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The Sixth Talk

1. The Sanctity Of Home

So far our discussions were about domestic morals. Now we shall deal with the sanctity of the home.

We learn from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Ahl al Bayt (a.s.) that a house that promotes love and affection is certainly an ideal home! The inhabitants of such homes take care of each other. They are regular in salah (prayers), fasting and are God fearing. They maintain a rapport with Allah through regular supplication. Such homes have an elevated position in the view of Allah. Allah desires such homes to prosper. Such homes appear shining to the inhabitants of the Firmament as do the stars to the people of the earth. We also learn from the Holy Quran and traditions of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) that a house where people have differences and hatred, where people are not regular in offering salah or fasting, where people commit sins, are like ruins. Such homes are not auspicious. Satan frequents such homes, while angel despise them.
The Holy Quran says:

فِی بُیُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ وَ یُذْکَرَ فِیهَا اسْمُهُ یُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِیهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَ الاُصَالِ

In houses which Allah hath allowed to be raised andwhere His name is remembered He is glorified therein In the morning and evening. (***Sura al An-Nur, 24 : 36***)

Allah says that certain homes are such that He himself wants them to be exalted, for example when a person tries to raise the spiritual level of his house. These are the homes where Allah's name is called out and the *tasbeeh* is recited. The occupants of these homes remember Allah – these are the homes that are exalted near Allah. These are the homes where salah is recited, the zakat is paid, and the occupants of such homes fear Allah that is they avoid sins.

This verse has an obvious meaning, which I have just mentioned. That is to say that Allah considers some homes to be as sanctified as masjids or madressas. Why are they sanctified? Because pious people live in them. And Allah is remembered in these homes. Salah and fasting takes place here, there

is no sinning, and no differences between those who live here.

However there is another hidden interpretation of this verse The Infallible Imams (a.s.) have made a commentary on this meaning of the verse. They say that there are some persons who are entitled to *azmat* or greatness. Imam Jafar al–Sadiq (a.s.) interprets the word *buyuut* (homes) in the verse as the hearts of the persons and not the homes built of brick, mortar and wood. These homes, according to him, are the sanctimonious bodies like that of the Prophet (s) and the Imams (a.s.).

Once Qatada came in the presence of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). He was awed with the Imam's (a.s.) personality. He said, "I have visited many learned men and had long sessions of discussions with them. But I never had such feelings as I am having now!" The Imam (a.s.) asked, "Are you aware with what sort of person you are conversing now? You are in front of abodes that have been elevated by Allah where He is remembered and His *dhikr* is done morning and evening! They are the people who cannot be diverted from Remembrance of Allah by any activity of trade or playful pastimes."

The other meaning of this Verse of the Holy Quran is interpretative (*Taweeli*). This we cannot understand. The Imams (a.s.) are the interpreters of the Quran, and are entitled to interpret it and do *tafseer* of the Quran. A part of the Quran is evident and is binding on all (*Hujjat*). Another aspect of the Book is hidden. Everyone can make use of this hidden aspect of the Quran according to his own ability.

The summary of this discussion is that the verse tells us about homes in which there is no strife. These are the homes wherein the housemates serve each other so that there is comfort. The man works and serves his children because they are Muslims and should live in comfort The Holy Quran says that only such a house is held in high respect by the angels. They are the homes that earn the pleasure of Allah. But those homes where strife exists, where the wife misbehaves with her husband, where the husband and wife don't have love and affection for each other, are, according to this verse of the Quran, homes which are not exalted. According to the traditions of the Ahl al Bayt too, such homes are inauspicious. According to *riwayaat* these homes are the abodes of the Satans. The Satans frequent these homes. In such homes the inhabitants don't offer prayers regularly. They never try to establish rapport with or supplicate to Allah. They have no care for the Day of Reckoning. Such homes, according to the Quran and traditions, are abodes of darkness.

Amir al Mu'minin (a.s.) says, "The house in which the Holy Quran is recited and Allah is remembered, where the inhabitants don't commit sins, is an auspicious house. The angels keep visiting such houses. The Satan keeps away from there. Satan and his cohorts, inspite all their efforts, cannot have access to such homes." Amir al Mu'minin further says, "The house where the inhabitants commit sins, where Satans come freely, but is despised by angels, is an inauspicious house. The children who are bred in such houses may not grow into pious persons. According to scientific and psychological norms too, it is difficult for such children to be successful in life. A house bereft of love and affection can offer nothing more than worry and anxiety. It is the children who are unfortunate in this environment. Such homes are prisons for the children.

