, and has extended to you the tongue of fairness…" he implies that once a slave is freed, he can think freely. He can put his thoughts into practice out there in the real world. Thus, we can say that once a slave is freed, he has attained freedom of the mind. Islam has granted its followers freedom of the mind, and has left their way to study and research open. Imam Ali said the following in this regard:

مَن اسْتَقْبَلَ وُجوهَ الآرَاءِ عَرَفَ مَواقِعَ الخَطأِ.

"Whoever looks at various aspects of thoughts can recognize positions of faults."[2]

Thus, we can see that there is no censorship of thoughts in Islam. The criteria for maturity and worth of a person in Islam are considered his intellect, knowledge and thinking. One hour of thinking is considered better than seventy years of worshipping. In many verses, the Qur'an advises man to think and understand. Consider the following verse:

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمْ أُوْلُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

"Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it: those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones endued with understanding." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Zumar 39:18***]

In another verse of the Holy Qur'an we read:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلاَ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"...can the blind be held equal to the seeing?" Will ye then consider not?" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-An'am 6:50***]

Ideological Freedom

One's ideology forms due to a certain background and environment. The way one is educated and some other factors are also involved in the formation of a person's ideology. To change a person's ideology we must rely on the same influential factors that were instrumental in its initial formation. We cannot use force to change a person's ideology. The Holy Qur'an says the following in this regard:

لاَ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error."[***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:256***]

In another verse we read:

وَلَوْ شَاء رَبُّكَ لآمَنَ مَن فِي الأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُواْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

"If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed, - all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Yunus 10:99***]

In another verse it says:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَن شَاء فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاء فَلْيَكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا

"Say, "The truth is from your Lord": Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it): for the wrongdoers We have prepared a Fire..!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:29***]

We also read:

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنتَ مُذَكِّرٌ لَّسْتَ عَلَيْهِم بِمُصَيْطِرٍ

"Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ghashiyah 88:21-22***]

Moreover, in another verse we read:

قَدْ جَاءكُم بَصَآئِرُ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَاْ عَلَيْكُم بِحَفِيظٍ

"Now have come to you, from your Lord, proofs (to open your eyes): if any will see, it will be for (the good of) his own soul; if any will be blind, it will be to his own (harm): I am not (here) to watch over your doings." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-An'am, 6:104***]

The above verses also clarify that there is no compulsion in religion. Everyone is free to choose. Islam is a religion of the intellect, logic, science and research. It forbids following blindly. It considers any form of worshipping other than God, like idol-worshipping or worshipping cows as forms of ignorance. Islam invites man to think and acquire knowledge.

Freedom of Ownership

Addressing the freed slaves and regarding their masters, Imam Sajjad said the following regarding their masters: "…and has liberated you to freely move about in the whole world…" This freedom includes freedom of thought and freedom of ownership. Thus, a freed slave can own and use his own property. Private ownership is rooted in man's nature. It fosters encouragement and helps our lives develop. Islam honors private ownership and legally supports it. Consider the following verse in this respect:

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبُواْ وَلِلنِّسَاء نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ

"…To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn…"[***The Holy Qur'an, al- Nisaa 4:32***]

Once you legitimately earn something, then it belongs to you. Consider the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَأْكُلُواْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلاَّ أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنكُمْ

"O ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: But let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual good-will!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:29***]

Therefore, what one earns through legitimate means belongs to him. Should he be killed while trying to

protect his property, he is considered a martyr:

مَن قُتِلَ دُونَ مالِهِ فَهُو شَهيدٌ.

"Whoever gets killed for guarding his wealth is a martyr."[3]

Freedom of ownership does not mean that one can obtain wealth through any possible means. Wealth obtained through work in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, business, industry and the like are one's legal property.

However, what one may obtain through acts like robbery, cheating in transactions, cheating in the amount of goods sold, usury or confiscation is considered to be illegitimately earned by Islam. Islam seriously fights such deeds. It places certain forms of Islamic tax and declares certain rights on what one earns legitimately. Consider the following verse regarding those who do not abide by these regulations:

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلاَ يُنفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَـذَا مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُواْ مَا كُنتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ

***"And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God: announce unto them a most grievous penalty-On the Day when heat will be produced out of that* (*wealth*) *in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. This is the* (*treasure*) *which ye buried for yourselves: taste ye, then, the* (*treasures*) *ye buried!"* [*The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:34-35*]**

This was a brief study of the degrees of freedom a slave attains after being freed. Finally, Imam Sajjad stresses the importance of the freed slave being grateful to his master for freeing him. The Imam warns the freed slave that he should never forget his master's major act of freeing him.

1. By freeing you from slavery.
2. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayz al-Islam, wise saying 164.
3. Islam wa Huquq al-Bashar, p.316; quoted from Al-Adalat al-Ijtima'iyat, p.103.

Right n. 27: The Right of the Freed Slave

حق المولى الجارية عليه نعمتك

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ مَوْلاكَ الْجَارِيَةِ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَتُكَ فَأَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللهَ جَعَلَكَ حَامِيَةً عَلَيْهِ، وَوَاقِيَةً وناصِرًا وَمَعْقِلاً، وَجَعَلَهُ لَكَ وَسِيلَةً وَسَبَباً بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ فَبالْحَرِيِّ أَنْ يَحْجُبَكَ عَنِ النَّارِ فَيَكُونَ فِي ذَلِكَ ثَوَابٌ مِنْهُ فِي الآجِلِ، ويَحْكُمُ لَكَ بمِيرَاثِهِ فِي الْعَاجِلِ إذَا لم يَكُنْ لَهُ رَحِمٌ، مُكَافَأَةً لِمَا أَنفَقْتَهُ مِنْ مَالِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَقُمْتَ بِهِ مِنْ حَقِّهِ بَعْدَ إنفَاقِ مَالِكَ، فَإنْ لَمْ تَقُمْ بحَقِّهِ خِيفَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ لا يَطِيبَ لَكَ مِيرَاثُهُ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of the slave whom you have favored[1] is that you should know that[2] God has established you as his supporter, and shelter and assistant, and refuge, and He has established him for you as the means and as a mediator between you and Him. Then by freeing him, he will protect you from the Fire. And this is the reward you get from him in the future.

And your immediate reward is to inherit from him if he does not have any relations of kin. There is a compensation for the property you have spent for him, and respecting his rights after you spent your property. Then if you do not respect his rights, there is the fear upon you that his inheritance would not be purified for you. And there is no power but in God.

In the previous chapter, Imam Sajjad clearly expressed the rights of the master incumbent on the freed slave. In this chapter, we discuss the rights of the freed slave incumbent on his master as expressed by Imam Sajjad. In fact, the natural rights of the freed slave on his master are discussed.

Man might get haughty or proud of himself if he does someone else a favor or frees him. Then he might mention his favors to him and belittle him. Imam Sajjad has advised us so as to eliminate the possibility of this haughtiness or undue pride. He said: “You should know that God has established you as his supporter, shelter, assistant and refugee, and He has established him for you as the means and as a mediator between you and Him.”

Duties of the Freed Slave

In what follows we read: “Then by freeing him, he will protect you from the Fire. In addition, you get this reward from him in the future. In addition, your immediate reward is to inherit from him if he does not have any relations of kin. There is a compensation for the property you spent for him, and respecting his rights after you spent your property.” This refers to the jurisprudence decree that one shall inherit from his freed slave if the slave does not have any relations of kin. Therefore, there are both worldly and heavenly rewards for freeing a slave. Next, we will review some of the traditions in this regard.

The Reward for Freeing a Slave

In the second tradition in section one of the Chapter Itaq in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah we read: “Zurarah quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir on the authority of God’s Prophet :

مَنْ أعْتَقَ مُسلِماً أعتَقَ اللهُ العَزيزُ الجَبّارُ بِكُلِّ عُضْوٍ مِنهُ عُضْواً مِن النّارِ.

“God the Honorable, the Almighty shall rescue from the Fire (of Hell) the body parts of whoever frees a Muslim slave – a part for a part.”[3]

Imam Sadiq narrated that once Fatima the daughter of Asad went to see the Prophet and said: “I have decided to free my slave maid.” The Prophet said:

إنْ فَعَلتِ أعْتَقَ اللهُ بِكُلِّ عُضْوٍ مِنها عُضواً مِنكِ مِن النّارِ.

“If you do that, then for every body-part of hers, God will free a corresponding part of your body from the Fire (of Hell).”[4]

Shiite Imams and Freeing Slaves

In another tradition in the same chapter, we read that Imam Sadiq said:

إنّ أبا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيهِ السّلامُ ماتَ وَتَركَ سِتّينَ مَملوكاً فَأعْتَقَ ثُلُثَهُم عِندَ مَوتِهِ.

“Imam Baqir had sixty slaves. At the time of his death, he freed twenty of them.”[5]

The Prophet of God and the Imams were always the first ones to free their slaves to demonstrate the worldly and heavenly benefits of this act to their followers.

1. By freeing him.
2. In the other version it is followed by: “God has made your freeing him a means of access to Him and a veil against the Fire. Your immediate reward is to inherit from him – if he does not have any relatives – as a compensation for the property you have spent for him, and your ultimate reward is the Garden.”
3. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v. 16, pp.2-5.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

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

حق ذي المعروف

وَأمّا حَقُّ ذِي المَعْرُوفِ عَلَيكَ فَأَنْ تَشْكُرَهُ وتَذْكُرَ مَعْرُوفَهُ وتَنْشُرَ لَهُ الْمَقالَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ، وَتُخلِصَ لَهُ الدُّعَاءَ فِيمَا بَينَكَ وبَيْنَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ، فَإنّكَ إذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ كُنْتَ قَدْ شَكَرْتَهُ سِرًّا وَعَلانِيَةً. ثُمَّ إنْ أَمْكَنَ مُكَافَأَتَهُ بالْفِعْلِ كَافَأْتَهُ وإلاّ كُنْتَ مُرْصِدًا لَهُ مُوطِّنًا نَفْسَكَ عَلَيْهَا.

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

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

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

Goodness and Evil are not Equal

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

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

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

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

Response to Courteous Greetings

We read in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذَا حُيِّيْتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّواْ بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

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

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

وَإِذَا حُيِّيْتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّواْ بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

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

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

Good, the Reward for Good

We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

هَلْ جَزَاء الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

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

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

"آيَةٌ في كِتابِ اللهِ مُسْجَلَةٌ." قلتُ: "ما هِيَ؟" قالَ: "قَولُ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: "هل جزاء الاحسان الا الاحسان" جَرَتْ في الكافِرِ وَالمُؤمِنِ وَالبَرِّ والفَاجِرِ، وَمَن صُنِعَ إلَيهِ مَعرُوفٌ فَعَليهِ أنْ يُكافِئَ بهِ، ولَيسَ المُكافأةُ أنْ تَصنَعَ كَما صُنِعَ حتىّ يَربى، فإنْ صَنَعْتَ كما صُنِعَ كان لهُ الفَضْلَ بالإبتِداءِ."

"There is a verse in God's Book that is unrestricted." He was asked: "Which verse?" Imam Sadiq said:

*"It is the Almighty God's words: **"Is there any Reward for Good - other than Good?"** (**55:60**) This holds true for believers, pagans, good-doers and evildoers. You must reward good for good. Whoever is done some good should respond with good. The proper compensation is not to respond with as much good as he did but with more, since if you respond equally he is ahead of you because he initiated the good deed."* 2

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

The Response to God's Favor

We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِن كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ

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

It is generally accepted that man is always hoping to receive God's Favors. He asks God for many things and expects a lot from Him. Then how can he ignore other people's needs and neglect their requests. We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

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

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

Being Friendly with Others

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

al-Kafi. The following traditions are cited from that chapter.

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

تَحَبَّبْ إلى النّاسِ يُحِبُّوكَ.

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

Suma’at quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

مُجامَلَةُ النّاسِ ثُلُثُ العَقْلِ.

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

God’s Prophet said:

التَّوَدُّدُ إلى النّاسِ نِصْفُ العَقْلِ.

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

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

مَن أولِيَ مَعْروفاً فَليُكافيءْ بِهِ فإنْ لَمْ يَستَطِعْ فَلْيَذْكُرْهُ فإنْ ذَكَرَهُ فَقَد شَكَرَهُ.

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

God’s Prophet said:

اصْنَعِ المَعْروفَ إلى مَن هُوَ أهْلُهُ وإلى مَن هو لَيسَ أهْلَهُ، فإنْ أصَبْتَ أهلَهُ فهو أهلُهُ وإنْ لم تُصِبْ أهْلَهُ فَأنْتَ مِن أهْلِهِ.

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

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

1. Tafsir–i–Namunah, v.4, p.42.
2. Tafsir Nur al–Thaqalayn, v.5, p.199.
3. Usul al–Kafi, v.2, pp.642–643.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Tarjumeh wa Sharh–i–Risalat al–Huquq, Sepehri, p.149, quoted from Sharh–i–Shabab al–Akhbar, pp. 201 & 328.

Right n. 29: The Right of the Caller to Prayer

حق المؤذن

وَأمّا حَقُّ الْمُؤَذّنِ فَأَنْ تَعْلَمَ أنّهُ مُذَكّرُكَ برَبك وَدَاعِيكَ إلَى حَظّكَ وَأَفْضَلُ أَعْوَانِكَ عَلَى قَضَاءِ الْفَرِيضَةِ الّتِي افتَرَضَهَا اللهُ عَلَيْكَ فَتَشْكُرُهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شُكْرَكَ لِلْمُحْسِنِ إلَيكَ. وَإنْ كُنْتَ فِي بَيْتِكَ مُهْتَمًّا لِذَلِكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ لله فِي أَمْرِهِ مُتَّهِماً وَعَلِمْتَ أَنَّهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِن اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ، لا شَكَّ فِيهَا، فَأَحْسِنْ صُحْبَةَ نِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ بحَمْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا عَلَى كُلّ حَالٍ.

And the right of your caller to prayer is that you should know that he is[1] the one reminding you of your Lord, and is calling you to your good fortune, and is your greatest helper in fulfilling an obligation that God has made incumbent upon you. Therefore, thank him for that just as you thank one who does some good to you.

And if you are upset with him at home due to this, you should not accuse him for this since his act is for God. And you should know that he is one of the blessings of God for you. There is no doubt about it. Then you should kindly treat God's blessing, by praising God for him under all circumstances. And there is no power but in God.

In short, we must remember that the one who calls us to prayer has the following rights incumbent upon us based on the following reasons:

1) He is the one who reminds us of our Lord.

2) He is the one who unites us to get the benefits that we can derive from praying.

3) He is our best assistant in fulfilling an obligatory duty.

Thus, we must thank him in such a way that we thank one who does good to us. If we are upset with him, we should not accuse him since his act is for the sake of God. We should know that he is one of God's Blessings. We should treat him with kindness and be grateful to him. Materialistic forces draw us away from God. It is the one who calls us to prayer who reminds us of the Lord. He helps save us from indulging in material pleasures. He assists us towards performing the prayer that helps us prosper. A high value has been recorded for the one who calls us to prayer in the traditions and books on Islamic jurisprudence. Few have been promised the rewards that those who call the people to pray have been promised.

The Meaning of 'Azan'

'Azan' in Arabic means announcement. Consider the following verse:

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

"And an announcement from God and His Apostle." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:3***]

The caller to prayer loudly announces that it is time to pray. We read in the following verse:

فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ

...But a crier shall proclaim between them..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:44***]

The Decree to Call for Prayer

The decree to call for prayers was revealed in the first year of the immigration of the Noble Prophet to Medina. Other dates are also recorded. The need for it became apparent when the number of Muslims became so many that it was hard for them all to know when to pray. They talked to each other and decided to establish a sign indicating that it is time to pray.

Some suggested to ring a bell but the Prophet did not agree since this was a Christian practice. Some suggested the use of a horn but the Prophet did not agree since this was a Jewish practice. Some suggested playing on the tambourine but the Prophet said that this was a Roman practice. Others suggested using fire but the Prophet said that this was a practice of the Magians.[2]

Some suggested raising a flag, but the Prophet did not say anything. Therefore, they did not settle on

anything specific. Gabriel descended when the Prophet was in Ali's house and revealed the decree for the call to prayer. Sadooq narrated in Man La Yahzuruhu al-Faqih: "Mansoor ibn Hazim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq : Gabriel descended to the Prophet of God when he was sleeping in Ali's house. Gabriel recited the 'Azan' and the 'Iqamah.' Then the Prophet said: O' Ali! Did you hear that? He said: "O' Prophet of God! Yes." Then the Prophet said: "Did you memorize it?" Imam Ali said: "Yes." Then the Prophet said: "Then teach it to Bilal." Then Ali taught it to Bilal.[3]

The Jurisprudents' Rule on the Call to Prayer

It is recommended for men and women to say the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' before they pray. It has been quoted on the authority of Al-Mashoor, as quoted by many others that it is recommended to say the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah'. It is quoted in the books Al-Jomal and its commentary, Al-Moqna'eh, Al-Nahayat, Al-Mabsoot, Al-Waseeleh, Al-Mohaz'zab, and Mofid's Akham Al-Nisaa that it is obligatory for men to say the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' in congregational prayers. The jurisprudents have specified the following cases in which there is no need to say the 'Azan':

1) For the afternoon Friday prayer once it is said right either after the noon prayer or after the Friday prayer.

2) For the afternoon prayer on the day of Arafeh if it is said right after the noon prayer.

3) For the night prayer on the day of celebration of sacrifice[4] for one who is in Mash'ar al-Haram if it is said right after the evening prayer.

4) The afternoon or the night prayer of a 'Mustahazeh' woman who must say them right after the noon or evening prayers.

5) The afternoon or the night prayer of one who cannot control his urination or bowel movement.

In either of the above cases, there is no need to say the 'Azan' if the prayers are said right one after the other or shortly thereafter.[5] Certain conditions have been stated by the jurisprudents for 'Azan' and 'Iqamah'. First, one must have the intention to say the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' from the start to the end. Therefore, if one says them without intending to approach God, it is not accepted of him.

Secondly, the one who says the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' must have faith. However, it is not required for the one who says the call to prayer to be mature, especially when it is used as an announcement. However, all the jurisprudents require that the one who says the call to prayer as an announcement should be a man. It is also required that the one who says the call to prayer for men should be a man.

Thirdly, 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' must be said in order. Fourthly, there must be proper continuity of expression in between the parts of the 'Azan'. Finally, the call to prayer should be said using correct Arabic.

There are certain conditions other than the prayer in which the jurisprudents have deemed it good to say the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' as follows:

1) When a child is born, it is good to say the 'Azan' in his right ear and the 'Iqamah' in his left ear.

2) When someone gets afraid of ogres or jinns in awesome deserts.

3) It is recommended to say the 'Azan' in the ear of one who has not had any meat for forty days.6

Now that it was said that according to the Shiites, the 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' are stressed and recommendable, and said that some jurisprudents consider them to be obligatory for men in congregation prayers, let us see what the Sunni jurisprudents say about this issue. Malik and Abu Hanifeh agree with the Shiites and say that 'Azan' and 'Iqamah' are good in all prayers whether at home or on a trip, whether said in person or in a congregation. They consider that there are no cases in which it is obligatory to say the 'Azan' or 'Iqamah'. However, Ahmad ibn Hanbal as well as the Shafi`iyah and Malikiyah have said that 'Azan and Iqamah' are obligatory as much as necessary.

The Difference in 'Azan' Between the Sects

The Shiites believe that there are two "Hayya Ala Khayril Amal" after "Hayya Alal Falah" but the Sunnis believe that "As Salat Khayron Min al-Nawm," should follow in the morning prayer. Shiite scholars believe that "Haya Ala Kharil Amal" had been used during the lifetime of the Prophet , and his family and the Imams continued saying it. Imam Ali said:

سمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَليهِ وآلِهِ يَقُولُ: "إنَّ خَيرَ أعْمالِكُمُ الصَّلاةُ." وَأمَرَ بِلالاً أنْ يُؤذِّنَ: حَيَّ عَلى خَيرِ العَمَلِ.

I heard the Prophet of God say: 'The best of your deeds is the prayer. He ordered Bilal to say "Hayya Ala Khayr'il Amal" in the 'Azan'. 7

The Sunnis accept this to be the case at the time of the Prophet , but say that Umar ibn Khattab ordered it to be removed, and to be replaced with "As Salat Khayrun Min al-Nawm" in the morning prayer. Sa'd ed-Din Taftazani quoted on the authority of Umar in Hashiye Bar Sharhul Uzad: Umar said: There were three things at the time of the Prophet which I forbade. One was Hajj Tamattu`, the second was temporary marriage, and the third one was "Hayya Ala Khayr'il Amal." 8 In Sharh al-Tajrid by Qushji, the above is narrated, but it ends with "I will punish whoever performs any of these." It is not clear who had authorized Umar to do that. The responsibility for this only rests upon those who follow him.

The Parts of 'Azan'

According to many traditions in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah, there are four "Allahu Akbar", two "Ashado An La Illaha Illal'lah", two "Ashado An'na Muhammadan Rasoulul'lah", and two "Hayya Alas- Salat", two

“Hayya Ala al-Falah” and two “Hayya Ala Khayril Amal”, two “Allahu Akbar”, and two “La Illaha Illal’lah” in the ‘Azan’. “Ashado An’na Ali’an Hojatul’lah” is not a part of the ‘Azan’, but it is recommended to say it.

The Philosophy behind ‘Azan’ as Expressed by Imam Ridha

The late Sadooq quoted on the authority of Imam Ridha : In fact, the people were ordered to say the call to prayer for many reasons, among which we can mention to remind those who might have forgotten to pray; to awaken the ignorant ones; to recognize those who are ignorant when it is time to pray. The one who calls to prayer invites the people to worship God through his call to prayer. He makes the people more inclined to pray and confess to the unity of God. He publicizes his own faith and submission and reminds those who have forgotten.

The one who calls to prayer starts by glorifying God and ends by testifying to His unity. Each part is repeated twice in order to affect the person who hears it. If he does not notice it the first time, he will recognize it the second time it is recited. Since the testifying to the unity of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad are the foundations of our faith, they are repeated twice. Thus, when one testifies twice to the unity of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad , he has whole-heartedly testified to all the pillars of faith. The next part of the ‘Azan’ is the invitation to pray, as this is its main purpose. Thus, this is the call to prosperity and good deeds, and the ‘Azan’ ends in the name of God, as it started with it.[9]

The Reward for Saying the Call To Prayer

Mu`awiyah ibn Wahab quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq on the authority of God’s Prophet :

مَن أذَّنَ في مِصْرٍ مِن أمصَارِ المُسلِمِينَ سَنَةً وَجَبتْ لهُ الجَنَّةُ.

Whoever performs the call to prayer in one of the Muslim towns for one year, Heaven is incumbent on him.”[10]

Suleiman ibn Ja’far quoted on the authority of his father that once when a man from Sham went to see Imam Sadiq , the Imam told him that Bilal is the first person to go to Heaven. The man asked the reason. The Imam said: “Because he was the first one to say the call to prayer.”[11] In another tradition Jabir Ja’far quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir that God’s Prophet said:

المُؤَذِّنُ المُحْتَسِبُ كالشّاهِرِ سَيفَهُ في سَبيلِ اللهِ القاتِلِ بَينَ الصَّفَّينِ.

“The one who calls to prayer, seeking a reward from God, is like one who has drawn his sword in the way of God and is fighting in between the rows.”[12]

Imam Ali said:

يحُشَرُ المُؤذّنونَ يَومَ القيامَةِ طِوالَ الأعْناقِ.

“Those who say the call to prayer will be raised as chiefs on the Day of Resurrection.”[13]

The late Sadooq quoted in the Manafi tradition on the authority of Ja’far ibn Muhammad on the authority of his father on the authority of God’s Prophet :

مَنْ أذَّنَ مُحتَسِباً يُريدُ بذلِكَ وَجْهَ اللهِ تَعالى أعْطاهُ اللهُ ثَوابَ أربَعِينَ ألفَ شَهيدٍ وَأرْبَعِينَ ألفَ صِدّيقٍ وَيَدخُلُ في شَفاعَتِهِ أربَعُونَ ألفَ مُسِيءٍ مِن أُمَّتي إلى الجَنَّةِ. إلا وإنَّ المُؤذّنَ إذا قالَ: أشْهَدُ أنْ لا إلَهَ إلاّ اللهُ، صَلّى عَليهِ سَبعونَ ألفَ مَلَكٍ وَاستَغْفَرُوا لهُ وَكانَ يَومَ القِيامَةِ في ظِلِّ العَرشِ حَتىّ يَفْرُغَ اللهُ مِن حِسابِ الخَلائِقِ وَيَكْتُبُ ثَوابَ قولِهِ: أشْهَدُ أنَّ محَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللهِ أربَعُونَ ألفَ مَلَكٍ.

“God the High will grant the reward of forty-thousand martyrs and forty-thousand veracious ones to whoever says the call for prayer for the sake of God. Due to such a person, forty-thousand sinners from my nation shall be allowed into Heaven. Indeed, when the one who says the call to prayer testifies to the unity of God, seventy thousand angels will send greetings to him and seek God’s forgiveness for him. They will be in the shade of the Lord’s Throne on the Resurrection Day until God finishes the reckoning of all people. Forty-thousand angels will record the reward of his testifying to the Prophethood of Muhammad .”[14]

1. In the other version it continues: ”reminding you of your Lord, calling you to your good fortune, and helping you to accomplish what God has made obligatory for you. So thank him for that just as you thank one who does good to you.”
2. Magians were priests of religious settlements from Mesopotamia and its surroundings, and existed up to the Christian epoch. They believed in the old nature religion of Iran, which preceded Zorastrianism.
3. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.89.
4. Known as Eid al-Qurban or Eid al-Azha.
5. ‘Urwah al-Wuthqa, chapter on Azan and Iqamah.
6. Ibid.
7. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.90.
8. Ibid.
9. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.4, p.646.
10. Ibid. pp.613-616.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.4, pp.613-616.

Right n. 30: The Right of the Ritual Prayer Leader

حق الإمام في الصلاة

وَأمّا حَقُّ إمَامِكَ فِي صَلاتِكَ فَأَنْ تَعلَمَ أنّهُ قَدْ تَقَلَّدَ السِّفَارَةَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ وبَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَالْوِفَادَةَ إلَى رَبكَ، وتَكَلَّمَ عَنْكَ وَلَمْ تَتَكَلَّمْ عَنْهُ، وَدعَا لَكَ وَلَمْ تَدْعُ لَهُ، وَطَلَبَ فِيكَ وَلَمْ تَطْلُبْ فِيهِ، وَكَفَاكَ هَمَّ الْمَقَامِ بَينَ يدي اللهِ وَالمُسَاءَلَةَ لَهُ فِيكَ وَلَمْ تَكْفِهِ ذَلِكَ، فَإنْ كَانَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ ذَلِكَ تَقْصِيرٌ كَانَ بِهِ دُونَكَ، وَإنْ كَانَ آثِماً لَمْ تَكُنْ شَرِيكَهُ فِيهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ عَلَيكَ فَضلٌ، فَوقَى نَفْسَكَ بنَفْسِهِ، وَوَقَى صلاتَكَ بصَلاتِهِ، فَتَشْكُرَ لَهُ عَلَى ذلِكَ. ولا حَوْلَ ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of your leader in your ritual prayer is that you should know that he has taken on the role of a mediator between you and God and appeared in the presence of your Lord on your behalf. And he speaks for you, but you do not speak for him; and he supplicates for you, but you do not supplicate for him; and he has beseeched for you and you do not beseech for him.

And he has spared you the anxiety of standing before God and the question of interrogation for your prayer, but you do not spare him that. Should he perform the prayer imperfectly, he is held responsible for that not you; and if he makes a mistake during the prayer, you will not be his partner in it, and there is no superiority in this for him over you. Then he protected you through himself, and he protected your prayer through his prayer. Therefore, thank him for this. And there is no power or strength but in God.

What Imam Sajjad tells us here is that the people praying should know that the prayer leader is a mediator between them and the Lord. He is praying to God on their behalf. He asks on their behalf. He suffers the fear of being in the position of being interrogated for their sake. If there are any shortcomings in the prayers, the responsibility rests upon his shoulders.

The people attending the prayer are not considered partners in this fault. The prayer leader has no superiority over others. He is just the maintainer of others and their prayers at the threshold of God the Almighty. The discussion here is not centered on the prayer itself. Rather it is about the rights of the leader of the prayers. He – who is standing in front – is like a military leader who is calling all his followers to fight with Satan.

Now they all attend to God who is the source of all perfections. The prayer leader is guiding a caravan of hearts towards God. He expresses ultimate humbleness to God on their behalf. He unites the rich and the poor, the employer and the employee, the master and the slave, the black and the white, the

informed and the uninformed together through saying the prayers.

The Wisdom behind Congregational Prayers

The Almighty God has established certain forms of worship to be done in a group. He has set up a certain time and place to do them, too. He has done so in order for the believers to achieve the blessings and effects of such social activities on their path to perfection. We can name a few of the effects of congregational prayers as follows:

1) When everyone in the congregation moves together in performing the various acts of bowing down, prostrating and sitting down in harmony, the Grandeur and Majesty of the Lord is manifested.

2) When congregational prayers are performed the might of the Muslims and their majesty and power is demonstrated.

3) When the people follow the prayer leader in their motions and in what they say in prayers, then they will learn to have order and to abide by the rules.

4) When the people pray together in a group several times each day, the social ties and the sense of brotherhood between them is reinforced.

5) When the people pray together in a group, they will develop a sense of mutual trust that can be used when they are to witness about something or make a deal.

6) Since the congregational prayers are always performed on time, they provide the best chance for one to approach God, and seek His acceptance of prayers.

7) When one participates in the prayer, especially the congregational prayers he abandons the material life and is delved into the spiritual life. Once he starts the prayer, he leaves everything but God behind, and directs his full attention to God.

8) An important benefit of congregational prayers is that they are a good means of the development of mosques and places of worship. This includes both the physical and spiritual aspects of development.

9) Another important benefit of congregational prayers is that the attendees get to know each other and their ties of friendship are strengthened.

