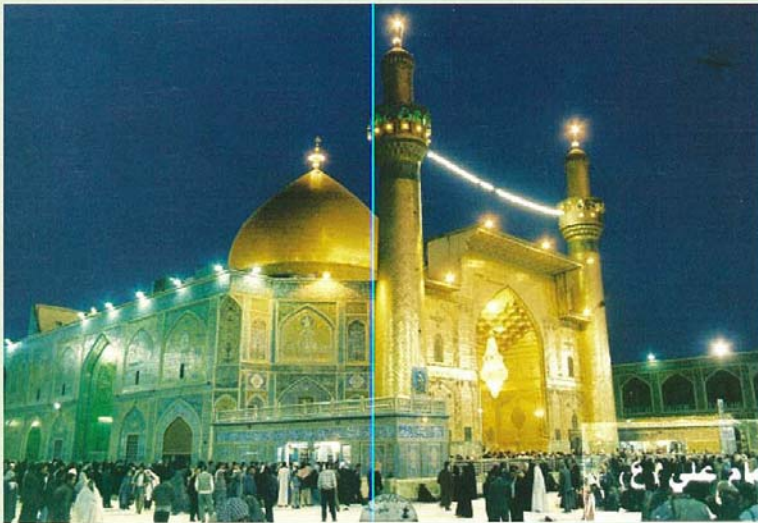




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(It is not necessary that the trustees agree with the writers view.)

Good Behaviour

By The Patron of S. I. Education Society

Behaving properly with other people is highly recommended in Islam. It is the essence of humanity. Dealing nicely with strangers will give you the feeling that you are among your kith and kin.

While driving, walking or traveling if you behave nicely you will win respect and inner contentment. Neighbours and relatives will remember you kindly in your absence. Good behaviour will create love and sympathy and you will be looked after and helped by others.

It must first be clearly said that your usual of behaving is not necessarily the definition of good behaviour. Correct behaviour is in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and traditions of Mohammad (s.a.w.) and his purified progeny (a.s.).

The Holy Qur'an says: '.....and whatever the Prophet gives

you, accept it and from whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah. '(59:7)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'Allah (s.w.t.) has taught me good behaviour'.

This means that you have to act according to the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) rather than in your own way of thinking.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) also said, 'Respect your children and teach them good behaviour. Teaching good behaviour to your children is better than charity'. This means that if you respect your children then you are teaching them the way of respect, and that if you respect others you too will be respected.

Imam Ali (A.S.) said, 'Good behaviour is a treasure for rainy days, a helper like a young man, a friend in every

gathering, a sympathizer in isolation. Good behaviour flourishes ruined hearts, revives lost talents and is a means for fulfilling your wishes. '

Finally, let me quote the following Hadith from Imam Ali (A.S.): 'For good behaviour it is sufficient to refrain from those things which you do not like in others.



Founder and Patron

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With thanks and dua.....The Patron

Shia Political Thought

By Ahmad Vaezi

To Protect True Freedom of Human Beings

Liberty is arguably one of the most important underlying values upon which contemporary western political thought is founded. Although there are contending analyses regarding the nature of freedom amongst western thinkers, liberals traditionally recognize individual freedom as the most fundamental human value and they define and evaluate all other values according to their relationship with it." Because most people, especially in the west, adopt a liberal conception of liberty, they often have reservations about whether a truly religious government can promote the freedom of its subjects. At a glance, it may seem strange to suppose that Islam, with its binding nature and limitations, could act as an effective safeguard of human freedom. But before proceeding with this discussion, it is

appropriate to explore and assess the liberal theory of freedom.

Also known as the negative view of liberty, the liberal conception of freedom has come to be understood as the absence of coercion. This definition of freedom emanates from the works of thinkers such as Hobbes and Bentham, who envisaged it merely as the absence of external, physical or legal impediments. However, this theory fails to acknowledge less immediate or obvious obstacles to freedom, such as lack of awareness, false consciousness, repression or other inner factors of this kind. In fact, it insists that to speak of such inner factors as relevant to the issue of freedom, is to abuse words. The only clear meaning that can be given to this perception of freedom is the absence of external obstacles.

