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## **Ethics**

All these innumerable means of living, that are now available to man and that we endeavor to acquire and use them day and night, were not available to man from the beginning of his life on the earth. They have, gradually, been brought into existence by man's efforts and have been utilized.

But in any case, from the primitive man to the civilized man of today, human beings have never ceased working and striving and through their Allah-given nature, they have tried to provide better means of living. This is because if a man loses his energy and the internal and external organs of h is body such as his eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, and also if his brain, heart, lungs, and liver fail to function properly, he will be nothing but a dead person.

For this reason, man works not only out of necessity, but also because he is a human being, he displays various activities. Since by his commonsense he realizes that he should arrange for the happiness and prosperity of his life in any way possible, he engages in work and effort and moves in the direction of his demands.

Therefore, living in any environment and in any manner, religious or non-religious, legal or despotic, urban or nomadic, man feels the necessity of a series of duties and obligations for himself (those things which are indispensable for living). If these duties and obligations are carried out, the reasonable desires of man will be fulfilled and he will lead a happy, comfortable, and prosperous life.

Certainly, the value of these duties and obligations, which are the only means of prosperity, is the humanity itself. We cannot perceive anything more precious and valuable than the humanity and which cannot be exchanged with any other commodity.

Therefore, 'dutifulness' and its implementation are the most important practical matters that man confronts in his life, for its value is exactly the same as that of man himself. Whoever refrains from performing his indisputable duties, or sometimes neglects them, he proportionately lapses in morality from the eminent position of humanity and naturally accepts his humility and worthlessness. With every violation of his human duty, such an individual inflicts blows after blows on the body of his society and indeed on his own body as well.

The Almighty Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

"Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience (103:2-3)."

The Almighty Allah also states:

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought... (30:41)."

# Difference of Opinion in the Identification and Specification of Duties

The importance attached to the identification of duties and their implementations are indisputable obligations in the world of humanity. Never can a human being possessing human nature be found who would deny this reality.

Since human duties have an absolute relationship with man's prosperity and life and because the religion differs with non-religious isms and practices as far as views regarding man's life are concerned, naturally religious duties will differ from the du ties of other non-religious isms and practices.

Religion believes that man has an infinite and endless life which does not terminate with death. The capital of pure and true beliefs, praiseworthy ethics, and good deeds that man has acquired in this world prior to his death, serves as the great investment for his infinite life in the Hereafter.

Therefore, in obligations and duties that religion has formulated for the individuals and the society, the life in the everlasting Hereafter is also taken into consideration.

Religion establishes its provisions in the sphere of theism and the worship and servitude of Allah, the obvious consequence of which will become manifest on the Day of Resurrection.

Non-religious isms and practices (whatever these may be) only take the short and transient life of this world into consideration and formulate duties through which man can benefit more from his materialistic life and material profits which are common between him and other animals.

Indeed with a reasoning which originates from feelings and sentiments of grazing animals and beasts, they draw up an animal life for man. They pay no attention to man's realism and his everlasting life full with intellectualities.

Therefore, the sublime human ethics (as definite experience indicates) gradually disappear from non-religious communities and the moral decadence of their members becomes clearer and more manifest day by day.

Some people argue that the base of religion is following and also the unquestionable acceptance of a series of duties and regulations; whereas, social policies can be justified by the current logic.

Those who have said so neglect the fact that the rules and regulations which are implemented in the society must be carried out indisputably. No one has ever heard or seen the people of a country following the prevalent laws after argument and scientific discourse or be exempted and free from following the laws whose philosophy they do not understand. Thus, in this respect, the religious and non-religious practices do not differ.

Indeed, through a study of the natural and social conditions of a country and on inquisitiveness in its general policies, one can find out the philosophy behind the generalities of the laws of that country and some of their details (not all).

This also holds true in the case of religious laws. By means of realism and inquisitiveness about creation and man's natural requirements, one can discover the generalities of the laws of religion which is an innate policy and some of their details.

The Holy Qur'an and many *ahadith* call the people to reasoning, reflection, and pondering and in some precepts refer to the brief expedience behind the commandments. There are many *ahadith* available to us from the Holy Prophet (S) and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) which state the reasons behind the precepts.

#### **Dutifulness**

As mentioned in the beginning of this book, the holy religion of Islam is a general and permanent program that has been descended to the last Prophet, Muhammad (S), from the Almighty Allah for human life in this world and the Hereafter to be carried out in the human society so as to pull the ship of humanity out of the whirlpool of ignorance and tribulation and carry it to the coast of salvation.

Since religion is a program of life, it has inevitably specified duties for man on things which are linked to his life and asks him to carry them out.

In general, our life is connected to:

- (1) The Almighty Allah Who has created us. Our moral obligation towards His blessings is greater than any other duty and our dutifulness towards His Holy Presence is more obligatory than any other obligation.
- (2) Ourselves.
- (3) Our fellow creatures with whom we are obliged to live and perform our duties and tasks with their cooperation and assistance. Thus, according to the order, we have three general duties: duty towards Allah, duty towards ourselves, and duty towards others.

#### (1) The Duty of Man towards Allah (Cognizance of Allah)

Our duty towards the Almighty Allah is the most important duty of all and we must perform it with a pure heart and a sincere intention. It is the first and foremost duty of man to know his Creator. Since the Almighty Allah is the source of existence of every creature and the originator of every existing phenomenon, the cognizance and knowledge of His pure Entity also illuminates every realistic person. Being inattentive to this moral reality is total ignorance, lack of insight, and irresponsibility. Whoever pays no attention to cognizance of Allah, he consequently puts out the light of his own conscience and thus will have no way of attaining the real human happiness.

As we see, those who refrain from cognizance of Allah and pay no heed to this reality in their lives are completely away from the human spiritualities and have no logic other than the logic of grazing animals and beasts.

The Almighty Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

"Therefore turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder and does not desire anything but this world's life. That is their goal of knowledge... (53:29–30)."

Certainly, it should be pinpointed that the cognizance of Allah is necessary and natural for man who is a realistic being endowed with the instinct of reasoning, for man, with his Allah–given commonsense, notices the signs of the Presence of Allah and His Knowledge and Might wherever he looks in the world of creation. Thus, the cognizance of Allah does not mean that man should bring it into existence for himself, rather it means that the man should not disregard this obvious reality which cannot be covered by any curtain, giving a positive response to his conscience which invites him to Allah and eliminating any doubt from his mind by following this philosophy.

#### The Worship of Allah

After cognizance of Allah, our second duty is the worship of Allah. This is because, while recognizing the truth, this reality becomes clear that happiness and prosperity, which are our only objectives, will be attained by implementing and executing the program which the Almighty Allah has specified for our lives and has communicated to us through His messengers. Therefore, obeying Allah's orders and serving him are the only duties of man compared to which other duties seem insignificant and trivial.

The Almighty Allah states:

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him...(17:23)."

The Almighty Allah also states:

"Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaytan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should serve Me; this is the right way (36:60-61)."

Thus it is our duty to recognize the status of our servitude and needs and to keep in mind the infinite Grandeur and Greatness of Allah. We must consider that Allah knows and sees our deeds in every respect and we must obey His commands. It is our obligation not to serve any but Allah and not to obey anyone else except the Holy Prophet (S) and the *A'immat al-Huda* (infallible Imams of Guidance) whom we are commanded to obey by the order of Allah.

The Almighty Allah states:

"O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you...(4:59)."

Surely, due to the obedience of Allah and the authorities of religion, we should actually maintain a great respect for anything attributed to Allah. We must respect the holy name of Allah and the names of the leaders of religion. We must endeavor for the honor of the Divine Book (the Holy Qur'an), the honored Ka'bah, and the holy mosques and the holy shrines of the leaders of religion, as the Almighty Allah states:

"...and whoever respects the signs of Allah, this surely is (the outcome) of the piety of hearts (22:32)."

#### (2) The Duty of Man towards Himself

No matter what policy or course of action man pursues in his life, indeed he looks after nothing but his happiness and prosperity. The recognition of the happiness of something is of minor importance with regard to-the recognition of the thing itself; that is, unless we know ourselves, we will not know our actual needs whose fulfillment provides us with happiness. Therefore, the most essential duty of man is to know himself so as to perceive his happiness and prosperity and endeavor to fulfill his needs by the means that are at his disposal. He must not waste away his valuable life which is his only treasure.

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "whoever knows himself knows his Allah".

And *Amir al–Mu'minin*, 'Ali (as), states: "whoever knows himself, attains the highest position of knowledge."

After knowing himself, man realizes that his greatest duty is to value highly the essence of his humanity and not to trample upon such a valuable treasure. He also finds that he must strive for his physical and mental health so as to attain a prosperous and delightful eternal life.

Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Ali (as) states: "Carnal desires will be low and insignificant to whoever respects himself."

The entity of man is comprised of two things: self or personality and body. It is man's responsibility to try to keep both these essential parts, i.e., the self or soul and body healthy and stable. He is duty bound to

endeavor for the health of his soul and body in accordance with the adequate and precise orders given on both of them by the holy religion of Islam.

#### **Physical Health**

Abstaining from Harmful Things: Through a series of rules and regulations, the holy religion of Islam has adequately safeguarded the physical health such as enjoining people not to eat corpse, blood, flesh of some animals, and poisonous food; prohibiting them from drinking alcoholic beverages and polluted water; over eating; causing harm to the body; and other directives which are beyond the scope of this chapter.

Keeping Clean: Cleanliness is one of the most important principles of health. For this reason, great importance has been attached to this principle in the holy *Shari'ah* of Islam. The importance given by Islam to cleanliness cannot be found in any other religion.