10) Finally, in the congregational prayers all people of different classes and races get together and stand in one line. There is no difference between the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the master and the slave, the informed and the uninformed person.

Congregational prayer is the best form of elimination of racism. The gap between the people from different classes or races is reduced to zero once they attend congregational prayers.

Congregational Prayers are Open to the Public

Fazl ibn Shadan quoted on the authority of Imam Ridha :[1]

> إنمَّا جُعِلت الجَماعَةُ لِئَلاّ يَكونَ الإخْلاصُ والتَّوحيدُ والإسْلامُ والعِبادَةُ للهِ إلاّ ظاهِراً مكْشوفاً لأنَّ في إظْهارِهِ حُجَّةً عَلى أهْلِ الشَّرقِ وَالغَربِ للهِ وَحدَهُ ولِيكونَ المُنافِقُ والمُستَخِفُّ مُؤدّياً لمَا أقَرَّ بهِ يُظْهِرُ الإسلامَ وَالمَراقَبةَ وَلِتكونَ شَهاداتُ الناسِ بالإسلامِ بَعْضِهِم لِبَعضٍ جائِزَةً ممْكِنةً، مَع ما فيهِ مِن المُساعَدَةِ عَلى البِرِّ وَالتَّقوى والزَّجْرِ عَن كَثيرٍ مِن مَعاصِي اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

"Congregational prayers are decreed because true devotion, submission and servitude of God shall not be attained unless it is done in public. The public performance of such deeds is a clear testimony of the uniqueness of God for the people of the East and the West. It is to be done in public so that even hypocrites and those who belittle the Muslims in private practically have to do what they have verbally confessed in public and have to make their devotion and submission clear to the public.

This is done so that it becomes easily possible for the people to testify as to one another's being Muslim. In addition to these, another benefit of the congregational prayer is that it makes it possible to help others and to cooperate with each other. It becomes possible for the people to worship God. Through congregational prayers, a lot of the bad deeds and acts of disobedience to God the Exalted the High are forbidden."

In another tradition we read: "Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of his noble father who quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

> مَن صَلّى الخَمْسَ في جَماعَةٍ فَظُنُّوا بهِ خَيراً.

"Think well of one who performs all his five sessions of daily prayers in congregations."[2]

This is the point that was mentioned earlier. One of the major benefits of attending congregational prayers is the mutual trust that is developed between those who attend. As Imam Ridha said in the tradition just cited above, God has established congregational prayers as the means by which men can publicly recognize the servitude to God, and the people of the East and the West can become fully aware of this divine proof. The congregational prayer also fosters cooperation, helping each other and the prevention of wicked deeds.

A Few Words from "Asrar ul-Salat"

Now we will present a few words from Asrar ul-Salat by the late Hajj Mirza Malaki Tabrizi regarding congregational prayers as follows.

The main wisdom behind the decree on congregational prayers is the unity of the hearts of the believers in God's affair. There are many benefits to this unity including the strengthening of Islam. In addition to this, congregational prayers are very effective in the perfection of the soul, its strengthening the soul in trotting along the path towards God, and obtaining divine rewards. This is because God's Mercy will encompass all of them if they are united in God's way if it should be meant to descend upon anyone of them. This is true even if not all of them deserve to receive God's Mercy.

The similitude of the unity of hearts is like that of the joining of narrow muddy streams of water. Once they join, they turn into a wide river that can cleanse everything on its way. This river will no longer become dirty from the least bit of added impurities. Thus, what is important is the unity of the hearts. If one succeeds to unite in congregational prayer with people whose hearts are united with God, then he can be hopeful to receive the reward that is promised in the traditions.

However, if the people who are attending the prayer are jealous of each other and hold a grudge against each other, then hoping to receive such rewards is a far-reaching aspiration. It is not considered hope in God, rather it is fooling oneself. When a prayer leader purifies his soul, anyone who knows him shall love him. He will also be kind with the believers due to this bond of divine love.

Therefore, their congregation will be a divine one. However, if the people who unite in prayer are really disunited in their hearts and are enemies of one another, are jealous of the God-given blessings that each other one has, then there will not be any illumination from this type of unity especially if one side involved is the prayer leader himself. This is all because the major effect of any worship is due to the way it affects the heart and illuminates it.[3]

The Reward for Congregational Prayers

Abu Saeed Khudhri quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet of God : After prayer Gabriel descended with seventy thousand angels and said: "O Muhammad! Your Lord sends greetings and grants you two gifts which He has never donated to any of the Prophets before you."

The Prophet asked: "O Gabriel! What are these two gifts?" Gabriel said: "Three units of prayer, and saying congregational prayers five times each day." The Prophet asked Gabriel: "What is the reward of congregational prayers for my nation?" Gabriel said: "Whenever there are two people attending congregational prayer, each one shall be rewarded the reward of one hundred and fifty prayers for each unit of congregation prayer. When there are three people, the reward will be that of two hundred and fifty prayers. When there are four people in the prayer, then their reward will be that of one thousand and two hundred prayers.

When there are five people in the prayer, the reward will be that of one thousand and three hundred prayers. When there are six people in the prayer, the reward will be that of two thousand and four hundred prayers. When there are seven people in the prayer, the reward will be that of four thousand

and eight hundred prayers. When there are eight people, the reward will be that of nine thousand and six hundred prayers for each unit of prayer. When there are ten people, the reward will be that of nineteen thousand prayers.

When there are more than ten people the reward cannot be recorded. Even if all the water in all the seas in the heavens and the Earth turns into ink, and the wood from all the trees turns into pens, and all the men, the jinns and the angels start to record, they cannot record the reward. O Muhammad! Hearing the praises of the Lord that a believer hears in the congregational prayer is better than seventy pilgrimages and one thousand non-obligatory pilgrimages for him."[4]

In another tradition Zurarah said: "I asked Imam Sadiq : Will the congregational prayer be right with just two people?" The Imam said: "Yes. The second man must stand on the right of the prayer leader." [5] According to another tradition Johani came to the Prophet and said: "I live in the desert. After the call for the prayer, there are only my servants, my wife and my children present there. I say the prayer with them. Is this considered to be congregational prayer?" The Prophet replied: "Yes."

Then considering all the reward, why do the followers of Imam Ali lose it all by not attending congregational prayers? Is this not a great loss for them indeed?

Stories about Ritual Prayer Leaders

Now that we have reviewed the traditions about the rewards of congregational prayers, let us consider the following stories about prayer leaders that Ghopanchi has compiled in his book Sharh-iRisalat al-Huquq.

1- An Arab man called Mujrim (meaning man of sin) was standing in the first row of the congregational prayer. As the prayer leader was praying he recited:

أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ثُمَّ نُتْبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ

"Did We not destroy the men of old [***lit. the first ones***] (***for their evil***)***? So shall We make later*** (***generations***) ***follow them?"*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Mursalat 77: 16-17***]
The Arab man moved back to the third row. Then the prayer leader said:

كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ

"Thus do We deal with men of sin." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Mursalat 77: 18***]

Then the Arab man said: "By God he has aimed his words at no one else but me." He picked up his shoes and ran away from the mosque.

2 – Three brothers called Abraham, Moses and Hajj Ahmad built a mosque and asked someone to be the prayer leader for that mosque. They paid for his living expenses. One day the prayer leader recited the following verse:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

"And this is in the Books of the earliest (Revelation), – The Books of Abraham and Moses." [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-A'la 87: 18-19***]

When he finished, Hajj Ahmad asked: "Do you not know that the three of us built this mosque together, and that we all help run it?" The man said: "Yes I know." Hajj Ahmad said: "Then why did you mention their names when you recited but made no mention of me?" The prayer leader said: "These are verses of the Qur'an. We cannot add to them."

Hajj Ahmad said: "No. You had better confess that you like them more than you like me. I will hit you hard with my cane if you do not add my name in your next prayer." Then when the prayer leader recited the next prayer he said: "The Books of Abraham, Moses and Hajj Ahmad." After he finished the prayer, the people who prayed after him asked: "Where did you get Hajj Ahmad from? He said: "The thought of getting hit by the cane resulted in Hajj Ahmad's name entering in the Qur'an."

3 – It has been narrated that once a prayer leader brought a trash can that is called "satl" in Arabic and put it behind him. When he bowed down in prayer he remembered his "satl" and thought that it was stolen. Then he raised his head and said: "Rabana Lakal Satl" instead of saying "Rabana Lakal Hamd". Some of the people who were praying said: "Do not worry, the trash can is behind you."

4 – A man was praying behind a prayer leader. Then the prayer leader forgot the Sura Fatiha and started repeatedly saying: "I seek refuge in God from Satan." The man who was praying behind him said: "It is not Satan's fault. You are the one who forgot how to pray."

1. 'Ilal wa 'Uyun al-Akhbar.
2. Ibid. p.371.
3. Tarjumeh wa Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Sepehri, pp.153-155, quoted from Asrar al-Salat, pp.491-497.
4. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, pp.144-145.
5. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.5, p.379.

Right n. 31: The Right of the Sitting Companion

حق الجليس

وَأمّا حَقُّ الجَلِيسِ فَأَنْ تُلِينَ لَهُ كَنَفَكَ، وَتُطِيبَ لَهُ جَانِبَكَ، وَتُنْصِفَهُ فِي مُجَارَاةِ اللَّفْظِ ولا تُغْرِق فِي نَزْعِ اللَّحْظِ إذَا لَحَظْتَ وتَقْصُدَ فِي اللَّفْظِ إلَى إفْهَامِهِ إذَا لَفَظْتَ. وَإنْ كُنْتَ الْجَلِيسَ إلَيْهِ كُنْتَ فِي الْقِيَامِ عَنْهُ بالْخِيَارِ وَإنْ كَانَ الجَالِسَ إلَيكَ كَانَ بالخِيارِ. ولا تَقُومُ إلا بإذْنِهِ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of your sitting companion is that you should treat him gently, warmly welcome him, be fair while talking with him, do not take your eyes off of him when you are looking at him, and pronounce your words clearly to help him understand what you say. And if you are the first one to go and sit with him, you can leave him when you wish. However, if he is the first one to come and sit with you, he can leave you when he wishes to. And you should not leave him without his permission.[1] **And there is no power but in God.**

Man as a Social Being

What is meant by “sitting companion” is friends or associates, be their friendship short-lived or for a long time. Whoever becomes our companion has certain rights incumbent upon us. Men of all ages at all times need companions since man has an instinctive desire for social living. Man suffers from loneliness. He would become happy if he has a good associate or friend.

The Role of Friends in Man’s Personality

Each person’s friends and associates have a great influence on his personality, worldly and religious affairs. Friends affect our behavior and the many aspects of our lives. This effect can be either positive or negative. This is so important that the Noble Prophet of God declared one of the criteria for each person’s personality to be that of his friends. He said: “It is a great tragedy for one not to have any good friends.”[2] Imam Ali said:

مَن فَقَدَ أخاً لهُ في اللهِ فَقَدَ أشْرَفَ أعْضَاءِهِ.

“When one loses his own sincere friend whose friendship with him was for the sake of God, it is as if he has lost one of his body parts.”[3]

Now that it has become clear that a friend has a very important role in our life, it is vital to be careful in choosing a good friend so that we can have a long-lasting relationship.

How to Choose a Good Friend

Regarding the way to choose a good friend, Imam Sadiq said:

مَن غَضِبَ عَلَيكَ ثَلاثَ مَرّاتٍ فَلم يَقُل فِيكَ سُوءاً فاتَّخِذْهُ لكَ خَليلاً.

“Whoever gets angry with you thrice, but does not say anything bad about you – take him for your friend.”[4]

Stable and Unstable Friendships

Imam Ali said:

مَن اتَّخَذَ أخاً بَعدَ حُسنِ الاخْتِبارِ دامَتْ صُحبَتُه وَتأكَّدَتْ مَوَدَّتُه.

“Whoever chooses a friend after properly testing him will have a lasting friendship with him.”[5]

Imam Ali said:

مَن اتَّخَذَ أخاً مِن غَيرِ اخْتِبارٍ أَلْجَأَهُ الاضْطِرارُ إلى مُرافَقَةِ الأشْرارِ.

“Whoever makes friends without proper considerations will have to put up with wicked friends.”[6]

Associating With Wicked People

Saint Abdul Azeem Hassani quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir who said:

مجَالَسَةُ الأشْرارِ تورِثُ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ بالأخْيارِ.

“Associating with wicked people causes a bad opinion regarding good people.”[7]

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of his grandfather on the authority of the Prophet of God :

ثَلاثٌ مُجالَسَتُهُم تُميتُ القُلوبَ: الجُلوسُ مَع الأنْذالِ، وَالحَديثُ مَع النِّساءِ، وَالجُلوسُ مَع الأغْنِياءِ.

“Associating with the following three groups of people will make your heart perish: sitting with ignoble ones, conversing with women and sitting with the rich.”[8]

In another tradition regarding associating with the rich, Imam Sadiq said:

لا تُجالِسِ الأغنِياءَ فإنّ العَبْدَ يُجالِسُهُم وهُوَ يَرى أنّ لله عَليهِ نِعْمةً، فَما يَقُومُ حتّى يَرى أنّه لَيسَ للهِ عَليهِ نِعمةٌ.

“Do not sit with the rich. For a servant sits with them and he is aware of the blessings God has bestowed on him, but he rises up thinking that God has bestowed no blessing on him.”[9]

In another tradition, we read that the Noble Prophet said: “Do not associate with the dead! They asked him: “O Prophet of God! Who are the dead?” He replied: “They are the wasteful rich, who are delved in the material life of this world and unaware of God. They see everything as wealth and money.”

Such people do not have a living heart. Thus, the Prophet considers them to be like the dead. Associating with the dead will result in the perishing of one’s heart. That is why it is forbidden by the Prophet of Islam . In Sifat ash–Shia Sadooq – may mercy be upon him – has quoted Imam Baqir who quoted on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful :

مُجالَسَةُ الأشْرارِ تورِثُ سوءَ الظَّنّ بالأخْيار، وَمُجالَسَةُ الأخْيارِ تلُحِقُ الأشْرارَ بِالأخْيار، ومجَالَسَةُ الأبْرارِ للفُجّارِ تُلحِقُ الأبْرارَ بِالفُجّارِ، فَمَن اشتَبَهَ عَليكُم أمْرَهُ وَلَمْ تَعْرِفوا دينه فانْظُروا إلى خُلطائِهِ، فإنْ كانوا أهْلَ دِينِ اللّهِ فهُوَ عَلى دِينِ اللّهِ وإنْ كانوا عَلى غَيرِ دِينِ اللّهِ فلا حَظَّ لهُ مِن دِينِ اللّهِ. إنَّ رَسُولَ اللّهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وآلِهِ كانَ يَقولُ: مَن كانَ يُؤمِنُ باللّهِ وَاليَومِ الآخِرِ فلا يُؤاخِيَنَّ كافِراً ولا يُخالِطَنَّ فاجِراً، وَمَن آخى كافِراً أو خَالطَ فاجِراً كان كافِراً فاجِراً.

“Associating with wicked people will result in one being suspicious of the good people. Association of the wicked people with good people will result in them becoming good people. Association of good people with the sinners will convert them into sinners. Then if you are in doubt about someone and do not know the degree of his attachment to the decrees of religion, look at his friends.

If he associates with religious people, then he is a follower of God’s religion. However, if he associates with people who do not follow God’s religion, then he has not benefited from God’s religion. Indeed the Noble Prophet of God said: One who believes in God and the Resurrection Day shall not fraternize with an unbeliever or associate with an immoral person. Whoever fraternizes with an unbeliever or associates with an immoral person is an unbeliever and immoral.”[10]

With Whom to Associate

Imam Sajjad said to his children:

جَالِسوا أهْلَ الدِّينِ وَالمَعْرِفَةِ فإنْ لم تَقدِروا عَلَيهِمْ فالوَحْدَةُ آنسُ وأسْلَمُ فإنْ أُبيتُم إلاّ مُجالَسَةَ النّاسِ فَجالِسوا أهْلَ المُرُوّاتِ فإنَّهُم لا يَرفَثُونَ فِي مُجالَسَتِهِمْ.

“Associate with the people of religion and recognition (*of God*)*. If you cannot find any such people, then solitude is more companionable and safer. If you insist on associating with people, then associate with the people of honor who do not utter unseemly speech in their gatherings.”*[11]

Imam Sadiq said:

مَن جالَسَ أهْلَ الرَّيبِ فَهُو مُريبٌ.

"Whoever associates with dubious people will be regarded as dubious."[12]

Associate with Scholars

The Noble Prophet of God said:

> إجْلِسوا عِندَ كُلِّ عالِمٍ يدْعوكُم مِن خَمسٍ إلى خَمسٍ: مِن الشَّكِّ إلى اليَقينِ ومِنَ الرّياءِ إلى الإخْلاصِ ومِن الرَّغْبَةِ إلى الزُّهْدِ ومِنَ الكِبَرِ إلى التّواضُعِ ومِنَ العَداوَةِ إلى المَحَبَّةِ.

"Associate with every scholar who calls you away from five things towards five things:

1. *From doubt to certitude*

2. *From dissemblance to sincerity* (*in deeds*)

3. *From desire* (*of this world*) *to abstinence*

4. *From pride to humility*

5. *From enmity to love*. [13]

Thus, we realize the importance of visiting the scholars. Their effect on man's spirit is clarified. We see why the Prophet of God invited us to associate with scholars.

The Role of Wise Companions

Imam Sadiq said:

> الإخْوانُ ثَلاثَةٌ: فَواحِدٌ كالغِذاءِ الّذي يُحتاجُ إليه في كُل وَقتٍ، والثاني في مَعنى الدّاءِ وَهو الأحمَقُ والثّالِثُ في مَعنى الدّواءِ وهو اللَّبيبُ.

"Brothers are of three kinds. The first kind is like nourishment that we need at all times; the second is like a disease, and they are the foolish ones. The third kind is like the remedy, and they are the intelligent ones."

Moa'tasim in the Minister's Party

Fazl Marwan was one of the ministers of the Abbasid Caliph Moa'tasim. He was so talented that he had attained an especial position near the Caliph.

To show the people his especial position near the Caliph, he invited the Caliph to an evening party. He

decorated his large house with glamorous materials, beautiful flowers, golden and silver dishes and expensive rugs. He prepared the best of the fruits and confectioneries.

Once the Caliph entered his house, he felt jealous and brought the excuse that his stomach hurt, and left the house. The minister realized that his efforts had given a negative result. He consulted with his intelligent friend Ibrahim Mooseli who was present. Ibrahim thought for a short while and told him to accompany the Caliph to the court and wait for his letter. He also advised him to read the letter in the presence of the Caliph.

Fazl followed Ibrahim's advice. After a short while, he received a letter in which it was written: "Now that the party for the Caliph has ended, the owner of the rugs and the jewels has come to take them back. Please issue permission to give them back to their owner." Moatasim asked about the contents of the letter. The minister read the letter. Then when the Caliph realized that these were all borrowed, his hurt feelings ended. Thus, the intellect of a very intelligent friend was able to save a friend.

The Criteria for Honesty

Imam Sadiq said:

> الصَّداقَةُ مَحدودةٌ، فمَنْ لمَ تَكُنْ فيهِ تِلكَ الحُدودِ فلا تَنسِبُهُ إلى كَمالِ الصَّداقَةِ، وَمَنْ لَم يكُنْ فيهِ شَيءٌ مِن تِلكَ الحُدودِ لا تَنسِبْه إلى شَيءٍ مِن الصَّداقَة. أوّلهُا أنْ تكونَ سَريرَتُهُ وَعَلانيَتُهُ لكَ واحِدةٌ، والثانيةُ أنْ يَرى زَينَكَ زَينَهُ وَشَيْنَكَ شَينَهُ، والثالثةُ أنْ لا يُغيّرَهُ مالٌ ولا ولايةٌ، والرابعةُ أنْ لا يَمْنَعَكَ شَيئاً ممّا تَصِلُ إلَيهِ مَقدِرَتُهُ، والخَامِسَةُ أنْ لا يُسَلّمَكَ عِندَ النَّكباتِ.

"There are certain criteria for sincere friendship. Do not attribute perfection in sincere friendship to one who does not possess these criteria. Do not attribute any (*degree of*) *sincere friendship to one who has none of these criteria. Firstly, his inner and outer self should be the same for you. Secondly, he should consider your honor to be his honor and your dishonor to be his dishonor. Thirdly, worldly wealth and position should not change him. Fourthly, he should not refuse you anything he has the capacity to attain. And fifthly, he should not desert you in times of affliction."*[14]

The Prophet's Association with the Poor Pious Ones

Consider the following verse:

> وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

"And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His

Face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:28***]

We learn from this verse that the value of men is not in their position or wealth. It has been said that the above verse was revealed under the following conditions. A group of the haughty rich people went to see the Prophet of God . Pointing at faithful men such as Salman, Abu-Dharr, Sohayb and Khobab they said: "O Muhammad! We will come to you if you sit at the highest position in the room and fend off these stinky folks who wear rough clothes."15

This verse condemns the formation of various classes in the society, and attempts to establish ties between the noble people and the poor ones. In a similar way, Imam Sajjad has recommended respect for our companions, a warm welcome for them, polite conversation with them and a respectful farewell.

1. In the other version it is followed by: "You should forget his slips and remember his good qualities, and you should tell nothing about him but good."
2. Shafi, v.1, p.192.
3. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.5, p.472.
4. Tarikh Ya'qubi, v.2, p.383.
5. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.5, pp.397-398.
6. Ibid.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.191.
8. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.191.
9. Ibid. pp.194-199.
10. Ibid. p.196.
11. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.196.
12. Ibid. p.197.
13. Ithna 'Ashariyah, p.202.
14. Ithna 'Ashariyah, p.343, quoted from al-Amali by Saduq, p.397.
15. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.12, p.414.

Right n. 32: The Right of the Neighbor

حق الجار

وَأمّا حَقُّ الجَارِ فَحِفْظُهُ غَائِبًا وَكَرَامَتُهُ شَاهِدًا ونُصرَتُهُ وَمَعُونتُهُ فِي الحَالَين جَمِيعاً. لا تَتَّبعْ لَهُ عَوْرَةً ولا تَبحَثْ لَهُ عَنْ سَوْءَ[ةٍ] لِتَعْرِفَهَا، فَإنْ عَرَفْتَهَا مِنْهُ عَنْ غَيْرِ إرَادَةٍ مِنْكَ وَلا تَكَلُّفٍ كُنْتَ لِمَا عَلِمْتَ حِصْناً حَصِيناً وَسِتْرًا سَتِيرًا، لَوْ بَحَثتِ الأَسِنَّةُ عَنْهُ ضَمِيرًا لَمْ تَتَّصِلْ إلَيْه لانطِوَائِهِ عَلَيهِ. لا تَسْتَمِعْ عَلَيهِ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَعْلَمُ. لا تُسَلِّمْهُ عِنْدَ شَدِيدَةٍ، ولا تَحْسُدْهُ عِنْدَ نِعْمَةٍ. تُقِيلُ عَثْرَتهُ وتَغْفِرْ زَلَّتَهُ. ولا تَدَّخِرْ حِلْمَكَ عَنْهُ إذَا جَهِلَ عَلَيْكَ، ولا تَخرُجْ أَنْ تَكُونَ سُلَّمًا لَهُ. تَرُدُّ عَنهُ

لِسَانَ الشَّتِيمَةِ، وَتُبْطِلُ فِيهِ كَيْدَ حَامِلِ النَّصِيحَةِ، وَتُعَاشِرَهُ مُعَاشَرَةً كَرِيمَةً. وَلا حَوْلَ وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of your neighbor is that you should be a guardian for him when he is absent, and you should honor him when he is present, and you should assist and support him in both situations. You should not pursue any of his imperfections, and you should not seek any of his faults. But if you should discover any of his faults unintentionally, you should take the role of a fortified stronghold and a veiling screen regarding what you know.

You should guard them in such a way that none of his defects can be discovered even if they are thoroughly inspected with spears. And you should not eavesdrop on him, and you should not forsake him during times of hardship. And you should not envy him when he receives a blessing. Pardon his deviation and forgive his mistakes. And do not lose your temper when he behaves out of ignorance with you. And do not stop to be his supporter, and answer those who scold him. And divulge for him the deception of those who counsel him, and associate with him in an honorable manner. And there is no power or strength but in God.

The Arabic word 'jar' meaning neighbor is used with several implications in the Holy Qur'an. In some places, it is used to refer to neighbors – close or far away. In the Holy Qur'an, it is also used to refer to those who seek asylum as in the following verse:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ

"If one amongst the Pagans ask thee for asylum, grant it to him…" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:6***]

The above word used for neighbor has the deeper meaning of security. That implies that neighbors are granted security by each other. The right of a neighbor is great both intellectually and religiously. The word 'jar' is used in any place where there is a great right as in the following verse:

لاَ غَالِبَ لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَّكُمْ

"No one among men can overcome you this day, while I am near to you." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Anfal 8:48***]

Here in the phrase 'I am near to you' in Arabic the word 'jar' is used. The Qur'an refers to close-by and distant neighbors. We shall discuss this issue next.

The Rights of Neighbors as Viewed in the Qur'an

Consider the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

وَاعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَلاَ تُشْرِكُواْ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

***"Serve God, and join not any partners with Him; and do good – to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer* (*ye meet*)*, and what your right hands possess."* [*The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:36*]**

The verse refers to some of the rights in Islam including those of neighbors. 'Neighbors who are near' in this verse has been interpreted by various commentators to imply various things. Some consider it to imply relatives. However, since the verses that have preceded this verse in the Qur'an refer to the rights of relatives this interpretation seems to be an unlikely meaning. Rather other implications seem to be more appropriate. It may mean neighbors who are closer to us in religion.

"Neighbors who are strangers" implies physical distance. According to traditions people living in up to forty houses away in either direction are considered our neighbors. It may also refer to non-Muslim neighbors who are not fighting with Muslims.[1] Now that we have studied the Qur'anic verses regarding neighbors, we will briefly review the traditions on this issue.

Traditions on the Rights of Neighbors

There are many traditions about the rights of neighbors, their due respect and their role in our security. The Prophet of God said:

مَن أغْلَقَ بابَهُ خَوفاً مِن جارِهِ عَلى أهْلِهِ وَمالِهِ فَليسَ جارُهُ مُؤمِناً.

"The neighbor because of whom one locks the door, out of fear for one's family and wealth, is not a believer."

The Prophet of God was asked: "O Prophet of God! What are the rights of neighbors incumbent upon other neighbors?" He said:

مِن أدْنى حُقوقِهِ عَلَيهِ إنِ اسْتَقْرَضَهُ أقْرَضَهُ وإنِ اسْتَعانَهُ أعانَهُ وإنِ اسْتَعارَ مِنهُ إعارَهُ وإنِ احْتاجَ إلى رِفْدِه رَفَدَهُ وإنْ دَعا أجَابَهُ وإنْ مَرِضَ عَادَهُ وإنْ مَاتَ شَيَّعَ جِنازَتَهُ وإنْ أصَابَ خَيراً فَرِحَ بِهِ وَلَمْ يَحْسِدْهُ وإنْ أصَابَ مُصيبَةً حَزِنَ لِحِزْنِهِ وَلا يَستَطيلُ عَليهِ بِبِناءٍ سَكَنَهُ فَيُؤذِيهِ بإشْرافِهِ عَلَيهِ وَسَدِّ مَنافِذِ الرّيحِ عَنهُ وإنْ أُهْدِيَ إلى مَنْزِلِهِ طُرفَةٌ أهْدى لهُ

قِسماً مِنها إذا عَلِمَ أنَّهُ لَيسَ عِندَهُ مِثلُها أو فَليَستِرْها عَنهُ وَعَن عِيالِهِ إنْ شَحَّتْ نَفسُهُ بِها. إسمَعوا ما أقُولُ لَكُم: لَمْ يُؤدِّ حَقَّ الجارِ إلاّ قَليلٌ مِمَّنْ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ، وَلَقَد أوصَاني اللهُ بالجَارِ حَتىّ ظَنَنْتُ أنَّهُ سَيُورِّثُهُ.

"The least of a neighbor's rights on him is that if he asks him for a loan he should grant it to him. If he asks for help, he should help him. If he wants to borrow something from him, he should lend it to him. If he needs him to donate something to him, he should do so. If he invites him, he should accept his invitation. If he gets sick, he should go and visit him. If he passes away, he should attend his funeral procession.

If he receives some blessings, he should be happy and not envious of him. If a tragedy befalls him, he should grieve for his grief. He should not build a tall building in front of his dwelling which would trouble him due to its overlooking his house and obstructing the passage of breeze. If he is presented with some novelty in his house, then he should present him a part of it if he knows that he does not have something like it, otherwise he should conceal it from him and his family if he desires it for himself."

(*The Prophet of God then added:*) *"Listen to what I tell you. Only a few people who are blessed by God's Mercy fulfil the rights of neighbors. God enjoined on me the rights of the neighbor to the extent that I thought He would appoint him as an heir."*[2]

There are three important points stressed by the Prophet in this tradition. The first point is that each person's house is his place of peace and security, both for his property and for honor. Should one lose his security at home, he has lost his most secure stronghold. This peace and security is everyone's certain right, and should not be violated by anyone. If one lives in such a way that threatens the security of his neighbors, then he is not a true believing Muslim.

The second point that is stressed here is not to build tall buildings overlooking other people's houses. We all know that at the time of the Prophet there were no tall buildings in Arabia. However, the teachings of the Prophet are universal, and for all times. Thus, he instructed us not to build such buildings. This is one of the signs of the completeness of Islamic teachings and a proof of Islam being the last religion. Housing is still one of man's major social problems.

The problem of finding a secure place to live is not only one of our problems, but it is also one of most countries of the world. The Westerners have chosen living in apartments with all its problems and limitations. Our people are also following this practice. The third point that is stressed is that one should not show what he brings into his house to his neighbors, or give a little of what he brings home to his neighbors if they are poor.

It is Forbidden to Hurt One's Neighbors

Imam Sadiq said:

مَلعُونٌ مَن آذى جَارَهُ.

“One who troubles his neighbor is cursed.”[3]

On the other hand, pleasing one’s neighbor is a cause of forgiveness. In Lubb al-Lubab Qutb al-Rawandi quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

مَن مَاتَ ولَهُ جِيرانٌ ثَلاثَةٌ كُلُّهُم راضُونَ عَنهُ غُفِرَ لهُ.