Alternatively, the positive view of liberty asserts that freedom involves the realization of some specific capacities, abilities and powers. And it implies that if these are not realized, then the individual is not truly free, even if he or she is not subject to external coercion. Whereas negative freedom is best described as 'freedom from' (compulsion), positive freedom can be termed as 'freedom to', meaning that an individual must be free to realize his capabilities. Therefore, it is necessary for positive freedom to adopt a theory concerning human nature and a set of ideas about human needs and *abilities*.

Taylor maintains that the positive perception of freedom concerns the exercising of control of one's life:

'Doctrines of positive freedom are concerned with a view of freedom which involves essentially the exercising of control over one's lives; one is free only to the extent that one

has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one's life. The concept of freedom here is an exercise-concept.

According to the Islamic conception of human nature, we are subject to various desires and capacities. Those who follow merely their natural instincts will remain in the prison of their low desires, unable to realize their potential. But those who exercise control over themselves and strive for self-purification, rather than merely obeying their impulses, are truly free.

The Qur'an says:

Have you considered the one who takes his low desires as his Master; Allah has made him err having knowledge and has set a seal upon his ear, his heart and placed a covering upon his eyes. Who can then guide him after Allah? Will you not then be mindful? [Chapter 45, Verse 23]
Then know that they only follow their low desires, and

who is more erring than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from Allah? Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people. [Chapter 28, Verse 50]

From this perspective, namely the positive interpretation of freedom, Islam should be recognized as a perfect form of guidance from Allah and a divine means to achieve true human freedom.

The Qur'an says:

Those who follow the Apostle Prophet, the ummah, whom they find written down with them in the Taurat [Torah] and the Injeel [Gospel], (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes things lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from their burden and the shackles which were upon them, so (as for) those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follows the light which has been sent down with him, there is it that

are the successful. [Chapter 7, Verse 157]

This verse among many others like it, state that the revelation received by the Prophet was sent as guidance to all mankind. That Islam is able to free human beings from the shackles placed upon them by their low desires, to raise them from a state of ignorance (concerning God and the hereafter) and to elevate them to a position of enlightenment and progress. By submitting oneself to the divine revelation and teachings of the Prophet, the individual is making an obvious commitment to worship and obey God, to control oneself and to accept certain limitations. In other words, Islam is a religion; a way of life that encompasses both spiritual and worldly aspects, thus obliging its followers to follow a specific lifestyle. This disagrees with the liberal 'negative' conception of human liberty, because it establishes boundaries and limitations upon freewill. But according

to the Islamic point of view, these limitations help them to attain true freedom embodied in spiritual life and nearness to Allah.

In conclusion, one of the key objectives of an Islamic state is to prepare a desirable social condition, so that people are able to realize their full capacities, and thus free themselves from burdens. This self-realization means that people can promote their individual virtues and prepare themselves for the ultimate salvation.

Establishing a just society and respecting human equality Justice (Adl) and Equality (Qest) are two of the most important aspects of the Islamic ideology. There are many verses of the Qur'an that oblige the believers to treat people equally and to deal with them justly.

Certainly we sent our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the book and the balance that men may

conduct themselves with equity. [Chapter 57, Verse 25]

Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge rule between people you judge with justice. [Chapter 4, Verse 58]

O you who believe, be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own-selves or your parents or near relatives, if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them in compassion; therefore, do not follow low desires, lest you deviate; and if your swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do. [Chapter 4, Verse 135]

These concepts of justice and equality encompass many different aspects of individual and public affairs. With specific regard to politics, they require the government to ensure that all people are granted an equal entitlement to citizenship, protection, the

rights granted by Islam, and the benefits that accompany it, regardless of their ethnicity, beliefs or talents.

However, the establishment of a society upon justice and equality does not require legal equality'. Meaning that it does not need to adopt a legal system that endorses universal and indiscriminate rights and duties for all members of that society. In fact, in its most precise definition, legal equality is clearly impractical. All contemporary legal systems adopt legal inequalities within their structures of rights and duties.

In politics for example, no democratic state allows children to vote, while in economics the salary of a qualified expert is greater than that of a labourer. Equally so, the Islamic legal system, which was revealed as divine law, includes legal inequalities. These arise in cases such as that of inheritance, where the share of

a woman is less than that of a man. Therefore, social justice and fair governance cannot be defined as merely overlooking all categories of inequality.

