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The Shi'ah

The Shi'ah1 الشِيعَة

The Virtue of the Shi'ah

فَضلُ الشِيعَةِ

1ـ الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): شَكَوتُ إلى رسولِ اللّهِ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ) حَسَدَ الناسِ إيَّايَ ، فقالَ: يا عليُّ ، إنّ أوَّلَ أربَعةٍ يَدخُلُونَ الجَنَّةَ أنا وأنتَ والحَسنُ والحُسينُ ، وذُرِّيَّتُنا خَلفَ ظُهُورِنا ، وأحِبّاؤنا خَلفَ ذُرِّيَّتِنا ، وأشياعُنا عَن أيمانِنا وشَمائِلِنا.

1– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'I complained to the Prophet (S) about people's jealousy towards me, so he replied, 'O Ali, the first four people to enter Paradise will be myself, you, Hasan and Husayn. The rest of our progeny will be behind us, those who love us will be behind them, and our Shi'ah will be on either side of us.'[al-Irshad, v. 1, p. 43]

2ـ الإمامُ الباقرُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): سُئِلَت أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ زَوجُ النبيِّ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ) عن عليّ بنِ أبي طالبٍ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ، فقالَت: سَمِعتُ رسولَ اللّهِ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ) يقولُ: إنّ عليّا وشِيعَتَهُ هُمُ الفائزونَ.2

2– Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said, 'Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet (S), was once asked about [the status of] Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), to which she replied, 'I have heard the Prophet (S) say, 'Verily Ali and his Shi'ah are the victorious ones.'[Ibid. p. 41]

Qualities of the Shi'ah

صِفاتُ الّشيعَةِ

3ـ الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ لِنَوفٍ البَكاليّ ـ: أتَدري يا نَوفُ مَن شِيعَتي ؟ قالَ: لا وَاللّهِ ، قالَ: شِيعَتي الذُّبُلُ الشِّفاهِ، الخُمصُ البُطُونِ ، الذينَ تُعرَفُ الرَّهبانيَّةُ في وُجوهِهِم ، رُهبانٌ باللَّيلِ أُسْدٌ بالنَّهارِ.

3– Imam Ali (a.s.) asked Nawf al-Bakali, 'Do you know who my Shi'ah are, Nawf?' to which he replied, 'By Allah, no.' Imam replied, 'My Shi'ah have parched lips and empty stomachs. They are those whose faces disclose asceticism, for they are ascetics by night, lions by day.'[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 78, p. 28, no. 95]

4ـ الإمامُ الحسنُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ في جَوابِ رَجُلٍ قالَ لَهُ: إنّي مِن شِيعَتِكُم ـ: يا عبدَ اللّهِ ، إن كُنتَ لَنا في أوامِرِنا وزَواجِرِنا مُطِيعاً فقد صَدَقتَ ، وإن كُنتَ بخِلافِ ذلكَ فلا تَزِدْ في ذُنوبِكَ بدَعواكَ مَرتَبةً شَرِيفَةً لَستَ مِن أهلِها ، لا تَقُلْ: أنا مِن شِيعَتِكُم ، ولكن قُل: أنا مِن مُوالِيكُم ومُحِبّيكُم ومُعادِي أعدائكُم، وأنتَ في خَيرٍ وإلى خَيرٍ.

4– Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) said in answer to a man who said to him, 'Verily I am one of your Shi'ah', 'O 'Aabdallah, if you are truly obedient to us in our commands and prohibitions, then you are telling the truth. But if not, then do not add to your sins by falsely claiming such a dignified position that you are not worthy of. Do not say, 'I am one of your Shi'ah', but say rather, 'I am one of your adherents and one of your lovers and an enemy to your enemies.' You are [doing] good and aiming towards good.'[Tanbih al-Khawatir, v. 2, p. 106]

5ـ الإمامُ الباقرُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): ما شِيعَتُنا إلّا مَنِ اتَّقى اللّهَ وأطاعَهُ، وما كانوا يُعرَفُونَ إلّا بالتَّواضُعِ والتَّخَشُّعِ وأداءِ الأمانَةِ وكَثرَةِ ذِكرِ اللّهِ.

5– Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said, 'Our Shi'ah are none other than those who are consciously wary of their duty to Allah and obey Him. They are known solely for their humbleness, their humility, their returning promptly whatever is entrusted in their care and their Abundant remembrance of Allah.'[Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p. 295]

6ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): إنّما شِيعَةُ عليٍّ مَن عَفَّ بَطنُهُ وفَرجُهُ ، واشتَدَّ جِهادُهُ ، وعَمِلَ لِخالِقِهِ ، ورَجا ثَوابَهُ، وخافَ عِقابَهُ، فإذا رأيتَ أُولئكَ فأُولئكَ شِيعَةُ جعفرٍ.

6– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'Verily the Shi'ah of Ali were those who restrained their stomachs and their sexual desires, who struggled and fought intensely, who worked hard for their Creator, who hoped for His reward and feared His punishment. If you have seen such people, then they are the very Shi'ah of Ja'afar.'[al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 233, no. 9]

7ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): اِمتَحِنُوا شِيعَتَنا عِندَ ثَلاثٍ: عِندَ مَواقيتِ الصلَواتِ كيفَ مُحافَظَتُهُم علَيها ، وعِندَ أسرارِهِم كيفَ حِفظُهُم لَها عَن عَدُوِّنا ، وإلى أموالِهِم كيفَ مُواساتُهُم لإخوانِهِم فيها.

7– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘Test our Shi’ah with regard to three things: the prayer times to see how well they observe them, their secrets to see how well they guard them from our enemies, and their wealth to see how they help out their fellow brothers with it.’[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 83, p. 22, no. 40]

8ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): إنّما شِيعَتُنا أصحابُ الأربَعةِ الأعيُنِ: عَينانِ فِي الرَّأسِ ، وعَينانِ فِي القَلبِ ، ألاَ والخلائقُ كُلُّهُم كذلكَ إلّا أنَّ اللّهَ عَزَّوجلَّ فَتَحَ أبصارَكُم وأعمى أبصارَهُم.

8– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘Verily our Shi’ah are those who possess four eyes: two in their head, as well as two in their heart. Actually, all people are such, except that Allah has opened their [the Shi’ah’s] eyes, and blinded others’ [as a result of their rejection of His guidance].’[al-Kafi, v. 8, p. 215, no. 260]

Those Who Are Not Considered To Be Shi’ah

مَن هُم لَيسُوا مِن الشّيعَةِ

9ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): لَيسَ مِن شِيعَتِنا مَن قالَ بِلِسانِهِ وخالَفَنا في أعمالِنا وآثارِنا . .

9– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘One who claims to follow us with his tongue, but does the opposite to our actions and deeds is not from among our Shi’ah.’[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 68, p. 164, no. 13]

10ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): قَومٌ يَزعُمُونَ أ نّي إمامُهُم ، واللّهِ ما أنا لَهُم بِإمامٍ، لَعَنَهُمُ اللّهُ، كُلَّما سَتَرتُ سِترا هَتَكُوهُ ، أقولُ: كذا وكذا ، فيقولونَ: إنّما يَعني كذا وكذا ، إنّما أنا إمامُ مَن أطاعَني .

10– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘There is a group of people who claim that I am their Imam, but by Allah, I am no Imam of theirs – may Allah curse them – every time I conceal a secret, they disclose it. Every time I explain a matter, they retort, saying, ‘Actually that means such and such.’ I am only the Imam of those who obey me.’[Ibid. v. 2, p. 80, no. 76]

11ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): ليسَ مِن شِيعَتِنا مَن أنكَرَ أربَعةَ أشياءَ: المِعراجَ ، والمُساءَلَةَ فِي القَبرِ ، وخَلقَ الجَنَّةِ وَالنارِ ، وَالشَّفاعَةَ .

11– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘The one who rejects four things is not from among our Shi’ah. They are: the Prophet’s Ascension to the heavens, the questioning in the grave, the creation of Heaven and Hell, and intercession.’[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 69, p. 9, no. 11]

12ـ عن محمّدِ بنِ عجلان: كنتُ عِند أبي عَبدِ اللّهِ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) فَدخلَ رَجلٌ فَسلَّمَ، فَسألَهُ: كيفَ مَن خُلّفْتَ مِن إخوانِكَ؟ قالَ: فأحسنَ الثناءَ وزكّى وأطرى . قالَ لهُ: كيفَ عِيادَةُ أغنِيائهِم على فُقَرائهِم ؟

فقالَ: قَليلَةٌ ، قالَ: وكيفَ مُشاهَدَةُ أغنيائهِم لِفُقَرائهِم ؟ قالَ: قَليلةٌ ، قالَ: فكيفَ صِلَةُ أغنيائهِم لِفُقَرائهِم في ذاتِ أيديهِم ؟، فقالَ: إنّك لَتَذكُرُ أخلاقا قَلَّ ما هِي فِيمَن عِندَنا . قالَ: فقالَ: فكيفَ تَزعُمُ هؤلاءِ أ نَّهُم شِيعَةٌ !

12– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) once asked a man about his tribe and brothers whom he had left back home, which the latter replied by praising them, attesting to their integrity and extolling them. Then Imam (a.s.) asked, ‘Do the rich among them visit the poor when they are ill?’ He replied, ‘Not much.’ ‘Do the rich frequent the poor at all?’ asked Imam. The man replied, ‘Not much.’ ‘Then, do the rich maintain relations with the leaders from amongst the poor?’ The man replied, ‘Verily you are listing virtues that people amongst us rarely possess.’ Imam said, ‘Then how can these people claim to be Shi’ah?!’ [al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 173, no. 10]

13ـ الإمامُ الكاظمُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): ليسَ مِن شيعَتِنا مَن خَلا ثُمّ لَم يَرُعْ قلبُهُ.

13– Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) said, ‘One who goes into retreat [in order to achieve spiritual upliftment] and who does not attain piety in his heart as a result is not from among our Shi’ah.’[Basa’ir al-Darajat, p. 247, no. 10]

Types of Shi’ah

أصنافُ الشّيعَةِ

14ـ الإمامُ الباقرُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): شِيعَتُنا ثلاثةُ أصنافٍ: صِنفٌ يَأكُلُونَ الناسَ بنا ، وصِنفٌ كالزُّجاجِ يَنُمُّ، وصِنفٌ كالذَّهَبِ الأحمَرِ كُلَّما أُدخِلَ النارَ ازدادَ جَودَةً.

14– Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said, ‘Our Shi’ah are of three types: one type dupe people in our name, one type are like glass which discloses everything that is inside it [that they, like glass, cannot keep hidden that which is placed in their trust, like secrets (ed.)], and one type are like red gold, which the more it is brandished in the fire, the purer it becomes.’[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 78, p. 186, no. 24]

15ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): الشّيعَةُ ثلاثٌ: مُحِبٌّ وادٌّ فهُو مِنّا ، ومُتَزَيّنٌ بنا ونحنُ زَينٌ لِمَن تَزَيَّنَ بنا، ومُستَأكِلٌ بِنَا الناسَ ، ومَنِ استَأكَلَ بِنَا افتَقَرَ .

15– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘The Shi’ah are of three types: one type who loves us and shows affection towards us, and he is one of us. The other type is he who adorns himself through us, and we will serve as an adornment for whoever adorns himself through us. And the third type seeks to cheat people and enrich himself in our name, and whoever does this will be impoverished.’[al-Khisal, p. 103, no. 61]

Prohibition of Extremism for the Shi’ah

نَهيُ الشّيعَةِ عَنِ الغُلُوّ

16، ـ عن عَمرو بنِ خالدٍ عَن الإمامِ الباقرِ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): يا مَعشرَ الشّيعَةِ ـ شِيعَةَ آلِ محمّدٍ ـ كُونُوا النُّمْرُقَةَ الوُسطى، يَرجِعِ إليكُمُ الغالي ، ويَلحَق بِكُمُ التّالي ، فقالَ لَهُ رجُلٌ مِن الأنصارِ يقالُ لَهُ سعدٌ: جُعِلتُ فِداكَ ، مَا الغالِي ؟ قالَ: قومٌ يَقولُونَ فينا ما لا نَقُولُهُ في أنفُسِنا ، فليسَ أُولئكَ مِنّا ولَسنا مِنهُم . قالَ: فَمَا التّالِي ، قالَ: المُرتادُ يُرِيدُ الخَيرَ ، يُبَلِّغُهُ الخَيرُ يُوجَرُ علَيهِ.

16– Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said, ‘O community of Shi’ah – the Shi’ah of the household of Muhammad – be like the middle saddle-cushion, on which the extremist who has slid forward falls back, and with which the follower who is yet to come catches up.’ Upon hearing this, a man called Sa’ad from among the ansar asked him, ‘May I be your ransom, who is an extremist?’ He replied, ‘They are a group of people who say such things about us that we do not say about ourselves. Neither are these people from among us, nor do we associate ourselves with them.’ Then the man asked, ‘Who is the follower that is yet to come?’ He replied, ‘The one who is searching for good and wants it, and who will eventually attain it and be rewarded for it.’[al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 75, no. 6]

Duties Incumbent on the Shi’ah in their Interactions with People

ما يَنبَغي لِلشّيعةِ في مُواجَهَةِ النّاسِ

17:ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ لعبد الأعلى ـ: يا عبدَ الأعلَى ... فَأقرِئهُمُ السلامَ ورَحمَةَ اللّهِ ـ يَعنِي الشّيعَةَ ـ وقُل: قالَ لَكُم: رَحِمَ اللّهُ عَبداً استَجَرَّ مَوَدَّةَ الناسِ إلى نفسِهِ وإلَينا ، بأن يُظهِرَ لَهُم ما يَعرِفُونَ ويَكُفَّ عَنهُم ما يُنكِرُونَ.

17– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘O ‘Aabd al-A’ala, ... give my greetings of peace and the mercy of Allah to my Shi’ah, and tell them: ‘Allah has mercy on the servant who incites love in the people towards himself and towards us [when attracting them towards Islam], by displaying to them that which they already like, and keeping from them that which they would reject.’[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 2, p. 77, no. 62]

18، ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): مَعاشِرَ الشّيعَةِ ، كُونُوا لنا زَيناً، ولا تَكُونُوا علَينا شَيناً ، قُولُوا لِلناسِ حُسناً وَاحفَظُوا ألسِنَتَكُم ، وكُفُّوها عنِ الفُضُولِ وقَبيحِ القَولِ.

18– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'O Shi'ah community, be an adornment for us [amongst people] and not a disgrace to us. Say good words to people, guard your tongues and restrain yourselves from mindless chatter and offensive speech.'[Amali al-Saduq, p. 327, no. 17]

The Station of the Shi'ah on the Day of Resurrection

مَقامُ الشّيعَةِ فِي القِيامَةِ

19ـ رسولُ اللهِ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ): تُوضَعُ يَومَ القِيامَةِ مَنابِرُ حَولَ العَرشِ لِشيعَتِي وشِيعَةِ أهلِ بَيتِي المُخلِصينَ في وَلايَتِنا ، ويقولُ اللّهُ عَزَّوجلَّ: هَلُمُّوا يا عبادِي إلَيَّ لأَنشُرَنَّ علَيكُم كَرامَتي؛ فقد أُوذِيتُم في الدُّنيا.

19– The Prophet (S) said, 'On the Day of Resurrection, pulpits will be set up around the Throne for my Shi'ah and the Shi'ah of my household, who are sincere in their adherence to our guardianship. Then Allah, Mighty and Exalted, will say, 'Hurry to Me My servants that I may spread My Magnanimity over you, for you have been hurt in the world.'['Uyun Akhbar ar-Ridha, v. 2, p. 60, no. 232]

20ـ قد سَأَلَ رسولَ اللّه (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ) ابنُ عبّاسٍ عن قولِ اللّهِ عَزَّوجلَّ: «والسّابِقُونَ السابِقُونَ أُولئكَ المُقَرَّبُونَ» ـ فقال: قالَ لي جَبرَئيلُ: ذاكَ عَلِيٌّ وشِيعَتُهُ ، هُمُ السابِقونَ إلَى الجَنَّةِ المُقَرَّبُونَ مِنَ اللّهِ بكَرامَتِهِ لَهُم .

20– The Prophet (S) was asked by Ibn 'Aabbas about the verse of Allah in the Qur'an, ***"And the Foremost Ones are the foremost ones: they are the ones brought near to Allah"*** [***Qur'an 56: 10,11***], to which he replied, 'This refers to Ali and his Shi'ah – they will be the foremost to enter Paradise, the ones brought near to Allah through His Magnanimity over them.'[Amali al-Tusi, p. 72, no. 104]

1. The word Shi'ah lexically means 'follower', and originally referred to those who followed Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib and who recognised him as the Prophet (S)'s divinely appointed rightful successor. Today it generally refers to the body of Muslims who recognise the twelve Imams from Imam 'Ali (a.s.) to the rest of the Imams (a.s.) from his and Fatima, the Prophet's daughter's lineage (ed.)

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