“Anyone who dies with three neighbors pleased with him will be forgiven (*by God*)*.”*[4]
The Prophet of God said:

مَن كانَ يُؤمِنُ بِاللهِ وَاليَومِ الآخِرِ فَلا يُؤذِ جَارَهُ.

“Whoever believes in God and the Final Day should not trouble his neighbors.” [5]

The Prophet also said:

حُرمَةُ الجَارِ عَلى الجَارِ كَحُرمَةِ أُمِّهِ.

“The reverence of a neighbor incumbent on the neighbor is like the reverence due to one’s mother.”[6]

Complaining Against One’s Neighbor

Imam Sadiq narrated that someone complained to the Prophet of God about his neighbor. The Prophet turned his face away from him. He came back again. Then the Prophet told Ali , Salman and Miqdad:

إذْهَبوا ونادُوا أنْ لَعْنَةُ اللهِ وَالمَلائِكَةِ عَلى مَن آذى جَارَهُ.

“Go and publicly announce that the curse of God and the angels is on one who troubles his neighbor.”[7]

Treating Neighbors with Kindness

The Noble Prophet said:

البِرُّ وَحُسْنُ الجِوارِ زيادَةٌ في الرِّزْقِ وَعِمارَةٌ في الدِّيارِ.

“Treating one’s neighbors with kindness and being a good neighbor will result in an increase in one’s share of daily bread and the development of towns.” 8

Imam Ridha has been quoted as having said the following in Fiqh al-Ridha:

وَأَحْسِنْ مُجاوَرَةَ مَن جَاوَرَكَ فإنَّ اللهَ تَعالى يَسْأَلُكَ عَنِ الجارِ، وَقَد رُوِيَ عَن رَسولِ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَليهِ وَآلِهِ: أنَّ اللهَ تَبارَكَ وَتَعالى أوْصانِي بالجَارِ حَتىّ ظَنَنْتُ أنَّهُ يَرِثُنِي.

“Be a good neighbor for your neighbors since God will ask you about the neighbour. God’s Prophet has been quoted as having said: God the Almighty enjoined on me the rights of the neighbor to the extent that I thought he will inherit from me.” 9

Be Considerate With Your Neighbors

It is quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

مَا آمَنَ بي مَن باتَ شَبْعانَ وَجارُهُ جَائِعٌ.

*“Whoever spends the night with a full stomach, while his neighbor is hungry, does not believe in me.”*10
He also said:

مَا آمَنَ بي مَن باتَ شَبْعانَ وَجارُهُ طاوٍ، مَا آمَنَ بي مَن باتَ كاسِياً وَجارُهُ عارٍ.

“One who spends the night with a full stomach while his neighbor is hungry, has not believed in me. One who spends the night clothed, while his neighbor has no clothes, has not believed in me.” 11

In a letter to his governor Uthman ibn Hunayf, Imam Ali wrote:

أأبِيتُ مِبطاناً وَحَولي بُطونٌ غَرثَى وَأكْبادٌ حَرّى؟

*“Should I pass the night with a full stomach while around me are hungry and thirsty bellies?”*12

Bad Neighbors

It has been quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

أعُوذُ باللهِ مِن جارِ سوءٍ في دَارِ إقامَةٍ تَراكَ عَيناهُ وَيَرعَاكَ قَلبُهُ، إنْ رآكَ بخَيرٍ ساءَهُ وإنْ رآكَ بِشَرٍّ سَرّهُ.

“I seek refuge in God from an evil neighbor next to one’s place of residence. His eyes see you and his heart watches you. If he sees you in a good state, it grieves him, and if he sees you in a bad state, it makes him happy.”[13]

Investigate Before Buying a House

The Noble Prophet said:

إلتَمِسوا الجَارَ قَبلَ شِراءِ الدّارِ وَالرَّفيقَ قَبلَ الطَّرِيقِ.

“Ask about the neighbor before buying the house, and the travelling companion before starting the journey.”[14]

The Domain of Neighborhood

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful :

حَرِيمُ المَسجِدِ أرْبَعُونَ داراً والجِوارُ أربَعون داراً مِن أرْبَعَةِ جَوانِبِها.

“The domain of the neighborhood of a mosque and a house is forty houses in four directions.”[15]

Imam Sajjad said: “The people living in forty houses on either side of your house are your neighbors. You must respect their rights, live with them, and associate with them in peace. Seek God’s help to do so.

1. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.3, pp.380-381.
2. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.2, p.79.
3. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.2, pp.78-79.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.2, pp.78-79.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. p.80.
10. Ibid. pp.78-79.
11. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.2, pp.78-79.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

Right n. 33: The Right of the Companion

حق الصاحب

وَأما حَقُّ الصَّاحِب فَأَنْ تَصْحَبَهُ بالفَضلِ مَا وَجَدْتَ إلَيهِ سَبيلاً وإلا فَلا أَقَلَّ مِنَ الإنصَاف، وَأَنْ تُكْرِمَهُ كَمَا يكْرِمُكَ، وَتحْفَظَهُ كَمَا يحْفَظُكَ، ولا يَسْبقَكَ فِيمَا بَينَكَ وبَينَهُ إلَى مكْرَمَةٍ، فَإنْ سَبَقَكَ كَافَأْتَهُ. ولا تُقَصِّرَ بهِ عَمَّا يَسْتَحِقُّ مِنَ الْمَوَدَّةِ. تُلْزِمُ نفْسَكَ نصِيحَتَهُ وَحِيَاطَتَهُ وَمُعَاضَدتَهُ عَلَى طَاعَةِ رَبهِ وَمَعُونتَهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ فِيمَا لا يَهُمُّ بهِ مِنْ مَعْصِيةِ رَبهِ، ثُمَّ تَكُونُ [عَلَيْهِ] رَحْمَةً ولا تَكُونُ عَلَيهِ عَذَاباً. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of the companion is that you should act as his companion with nobility as much as you can, otherwise you should at least treat him with fairness. Honor him as he honors you, and guard him as he guards you, and do not let him precede you in generosity. And if he precedes you, then recompense him. Do not fall short of giving him the love that he deserves. Commit yourself to advise him, care for him, and help him perform the acts of obedience to his Lord, and help him restrain himself from any act of disobedience of his Lord that he might attempt. Then be a mercy upon him, and not a chastisement. And there is no power but in God.

To summarize the Imam's words, we can say:

1) Treat him with nobility as much as possible. At least be fair with him.

2) Honor him as he honors you. Try to be the first one to treat the other one with kindness. Return his favors.

3) Commit yourself to advise him to do acts of obedience to God.

4) Always restrain him from sinful acts. Try to be like a blessing for him.

We read the following in the Qur'an:

يَا صَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ أَأَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

"O my two companions of the prison! (***I ask you***)***: are many lords differing among themselves better, or the One God, Supreme and Irresistible?"*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:39***]

In the Arabic text of the following verse, the word used for 'a wife' actually means a companion.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

"And Exalted is the Majesty of our Lord: He has taken neither a wife nor a son." [***The Holy Qur'an, Jinn 72:3***]

In the following verse the word companion refers to the Noble Prophet of God :

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى

"Your Companion is neither astray nor being misled." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Najm 53:2***]

Thus, we can say that companion refers to someone that is with us either for a short time or for a long time. There is a right that is incumbent upon us for our companion.

Learning from Friends

One of man's characteristics is learning from friends. We influence others. Others influence us. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an warns us about the possibility of deviation and depicts for us a scene in the Hereafter when man realizes that ignorant and tricky companions have corrupted him. Then he wishes that he had never made friends with them. However, then it is too late to be sorry. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا

لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنسَانِ خَذُولًا

"The Day that the wrongdoer will bite at his hands, he will say, "Oh! Would that I had taken a (straight) path with the Apostle! Ah! Woe is me! Would that I had never taken such a one for a friend! He did lead me astray from the Message (of God) after it had come to me! Ah! The Evil One is but a traitor to man!"..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Furqan 25:27-29***]

Man's state of extreme sorrow for following the footsteps of an evil friend is shown in these verses. Although these verses refer to the Hereafter, there are many people who greatly suffer from the companionship of bad friends, love their property, and honor.

Bad Companions as Viewed in the Traditions

There are many traditions that advise man not to make friends with bad people in order to prevent any losses and any future state of becoming sorry. Imam Ali said:

لا تَصْحَبِ الشِّرّيرَ فإنَّ طَبعَكَ يَسرِقُ مِن طبْعِهِ شَرّاً وأنْتَ لا تَعلَمُ.

"Avoid the companionship of wicked people since your nature will unknowingly adopt their wickedness."[1]

Imam Sadiq said:

مَن يَصحَبْ صاحِبَ السّوءِ لا يَسْلَمْ.

"Whoever associates with bad friends will not remain sound."[2]

He also said:

مَن لَمْ يَتَجَنَّبْ مُصاحَبَةَ الأحْمقِ يُوشَكُ أنْ يَتَخَلَّقَ بأخْلاقِهِ.

"Whoever does not avoid the companionship of a fool will come close to adopting his behavior."[3]

These traditions point out that man is influenced by his friends and will adopt their behavior. If his friends are stupid or wicked, then he will unknowingly adopt their behavior and act like them. The fact that the physicians have pointed out about contagious diseases is not limited to physical illnesses. Some mental illnesses are contagious too. When Imam Ali said: "… your nature will unknowingly adopt their wickedness…" he referred exactly to this fact. In addition, when Imam Sadiq said: "Whoever associates with bad friends will not remain sound…" he referred to this fact too.

The Consequences of Becoming Friends with a Fool

As an example of the consequences of becoming friends with a fool, consider the following story. A person needed to dig a well in his yard asked someone to come and dig one for him. A large amount of dirt was dug out of the well and piled up in the yard. He wondered what to do with that dirt. He went to a friend of his to ask for advice. His friend was a fool!

He told him to dig another well in the yard and then throw the dirt from the first one in it. He did the same, but ended up with a large amount of dirt from the second well piled up on the other side of his yard. He went to his friend again to ask for more advice. His friend told him to simply pour the dirt from the second well he had dug into the first one!

As another example, consider the following story. Once a cow stuck his head into a large earthenware jar to eat, but his head was stuck in it. The owner thought for a while, but he could not find a way to get the cow's head out of the jar.

Then he went to the magistrate to get help. The magistrate came to the place where the cow was and

ordered the cow's head to be cut off once he saw what had happened. They cut off the cow's head and it fell in the jar. They tried to bring it out but did not manage to do so. Then the magistrate ordered them to break the jar to get it out. Therefore, the jar was broken and the cow's head was chopped off too. This is the result of following the advice of a fool!

It has been narrated on the authority of Solomon:

> لا تَحكُموا عَلى رَجُلٍ بِشَيء حَتىّ تَنظُروا إلى مَن يُصاحِبُ، فإنمّا يُعرَفُ الرَّجُلُ بأشْكالِهِ وَأقْرانِهِ وَيُنْسَبُ إلى أصْحابِهِ وأخْدانِهِ.

"Do not express an opinion about a person before you consider with whom he keeps company, since a man is only known through the type of friends and associates he has, and is described in relation to his companions and intimates."[4]

Imam Ali said:

> لا خَيرَ في صُحبَةِ مَن اجْتَمَعَ فيه سِتُّ خِصالٍ: إنْ حَدَّثكَ كَذبَكَ وإنْ حَدَّثْتَهُ كَذَّبَكَ وإن ائْتَمَنْتَهُ خانَكَ وإن ائْتَمَنَكَ اتَّهَمَكَ وإنْ أنعَمْتَ عليهِ كَفَّرَكَ وإنْ أنْعَمَ عليكَ مَنَّ بِنِعْمَتِهِ.

"There is no good in the companionship of one in whom six qualities are combined:

1 – Those who lie when they tell you something.
2 – Those who consider you to be telling a lie when you tell them something.
3 – Those who betray you after you trust them.
4 – Those who will accuse you of something after they trust you.
5 – Those who will not be grateful when you confer a favour on them.
6 – Those who, if they confer a favour on you, will make mention of it."

Whom not to Associate With

Imam Baqir said: My father advised me as follows:

> يا بُنَيَّ لا تَصْحَبَنَّ خَمْسَةً وَلا تُحادِثْهُم وَلا تُرافِقْهُمْ في طَريقٍ. فَقُلتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِداكَ يا أَبَة، مَن هؤلاءِ الخَمْسَةُ؟ قالَ: لا تَصْحَبَنَّ فاسِقاً فإنّهُ يَبيعُكَ بأكْلَةٍ فَما دُونَها. قلتُ: يا أبَة، وَما دُونها؟ قالَ: يَطْمَع فِيها ثُمَّ لا يَنالهُا. قلتُ: يا أبَة، وَمَن الثّاني؟ قالَ: لا تَصْحَبَنَّ البَخيلَ فإنّهُ يَقْطَعُ بِك في مَالِهِ أحْوَجَ ما كُنْتَ إلَيهِ. فقُلتُ: وَمَن الثّالثُ؟ قال: لا تَصْحَبَنَّ كَذّاباً فإنّهُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ السَّرابِ يُبَعِّدُ عَنكَ القَريبَ وَيُقَرّبُ مِنكَ البَعيدَ. قُلت: وَمَن الرّابِعُ؟ قالَ: لا تَصْحَبَنَّ الأحْمَقَ فإنّهُ يُريدُ أنْ يَنْفَعَكَ فَيَضُرُّكَ. قُلتُ: ومَن الخامِسُ؟ قالَ: لا تَصْحَبَنَّ قاطِعَ رَحِمٍ فإنّي وَجَدْتُهُ مَلعوناً في كِتابِ اللهِ في ثَلاثَةِ مَواضِعَ.

"O my son! Be sure not to associate, converse or travel with five groups of people." I asked him: "O

father. May I be your ransom! Who are these five groups of people?" He replied: "Do not associate with corrupt people since they will sell you for morsel or less than that." I asked him: "O father! What is meant by less?" He said: "They will desire it but will not get what they wanted."

Then I asked: "O father! Who are the second group?" He said: "Do not associate with misers since they will deprive you of their property when you need it the most." I asked: "Who are the third group?" He said: "Do not associate with liars since they are like a mirage. They will make the near seem distant to you and make the distant seem near." Then I asked: "Who are the fourth group of people?" He replied: "Do not associate with fools, since they will cause you harm even though they intend to help you. Then I asked: "Who are the fifth group?" He said: "Do not associate with those who cut off ties with their relatives since I have found them cursed in three places in the Qur'an."

Now let us consider the verses that Imam Sajjad referred to:

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَن تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعْمَى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

"Then, is it to be expected of you, if ye were put in authority, that ye will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin? Such are the men whom God has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight." [***The Holy Qur'an, Muhammad 47:22-23***]

These verses are about a group of hypocrites. And for the second occasion:

وَالَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

"But those who break the Covenant of God, after having plighted their word thereto, and cut asunder those things which God has commanded to be joined, and work mischief in the land; - on them is the curse; for them is the terrible home!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ra'd 13:25***]

The ideological and scientific corruption of the materialistic people is summarized in the following three in the above verse:

1 – Breaking divine covenants, including natural, intellectual and religious ones.
2 – Cutting off relationships including ties with God, with divine leaders and with oneself.
3 – Corruption on the Earth.
In addition, the third verse reads as follows:

الَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ أُولَـئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

"Those who break God's Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what God Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:27***]

Visiting near relations is so important that the Prophet of God said:

صِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ تُعَمِّرُ الدِّيارَ وَتَزيدُ في الأعْمارِ وإنْ كانَ أهْلُها غَيرَ أخْيارٍ.

"Establishing the ties of kinship will result in the development of towns and an increase in the lifespans, even if those who adhere to it are not of the good ones."[5]

Imam Hasan's Advice to Junadah

In a part of his advice to Junadah ibn Amyat, Imam Hasan said:

وَإذا نازَعَتْكَ نَفْسُكَ إلى مُصاحَبَةِ الرِّجالِ فاصْحَبْ مَن إذا صَحِبْتَهُ زانَكَ وإذا خَدِمْتَهُ صانَكَ وإذا أرَدْتَ مَعونَةً أعانَكَ وإنْ قُلتَ صَدَّقَ قَولَكَ وإنْ صِلْتَ شَدَّ صَولَكَ وإنْ مَدَدْتَ يَدكَ لِفَضْلٍ مَدَّها وإنْ بَدَتْ مِنكَ ثَلْمَةٌ سَدَّها وإنْ رَآى مِنكَ حَسَنَةً عَدَّها وإنْ سَأَلْتَهُ أعطاكَ وإنْ سَكَتَّ عَنهُ ابتَدَأكَ وإنْ نَزَلَتْ بِكَ إحْدى المُلِمّاتِ واساكَ.

"If you feel you need to associate with others, associate with the following people:
1) Associate with people whose association is like an adornment for you.
2) Associate with people who will protect you when you serve them.
3) Associate with people who will help you when you need help.
4) Associate with people who will accept what you tell them as the truth.
5) Associate with people who will strengthen any bonds of friendship that you initiate with them.
6) Associate with people who will accept your favors when you favor them out of nobility.
7) Associate with people who will cover up anything that might harm your honor.
8) Associate with people who will recognize your good deeds towards them.
9) Associate with people who will grant you when you ask, and if you are silent, give you without your asking.
10) Associate with people who will be sympathetic with you when you face hardships."[6]

The Commander of the Faithful said:

لا تَصْحَبْ إلاّ عاقِلاً تَقِيّاً ولا تُخالِطْ إلاّ عالِماً زَكِيّاً ولا تُودِعْ سِرَّكَ إلاّ مُؤمِناً وَفِيّاً.

“Do not be friends with anyone unless he is pious and intelligent. Only associate with a righteous scholar. Do not entrust your secrets to anyone except believers who honor their promises.”[7]

He also said:

> وَاعْلَموا أنَّ صُحبَةَ العالِمِ واتِّبَاعَهُ دِينٌ يُدانُ بِهِ، وَطَاعَتُه مَكْسَبَةٌ لِلحَسَناتِ مَمْحاةٌ لِلسَّيّئاتِ وذَخِيرَةٌ لِلمُؤمِنين وَرِفْعَةٌ في حَياتهِم وَمماتهِم.

“Know that associating with the scholar and following him is a practice with which God is served. Obedience to him results in the attainment of good deeds and the elimination of evil deeds. It will be a savings for believers, and an elevation in their position in this life and after death.”[8]

1. Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v.20, p.272.
2. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.2, p.65.
3. Ibid. p.64.
4. Safinah al-Bihar, v.2,p.27.
5. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.1, p.105.
6. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.210.
7. Ibid. p.209.
8. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, p.209.

Right n. 34: The Right of the Partner

> حق الشريك

> وَأمّا حَقُّ الشَّرِيكِ، فَإنْ غَابَ كَفَيْتَهُ، وَإنْ حَضَرَ سَاوَيْتَهُ، ولا تَعْزِمْ عَلَى حُكْمِكَ دُونَ حُكْمِهِ، وَلا تَعمَلْ برَأْيِكَ دُونَ مُناظَرَتِهِ، وتَحْفَظُ عَلَيْهِ مَالَهُ وَتنْفِي عَنْهُ خِيَانتَهُ فِيمَا عَزَّ أَو هَانَ فَإنَّهُ بَلَغَنَا أَنَّ «يَدَ اللهِ عَلَى الشَّرِيكَيْنِ مَا لَمْ يَتَخاوَنا». ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of the partner is that you should take care of his affairs in his absence. And you should treat him equally when he is present. And you should not make any decisions on your own without considering his opinion. And you should not act according to your own opinion before discussing it with him. You should safeguard his property, and refuse to betray him in what is of great or little importance, since it has been transmitted to us: “God’s hand is above (the hands of) the two partners as long as they do not betray each other.” And there is no power but in God.

The concept of partnership has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an when referring to Moses and his brother Aaron. Here Aaron is to become a partner with Moses to help him invite Pharaoh to obey God.

اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي

وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي

"Add to my strength through him. And make him share my task." [***The Holy Qur'an, Ta-Ha 20:31-32***]

A partner is one who has a share in something or some work. We read in the following verse:

وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ

"...Nor has He a partner in His dominion..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Furqan 25:2***]

This refers to God having no partners. Of course, God has created many angels and forces to act as intermediate means to run the affairs of the universe. This also refers to ascribing partners to God.

أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ

"...Or have they a share in the heavens?" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Fatir 35:40***]

An infidel is one who associates partners with God.[1]

Partnership as Viewed in Jurisprudence

A partnership is not established unless it is regarding two things that are totally alike in all respects, and are mingled into each other. Then each partner allows the other one to use it.[2] Some jurisprudents have also required that partnership should be verbally expressed in Arabic or another language. Partners should be adults, and they should be sound-minded. They should fully opt to engage in partnership and have the right to use their property. In Qawa`id al-Ahkam Allameh Hilli said: "There are four types of partnership:

1 - Partnership of property (Shirkah al-Amwal)
2 - Partnership by contributing effort and skill (Shirkah al-Abdan)
3 - Partnership based on negotiation (Shirkah al-Mufavezah)
4 - Partnership based on credit and reliability (Shirkah al-Wujuh)

However, no forms except the first type are right."[3] Therefore, partnership is only correct in regards to property when done subject to the conditions expressed by the jurisprudents.

Business Etiquette

For business to be right and for any earned profits to be legitimate, there is certain trade etiquette in Islam. There is a whole chapter on "business etiquette" in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah. As partnership is part of trade, it is subject to that etiquette. Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet :

مَن باعَ وَاشْتَرى فَلْيَحْفَظْ خَمْسَ خِصالٍ وإلاّ فلا يَشْتَرِيَنَّ وَلا يَبِيعَنَّ: الرّبا وَالحَلْفَ وَكِتْمانَ العَيبِ وَالحَمْدَ إذا باعَ والذَّمَّ إذا اشْتَرى.

"Whoever buys or sells should adhere to the following or not engage in trade:

1 – Avoid usury.
2 – Do not swear in trade.
3 – Do not cover up the flaws in his goods.
4 – Do not praise what he wants to sell.
5 – Do not put down what he wants to buy."[4]

In another tradition in Istikharat we read that Ibn Tavoos quoted on the authority of Muhammad ibn Yahya: "A friend of mine decided to go on a business trip, but postponed it until he could go to visit Imam Sadiq and seek his advice. When he went to see Imam Sadiq and asked for advice, the Imam said: I advise you to be honest. Do not cover up the flaws of what you want to sell.

Do not cheat or fool the one who buys goods from you since it is illegitimate to do so. You should like for others what you like for yourself. Do not swear since false swearing will cause you to go to Hell. A businessman is at a loss unless what he gives and takes is right. Therefore, pray when you decide to start your trip and ask God for good. My father said that the Prophet of God recommended asking God for good when you want to go on a trip just as he taught the Qur'an."[5]

Partnership as Viewed in Traditions

The Noble Prophet said that God the Almighty said:

أنَا ثالِثُ الشَّريكَينِ ما لَمْ يَخُنْ أحَدُهُما صَاحِبَهُ، فإذا خَانَهُ خَرَجْتُ مِن بَينِهِما.

"I am the third party in any partnership as long as one of the partners does not cheat the other. If he cheats him, I leave the partnership."[6]

Husayn ibn Mukhtar asked Imam Sadiq : “If one who has a partner finds out that his partner has cheated him, does he have the right to take the same amount of money from what they share?” Imam Sadiq replied:

شُوّه! إنمَّا اشتَرَكا بأمَانَةِ اللهِ، وإنّي لأُحِبُّ لهُ إنْ رَآى شَيئاً مِن ذلِكَ أنْ يَسْتُرَ عَلَيهِ ومَا أُحِبُّ أنْ يَأخُذَ مِنهُ شَيئاً بِغَيرِ عِلْمِهِ.

“How unseemly! They only entered into partnership in the security of God. I wish him to cover up his partner’s mistake, and do not like him to take anything without the knowledge of his partner.”[7]

Thus, we realize that partners should not cheat each other. They should not take things from their joint property in each other’s absence since this act would violate the rights of the other partner.

1. Qamus-i-Qur’an, v.4, p.20.
2. Al-Khalaf, Shaykh Tusi, v.2, p.138.
3. Qawa’id al-Ahkam, v.1, p.242.
4. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.2, p.284.
5. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.2, p.285.
6. Nahjul Fasaha, Kalameh 767.
7. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.13, p.187.

Right n. 35: The Right of Property

حق المال

وَأمّا حَقُّ المَالِ، فَأَنْ لا تَأْخُذَهُ إلاّ مِنْ حِلِّهِ، ولا تُنْفِقَهُ إلاّ فِي حِلِّهِ، وَلا تُحَرِّفْهُ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ، ولا تَصْرِفَهُ عَنْ حَقَائِقِهِ، ولا تَجْعَلْهُ إذا كَانَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إلاّ إلَيهِ وَسَبَباً إلَى اللَّهِ. ولا تُؤْثِرَ بِهِ عَلَى نفْسِكَ مَنْ لَعَلَّهُ لا يَحْمَدُكَ، وَبِالْحَرِيِّ أَنْ لا يُحْسِنَ خِلافَتَهُ فِي تَرِكَتِكَ ولا يَعْمَلُ فِيهِ بطَاعَةِ ربكَ فَتَكُونَ مُعِينًا لَهُ عَلَى ذلِكَ أَو بمَا أَحْدَثَ فِي مَالِكَ أَحْسَنَ نَظَرًا لِنَفْسِهِ، فَيَعْمَلَ بطَاعَةِ رَبِهِ فَيَذْهَبَ بالْغَنِيمَةِ وتَبُوءَ بالإثمِ وَالْحَسْرَةِ وَالنَّدَامَةِ مَعَ التَّبعَةِ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of your property is that you should not attain it except by legitimate means and you should only spend it for legitimate causes. You should not spend it improperly, you should not use it wrongfully, and you should only use what is from God in His way and as a means to approach Him.

In it (your property) you should not prefer above yourself one who does not show gratitude to

you, and in fact will neither use your legacy well nor use it in obedience to your Lord. In that case you will be an aid to him in that. Or you may bequeath your property to one who spends it in the way of obedience to God in ways better than you do. Then he will gain the benefits, and you will be left with the sins, the regret and the remorse together with the ill consequences. And there is no power but in God.

We can summarize this as follows:

1 Proper ways to obtain wealth, and give charity.

2 The proper direction of use of property and its due right.

3 The source of wealth is God. Therefore, wealth must be spent in His way.

4 Wealth should be used wisely. Otherwise, it will be left as inheritance. The inheritors might use it properly and gain the related benefits of this world and the Hereafter. The loss might be left for the one who earned it in the first place.

Wealth is not stable. It might belong to us one day and belong to others later. We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

"Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:46***]

Forms of Ownership

There are two forms of ownership: true ownership and virtual ownership. True ownership is the form of ownership in which the owner has absolute control over things he owns. Examples include the ownership of the cause over the effect or the mind over imagination. God is the true owner of all things as we can see in the following verse:

وَلِلّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا

"But to God belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And He it is that encompasseth all things."[***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:126***]

True ownership cannot be transferred from the owner. However, virtual ownership is the form of ownership in which the owner can use the property and prevent other people from using it. This is like the ownership of man over his wealth. This form of ownership has been developed through the social association of people with one another. That is why it is called virtual. There is no true developmental

relationship between the owner and the property. This form of ownership is transferable.

Man is the Center of Creation

As viewed by Islam, man is the center of God's creation. Everything else is created to be subject to him. The Holy Qur'an counts the blessings and considers them to be for man's use as we can read in the following verse:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً

"It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:29***]

Also, consider the following verse in this regard:

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

"Do ye not see that God has subjected to your (***use***) ***all things in the heavens and on earth?"*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Luqman 31:20***]

And the following verse:

هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا

"It is He Who hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein." [***The Holy Qur'an, Hud 11:61***]

And the following:

وَآتُوهُم مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ

"Give them something yourselves out of the means which God has given to you." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:33***]

Thus, we see that God has given man a central role in creation, and everything is created for man.

God has created everything including wealth for man's benefit. The economic system is an important part of the overall Islamic system. It has been set up to meet man's basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, defense, recreation, health and hygiene, as well as his psychological needs such as man's desire for beauty.

The World as Viewed by Islam

We can group the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet and the Immaculate Imams regarding the life of this world into three distinct groups. First, let us look at the Qur'anic verses in this regard:

1 – There are some verses that blame the life of this world to be play and amusement as we read in the following verse:

إِنَّمَا الحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ

"The life of this world is but play and amusement." [***The Holy Qur'an, Muhammad 47:36***]

Also, consider the following verse:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلاَّ لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ

"What is the life of this world but play and amusement?" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-An'am 6:32***]

And the following verse:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ

"What is the life of this world but amusement and play?" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ankabut 29:64***]

And the following:

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ

"Know ye (all) that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hadid 57:20***]

2 – In the second group of verses the life of this world and its associated things are considered to be good and desirable as we read in the following verses using the Arabic word "Fadlihi":

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ إِن شَاء إِنَّ اللّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

"And if ye fear poverty soon will God enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty. For God is All-Knowing, All-Wise." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:28***]

وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاخِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُواْ مِن فَضْلِهِ

"And thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves, that ye may seek (***thus***) ***of the bounty of God."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Na□l 16:14***]

الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ

"(***Nor***) ***those who are niggardly or enjoin niggardliness on others, or hide the bounties which God hath bestowed on them."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:37***]

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Were it not for the grace and mercy of God on you, in this world and the Hereafter, a grievous penalty would have seized you in that ye rushed glibly into this affair." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:14***]

And using the Arabic word 'Khayr' in the following verses:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا

"It is prescribed when death approaches any of you if he leave any goods." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:180***]

و

مَا تُنفِقُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلأنفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلاَّ ابْتِغَاء وَجْهِ اللّهِ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لاَ تُظْلَمُونَ

"Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of God. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly."[***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:272***]

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

"And violent is he in his love of wealth." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-'Adiyat 100:8***]

وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

"And niggardly when good reaches him." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ma'arij 70:21***]

And using the Arabic word 'Rahmat' in the following verses:

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَا الإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَئُوسٌ كَفُورٌ

"If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! He is in despair and (falls in) blasphemy." [***The Holy Qur'an, Hud 11:9***]

قُل لَّوْ أَنتُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَّأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الإِنفَاقِ

"Say: If ye had control of the Treasures of the Mercy of my Lord, behold, ye would keep them back, for fear of spending them!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israel 17:100***]

فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ

"So thy Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure - a mercy (and favor) from thy Lord." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:82***]

And using the Arabic word 'Hasana' in the following verses:

فَإِذَا جَاءتْهُمُ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُواْ لَنَا هَـذِهِ

"But when good (times) came, they said: This is due to us!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:131***]

إِن تُصِبْكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ

"If good befalls thee, it grieves them." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:50***]

There are also some verses in which worldly deprivation under some circumstances is considered a

form of divine chastisement.