Instead, Islamic social justice is realized by the correct and complete implementation of the Islamic laws (Shari'a) and values without exception.

Thus an Islamic state is distinguished by the objectives stated above, which have been laid down by the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. Other objectives include the eradication of tyranny, the promotion of tolerance and peaceful co-existence with non-Muslims in Islamic territory, the dissemination of knowledge amongst the people and the creation of a welfare society in order to decrease the economic divide between the rich and the poor. Finally, it is also essential that the Islamic government should be led by a just and well-qualified leader, so that it may realize its fundamental

aims. This is emphasized in the following tradition of Imam Rida (peace be upon him):

‘Some of the reasons behind appointments of lawful amirs (holders of authority) by God and making their obedience obligatory are as follows: Firstly, people would feel duty bound to follow certain rulers that would rescue them from corruption. It is not possible

to follow such rulers unless power is entrusted on a trustee ruler. Secondly, prosperity of nations depends on the existence of rulers who try to solve their temporal and spiritual problems. God, the Wise, never leaves His creatures without a guide. The third reason is that, in the absence of a right leader and guide, the religious commandments and orders would be ruined.

Activities

- English Monthly Magazine “The Minister”.
- Urdu Monthly Magazine “Al-Moballigh”.
- Audio Magazine “The Voice”.
- Religious Madressa. (Mon, Tue and Wed).
- Islamic Library (a collection of manuscripts and printed books in Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu languages).
- Weekly Religious Gathering:

Thursday 8:00 pm – Dua-e-Kumayl and Majlis

Friday 8:00 pm – Dinner, Lectures (English & Urdu), followed by questions and answers.

Saturday 7:30 am – Breakfast followed by lecture on Different topics.

Sunday 11:00 am – (First Sunday of every month)
Medical Lecture by a Doctor.

We need Momineen’s views and help.

Islam

By Sayid Mujtaba Musawi Lari

Islam stands for harmony and perfectibility with an unmatched depth and breadth of scope that comprises all aspects of spirit and life. It knows all the roads that lead to blessing and happiness. It has the cure for human ills, individual and social, and makes them as plain as the wit of man can devise or comprehend. It sets out to develop all sides of each person: and therefore perforce includes every reality which impacts human existence. It has not given way, in its doctrine of man, to modern errors or corrupt institutions. It does not set man in God's place. To do so is to leave man with only himself to rely on in all his pride and egotism: or else to reduce him to the slavery of being a beast of burden for his fellows, powerless, will-less, helpless before nature's and matter's tyrannies. This is precisely what modern heresies do with man. But Islam vindicates

man's unique nature *vis-à-vis* all other living creatures, affirming that he is a special creation with a lofty calling all his own.

Islam holds that a man's personality does not cease to exist with death, but is continuous and eternal. "Worldly" and "other-worldly" are an indivisible unity. Body and soul can therefore not be dissolved into disparate elements. Islam, on these grounds, presents both worlds in shining terms. It both trains a man for eternity and also finds the guiding principles for its public institutions on earth in the sublime destiny inherent in man's creation.

Eternity dictates universal principles, unchanging and unchangeable. These Islam proclaims as tenets, convictions, commandments, statutes, in its school of contentment, in its thrust for

progress. It offers man the perfection of freedom for thought, for concern, and for exegesis of the divine law on matters of social necessity. It reverts to first principles which provide the sure and unshifting basis of rock-bottom truth in all the chances and changes of this mortal life.

Islam holds that man has certain characteristics which are his link with the material world and certain others which connect him with realities that are non-material and which motivate desires and aims of a more sublime nature. Body, mind and spirit each have its proper propensities. Each must be duly weighed, so that what one of these indivisible elements desires does not conflict with the desire of another. Islam takes all the elements and facets of human nature into account and caters for the compound essence of man's combined material and spiritual propensities. It draws him, upward towards the highest without cutting his roots in the material. It

demands absolute purity and chastity without denying the flesh and its needs. Its current flows from pole to pole over a network of live wires-convictions and regulations which preserve the integrity of all the innate human instincts while rejecting the Freudian doctrine of total freedom which treats man as nothing but animal.