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated: "Cleanliness is a part and parcel of Islamic faith" and this, by itself, is the greatest praise for cleanliness.

Repeated recommendations have reached us from the leaders of Islam in regard to taking bath. Allmam Musa ibn Ja'far (as) states: "Taking a bath every other day makes man healthy and stout."

Al-'Imam 'Ali (as) states: "Bathroom is a very good place since it removes the dirtiness of man."

In addition to giving general orders concerning cleanliness and neatness, Islam enjoins in particular for each and every cleanliness; for instance, it orders the people to pare the nails of their hands and feet, to shave arid remove the excess hair on their bodies and heads, to wash their hands before and after meals, to comb their hair, to gargle with water and inhale water, to sweep their homes, and to keep clean the roads, house doors, ground under the trees, etc.

Beside these orders, Islam has specified certain actions which are linked with permanent *taharah* and neatness such as for reciting *salat* and having *sawm*, removing the *najasahs* (impurities) from the body and the clothes, performing several times everyday the *wudhu'* before reciting the *salawat*, and performing various *qhusls* (taking bath according to the specified Islamic manner).

From the fact that water should reach the surface of the body during *wudhu'* before *salat* and *ghusl* and that the body should not be dirty and greasy, it becomes clear that the cleanliness of the body is implicitly essential.

The Neatness of Clothes: The *Surat al–Muddaththir* is one of the *suwar*which was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) in the early stages of his prophetic mission. In the fourth verse of this *surah*,

Allah orders the people for *taharah* of their clothes:

#### "And do taharah of your garments (74:4)."

The *taharah* of garments is *wajib* for *salat* according to specific Islamic jurisprudential order, but, in general, *taharah* from uncleanliness and dirtiness is always recommended. Many recommendations have reached us from each of the Fourteen *Ma'sumin* (as) in this regard. The Holy Prophet (S) states: "Whoever puts on clothes should clean them as well." *Amir al–Mu'minin*, 'Ali (as) states: "Washing garments relieves one from grief and anxiety and neat clothes are a means for acceptance of his *salat*."

It has been narrated from al-'Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) and al-'Imam Musa al-Kazim (as) that possessing ten or twenty shirts and changing them is not extravagance.

In addition to the cleanliness and *taharah* of garments and body, a Muslim must also be well-dressed and must meet the people with the best possible appearance and looks. Al-'Imam 'Ali (as) states: "Put on beautiful clothes and dress yourself up, for Allah is good and likes the good things, but these should be religiously lawful." Then, al-'Imam 'Ali (as) reads the following verse:

## "Say: Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions...(7:32)?"

Gargling with Water and Brushing the Teeth: Being a channel for food, the mouth of man gets contaminated due to eating food. Food particles remain in the roots of the teeth, on the tongue, and in all other parts of the mouth thus rendering the mouth contaminated and malodorous.

Sometimes, as a result of fermentations and chemical actions and reactions that take place in food particles, poisonous matters are formed which get mixed with the food and then enter the stomach. Moreover, the breath of such a person in a gathering pollutes the air and annoys other people.

Therefore, the holy religion of Islam has ordered the Muslims to brush their teeth everyday (especially before each *wudhu'*) gargle their mouth with pure water, and clean their mouth from contamination.

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "If it were not for the fear of hardship and indigence, I would have made brushing the teeth *wajib* upon Muslims." Elsewhere, the Holy Prophet (S) states: "*Jibril* always recommended brushing the teeth to an extent that I even imagined it would become incumbent upon the Muslims later on."

Breathing: Breathing is one of the essential needs of man in his life. Quite often, the current of air surrounding man's residential area is not without dust and dirt. Surely, breathing such an air is harmful for the respiratory system. To protect against this harm, the Compassionate Allah has provided hair inside man's nose. This hair prevents the entrance of dust and dirt into the lungs.

Nevertheless, sometimes the hair of the nose cannot fully perform its function because of the accumulation of dirt and dust in the nose. For this reason, Islam has issued orders for Muslims to inhale water several times a day while having *wudhu*' so as to protect the health of their respiratory system by

inhaling clean water through their nostrils.

#### **Mental Health**

Moral Refinement: With his Allah-given conscience, man perceives the value of praiseworthy ethics and realizes its significance from the individual and social viewpoints. Thus, there is no one in the human society who does not praise good ethics and who does not respect those who are endowed with praiseworthy ethics.

The value that man attaches for praiseworthy ethics needs no further explanation and the elaborate orders of Islam on ethics are thoroughly clear for everybody.

The Almighty Allah states:

"And the soul and Him Who made it pure, then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it; he will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it (91:7–10)."

While interpreting this verse, al-'Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) has stated: "The Almighty Allah has revealed to man the things which are good for him and must be put into effect and the things which are bad for him and must be avoided."

#### Receiving Education and Knowledge

One of the praiseworthy intellectual attributes is to have knowledge. The virtue and superiority of a knowledgeable man over an ignorant person is absolutely clear.

Wisdom and knowledge distinguish a man from other animals. Other animals, with their particular characteristics, are endowed with invariable instincts in accordance with which they meet the needs of their lives. There is no scope for elevation and progress in the lives of animals and they cannot open up new gates to themselves and to others.

It is only man who augments his existing knowledge with new knowledge through his wisdom and attains a new value and splendor for his materialistic and spiritual life by discovering the laws of nature and metaphysics. It is only man who takes a deep look into the past periods and lays the foundation for his own future and the future of others.

More than all the new and old social systems of all religions and faiths, Islam encourages the people to acquire knowledge and learning. In order to establish a fundamental culture and civilization, Islam has made receiving the education as *wajib* upon every Muslim man and woman. Many orders have been handed down to us from the Holy Prophet (S) and religious leaders in this regard.

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "Education is wajib upon every Muslim." In this hadith, knowledge is

described in an absolute form and includes all branches of science. There is no exception even as far as women and men are concerned. Thus, the acquisition of knowledge and learning in Islam is not intended to apply only to a particular nature or type. On the contrary, the duty of acquiring knowledge is universal and all-embracing.

The Holy Prophet (S) also states: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." Every religious precept has a specific time and for all of them maturity is a necessary condition: i.e., the person, for whom the religious principles are applicable, must have reached maturity. The religious precepts are not *wajib* upon a person unless he has reached maturity.

Some of the religious *wajibat* are no longer applicable during old age and at the time of weakness, but acquiring knowledge and learning is *wajib* for man since his birth until his death. In other words, acquiring knowledge is *wajib* at all the stages of man's life. On the basis of this principle, a Muslim should acquire knowledge all through his life and should add to his knowledge day by day. This *hadith*, too, has extended and generalized the time of this *wajib* obligation.

The Holy Prophet (S) also states: "Go for seeking knowledge even if it may be in China (i.e., far away)." Another *hadith* states: "Knowledge is the most valuable thing that the believer has lost. He should go after it, even if he finds it in China (the farthest points in the world)." According to this commandment, every Muslim is obliged to acquire knowledge even if long journeys are required for this purpose. Finally, he should endeavor to find at any cost what he has lost.

The Holy Prophet (S) also said in another *hadih*: "knowledge is what a believer has lost. He must get it back from wherever he finds." However, in acquiring knowledge, the only condition is that it should be appropriate and beneficial to the societies.

Islam highly recommends man to know the secrets of creation and to think about the heavens, the earth, the human nature, the history of nations and peoples, and the works of former generations (philosophy, mathematics, natural sciences, etc). Also, learning moral and religious matters (ethics and Islamic laws) and different kinds of arts which shape man's life are highly encouraged and stressed by Islam.

Indeed, the importance of knowledge is so great from the viewpoint of the Holy Prophet (S) that in the Battle of Badr when the Muslims took a group of the unbelievers as captives, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered every captive to be released by paying exorbitant sums of money. Only a group of the captives, who were literate, became exempt from paying such money provided that each of them teaches ten Muslim youths to read and write.

Thus for the first time, adult schools (adult classes) were established in the world and this great honor was ascribed to the Muslims in the history of the world. Interestingly enough, once for all in the history of man, teaching knowledge was accepted instead of war–spoils by the order of the Holy Prophet (S). Neither before nor after that had anyone in the world witnessed a victorious commander except the teaching of children instead of ransom and war–spoils.

The Holy Prophet (S) went to those adult classes in person and took with him those who knew reading and writing. He asked them to test the children to find out how much progress they had made in their lessons and practice. The Holy Prophet (S) used to encourage more any child who was found more diligent in learning.

Even one of the historians writes:

"A woman named "Al-Shifa'," who had learned reading and writing during the "period of ignorance," used to go to the house of the Holy Prophet (S) and teach the wives of the Holy Prophet (S) how to read and write. For this reason, she was appreciated, encouraged, and rewarded by the Holy Prophet (S)."

#### The Value and Importance of a Student from the Viewpoint of Islam

The importance of endeavor in attaining any objective equals the objective itself. Since every man, with his Allah given nature, considers the importance of knowledge in the human world higher than anything else, the value of one who seeks knowledge will be the highest of all. Since the religion of Islam is established on the basis of man's nature, it undoubtedly attaches the highest value to students. The Holy Prophet (S) stated: "He who is engaged in acquiring knowledge is loved by Allah."

Although *jihad* (Islamic war) is one of the pillars of Islam and if the Holy Prophet (S) or any of the infallible Imams (as) issues the order for war, all Muslims must take part in it, those who are engaged in learning Islamic sciences and theology are exempt from this duty. At all times, a sufficient number of Muslims must engage themselves in studying at Islamic education centers.