3 – The third group of verses describe the above two groups and attempt to clarify the seemingly contradictory nature of the above classifications of the life of this world. In these verses, we are told that the life of this world is good when it is directed towards the life of the Hereafter as a preparatory stage for it. However, if the life of this world on its own is stressed upon, then it is blameworthy. Consider the following verse in this regard:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءنَا وَرَضُواْ بِالْحَياةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنُّواْ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ

أُوْلَـئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكْسِبُونَ

"Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present, and those who heed not Our Signs – their abode is the Fire because of the (evil) they earned." [***The Holy Qur'an, Yunus 10:7-8***]

The World as Viewed by the Traditions

Imam Ali said:

الدُّنْيا مَتْجَرُ أوْلِياءِ اللهِ.

"The world is a trade center for God's friends."[1]

The Noble Prophet said:

الدُّنْيا مَزْرَعَةُ الآخِرَةِ.

"The world is a farm for the Hereafter."[2]

He also said:

نِعْمَ العَونُ الدُّنْيا عَلى الآخِرَةِ.

"The world is the best aid for the Hereafter."[3]

He also said:

نِعْمَ المَالُ الصّالِحُ لِلعَبْدِ الصّالِحِ.

"How good is wealth for a good servant!"[4]

Thus, we can conclude that this world is an intermediate step and a means to reach the Hereafter. The phrases "trade center", "farm", and "helper" used in these traditions to refer to this world imply that one cannot attain prosperity in the Hereafter without using the life of this world. However, if we forget the role of this world and consider it the ultimate goal for man, then we will become negligent and seek our absolute welfare in this world. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ

"If God were to enlarge the provisions for His servants, they would indeed transgress beyond all bounds through the earth..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:47***]
It also says:

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَيَطْغَى أَن رَّآهُ اسْتَغْنَى

"Nay, but man doth transgress all bounds, in that he looks upon himself as self-sufficient." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-'Alaq 96:6-7***]

In addition, in another verse we read:

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الإِنسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَؤُوسًا

"Yet when We bestow our favors on man, he turns away and becomes remote on his side..." [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israil 17:83***]

That is why divinely guided leaders have always stressed the concept of sufficiency in this world. In a tradition from the Prophet of God we read:

اللّهُمّ ارْزُقْ محَمَّداً وَآلَ محَمَّدٍ وَمَن أحَبَّ محَمَّداً وَآلَ محَمَّدٍ العَفافَ وَالكِفافَ

"O God! Grant Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and those who love Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, chastity and sufficiency."[5]

It is also written in Nahjul Balaghah:

وَلا تَسألوا فِيها فَوقَ الكِفافِ وَلا تطْلُبوا مِنها أكْثَرَ مِن البَلاغِ.

“Do not ask herein for more than what is enough and do not demand from it more than sufficiency.”

Through these verses and traditions it became clear that wealth and its role in economy is very important in life. We also realize that our life should be accompanied by a strong belief. Now let us consider how Islam views obtaining wealth and spending it.

Earning and Collecting Wealth

All men like wealth. Is this love for wealth and motivation to own, a part of man’s nature or is it an acquired form of behavior? Some people believe this to be a part of man’s nature since even animals have an instinct to own which can be observed from their behavior. Some scientists consider this love for ownership not to be an independent instinctive force.

Rather they think it is a means by which man can fulfill other instinctive needs such as eating, clothing, housing, sex, and child-rearing. Animals exert their ownership over objects that they need for specific purposes. The various forms of this ownership can be seen regarding their food, companions, and nest or a place to live. The tendency to own is stronger in animals regarding their stronger inclinations such as hunger, sex and child-rearing.

William James considered ownership to be a form of social expression of personality or a form of psychological volumetric expansion. He said: “The word me does not imply my psychological forces only. Rather it also includes my clothes, my house, my automobile, my property, my bank account, etc. All these things arouse the same senses in me.”[6]

Even though the love for wealth is not instinctive, it has slowly become a value in the society since wealth can help fulfill many of man’s desires. The Qur’an says:

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

“And violent is he in his love of wealth.” [***The Holy Qur’an, al-‘Adiyat 100:8***]

Imam Sadiq said:

لا خَيرَ في مَن لا يحِبُّ جمْعَ المَالِ مِن حَلالٍ يَكُفُّ بهِ وَجْهَه ويَقْضي بهِ دَينَه ويَصِلُ بهِ رَحمَهُ.

“There is no good in one who does not like to legitimately earn wealth to safeguard his honor, pay back his debts and establish the bonds of kinship.”[7]

The Goal of Obtaining Wealth

Once when the Prophet of God was sitting with a few of his companions, he saw a strong young man who was working hard and had been working since dawn. The companions expressed their unhappiness about that man's acts and said: "We wish this young man used his strength and youth in God's way." The Prophet said:

> لا تَقولوا هَذا! فإنَّهُ إنْ كانَ يَسْعى عَلى نَفْسِه لِيَكُفَّها عَن المَسْألَةِ وَيُغنِيَها عَنِ النّاسِ فهُوَ في سَبِيلِ اللهِ، وإنْ كانَ يَسْعى عَلى أبَوَيْنِ ضَعِيفَينِ أو ذُرِّيَّةٍ ضِعافٍ لِيُغْنِيَهُم وَيَكُفَّهُم فهُوَ في سَبِيلِ اللهِ، وإنْ كانَ يَسْعى تَفاخُراً وَتَكاثُراً فَهوَ في سَبِيلِ الشَّيطانِ.

"No. Do not say this. If he is working so hard in order to prevent himself from asking from people and to be free of need of them, then he is working in God's way. If he is working hard to fulfill the needs of his weak parents or children, to make them free of need, then he is working in God's way. However, if he is working hard to collect a lot of wealth and show off to others, then he is working in Satan's way." 8

Thus we realize that whoever works hard to fulfill his needs and safeguard his honor is serving God and such acts of earning wealth are not only not blameworthy, but are considered to be a duty for every man as well. The deeds and types of behavior of the Immaculate Imams are a strong document to support this. Let us read what Muhammad ibn Monkadir said about Imam Baqir . Imam Sadiq said that Muhammad ibn Monkadir once said: "I did not think that Ali ibn Al-Husayn 9 would appoint a better leader after himself.

However, once I saw his son Muhammad ibn Ali 10 and decided to advise him. However, it turned out that he advised me instead. I was in the outskirts of Medina on a very hot day when I saw him working on the farm. I asked myself why such an old man from the Quraysh tribe is working so hard seeking wealth on such a hot day. After greeting him, I asked him why he was working so hard seeking worldly gains.

I said: May God improve your condition. Why is a noble man from the Quraysh tribe seeking worldly gains at this time of day? What would happen to you if the angel of death comes to take your life in this condition? Then he greeted back and said: "If the angel of death arrives while I am working so hard as I am doing now in order to earn a living for myself and children so that I do not have to beg from you for my needs, then I will be found in a state of servitude of God. I should be worried to be caught by the angel of death in a sinful state."

Then I said: "Yes, you are right. May God have Mercy on you! I wanted to advise you, but you were the one who gave me advice."11 Thus, we see that our religious leaders made an effort to earn their living so that they did not have to ask others for what they needed. They also taught their followers to earn their own living and not beg.

Those who are working to earn a living for themselves, their wife and children are considered to be in the ranks of those who participate in a holy war in Islam. Imam Sadiq said: “Whoever strives to earn a living for his wife is like one who is fighting in the way of God.”[12] In addition, one who abandons his wife and does not fulfill her needs is deprived of God’s Mercy. The Noble Prophet of God said:

مَلعُونٌ مَلعونٌ مَن يَضيعُ مَن يَعولُ.

“Cursed, cursed, is one who neglects his dependants.”[13]

Obtaining Wealth by Legitimate Means

Imam Baqir quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet during the Farewell Pilgrimage:[14]

ألا إنَّ الرُّوحَ الأمِينَ نَفثَ في رَوعِي أنَّه لا تمُوتُ نَفسٌ حَتىّ تَستَكْمِلَ رِزْقَها، فاتَّقوا اللهَ وَأجمِلوا في الطَّلَبِ وَلا يحْمِلَنَّكُم اسْتِبطاءُ شَيءٍ مِن الرِّزْقِ أنْ تَطلُبُوهُ بمَعْصِيةِ اللهِ، فإنَّ اللهَ تَبارَكَ وَتَعالى قَسَّمَ الأرْزاقَ بَينَ خَلقِهِ حَلالاً وَلَم يُقَسِّمْها حَراماً، فَمَن اتَّقى اللهَ وَصَبرَ أتاهُ اللهُ بِرزْقِه مِن حِلِّه، وَمَن هَتَكَ حِجابَ السِّتْرِ وَعَجَّلَ فَأخَذَهُ مِن غَيرِ حِلِّهِ قُصَّ بهِ مِن رِزقِهِ الحَلال وحُوسِبَ عَلَيهِ يَومَ القِيامَةِ.

“Indeed, Gabriel informed me that no one shall die before receiving his full share of daily bread. Thus, fear God and be moderate in seeking sustenance. Do not rush to earn your daily bread from illegitimate or sinful ways if your daily bread is delayed a little. Indeed God the Exalted the High has divided legitimate daily bread among his creatures, and has not divided illegitimate daily bread among them.

Therefore, God shall grant whoever fears God and is patient and perseveres, his share of legitimate daily bread. But whoever tears up the covering veil (*of innocence*) *and rushes to obtain wealth by illegitimate means will lose a portion of his share of legitimate daily bread. He will also be held accountable for his illegitimate earnings on the Resurrection Day.”*[15]

Therefore, we learn that patience and perseverance are important. If we do not earn as much as we want, we should not try to illegitimately earn wealth since by so doing we will not only lose a portion of our legitimate daily bread, but we will also be held accountable at the just threshold of God.

Convenient and Hard to Earn Income

Imam Sadiq said:

الرِّزقُ مَقسومٌ عَلى ضَربَينِ أحَدُهمَا واصِلٌ إلى صاحِبِهِ وإنْ لم يَطْلُبْهُ وَالآخَرُ مُعَلَّقٌ بِطَلَبِهِ. فالَّذي قُسِّمَ لِلعَبْدِ عَلى كُلّ حالٍ آتيهِ وإنْ لم يَسْعَ لهُ، والَّذِي قُسِّمَ لهُ بِالسَّعْيِ فَينبَغي أنْ يَلتَمِسَهُ مِن وُجوهِهِ وَهُوَ مَا أحَلَّهُ اللهُ لهُ دونَ غَيرِهِ، فإنْ طلَبَهُ مِن جِهَةِ الحَرامِ فوَجَدَهُ حُسِبَ عَليهِ مِن رِزقِهِ وَحُوسِبَ بِهِ.

"The daily bread is divided into two parts. One part of it will be earned whether you ask for it or not. However, the second part is what you must go out to work for and try to earn. You will obtain the first part no matter what, even if you do not ask for it. However, it is best for you to use legitimate means to earn the other portion that you must seek to obtain. Should you obtain it through illegitimate means, it will still be considered to be a portion of your share of daily bread, but you will be held responsible for it."[16]

What was said so far clarifies what Imam Sajjad said about wealth. He also said that your wealth might be left as inheritance for one who might use it right and get its reward in the Hereafter, too. The Commander of the Faithful said:

إنَّ أعظَمَ الحَسَراتِ يَومَ القِيامَةِ حَسْرَةُ رَجُلٍ كَسَبَ مالاً في غَيرِ طاعَةِ اللهِ فَوَرَّثَهُ رَجُلاً فأنْفَقَهُ في طاعَةِ اللهِ سُبحانَهُ فَدَخَلَ به الجَنَّةَ وَدَخَلَ الأوَّلُ بِهِ النّارَ.

"On the Resurrection Day the greatest regret will be felt by the man who earned wealth through sinful ways, and left it as inheritance for a person who spent it in obeying God. The latter will be rewarded Paradise on that account, while the former one will enter the Fire on account of it."[17]

This is a real cause for sorrow! To suffer the hardships of earning wealth, and the chastisement of using illegitimate means to earn it!

1. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Hikmah 131: "Certainly this world is a house of truth for him who appreciates it; a place of safety for him who understands it; a house of riches for him who collects provision from it (for the next world); and a house of instruction for him who draws instruction from it. It is the place of worship for the lovers of God; the place of prayer for the angels of God; the place where the revelation of God descends; and the marketing place for those devoted to God. Herein they earn mercy and herein they acquire Paradise by way of profit."
2. Daramadi Bar Iqtisad Islami, v.1. p.47.
3. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.12, p.17.
4. Ibid.
5. Bihar al-Anwar, v.72, p.59.
6. Bozorgsal wa Jawan (Guftar-i-Falsafi), v.1, p.272, quoted from Ravanshenasi Ijtima'i, v.1, p.104.
7. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.12, p.19.
8. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.3, p.140.
9. Imam al-Sajjad .
10. Imam al-Baqir .
11. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.12, pp.9-10.
12. Ibid. p.27.
13. Ibid. p.27.
14. The last performance of the pilgrimage of the Holy House of God by the Prophet Muhammad .
15. Ibid. p.27.
16. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.12, p.29.
17. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Hikmat no. 429.

Right n. 36: The Right of the Creditor

حق الغريم الطالب

وَأمّا حَقُّ الغَرِيمِ الطَّالِب لَكَ، فَإنْ كُنْتَ مُوسِرًا أَوفَيتَهُ وَكَفَيتَهُ وَأَغْنَيتَهُ وَلَمْ ترْدُدْهُ وتَمْطُلْهُ فَإنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ ـ قَالَ – «مَطَلُ الغَنِيّ ظُلْمٌ». وَإنْ كُنْتَ مُعْسِرًا أَرْضَيتَهُ بحُسْنِ القَوْلِ وَطَلَبتَ إلَيهِ طَلَباً جَمِيلاً وَرَدَدتَهُ عَنْ نفْسِكَ ردًّا لَطِيفًا، وَلَمْ تَجْمَعَ عَلَيْهِ ذهَابَ مَالِهِ وَسُوءَ مُعَامَلَتِهِ فَإنَّ ذلِكَ لؤمٌ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلاّ باللهِ.

And the right of him to whom you owe[1] is that you should pay him back if you have the means to do so. You should meet his need, make him rich, and avoid putting him off and procrastinating. The Prophet, may God's peace be upon him and his household, said: "The procrastination of the rich is oppression." But if you are in hardship, you should satisfy him by using good words. You should gently ask him and send him away with gentleness. You should not take his property and mistreat him too. That is meanness. And there is no power but in God.

In short, Imam Sajjad said: "One should pay back his debt if he can do so. It is not right to postpone the repayment of a debt. One should talk gently and be good-tempered when dealing with the creditor. Otherwise, one is blameworthy since he has taken the money and is rude to the creditor too.

Our life has many vicissitudes. It is not always the same. At times, we are rich. At other times, we may be poor. We must try hard to maintain our dignity under all conditions. When rich we should not become rebellious and sinful. In addition, when we are poor we should not debase ourselves. An important issue in Islam is helping others during times when they need money by giving them a loan. We are also advised to give more time to those who do not have money to pay back their loan to us. There are many verses of the Holy Qur'an that outline the value and importance of this issue.

Loaning to God

Charity is recommended in Islam. In addition, an important form of loan in Islam is an interest-free loan. This is considered by the Qur'an to be loaning to God as we read in the following verse:

إِن تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

***"If ye loan to God, a beautiful loan, He will double it to your* (*credit*)*, and He will grant you Forgiveness: for God is most Ready to appreciate* (*service*)*, Most Forbearing."* [*The Holy Qur'an, al-Tagabun 64: 17*]

This implies that loaning to God will be rewarded by Him and is a cause of forgiveness and divine appreciation. In another verse we read:

مَن ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ

"Who is he that will loan to God a beautiful loan? For (God) will increase it manifold to his credit, and he will have (besides) a liberal Reward." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hadid 57:11***]

In another verse the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَّدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ

"For those who give in charity, men and women, and loan to God a beautiful loan, it shall be increased manifold (to their credit), and they shall have (besides) a liberal reward." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hadid 57:18***]

Some consider loaning to God to be just charity while others also include giving interest-free loans to believers:

مَّن ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

"Who is he that will loan to God a beautiful loan, which God will double unto his credit and multiply many times? It is God that giveth (you) want or plenty, and to Him shall be your return." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:245***]

Usury as Viewed by the Qur'an

Giving charity and interest-free loans were mentioned to be highly valued acts in Islam. In these acts, one only considers the pleasure of God and intends to help others. On the contrary, there is the question of usury that has extremely detrimental social effects. We read in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَذَرُواْ مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُواْ فَأْذَنُواْ بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُؤُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لاَ تَظْلِمُونَ وَلاَ تُظْلَمُونَ

"O ye who believe! Fear God, and give up what remains of your demand for usury, if ye are indeed believers. If ye do it not, take notice of war from God and His Apostle: But if ye turn back,

ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:278-279***]

Here we note that taking usury is against our beliefs, and is considered to be like staging a war against God and the Prophet . If one repents from doing this heinous act, then he can take back his money without taking any interest. In another verse we read:

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لاَ يَقُومُونَ إِلاَّ كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُواْ إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَن جَاءهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَانتَهَىَ فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ يَمْحَقُ اللّهُ الْرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ

"Those who devour usury will not stand except as stand one whom the Evil one by his touch hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury," but God hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for God (***to judge***)***; but those who repeat*** (***the offence***) ***are companions of the Fire: they will abide therein*** (***for ever***)***. God will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity: For He loveth not creatures ungrateful and wicked."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:275-276***]

Here we see usurers depicted like insane men. This may refer to their social behavior since their deeds are similar to mad people. They do not care for sympathy, love, cooperation and the like. It may also refer to the way they will be resurrected in the Hereafter since our looks in the Hereafter portray our deeds in this world. Imam Sadiq said:

آكِلُ الرِّبا لا يخْرُجُ مِن الدُّنيا حَتىّ يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيطانُ.

"A usurer shall not depart this world without Satan driving him insane."[2]

Some people question whether or not the roots of insanity are derived from Satan. As we know, insanity is a form of psychological illness. Some believe that it is a form of being touched by Satan. This belief was very popular among the Arabs. As we know, following satanic thoughts will cause one to think differently. Consequently, he will not be able to distinguish right from wrong. In this verse, the state of usurers is presented – both here and in the Hereafter.

The Justifications of Usurers

Usurers claim that their deed is similar to engaging in trade. They should be told that God has allowed trade, but He has forbidden usury. This is because in trade both sides are equally prone to lose or gain, while in usury the one who gives the loan never loses. Also note that in normal trade both sides help

develop production and consumption, while a usurer helps neither.

In addition, our capital will be channeled into the wrong directions causing the economy to suffer when usury is practiced, while trade fosters the healthy flow of capital in the economy. Devouring usury will also result in animosities and class disputes while engaging in trade does not. Usury is discussed in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَأْكُلُواْ الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"O ye who believe! Devour not usury, doubled and multiplied; but fear God; that ye may (***really***) ***prosper."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:130***]

وَأَخْذِهِمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُواْ عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

"...That they took usury, though they were forbidden; and that they devoured men's substance wrongfully. We have prepared for those among them who reject faith a grievous punishment." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:160-161***]

Giving Time to the Debtor

Imam Sajjad has recommended paying back one's debt if he can. However, if he does not have enough money to pay it back, the Imam recommends us to give him time to do so. We also read the following verse in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

"If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you if ye only knew." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:280***]

The verses on charity, interest-free loans, and forbidden usury were presented earlier. Here we see that the repayment of a loan is a duty. However, we are also told that we should give the debtor time to repay if he is in difficulty. This is opposed to the common practice in the Age of Ignorance when debtors in a difficulty were charged more interest and put under more pressure to pay back. In Islamic law, it is clearly stated that we cannot take back our loan by seizing the living necessities of the debtor.

We can only seize what he might have that is extra. This is a clear form of support for the weak classes of the society. Still a more important issue is presented here. We are told that a loftier act would be to remit the debt by way of charity if we can. This is a form of self-sacrifice that is highly valued. We can see this side by side with the advice to the debtor to talk gently with the creditor. The rights of both sides

are clearly described here. Now let us look at some related material presented in volume 2 of Shafi by the late Fayz. In a tradition the reward for giving more time is mentioned: Imam Sadiq said:

مَن أرَادَ أنْ يُظِلَّهُ اللهُ يَومَ لا ظِلَّ إلاّ ظِلُّهُ... فَلْيُنْظِرْ مُعْسِراً أوْ يَدَعْ لهُ مِن حَقِّهِ.

"Those who desire to be in the Shade of God on the Day on which there is no other shade, should give time to debtors who are unable to pay back their debt or remit it."[3]

Imam Sadiq narrated that once the Prophet climbed the pulpit and said:

أيُّها النّاسُ! لِيُبَلِّغِ الشّاهِدُ الغائِبَ مِنكم. ألا وَمَن أنْظَرَ مُعْسِراً كانَ لهُ عَلى اللهِ في كُلّ يَومٍ ثَوابُ صَدَقَةٍ بِمِثْلِ مَالِهِ حَتىّ يَستَوفِيَهُ.

"O People! You who are present and can witness to what I say! Deliver my words to those who are absent. Beware! God will reward the one who gives time to a debtor who cannot pay back his debt with the reward of charity on his loan for each day that the repayment of the loan is postponed."

Then Imam Sadiq recited the following verse:

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

"If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you if ye only knew." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:280***]

Then he said:

إنَّهُ مُعسِرٌ فَتَصَدَّقوا عَليهِ بما لَكُم عَلَيه فهوَ خَيرٌ لَكُم.

"He is a poor person, so give charity to him from what he owes you, and it will be better for you."[4]
The Prophet said:

كَما لا يَحِلُّ لِغريمِكَ أنْ يَمطُلَكَ وَهُوَ مُوسِرٌ فَكذلِكَ لا يحِلُّ لكَ أنْ تُعسِرَهُ إذا عَلِمتَ أنَّه مُعْسِرٌ.

"Just as it is not permissible for your creditor to postpone the repayment of a loan if he is well to do, similarly it is not permissible for you to demand your money back from him if you know that he is in straitened circumstances."[5]

Imam Sadiq was told that Abdul Rahman ibn Seyabeh who had passed away had an unpaid debt to someone. They had asked the creditor to forgive his debt, but he had not accepted to do so. The Imam said:

وَيحَهُ! أمَا يَعلَمُ أنَّ لهُ بِكُلِّ دِرهَمٍ عَشَرةً إذا حَلَّلَهُ وإنْ لم يحَلِّلْهُ فإنمَّا هوَ دِرهَمٌ بِدِرهَمٍ.

"Woe to him! Does he not know that for each Dirham that he forgives he shall be rewarded ten Dirhams? But if he does not forgive, he can only receive one Dirham for each Dirham."

1. In the other version it continues: " a debt that, if you have the means, you pay him back, and if you are in straitened circumstances, you satisfy him with good words and you send him away with gentleness."
2. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.2, p.272, quoted from Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p.291.
3. Shafi, v.2, p.110.
4. Shafi, v.2, p.110.
5. Ibid.

Right n. 37: The Right of the Associate

حق الخليط

وَأمّا حَقُّ الخَلِيطِ فَأَنْ لا تَغُرَّهُ ولا تَغُشَّهُ ولا تُكَذِبَهُ ولا تُغَفِّلَهُ ولا تَخدَعَهُ ولا تَعمَلْ فِي انتِقَاضِهِ عَمَلَ الْعَدُوِّ الَّذِي لا يُبقِي عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ وَإنِ اطْمَأَنَّ إلَيكَ اسْتَقْصَيتَ لَهُ عَلَى نفْسِكَ وَعَلِمْتَ أَنَّ غَبْنَ الْمُسْتَرْسِلِ رِبًا. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of the associate is that you should not mislead, or cheat him, lie to him or fool him, and you should not trick him. And you should not treat him as an enemy does who does not spare his friend. If he trusts you, you should be very careful of yourself for his sake, and realize that cheating the intimate ones is like usury. And there is no power but in God.

An associate is anyone with whom we somehow associate, such as a classmate, a partner or a friend. Imam Sajjad said that whoever is somehow associating with us has a right. This right is that we should not cheat him, and avoid any kind of trickery with him, and we should not deal with him as we would with our enemies. We should not harm him once he trusts us. There are many verses of the Holy Qur'an and traditions that were presented regarding the rights of the companion. These hold true for our associate too, but we will not restate them here. We will just mention a few traditions regarding the rights of our associates.

Traditions Regarding the Associates

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

أسْعَدُ النّاسِ مَن خالَطَ كِرامَ النّاسِ.

"The most prosperous people are the ones who associate with the noblest people."[1]

One of the main factors influencing our prosperity has been pointed out to be having noble friends in this tradition. God's Prophet also said:

سَائِلوا العُلَماءَ وخَالِطوا الحُكَماءَ وَجَالِسُوا الفُقَراءَ.

"Ask from the learned, associate with the wise, and sit with the poor."[2]

In this tradition we are advised to maintain our association with the wise people.

Characteristics of a Good Friend

The Noble Prophet said:

مَن أرَادَ اللهُ بِه خَيراً رَزَقَهُ خَليلاً صَالِحاً إنْ نَسِيَ ذَكَّرَهُ وإنْ ذَكَرَ أعَانَهُ.

"He to whom God intends good, He will provide him a righteous friend who will remind him (*to remember God*) *should he forget, and who will help him when he remembers."*[3]

Friends we choose must be intelligent and experienced. It was pointed out earlier that we should avoid ignorant or dumb friends. Our friends should also be religious and inclined to do good deeds. They should also be polite and good-mannered. A wicked friend will draw one to ill-conduct. Also a friend should be personally inclined to be our friend, and be a real friend. We have been admonished against cheating or tricking our friends by Imam Sajjad .

There is a chapter on this subject in *Usul al-Kafi*. We read the following in the first tradition of this chapter: "The Commander of the Faithful said:

لَولا أنَّ المَكْرَ وَالخَديعَةَ في النّارِ لَكُنتُ أمْكَرَ النّاسِ.

"Were it not that guile and deceit resulted in the Fire (*of Hell*)*, I would have been the most guileful of*

people."[4]

A deceitful person is not an intelligent one. Being deceitful implies acting opposite to what you are thinking. In the third tradition in this chapter we read: Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

لَيسَ مِنّا مَن ماكَرَ مُسْلِماً

"One who is deceitful to a Muslim is not from us."[5]

The Commander of the Faithful said the following regarding those who lie:

..يَنبَغِي للرَّجُلِ المُسلِمِ أنْ يجْتَنِبَ مُؤاخَاةَ الكَذّابِ، فإنَّهُ يَكْذِبُ حَتىّ يجِيءَ بالصِّدْقِ فَلا يُصَدَّقُ

"A Muslim should avoid becoming friends with a liar, for he will lie until when he finally tells the truth, he will not be believed."[6]

In short, a good friend is one of the best blessings of God. He has certain rights incumbent upon us. We should not oppress him by telling him lies, or cheating him. Each friend must honor the rights of his friends.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.185.
2. Ibid. p.188.
3. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.289.
4. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.336.
5. Ibid. p.337.
6. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p.341.

Right n. 38: The Right of the Adversary

The Right of the Adversary who has a claim against you

حق الخصم المدعي عليك

وَأمّا حَقُّ الخَصْمِ المُدَّعِي عَلَيْكَ، فَإنْ كَانَ مَا يَدَّعِي عَلَيكَ حَقّاً لَمْ تنفَسِخ فِي حُجَّتِهِ وَلَمْ تَعمَلْ فِي إبطَالِ دَعْوَتِهِ وَكُنْتَ خَصْمَ نفْسِكَ لَهُ والحَاكِمَ عَلَيْهَا والشَّاهِدَ لَهُ بحَقِّهِ دُونَ شَهَادَةِ الشُّهُودِ، فَإنَّ ذلِكَ حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ، وَإنْ كَانَ مَا يَدَّعِيهِ

بَاطِلاً رَفَقْتَ بِهِ وَرَوَّعْتَهُ وناشَدتهُ بدينِه وَكَسَرْتَ حِدَّتَهُ عَنكَ بذِكْرِ اللهِ وَأَلْقَيْتَ حَشْوَ الْكَلامِ وَلَغَطَهُ الَّذِي لا يَرُدُّ عَنْكَ عَادِيَةَ عَدُوِّكَ بَلْ تبُوءُ بإثمِهِ وَبِهِ يَشْحَذُ عَلَيْكَ سَيفَ عَدَاوَتِهِ لأَنَّ لَفْظَةَ السُّوءِ تَبعَثُ الشَّرَّ. وَالخَيْرُ مُقْمِعَةٌ لِلشَّرِّ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of the adversary who has a claim against you is that if his claim against you is true,1 you should not nullify his proof or abolish his claim. And you should dispute against yourself on his behalf and be a fair judge against yourself, and give witness to his right against you without the witnessing of any witnesses. This is the right of God that is made incumbent upon you. But if what he claims against you is false, treat him with gentleness and remind him to fear God, and implore him by his religion.

And by reminding him of God, you should help reduce his fury against you. Avoid using indecent words and yelling at him since this will not eliminate the animosity of your enemy, but it will result in your suffering from the sin he commits against you. And it will also result in his sharpening of the sword of animosity towards you, since indecent words will cause evil, but good words will eradicate evil. And there is no power but in God.