Islam is not a mere set of ideas in the world of metaphysical speculation: nor did it come into being simply to order man's social living. It is a way of life so comprehensively meaningful that it shapes education, society and culture to heights none other ever aimed at. It forms a supreme court of appeal and rallying-point for East and West alike, and offers them an ideology which can answer their divisive materialisms. It can replace their inequities and contradictions with a more universal, more perfect and more powerful idea.

Islam does not concede priority of any kind to material affluence or to hedonistic comfort as basic for happiness. It finds its principles in an analysis of man's true nature. With these principles it constructs a plan for individual, social and international living, framed by fixed and all-embracing moral standards, aimed at a goal for humanity far loftier than the modern world's limited materialist aims.

Islam does not imprison man in the narrow confines of the material and the financial. It sets him in a spacious and expansive air. There morality, principle and the spirit reign. Its statutes are those which spring from the nature of man himself. They encourage mutual help and team-work. They pursue values outside the straitened boundaries imposed on individual and on community by the petty pusillanimous pedestrian patterns of materialist purposes. Instead it yokes

man's strength and striving to the change, advance, progress and perfecting inherent in his creation.

Islamic training sets out to refine and enhance human qualities and to harness them to right and reasonable objectives which direct and dictate every forward step to the desired end. It focuses a man's motives, which arise from his natural desires and basic needs, in such a concentrated and streamlined beam that each talent is called in to exercise its function in due succession and order. Impetuous uncoordinated impulses are thus controlled so that no single instinct overrule commonsense nor momentary urge replace reason. Instead man is made master of his fate and captain of his soul. Excess is obviated and every person is accorded his or her legitimate share in the common triumph of all. In this employment every need of body, mind and soul is met and satisfied.

Whenever in history individuals have united in harmonious pursuit of such aims, persons and communities have found themselves. "What is right" has ruled thoughts, conduct and character; human living has been orderly and secure. Reason dictates this training, and calls to a religion with convictions superstition-free, canons practical, statutes feasible and excellences

virtuous. The God-given human intelligence intuitively and logically perceives their truth.

No man is asked to perform a task above that which he is able. But his powers are put at full stretch. Every possibility within him is expressed to the full. And each is, at doomsday, judged; then the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.

Important dates of this month
Subject to the sighting of the moon

- 1st May 2009 6th Jamadi Al Awwal 1429**
- 8th May 2009 / 13th Jamadi Al Thani 1430Moon Confronting Scorpio**
- 9th May 2009 / 14th Jamadi Al Thani 1430Moon Confronting Scorpio**
- 26th May 20091st Jamadi Al Awwal 1429**
- 28th May 2009 / 3rd Jamadi Al Thani 1430Sad Demise of Fatima Zehra (a.s)**

**Dear Reader, overseas UK,
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Please let us know your positive interests to receive the monthly magazine, The Minister, regularly in future..... The Patron

General Beliefs

By Ayatullah Jafar Sobhani

Repentance

One of the teachings of Islam and indeed of all religions of heavenly origin is that sinners always have the possibility of repentance before them. When a man is genuinely remorseful in regard to his sins, and his spirit turns him towards God in humility, and with a pure heart he resolves never to repeat his sins, then God, who is infinitely kind, accepts his repentance. The Qur'an says:

And turn all together in repentance unto God, O believers that ye may succeed.
(Sura al-Nur, xxiv: 31)

Those who are unaware of the reforming influence of repentance and the belief in intercession imagine that opening up these two doors for sinners is a kind of invitation to them to commit sin! Those who think thus seem to be oblivious to the fact that many people are, in

different ways, besmirched with some sin; rarely can one find a person who, throughout his life, has never sinned. Who, indeed, has never sinned in this world? Therefore, if the door of repentance (and of intercession) were not open, those souls who might be ready to renounce a life of sin and to resolve, henceforth, to lead lives of purity and goodness, such people would say to themselves: 'We shall have to endure the punishment of Hell because of the sins we have committed; so why not spend the rest of our lives gratifying our souls' desires and losing ourselves more completely in the bosom of illicit pleasure?' In this way, the closing of the door of repentance opens wide the entrance of the pit of despair as regards the mercy of God; behaviour will then follow the downward path of concupiscent desire, rather than the upward path of fervent hope.

