

The Thirteenth Talk

1. The Birth Of Imam Hasan (a.s.)

Today is very auspicious! On this happy day Imam Hasan (a.s.) was born! Let's all congratulate Hadhrat Fatima Zahra (a.s) in celebration of the happy event! I do pray, and hope, that the Prophet (s) will bless this gathering on the happy occasion! I hope, and pray, that every one of us goes from this meeting with attainment of our legitimate wishes! To suit the happy occasion, I shall first narrate a tradition about Imam Hasan (a.s.). I hope this tradition becomes a beacon of guidance for all of us.

Once a person came to the presence of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and made a fervent appeal for help. The Imam (a.s.) came out of his house with the person. When he found Imam Husayn (a.s.) on the way, he asked the person, "Why didn't you approach this brother of mine for help?" The man said, "O son of the Prophet! I had noticed that Imam Husayn (a.s.) was in the mosque doing his *I'tekaaf* (retirement to the mosque for continued prayer). At that moment Imam Hasan (a.s.) said the following words that should be a source of guidance for us:

"If you had approached Imam Husayn (a.s.) during his I'tekaaf for his help, and he had fulfilled your need, then the reward for him would have been more than continuous prayer (I'tekaaf) for one month!"
(Bihar, Vol 74, Page 335)

If someone provides relief to a Muslim, his reward will be more than that for spending a month in the mosque praying day and night! I, therefore, appeal to all the believing men and women that, to the extent possible, they should provide help and assistance to Muslims.

A wife who helps her husband and a husband who takes care of the needs of his wife too shall earn this reward. . This will be the theme of our talk today.

2. Conceit

One thing that destroys love and affection is conceit and pride in persons. If men and women are proud and conceited, then they are exposed to great dangers. Allah's Prophets (a.s.) used to object to proud

persons because they used to interfere with the mission of the Prophets. They were so conceited and proud that they never lent their ears to anyone. Conceit and pride are so dangerous that the Holy Quran says that if people acquire these foul traits, then these traits become a part of their nature and they become rebellious and vain. They become so rebellious that on the Day of Judgment too, they will remain conceited and proud in front of Allah. The Holy Quran further says that when these conceited, proud and vain persons are brought to the grounds of Judgment on Doomsday, they will learn that, in fact, they are destined for Hell. Then, they will object to Allah and accuse Him of making a mistake. They will swear that they are good people and will say that Allah is making a mistake by unjustly assigning them to Hell!

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ أَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَذِبُونَ

On the day when Allah will raise them all together, then will they swear unto Him as they (now) swear unto you, and they will fancy that they have some standing. Lo! Is it not they who are the liars? (Sura Mujaadalah, 58: 18))

The Holy Quran says that even on the Day of Judgment these proud and conceited persons will behave the same way as they did in this world. They don't see anything other than their own point of view.

Those who are proud in this world will be the same in front of Allah. I fervently appeal to the ladies and the men that they should refrain from becoming proud. The woman should not think that she is better than her husband. She should not boast about herself, her parents or other family members to her husband. She should not be vain about her good looks. If she is educated, has a diploma, attends *darse kharji*, then she should not brag about it to her husband. If she becomes proud and develops self-love, the first person she harms is herself. Such women cannot rule over the hearts of their husbands.

Similarly the husband should not be proud about his wealth or family. May Allah keep us all away from this danger. The ladies should be very careful and never consider their husbands inferior to others. They should not air pride over the qualities of their fathers, brothers and others. This is wrong, even if her husband is poor, while her brother is rich. Even if your parents are rich and influential in the society, your responsibility is to keep your husband happy at all times, and consider him better than your relatives.

The ladies should always uphold the respect of their parents. They should be kind to their siblings. But all this should not be at the cost of the attention that they have to give to their husbands. The husband should also respect others, but must take special care of his wife. There are several types of conceit and every type has its own bitter fruits. One very bitter fruit of conceit is that it destroys love between people!