The Right of the Adversary against whom you have a claim

حق الخصم المدعى عليه

وَأمّا حَقُّ الخَصْمِ الْمُدَّعَى عَلَيهِ فَإنْ كَانَ مَا تدَّعِيهِ حَقًّا أَجْمَلْتَ فِي مُقَاوَلَتِهِ بمَخرَجِ الدَّعْوَى، فَإنّ لِلدَّعْوَى غِلْظَةً فِي سَمْعِ الْمُدَّعَى عَلَيهِ. وَقَصَدْتَ قَصْدَ حُجَّتِكَ بالرِّفْقِ وَأَمْهَلِ الْمُهْلَةِ وَأَبْينِ الْبَيَانِ وَألطَفِ اللُّطْفِ ولَمْ تَتشَاغَلْ عَنْ حُجَّتِكَ بمُنازَعَتِهِ بالقِيلِ وَالقَالِ فَتَذهَبْ عَنْكَ حُجَّتُكَ ولا يَكُونَ لَكَ فِي ذَلِكَ دَرْكٌ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of the adversary against whom you have a claim is that if your claim against him is true,2 you should use pleasant words while you are filing your claim, since hearing the claim is harsh for the defendant. And you should provide your evidence with lenience, and respite, and with the clearest statements, and with absolute gentleness. And you should not dispute with him over gossip lest your proofs will be voided and you will lose the opportunity to prove them. And there is no power but in God.

Sources of Quarrelling

One of the fundamental desires of man in this short life is to have peace and security. Man wishes to have a life filled with love and peace and free of quarrelling. On the other hand, man is also subject to his whims. He is greedy, selfish, lazy and haughty. These factors drive him to not be pleased with what is rightly his, and violate other people’s rights.

It is obvious that the more the crowd in one place, the more quarrelling there will be among them. It is not possible for both sides of a quarrel to be right. Usually one side is the one who is transgressing. Thus, we need a judge in the society to handle these cases to resolve the quarrels and establish justice between them. This is one of the major reasons for the appointment of Prophets in the different eras in history.

Islam Invites Man to Destroy the Roots of Quarrels

The illuminating teachings of Islam invite man to love and friendship, and even forgiving and self-sacrifice. These instructions lead man to eliminate the roots of problems in the society so that quarrels do not even start. We read the following verse in the Holy Qur'an regarding the followers of Islam after those who accepted Islam and migrated to Medina, and those who already lived in Medina and helped the Prophet and his followers:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاؤُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancor (***or sense of injury***) ***against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful."***[***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hashr 59: 10***]

In this verse, we see the spirit of love in the Muslims that can eliminate quarrels. The same holds true for the life of the Hereafter. We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ غِلٍّ

"And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:43***]

God has promised us the peaceful life we desire but cannot find in this world in the Hereafter. Thus, Islam has instructed man to abandon fighting in life. If there is quarrelling between people, Islam has given certain instructions to eliminate the fight.

Resolving the Differences

There is a chapter in *Usul al-Kafi* on resolving the differences between the people. Muslims are invited to help resolve the differences between other Muslims. This is considered a form of worshipping. Habib al-Ahwal narrated that he heard Imam Sadiq had said:

صَدَقَةٌ يحِبُّها اللهُ إصْلاحٌ بَينَ النّاسِ إذا تَفاسَدوا وَتَقارُبٌ بَينَهُم إذا تَباعَدوا.

"The charity God likes is resolving the differences between the people who have problems with each other; and helping them get closer to each other when their discord has caused them to become separated."[3]

In another tradition, we read that Imam Sadiq said:

لأَنْ أُصْلِحَ بَينَ اثنَينِ أَحَبُّ إليَّ مِن أنْ أتصَدَّقَ بِدينارَيْنِ.

"Helping resolve the differences between two people is more desirable to me than giving two Dinars in charity."[4]

However, if the differences do not get resolved this way their case has to be settled in court. Islam has the best judicial system in order to give everybody his or her due rights. The judge must be a just person, and consider the two sides of the agreement in the same manner. He should also try to please God in his ruling on the case.

Islam's Judicial Rules

The most important steps implemented in European countries regarding judges are as follows:

1 A judge must be independent and immune and be able to prosecute anyone no matter what his rank or position of power is.

2 A judge must be paid a high enough salary to meet his financial needs so that he does not give in to a rich man and rule unjustly. It is said that the British government has dealt nicely with this issue.

3 All should be treated equally in court.

These issues, which are highly respected in European courts, are all parts of the teachings of Islam.

The Power of the Judge

The judge is granted so much power in Islam that even none of the members of the Islamic government can surpass that power. Only the ruler and his representative possess a higher degree of power. The Commander of the Faithful wrote the following in his letter to Malik al-Ashtar when he appointed him as his representative in Egypt:

ثُمَّ ٱخْتَرْ لِلْحُكْمِ بَيْنَ النّاسِ أَفْضَلَ رَعِيَّتِكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ... وَأَعْطِهِ مِنَ الْمَنْزِلَةِ لَدَيْكَ ما لا يَطْمَعُ فِيهِ غَيْرُهُ مِنْ خاصَّتِكَ،

لِيَأْمَنَ بِذٰلِكَ ٱغْتِيالَ الرِّجالِ لَهُ عِنْدَكَ.

“Choose for the administration of justice among people one who is, in your view, the best of your subjects.... Grant him the rank near you to which none of your special companions may aspire, so that by it he may be safe from people slandering him before you”[5]

Financial Independence of the Judge

Islam has granted the highest degree of financial independence to the judge. Imam Ali ordered Malik to give the judge as much money as he needs so that his financial needs do not affect the way he makes judgments.

The Duties of the Judge in the Court

The stress Islam has placed on equal treatment for both sides in the court is so much that even the current practice in Europe does not meet these high standards. It may even be that men cannot implement these standards for many more centuries. The judge should treat both sides equally in the court. Both parties should sit in the same place even if one side of the case is the ruler and the other party is a simple peasant. No privilege should be established for either party. Consider the following case.

Haroon Choosing a Judge

It is recorded in history that when the Abbasid Caliph Haroon ul-Rashid finished his pilgrimage he entered Medina. The people asked him to appoint a just judge since the judge had passed away. They introduced two men to him as candidates. In order to establish their degree of suitability for this position, Haroon called one of them to enter. The prime minister was standing in front of Haroon.

When the man entered, Haroon told him that there was some disagreement related to an estate between him and the prime minister. In addition, Haroon asked the man to resolve the case. The man thought for a while after hearing the reasons for the disagreement and said that Haroon is right. Haroon asked him to leave, and called in the other man. He repeated the same fictitious story again and asked the man to judge between them.

The man said: “I cannot judge between you since one side of the argument is sitting in the highest position of power while the other side is standing up in front of him. According to Islam you should both be in the same position before I can judge between you.” Haroon ul-Rashid enjoyed the man’s reply and appointed him as the judge immediately.

A judge is even supposed to treat the two sides equally in the way that he looks or points at them. He

should also talk to each of them for about the same time. He should treat them both in the same way. Imam Ali said:

فاخْفِضْ لهُم جَناحَكَ وَألِنْ لهُم جانِبَكَ وابْسُطْ لهُم وَجْهَكَ وآسِ بَينَهُم في اللَّحْظَةِ والنَّظْرَةِ حَتىّ لا يَطمَعَ العُظماءُ في حَيفِكَ لهُم وَلا يَيأَسَ الضُعَفاءُ مِن عَدلِكَ عَليهِمْ.

"Humble yourself to them, be gentle with them and meet with them in a friendly, cheerful manner. Treat them equally in your regard and consideration of them, so that the strong do not hope for your acting unjustly (in their favour), while the weak do not despair of your justice to them."[6]

The Words of Shahid al-Awwal About the Duties of the Judge

In Al-Lum'ah Al-Dimishqiyah the words of Shahid al-Awwal about the duties of the judge are recorded as follows: "It is incumbent upon the judge to treat the two sides equally in talking, looking, greeting, respecting, listening and being just. If one of the parties is a Muslim and the other one is a pagan, the judge can let the Muslim man sit down while the pagan one stands up.

The judge does not have to be whole-heartedly inclined to both sides in this case. This is the jurisprudents' view on the duties of the judge. Regarding the way the judge should act in the court we read in Al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyah: "If one side of the fight starts to talk, the judge should listen to him. If both sides do so, the judge should listen to the one on the right. If both remain silent the judge should say that either one can present his claim, or they can both talk."[7]

The Plaintiff and the Defendant

What is the difference between the plaintiff and the defendant? Shahid al-Awwal said: "The plaintiff is the side whose abandoning of the claim shall end the dispute. However, the defendant is the other side of the dispute. He cannot end the dispute. There are three possible responses by the defendant. He accepts the claim, rejects it or remains silent. Each form of response is different as viewed by the judge.

Evidence and Oath

We read in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah that the evidence is to be provided by the plaintiff, and oath is for the defendant.[8] This has been quoted from Imam Sadiq on the authority of God's Prophet . Abi Basir quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

إنَّ اللهَ حَكَمَ في دِمائِكُم بِغَيرِ ما حَكَم في أمْوالِكُم؛ حَكَمَ في أمْوالِكُم أنَّ البَيّنَةَ عَلى المُدَّعي وَاليَمينَ عَلى المُدَّعَى عَلَيهِ، وَحَكَمَ في دِمائِكُم أنَّ البَيّنَةَ عَلى مَنِ أدُّعِيَ عَلَيهِ وَاليَمينَ عَلى مَن ادَّعَى لِئَلاّ يَبْطُلَ دَمُ امرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ.

"God's ruling regarding your blood (*that has been shed*) *is different from His ruling on your property. God has ruled that, regarding your property, the evidence is incumbent on the plaintiff and the oath on defendant, but regarding your blood* (*that has been shed*) *the evidence is incumbent on the defendant and the oath on the plaintiff, so that the blood of a Muslim may not be shed without compensation."*[9]

Imam Ridha provided the following in response to a question asked:

وَالعِلَّةُ في أنَّ البَيّنَةَ في جميعِ الحُقوقِ على المُدَّعي وَاليَمِينَ عَلى المُدَّعَى عَليهِ ما خَلا الدَّمِ لأنَّ المُدَّعَى عَليهِ جاحِدٌ وَلا يمْكِنُهُ إقامَةُ البَيّنَةِ على الجُحودِ لأنَّهُ مجْهُولٌ وَصَارتِ البَيّنَةُ في الدَّمِ عَلى المُدَّعَى عَليهِ واليَمِينُ عَلى المُدَّعِي لأنَّهُ حَوطٌ يحْتاطُ بهِ المُسلِمونَ لِئَلاّ يبْطُلَ دَمُ امرِئٍ مُسْلمٍ ولِيَكونَ ذلِكَ زاجِراً وَناهِياً لِلقاتِلِ لِشِدَّةِ إقامَةِ البَيّنَةِ عَلى الجُحودِ عَليهِ لأنَّ مَن يَشهَدُ على أنَّهُ لم يَفعَلْ قِليلٌ.

"The reason why evidence, in all cases other than that of bloodshed, is incumbent on the plaintiff and the oath on the defendant is that the defendant denies the claim and it is not possible to establish evidence for denial.

However, in case of bloodshed, the evidence is due from the defendant and the oath from the plaintiff. This is because it is a safeguard which protects the Muslims, so that the blood of a Muslim may not go uncompensated, and so that it may be a restraint and a deterrent for the murderer, because of the difficulty of establishing the evidence for denial, for there will be few who will testify that he has not done it.." [10]

We learned from the above the jurisprudents' view on the claiming side and the claimant's side. Imam Sajjad presented the moral aspects of this issue. He reminded both sides of their moral duties. He invites both sides to the truth and admonishes them against pursuing falsehood. Thus, it is better for both sides of any dispute to remember the recommendations of Imam Sajjad and take their case to a just judge – not an oppressive one. Many traditions exist to support this.

1. In the other version it continues: "you give witness to it against yourself. You do not wrong him and you give him his full due. If what he claims against you is false, you act with kindness toward him and you show nothing in his affair other than kindness; you do not displease you r Lord in his affair. And there is no strength save in God."
2. In the other version, it continues: "you maintain polite moderation in speaking to him and you do not deny him his right. If your claim is false, you fear god, repent to Him and abandon your claim."
3. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.209.
4. Ibid.
5. Nahjul Balaghah,
6. Nahjul Balaghah.
7. Al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyah, Book of al-Qada.
8. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.18, pp.170-173.
9. Ibid.
10. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.18, pp.170-173.

Right n. 39: The Right of Him Who Seeks Your Advice

حق المستشير

وَأمّا حَقُّ المُسْتَشِيرِ، فَإنْ حَضَرَكَ لَهُ وَجْهُ رَأْيٍ جَهَدْتَ لَهُ فِي النَّصِيحَةِ، وَأَشَرْتَ عَلَيهِ بمَا تَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ لَوْ كُنْتَ مَكَانهُ عَمِلْتَ بهِ، وَذَلِكَ لِيَكُنْ مِنْكَ فِي رَحْمَةٍ وَلِينٍ، فَإنَّ اللِّينَ يُؤْنِسُ الْوَحْشَةَ وَإنَّ الْغِلْظَ يُوحِشُ مَوضِعَ الأنْسِ. وَإنْ لَمْ يَحْضُرْكَ لَهُ رَأيٌ وَعَرَفْتَ لَهُ مَنْ تثِقُ برَأيِهِ وَترْضَى بهِ لِنَفْسِكَ دَلَلْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَرْشَدتَهُ إلَيْهِ، فَكُنْتَ لَمْ تَألُهُ خَيرًا وَلَمْ تَدَّخِرْهُ نُصْحاً. ولا حَوْلَ ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of him who seeks your advice is that you should exert all efforts to advise him if you can provide him with a good opinion, and suggest to him to choose what you would have chosen if you were in his place. You should do so with mercy and with lenience since lenience will eliminate fear while rudeness will eliminate friendliness.

But if you do not have any good advice for him, you should refer him to someone else whom you know and trust his advice yourself. You should spare no efforts to guide him towards the good and do your best to advise him. And there is no power but in God.

In short, Imam Sajjad says that once someone seeks advice, a right is established for him. This right is clearly providing him with proper advice if we can, or referring him to someone else whom we know and can provide him with some good advice.

Consultation in Islam

Consultation is one of the most important issues in Islam. It helps us get our affairs done in a more reasonable fashion. If we do not consult others regarding our affairs, then our affairs will not be done in a perfect way, since by ourselves we cannot consider all aspects of an issue no matter how intelligent we are. Once issues are presented for consultation, and several experienced people use their intellect to help, then the job will be done more perfectly.

Consultation is so important in Islam that even the Prophet , who received divine revelations and was highly intelligent, consulted with others and respected their views. This was done in order to establish consultation as a practice among Muslims. His consultations were related to public issues about the execution of divine rules, and not on legislative issues.

Effects of Consultation

People who seek other people's advice regarding their affairs seldom fail. Others who consider themselves needless of other people's advice and do not do so, and just rely on their own minds, usually make mistakes even though they may be very intelligent. Such an attitude makes one unpopular and stops the flow of suggestions towards him.

Those who consult others regarding their affairs will not experience other people's jealousy if they succeed, since others will consider this success as their own. Even if one fails, others will not blame him since they will consider this failure to be their own fault. They will treat him sympathetically.

One can also evaluate the degree of friendship of others when he seeks their advice. This will pave the way for future success. This might have been one of the reasons that the Prophet sought other people's advice, even though he was very intelligent.

Consultation as Viewed by the Holy Qur'an

Consider the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ لِنتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنفَضُّواْ مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"It is part of the Mercy of God that thou dost deal gently with them Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (***their faults***)***, and ask for*** (***God's***) ***forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs*** (***of moment***)***. Then, when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in God. For God loves those who put their trust*** (***in Him***)***."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:159***]

It was revealed during the Battle of Uhud. It deals with an important aspect of leadership. A good leader is one who forgives those who make mistakes, but realize their mistake and repent. If a leader does not forgive such people, and treats them with harshness, then the people will soon leave him unsupported, he will fail to implement his plans, and thus he fails to lead.

In this verse, the Prophet is instructed by God to consult the people regarding his affairs. The Prophet obviously did not consult the people regarding revelations. Rather he consulted them regarding the ways in which he implemented divine decrees.

In other words, he never consulted the people on legislative issues: Rather they were consulted on executive issues. For example, in the Battle of Badr the Muslims set up their camps in a given location by the order of the Prophet . One of the companions called Hobab ibn Monzar asked: "Is camping in this

location decreed by God, or is it your own opinion?" The Prophet said: "No. There is no divine ruling on this issue." Then Hobab said: "This is not a good place to camp." The Prophet agreed with him.

We also read in the Holy Qur'an:

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

"Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:38***]

As we can see the issue of consultation is stressed in this verse also right after establishing regular prayers.

Consultation as Viewed in the Traditions

There are many traditions about consultation from the life of the Prophet and the Immaculate Imams . The Prophet said:

ما شَقَى عَبدٌ قَطُّ بمَشُورَةٍ وَلا سَعِدَ بِاسْتِغْناءِ رأيٍ.

"No one has ever been wretched after consultation, and no one has become prosperous through being satisfied with his own opinion."[1]

Imam Ali said:

مَن اسْتَبَدَّ بِرأيِهِ هَلَكَ وَمَن شاوَرَ الرّجالَ شَارَكَهُم في عُقولِهِم.

"One who only follows his own opinion will perish, but one who consults people shares with them in their intellect."[2]

The Noble Prophet said:

إذَا كانَ خِيارُكُم أُمَرائَكُم وأغْنِياؤكُم سُمَحائَكُم وأمْرُكُم شُورى بَينَكُم فَظَهْرُ الأرْضِ خَيرٌ لَكُم مِن بَطْنِها، وإذا كَانَ أُمَراؤكُم شِرارَكُم وأغْنِياؤكُم بُخَلائَكُم وَلم يَكُن أمْرُكُم شورَى بَينَكُم فَبَطْنُ الأرضِ خَيرٌ لكُم مِن ظَهرِها.

"If your good people are your rulers, your rich ones are generous, and your affairs are carried out in consultation with each other, then the surface of the earth is better for you than its depths. However, if

your rulers are your evil ones, your rich are miserly, and your affairs are not carried out in consultation with each other, then being under the earth is better for you than being on it."[3]

Imam Kazim said:

> يا هشامُ! مجَالَسَةُ أهْلِ الدّينِ شَرَفُ الدّنيا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمُشَاوَرَةُ العاقِلِ النّاصِحِ يُمْنٌ وَبَرَكَةٌ وَرُشْدٌ وَتوفِيقٌ مِن اللهِ، فإذَا أشارَ عَلَيكَ العاقِلُ النّاصِحُ فإيّاكَ وَالخِلافَ، فإنَّ في ذلِكَ العَطَبَ.

"O Hisham! Associating with people of religion is nobility in this world and the Hereafter. Consulting with an intelligent, sincere advisor is good fortune and a blessing and guidance. It is a form of divine success. Therefore, beware of acting against the advice of an intelligent, sincere advisor whose advice you seek, for in that lies ruin."[4]

Whom to Consult With

Chapters 21 and 22 of Wasa`il al-Sh`ah deal specifically with whom to consult with. We shall present a few traditions from these chapters here.
Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of his Noble father that the Prophet of God was asked: "What does 'Hazm' mean?" He replied:

> مُشاوَرَةُ ذَوي الرّأيِ واتِّباعُهُم.

"Consulting with those who are well-informed and following their advice."[5]

Imam Sadiq said that one of the recommendations of the Prophet to Imam Ali was:

> لا مُظاهَرَةَ أوْثَقُ مِن المُشاوَرَةِ ولا عقْلَ كالتَّدبيرِ.

"There is no aid more reliable than consultation, and there is no intellect like pondering over the affairs."[6]

Imam Baqir said: "There are four lines in the Torah the first of which is as follows:

> مَن لا يَسْتَشِرْ يَنْدَمْ.

"One who does not seek advice regarding his affairs will regret it."[7]

Imam Ali said:

لا ظَهيرَ كَالمُشاوَرَةِ.

“There is no aid like consultation.”[8]

Imam Sadiq said:

إستَشِرْ في أمْرِكَ الّذينَ يخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم.

“In your affairs, only consult with those people who are fearful of God.” [9]

Imam Sadiq said:

اسْتَشِرِ العاقِلَ مِن الرّجالِ فإنَّه لا يأمُرُ إلا بِخَيرٍ، وإيّاكَ والخِلافَ فإنَّ مُخالَفَةَ الوَرِعِ العاقِلِ مَفْسَدَةٌ في الدّينِ والدّنيا.

“Consult with men who are intelligent, since they will only advise you to do good. Beware of opposing (their) advice, for opposing the God-fearing intelligent man is a cause of ruin in religion and in this world.”[10]

Imam Sadiq said:

إنَّ المَشورَةَ لا تَكونُ إلاّ بحُدودِها وإلاّ كانَت مَضَرَّتهُا عَلى المُستَشِيرِ أكْثَرَ مِن مَنفَعَتِها لهُ: فأوَّلهُا أنْ يَكونَ الّذي تَشاوَرَ عاقِلاً، وَالثّانيةُ أنْ يَكونَ حُرّاً مُتَديّناً، والثّالِثَةُ أنْ يكونَ صَديقاً مُؤاخِياً، والرّابِعةُ أنْ تُطلِعَهُ عَلى سِرّكَ فَيَكونُ عِلمُهُ بِه كَعِلمِكَ بِنفْسِكَ.

“Consultation should be carried out within its limits, otherwise it will be more harmful than beneficial to the one seeking advice. Firstly, the one consulted should intelligent. Secondly, he should be a free, religious man. Thirdly, he should be a sincere friend. Fourthly, when he becomes acquainted with your inner thoughts, his knowledge of it should be like your knowledge of yourself.”[11]

Whom Not to Consult With

Undoubtedly we cannot consult with just anyone. We were advised to consult with those who are intelligent, God-fearing, honest and trustworthy and who wish us well. Consulting with some people might cause us harm and deprivation. The Commander of the Faithful in his letter to Malik al-Ashtar tells us whom not to consult with:

لا تُدخِلَنَّ في مَشورَتِكَ بخِيلاً يَعدِلُ بكَ عَن الفَضْلِ وَيَعِدُكَ الفَقْرَ، ولا جَباناً يُضَعِّفُكَ عَن الأمورِ ولا حَريصاً يُزَيِّن لكَ الشَّرَهَ بالجَورِ.

“Do not include in your consultations a miser who turns you away from generosity and threatens you with poverty, or a coward who renders you weak in your affairs, or a greedy person who makes covetousness (*for wealth and power*) *accompanied by tyranny seem attractive to you .”*[12]

As stated before consultation is a means of finding the proper way to do things. It is meant to help us do the right thing. Therefore, we should not consult with wicked, stingy, greedy or cowardly people. They will not help us if we consult with them. Rather they will cause misery for us. That is why Imam Sajjad has said: “But if you do not have any good advice for him, you should refer him to someone else whom you know and trust his advice yourself.”

1. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.3, p.145.
2. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Hikmah 161.
3. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.3, p.145.
4. Tuhaf al-‘Uqul, p.293.
5. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.8, pp.424-427.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.8. pp.424-427.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayz al-Islam, letter no.53.

Right n. 40: The Right of Him Whose Advice You Seek

حق المشير

وَأمّا حَقُّ المُشِيرِ عَلَيْكَ فَلا تتَّهِمْهُ فِيمَا لا يُوافِقُكَ عَلَيهِ مِنْ رَأْيِهِ إذا أَشَارَ عَلَيْكَ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ الآرَاءُ وَتصَرُّفُ النَّاسِ فِيهَا وَاختِلافُهُمْ. فَكُنْ عَلَيهِ فِي رَأيِهِ بالخِيَارِ إذا اتَّهمْتَ رَأْيَهُ، فَأَمّا تُهْمتُهُ فَلا تَجُوزُ لَكَ إذَا كَانَ عِنْدكَ مِمَّنْ يَسْتَحِقُّ الْمُشَاوَرَةَ. وَلا تَدَعْ شُكْرَهُ عَلَى مَا بَدَا لَكَ مِن إشْخاصِ رَأْيِهِ وَحُسْنِ وَجْهِ مَشُورَتِهِ، فَإذا وَافَقَكَ حَمِدتَ اللَّهَ وَقَبِلْتَ ذلِكَ مِن أَخِيكَ بالشُّكْرِ والإرْصَادِ بالْمُكَافَأَةِ فِي مِثلِهَا إنْ فَزِعَ إلَيْكَ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of him whose advice you seek is that you should not accuse him when he gives you advice that does not conform to your own opinion. It is quite natural that opinions are divergent and people have various views about their affairs in which they disagree. You are free not to accept his advice if you doubt it.

However, you are not permitted to accuse him of providing you with ill advice as long as you consider him to be of those worthy of consultation. Do not stop thanking him for the thoughts and the good advice he has given you. And if it was appropriate for you, you should thank God for it, accept it from your brother with gratitude, and be ready to act similarly for him should one day he seek your advice. And there is no power but in God.

Imam Sajjad advises us not to accuse the one whose advice we seek, if what they suggest does not agree with our own opinion. If his advice is in agreement with our own opinion, then we should thank God and be grateful to the person who advised us.

An Advisor's Honesty and Trustworthiness

In the previous discussions, we described whose advice we should seek. We also expressed the expected qualities of a good advisor using traditions. There is a chapter in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah in this respect.

This is the first tradition in that chapter: Imam Sadiq said: "A man went to see the Commander of the Faithful and said: "I have come to seek your advice and that of Hasan, Husayn and Abdullah ibn Ja'far about marriage." The Blessed Imam Ali said:

المُستَشارُ مُؤتَمَنٌ.

"One whose advice is sought is a confidant". 1

Then he told the man his viewpoints.

In the second tradition, we read that Imam Sadiq said:

مَن اسْتَشارَ أخاهُ فَلَم يَنْصَحْهُ مَحْضَ الرّأيِ سَلَبَهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَأيَهُ.

*"One whose brother seeks counsel from him and he does not counsel him with sincerity, God will deprive him of his soundness in judgment."*2

Two important points have been mentioned in these two traditions. First off all, one whose advice is sought is trustworthy. Therefore, he will never cheat one. Therefore, one who seeks advice should never accuse the one whose advice he seeks. He should not be suspicious of him, as Imam Sajjad has said. Secondly, the one whose advice is sought should sincerely express whatever he thinks. Should he hesitate to do so, God will take away his effective point of view, since he has not been grateful for the blessing of being asked for advice.

Seeking the Advice of Those Lower in Rank

An interesting point about seeking advice is that we can even seek the advice of those who are lower in rank than we are. We do not necessarily have to seek the advice of those in a higher position than we are. There is a chapter in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah in this regard. In the second tradition in this chapter, we read: Fuzayl ibn Yasar said that Imam Sadiq sought his advice on some issue.

Fuzayl asked the Imam how could such a lowly person like himself give advice to such a person like the Imam ? The Imam replied: "Whenever I seek your advice."[3] In the third tradition of this chapter we read: "Hasan ibn Jahm narrated that he was with Imam Ridha when the Imam remembered his noble father and said: "His intellect was extremely superior to the intellect of the people of his time, and sometimes he used to seek the advice of one of his black slaves." Then he was asked: "Can you seek the advice of such people?" Then Imam Ridha replied: "In fact, God the Blessed and the High expresses facts when they talk, and on many occasions my father used to act upon their advice regarding the garden."[4]

Imam Ali's Viewpoints on Advisor

The compiler of *Nahjul Balaghah*, who is Sayyid Razi, narrated that once Abdullah ibn Abbas sought Imam Ali's advice, and was in disagreement with the advice given to him by the Commander of the Faithful . Imam Ali said: "It is up to you to give me your advice. But whenever my advice is in disagreement with what you think, you must obey me."[5]

In another tradition we read: Ali ibn Mahzyar narrated that Imam Baqir wrote him a letter and asked him to tell so and so to consult with him, but choose to do what they themselves think is best to do, since they are better aware of the conditions of their own town, and know how to deal with the rulers.

This is because consultation is blessed and God has ordered the Prophet in the Holy Qur'an to "consult with the people, but make a decision himself as to what is best to do, and rely on God after he makes up his mind." Then if what the advisor says is correct, you can benefit from his advice, and if it is not correct, you can hope to guide him in the straight path with God's will. When it is said seek their advice in the affairs, it is meant seek the good."[6]

Imam Ali said:

لا ظَهيرَ كالمُشاوَرَةِ

"There is no aid like seeking advice."[7]

1. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.8, p.427.
2. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.8. p.427.
3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. p.428.
5. Bihar al-Anwar, v.75, p.104.
6. Bihar al-Anwar, v.75, p.104.
7. Ibid.

Right n. 41: The Right of Him Who Seeks Your Counsel

حق المستنصح

وَأمّا حَقُّ المُسْتَنصِحِ فَإنَّ حَقَّهُ أَنْ تُؤَدِّيَ إلَيهِ النَّصِيحَةَ عَلَى الحَقِّ الَّذِي تَرَى لَهُ أنّهُ يحْمِلُ وَتخرُجَ المَخرَجَ الَّذِي يَلينُ عَلَى مَسَامِعِهِ، وتُكَلِّمَهُ مِنَ الْكَلامِ بمَا يُطِيقُهُ عَقلُهُ، فَإنَّ لِكُلِّ عَقْلٍ طَبقَةً مِنَ الْكَلامِ يَعْرِفُهُ ويَجْتَنِبُهُ، وَلْيَكُنْ مَذهَبَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ..

And the right of him who seeks your counsel is that you should give him your counsel as much as you think he can bear. And you should talk with him with such gentle words that he listens to you and you should use such words that his intellect can understand. This is because for each person's intellect there is a certain way of talking that he can comprehend and respond to. You should choose having mercy as your course of action. And there is no power but in God.