The positive effects of the principle of repentance become clearer when we understand that the acceptance of repentance in Islam requires the fulfillment of certain conditions, as the sages and the scholars of our religion have explained. The most important such condition is that one no longer performs the sins of which one repents. The Qur'an says clearly and explicitly, as regards the door of repentance:

'... Thy Lord hath prescribed for Himself mercy, that whoso of you doeth evil through ignorance and repenteth afterward thereof, and doeth right, truly. He is Forgiving, Merciful.' (Sura al-An'am, VI: 54)

Reward and Punishment

Both intellectual evidence and traditional authority alike attest to the fact that on the Day of Resurrection, each person will behold the reward for his good actions.

The Qur'an says:

And whoso doeth good an atom's weight will see it then. (Sura al-Zilzal, xcix: 7)

And also:

'... and that his effort will be seen. And afterward he will be repaid for it with fullest payment.' (Sura al-Najm, LIII: 40-41)

From these verses it is clear that the wicked deeds of man do not obliterate his good deeds. Nevertheless, it must be understood that those who indulge in certain sins (such as disbelief or polytheism), or become apostates, will experience the 'nullification of action', and consequently will find their good deeds wiped out; they are then subject to perpetual punishment:

'And whoso among you becometh an apostate and dieth in his disbelief, such are they whose works are nullified both in the world and the

Hereafter. Such are the rightful owners of the Fire, abiding therein.' (Sura-al-Baqara, 11:217)

Taking all of the above into consideration, it is clear that each person of faith will behold the consequences of his good and bad acts in the next world, unless those bad acts take the form of apostasy and the like, in which case, according to the Qur'an and Hadith, all good deeds are negated and lost.

In conclusion, it is necessary to insist on the following point: Although God has 'promised' to reward the good deeds of the believers and, conversely, has 'threatened' to punish bad acts, there is a significant difference between the two principles, - promise and threat (*wa'd and wa'id*). For the necessity of keeping a promise is a self-evident intellectual principle, and the breaking of a promise is also, self-evidently, a sin. But as

regards a 'threat', the meting out of the punishment threatened is a right possessed by the punisher, but he can also refrain from exercising this right. Thus, there is nothing preventing certain good actions from, as it were, covering over the ugliness and consequences of bad deeds, this being called *takafir*. In the Qur'an, certain good acts are deemed means whereby this 'covering-over" by God of bad action is effected, one of these means being the avoidance of major sins:

If ye avoid the major sins which ye are forbidden. We will remit from you your evil deeds, and make you enter at a noble gate. (Sura al-Nisa', iv: 31)

Certain acts such as making repentance, giving charity in secret, speaking truthfully, and the like, also have this effect; that is, they too attract God's 'covering over' of man's sins.

The Excellences of Imam Hussein [A.S] in Sunni Hadith

By M. Ayoub

Human history may be seen as a record of the eternal struggle between right and wrong, virtue and vice, good and evil, and righteousness and wickedness. This struggle was decreed by God when Adam, an earthly creature, was sent to earth to engage in this eternal battle. It is through this struggle that human beings can earn their eternal bliss in the Gardens of Paradise, or their eternal punishment in the Fire. In the history of nations this struggle often attains universal significance as that moment of the struggle can speak to all subsequent times and situations. Thus the Qur'an urges us over and over again to ponder the end of those who were before us, and how God dealt with them. In every case, moreover, a prophet or messenger of God was rejected by his people and killed or driven out. In this sense, therefore, the struggle is

in the end between God and humankind, between truth and falsehood, and between right guidance and manifest error.

Nowhere is this struggle placed in sharper relief than in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and the lives of the people of his House. The life and witness of the Imam Hussein in particular, has acquired special significance in Muslim piety. This is because he has provided a model for all martyrs in the way of God, for all time.

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the universal significance of the Imam in Muslim tradition. It is important to observe that all the traditions cited in this essay are found in both Shia and Sunni Hadith literature. But while in the Sunni community such traditions remain purely pietistic, Shia

tradition has made them the basis of a complex theological system.