The Almighty Allah states:

"And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth all together; why should not then a section from every group from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious (9:122)?"

#### The Importance of a Teacher and an Instructor

The teacher is a warm and luminous centre who gets strength from the light of knowledge in order to eradicate ignorance and illiteracy in the whole world. It is the teacher who makes the blind-hearted and the ignorant clear-sighted and wise and takes them, with the assistance of the luminous torch of knowledge and education, to the holy valley and the heaven of prosperity.

For this reason, respect for teachers is essential and obedience towards them is obligatory in the religion of Islam. Teachers are considered the holiest and the most exalted individuals in the human society. Regarding the great and deserving status of teachers, it suffices to say that *Amir al–Mu'minin*, 'Ali (as) states: "He who taught me a word has indeed made me his slave."

These wise words are very valuable in paying respect to the status of teachers.

Also, *Amir al–Mu'minin* (as) states: "The people are divided into three groups: the first group consists of the *'ulama'* of Islam; the second one consists of those who acquire knowledge for the salvation of themselves and others; and the third one consists of those who lack knowledge and wisdom. These (people constituting the third group) people are like flies that sit on the head and face of animals and fly in different directions with the blow of each wind (or fly in any direction from which they smell bad odor of filth)".

#### **Paying Respect to the Learned Men**

While describing about the high status and value of knowledge and the dignity of the learned men, the Holy Qur'an states:

## "...Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees... (58:11)."

The value of scholars is so great to the Prophet (S) of Islam that he stated: "The death of a tribe is easier and less detrimental than the death of a scholar." Similarly, the Almighty Allah also states in another verse:

## "... Are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful (39:9)."

Thus the *alim* (Islamic scholar) and the ignorant are never alike. A learned and wise man has obvious superiority over anyone who lacks knowledge. The conclusion drawn from this Qur'anic verse indicates that in the view of the Qur'an the term 'knowledge' does not exclusively apply to Islamic knowledge, rather it covers anything which gives man insight and enlightenment and helps him in his worldly and heavenly affairs.

Regarding the superiority of scholars over the worshippers of Allah and the devout people, the following has been related from al-'Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as): "A scholar who puts his knowledge into use is superior to seventy thousand worshippers and has preference over them."

The Prophet (S) of Islam believes that the status of personality of a man is determined by his knowledge. The Holy Prophet (S) states: "The most learned man is one who adds to his own knowledge by deriving benefit from the knowledge of others. The value of man is determined by his knowledge. Thus, the more knowledgeable a man is, the more valuable he is, and also the less knowledgeable a man is, the less valuable he is."

#### The Duties of Teachers and Students

The Holy Qur'an considers knowledge and learning as man's true life, because in the absence of

knowledge, man would not have been different from an inanimate object and a deceased person.

Therefore, a student should consider his teacher as a focus of life from whom he gradually receives details of his actual life.

For this reason, he should owe his life to the teacher and should not fall short of respecting him. He must not show stubbornness in receiving lessons from the teacher even if they are accompanied with harshness. The student must respect his teacher in his presence or absence and during his lifetime and after his death.

Similarly, the teacher should also feel responsible for the life of his students. He must not be tired nor must he take rest as long as he has not led his students to the status of live and honorable men. The teacher should not get disappointed if at times the students do not exercise proper care to receiving his teachings. He must encourage and reward his students if they progress in their education. The teacher must never depress the morale of his students by his words and deeds.

#### **Two Important Masterpieces in The Teachings Of Islam**

Each of the social policies that is current in various human societies contains a series of secrets. If these secrets become manifest to the people, the status of the leaders of the society and their carnal desires will be jeopardized. For this reason, they always hide some realities from the public. The reason behind this is that most of the matters are the creations of their minds. Since these are against reason and the interest of the community and the individuals, they are afraid that they would face a flood of objections and the jeopardy of their interests if these secrets are discovered.

For this reason, Christian churches and the intellectual and spiritual centres of other religions do not allow the people to think freely, rather they reserve the right of changing and explaining the religious teachings and the contents of religious books for themselves. They say that it is the duty of the people to accept whatever they say indisputably and without any discussion and inquisitiveness. It is this very policy that h us marred many religious policies. The existing policy of Christianity is a veracious proof for this statement.

But since Islam has confidence in its rightfulness, unlike all other religious and non-religious policies, it sees no ambiguity or lack of clarity in its path.

(1) Islam does not conceal any rightful matter, nor does it allow its followers to keep any rightful matters as secrets. This is because the laws of this pure religion are formulated according to the laws of nature and creation, thus none of its truths and realities can be denied.

Concealing realities is one of the major sins. In His words, the Almighty Allah has cursed those who conceal the truth, where He states:

"Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it

clear in the Book for men, these it is whom Allah shall curse and those who curse shall curse them (too) (2:159)."

(2) Islam has ordered its followers to think freely about the realities and the teachings and to stop moving along whenever they see the slightest ambiguity; so that their clear faiths may always remain intact from the harm of the darkness of any doubts and uncertainties. Islam also orders the people to try to remove any doubts and uncertainties in a just and truth–seeking manner and strive to solve them freely if they are faced with them. The Almighty Allah states:

"And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge... (17:36)."

#### **Abstaining from Free Thinking and Expression of Truth**

The perception of the realities through thinking and reflection and their recognition are the most valuable virtues of man, the only feature of his superiority over other animals, and the basis of his dignity and honor. The feeling of love for humanity and the instinct of realism will never allow man to be deprived of the freedom of thought by the imposition of imitative thinking. Neither will they allow wisdom to be led astray by concealing the realities, so that divine thinking would cease.

This fact, however, should not be neglected that when man is unable to understand a reality or when, due to stubbornness and persistence of the other side, there is no hope for the establishment of reality and its expression will cause a loss to man's property, life, and, reputation, the instinct of realism and the love for humanity judge on the contrary. In order to respect the reality and to safeguard man from the danger of aberration and other dangers to his property, life, and honor, the instinct of realism and humanity call for the concealment of realities.

Through many *ahadith*, the Imams of *Ahl al–Bayt* (as) have seriously prohibited the people from thinking on some of the realities which are beyond the level of understanding of man.

The Almighty Allah authorizes the concealment of reality in the case of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation) in two instances1.

#### Conclusion

In several cases, Islam considers the concealment of truths and realities not only harmless but also necessary:

- (1) *Taqiyyah* is applied where there is no hope for the establishment of truth and when the expression of the truth will cause danger to one's property, life, and honor.
- (2) When truth is not intelligible for someone and its expression may lead him astray or may cause disdain and insult towards the truth.

(3) When due to the lack of capability free thinking reveals the truth in an untrue way and leads to aberration.

#### **Ijtihad and Taqlid**

## Ijtihad (Deduction of Commandments Based On Islamic Fundamentals) And Taqlid (Following A Mujtahid In Practising Islamic Laws)

The requirements of man in his environment and the measures that he must take to arrange them are so great that a common man cannot enumerate them let alone specializing in all of them and obtaining enough knowledge concerning them.

On the other hand, since man performs his tasks by means of thinking and will power, he should have sufficient information when he wants to take a decision. He will be unable to take decisions if he lacks sufficient information. He must either be fully qualified himself to take any course of action or he must ask someone who is endowed with qualifications and so perform his duties according to his instructions. For instance, we instinctively refer to a doctor for the treatment of our ailments, to a civil engineer for the plan of a building, to a mason for masonry work, and to a carpenter for making doors and windows.

Thus we always spend our lives by means of *taglid* or following others even for insignificant matters.

Whoever says: "I do not follow another person in my life", either he does not understand the meaning of his words or is affected by a mental sickness. Islam, which has based its religious laws on the human nature, has also adopted the same policy.

Islam orders its followers to learn the religious teachings and precepts. The source of these teachings is nothing but the Divine Book, i.e., Qur'an and the *ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (S) and the infallible Imams of *Ahl al–Bayt* (as).

It is obvious that obtaining all religious teachings from the Qur'an and the *ahadith* is not an easy task. Such a task is not possible for all Muslims and only a limited number of people can accomplish this task.

Therefore, this religious order naturally takes the form that a group of Muslims, who are not able to acquire the teachings and precepts through reasoning, should refer to those who have obtained the Islamic commandments through proofs and reasoning, and should then perform their duties.

A scholar who obtains Islamic commandments through proofs and reasoning is called "mujtahid" and his endeavour in this regard is called "ijtihad" One who refers to the mujtahid is called "muqallid" (one who follows a mujtahid's instructions for performing his deeds) and his referring to the mujtahid is called taqlid (following a mujtahid in practicing Islamic laws).

Surely, it should be known that *taqlid* holds true in worships, transactions, and other practical rules of Islam, but in regard to *Usul al–Din* (the fundamental principles of Islam) which are matters of belief, one

can never have confidence in the views of others and cannot content himself with following them. This is because in the case of the fundamental principles of Islam, faith and belief are desirable and not action. We can never consider the faith of others to be our own.

It cannot be said that Allah is One because our fathers or scholars say so or that the Hereafter is true since all Muslims believe in it.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to know the *Usul al–Din* of his religion through reasoning and proof even if it may be a very simple one.

#### (3) The Duty of Man towards Others

These duties can be described as follows:

#### The Duty of Man towards His Parents

Parents are the means of the creation of a child and the imparters of his initial education and training; therefore, the holy religion of Islam has placed a great deal of emphasis on children's obeying to them and on their respect to an extent that the Almighty Allah has commanded the people to be kind and generous to their parents right after mentioning *Tawhid* (the Oneness of Allah) and states:

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and has commanded goodness to your parents...(17:23)."