In short, Imam Sajjad states that one who seeks counsel has the right to be advised as much as he can bear to hear. Advice should be given gently to help the listener accept it. One should also be kind when giving someone some advice. Giving counsel and wishing well are among the important topics stressed in Islam. The Qur'an has stressed that the Divine Prophets are social counselors. We read in the Chapter A`raaf of the Holy Qur'an that the Prophets give advice to people:

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالاَتِ رَبِّي وَأَنصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

"I but fulfill towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: Sincere is my advice to you, and I know from God something that ye know not." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:62***]

Prophets as Advisors

The Prophet Noah said the following to his nation:

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالاَتِ رَبِّي وَأَنصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

"I but fulfill towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: Sincere is my advice to you, and I know from God something that ye know not." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:62***]

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِن لاَّ تُحِبُّونَ النَّاصِحِينَ

So Salih left them, saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the message for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel, but ye love not good counselors!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:79***]

The Qur'an says the following regarding the Prophet Shu'aib :

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالاَتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ آسَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ

So Shu'aib left them, saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the messages for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel, but how shall I lament over a people who refuse to believe!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:93***]

All the Prophets of God were advisors to their nations. All men naturally welcome being advised except those who have lost their purely divine nature. Such people did not pay any attention to the Prophets and were thus seized by a severe punishment. It is interesting to note that even Satan uses giving advice as a means of fooling people. We read in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an about Satan's swearing to Adam and Eve that he is their sincere advisor:

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

"And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere advisor." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:21***]

Thus, we should realize that our enemies might sometimes approach us as friends giving us advice in order to corrupt us. We learned that the Prophets were advisors to their nations. There are several traditions from the Immaculate Imams , which state that believers are also each other's advisors.

Believers Advise Each Other

There is a chapter in *Usul al-Kafi* on "Believer's Advice." Imam Sadiq said:

يجِبُ لِلمُؤمِنِ عَلى المُؤمِنِ أنْ يُناصِحَهُ.

“It is incumbent upon a believer to give sincere counsel to a(nother) believer.”[1]

The late Allameh Majlisi said in his book Mir’at al-Uqool: “What is meant by advice is guiding them to improve their religious and worldly affairs, and training the ignorant people to fend off harm from them and bring them some benefits. If they do not accept your advice, you have shown your good intentions by advising them to do good deeds and refrain from evil acts.” The Noble Prophet of God said:

لِينْصَحِ الرَّجُلُ مِنكُم أخاهُ كَنصِيحَتِهِ لِنَفسِهِ.

“Each of you should give sincere advice to your brethren just as you give sincere advice to yourselves.”[2]

Advisors Are the Best of the People

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

إنَّ أعْظَمَ النّاسِ مَنْزِلَةً عِندَ اللهِ يَومَ القِيامَةِ أمشَاهُم في أرْضِهِ بِالنَّصِيحَةِ لخَلقِهِ.

“The people of the highest rank near God on the Resurrection Day are those who were the most active on His earth in counseling His creatures.”[3]

This implies exerting efforts to advise the people and to improve their conditions. Sufyan ibn Uyaynah narrated that he heard Imam Sadiq say:

عَلَيكُم بالنُّصْحِ للهِ في خَلقِهِ فَلنْ تلقاهُ لِعَمَلٍ أفْضَلُ مِنهُ.

“It is prescribed for you to advise the people for the sake of God. You will not find any better deed than this.”[4]

We see that advice given sincerely for God’s sake is highly valued, not advice intended to corrupt the people or out of deceit or financial expectations. There is no reward but deprivation for such advice. The Noble Prophet of Islam delivered a sermon in Mina and said:

ثَلاثٌ لا يَغِلُّ عَلَيْهِنَّ قَلبُ أمْرِئٍ مُسلِمٍ: إخلاصُ العَمَلِ للهِ وَالنَّصيحَةُ لأئِمَّةِ المُسلِمينَ وَاللّزُومُ لجَماعَتِهِم.

“Three things for which a Muslim’s heart should have no malice: sincere deeds for God, sincere advice and desiring what is good for the Imams of the Muslims, and adhering to their community.” [5]

We note the importance of doing things for the sake of God, and the need of the leaders to be advised

mentioned by the Prophet in this tradition.

How to Advise

We learned that advice should be given for the sake of God to be effective. It should also be as much as one being advised can accept. We cannot advise people in any way we want. We must learn how to advise, how to express our advice and how to influence the person being advised. Imam Sajjad said: "You are not free to say whatever you wish, since the Prophet of God has said:

رَحِمَ اللهُ عَبداً قَالَ خَيراً فَغَنِمَ أو صَمَتَ فَسَلِمَ.

"May God have mercy on the servant who speaks well and benefits, or is silent and remains secure."[6]

Imam Ali said:

إيّاكَ وَالكلامَ فيما لا تَعرِفُ طَريقَتَهُ وَلا تَعْلَمُ حَقيقَتَهُ، فإنَّ قَولَكَ يَدُلُّ عَلى عَقلِكَ وَعِبارَتُكَ تُنبِئ عَن مَعرِفَتِكَ.

"Refrain from speaking about what you do not know how to do, and do not know the truth about it. What you say is a sign of your intellect, and your words inform others of the degree of your knowledge and recognition."[7]

One of the key elements in good advice is in its not being boring. Imam Ali said:

أحْسَنُ الكَلامِ ما لا تمِجُّهُ الآذانُ ولا يَتعَبُ فَهْمَهُ الأفهامُ.

"The best speech is that which the ears do not eject (*through forgetfulness*)*, and the understanding of which does not fatigue the intellect."*[8]

This has been expressed as one of the rights of him who seeks your counsel by Imam Sajjad : "And you should talk with him in such gentle words that he listens to you and you should use such words that his intellect can understand."

The Noble Prophet also said: "We the Prophets are appointed to talk to the people according to their level of intellect." Imam Sajjad advises us to use mercy in dealing with the people we advise, and not use force, frightening or threatening. This is because such acts have no influence on the person being advised.

Mansour Seeking Advice from Imam Sadiq

Mansour, the Abbasid caliph, attempted to invite Imam Sadiq to his court in order to claim to be a just ruler. He sent Imam Sadiq the following message: “Why do you not associate with us in our court as other people do?” He thought that the Imam would fear his might. But the Imam replied: “O’ Mansour! We have nothing of this world for which to fear you, and find nothing of the Hereafter near you to put any hopes in. What is the benefit of my associating with you?”

Mansour felt bad receiving this response and sent another message saying: “Then come associate with us to give us some advice.” Imam Sadiq sent him the following response: “O’ Mansour! Whoever seeks (the blessings) of this world would not advise you, and whoever seeks the Hereafter would not associate with you,.”9

1. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.208.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.389.
6. Sukhan wa Sukhanwari, p.44.
7. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.2, p.320.
8. Fehrest Mawdu’-i- Durar wa Ghurar, p.332.
9. Al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-Arba’ah, v.1, p.108.

Right n. 42: The Right of the Counselor

حق الناصح

وَأمّا حَقُّ النَّاصِحِ فَأَنْ تُلِينَ لَهُ جَنَاحَكَ ثُمَّ تشرأب لَهُ قَلبَكَ وَتفْتَحَ لَهُ سَمْعَكَ حتَّى تَفْهَمَ عَنهُ نصِيحَتَهُ، ثُمَّ تنْظُرَ فِيهَا، فَإنْ كَانَ وُفّقَ فِيهَا لِلصَّوَاب حَمِدْتَ اللَّهَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَقَبلْتَ مِنْهُ وَعَرَفْتَ لَهُ نَصِيحَتَهُ، وَإنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ وُفّقَ لَهَا فِيهَا رَحِمْتَهُ وَلَمْ تتَّهِمَهُ وَعَلِمْتَ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يألُكَ نُصْحًا إلا أَنَّهُ أَخطَأَ إلا أَنْ يَكُونَ عِنْدَكَ مُسْتَحِقًّا لِلتُّهْمَةِ فلا تَعْبَأْ بشيء مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of your counselor is that you should treat him gently, then you should be whole-heartedly attentive to him, and open you ears for him so that you understand his counsel. And then study it deeply. And if what he presents to you is right, you should praise God for it, and accept it from him and acknowledge his favor.

But if what he presents to you does not agree with you, you should be kind to him and make no accusations against him. And you should know that he spared no efforts to provide you with the best advice, but he made a mistake. But if he deserves to be accused, then you should not pay any attention to him under any circumstances. And there is no power but in God.

In short, Imam Sajjad advises us to be humble and listen to the one who is counseling us. We should think it over, and praise God if what he says is right. We should also be grateful to him. However, if what he says is not right, we should know that he did not have any bad intentions and we should not accuse him. We should realize that he has made a mistake, and should not act upon his advice. In the previous chapter, we cited the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions regarding those who seek our counsel.

In this chapter, we will mention some traditions regarding the rights of the counselor. The Commander of the Faithful said:

لِيَكُن أحَبُّ النّاسِ إلَيكَ المُشفِقَ النّاصِحَ.

"The most beloved person for you should be your sympathetic counselor."[1]
He also said:

مَن أعْرَضَ عَن نَصِيحَةِ النّاصِحِ أُحْرِقَ بمَكِيدَةِ الكاشِحِ.

"One who rejects the sincere advice of a counselor will burn in the scheming of a secret enemy."[2]

The Commander of the Faithful has also said:

أمّا بَعدُ، فإنَّ مَعصِيَةَ النّاصِحِ الشَّفِيقِ العالِمِ المُجَرِّبِ تُورِثُ الحَسْرَةَ وتُعْقِبُ النَّدامَةَ

.

"Disobeying the compassionate counselor who is knowledgeable and experienced will result in remorse and regret."[3]
He also said:

إسمَعُوا النّصِيحَةَ ممَّن أهْداها إلَيكُم واعقِلوها عَلى أنفُسِكُم.

“Listen to the advice of those who grant you their advice, and keep it in yourselves (*for future use*)*.”*[4]

He also said:

أشْفَقُ النّاسِ عَلَيكَ أعْوَنهُم لَكَ عَلى صَلاحِ نَفسِكَ وَأنْصَحُهُم لَك في دِينِكَ.

“The most compassionate people to you are those who are the most helpful to you in improving yourself, and those who most sincerely counsel you in your religion.”[5]

In another wise saying he said:

مِن أكْبَر التّوفِيقِ الأخْذُ بِالنّصِيحَةِ.

“One of the greatest successes is to accept advice.”[6]

He also said:

مُناصِحُكَ مُشفِقٌ عَليكَ مُحسِنٌ إلَيكَ ناظِرٌ في عَواقِبكَ مُستَدرِكٌ فَوارِطَكَ، فَفي طاعَتِهِ رَشادُكَ وَفي مخَالَفَتِهِ فَسادُكَ.

“Your counselor is kind to you. He does you good. He sees the final outcome (*of your actions*)*. He recognizes your shortcomings. Your being rightly directed lies in your obedience to him, and your corruption lies in your opposing him.”*[7]

At the end let us mention that the Commander of the Faithful recommends the counselor to advise in private, not in public and says:

نُصْحُكَ بَينَ المَلأِ تَقرِيعٌ.

“Your advising him in public is a rebuke.”[8]

1. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.5, p.51, quoted from Ghurar al-Hikam.
2. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.5, p.350,
3. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.412.
4. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.2, p.242.
5. Ibid. p.486.
6. Ibid. v.6, p.20.
7. Ibid. p.139.
8. Ibid. p.172.

Right n. 43: Right of the Older One

حق الكبير

وَأمّا حَقُّ الكبيرِ فَإنَّ حَقَّهُ تَوقِيرُ سِنِّهِ وَإجْلالِ إسْلامِهِ إذَا كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْفَضلِ فِي الإسْلامِ بتَقْديمِهِ فِيهِ وتَرْكِ مُقَابَلَتِهِ عِنْدَ الْخِصَامِ ولا تَسْبِقْهُ إلَى طَرِيقٍ، ولا تَؤُمَّهُ فِي طرِيقٍ ولا تَسْتَجْهِلْهُ. وَإنْ جَهِلَ عَلَيْكَ تحَمَّلْتَ وَأَكْرَمتَهُ بحَقّ إسْلامِهِ مَعَ سِنِّهِ فَإنّمَا حَقُّ السِّنّ بقَدْرِ الإسْلامِ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of him who is older than you is that you should respect him because of his age, and honor his submission to God since he has precedence (over you) in Islam. You should refrain from confronting him in disputes and should not surpass him or walk ahead of him, and you should not consider him to be foolish. If he behaves foolishly with you, you should put up with it and honor him because of the right of his Islam and his age. This is because the right of age is in the same measure as (the right of) Islam. And there is no power but in God.

Regarding old age we read in the Qur'an:

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىَ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ

"He said: O my Lord! How shall I have a son seeing I am very old ..." [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:40***]

In addition, in another verse the Qur'an refers to being the biggest:

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَاذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ

"So he broke them to pieces, (all) but the biggest of them, that they might turn (and address themselves) to it." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Anbiyaa 21:58***]

In another verse, we see the Qur'an referring to leader:

إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْر

"Surely this must be your leader who has taught you magic" [***The Holy Qur'an, Taha 20:71***]

In short, Imam Sajjad states that elders should be respected due to their greatness, age and being Muslim. He has admonished us against any form of harsh treatment with the elders. Next, we will review how the Qur'an looks at this issue.

Weakness in Childhood and Old Age

Our life always begins with weakness in childhood, and ends with weakness in old age. Children grow up to be strong and make progress, and attain power. Each day they move closer to their peak of youth and gain more strength. On the other hand, old people deteriorate everyday, and get weaker everyday they approach the termination of their life. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an says:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً

"It is God who created you in a state of (helpless) weakness, then gave (you) strength after weakness. Then after strength, gave (you) weakness and a hoary head ..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Rum 30:54***]

In another verse the Holy Qur'an says:

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ

"If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature. Will they not then understand?" [***The Holy Qur'an, Ya-Sin 36:68***]

We lose all our physical strength and our health deteriorates as we get old. Our understanding turns into lack of comprehension, our strong memory is converted into senility, our strength deteriorates and turns into weakness. Our perfection turns into shortcomings, our power turns into disability, and our freshness and beauty turns into wrinkles and ugliness. When we get old we not only cannot learn new things, we will also forget what we learned earlier. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an says:

وَاللّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَمِنكُم مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لاَ يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا

"It is God who creates you and takes your souls at death. And of you there are some who are sent back to a feeble age, so that they know nothing after having known (much) ..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nahl 16:70***]

Once we get old, we have to live with all the troubles of old age.

The Old as Social Outcasts

One of the calamities for the elderly is their natural separation from the active work force in the society due to their old age and weakness. They have to retire, and stay home. A worst calamity for the elderly is for them not to find the love and respect they deserve in their family. The haughty young children might treat them with harshness or might ruthlessly cast them out of their own homes; and they will be left alone with a broken heart and no love and support. Such people will suffer a lot, and shall soon perish.

Death Due to Psychological Stress

Dr. Adolph who is a member of the American College of Surgeons stated: “When I was working as an intern in the hospital, we treated a seventy-year old lady for a broken hip bone. While I was reviewing her x-rays, I noticed that she was healing rapidly and her bones were rapidly reconstructing themselves.

I congratulated her for the very good reaction of her body to the treatment. She had improved a lot, and could walk using some canes instead of a wheel-chair. The surgeon who had operated on her told me that she had recuperated and could be released in twenty-four hours. On the same day, her daughter came to the hospital to visit her. I told her that her mother had recuperated and she could take her home the next day. She did not tell me anything and went to talk with her mother.

She told her that her husband had said that they could not take her back home anymore, and that they might be able to take her to the home for the elderly. A few hours later, I was called in to check on her. She was in a very bad state and died in less than twenty-four hours. She had recuperated from a difficult surgery on her broken hip, but could not withstand her heart being broken. Her broken heart could no longer be treated![1]

Unfortunately, we cast out our elderly from our warm and sweet homes into the homes for the elderly. This form of dealing with them has added an additional burden to their already extensive amount of problems due to aging. However, Islam has expressed its educational programs and ethics under the subject of the rights of the elders.

Respect for the Elders as Viewed in Traditions

The rights of the elders are respected in Islam. Families are taught to honor and respect their elders instead of casting them out to the homes for the elderly. We will point out some of the traditions in this respect. There are several related traditions in the Chapter “Al-Isharat” in *Usul al-Kafi*. Abdullah ibn Sin’an narrated that Imam Sadiq said:

إنَّ مِن إجْلالِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إجْلالَ الشَّيخِ الكَبيرِ.

“Part of reverence to God, the Exalted, the High, is to show reverence to an old man.”[2]

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet of God :

مَن عَرَفَ فَضْلَ كَبيرٍ لِسِنِّهِ فَوقَّرَهُ آمَنَهُ اللهُ مِن فَزَعِ يَومِ القِيامَةِ.

“Anyone who recognizes the high status of old people and respects them, God will save him from experiencing the might and fear of the Resurrection Day.”[3]

Imam Sadiq said:

ثَلاثةٌ لا يجْهَلُ حَقَّهُم إلاّ مُنافِقٌ معروفٌ بالنّفاقِ: ذو الشَّيبَةِ في الإسْلام وَحَامِلُ القُرآنِ والإمامُ العادِلُ.

“There are three whose rights none are ignorant of except a hypocrite known for his hypocrisy: an elderly (*white haired*) *person in Islam, the bearer of the Qur’an, and the just Imam.”*[4]

Ibn Sin’an narrated that Imam Sadiq told him:

مِن إجْلالِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إجْلالُ المُؤمِنِ ذي الشَّيبَةِ، وَمَن أكْرَمَ مُؤمِناً فبِكَرامَةِ اللهِ بَدَأَ وَمَن اسْتَخَفَّ بمُؤمِنٍ ذي شَيبَةٍ أرْسَلَ اللهُ إلَيهِ مَن يَسْتَخِفُّ بِه قَبلَ مَوتِهِ.

“Part of reverence to God, the Exalted, the High, is showing reverence to an elderly (*white-haired*) *believer. Whoever respects a believer has begun with the respect of God, and whoever holds an elderly believer in light estimation, God will send to him one who will hold him in contempt before he dies.”*[5]

God the Almighty said:

الشَّيْبُ نورِي وأنا أسْتَحْيِي أنْ أُعذِّبَ نوري بِناري.

“White hair is My light, and I am ashamed to punish My light with My Fire.”[6]

Ibn Abi Shu’bah narrated that the Prophet of God admonished against cutting white hair and said:

هوَ نورُ المُؤمِنِ.

“It is the light of the believer.”[7]

A man from the Hozayl tribe went to see God’s Prophet and said: “O’ Prophet of God! I am old. My

bones are fragile. I have lost my power, and cannot pray and fast as I should." The Prophet said: "Repeat your words. There are no sticks or stones around which are not crying for you as a sign of mercy. How can God not have mercy upon you?"[8]

When it was time to punish the people of Lot, God the Almighty put it off until dawn. When the Prophet Lot asked why, Gabriel told him that God says: "There is an old man with a white beard sleeping on his back amongst these people. I have put off their punishment until he turns his face around."

God's Prophet said:

> إنَّ اللهَ تَعالى يَنظُرُ في وَجْهِ الشَّيخِ صَباحاً وَمَساءً فَيقُولُ: عَبدي! كَبُرَ سِنُّكَ وَدَقَّ عَظْمُكَ وَرَقَّ جِلدُكَ وَقَرُبَ أَجَلُكَ وَحانَ قُدومُكَ عَلَيَّ فَاسْتَحْيِ مِنّي فأنا أسْتَحْيِي مِن شَيْبَتِكَ أنْ أُعَذِّبَكَ في النّارِ.

"Every morning and night, God the Exalted looks upon the face of the old man and says: O My servant! You have become old, your bones have become fragile, your skin has become delicate, your time of death is near, and the time has come for your arrival before Me. Therefore, be ashamed before Me, for I am too ashamed of your white hair to chastise you in the Fire."

Then the Prophet cried. They asked him the reason for crying. He said:

> أبْكي مِمَّن يَستحْيِي اللهُ مِنهُ وهُوَ لا يَستَحْيِي مِن اللهِ.

"I weep for one before whom God is ashamed, but he is not ashamed before God."[9]

Imam Sadiq said:

> إنَّ اللهَ لَيُكرِمُ أبْناءَ السّبعِينِ وَيَسْتَحْيِي مِن أبْناءِ الثّمانِينَ فَيأمُرُ بِأنْ تُكْتَبَ لهُمُ الحَسَناتُ وَتمْحى عَنهُم السَّيّئاتُ.

"God treats people in their seventies with honor, and is ashamed before eighty-year olds. Thus he orders that good deeds be recorded for them and their sins be wiped out."[10]

Respecting the Old Will Save You from the Penalty

God's Prophet said:

> مَن وَقَّرَ ذا شَيبَةٍ لِشَيْبَتِه أمَّنَهُ اللهُ تَعالى مِن فَزَعِ يَومِ القِيامَةِ.

"He who respects the old for their age and white hair, God, the Exalted, will safeguard him from the

terror of the Day of Judgment." 11

We quoted several traditions that stressed the importance of respecting the elderly. There may be many old people in any society. The civilized world has opted to separate them from their sweet homes and cast them out into homes for the elderly. However, Islam has stressed that their white hair is a sign of due respect and a source of blessings for us. Islam instructs us to honor them now that they have approached the end of their life.

We should not oppose them, or treat them with anger and hurt their feelings. We should realize that they have become impatient due to their old age. They have lost their ability to withstand difficulties such as hunger, thirst and other things. We should also learn that God is shy of old people. They should be shy of God, too. They should not commit sins. There are some people who have gotten used to sinning. They should cleanse their souls by sincerely repenting to God, and seeking God's forgiveness and mercy.

1. Guftar-i-Falsafi (Buzurgsal wa Jawan), v.2, p.342, quoted from Ithbat Wujud-e-Khuda, p.250.
2. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.658.
3. Ibid.
4. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.658.
5. Ibid.
6. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.445, and Safinah al-Bihar, v.1, on white hair.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.445, and Safinah al-Bihar, v.1, on white hair.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

Right n. 44: The Right of the Younger One

حق الصغير

وَأمّا حَقُّ الصَّغِيرِ فَرَحْمتُهُ وتَثقِيفُهُ وتَعْلِيمُهُ وَالعَفْوُ عَنْهُ وَالسِّترُ عَلَيهِ وَالرِّفْقُ بِهِ وَالمَعُونَةُ لهُ وَالسِّترُ عَلَى جَرَائِرِ حَدَاثتِهِ فَإنّهُ سَبَبٌ لِلتَّوبَةِ وَالْمُدَارَاةُ لَهُ وتَرْكُ مُمَاحَكَتِهِ، فَإنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدنى لِرُشْدِهِ.

And the right of him who is younger than you is that you have compassion on him, train and educate him, pardon him, and cover up his faults, be gentle with him and help him, cover up the guilts of his juvenility because this will make him repent; treat him with patience, and stop quarrelling with him. This will lead him to more sensible conduct.

Imam Sajjad recommends us to treat younger people with kindness, educate them, pardon them and cover up their faults. We should be patient with them and help them with their affairs. Undoubtedly being egocentric is one of the foundations of the development of children's personality. If used properly and directed well, it can lead to their prosperity.

A proper way to respond to this egocentrism is to respect the children and attend to their personality. Any child whose egocentrism is not properly recognized in the family will feel humiliated. He will have a feeling of having failed in life. He will be depressed. Such children are prone to various deviations and faults. That is why Imam Sajjad instructs us to overlook their mistakes.

The Noble Prophet has said the following regarding child-rearing:

> أكْرِموا أوْلادَكُم وَأحْسِنوا آدابَكُم.

"Respect your children and improve your behavior."[1]

Imam Sajjad has stressed training and educating children as one of the major duties of parents, and rights that children have incumbent upon their parents. The practices and lives of the Immaculate Imams are good examples of this.

Encouraging Children

Imam Hasan gathered his children and his brother's children once and told them:

> إنّكُم صِغارٌ اليَومَ ويوشَكُ أنْ تَكونوا كِبارَ قَومٍ آخَرينَ، فَتَعَلَّموا العِلمَ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَستَطِعْ مِنكُم أنْ يحْفَظَهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْهُ وَلْيَضَعْهُ في بَيتِهِ.

"You are all children today, but will soon be great men in the future, so acquire knowledge. Whoever of you does not have a good memory, should write down what his teachers say and keep the notes at home for later review."[2]

We see that Imam Hasan uses the children's egotism to encourage them to study to become great men in the future. He does not resort to punishment or threatening, rather he shows them that their studies today will pave the way for their progress tomorrow. What is done by Imam Hasan is the best known method of educational guidance today. Thus if a family succeeds in encouraging their children to study by raising hopes for their future progress in them, that family can direct them to eagerly pursue knowledge. There is no need to resort to threatening them or using force and punishment.

Proper Way of Child-Rearing

One of the most fundamental conditions for the proper development of our children is freedom. The same holds true for adults. There is no hope for progress in an environment full of oppression. It is the calm atmosphere of freedom that fosters the flourishing of talents. That is why Muslim teachers do not resort to the use of force as much as possible. The Prophet of Islam who was the teacher of humanity was very kind.

Ibn Masoud narrated that once when a man went to see the Prophet , he was afraid to talk. The Prophet said: “Do not be afraid. I am not a king.”[3] The Noble Prophet said:

مَن كانَ عِندَهُ صَبِيٌّ فَليَتَصَابَ لَهُ.

“Whoever has a child should behave like a child with him.”[4]

Imam Ali said:

مَن كانَ عِندَهُ وَلَدٌ صَبا.

“Whoever has a child should play with him.”

The Noble Prophet said:

رَحِمَ اللهُ عَبداً أعانَ وَلَدَهُ عَلى بِرِّهِ بالإحْسانِ إلَيهِ وَالتّأَلُّفِ لهُ وَتَعليمِهِ وَتَأديبِهِ.

“May God’s mercy be upon a servant (*of God*) *who helps his child in righteousness through goodness to him and friendliness towards him, and through educating and training him.”*[5]

Respecting Children

Whenever the Noble Prophet of God returned from a journey, and met the children on the way home, he stopped in respect for the children. He then asked the smaller children to come forward. He picked them up and hugged them. He put some of them on his shoulders. He instructed his companions to hug children and let them ride on their shoulders. He said children get really happy this way. The children never forget these moments. Whenever they got together, they proudly talked about how the Prophet of God hugged them, and gave them a ride on his back, or that he ordered his companions to give them rides on their backs.

Overlooking Children's Mistakes

Imam Sajjad instructs us to pardon the faults of children, and overlook their mistakes. Overlooking and pardoning some of the faults of children is one of the major moral issues that should be used in the education of children. It is sometimes more effective to overlook other people's mistakes and act as if you know nothing about them. Imam Sadiq said:

صَلاحُ حالِ التّعايُشِ وَالتّعاشُرِ مِلءُ مِكيالٍ ثُلثاهُ فِطنَتُه وثُلثُهُ تَغافُلٌ.

"Goodness of companionship and living together is a full measure, two-thirds of which is (*possessing*) *understanding and one third of it is overlooking* (*the shortcomings of others*)*."* 6

The Prophet of Islam has stressed the importance of overlooking other people's mistakes as we can read in the following tradition:

المُؤمِنُ نِصفُهُ تَغافُلٌ.

"Half of (*the nature of*) *the believer is overlooking mistakes."*7

Of course, there are two forms of overlooking. One form is recommendable while the other form is not desirable. The form of overlooking of other people's mistakes that is recommended by the leaders of Islam is based on the intellect and is meant to make improvements. It is done with good intentions. Teachers can get good results from overlooking, if they do it at the proper time and in the proper place.

As an example, stealing money from the parents is sometimes done by some children all over the world. The instinctive desire to own develops in children sooner or later. Then they start to consider everything their own property. They may take other kids' toys, or pick some money from their father's pocket. In these conditions it is best for the father to say: "Some money has been taken from my wallet." Then the mother should say: "Is there anyone in this house who might do such a bad thing? No, of course not."

Then the father should apologize and say: "I am sorry. It must have fallen out of my pocket, or maybe I did not get the right change back when I was shopping." Then the child will think over what he has done, and say to himself how good it is that no one has found out about it. Then he will decide not to do it again, since this will threaten his honor. As stressed by Imam Sajjad , this is one of the situations in which overlooking a child's mistake is recommendable and will lead to an improvement in his behavior.

1. Qamus Qu'ran, v.4, p.129.
2. Guftar-i-Falsafi (Koodak), v.1, p.464, quoted from Bihar al-Anwar, v.1, p.110.
3. Guftar-i-Falsafi (Koodak), v.1, p.479, quoted from Bihar al-Anwar, v.1, p.110.
4. Ibid. p.130, quoted from Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.5, p.126.

5. Ibid. quoted from Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.262.
6. Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p.264.
7. Guftar-i-Falsafi, v.1, p.405.

Right n. 45: The Right of Him Who Asks from You

حق السائل

وَأمّا حَقُّ السَّائِلِ فَإعْطَاؤُهُ إذا تَيَقَّنتَ صِدْقَهُ وَقَدَرْتَ عَلَى سَدِّ حَاجَتِهِ، وَالدُّعَاءُ لَهُ فِيمَا نزَلَ بِهِ، وَالْمُعَاوَنَةُ لَهُ عَلَى طَلِبَتِهِ، وَإِن شَكَكْتَ فِي صِدْقِهِ وَسَبَقَتْ إلَيهِ التُّهْمَةُ لَهُ وَلَمْ تَعْزِمْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ لَمْ تَأْمَنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ كَيْدِ الشَّيْطَانِ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَصُدَّكَ عَنِ حَظِّكَ ويَحُولَ بَيْنَكَ وبَينَ التَّقَرُّب إلَى رَبكَ فَتَرَكْتَهُ بسِترِهِ وَرَدَدتَهُ رَدًّا جَمِيلاً. وَإنْ غَلَبتَ نفْسَكَ فِي أَمْرِهِ وَأَعْطَيتَهُ عَلَى مَا عَرَضَ فِي نفْسِكَ مِنْهُ، فإنَّ ذلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الأُمُورِ.

And the right of him who asks from you[1] is that you should grant him (his request) if you are certain that he is honest and you are able to fulfill his need. You should also pray to God to relieve him from what has befallen upon him, and help fulfill his needs.

But if you doubt his honesty and he has already been accused of dishonesty, but you are not convinced about this, you will not be sure whether this is one of the plots of Satan who is trying to deprive you of your fortune and cause a blockage between you and your approach to your Lord.

Then you should leave him and overlook[2] and should turn him down gently. But if you can overcome yourself in this respect and grant him what he has asked for despite what is presented to you regarding him, then this is due to your resolution in the conduct of affairs.