A house where sins are rampant, where strife exists, extinguishes the inherent abilities of the children who are raised there. The lives of such parents and the children are always sad. According to traditions, if you desire your house to be auspicious then salah, fasting, supplications recitation of Quran should take place in your house. If you want your children to be auspicious, if you desire your wealth to be auspicious, then you should make an effort to ensure that your house is not a place for sinning. Traditions make it very clear to us that if our homes are abodes of sin, then we should not expect them to be felicitous. Your life will be wasted in this house; the children born in this house will be inauspicious. All of us should bear a tradition in mind, which tells us that:

"You see the stars twinkling in the sky. Similarly the house where there is no thought of sin, where the inhabitants offer prayers, supplications, observe fasts; the angels see such houses as shining stars."

Another tradition says:

"A house in which dog is kept is not visited by the angels."

There are three meanings of this tradition:

--- One meaning pertains to breeding of dogs at home as is done in the Western Cultures. These people will be grouped with Yazid on the Day of Reckoning because Yazid used to play with dogs and monkeys!

--- In the second meaning is that 'house' refers to the hearts of men. If this heart has evil qualities, the light of the Lord cannot shine in it. It cannot be divinely inspired. The angels inspire man. Angels enter the hearts of those men who have cleansed their hearts, and do not raise dogs in their hearts – pride, jealousy, etc. This is the best interpretation of this tradition

--- The third meaning of this tradition pertains to the subject of our discussion. A house where there is no goodwill, where the husband behaves with the wife like a wild animal, where there is constant strife amongst the inhabitants, is not visited by the angels. Angels do not visit the home of people who have the qualities of animals. Apparently this meaning is also correct.

The logical meaning of the tradition fits more into the second and the third interpretation given above.

If the angels don't visit our homes, if Allah's blessings are not bestowed upon us, then it is a matter of concern for us. But it is more so for the innocent children who grow in such homes. Remaining on the right path for children raised in such homes is very difficult.

The Holy Quran says that a home is a place for rest. A husband and wife are meant to provide comfort to each other. Homes where sins are committed, where Satan visits freely and where angels are shy of coming are not places of comfort. On the contrary unrest and hardships prevail there. The Holy Quran says:

أَ فَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَنَهُ عَلىَ تَقْوَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَ رِضْوَنٍ خَيرٌ أَم مَّنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَنَهُ عَلىَ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانهَّارَ بِهِ فىِ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَ اللَّهُ لَا يهَْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظَّلِمِين

Is he who founded his building upon duty to Allah and His good pleasure better, or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, overhanging precipice so that it toppled with him into the fire of Hell? Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk. (***Sura Tawbah, 9: 109***)

This verse says that if the walls and pillars of a house are strong, only then will the roof be permanent. On the contrary, if one builds a house on land that is prone to floods, it will be carried away by the flood

The Holy Quran says that your life and home should be based on *Taqwa* (piety). In such a home the inhabitants are regular at offering prayers; they recite the Holy Book, observe mandatory fasts, supplicate to Allah and abstain from sin.

The Holy Quran says:

يخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَ الْأَبْصَر

...(***Men***) ***who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned.***(***Sura An-Nur, 24 : 37***)

A home in which the inhabitants have the fear of Allah is a strong home. The progeny coming out of such a home is always strong and firm. Spending time in such a home is auspicious. A house in which there is no fear of Allah, is according to the Quran, a house built on land that is frequented by floods. Whenever there is a flood, this house will be washed away into Hell. The people of such homes are bereft of the blessings and mercy of Allah. There is no felicity in such homes. Angels don't visit these homes. Instead you will find anger, sadness, oppression, troubles and tribulation. If you need Allah's succor, it is imperative that your homes be free of sins. They must be places where the inhabitants offer prayers. If you visit the mosque for offering the mandatory prayers in congregation, you must offer optional prayers at home. The Quran says that you should not be like the Jews and the Christians who restrict their prayers to the congregations at the Synagogue and the Church. Islam lays great stress on making your homes the places of prayer and supplication. Your homes should be the places of recitation of the Quran, offering of prayers, mutual help and affection.

