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Ethics

The reverend Shaykh was extremely kind, pleasant–faced, good–tempered, well mannered, and polite. He always sat in a kneeled position and never leaned back on a cushion, keeping slightly at a distance from it. Whenever he shook hands with someone, he was by no means the first to withdraw his hand. He was very calm and peaceful. While speaking, he was always cheerful and smiling. He rarely got infuriated; and when he did, it was the time when the Satan and the *nafs* (vain desires) would come toward him. At such times, he would be overwhelmed by fury and would usually leave home, until he would win over the *nafs*; then he would calm down and return home.

One point that he would always emphasize and recommend to others regarding "good disposition" was that one should always be good-tempered for the sake of God and be well behaved toward people.

In this respect, he would say: "Be humble and good-tempered for the sake of God, rather than for pleasing people and as hypocrisy."

The Shaykh was quite taciturn; his pensive look explicitly indicated that he was engrossed in deliberation, remembrance of and attention to God. The beginning and the end of his talk was always concerning God. Looking at him would remind one of God. When sometimes he was asked where he had been, he would answer:

"Inda Malikin Muqtadir-In the presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent."

In the supplication sessions (e.g., *Nudba* and *Kumayl*, etc.) he would weep a lot. Whenever the poetry of Hafiz and Taqdis was recited his eyes would turn tearful. At the same time of weeping he was also capable of smiling or stating something in order to soften the possible boring climate into a cheerful one. He felt a deep love toward the holy Imam Ali Amir al–Mu'minin (a), and was his staunch advocate and lover. Whenever he sat down or stood up he would very gently recite the *dhikr* of '*Ya Ali adrikni'* (O Ali! Hearken my pleading).

Humbleness

Regarding this feature of the Shaykh, Dr. Farzam says: 'His conduct toward others was very humble and respectful. He would always open the door to welcome and admit us in for the sessions we used to hold in his house. Sometimes even he would quite unaffectedly take us to his workshop where he used to do his tailoring.

Once in the winter, he brought two pomegranates, and gave me one and said in very selflessly and unaffectedly manner: "Help yourself, Hamid jan! (dear Hamid)." He was by no means snobbish, and never considered himself superior to others. If he ever gave advice to someone, it was merely to fulfill the duty of guiding and instructing others.

He would always sit next to the entrance and whoever entered the room he would welcome them warmly, and respectfully invited them to be seated. Another disciple of the Shaykh says: 'When he was going somewhere in the company of his friends, he would not go ahead of others to get in.' Another one says: 'We had a trip to Mashhad together with the Shaykh. When we were setting out for the Holy Shrine, Haydar Ali Mu'jiza-son of the late Mirza Ahmad Murshid Chilu'i1-frantically dropped himself on the Shaykh's feet trying to kiss his feet. The Shaykh retorted: "You mean-spirited one! Beware of that disobedience of God! Be ashamed of yourself! Who do you think I am?!"

Reconciliation

One of the most important moral issues that the Shaykh was very concerned about was to reconcile people with each other. He would invite to his house those who were not on speaking terms with each other, and would reconcile them by means of quoting relevant verses from the Qur'an and Islamic *hadiths* (traditions).

Profound Reverence for the Sayyids

He was highly reverent to the descendants of Imam Ali (a), Hazrat Fatima (a), and the Sayyids. He was frequently observed to be kissing their (the Sayyids') hands and enjoined others to respect them too.

There was a noble Sayyid who often went to visit the Shaykh. He had the habit of smoking the hobble bubble. Whenever one was prepared for him, the Shaykh himself –although not in the habit of smoking it –would first take a couple of drags, pretending he was smoking, so that the Sayyid would not feel ashamed of smoking; then the Shaykh would offer it to him to smoke.

One of the Shaykh's friends related: 'Once on a winter day I had an audience with the Shaykh.

He said:

"Let's go to one of Tehran's old quarters."

We went to an old alley. There, we found a shabby store where an old respectful Sayyid –who was a bachelor –worked as a charcoal seller and lived and slept there as his residence.

It turned out that the previous night the kursi2 had been set on fire burning his clothes and some of his belongings.

His living condition was so miserable that many people were even unwilling to enter such places as that. With utmost humbleness, the Shaykh went to him and after a warm greeting, he collected his unwashed and half-burnt clothes to wash and mend. Then the old man said to the Shaykh that his possessions had been lost and he had not been able to carry on his job. Hearing this, the Shaykh turned to me and said:

"Give him something to restart his business with!"

Respect for All People

The reverend Shaykh was respectful not only to the Sayyids but also to all other people. If someone made a mistake, he would not humiliate them in the presence of others. He never reproached someone for their flaws but treated them warmly and amiably instead.

Indifference to the Worldly Positions

During the later periods of his life, a number of elites gradually became familiar with the Shaykh who included not only some of the eminent figures of the *Hawza* and University, but also some political and military personalities as well who visited him for various purposes.

Despite all his humbleness and respect toward the poor, the oppressed, and particularly the Sayyids, the Shaykh was indifferent to the formal dignitaries and high-ranking officials.

When they used to visit his house, he would say:

"They have come to ask me for 'the hag'3; they are distressed, run-down, and they have someone (around among their relatives) ailing. They come to me for *du'a* (supplication)."

The Shaykh's son said: "One of the generals who was devoted to my father once said to me: 'Do you know why! I love your father? It is because when the first time I went to visit him he was sitting next to the door in his room. I greeted him, then he said: "Go sit down!" I did so. A while later a blind man arrived; I saw that the Shaykh stood up, embraced him respectfully, and seated him near himself.

"I was looking around the house to see what was going on when I noticed the blind man rose up to leave. At the same time the Shaykh went ahead of him to help him put on his shoes, and then placed

ten tomans in his hand and the blind man left.

When it was my time to say goodbye, however, he did not move from where he was sitting and just said: "Khuda Hafiz!"4

Traveling Ethics In his blessed and outshining life, the Shaykh had made trips to Mashhad, Kashan, Isfahan, Mazandaran, and Kermanshah. The only travel he had outside Iran was to Iraq in order to make pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines there. From these trips, which were usually made in the company of his friends, that part of the memories and instructive points which are related to the traveling ethics are selected and brought up in the present volume.

According to the Shaykh's co-travelers, he had been good-natured, unfeigned in sincerity, and pleasurable to travel with. He never differentiated himself from his disciples and devotees. If some luggage and provisions were supposed to be carried along the trip, he would carry his portion and also paid his share of the expenses.

- 1. See "We sell on credit even to you", Chapter Three, part 1
- 2. A square table covered with quilts and blankets with a brazier under it to heat the legs and the body.
- <u>3.</u> The reverend Shaykh usually referred to the world as "the hag"; a term referred to in Islamic traditions as "'ajuz". See also chapter three, part 3, "The Pitfall of Love toward God."
- 4. Meaning, "goodbye".

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