This topic is discussed along with the rights of him from whom you beg in the next chapter.

1. In the other version it continues: "is that you give to him in the measure of his need."
2. His dishonesty.

Right n. 46: The Right of Him from Whom You Ask

حق المسؤول

وَأمّا حَقُّ المَسئولِ فَحَقُّهُ إنْ أَعْطَى قُبلَ مِنْهُ مَا أَعْطَى بالشُّكْرِ لَهُ وَالمَعْرِفَةِ لِفَضْلِهِ وَطَلَبَ وَجْهِ الْعُذْرِ فِي مَنعِهِ، وَأَحْسَنَ بِهِ الظَّنَّ. وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ إنْ مَنِعَ [فَ]مَالَهُ مَنَعَ وَأَنْ لَيْسَ التَّثْرِيبُ فِي مَالِه، وَإنْ كَانَ ظَالِمًا فَإنَّ الإنسَانَ لَظلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ.

And the right of him from whom you ask[1] is that you should accept from him whatever he grants you with gratitude and acknowledge his nobility. And you should accept his excuse if he withholds and think well of him. And you should realize that if he withholds, he is withholding his own property, and that he could not be blamed for withholding his own property. If he is doing wrong, then "..indeed man is unfair and ungrateful" (14:34).

Therefore, Imam Sajjad recommends not to deprive one who is needy from our help if we are wealthy, and to pray to God to eliminate their poverty. If we doubt their claim, we should consider the possibility of Satan's plans to deprive us from a divine blessing. The Imam instructs us to politely tell off the beggar if we cannot help him. He also recommends us to thank those from whom we ask for something if they grant us anything, and not blame them for not giving us anything since everyone naturally likes what he owns.

When to Ask

Islam recommends us to ask in order to learn. We read in the Holy Qur'an:

فَاسْأَلُواْ أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

" … If ye realize this not, ask of those who possess the message." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Na*** ***16:43***]

Asking is one of the means for learning. However, what Imam Sajjad is discussing is not asking to learn. Rather he is discussing the situations when we ask someone for something due to our need. Begging is forbidden in Islam unless it becomes absolutely necessary like when one is about to die of poverty. In this situation, one can ask for something in order to save his life. In these conditions, the one being

asked to help should assist the one who is asking for help. We read in the Holy Qur'an:

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ

لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

"And those in whose wealth is a recognized right for the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason) from asking." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ma'arij 70:24-25***]

Those who ask should not be deprived from presenting their petition. The Qur'an says:

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ

"Nor repulse the petitioner (unheard)." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Dhuha 93:10***]

Is the right mentioned in the verse 70:24-25 cited above referring to the alms, the one-fifth levy or other obligatory religious rights? Or is it a different right? Some believe it to refer to a different right, since the obligatory religious rights are incumbent upon all people whether they are pious or not. If we accept this interpretation, then we can conclude that those who pray also recognize a right in their wealth for the needy and the deprived for the sake of God.

Verse 93:10 cited above implies that we should not harshly push away those who ask us for something. This might imply those who ask us about scientific or religious issues, or those who are deprived, and ask us for financial help.[2]

Begging is Loathsome

Many traditions from the Immaculate Imams have expressed that begging is loathsome. Begging will cause the people to lose their trust in the beggar, and result in one's humility. A believer has honor and should not do something that causes him to lose his honor. Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet :

إنَّ اللهَ تَبارَكَ وَتَعالى أحَبَّ شَيئاً لِنفْسِهِ وَأبْغَضَهُ لخَلقِهِ؛ أبْغَضَ لخَلْقِهِ المَسأَلَةَ وَأحَبَّ لِنَفْسِهِ أنْ يُسأَلَ، وَلَيسَ شَيءٌ أحَبَّ إلى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِن أنْ يُسأَلَ فَلا يَسْتَحْيِي أحَدُكُم أنْ يَسأَلَ اللهَ مِن فَضْلِه وَلو شِسْعَ نَعْلِهِ.

"There is something that God the Exalted the High loves for Himself, but hates for others. He hates for people to ask from others, but He loves the people to ask from Him. Nothing is more loved by God the Exalted the High than to be asked for something. Therefore none of you should be ashamed of asking

God from His Bounty, even if it be just for your shoe-lace."[3]

It is obvious that one who begs from others has lost his trust in God. In another tradition he is quoted to have said:

إيّاكَ وَسؤالَ النّاسِ فإنّهُ ذُلٌّ في الدّنيا وفَقْرٌ تُعَجّلونَهُ وحِسابٌ طَويلٌ يَومَ القِيامَةِ.

"Beware of begging from people, for it is humiliation in this world, poverty that you hasten, and a prolonged Reckoning on the Resurrection Day."[4]

In another tradition we read that Husayn ibn Abil'ala quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

رَحِمَ اللهُ عَبداً عَفّ وَتَعَفَّفَ وَكَفَّ عَن المَسألَةِ فإنَّهُ يَتَعَجَّلُ الدَّنِيَّةَ في الدّنيا ولا يُغنِي النّاسُ عَنهُ شَيئاً.

"May God have mercy upon the servant who is chaste, and abstains (*from what is unlawful*)*, and refrains from asking, for it hastens baseness in this world, and people will not benefit from it at all."*[5]

Maintaining Human Nobility

In his will, the Commander of the Faithful gave the following advice to Imam Hasan regarding human nobility, and the loss of one's honor and respect due to begging:

وَأكْرِم نَفْسَكَ عَن كُلّ دَنِيَّةٍ وإنْ ساقَتْكَ إلى الرّغائِبِ فإنّكَ لنْ تَعتاضَ بمَا تَبذُلُ مِن نَفْسِكَ عِوَضاً ولا تَكُن عَبْدَ غَيرِكَ وَقَد جَعلَكَ اللهُ حُرّاً.

"O my son! Honor yourself and do not debase yourself even if it will help you reach your goal. You can never get back the equivalent of your lost honor if you do so. Do not be a servant of others, since God has created you to be free." [6]

In another part of the will we read:

وَإنِ اسْتَطَعتَ أنْ لا يَكونَ بَينَكَ وَبَينَ اللهِ ذو نِعمَةٍ فافْعلْ، فإنَّكَ مُدرِكٌ قِسَمَكَ وَآخِذٌ سَهمَكَ وإنَّ اليَسيرَ مِن اللهِ سُبحانَهُ أعظَمُ وَأكْرَمُ مِن الكَثيرِ مِن خَلقِهِ وإنْ كانَ كُلٌّ مِنهُ.

"Try not to establish anyone between you and your God – who is the owner of the blessings. You will only get your share of the daily bread. Although all the blessings which are directed to you come from Him, a little bit received directly from God is loftier and more respectful than a lot received from His servants."[7]

We can see that the Imam advises his son not to humiliate himself since God is the Nourisher of all. Therefore, we should not beg since this will result in the loss of our honor. He also said:

السّؤالُ يُضعِفُ لِسانَ المُتَكَلِّمِ وَيُكَسِّرُ قَلبَ الشُّجاعِ البَطلِ ويُوقِفُ الحُرَّ العَزيزَ مَوقِفَ العَبْدِ الذّليلِ وَيُذهِبُ بهَاءَ الوجْهِ ويمْحَقُ الرّزقَ.

"Begging will weaken the speaker's tongue; it will break the heart of the brave, and place a free and powerful person in the position of a lowly slave. It will result in the loss of his honor and destroy his sustenance."[8]

Avoid the Humiliation of Begging

Imam Sajjad said:

طَلَبُ الحَوائِجِ إلى النّاسِ مَذَلَّةٌ لِلحَياةِ وَمَذْهَبَةٌ لِلحَياءِ واسْتِخفافٌ بِالوَقارِ وَهُو الفَقْرُ الحاضِرُ.

"Seeking one's needs from people is humiliation in this life a cause of becoming bereft of shame and taking one's honor lightly, and it is present poverty."[9]

The Imam Sadiq said:

طَلَبُ الحَوائِجِ إلى النّاسِ استِلابٌ لِلعِزّةِ وَمُذهِبَةٌ لِلحَياءِ، واليَأسُ ممّا في أيْدِي النّاسِ عِزٌّ لِلمُؤمِنِ في دينِهِ، والطَّمَعُ هو الفَقْرُ الحاضِرُ.

"Seeking one's needs from the people is a deprivation of honor and a cause of becoming bereft of shame. Cutting off hope in what the people possess will cause a believer to have honor in his religion; and greed is present poverty."[10]

The Noble Prophet of Islam said:

مَن فَتَحَ عَلى نَفسِهِ بابَ مَسألَةٍ فَتحَ اللهُ عَليهِ سَبعينَ باباً مِن الفَقْرِ لا يَسُدُّ أدناها شَيءٌ.

"Whoever opens up to himself a path of begging from the people will cause God to open up seventy paths of descension of poverty upon him in such a way that nothing can block even the narrowest of these seventy paths."[11]

The Prophet of God advised Abu-Dharr:

يا أَبا ذَرّ! إيّاكَ وَالسُّؤالَ فإنّه ذُلٌّ حاضِرٌ وفَقْرٌ تَتَعَجَّلُهُ وَفيهِ حِسابٌ طَويلٌ يَومَ القِيامَةِ. يا أَبا ذَرّ! لا تَسْأَلْ بِكَفّكَ، وإنْ أتاكَ شَيءٌ فاقْبَلْهُ.

"O Abu-Dharr! Beware of begging from the people since that is the present humiliation, and poverty that you hasten. There is also extensive Reckoning for it on the Resurrection Day. O Abu-Dharr! Do not beg from the people, but accept what is granted to you in any other way."[12]

Imam Ridha said: "A man went to see the Prophet and asked the Prophet to teach him something that will not hinder his going to Heaven. The Prophet said:

لا تَغْضَبْ وَلا تَسأَلِ النّاسَ وارْضَ لِلنّاسِ ما تَرضَى لِنَفسِكَ.

"Do not get angry and do not beg from people, and love for others what you love for yourself."[13]

There are also several poems that support this idea in the literature.
Once when Imam Ali saw a man who was begging in Arafah. He admonished him and said: "Woe to you who beg from people (instead of asking God) for what you need on such a day." [14]

The Prophet said: "Do not beg from the people." A poor man had come there to beg from the Prophet . The Prophet repeatedly said:

مَن سَأَلَنا أعْطَيناهُ وَمَن اسْتَغْنى أغْناهُ اللهُ.

"Whoever asks us, we will grant him, but whoever is content, God will make free of need." [15]

The poor man did not ask for anything and returned home. Then his wife asked him the reason, and he told her what the Prophet had said. He then went to the desert, started to pick dried plants, and brought them back home for sale. This way he got rich after some time. He returned to the Prophet and told him what had happened. The Prophet again said: "I told you that God will make rich whoever does not beg from the people."

So far we have discussed how begging affects one's honor, social status, and psychological state of mind. We have also discussed how begging will make one poor. Therefore, one should not beg as much as possible. However, what should one do, and whom should he turn to if he really becomes needy?

Whom to Ask for Help

The Commander of the Faithful said:

فَوتُ الحاجَةِ أهْونُ مِن طَلَبِها إلى غَيرِ أهْلِها.

“Giving up one’s need is easier than to ask for it from the wrong person.” 16

In another statement he said:

مَاءُ وَجهِكَ جامِدٌ يَقْطُرُهُ السّؤالُ، فانْظُر عِندَ مَن تَقْطُرهُ.

“Your honor is in a state of solidity. Begging will make it fall in drops. Thus be careful before whom you let it fall.” 17

He also said:

لا تَسأَلُ مَن تَخافُ مَنْعَهُ.

*“Do not ask from one whose refusal you fear.”*18

Imam Sadiq said:

فَوتُ الحَاجَةِ خَيرٌ مِن طَلَبِها مِن غَيرِ أهْلِها.

*“It is better to give up one’s need than to ask for it from the wrong person.”*19

Imam Baqir said:

إنمَّا مَثَلُ الحاجَةِ إلى مَن أصَابَ مَالَهُ حَديثاً كَمَثَلِ الدّرهَمِ في فَمِ الأفْعى؛ أنتَ إليهِ محُوِجٌ وأنْتَ مِنها عَلى خَطَر.

“Seeking a need from one who has recently acquired wealth is like a dirham in the mouth of a viper – you are in need of it, but you are in danger from the snake.” 20

A Bedouin went to see Imam Ali and said: “O Commander of the Faithful! I have three problems: pain in the body, poverty and ignorance.” Imam Ali said: “O Arab brother! Please go to a doctor for your physical illness, go to a knowledgeable man for your ignorance, and turn to the generous people for your poverty.”

Then the man said: “You are a doctor, a knowledgeable one, and a generous person.” Imam Ali ordered three-thousand Dirhams to be paid to him from state funds. Then he told him: “Use one-thousand Dirhams to treat your illness. Use another one-thousand Dirhams to treat your ignorance, and use the

remaining one-thousand Dirhams to treat your poverty."[21]

Begging From Imam Hasan

A beggar came to Imam Hasan , sat down, and wrote: "Nothing is left for me to be sold. It suffices for you to look at me to realize this. There is only my honor left to be sold. I found no customer better than you to sell my honor to." Imam Hasan asked his servant: "How much money is in the house?" The servant replied: "Twelve-thousand Dirhams." Imam Hasan told the servant: "I am shy of this man. Please give him all that money."

Then the servant was surprised and asked: "Should I give all your money to him?" The Imam said: "Yes. Have a good opinion about God." The servant then brought all the money to give to that man. Imam Hasan said: "Please excuse us. We could not provide any more. You came in rushing to us but you were granted a little. If you could come later, and were not in a rush, we could give you more. Take this small gift, and know that you made no deal with us. I am not the customer for your merchandise.[22] I cannot buy it." [23]

One should realize that charity first reaches God. Thus, we should not mention our charity to the one who receives it. We notice how Imam Hasan treated the beggar with nobility. He gave him all the money that he had, and yet he apologized to him for the small gift he had given him. Thus, Imam Hasan taught his followers a great lesson.

Begging From Imam Husayn

Ibn Asakir wrote in Tarikh-i-Kabir that a beggar was walking in the alleys of Medina until he reached Imam Husayn's house. He knocked at the door and said: "No beggar has lost hopes in your grants so far. Whoever knocked at your door did not lose hopes. You are considered the owner of generosity, and its treasure. Your noble father was the killer of the corrupt people."

Imam Husayn was busy saying his prayers. Then he finished his prayer, came to the door and noticed the pale face of the beggar. He called Qanbar and asked: "How much money do you have?" Qanbar replied: "Two hundred Dirhams which you ordered me to give to your children." Then Imam Husayn said: "Someone else has come who is more needy than they are. Bring the money."

Then Qanbar brought the money. Imam Husayn granted it to the beggar and said: "Take this donation. I apologize to you. Know that I like you. If the times were different, I would have given you much more. Know that the times are changing, and we have very little of the worldly goods." The Arab took the money, stepped back and said: "You and your family are adorned with the garment of purity and you are blessed whenever your name is said. You are great. The knowledge of the Book, the divine revelations and the Qur'anic verses are in your house. Whoever is not associated with Imam Ali has nothing to be proud of among the people."[24]

1. In the other version it continues: “is that you accept from him with gratitude and recognition of his bounty if he gives, and you accept his excuse if he withholds.”
2. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.27, p.107.
3. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.478-479.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, letter no. 31.
8. Akhlaq wa Ta’lim wa Tarbiyat Islami, p.329, quoted from Ghurar al-Hikam, v.2, p.141.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, v.7;8, p.136.
10. Akhlaq wa Ta’lim wa Tarbiyat Islami, p.329, quoted from Jami’ al-Sa’adat, v.2, p.97.
11. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.484.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. The rites of Hajj include circling the Ka’ba seven times and going seven times between the hillocks of Safa and Marwa, as Hagar did during her search for water. Then the pilgrims stand together in Arafah and ask God for what they wish and for His forgiveness, in what is often thought of as a preview of the Day of Judgment.
15. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.483.
16. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Hikmat 66: “To miss what one needs is easier than to beg from an inappropriate person.”
17. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.6, p.243, 264.
18. Ibid.
19. Tuhaf al-‘Uqul, p.264.
20. Ibid. p.214.
21. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.504.
22. His honor.
23. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.506.
24. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.506.

Right n. 47: The Right of Him through whom God makes you Happy

حق من سرك الله به وعلى يديه

وَأمّا حَقُّ مَنْ سَرَّكَ اللهُ بِهِ وَعلَى يَدَيهِ، فَإنْ كَانَ تَعَمَّدَهَا لَكَ حَمِدْتَ اللهَ أَوّلاً ثُمَّ شَكَرْتَهُ عَلَى ذلِكَ بِقَدْرِهِ فِي مَوْضِعِ الجَزَاءِ وَكَافَأْتَهُ عَلَى فَضْلِ الابْتِدَاءِ وَأَرْصَدْتَ لَهُ الْمُكَافَأَةَ، وَإنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ تَعَمَّدَهَا حَمِدْتَ اللهَ وَشَكَرْتَهُ وعَلِمْتَ أَنَّهُ مِنْهُ، تَوَحَّدَكَ بِهَا وأَحْبَبْتَ هذا إذ كَانَ سَبَباً مِنْ أَسْبَاب نِعَمِ اللهِ عَلَيْكَ وَتَرْجُو لَهُ بَعْدَ ذلِكَ خَيرًا، فإنَّ أَسْبَابَ النِّعَمِ بَرَكَةٌ حَيثُ مَا كَانتْ وَإنْ كَانَ لَمْ يَتَعَمَّدَ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of him through whom God makes you happy is that[1] if he intentionally made you

happy, you should first praise God and then you should thank him accordingly, and reward him for initiating a nobility and be determined to return his favor. But if he made you happy unintentionally, you should praise God, thank Him, and realize that He chose you exclusively for that, and you liked it. He has been one of the means of God's blessings descending upon you. You should only wish him well since the means of descension of blessings are themselves blessings wherever they be, even if unintentionally. And there is no power but in God.

There are many different situations in life. Sometimes life is filled with failures and difficulties. At other times, it is filled with success and happiness. The difficulties may seem like storms that threaten a safe harboring. The successes may cause such an outbreak of happiness that we lose all our control. Islam and the Qur'an direct us towards prosperity, and invite us to act moderately in all situations.

We should not lose hope in God's Mercy when we are faced with difficulties. We should not think that there is no way out for us. We should not become negligent during times of happiness and forget our identity and God. We should remember God in all situations, and realize that blessings and the attention that we receive are due to God's will. It is God who makes us happy. We should also realize that difficulties are very instrumental in our progress and development. We should be moderate whether we are happy or sad. The cause of happiness varies. Sometimes we get a new position. At other times, we get rich. Sometimes another person makes us happy.

The Reward for Making Believers Happy

There is a chapter on this subject in *Usul al-Kafi*. The importance of happiness and making people happy has been outlined there. We will review a few of them here.
Abi Hamzeh al-Thumali quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq on the authority of God's Prophet:

مَن سَرَّ مُؤمِناً فَقَدْ سَرَّني وَمَنْ سَرَّني فَقَدْ سَرَّ اللهَ.

"Whoever makes a believer happy has indeed made me happy. Whoever makes me happy has made God happy."[2]

This tradition shows us that one way to please the Prophet and God is to make the people happy. This can play a very important role in fostering social unity, and in eliminating hard feelings and animosities.
Jabir narrated that Imam Baqir said:

تَبَسُّم المُؤمِنِ في وَجهِ المُؤمِنِ حَسَنَةٌ وَصَرْفُ القَذى عَنهُ حَسَنَةٌ وَما عُبِدَ اللهُ بِشَيءٍ أَحَبُّ إلَيهِ مِن إدخَالِ السُّرورِ عَلى المُؤمِنِ.

"The smile of a believer at another believer is a good deed. Removing a speck from your brother's eye is

a good deed. No form of worshipping God is more loved by Him than making the believer happy."[3]

Therefore, the best form of worshipping God is making others happy. Imam Baqir said: "In the supplications of Moses – the son of Imran – we read that God told Moses : "There are among My servants some for whom Heaven is destined and they shall have the rule there." Then Moses asked: "O Lord! Who are those who have such a special place in Heaven?"

God said: "Those who make believers happy." This tradition continues as follows: "If a believer who lives in a land that is ruled by an oppressive ruler migrates to a land in which pagans live, seeks asylum there and gets influenced by them; when he dies he will be told, "O My servant! I would have let you reside in Heaven if you had any place there, but Heaven is forbidden for those who set up partners with me." The fire will be ordered to seize that man but not to torture him, and he will be fed at proper times. Then Moses asked: "Where will he be fed from?" God said: "He will be fed from wherever God wills."[4] We also see a similar concept in the following verse:

إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاء

"God forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth ..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:48***]

Therefore, we realize that those who make people happy go to Heaven and have a special rank there. In the sixth tradition in the above-mentioned chapter, we read that Imam Sadiq said:

لا يَرى أَحَدُكُم إذا أدْخَلَ عَلى مُؤمِنٍ سُروراً أنَّهُ عَليهِ أدخَلَهُ فَقَط، بَل واللهِ عَلَينا، بَل وَاللهِ عَلى رَسولِ اللهِ.

"When one of you makes a believer happy, you should not think that you have only made him happy. No, I swear by God, you have also made us happy. No, I swear by God, you have also made God's Prophet happy."[5]

Therefore the Prophet and the Immaculate Imams all get happy when they see that their followers are being kind to each other and making each other happy.

Making Others Happy Will Save You

Sodayr Seyrafi quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq : "When a believer is resurrected on Judgment Day, he might see someone ahead of him who tells him not to be afraid of what he sees, and gives him glad tidings of happiness from the Lord. Then that person always accompanies him until the Reckoning. His Reckoning will be an easy one, and he will be told to go to Heaven.

That person who always walks ahead of him will still accompany him. Then the believer will ask: "May

God have Mercy upon you. You have been walking ahead of me since I was resurrected, and have given me glad tidings of God's Mercy on me. Now please tell me who you are." That person will say: "I am the result of your deeds making other believers happy in your life. God created me out of that happiness to give you glad tidings."[6] In this tradition, we see that all our deeds will somehow be manifested in the Hereafter.

Imam Sadiq's Followers are Men of Action

Kulayni narrated that Mohammad ibn Jamhoor said: "Najashi was a farmer who was appointed as the governor of the provinces of Ahwaz and Fars. One of his agents went to see Imam Sadiq and said: I owe Najashi a lot of taxes and know that he really likes you. Can you please write a recommendation for me? Imam Sadiq wrote: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Make your brother happy in order to make God happy."

Then the man took the letter and gave it to Najashi. Najashi waited until others left. Then he kissed the letter and asked him what he wanted. The man told Najashi that he had been taxed 10,000 Dirhams. Najashi ordered the tax not to be taken from him, and asked if he had made him happy that way. The man said yes. Then he ordered that a horse, a servant and a maid be given to him and asked if he had made him happy.

The man said yes. Then Najashi ordered the carpet he was sitting on to be given to him, too. Later on, Mohammad ibn Jamhoor told the Imam what had happened. The Imam became happy. He said: "O you became happy." The Imam said: "Yes. I swear by God that the Prophet became happy, too."

Making Others Happy Will Always Accompany You

Imam Sadiq said:

> مَن أدْخَلَ عَلى مُؤمِنٍ سُروراً خَلَقَ اللّهُ مِن ذلِكَ السّرورِ خَلقاً فَيلْقاهُ عِندَ مَوتِهِ فَيَقولُ لهُ: أبْشِرْ يا وَليَّ اللّهِ بِكَرامَةٍ مِن اللّهِ وَرِضوانٍ، ثُمَّ لا يَزالُ مَعَهُ حَتىّ يُدخِلَهُ قَبرَهُ، فَيَقولُ لهُ مِثلَ ذلِكَ فإذا بَعثَ يَلقاهُ فَيَقولُ لهُ مِثلَ ذلِكَ، ثُمَّ لا يَزالُ مَعهُ عِندَ كُلِّ هَولٍ يُبَشّرُهُ وَيَقولُ لهُ مِثلَ ذلِكَ، فَيَقولُ لهُ: مَن أنتَ رَحمَكَ اللّهُ؟ فَيَقولُ لهُ: أنا السّرورُ الّذي أدخَلتَهُ عَلى فُلان.

"Whoever makes a believer happy, God will create from that happiness a creature who will meet him at the time of his death and say to him: 'Rejoice, O friend of God, at the favour and pleasure of God'. He will stay with him until he enters the grave and will repeat the same words to him. When he is resurrected, he will meet him and say the same to him again. Then he will continue to be with him at every (moment of) terror, giving him glad tidings and repeating the same words. The man will say to him: 'Who are you, may God have mercy on you'? He will answer: 'I am the happiness you had brought to so and so in his lifetime'."[7]

In the last tradition in that chapter, we read that Hisham ibn Hakam quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

مِن أحَبِّ الأعْمالِ إلى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إدخالُ السُّرورِ عَلى المُؤمِنِ: إشْباعُ جُوعَتِهِ أو تَنفِيسُ كُربَتِهِ أو قَضاءُ دَينِهِ.

"One of the most beloved deeds for God is making a believer happy. That includes feeding him if he is hungry, or helping fend off his calamities, or paying off his debts."[8]

Thus, we realize that Islam is for this world and the Hereafter. The best society is one whose members treat each other with kindness and love. The Immaculate Imams have constantly advised their followers to help each other in order to direct them towards achieving Utopia.

1. In the other version it continues: "you first praise God, then you thank that person."
2. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.188, traditions 1-2.
3. Ibid.
4. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.188, tradition 3.
5. Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, tradition 6.
6. Ibid. pp.190-191.
7. Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, pp.191-192.
8. Ibid.

Right n. 48: The Right of Him Who Wrongs You

حق من ساءك

وَأمّا حَقُّ مَنْ سَاءَكَ القَضَاءُ عَلَى يَدَيهِ بقَوْلٍ أَوْ فِعْلٍ فَإنْ كَانَ تَعَمَّدَهَا كَانَ العَفْوُ أَوْلَى بكَ لِمَا فِيهِ لَهُ مِن القَمْعِ وَحُسْنَ الأَدَبِ مَعَ كَثِيرِ أَمْثالِهِ مِنَ الخَلْقِ، فإنَّ اللهَ يَقُولُ [وَلَمَنِ انتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبيلٍ. إنمَّا السّبيلُ عَلى الَّذين يظْلِمونَ النَّاسَ ويَبغونَ في الأرْضِ بغَيرِ الحَقّ، أُولئِكَ لهُم عَذابٌ أليمٌ. وَلمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إنَّ ذلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الأُمُورِ] وَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ [وَإنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بمِثلِ مَا عُوقِبتُمْ به وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابرِينَ] هَذا فِي الْعَمْدِ فَإنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ عَمْدًا لَمْ تَظْلِمْهُ بتَعَمُّدِ الانتِصَارِ مِنْهُ فَتَكُونَ قَدْ كَافَأتَهُ فِي تَعَمُّدٍ عَلَى خَطَأٍ. وَرَفِقْتَ بهِ وَرَدَدتَهُ بأَلْطَفِ مَا تقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ. ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of him who wrongs you[1] is to put an end to the matter by word or deed. If he did it intentionally, it is more appropriate for you to pardon him. This would eliminate bad feelings, and it is the polite way to treat most such people. Indeed God says: *"But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong* (*done*) *to them, against such there is no blame. The blame is*

only against those who oppress men with wrongdoing and insolently transgress beyond bounds throughout the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a Penalty grievous. But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs" (***42:41-43***).

The Almighty the High also says: ***"And if ye do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out. But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best*** (***course***) ***for those who are patient"*** (**16:126**).

This is so if it was intentional. But if he who wrongs you has done it unintentionally, then you should not oppress him by intentionally insisting on retaliation, lest you would be punishing him intentionally for what he has done unintentionally. You should be gentle with him and respond to him as kindly as you can. And there is no power but in God.

In short, we can say that if someone wrongs you, he has either done so intentionally or unintentionally. You should pardon him if he has done so intentionally. Hopefully he will not take advantage of your pardoning him. If he has wronged you unintentionally, it is not proper to punish him intentionally. Rather you should be kind to and gentle with him.

Invitation to Pardon

Very few people are able to totally avoid violating the rights of others whether intentionally or unintentionally. If people are urged to take revenge whenever they can do so, then there will be an escalation of harsh social encounters. Attacks for taking revenge are of an unpredictable nature and no one can control their severity. Usually they will be harsh. Even if they are measurable and controllable, they never seem to be exactly equal to compensate for the wrong that was done from the views of both parties involved.

Therefore, even if one side wants to be fair and exactly punish the other side in an amount equal to the original misdeed, the other party does not agree and will be urged to take revenge himself. Thus, the fighting will continue on and on. The only possible way to stop this chain of revenge taking is forgiving.

If we think we will realize that there is no real benefit in taking revenge, since it will only bring temporary relief for us. Yet the satisfaction we can get from pardoning the other party is much more spiritually rewarding and long-lasting. This issue has been delicately addressed in the Holy Qur'an and Islamic literature, and pardoning has been declared an important duty for Muslims. First, let us consider the Qur'anic verses that Imam Sajjad referred to.

Seeking Help from the Believers

Seeking help from other believers is one of the signs of believers. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنتَصِرُونَ

"And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (***are not cowed but***) ***help and defend themselves."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:39***]

What we can learn from this verse is that those whose help is sought are duty-bound to help. That implies that both the believer who is being oppressed and other believers are responsible to help defend against the oppressor. This is also stated in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِنِ اسْتَنصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ

"... But if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Anfal 8:72***]

This responsibility placed on the believer's shoulders to help each other at times of oppression warns the oppressors. They will then know that other believers will not sit idle if a believer is oppressed. In another verse, the response to injuries is clearly stated to be an equal injury:

وَجَزَاء سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

"The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (***in degree***)***: but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from God: for*** (***God***) ***loveth not those who do wrong."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:40***]

What an oppressor does to a believer is inflicting an injury. The recompense is an equal injury and is considered a bad deed even though the original injury is a bad deed. We also read in another verse of the Holy Qur'an:

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُواْ عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

"The prohibited month for the prohibited month, - and so for all things prohibited, - there is the law of equality. If then anyone transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye likewise against him. But fear God, and know that God is with those who restrain themselves." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:194***]

It is also not wrong to seek help or help defend others as we read:

وَلَمَنِ انتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِم مِّن سَبِيلٍ

"But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong (done) to them, against such there is no cause of blame." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:41***]

Forgiving: a Better Way

Imam Sajjad cited the following verse:

وَلَمَن صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

"But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:43***]

He also cited the following verse:

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُواْ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُم بِهِ وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّابِرِينَ

"And if ye do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nahl 16:126***]

In some traditions, it is stated that this verse was revealed in the Battle of Uhud when the Prophet of God saw the body of his noble uncle, the Blessed Hamzeh, torn into pieces. He got upset and said:

اللّهُمَّ لَكَ الحَمْدُ وإلَيكَ المُشتَكى وَأنتَ المُستَعانُ عَلى ما أرى.