2. Household Chores

In Islam one of the most important aspects of worship is the man and wife helping and serving each other. You are aware that martyrdom in the way of Allah is very blessed. We read in the traditions that a woman who serves her husband by cooking food, cleaning dishes, making his bed etc. will get reward from Allah equal to the reward of a martyr. Similarly traditions inform us that a man who helps his wife at home so that she is not inconvenienced and strives to provide sustenance to his wife and family will be

eligible for reward equal to that of a martyr.

Serving at home is a great worship. If you wish that your home remains an auspicious and a blessed place, that angels come to your house, if you want to live a blessed life, and above all this if you desire that noble children be turned over to the society from your house, it is imperative for you to maintain a strong relationship with Allah. One of the ways to achieve this is to maintain love and affection between the husband and wife. Lucky are the men who keep their wives contented and happy. Unfortunate is the lady whose husband is not pleased with her, Unfortunate are the couples who don't live in peace. Birth of noble progeny in such homes is impossible!

3. The Effect Of Ill-Gotten Wealth

If illegitimate income (the income got from charging interest, taking bribes, cheating, etc.) comes to a family and the sustenance of the members is drawn from it, then be assured that angels don't enter such homes. Such homes are surrounded by fire. The angels in the Heavens see such homes as being engulfed with fire. The Holy Quran says that the angels pity the innocent children and women who are engulfed by fires in these unfortunate homes.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَلَ الْيَتَمَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِى بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَ سَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا

Lo! Those who devour the wealth of orphans wrongfully, they do but swallow fire into their bellies, and they will be exposed to burning flame. (***Sura an-Nisa', 4: 10***)

Here the word "orphans" is used allegorically. The verse means that if a person consumes ill-gotten wealth, it is tantamount to consuming fire. Use of ill-gotten wealth is as forbidden as depriving an orphan of his rights. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) says about this verse that those who don't give *Khums* and *Zakat* and consume the wealth on which *Khums* and *Zakat* have not been paid, and consume the wealth which has been accumulated by bribery, interest, cheating, and gambling are eating fire! When food is laid on the table in a house where *Khums* and *Zakat* are not paid, a person blessed with the ability to see such things, can actually see the wife and children consuming fire.

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيد

...Now we have removed from thee thy covering, and piercing is thy sight this day. (***Sura Qaf, 50: 22***)

On the Day of Judgment the delicacies that you coveted so much, the ill-gotten wealth that you collected and consumed will turn into Hellfire! In Hell this will be the recompense they will get. The women and children of such homes have to be pitied. It is impossible for the children of such homes to turn out

felicitous. The very same women and children of this man will be his sworn enemy on the Day of Reckoning! They will catch him by the scruff of his neck and ask him, "O unjust person! Why did you feed us fire? Why did you not pay *Khums*? Why did you feed us your ill-gotten wealth? Because you fed us with wealth that was forbidden we turned towards sin instead of worship. You have deprived us of felicity by giving to us ill-gotten sustenance!"

It is mentioned in the traditions that on the Day of Judgment the most unfortunate person will be the one cursed by his family members although he toiled hard in the world to provide sustenance to his wife and children. They will plead with Allah, "He has fed us with wealth on which *Khums* was not paid and he fed us on the bribes he had taken forcibly. He made us hard-hearted! O Allah! Put him through a harsh accounting!"

وَ قَدِمْنَا إِلىَ مَا عَمِلُواْ مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَهُ هَبَاءً مَّنثُورًا

And We shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes. (***Sura Al-Furqan, 25: 23***)

The Holy Quran says in this verse that there is a group of people who have been regular at prayers, had performed the Hajj and made pilgrimages to the Holy places, shed tears during the meeting held to mourn the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) - Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) says that these acts of worship are so luminous, that this worshipper will come in a white dress, shining like a lamp on the grounds of reckoning - but because he had consumed forbidden wealth and usurped the wealth of others, all his good deeds will be taken away from him and turned over to others. At this juncture others will laugh at him in ridicule and say, “His wife and children have eaten his good deeds” The ill-gotten wealth was consumed by the wife and children in the world, now he is the one who has to answer for it. Now he has to turn over his good deeds to his wife and children and go into Hell, empty handed.

Fulfilling the rights of other people is difficult. Beware and be assured that if forbidden wealth enters your house, then the mercy of Allah will surely depart, blessings will flee this house, love and affection departs from this house. A day comes when the very children for whom you toiled will on the Day of *Qiyamah* curse you and make you an inmate of Hell.

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