However, to appreciate the place of Hussein, 'the prince of martyrs', in Muslim history, a word must be said about the place of the Prophet's family (the ahl al-bayt) in Muslim piety. At the same time the people of the House of the Prophet Muhammad are not unique in the prophetic history of human societies. A word is, therefore, necessary concerning the families of other prophets, if we are to appreciate fully the devotion which Muslims throughout their long history have accorded the people of the House of Muhammad, the seal of the prophets.

Prophetic history begins, according to the Qur'an, with Adam, called *safwat Allah* (the elect of God). He was followed by Noah, the first of the prophets of power or resolve (*ulu al'azm*). Noah was sent as a messenger by God to

his people who rebelled against God's message, and were thus destroyed by the flood. Then came Abraham, the father of prophets. With his son Ishmael he built the Ka'bah, the first house for the worship of God. [1] Ishmael was also a prophet, and the ancestor of the prophets Shu'ayb, Salih, Hud, and finally Muhammad, the last messenger of God to humankind.

Isaac, Abraham's second son, was also a prophet and the father of prophets. Among his descendants was the family of Imran, the father of Moses, and Jesus, as well as other earlier prophets who were sent by God to the Children of Israel. The Qur'an declares that God has elected Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran. It further states that they were a single progeny, one from the other', [2] All the prophets and their families are therefore of one physical and spiritual lineage. They and their

households are the elect of God, purified and honored over the rest of humankind.

The people of the House of the Prophet Muhammad were likewise chosen by God and purified from all evil and sin. The Muslim community did not, however, infer the status of the family of Muhammad from that of earlier prophets and their families.

Rather they too were chosen by God and purified from all evil and sin. Yet because Muhammad was the last prophet sent to guide humanity to God and the good, his descendants could not assume his prophetic role. Their mission was to be the Imams, or guides, of the Muslim community. Their task is to safeguard the message vouchsafed to Muhammad by God for humankind. Like many prophets, the Imams had to endure rejection by their people and much suffering at their hands; martyrdom in the cause of God was often their

lot. Yet the greater the suffering, the greater is the reward and honor which God promises His prophets, friends (awliya'), and righteous servants. Thus the Prophet was asked: 'Who among men are those afflicted with the greatest calamity?' He replied:

The prophets, then the pious, everyone according to the degree of his piety. A man is afflicted according to his faith (din), if his faith is durable, his affliction is accordingly increased, and if his faith is weak, his affliction is made lighter. Afflictions continue to oppress the worshipful servant until they leave him walking on the face of the earth without any sin cleaving to him.

EXCELLENCES OF THE AHL AL BAYT

In both Sunni and Shia Muslim tradition, one important event symbolizes the status of the ahl al-bayt and the human as well as spiritual dimensions of their

relation to the Prophet. This is the tradition or episode of al-kisa' (the mantle, or cloak) which the Prophet spread over himself and Fatima his daughter, 'Ali, and their two sons Hasan and Hussein. This tradition has come down to us in a number of versions, each stressing one or another aspect of the excellences of the family of the Prophet and his love for them. Ahmad b. Hanbal relates on the authority of Umm Salama, the Prophet's wife that he said to Fatima one day:

'Bring me your husband and two sons.' When they had all come together he spread over them a mantle, and laying his hand over them, he said: 'O God, these are the people of the House of Muhammad! Let therefore your prayers and blessings descend upon Muhammad and the people of the House of Muhammad; for you are worthy of all praise and glory.' Umm Salama continued: I then lifted the mantle to enter in with them, but he pulled it away from my

hand saying, "You too shall come to a good end".

The point which this version of the kisa' tradition emphasizes is that the ahl al-bayt are only the five: Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, and their two sons Hasan and Hussein. Umm Salama, one of the most highly venerated of the Prophet's wives, was denied this special status. We shall have more to say about this point, as it is emphasized in almost every version of this tradition. In another highly interesting version of the kisa' tradition, related on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. Jafar b. Abi Talib, we read:

As the Apostle of God saw mercy descending, he demanded: 'Call them for me, call them for me!' Safiyya asked: 'Who should we call, O Messenger of God?' He answered: 'Call the people of my household: 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Hussein.' When they were brought, he spread a mantle over them; then lifting his hands to heaven said: 'O

God, these are the people of my House; bless O God, Muhammad and the people of the House of Muhammad! God then sent down the verse:

Surely God -wishes to remove all abomination from you, O People of the House, and purify you with a thorough purification.