3. Types Of Conceit

One type of conceit results in argument and quarrel. This means that the person insists on getting his way and wants others to accept his point of view. This trait is more pronounced in some persons. They

tend to force their opinions on others. They come up with meaningless arguments and expect others to agree with them. They interrupt during conversations and they are very voluble. Being wrongly stubborn is a sin. Abu Dawood says that he was amongst those two or three persons who used to argue about certain matters of Islam, each one wanting to present Islam according to his own opinion. Once, when they were in the midst of a heated argument, the Prophet of Islam (s) arrived there. He heard their heated argument. Abu Dawood says that he had never seen the Prophet (s) so angry. Then the Prophet (s) said, "Quarreling and arguing is not the way of Muslims. I will not intercede on their behalf on the Day of Judgment if they indulge in such things." He (s) added, "First Allah ordered me to stop people from idol worship and polytheism. The next thing he ordered me to do was to **stop** people from argument and quarrel!"

Ponder upon the severity of this tradition. This is an illness, which has no cure, but 90% of people suffer from this ailment of arguing and quarrelling. The Holy Quran says that quarrel and argument is instigated by Satan.

وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ

... Lo! The devils do inspire their minions to dispute (Sura al An'aam, 6: 121)

The *Shayateen* instigate their friends and followers to argue and quarrel with you. Therefore, every person who argues and fights is a friend of Satan, and in turn Satan is his friend, because these are satanic activities, not righteous ones. If a woman creates a hue and cry in front of her husband just to get her way, or if a husband picks up a fight with his wife for the same reason, they destroy the roots of love. Quarrels destroy love. Therefore, I request the ladies, in particular not to fight or quarrel with their husbands. Don't try to impose your way or your opinion on your husband. If the husband is wrongly adamant, the best course for the wife is to exercise patience. If the wife, in her ignorance, becomes adamant, the husband should discreetly avoid argument with her.

The Prophet of Allah (s) has said whoever exercises patience at the time of an argument, will be rewarded with three gardens in Paradise. Of these three gardens two are named *Ridwan and Aden*. The third garden has no particular name.

4. Stubbornness

Another type of conceit manifests itself in stubbornness in behaviour with others. There are people who are so stubborn that they prefer to jump into a deep well rather than change their point of view. This is a very harmful trait. The Holy Quran says that people are of two types. The first category is that of persons who accept the truth. When they recognize the truth, their eyes water with sheer happiness.

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ

When they listen to that which hath been revealed unto the messenger, thou seest their eyes overflowing with tears because of their recognition of the truth (Sura al Maida, 5: 83)

On reading the Holy Quran, there is a group of people who recognize the truth and their eyes water in recognition of this fact. But there is another group who are not willing to recognise and accept the truth. They are willing to eat stones, or burn in the Hellfire, but stubbornly refuse to accept the truth. .

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

And when they said: O Allah! If this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down stones on us or bring on us some painful doom! (Sura al Al-Anfal, 8, 8: 32)

There was a group of people who refused to accept the truth and said: We are waiting, send a boulder from Heaven and destroy us, but we will not accept the truth.

Some ladies are stubborn. They refuse to accept facts and reality; rather they even refuse to listen. Similarly, some men simply refuse to listen. The poor wife is talking for the last half hour, but the husband refuses to listen. He keeps saying “no” to all that she says, but if you ask him what his wife has just said, he is unable to answer. If she says that you are saying no, but what did I say, that you have responded with a “no”, his answer is: “no”.

Occupation and colonization are horrific acts and grave sins because these things turn individuals or masses into slaves. May Allah curse those who established the concept of mass slavery. Those countries that unjustly control other countries are destined to doom. But when a wife is able to conquer the heart of her husband, it is a virtuous thing. Man and wife should make efforts to conquer each others' hearts. But alas, the wife does not know how to conquer the heart of her husband or rule over his heart. One of the two things that come in the way of conquering the spouse's heart is stubbornness. Those who are stubborn are mentally ill. If, god forbid, your children are stubborn, you have to gradually cure them from this malady, but you can do this only if you yourself are free from this illness.