"O God! Praise is for you. I bring my complaint to You, and seek Your help regarding what I see."

Then the above verse was revealed and the Prophet said: "I will be patient. I will be patient."[2]

The Difference between Forgiving and Overlooking

We read the following verse in the Holy Qur'an regarding forgiving and overlooking:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُوْلُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَن يُؤْتُوا أُوْلِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Let not those among you who are endowed with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want, and those who have left their homes in God's cause: let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that God should forgive you? For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:22***]

The difference between simply forgiving, and forgiving and overlooking is that one who forgives and overlooks will no longer blame and remind the other person of his mistake.

Doing Good in Return for Evil

A more important stage that is beyond forgiving and overlooking is responding by doing good in return for evil. Undoubtedly this is one of the excellent manifestations of human spirit, and requires moral training and spiritual refinement. It is also the best lesson one can teach those who engage in an evil deed. Therefore, this kind of response to an evil deed is considered the best way to end animosities. We read in the following verse:

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

وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

"Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (***Evil***) ***with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, - none but persons of the greatest good fortune."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Ha-Mim 41:34-35***]

Therefore, we are reminded of the magic power of "repelling evil with what is better." We learn that we can use this form of behavior as a means of converting our worst enemies into friends. We are also told that achieving this requires the "exercise of patience and self-restraint" which is only possible if we have faith, piety, moral and scientific nobility, patience and self-restraint against negative human tendencies.

Those who oppress always expect retaliation and revenge from the other side. They even consider themselves worthy of such retaliation due to their sub-conscience. This is the reason why responding with goodness in return for their evil deeds is like a shock to them, and it can turn them into friends instead of foes. Once, unexpectedly they are treated nicely in return for their evil behavior, their conscience is awakened and they change their opinions regarding their enemies.

Forgiving When in Power

We can only say one has forgiven another person's wrong-doing if he is in a position of power and can take revenge but quenches his anger and does not do so. However, when one who is wronged is in a weak position, and cannot take revenge, he cannot claim to have forgiven the other party.

Joseph Forgave

This point has been clarified in the Holy Qur'an in the story of the Blessed Joseph and his wrongdoing brothers. When they went to Egypt for the third time and they got to know their brother Joseph:

قَالُواْ أَإِنَّكَ لَأَنتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَاْ يُوسُفُ وَهَـذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَن يَتَّقِ وَيِصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"They said: "Art thou indeed Joseph?" He said, "I am Joseph, and this is my brother. God has indeed been gracious to us (all): behold, he that is righteous and patient, - never will God suffer the reward to be lost, of those who do right." [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:90***]

Then Joseph reminded them of their wrongdoings and asked them what they deserved. They acknowledged their wrong deeds and accepted that they deserved to be punished, but asked Joseph to forgive them. Joseph replied:

قَالَ لاَ تَثْرَيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

"He said: "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: God will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:92***]

Here Joseph is in the position of power and can punish them in any way he wishes to, but he forgives them - a true case of forgiving.

The Prophet Conquers Mecca and Forgives

The Prophet Muhammad conquered Mecca in the 8th year after his immigration to Medina. He entered the city and went to the Masjid ul-Haram (The Haram Mosque). He recited this verse:

وَقُلْ جَاء الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

"And say: "Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature)

bound to perish." [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israil 17:81***]

Then he ordered the idols to be destroyed and said: "There is no god but God the One and Only." Then he turned to the people of Mecca and said: "What do you say and suspect?" They said: "We say good things and have good thoughts. A noble brother, the son of a noble brother has now become victorious." Then the Prophet said: "Now I will say unto you what my brother Joseph said: "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you. God will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy. I free you all. You can go."

We see that the Prophet , who was in total power and could kill them all, did not do so. He only punished a few who had committed major crimes, and forgave all others."[3]
Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said:

عِندَ كَمالِ القُدرَةِ تَظْهَرُ فَضيلَةُ العَفْوِ.

"The nobility and true value of forgiving will be demonstrated when in total power."[4]

This emphasizes the fact that true forgiving is limited to cases where one has the power to take revenge. One who does not have any power has no choice but to forgive. He also said:

أحْسَنُ العَفْوِ ما كانَ عَن قُدرَةٍ.

"The best form of forgiving is one rooted in power." [5]

He also said in *Nahjul Balaghah*:

إذَا قَدَرتَ عَلى عَدُوِّكَ فاجْعَلِ العَفْوَ عَنْهُ شُكراً لِقُدرَتِكَ عَليهِ.

"Once you overcome your enemy, make your forgiveness of him a way of being grateful to God for your victory over him."[6]

The noble spirit of free men deems it proper to forgive others and abandon taking revenge when they are in total power, thereby changing their enemies from within.

1. In the other version it continues: "is that you pardon him. But if you that your pardon will harm him, you should defend yourself. God says: 'Whosoever defends himself after he has been wronged – against him there is no way'". [Shura,, 42:41]
2. Tafsir–i–Namunah, v.11, p.457.
3. Tarikh Payambar–i–Islam, p.324.
4. Sharh Ghurar wa Durar, v.4, p.324.
5. Ibid. v.2, p.435.
6. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Hikmat no.11.

Right n. 49: The Right of People of Your Creed

حق أهل ملتك

وَأمّا حَقُّ أَهْلِ مِلَّتِكَ عَامَّةً فَإِضْمَارُ السَّلامَةِ وَنشْرِ جَنَاحِ الرَّحْمَةِ وَالرِّفْقِ بمُسِيئِهِمْ وَتَأَلُّفُهُمْ وَاسْتِصْلاحُهُمْ وَشُكْرُ مُحْسِنِهِمْ إِلَى نفْسِهِ وَإِلَيْكَ، فَإِنَّ إِحْسَانهُ إِلَى نفْسِهِ إِحْسَانهُ إِلَيكَ إذا كَفَّ عَنْكَ أَذاهُ وَكَفَاكَ مَئونتَهُ وَحَبَسَ عَنكَ نفْسَهُ فَعَمِّهِمْ جَمِيعًا بدَعْوَتِكَ وَانصرُهُمْ جَمِيعاً بنُصْرَتِكَ وَأَنزَلتَهُمْ جَمِيعاً مِنْكَ مَنَازِلَهُمْ، كَبيرَهُمْ بمَنْزِلَةِ الْوَالِدِ وَصَغِيرَهُمْ بمَنْزِلَةِ الْوَلَدِ وَأَوْسَطَهُمْ بمَنْزِلَةِ الأَخِ. فَمَنْ أَتاكَ تَعَاهَدْتَه بلُطْفٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ. وَصِلْ أَخَاكَ بمَا يَجِبُ لِلأَخِ عَلَى أَخِيهِ.

And the right of the people of your creed is that you should have their welfare at heart, be merciful and gentle to their wrongdoers, treat them with friendliness and desire their well-being, and thank those of them who do good to themselves and to you.[1]

Their goodness to themselves is goodness to you because they have refrained from troubling you, spared you their burden, and restrained themselves from you. So include them all in your supplication, and help them all with your aid. And you should respect each one of them as he deserves: their old men hold the position of your fathers, and their young ones hold the position of your children, and their youths hold the position of your brothers. You should gently and compassionately care for those of them who come to you. And you should treat your brethren as brothers deserve to be treated.

Here the phrase "people of your creed" stands for nation, and it usually refers to people of the same belief. It is similar to religion that God has sent down to people through Prophets. The only difference is that nation is only ascribed to a Prophet not to God or the individuals. We do not say God's nation or so and so's nation. However, religion is ascribed to God, a Prophet, or an individual. We see such instances in the words of the Prophet Joseph in the Holy Qur'an as "the ways of a people":

إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُون وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

"I have (***I assure you***) ***abandoned the ways of a people that believe not in God and that*** (***even***) ***deny the Hereafter. And I follow the ways of my fathers, - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:37-38***]

In another verse we read:

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ

"We never heard (the like) of this among the people of these later days. This is nothing but a made-up tale!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Sad 38:7***]

It has also been referred to the idol-worshippers:

قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُم بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللّهُ مِنْهَا

"We should indeed invent a lie against God if we returned to your ways after God hath rescued us therefrom..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A`raaf 7:89***]

In this chapter, we shall discuss Imam Sajjad's expression of the rights of the people who have the same religion, or the nation of Islam.

Islam and the Society

Islam considers man as a social creature whose development is subject to social development. We can easily understand this in the way God addresses groups of people in the Qur'an. In the following verse, God addresses the people to follow the straight path:

وَأَنَّ هَـذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"Verily this is My way, leading straight. Follow it. Follow not (other) paths. They will scatter you about from His (great) Path. Thus doth He command you that ye may be righteous." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Anam 6:153***]

In another verse, God invites the people who were enemies before to be united as brothers:

وَاعْتَصِمُواْ بِحَبْلِ اللّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلاَ تَفَرَّقُواْ وَاذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَاء فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا

"And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember with gratitude God's favor on you for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye become brethren ..." [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:103***]

Others are surprised about this event. John Davenporth, the well-known British scholar wrote: "Muhammad who was a simple Arab was able to unite the small, hungry and naked tribes which were all scattered about into a disciplined and united nation by introducing to them such new ethics and characteristics that did not exist in other nations. He could overthrow the Constantinople Empire and the

Persian kingdom in less than thirty years. He conquered Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, and extended his rule from the Atlantic Ocean to the Caspian Sea and the Jaxartes River."[2]

The late Indian politician and scholar Nehru wrote:
"The history of the Arabs and the way they rapidly expanded out into Africa, Asia and Europe, and created a great and an excellent civilization is one of the wonders of human history. The force and the thoughts that awakened the Arabs and filled them with power and self-confidence was due to Islam. This religion was started by a new Prophet called Muhammad who was born in Mecca around the year 570 A.D"[3]

These were just two instances that we cited. There are many other writings by the world's most famous scholars confessing to the great developments due to the appearance of the Muslim nation that would make up a large volume if complied together.

In the following verse, Muslims are invited to be united:

وَلاَ تَكُونُواْ كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُواْ وَاخْتَلَفُواْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs. For them is a dreadful Penalty." [***The Holy Qur'an, Ali-I-Imran 3:105***]

Here Muslims are asked to avoid the disputes that the nations following Judaism or Christianity pursued before. The Qur'an advises the Muslims to avoid disputes that would lead to their loss of grandeur. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَأَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلاَ تَنَازَعُواْ فَتَفْشَلُواْ وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"And obey God and His Apostle, and fall into no disputes lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering for God is with those who patiently persevere." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Anfal 8:46***]

In this verse, the role of leadership and obeying the orders of our leaders is clarified. We should avoid any disputes in order to maintain our power. In this way, we should all persevere with patience.

Brotherhood as a Slogan for Muslims

The Qur'an has admonished us against disputes, and has invited Muslim societies to brotherhood:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

"The Believers are but a single Brotherhood. So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive Mercy." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hujurat 39: 10***]

Man is a social creature. Undoubtedly in each society, individuals pursue their own interests. This is why there are social disputes. How should we behave in order to avoid social disputes? There are moral recommendations in Islam which when followed will guarantee this. There are two chapters in *Usul al-Kafi* on moderation and friendliness. We will review some of the traditions in these chapters here. Ali ibn Ibrahim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq on the authority of God's Prophet :

ثَلاثٌ مَنْ لَم يَكُنَّ فِيهِ لم يَتِمَّ لهُ عَمَلٌ؛ وَرَعٌ يحْجِزُهُ عَن مَعاصِي اللهِ وَخُلُقٌ يَدارِي بِه النّاسَ وَحِلْمٌ يَرُدُّ بِه جَهْلَ الجاهِلِ.

"There are three characteristics which if anyone lacks his deeds will not be perfect: 1) piety to prevent him from disobedience to God 2) being good natured with people, 3) forbearance that wards off the ignorance of an ignorant person."[4]

In another tradition Muhammad ibn Yahya quoted on the authority of Husayn ibn al-Hasan on the authority of Imam Baqir : "Gabriel descended to the Prophet and said:

يا مُحَمَّدُ! رَبُّكَ يُقرِئُكَ السّلامَ وَيَقولُ لكَ: دارِ خَلْقِي.

"O Muhammad! Your Lord greets you and says: Be affable with My creatures."[5]

In another tradition Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet :

أَمَرَني رَبّي بِمُداراةِ النّاسِ كَما أمَرَني بأدَاءِ الفَرائِضِ.

"My Lord has ordered me to be affable wtih people just as He ordered me to perform the obligatory deeds."[6]

The Effects of Treating People with Gentleness

Allameh Majlisi has defined gentleness as: "mildness, kindness, and avoiding harshness in actions and speech when dealing with people in all circumstances."[7] Imam Baqir said:

انّ لِكُلّ شَيءٍ قُفلاً وقُفل الإيمانِ الرّفْقُ.

"Everything has a lock (a safeguard) and the lock of faith is gentleness".[8]

In this tradition, faith has been expressed as a precious jewel, which must be safeguarded, and the heart is its vault. Gentleness is expressed as the lock that can securely protect faith in our heart. It does not let Satan enter our heart and rule our faith. If this lock is opened and gentleness is abandoned, harshness, quarrelling and corruption will ensue.

Imam Baqir quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet of Islam :

لَو كانَ الرِّفْقُ خَلقاً يُرَى ما خَلَقَ اللهُ شَيئاً أحْسَنَ مِنهُ.

"If gentleness was a creature that could be seen, God would not have created anything better than it."[9]

Imam Baqir said:

إنّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَفيقٌ يُحِبّ الرِّفقَ، ويُعْطي عَلَى الرِّفْقِ ما لا يُعْطِي عَلىَ العُنفِ.

"God, the Exalted, the High, is gentle and is loves gentleness. He grants for gentleness what he does not grant for harshness."[10]

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet :

الرِّفْقُ يُمْنٌ وَالخَرقُ شُؤمٌ.

"Gentleness is auspiciousness, while harshness is inauspiciousness."[11]

Therefore we can better understand what Imam Sajjad means when he says "and treat their wrongdoers with patience, and treat them with friendliness, and seek their welfare, and thank those of them who do good to you and to themselves … and you should respect each one of them as he deserves: their old men hold the position of your fathers, and their children hold the position of your children, and their youths hold the position of your brothers …"

These rights of others have already been discussed in the previous chapters. He finally instructs us by saying that: "…You should gently and compassionately care for those of them who come to you. And you should treat your brother as a brother deserves to be treated." This stresses the importance of the people of the same belief. We should treat them as we treat our brothers. We should seek God's help in so doing.

1. In the other version it continues: "And keeping harm away from them. You should love for them what you love for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their old men stand in the place of your father, their youth in the place of your brothers, their old women in the place of your mother, and their young ones in the place of your children."
2. Uzr-e-Taqsir bi Pishgah-i-Muhammad wa Qur'an, translation by Sayyid Ghulam Rida Sa'idi, p.77.

3. A Look at World History, translation by Mahmood Tafazzoli, v.1, p.290.
4. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.116.
5. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.116.
6. Ibid.
7. Mir'at al-'Uqul, v.8, p.233.
8. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.118.
9. Ibid. p.120.
10. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.116.
11. Ibid.

Right n. 50: The Right of Those Under the Protection of Islam

حق أهل الذمة

وَأمّا حَقُّ أَهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ فَالحُكْمُ فِيهِمْ أَنْ تَقبَلَ مِنْهُمْ مَا قَبِلَ اللهُ، وَتَفِي بمَا جَعَلَ اللهُ لَهُمْ مِنْ ذِمَّتِهِ وَعَهْدِهِ وَتكِلُهُمْ إلَيهِ فِيمَا طَلَبُوا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُجْبِرُوا عَلَيْهِ وَتحْكُمَ فِيهِمْ بمَا حَكَمَ اللهُ بهِ عَلَى نفْسِكَ فِيمَا جَرَى بَيْنَكَ [وَبيْنَهمْ] مِنْ مُعَامَلَةٍ وَلْيَكُنْ بَينَكَ وَبيْنَ ظُلْمِهِمْ مِنْ رِعَايَةِ ذِمَّةِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَفَاءِ بعَهْدِهِ وَعَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ – صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ – حَائِلٌ فَإِنَّهُ بَلَغَنَا أَنَّهُ قَالَ «مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا كُنْتُ خَصْمَهُ» فَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ. ولا حَوْلَ ولا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of those under the protection of Islam is that you should accept from them what God has accepted from them, and fulfill what God has established for them under His protection and covenant, and entrust them to Him in what they are required to carry out, and are obliged to do.

And you should judge among them with the judgments of God that He commanded for you regarding the conditions of dealing with them, and do not wrong them as long as they honor God's covenant and fulfill their pledge. And the pledge of the Prophet, may God's peace be upon him and his household, is a barrier[1] since it is reported that he said: "I am the adversary of whoever oppresses one who has a treaty." Therefore, fear God. And there is no power but in God.

The Arabic word 'Dhimma' means a pledge or a covenant. It has appeared in the following verses, for example:

كَيْفَ وَإِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لاَ يَرْقُبُواْ فِيكُمْ إِلاًّ وَلاَ ذِمَّةً يُرْضُونَكُم بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

"How (can there be such a league), seeing that if they get an advantage over you, they respect not in you the ties either of kinship or of covenant? With (fair words from) their mouth they entice you, but their hearts are averse from you; and most of them are rebellious and wicked." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:8***]

لاَ يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلاًّ وَلاَ ذِمَّةً وَأُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ

"In a believer they respect not the ties either of kinship or of covenant! It is they who have transgressed all bounds. [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:10***]

"Those under the protection of Islam" refers to the Jews and the Christians who live under the rule of an Islamic government and have a covenant with the Muslims. There are two references to this in the Holy Qur'an.[2] We read in *Nahjul Balaghah* the following regarding the various social classes: "And there are people amongst them who pay taxes and tribute."[3]

The people of the Book are the non-Muslims who adhere to one of the Divine Books that are mentioned in the Qur'an. These people are considered to be under the protection of Islam. They must pay taxes to the state in order to benefit from the support of the government while living in an Islamic country. Then the Islamic government protects their lives and their property using this revenue.

According to Islamic jurisprudence, the people of the Book who live under the protection of Islam can rely on their own religious jurisprudents regarding their divine affairs, and can go to Muslim judges regarding their personal or economic affairs. The Muslim judge will judge between them according to Islamic principles. In such cases, the people of the Book under the protection of Islam can rely on their own religious authorities, too.[4]

Our Duties towards the People of the Book

It was stated that Jews and Christians who live in an Islamic country are under the protection of Islam. Now let us see that based on the Qur'an, what duties we have towards the people of the Book. Consider the following verse in this regard:

قَاتِلُواْ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّهِ وَلاَ بِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَلاَ يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلاَ يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُواْ الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ

Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the people of the Book, until they pay the Jizya[5] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:29***]

We see that Islam has established an in-between law for them - something between that for Muslims and Infidels. This is because the people of the Book who follow the principles of a divine Holy Book are somewhat similar to Muslims, but in some respects, they are close to the infidels.

It is for this reason that we are not permitted to kill them. However, we are only allowed to accommodate them in the Muslim society if they agree to peacefully live with Muslims, respect the Muslims, and do not rebel against the Muslims.

Poll-tax

Poll-tax is a form of tax that is taken from non-Muslims who live under the protection of Islam. They pay this tax so that the Islamic government can protect their lives and their property.[6] Some people believe that the origin of the Arabic word used for poll-tax is derived from ancient Persia.

At that time, a certain type of tax was levied to strengthen the army. Others believe it to be a purely Arabic word that refers to tax taken to provide security for religious minorities.[7] In chapter seven we referred to the text of the covenant between Khalid ibn Walid and Salvaba, the elder of the Christians regarding the imposition of tax in return for being under the protection of Islam.

Pre-Islamic Poll-Tax

Some believe that the first instance of poll-tax is related to the Sasanian king Anushiravan. It is certainly known that Anushiravan was the first ruler to levy taxes on the nation. He charged taxes to all non-governmental workers between the age of twenty and fifty. He charged 4, 6, 8 or 12 Dirhams per person. It is known that the philosophy behind this tax was to collect money in order to defend the country and its independence. To accomplish these objectives some personally participate in the defense activities, while others support them through paying annual taxes.

The age of tax payers being between twenty and fifty years implies that it was levied only on those who could carry weapons and participate in the defense activities, but did not do so because of their engagement in a job. Muslims do not have to pay such taxes because all Muslims are required to participate in a holy war when needed, but non-Muslims are not obliged to participate in a holy war; but they must pay taxes. The other reason supporting this idea is the exemption of the children, women, old men and the blind men from religious minorities. Therefore we realize that this form of tax is a form of financial assistance provided by the people of the Book in return for the protection that the Muslims offer them to safeguard their lives and property.[8]

Therefore, those who consider this form of tax as payment to a conqueror have not paid attention to the real meaning behind it. They should realize that the people of the Book receive full protection under an Islamic government by paying this tax. In addition, they become totally exempt from having to participate in defense activities or engaging in holy wars. In the verses cited above we read: "… until they pay the

Jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued." This implies that the payment of this tax is a sign of their submission to Islam and the Holy Qur'an. In other words, it implies their readiness to peacefully live as a religious minority among the ruling majority.[9]

The Jurisprudence Ruling on Poll-Tax

The first questions on the jurisprudence ruling on poll-tax is on who should pay this tax. Then it deals with how much they should be charged and the conditions for that. In Shara'i al-Islam by Muhaqqiq we read: "Take it from those who confess to their religion being the Jews, the Christians and those who are thought to follow the Holy Book being the Magians."[10] The Commander of the Faithful said: "The Magians are attached to the Jews and the Christians, and are treated the same regarding the poll-tax and the blood compensation issues since they have had a Divine Book in the past."[11]

There are traditions which state that the Prophet of the Magians was named "Damast" and their book was called 'Jamast' which was recorded on twelve thousand cow skins. These were all burnt.

The poll-tax cannot be taken from those other than the people of the Book. The Qur'an says the following regarding the Pagans:

فَاقْتُلُواْ الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدتُّمُوهُمْ

"Then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:5***]

The case of the idol-worshippers is also clear. Therefore, the poll-tax can only be taken from these three groups of religious people if they adhere to the conditions of the covenant. There is no distinction between the Persians or the Arabs in this regard. No taxes can be charged to children or the mentally ill.

The Amount of Poll-Tax

What is known from the companions[12] is that there is no fixed amount for this tax. The amount is based on the opinion of the leader, and the financial ability of the tax-payers to pay it. What we understand from Islamic history is that it is set to be a very small amount, sometimes about one Dirham, or what the tax-payer can pay.

The Conditions of the Poll-Tax

There are six conditions for the poll-tax as follows:

1 - They should accept the payment of this tax.

2 - They should not do anything that violates the conditions of submission and security such as deciding

to engage in war with the Muslims.

3 – They should not hurt the Muslims, financially harm them, or sexually harass the Muslims. If any of them vilifies the Prophet , he would be killed.

4 – They should not publicly engage in the Islamically forbidden acts such as drinking wine, eating pork, or marrying those who are forbidden to marry. The covenant is violated if any such deeds are done.

5 – They should not build any synagogues in Muslim lands, ring the synagogue bell, or build their houses to be taller than the houses of the Muslims.

6 – They should be subject to the decrees of Islam.

The jurisprudents have expressed these six conditions for the poll–tax. These have been discussed in detail in books on Islamic jurisprudence. We only made a few remarks to clarify the rights of the people under the protection of Islam as expressed by Imam Sajjad . Now let us see the moral and humane aspects of the rights of the people under the protection of Islam.

The Responsibilities of the Muslims

In a sermon to the people of the Kufa, Imam Ali said:

> وَلَقَد بَلغَني أنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنهُم كانَ يَدخُلُ عَلى المَرأةِ المُسْلِمَةِ وَالأُخرى المُعاهِدَةِ فَيَنْتَزِعُ حِجْلَها وَقُلْبَها وَقَلائِدَها وَرُعاثَها ما تَمْتَنِعُ مِنهُ إلاّ بالاسْتِرجاعِ وَالاسْتِرحَامِ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفوا وافِرينَ ما نالَ رَجُلاً مِنهُم كَلِمٌ ولا أُريقَ لهُم دَمٌ، فَلَو أنَّ امْرَءً مُسلِماً ماتَ مِن بَعدِ هذا أسَفاً ما كانَ بِهِ مَلوماً بَل كانَ بِهِ عِندي جَديراً.

"I have been informed that their men (*soldiers from the army of Mu`awiyah*) *would enter the house of the Muslim woman, and the woman under the protection of Islam, snatching their anklets, bracelets, necklaces and earrings. She could not put up any resistance to them but to recite the verse of: '**We are from God and to Him shall we return**'* (***2:156***)*, and to ask them for mercy. Then they would leave laden with wealth, with not a man among them suffering a cut or their blood being shed. If a Muslim would die in grief after this, he would not be blameworthy; in fact, in my opinion, it would be worthy of him."*[13]

When we see how much the leader of the Muslims gets upset when a person under the protection of Islam is oppressed, then we realize how important it is to respect these rights. When Imam Ali saw an old Christian man who was begging, he asked who he was. When they told him that he was a Christian, he said: "You used him when he was young, but have abandoned him in these conditions now that he is old and unable to work?"[14] Then Imam Ali issued an order for the state to support him financially.

Respecting the Covenant

One of the main moral issues regarding the people under the protection of Islam is respecting their covenant as expressed by Imam Sajjad . God has said the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَوْفُواْ بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْؤُولاً

"And fulfill (every) engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (On the Day of Reckoning)." [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israil 17:34***]

He has also said:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

"Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Mu'minun 23:8***]

Respecting the covenant is stressed in these two verses of the Holy Qur'an. This is considered one of the salient characteristics of believers. One will be held responsible for this and questioned about it in the Hereafter. We can also recognize the importance of this issue from traditions from the Noble Prophet and the Immaculate Imams .

Ali ibn Ibrahim narrated that he heard Imam Sadiq say:

عِدَةُ المُؤمِنِ أخاهُ نَذْرٌ لا كَفّارَةَ لهُ.

"The believer's promise to his brother is a vow that has no expiation."[15]

One must honor a promise just as one honors a vow. The Noble Prophet said:

مَن كانَ يُؤمِنُ بِاللهِ وَاليَومِ الآخَرِ فَلْيَفِ بِوَعْدِهِ.

"Whoever believes in God and the Resurrection Day should honor his promise."[16]

He also said:

أقْرَبُكُم مِنّي غَداً في المَوقِفِ أصْدَقُكُم في الحَديثِ وأدّاكُم للأمانَةِ وأوْفاكُم بِالعَهْدِ وَأحْسَنُكُم خُلُقاً وأقْرَبُكُم مِن النّاسِ.

"The nearest of you to me tomorrow, at the station (in the Hereafter), will be the most truthful of you in speech, the best of you in delivering the deposits entrusted to you, the most faithful of you in promise, the best of you in nature, and the nearest of you to people."[17]

Be it a Muslim or a Pagan

The Prophet of God said:

ثَلاثٌ لم يَجْعَلِ اللهُ تَعالى فِيهِنَّ رُخْصَةً: أدَاءُ الأمانَةِ إلى البَرِّ وَالفاجِرِ، وَالوَفاءُ بِالعَهدِ لِلبَرِّ وَالفاجِرِ، وبرّ الوالِدَين برّين كانا أو فاجِرَين.

"There are three things in which God, the Exalted, has not given any concession:
1 – Delivering the deposit entrusted to you, whether to the virtuous or the evildoer.
2 – Fulfilling the promise, whether to the virtuous or the evildoer.
3 – Goodness to parents, whether they are virtuous or evildoers."[18]

What is understood from the verses and the traditions is the meaning of Imam Sajjad's recommendations regarding the rights of the people under the protection of Islam. Therefore, anyone who honors these rights has indeed honored the rights of God and His Prophet . Anyone who does not honor these rights has oppressed the people who have a covenant with him. The Prophet has said that he will be the adversary of such people in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an instructs us not to mistreat those opponents of Islam who do not mistreat us. Consider the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَى إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوْهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

***"God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loveth those who are just. God only forbids you with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such a turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong."* [*The Holy Qur'an, al-Mumtahana 60:8-9*]**

The Holy Qur'an invites the people of the Book to be in harmony with the Muslims on ideological issues, and admonishes them against disunion as we can read in the following verse:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْاْ إِلَى كَلَمَةٍ سَوَاء بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلاَّ نَعْبُدَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَلاَ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضاً أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُولُواْ اشْهَدُواْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say: "O' People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you that we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than God." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to God's Will)." [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:64***]

1. Protecting them.
2. Qamus al-Qur'an, v.3, p.24.
3. Nahjul Balaghah, letter no.53.
4. International Private Rights, p.108.
5. Tribute, a poll-tax levied on those who did not accept Islam, but were willing to live under the protection of Islam, and were thus tacitly willing to submit to its ideals being enforced in the Muslim state.
6. Mufradat, Raghib, Article on Poll-tax.
7. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.7, p.356.
8. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.7, p.356.
9. Ibid. p.355.
10. Shara'i al-Islam, Muhaqqiq, Book on Jihad, Chapter on Poll-tax.
11. Jawahir al-Kalim, v.21, p.229.
12. Of the Prophet .
13. Nahjul Balaghah, sermon no.27.
14. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.11, p.49.
15. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.364.
16. Ibid.
17. Tarikh Ya'qubi, v.2, p.392.
18. Ibid.

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