This version of the tradition provides the meaning of the kisa' and the basis of its significance. The mantle is a symbol of divine mercy and blessing covering the Prophet and his holy family. It is, moreover, a source or haven of consolation and serenity in the face of the great sufferings and martyrdom which the Prophet's family had to endure after him. In this infinite source of divine mercy, the pious also share in times of sufferings and afflictions. The kisa' finally sets apart the 'holy five' from the rest of the faithful, and distinguishes them from the rest of the Prophet's family.

The event of the kisa' provides the occasion for the revelation of the verse of purification just cited. Before the sectarian conflicts which split the Muslim community set in, classical tradition was almost unanimous in interpreting this verse as referring to the Prophet, his daughter Fatima al-Zahra' (the Radiant), her husband and cousin, Ali, and their two sons Hasan and Hussein.

In still another version of the kisa' tradition, the continuity of the Prophet's family with those of earlier prophets is clearly indicated. Wathila b. al-Asqa', on whose authority this tradition in most of its variants is related, reports the following prayer uttered by the Prophet: O God, as you have bestowed your blessings, mercy, forgiveness, and pleasure upon Abraham and the family of Abraham, so they [Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Hussein] are of me and I am of them! Bestow, therefore, your blessings, mercy,

forgiveness and pleasure upon me and them.'

This prayer echoes a prayer which Muslims repeat daily:

O God, bless Muhammad and the people of the House of Muhammad, as you have blessed Abraham and the people of the House of Abraham among all beings. The House of Muhammad is, therefore, for all Muslims, 'the household of Prophethood and the frequenting place of angels'. The famous Qur'an commentator al-Suyuti quotes a tradition attributed to Umm Salama in interpretation of the verse of purification:

This verse was sent down in my house ... There were in the house then, seven: Gabriel and Michael, and 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Hussein, and I stood at the door of the house. I asked: 'O Messenger of God am I not of the People of the House?' He said: 'You shall indeed come to a good end! You are, however, one of the wives of the Prophet.'

The close friendship between the Prophet and the holy family, relationship which went far beyond the bond of blood relation, may be seen in the incident of the mubahala, or prayer ordeal, with which the Prophet challenged the Christians of Najran. In the mubahala verse of the Qur'an, God orders the Prophet and his opponents to 'Call together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves.' In the view of most Qur'an commentators and traditions, the Prophet's sons are Hasan and Hussein, 'his women' refers to Fatima, and 'his self' refers, apart from himself, to 'Ali. When the people of Najran saw them, they recognized their high status with God, and with great trepidation they declined the mubahala and opted instead for peace.

Tradition asserts that the Prophet sensed the hostility which his community was to show to the People of his House after him. He is said to

have often declared, I am at war against him who fights against you, and will show peace toward him who shows peace to you.' This invective is strongly put in a tradition related on the authority of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's famous Companion and the first caliph. He said: I saw the Messenger of God pitch a tent in which he placed 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Hussein. He then declared: 'O Muslims, I am at war against anyone who wars against the people of this tent, and am at peace with those who show peace toward them. I am a friend to those who befriend them. He who shows love toward them shall be one of a happy ancestry and good birth. Nor would anyone hate them except that he be of miserable ancestry and evil birth.

Love for the Prophet's family is enjoined by God in the Qur'an, where He says.' Say, I ask no other reward of you save love of my next of kin' (42:23). Qur'an commentators have generally agreed that 'the

next of kin' here intended are the ahl al-bayt.

The People of the House of the Prophet Muhammad have been for the pious an example of generosity, steadfastness in the face of hardship, and a source of solace in time of trials and afflictions. After days of fasting and prayers for the health of the two sick children Hasan and Hussein, the family fed the few morsels of dry bread and dates for which 'Ali had labored so hard to the needy. On the first evening, we are told, a beggar came. On the second, it was an orphan, and on the third, a captive. To each in turn, they gave the loaf of barley bread and few dates which Fatima had prepared for the family to break their fast.

Thus God sent down the verse. – 'They give food to eat, even though they cherish it, to the needy, the orphan and the captive.' Yet, in the end, God sent down a celestial table to feed His friends.