In *ahadith* enumerating mortal sins, misconduct towards parents ranks second to shirk (polytheism). The Almighty Allah states:

"...If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them generous words. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: 'O my Lord! have compassion on them, similar to what they had on me when they brought me up (when I was) little' (17:23–24)."

How well did an old woman say to her child when she saw him powerful and bulky. If you recalled your childhood when you were helpless in my arm you would not treat me unkindly today as you are a brave man and I am an old woman.

In the holy religion of Islam, obedience of the parents is *wajib* except in the case when they order the children to give up one of the *wajib* deeds of religion or perform a religiously *haram* act. It has been proven by experience that those who tease their parents do not remain happy and prosperous in their lives and consequently they will not attain salvation.

#### The Rights of Parents

In a family circle, the relationship of parents to their children is like that of the roots of a tree to its branches because the continuity and survival of the branches of the tree depend upon its roots. Parents are also the founders of the children's life. Since the human society is comprised of the two categories, i.e., parents and children, parents are the main roots of the human society.

Besides being an utmost ingratitude and cowardice, misbehavior towards the parents and annoying them also cause the decadence of humanity and the annihilation of the society. This is because the disrespect of children towards their parents will be reflected by the parents in the form of unkindness and disfavor towards them. On the other hand, if the children look towards their parents with disrespect and lowliness, they cannot expect anything better from their own children and will not depend upon the help of their children when they reach the age of debility and infirmity. Thus they naturally become disappointed to form a family, as is the case with many of the young people of the present age.

Generalization of this kind of thinking will definitely obstruct the path of regeneration and reproduction, because a wise man will never devote his valuable life to nurture a young tree from whose fruits he will not benefit, under whose shadow he will not sit, and that looking towards it will render him no benefit but grief and anguish. We might assume that the governments can encourage the people to set up families by giving them various rewards and incentives and thus eliminate the problems of regeneration and reproduction; but it should be noted that the social methods and customs that are devoid of natural backing (like parent–children affection) cannot last.

Besides this fact, not benefiting from one of the natural instincts will inevitably deprive man of a series of pure spiritual pleasures.

#### The Rights of Children on Parents

The works that a man must perform for someone who is the beneficiary are called *huquq* (rights) and the works that a person must perform are called duties, orders, and obligations. For instance, it is the duty of an employer to pay the wages of his employee and it is the right of the employee to receive it after performing a task for him. If the employer does not pay the wages, the employee can demand it and defend his right.

Since man is created in such a manner that his life is not everlasting in this world and because willingly or not he dies after some time, Allah has established the method of reproduction, has provided people with the means of reproduction, and has directed man's inner feelings towards it in order to safeguard the mankind from total annihilation.

It is because of this overall mobilization that man naturally considers his child to be an inherent part of himself and assumes his child's survival to be that of his own. For this very reason, man goes through all kinds of endeavors and makes efforts for the comfort and happiness of his children and endures various hardships, for he considers the annihilation of his child or his child's personality to be his own annihilation or the annihilation of his own personality.

Indeed, man obeys the order of the world of creation which demands the survival of mankind. Thus it is the duty of parents to implement the order enjoined by conscience and religious laws with regard to their children and to bring them up very well, so that they may grow into decent human beings. Parents are also duty bound to consider rightful for their children those things that they consider rightful for themselves from the viewpoint of humanity. Some of the duties of parents are as given below.

(1) Parents must establish and make firm the foundation of praiseworthy ethics and decent attributes in the natures of their children from the very first day that they begin to understand words and signs. They must not frighten their children with superstitious subjects as much as they can. They must prevent them from committing evil and unchaste acts.

The parents, too, must avoid lying, ill-speaking, and using bad language and obscene words in front of the children. The parents should perform decent deeds, so that the children might be brought up as chaste and magnanimous people.

Parents must endeavor and show motivation and justice, so as to transfer to their children the love for justice and humanity through the law of "the transfer of ethics" in order to keep their children away from oppression, meanness, and selfishness.

- (2) Parents should patronize their children for their eating, sleeping, and other requirements for living until they attain the age of discernment. They must have consideration for the physical health of their children so that they may have a healthy body and a strong mind and temper ready to be educated and trained.
- (3) Parents should put their children under the care of a teacher from the time they get aptitude for education (usually from seventh year of their age). Parents should make every effort to place their children under the care of a decent teacher, so that they may get good and desirable impressions from what they hear and so that such a teacher would become the source of inspiration and cause the refinement of their spirit, the purification of their soul, and the cultivation of their ethics.
- 4) Parents should take their children along with them to gatherings in order to familiarize them with social customs and praiseworthy etiquette when their age calls for participation in social gatherings or family visits.

#### **Respect for the Elders**

It is also required to respect the elders, as the Holy Prophet (S) states: "The glorification and respect for the elders is the glorification and respect for Allah."

#### Man's Duty towards His Relatives

The paternal and maternal relatives, who have a consanguineous and near relationship, are the natural means for the formation of the society. Due to the similarity of blood and cells, man becomes part of a

family. For the sake of this unity and natural relationship, Islam orders its followers to observe the kinship bonds with kindness. Strong recommendations have been made in the Qur'an and the *ahadith* of religious leaders in this respect.

The Almighty Allah states:

"...And be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you (4:1)."

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "I enjoin my *Ummah* (people) to observe the kinship bonds with kindness. Even if the relatives are separated from one another by a year–long distance, they should not disconnect the kinship bonds of their relationship."

#### Man's Duty towards His Neighbours

Since neighbors very often come in contact with one another due to the proximity of their residential area and naturally – as they constitute a larger family, the good behavior and the misbehavior of one of them will have more effect on other neighbors than that of all others.

He, who spends the night with clamor in his house, does not annoy anyone residing in the remote corner of the city, but he disturbs his neighbor's peace. A wealthy man who spends his life in feasting and drinking in his beautiful palace is far away from the sight of the poor, but he burns the heart of his indigent neighbor living in a clay–hut. Surely, a day will come when this wealthy man will duly be punished. For this reason, taking care of the neighbors has been highly emphasized in the holy religion of Islam.

The Holy Prophet (S) stated: "Jibril recommended to me about the neighbors to such an extent that I thought the Almighty Allah would appoint one's neighbor as one of his heirs." He also stated: "whoever believes in Allah and in *Ma'ad*, never does injustice to his neighbor, lends him money if he asks for it, and shares his grief and happiness. One should not annoy his neighbor even if he is an unbeliever."

He also states: "He, who hurts his neighbor, will not smell the fragrance of Paradise and he, who disregards the rights of his neighbor, is not my follower. Whoever has had enough to eat and does not help his neighbor after knowing that he is hungry, is not a Muslim."

#### Man's Duty towards the Inferior and The Poor

There is no doubt that the establishment of a society is to fulfill the needs of the individuals. The most important duty of the members of any society is to help the helpless and the weak and to eliminate in some way the needs of those who are unable to eliminate these by themselves.

It has been thoroughly clarified nowadays that the carelessness of the rich towards the difficulties of the poor is the greatest danger that can destroy a society and that the rich will be the first victim of this danger.

Taking this danger into consideration, fourteen centuries ago, Islam ordered the rich to distribute a portion of their wealth among the poor and the helpless annually. If the said amount is sufficient to eliminate the needs of the poor, it is recommended that the rich donate as much as they can for the cause of Allah so as to improve the living conditions of the poor.

The Almighty Allah states:

"By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love... (3:92)."

The *ahadith* on the subject of serving the humanity are innumerable. The Holy Prophet (S) stated: "The best of men is one who is more beneficial for the people." He also stated: "In *Ma'ad*, a person who has taken greater steps towards charitable acts for the servants of Allah will be placed in a higher status before the Almighty Allah."

Help friends at the time of calamity so that you may have favors of Allah. Somehow you will someday reap the seeds of goodness that you sow today.

#### Man's Duty towards the Society

As we know, human beings work with joint effort. They take advantage of each others' endeavors to eliminate the needs of their life. The society established by these individuals is similar to a "great man" and each individual is like an organ of this great man's body.

Each organ of the body performs its own specific function and makes up for its own weaknesses by benefiting from the functions of other organs; that is, in its sphere of activity, each organ provides its interests while providing the interests of other organs and continues its life in the light of the life of other organs.

If some organs acted selfishly and were of no use to other organs; for example, if while the hands or feet were functioning, the eyes did not cooperate with them or if the mouth only contented itself with chewing and enjoying the food without swallowing it to satisfy the needs of the stomach, man would die and, as a result, the same self-centered and self-seeking organ would also die.

The duty of the members of a society is exactly like the duty of the organs of a body, i.e., man must look for his interests within the framework of the interests of the society. He must consider what benefits the society would derive from his efforts so that by his efforts all are benefited and he also gets benefited. He must defend the rights of others so that his own rights would not be violated.

This is a fact which we realize with our Allah-given nature. The holy religion of Islam, which is established on the basis of nature and creation, does not have the commandments and views other than

these on this matter.

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "A Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue Muslims are safe."

He further states: "Muslims are brothers and are like a single-hand, single-heart, and single-direction against aliens."

He also states: "Whoever does not care about the affairs of the Muslims is not a Muslim."

For the Battle of Tabuk when the Holy Prophet (S) set out with the army of Islam for the frontier of Rome, three Muslims did not participate in the battle. After the return of the army of Islam, when these three persons welcomed and greeted the Holy Prophet (S), the Prophet (S) turned his face and did not answer their greetings. In the like manner, the Muslims also turned their faces from these three men. No one, in Madinah, not even their wives, talked to them. Consequently, they became helpless and sought refuge in the mountains of Madinah and engaged themselves in repentance and contrition until Allah accepted their repentance after several days and then they returned to the city.