5. Unrealistic Expectations

Another type of conceit results in excessive expectations. Some women have excessive and unreasonable demands that their husbands cannot fulfil. For example, a husband earns 5,000 a month, but the wife demands a dress costing 5,000 for eid. The husband says that he cannot afford to buy so expensive a dress. The wife insists that she must have it. Do not have unrealistic expectations. Even the men should exercise care in this matter. If you have not bought meat, do not expect to be served meat-balls.

I appeal to the ladies that if their husbands have limited incomes, they should not insist on spending money like some of their better placed friends. Certain women, whose husbands are officers, want to for example change the carpet. In spite of the wife repeatedly pleading with the husband, he maintains that he cannot afford to do so. Expecting too much is a sin. Ask only for that which your husband can afford. Men should ask only for what is in the house. If a man taxes his wife with a task which is beyond her ability then, on the Day of Judgement Allah will burden him with a thing which will be beyond his capacity.

The fire of Hell is extremely difficult to bear. The destination of people who expect too much from others is Hell, if they die without repenting. A wife who knows that her husband cannot fulfil her desire, and in spite of knowing this embarrasses him by making demands, will be put to shame by Allah on the Day of Judgement. Self-respect is the most valuable thing for anyone. A person said that Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave away everything in the way of Allah excepting two things – his faith and his self-respect! Self-esteem and self-respect for men, especially in front of their spouses is of utmost importance. Wives should ensure that the self-respect of their husbands is not hurt at home in any manner. They must take care not to make unjustified demands. Similarly wives too expect to be respected by the husbands. The husbands are requested to respect their wives. The husband should not wound the personality of his wife, nor tax her with unrealistic expectations.

House-keeping and caring for the children are difficult tasks. It is the woman's responsibility to keep herself and the children clean and tidy, take care of the house, and be ready to receive the husband when he returns home in the evening. But if it so happens that tea or food is not ready when the husband returns home, he should prepare this himself, instead of complaining. Don't expect too much from your partner. Don't try to dominate your spouse. If a truck has a load-capacity of 5 tonnes, but you load it with 8 tonnes, it will breakdown after 2 miles. Similar is the case of the wife who tries to dominate her husband, or vice versa. If you overload the truck, it will stop working, it will break down. Pity on the husband who has no tranquillity and happiness. Pity the husband who is not thoughtful in dealing with his spouse. According to Imam Musa bin Jaffer (a.s.) such a person has lost his world as well his Hereafter! Husband and wife trying to dominate each other and expecting too much from each other are the bitter fruits of the trait of conceit and pride.

6. Not Accepting Criticism

One of the fruits of conceit is refusing to accept any criticism. The ladies must consider seriously what I am going to say: Backbiting is forbidden in Islam but criticism is not! To seek out other peoples' faults, whether it is meant as a joke or not, done in their presence or in their absence, is not permitted. But criticism is constructive. Like a mirror, it acquaints the person with his faults. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

Amongst my brothers my favourite is one who informs me of my failings and defects. (Bihar, Vol 74,

Criticising people is necessary but more important is to accept and take constructive criticisms in the right spirit. People face difficulties in this matter. Sometimes the husband points out to his wife her weaknesses. But she should accept this criticism. It is not enough to verbally accept the criticism by saying “Okay, okay”. She must make practical efforts to bring about changes in her behaviour. When an ill-mannered husband cannot get along with the children, or addresses them using foul language, the wife should politely and discreetly point out that his behaviour will affect the children – they may fall ill. Now it is the responsibility of the husband to make a serious attempt to mend his ways. But, generally, in our homes, instead of constructive criticism, we create a hue and cry, and complain. We don’t accept criticism; especially the ladies are unwilling to accept any criticism. This is a very serious issue, because this attitude destroys the love for the wife in the husband's heart. When a husband repeatedly tells her something, but the wife pays no heed to his advice and criticisms, he turns indifferent to her. The end result will be that there will be no love left between the two!

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