#### **Justice**

In the Qur'an and the *ahadith* of the religious leaders, justice is of two kinds: individual and social. Both are highly regarded by the holy religion of Islam.

#### **Individual Justice**

The individual justice means that the man should abstain from falsehood, backbiting, and other major sins. He should not insist on committing other sins. He who is endowed with this quality is called 'Adil (just). According to the Islamic regulations, if such a man has educational ability as well, he can take charge of judicial and governmental positions, or he can become a religious authority or maintain other social positions. But the one who is deprived of this religious personality cannot enjoy these privileges even though he may be a scholar.

#### **Social Justice**

Social justice means that man should not trespass upon the rights of others. He should consider all the people equal by the divine laws. He should not exceed justice in implementing religious laws. He must not be influenced by feelings and sentiments. He must not deviate from the right path. The Almighty Allah states:

"Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice... (16:90)."

Again He states:

"...And that when you judge between people you judge with justice...(4:58)."

Orders have been issued in many Qur'anic verses and *ahadith* to consider justice in words and deeds. In several cases, the Almighty Allah has explicitly cursed the oppressors.

## **Tyranny and Oppression**

The Almighty Allah has repeatedly mentioned about tyranny in His Divine Book and has reproached this indecent quality which is a characteristic of the beasts (in two-thirds of the number of *Surahs* of the Holy Qur'an, which are 114, there is a discussion on tyranny).

There is no one who has not felt the badness and unfairness of tyranny by his own nature or who more or less does not know what painful calamities have come upon human society, what bloodsheds have taken place, and what a large number of houses have been demolished due to tyranny and oppression.

It has been proven by experience that the palace of tyranny will not last long no matter how strong it may be and sooner or later, it will collapse on the heads of the oppressors. The Almighty Allah states:

#### "...Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people (6: 144)."

Religious authorities have also stated: "Monarchy and kingdom will last with blasphemy, but these will not stabilize with tyranny and oppression."

## **Sociability**

Being bound to live in a society, man has no escape from the company of people. Undoubtedly, man associates with other people to protect his own social status, to further h is material and spiritual advancement day by day, and to solve the difficulties of his life better and with greater ease.

Thus he must behave with other people in such a way so as to attain endearment, to augment his social honor day by day, and to add to the number of his friends. If people see unfriendliness or bitterness in the behavior of others, their hearts will be filled with abomination and anguish.

Finally, a day will come when everyone will escape from the company of such a person and he will be hated and disfavored by others. He must then live all alone and as a stranger in his native land. This is one of the most bitter and most unpleasant examples of man's misfortune.

This is what the holy religion of Islam has enjoined its followers to have good social behavior and has prescribed the best etiquettes and instructions in this respect. For example, Islam has ordered Muslims to greet when they meet one another and has considered the person who greets first to be superior to the other.

The Holy Prophet (S) took the lead in greeting others. He even greeted women and children. If someone greeted the Holy Prophet (S), he would in turn greet him better.

The Almighty Allah states:

"And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better (greeting) than it or return it...(4:86)."

Allah has also stated that man should show humbleness and modesty in his association with people and should respect others commensurate with their social status.

The Almighty Allah states:

"And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness... (25:63)."

The point that should be mentioned is that humbleness and modesty do not mean that man should degrade himself before the people and thus hurt his personality, rather these mean that man should not show off his superiorities and honors to the people and should not associate with himself other extraordinary privileges. One must not consider the people degraded and insignificant.

Similarly, respect to the people does not mean that one should respect others to an extent bordering on flattery and buttering, rather it means that one must value everyone according to his religious and social status. One should respect the dignitaries commensurate with their rank and status. One must also respect the others according to their observation of human qualities.

Again paying respect to people does not mean that m an should keep mum and overlook the indecent acts of people. Neither it means that man should associate with the people in a gathering in which all act against human prestige or carry out an action against religious principles.

It doesn't mean that man should go with the stream for the fear of defamation either, for the people should, in fact, be respected on the basis of their human dignity and their religious and moral values, not because of their physique and stature. If a man loses his human dignity and religious value, there will be no reason for his being respected by the others.

The Holy Prophet (S) stated: "One should not commit a sin before Allah for the sake of obeying others."

## **Teasing People and Mischievousness**

These two attributes are closely linked together, for teasing people means annoying them and inflicting pain on them either by means of the tongue, such as cursing and using words which annoy others, or by means of the hands, such as performing an action to make the people unhappy. Mischievousness means doing things to cause evil for the people. At any rate, these two attributes are at the opposite pole of the dreams of comfort of life and peace of mind, for the sake of which, man has established the society.

Therefore, the religion of Islam, which gives the top priority to the interests of the society, has forbidden the people to tease others and to make mischief, as the Almighty Allah states:

"And those who speak evil things of the believing men and the believing women without their having earned (it), they are guilty indeed of a false accusation and a manifest sin (33:58)."

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "Whoever bothers a Muslim, has bothered me and bothering me is bothering Allah. Such a person has been cursed in the *Tawrat*, the *Injil*, and the Qur'an." He also states: "One, who casts an angry glance on a Muslim and frightens him, will be frightened by Allah on the Day of Judgment."

## **Association with the Good People**

Although man associates with a large number of people, he is obliged to associate with some people more than others due to the exigency of his life. These are the people who are called "friends."

Surely, the main cause for this friendship and relationship is a kind of similarity in ethics, manners, profession, and the like which exist between the two persons or among a group of individuals.

Since companionship gradually transfers the habits and character of one of the two companions to the other, a man must choose the company of good people, for in this case, the decent ethics of his friends will be transferred to him and he will benefit from their taintless and benevolent friendship and cooperation.

He will also be enthusiastic in the continuation of their friendship. Furthermore, he will improve his own social value and dignity among the people.

Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as) states: "Your best friend is the one who leads you to do good deeds."

He also states: "Man is evaluated on the basis of the friends he chooses."

First let me know with whom you have associated, so that I can describe your identity. It is the value of your acquaintances that determines the value and worth of your life.

## **Companionship with the Bad People**

Companionship with the bad people and the evil-doers is the source of all sorts of wretchedness and misfortune. To clarify this matter, it suffices to say that if we ask the criminals and the evil-doers such as thieves and bandits the cause of their aberration and deviation, they will undoubtedly reply that the companionship and association with bad people have put them in such a situation. From among a thousand wicked and defiled people, not even one can be found who has chosen an indecent course of action deliberately.

Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as), states: "Shun the companionship of bad people, for a bad friend makes you similar to himself. Unless he succeeds in this respect, he will not accept you as a friend."

'Ali (as) also states: "Avoid the friendship of an evildoer, for he will sell you for a trivial thing."

Associate less with bad people, for you will be distressed; since human nature is apt to acquire habits,

## **Truthfulness**

The relationship of human beings with one another, which is the basis of human society, is established through speaking. Thus true words that reveal a concealed reality to man are one of the essential bases of the society. Great advantages, which are always necessary for a society, are acquired by means of telling the truth.

The advantages of truthfulness can be summarized in a few sentences as follows:

- (1) A truthful person is trusted by his fellow-men and relieves them of determining the truthfulness of his remarks.
- (2) A veracious person is honored by his conscience and is relieved of the pain of falsehood.
- (3) A truthful person keeps his promise. He will not be disloyal to what he is entrusted with, for truthfulness in action is not different from truthfulness in words.
- (4) Many differences of opinion and disputes will be eliminated as a result of truthfulness, for the main reason for most quarrels is the denial of truth and reality by either or both parties.
- (5) As a result of truthfulness, a large part of moral imperfections and violations of laws and provisions is eliminated automatically, because most people lie in a bid to cover these kinds of deeds and actions.

Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as) states: "A true Muslim is one who prefers truthfulness, although it may be to his detriment, over falsehood from which he may benefit; and gets internal satisfaction as a result of this preference."

## The Disadvantages of Falsehood

From the aforementioned statements, the disadvantages of falsehood also become clear. A liar is the wicked enemy of human society. He endeavors to ruin the society by his falsehood which is a big crime.

This is because falsehood resembles narcotics which kill the intelligence and commonsense of the society and hide the reality. Falsehood is also similar to alcoholic beverages which intoxicate the people and render them unable to distinguish between good and bad.

Therefore, Islam considers falsehood as one of the mortal sins and does not believe in any religious stature of a liar.

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated: "Three groups of people are *munafiqin* even if they recite *salat* and observe *sawm*. They are the liars, those who do not keep their promise, and those who are disloyal to what they are entrusted with." *Amir al–Mu'minin* 'Ali (as) also states: "Man derives pleasure from his faith when he gives up falsehood; even he should give up his lying which may be for fun sake."

Falsehood has not only been introduced as a sin and an indecent deed in Islam, but its indecency and unfairness is also clearly perceived by commonsense. The prevalence of this indecent deed in the society will soon shatter the confidence of the people towards one another which is the only basis in their social relationship. By the disruption of such a relationship, the people will, in effect, live in isolation because of having utmost anxiety from one another although they may apparently seem to be living in a knitted society.

Man always deals with external matters in his life. He keeps himself alive through his activities and by bringing about changes in matters and thus fulfils his desires. This creature who works by commonsense and will power has based his vast and extensive life on knowledge. His work is directly related to the knowledge available to him. He constantly adjusts his learnings and performs his external activities accordingly.

Therefore, receiving true information is essential for man and is of prime importance. If the correct outside news are not revealed to man, for instance, if he sees the ditch as a road and the road as a ditch, or if he sees the distant as the nearby and the nearby as the distant, or if he receives the news in an untrue way, he will not be able to continue his living. Thus it becomes clear that falsehood is a serious threat to social life and a liar is a person without any personality and dignity. He is the enemy of the society and his remarks are considered invalid and unreliable by the people. He himself is cursed by Allah.

## **Backbiting and Libel**

Slandering others and backbiting them, if true, are called backbiting, and if wrong, are called libel and sometimes calumny.

Surely, the Almighty Allah has not created man (except the prophets and the Imams) free from sins. As a result of his shortcomings, man is fallible and all people live behind the curtain with which the Almighty Allah has covered their deeds by His Divine Wisdom.

If this divine covering is lifted from over the defects and shortcomings of the people, they will be repugnant from one another and will avoid the company of each other, thus leading to the destruction of the foundation of their society.

Therefore, the Almighty Allah has declared backbiting as *haram*, so that everyone may live in peace from backbiting by one another and the outwardly appearance of the environment of their lives would seem adorned until gradually the same outward beauty corrects the internal obscenity.

The Almighty Allah states:

"...Nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?.... (49: 12)."

The sin and obscenity of libel is definitely greater than backbiting and the wise are thoroughly aware of its obscenity. In His words, the Almighty Allah has made the badness and obscenity of libel quite clear and states:

"Only they forge the lie who do not believe... (16: 105)."

## **Damaging the Prestige of People**

Damaging one's chastity is a mortal sin in Islam and, in different cases, severe punishments such as whipping, killing, and stoning to death have been laid down for it.

Allowing the commitment of this indecent deed, although it may have been agreed upon by both the parties, will shake the foundation of families which is of prime importance in Islam and will cease the proceeding of the precepts of inheritance and the like. Finally, it makes parent–child affection and relationship invalid and leads to the disappearance of the true guarantee of society which is the natural result of reproduction.

## **Self-Respect and Honesty**

The world of creation, that has created man sociable and in need of cooperation, has prepared him in such a way as to be able to manage his own affairs in the society with his own capability and to handle his living from what he gains in his life.

With consideration of what has already been discussed above, there remains no doubt that the attribute of self-respect means that man should take advantage of Allah-given powers in his life and should utilize them for attaining his goals. He must not rely upon the powers of others and this, indeed, is one of the natural and praiseworthy qualities of man.

Self-respect is like a barrier which protects man from an inferior life and from many unjust acts and indecent deeds. Whoever is not endowed with self-respect and fixes his eyes on others, would easily sell his will power and personality to others and would offer whatever he is asked for, even if it may be his natural freedom, prestige, honor, and dignity.

Most crimes such as murder, banditry, theft, pick pocketing, the crime of lying, flattery, disloyalty to one's country, reliance on foreigners, and the like are the evil consequences of greed and reliance upon others.

But whoever wears the crown of honour of self-respect, does not submit himself to any splendor but the splendor of the Almighty Allah, does not yield to any authority and pomp, and always defends what he considers to be true. Self-respect is the best means by which one can acquire the attribute of honesty and safeguard it.

## **Benevolence and Helping the Needy**

It is certain that in any society, the poor and the helpless deserve help. It is the duty of the rich to help the poor and not to trample upon this certain right. The holy religion of Islam has also set out strict rules concerning the observation of this right. It holds the rich responsible to help the weak and the poor.

In the Holy Qur'an, the Almighty Allah has introduced Himself as Benevolent, Beneficent, and Merciful. Allah has encouraged His servants to attain these praiseworthy attributes to the extent that He states: "Allah is with benefactors;" and He also states: "Whatever you spend in the way of Allah is to your own advantage." Elsewhere, He states: "Whatever you spend in the way of Allah will be returned unto you and you will not sustain a loss."

Study and investigation into the social conditions and also in the advantages of benevolence clarify the context of these verses, for, indeed, all forces of the society work for every individual.

In a society where a group of helpless people fail to make efforts due to insolvency, the acquisition of income diminishes proportionately and its evil consequences embrace all people. In such a society, a time will come when the rich become the poorest of all. But if the rich help the poor with their benevolence and generosity, they will gain the following outstanding results:

- (1) By this action, they gain the affection of others and captivate the hearts of a group of people.
- (2) They gain a great deal of respect with an insignificant amount of money.
- (3) They attain people's support, because people take sides with the benefactors.
- (4) They are safe from the danger of the accumulation of the vengeance and anger of the poor which harm the good and the bad together.
- (5) The trivial money that they spend in the way of Allah will increase in amount and return unto them as a result of proper running of the economy.

There are innumerable Qur'anic verses and *ahadith* regarding the attribute of spending in the way of Allah and also in regard to the encouragement and persuasion for this noble deed.

## Cooperation

Benevolence and beneficence, mentioned earlier, are one of the various branches of cooperation which forms the basis of human society, for the society exists when all individuals help one another by means of which all may enjoy good and sound living conditions and will meet their requirements of life.

It should not be imagined that the holy religion of Islam has demanded benevolence only in financial matters, rather it is one of the aims of Islam and also one of the demands of man's conscience to offer all kinds of help to every helpless, although he may not be in need of money.

To teach an illiterate, to help a blind, to guide a misled, to assist an oppressed person, and... are all the true acts of benevolence and beneficence and a part of the cooperation whose credibility we have approved and confirmed on the very first day of the establishment of the society.

It is self-evident that if man fails to perform a part of minor tasks, he will not perform principal tasks and if he disregards the insignificant minor duties, he will refuse to undertake general and important obligations.

## **Arranging Charities and Reliefs**

Benevolence is praiseworthy when it renders good results. Of course, the more general and lasting the results, the more praiseworthy and better would be the benevolence. The treatment of a patient is an act of benevolence and beneficence, but construction and management of a hospital which treats hundreds of patients daily cannot be compared with this act.

Teaching a student is praiseworthy, but it can never reach the value of setting up an institution which turns out hundreds of graduating scholars annually. This is why general donations, public charities and reliefs are the acts of highest benevolence and beneficence.

In Islamic terminology, this public charity is interpreted as "standing charity". The Holy Prophet (S) states: "Two things provide man with honor: a righteous child and standing charity." According to the Holy Book and the *ahadith*, as long as the standing charity exists the Almighty Allah considers its benefactions for the one who has established this charity.

## **Self-Sacrifice**

There is no doubt that, in the human conscience, the genuine life and honest living are of equal importance. A life without honor and devoid of man's prosperity is not a life indeed, rather it is a death much bitter and more unpleasant than natural death. A man who maintains value for his honor and prosperity should escape from such a mean life resembling death.

In whatever environment a man lives and to whatever policies he may be inclined, he will understand with his Allah–given nature that death for the cause of sanctification is prosperity itself although this matter is clearer in the logic of religion than in any other logic and is far away from supposition and superstition.

This is because whoever defends his religious society and gives his life for this cause, is aware that he has not deprived himself of any privileges and that he will get a sweeter, more valuable, and everlasting life in return for giving his sweet and short–span life for the cause of Allah. Truly, his prosperity is immortal.

The Almighty Allah states in His words:

"And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead,. nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord (3:169)."

But in non-religious societies which consider human life confined to the short-span life of this world only, it can never be said that man will be again alive in the Hereafter or will attain happiness and prosperity, except that it is inculcated upon the people, through suppositions and superstitions, that if a man is, for example, killed for the cause of his country or for national sanctities, his name will be entered in the list of the devoted and self-sacrificing persons of the nation and will be inscribed in gold in the history book and thus he will remain alive forever.

The praise and sanctification for martyrdom and getting killed in the way of Allah have not been made in Islam so much for any other good deed.

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "There is always a good deed surpassing other good deeds. But no good deed can surpass martyrdom." Muslims of the early period of Islam asked forgiveness from the Holy Prophet (S) and, as a result of the prayers of the Holy Prophet (S), they attained the elevated rank of martyrdom. They never used to cry for those who were martyred, knowing that the martyrs were alive and not dead.

## **Generosity and Donation of Money**

The role that wealth plays in regulation of life needs no explanation. Many people consider life the same as wealth and do not believe in any virtue and honor for man except property and wealth. They direct all their activities towards accumulating and saving money. As a result of this fascination and greed, they get entangled in stinginess.

Such people deprive others and sometimes degrade themselves further and submit to meanness and miserliness, thus depriving themselves of enjoying their own wealth as well. Neither they enjoy themselves nor do they give money to others. They only enjoy accumulating money.

Those who are entangled with the indecent attribute of miserliness (certainly, those who are involved in stinginess are even meaner than them) lose their human nature and become destitute in their lives because:

- (1) They only look for their own happiness, prosperity, and comfort and believe in individual life, although human nature advocates social life for us and the individual life, led in any manner, is doomed to destruction.
- (2) By showing off their authority to others, they attract towards themselves the poor and the needy due to their humility. Although they do not relieve the sufferings of the afflicted, they try to make the needy pay respect to them. They take the poor as slaves and foster the spirit of idol-worshipping. Consequently, human courage, bravery, magnanimity, and pride will be eradicated from the society.
- (3) Trampling upon the pure feelings of affection, friendship, philanthropy, compassion, and benevolence, they promote all kinds of felony, crime, meanness, and wickedness in the society. This is because the most powerful natural factor of crime and offence such as backbiting, incontinence, theft, banditry, murder, and poverty cannot be found among the needy.

These factors are the anger, rancor, and feeling of revenge which are implanted in the hearts of the afflicted and distressed by the wealthy people and which are aggravated by the stingy rich people. That is why a stingy person in a society is, in fact, the first enemy of that society and is always affected by the anger and severe punishment of Allah and the hatred of the inhabitants of the world.

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an reproaching and blaming the mean quality of stinginess and greed on the one hand, and on praising the attribute of generosity, spending in the way of Allah, and helping the poor and needy on the other.

In His words, the Almighty Allah promises that He will return the property that is donated ten times and, in some instances, seventy and up to seven hundred times and more to the donor.

It has also been proved through experience that the wealth of those who are generous, who help the poor generously, and who cater for the shortcomings of the human society is increased day by day.

Those who resolve the difficulties of others will not face difficulties themselves. No one has ever seen any knot in the comb.

If they occasionally face difficulties, all people will sympathize with them. Whatever help they have extended to others will collectively return unto them.

Furthermore, like honorable men, they have set their conscience at peace by doing good deeds and have responded to the Divine call concerning the *wajib* and *mustahabb* obligations. They have used the pure feelings of humanity through kindness, compassion, philanthropy, and benevolence and have acquired popularity and an immaculate respect from the people. Finally, they have gained the

satisfaction of the Almighty Allah and the everlasting prosperity at the lowest cost.

#### The Generalities of Jihad

Every creature defends his life as well as his interests. Like others, every creature is equipped with a defensive power that enables him to combat with his enemies. With his Allah–given instinct and nature, man believes that he must defend himself and destroy the enemy who wants to destroy him and who never gives up his animosity.

He also believes that he should defend his rights if someone transgresses upon his vital interests and that he should cut off the hands of the transgressor by any means possible.

This natural phenomenon, which is invariably present in the nature of an individual, is firm and stable in human societies as well, i.e., an enemy who threatens the members of a society or its social independence is condemned to death by that society. This way of thinking has always been predominant in human societies that individuals and societies can make any decisions and can act harshly against their dangerous enemies.

Islam is also a social religion established on the basis of *Tawhid*. Islam considers those who refuse to abide by truth and justice as its vital enemies and as the ones who disturb the order of humanity. Islam does not believe in any human value and respect for them.

Since Islam is itself a universal religion and because it has not set any specific place as its homeland and frontiers for its followers, it fights with anyone who believes in shirk and who does not accept the truth and divine laws by clear logic and wise counsel in order to make him follow truth and justice.

The essence of the laws of Islam on jihad is only this and no more. It is exactly in accordance with the policies which are usually adopted by every human society against its vital enemies.

Contrary to the propaganda by the malicious enemies, Islam is not the "religion of sword", for Islam is not an imperial–plan which knows no logic but sword and political maneuvers, rather it is a religion whose founder is Allah Who, in His Divine Words, addresses the people through logic and reasoning and invites His creatures to a religion which corresponds to their creation.

A religion whose general initial greeting is *salam* (peace) and whose universal policy, according to the explicit wording of the Holy Qur'an, is: ("") "...Reconciliation is better ... (4:128)" will never be a religion of sword and oppression.

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S), when the divine light of Islam had illuminated the entire Arabian Peninsula and when Muslims were involved in important battles and severe wars, the casualties of the Muslims did not reach more than two hundred persons and the casualties of the unbelievers did not touch the figure of one thousand in number. (Among these one thousand people, seven hundred

belonged to Banu-Qurayzah, who were killed by the order of the arbitration they had themselves chosen.). Thus it is quite unfair to call such a religion, the "religion of sword".

#### The Instances of War In Islam

There are a few groups with whom Islam combats:

- (1) *Mushrikin*: These are the ones who do not believe in *Tawhid*, *Nubuwwah*, and *Ma'ad*. This group should primarily be invited to embrace Islam. The facts of religion must be explained to them clearly in such a way that no ambiguity and excuse would remain. Then if they accept these truths, they will be considered as the brothers of other Muslims and equal to them in profits and losses. But if they refuse to accept the truth and reality after these are clearly explained to them, Islam will perform the religious duty of *jihad* against them.
- (2) Ahl al-Kitab: These are the followers of the Divine Books2 who have a religion and a divine book from the viewpoint of Islam and who believe in Tawhid, Nubuwwah, and Ma'ad. Islam gives its permission to these groups to live under its protection by paying jizyah (head tax charged from Ahl al-Kitab in lieu of their non-acceptance of Islam), that is, by accepting the guardianship of Islam, they must safeguard their own independence and perform their deeds according to their own religious regulations.

Their life, honour, and property will be respected like that of all other Muslims. In lieu of this, they must pay an insignificant sum as *jizyah* to the Muslim society. They must not, however, make evil propaganda, help the enemies of Islam, or perform anything else that is to the detriment of the Muslims.

- (3) Those who do injustice and engage in corruption: This group of people includes those Muslims who engage in armed rebellion against Islam and the Muslims and embark on the massacre of other Muslims. The Islamic society combats with such people, so that they may surrender and give up corruption and revolt.
- (4) The enemies of Islam who attack in order to destroy the very foundation of Islam or to overthrow the Islamic Government: In this case, it is *wajib* for all Muslims to defend Islam and to deal with them like *kafir harbi* (unbeliever to be fought against).

If it is deemed advisable in the interests of the Muslims and Islam, the Islamic society can temporarily enter into a non-aggression treaty with the enemies of Islam, but it does not have the right to establish friendly relations with them in a manner that their words and actions cause evil effects and corrupt the thoughts and deeds of Muslims.

## **Escaping From Jihad and Defence**

Running away from the battlefield and escaping from the enemy means that the person who runs away considers his life as more valuable and dearer than the existence of the society. It is indeed the surrender of religious sanctities and the life, honor, and property of the society to an enemy who threatens their lives in all respects.

Therefore, escaping from jihad and defense is a mortal sin. The Almighty Allah has explicitly promised to put the person who escapes from jihad in hell as He states:

"And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day unless he shall turn aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to a company – then he, indeed, becomes deserving of Allah's wrath, and his abode is hell...(8:16)."

## **Defending the Islamic Domain**

According to what has been discussed, defending the Islamic society and the territory of Muslims is one of the most important Islamic obligations. The Almighty Allah states:

"And do not speak of those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive (2:154)".

The story of men who most heartily participated in bloody battles during early period of the advent of Islam and of martyrs who got weltered in their pure blood is extremely astonishing as well as exemplary. These were the ones who established and made firm foundation of this holy religion with their pure blood and severely injured bodies.

## Fighting With the Internal Enemies of The Society

As according to natural logic, we ought to fight the foreign enemies and defend the society from damages, we should combat and fight the internal enemies of the society as well. The internal enemy of the society is one who breaches the general policies and the rules that are in force and thus disrupts and deranges the general order of the society. That is why security forces and various punishments to retribute the offenders are established in organized societies to safeguard the order and continuation of affairs.

In addition to setting up the executive power and various punishments, Islam has made incumbent upon all individuals to carry out the precept of *al-amr bil-ma'ruf* (enjoining the lawful acts) and *al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (forbidding the sinful acts), thus making the campaign more general and more effective.

The main difference between Islam and other social policies is that other policies have only focused on

the reformation of the actions and deeds of the people, but Islam has paid attention to both actions and ethics of the people and has fought against corruption in both the instances.

Sins which have been forbidden by Islam are the actions that have sinister effects and evil consequences in the society. Nevertheless, some of these sins directly corrupt the individual or individuals who commit them and somehow influence the society as local wounds and organic complications that appear in the human body. Most sins, such as not reciting *salat* and not observing *sawm*, disturb the status of worshipping Allah and deny the divine rights and so fall within this category.

Some of the sins directly threaten the social life and annihilate the whole structure of the society like diseases which directly affect human life and disrupt the affairs of man's life. Lying and slandering fall under this category. According to Islam, the rights of parents, backbiting, and attacking the honor of the people also fall under the same category.

## **Defending the Truth**

Another defense which is much more profound and enormous than defending territory is the defense of right which is the only objective of the holy religion of Islam. The most important aim of this divine policy is the revival of right and reality and hence this pure religion has been named as the religion of truth, *i.e.*, a religion that belongs to the truth, involves nothing but the truth, and aims at nothing but the truth.

While describing about His Book, which contains all the truths, the Almighty Allah states:

#### "... Guiding to the truth and to a right path (46:30)."

That is why it is incumbent upon every Muslim to follow the truth, tell the truth, listen to the truth, and defend the truth with his utmost capacity and in any way possible.

## **Homicide**

Another instance of injustice which is very indecent and reproachable in the holy religion of Islam is homicide and killing an innocent person.

Homicide is one of the mortal sins. In His words, the Almighty Allah equals the killing of a human being with massacre of all the human beings. This is because the killer of one person deals with humanity and humanity is the same in one person or in one thousand persons.

## **Infringing Upon The Property of Orphans**

Just as benevolence towards people is logically and religiously praiseworthy, malevolence towards Allah's servants is unfair and blameworthy. Injustice and oppression are strongly prohibited by the holy religion of Islam in several instances, one of which is the infringement upon the property of orphans.

Misappropriating the property or money of an orphan is one of the mortal sins in Islam. It is specified in the Holy Qur'an that whoever misappropriates an orphan's property eats fire indeed and will soon be thrown in the blazing fire of hell. According to the statements of the infallible Imams (as), the main reason for so much emphasis is that if an aged man (who is not an orphan) is oppressed, he may defend his rights, but an orphan is unable to do so.

## **Disappointment for The Blessings of Allah**

In Islam, one of the most dangerous sins is being disappointed for Allah's blessings.

The Almighty Allah states:

"Say: O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether. surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful (39:53)."

At another place, the person who despairs of the blessings of Allah is considered to be an unbeliever. The reason behind this is that if a person despairs of the blessings and forgiveness of Allah, he will no longer have any internal stimulant to perform good and praiseworthy deeds in his life and to refrain from committing *dhanb kabir* (mortal sin) and *dhanb saghir* (venial sin) and indecent actions, because the main motivation for the two items mentioned above is "hope for Allah's blessings" and "deliverance from the punishment of Allah". This expectation does not exist in such a person. There is no difference between this person and the one who does not believe in any religion as far as mental and internal qualities are concerned.

## **Anger and Wrath**

Anger is a condition that prompts man to take revenge and he gets internal satisfaction in taking revenge. If a man acts with laxity in controlling himself, his commonsense will be immediately subdued by anger and wrath and every indecent and unfair action will seem right to him to the point that he becomes more rapacious than any beast.

Strict orders have been issued by Islam for preventing the outburst of anger and severe reproachment has been set against following it. The Almighty Allah has shown great favors towards those who control their anger and remain patient when they are angry.

As the Almighty Allah states:

"...And those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men...(3:134)."

In regard to the characteristics of believers, the Almighty Allah states:

"... And whenever they are angry they forgive (42:37)."

## **Bribery**

Receiving money or a gift in return for a judgment or for the accomplishment of a task which is the duty of the receiver is called bribery.

Bribery is a mortal sin in Islam. The person who commits this sin is deprived of many social privileges of religion (justice) and deserves Allah's punishment. This matter has been specified in the Holy Book and the *ahadith*.

The Holy Prophet (S) has cursed tile givers, receivers, and the mediators of bribe.

The sixth infallible Imam (as) also states: "Receiving bribe for administering justice equals blasphemy to Allah".

Surely, all these reproachments apply to the bribe taken for the judgment of truth or for administering justice. The sin of the bribe taken for the judgment contrary to truth and for unjust deeds is far greater and its retribution is much severer.

## **Theft**

Theft is an unfair and indecent action that threatens the financial security of the society. It is self-evident that the fundamental source of human life is the property and wealth which man acquires at the expense of his life. Man protects h is wealth so that it can be safeguarded against any infringement by others so that it can consequently remain as the protection and backing of the society.

Surely, breaking through this protection and disrupting this order mean ruining man's life which has been spent to acquire such wealth. It results in disabling men to perform most of their activities and renders them inefficient.

That is why, in regard to the punishment of this repugnant action which is considered to be perfidious by the thief's self-conscience as well, Islam has ordered to cut the thief's hand (four fingers from the right hand). The Almighty Allah states:

"And (as for) the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned. (5:38)."

## **Selling Underweight**

In Islam, selling underweight is a mortal sin. In His words, the Almighty Allah reproaches and threatens those who commit it and states:

"Woe to the defrauders....Do not these think that they shall be raised again, for a mighty day (83: 1, 4, 5)."

Besides doing injustice to the people and stealing their money by way of theft, a person who sells underweight causes people to lose their confidence in him and gradually loses his customers and at last his own money.

## The General Penalty of Sins in Islam

These indecent deeds are called mortal sins in Islam and the Almighty Allah has clearly promised to punish those who commit these sins.

In addition to establishing severe punishments for some of these sins, Allah has excluded those who commit these sins (even once) from the just, i.e., He has taken away from them the honor of being a righteous member of the human society.

Whoever commits a mortal sin loses his justice and gets deprived of the privileges that a righteous member of the society can enjoy. He cannot be in charge of one of the various positions of the Islamic government; for example, he cannot become *khalifah* or *imam al-jama'ah* (the imam of congregational *salat*). His testimony to the benefit or detriment of others is not acceptable. He will remain in this state until he repents and develops the quality of justice in himself once again by constantly having *taqwa* (piety).

# The Essentiality of Employment and The Importance of Trade And Industry

Endeavour and work are the base and foundation upon which the world of creation is established and these are the only guarantee for the survival of every creature. The Almighty Allah has equipped His creatures with suitable means with which they derive benefits and avoid losses.

Man, who is the most astonishing and sophisticated design of creation, has more requirements than any other creature. Thus he needs more endeavors with which he could meet his countless requirements and also maintain the family that he should naturally administer.

That is why Islam, which is a natural and social religion, considers working and earning as *wajib* for the people.

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "It is *wajib* upon every Muslim man and woman to earn *halal* money for his or her livelihood and subsistence3."

Islam has not attached any importance to those who spend their lives idly. Whenever the Holy Prophet

(S) saw a man whose strength and capability were surprising, he would ask: "Does he work?" If they said: "No, he is idle.", the Holy Prophet (S) would state: "To me, he has no respect.", meaning that an idle youth had no value to the Prophet (S)4.

In Islam, every individual should choose one of the many professions and industries towards which the Almighty Allah has guided him to choose according to his own aptitude and interest. He should earn his living in this way, carry one of the burdens of society on his back, and try to provide the people with comfort.

The Almighty Allah states:

#### "And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for (53:39)."

In short, Islam has made the strongest recommendations about working and acquiring sustenance and has not disregarded the importance of economic activities even in the most critical moments so much so that Al-'Imam al-Sadiq (A) said to his friend Hisham: "Even during the war, when soldiers array in line and when the fire of battle is fanned, do not neglect your economic duty and necessary activities for providing your subsistence and follow your financial efforts in such difficult situations5.

Thus idleness due to laziness is strictly forbidden in Islam.

#### **Denouncement of Idleness**

It is clear from what has been discussed earlier that working and making effort is a right path that creation has provided for man to attain his prosperity by following it. Surely, deviation from the path of creation and nature, no matter how minor it is, will only lead to the detriment of man. In this case, deviation from a matter upon which the very foundation of life is established will lead to nothing but misery in this world and in the *Akhirah*.

This is why the seventh infallible Imam Musa al-Kazim (as) states: "Do not show sluggishness and tiredness in your work or else you will lose in this world and in the *Akhirah*."

The Holy Prophet (S) has cursed those who have got used to idleness and who put the burden of their life on the shoulders of others.

Today, psychological and social experiments have thoroughly clarified that most social corruptions are generated by idleness. It is idleness that disrupts the economic and cultural activities of the society and gives rise to all kinds of moral decadence and superstitions.

## **Agriculture and Its Advantages**

Farming, which is the means for providing food for the society, is one of the most praiseworthy human

professions due to its importance. Therefore, Islam has laid down great emphasis for choosing this profession.

The sixth infallible Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) states: "Farmers would enjoy more respectable positions than others on the Day of *Qiyamah*."

The fifth infallible Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) states: "There is no job better than farming and there is no benefit better than the benefit of farming, because benevolent and malevolent grazing animals and birds benefit from it and pray for the farmer."

The Holy Prophet (S) states: "A Muslim who plants a tree or cultivates a land from which people, birds, and grazing animals eat will have the reward of *sadaqah* (charity)."

Muslims are obliged to use their natural energy to the maximum, i.e., to the point where one of the religious leaders states: "If at the time when the world is to come to an end and the solar system is to collapse any one of you has a small plant in hand, he should plant it if he has enough time to do so 6. This means that the idea of the collapse of the world should not prevent you from performing this noble deed.

'Ali (as) states: "Curse and imprecation of Allah be upon one who has land and water, i.e., one who has natural resources at his disposal but does not use his human skill to take advantage of them and consequently lives in poverty and beggary7."

## **Self-Confidence**

It has been repeatedly mentioned under the section on "Beliefs" that the general planning of Islam is that man should worship none except Allah and should not pay homage and bow down to anyone but He Who is the Creator of the world.

All are the creatures of Allah and receive their subsistence from Him. No one has privileges over others except in respect of those things which are done for the sake of Allah.

Every Muslim should have self-confidence and should take advantage of the blessing of independence given to him by the Almighty Allah. Man must use all the means that Allah has bestowed on him to pass his life. He should not rely upon others and consider a partner for Allah and worship a new idol each day.

The servant should realize that he eats his own bread and not of the master. He should know that he receives the reward of his labor, not the tip from his master or lord. Every employee should believe that he receives the wages of his hard work, not the gift and gratuity from his boss, his office, the government, or the society.

After all, a free man should not rely on and pay homage to any but Allah; otherwise, internally, he will have the same meanness and servitude of polytheism that the idol–worshippers have openly.

Finally, it should be noted that self-confidence means that man should use his intrinsic capability in his life and should not rely on others. It doesn't mean that he should dissociate from the Almighty Allah and consider himself to be really effective as the source of all hopes and desires.

## The Disadvantages of Relying On Others

Relying on others, that is, living on the support of others, means giving up human pride, honor, independence, and freedom. It is the source of all kinds of offences and social misdeeds which originate from meanness and degradation.

Whoever relies on others and fixes his eyes upon this or that person, indeed offers his will and commonsense for sale, for he should commit flattery and should do whatever (right or wrong, decent or indecent) they demand of him or order him to do.

He should resign himself to any disdain and scorn. He must practice xenophilism, agree to do any injustice and oppression, and at last consider all the limits and human laws as naught.

Asking for help in unnecessary cases is *haram* in Islam. Financial contribution to the needy, which is a part of Islamic provisions, only applies to those needy people whose earning is less than their expenses or to those who are disabled.

- 1. Holy Qur'an, Surah 3, Ayah 28 and Surah 16, Ayah 106
- 2. the Jews, the Christians, and the Magians
- 3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 23, p 6
- 4. Al-Mustadrak, vol. 2, p 501
- 5. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p 101
- 6. Al-Mustadrak, vol. 2, p 501
- 7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 23, p 19

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