Early tradition shows a tension in the relationship of the Prophet to the community and in the relationship of the latter to the holy family. Much of the literature reflecting this tension was most likely the product of a later age, but projected back to the time of the Prophet and his Companions. Here love for the Prophet's family is not simply recommended as a pious act, but is presented as a challenge, and in a harsh reproaching tone. Furthermore, it is on this love to the ahl al-bayt that rewards and punishments on the Last Day are predicated.

Thus we are told that the Prophet said: He, who desires the pleasure to live my life, die my death and dwell in a garden of Eden which my Lord has planted, let him be a friend to 'All after me. Let him also be a friend to his friends. Let him finally be guided by the Imams after me, for they are my progeny. They were created of my clay, and have been vouchsafed knowledge and understanding. Woe to

those of my community who deny their superiority, and those who violate the demands of kindness to my next of kin. May God not grant them my intercession.'

In another tradition, the Prophet promises his intercession to those who honor his descendants, provide them with whatever needs they may have, and those who love them with their heart and profess this love with their tongues.

It has already been stressed that the ahl al-bayt share with the prophets of old and their descendants a high status and divine favor, but not the office of Prophethood. They share, moreover, with the Prophet Muhammad the prerogative of intercession. This is expressed in hagiographical language, a language common to both Sunni and Shia tradition. One such common example may suffice to demonstrate the devotion in the piety of both traditions to the Prophet and the people of his household.

The Qur'an tells us that Adam received certain words of God which warned him of God's forgiveness and mercy:

Adam received words from his Lord, and He turned towards him; for He is relenting, compassionate (2:37).

Suyuti reports that Ibn 'Abbas, the famous traditionist and authority on the Qur'an, asked the Prophet about the words which Adam received. The Prophet answered: 'He prayed saying, "O God, for the sake of Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Hussein, do turn toward me", and He turned toward him.' In another highly dramatic version of this tradition, Adam is taught the words as the only means by which God would accept his repentance and forgive him. 'Ali, we are told, enquired of the Prophet concerning the verse under discussion. The Prophet told him that when Adam and his wife were

expelled from Paradise, Adam wept bitterly over his sin for a hundred years. Finally, Gabriel came to him and spoke thus on God's behalf:

O Adam, did I not create you with my own hand? Did I not breathe into you of my spirit? Did I not command my angels to bow down before you? Did I not provide you with Eve my servant?' 'Yes', Adam answered. Gabriel asked: 'What then is the cause of this weeping?' Adam replied, 'Why should I not weep when I have been expelled from the proximity of the All-Merciful?' The angel then said: 'You must pray fervently with these words, and God will accept your repentance and forgive your sin. Say: "O God, I beseech you for the sake of Muhammad and the people of the household of Muhammad; nor is there any god but you. I have done evil, and have wronged my soul. Turn towards me for you are relenting, compassionate.

The Duties of Men

By Hujjatul Islam Ibrahim Amini

The Guardian of the Family

Man and woman are the two basic pillars of a family, but since men are endowed with special qualities by the order of creation, and because their power of logic is stronger than women's, they are regarded as the guardians of their families.

The Almighty Allah regards men as the guardians of their families and states in the Holy Qur'an that: "Men are the maintainers of women, because Allah has made some of them to excel others... (4:34)."

Therefore, men have a greater and more difficult responsibility in supporting their families.

It is the man who can, through his wisdom, support his family and prepare the grounds for their happiness and it is he who can turn the house into a

paradise and his wife to act as an angel.

"The Prophet (SA) of Allah stated: 'Man is the guardian of his family and every guardian has responsibilities toward those under his guardianship.'

A man, who is supporting his family, should know that a woman is also a human being like a man. She also has desires and the rights of freedom and life. Marrying a woman is not hiring a servant, but it is a selection of a partner and a friend *who* would be able to live with for the rest of one's life.

Man has to care for her and her desires. Man is not the owner of his wife and in fact a woman has certain rights upon her husband.

Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: "... *And women have rights similar to the rights of*

men in a just manner, and the men have a degree (of advantage) over them... (2:228)."

Taking Care of your Wife

The secret to a family's prosperity is the way in which one takes care of one's wife, and this is, like the duty of a woman towards their husband which is regarded to be at the same level as *Jihad*, is also regarded as a man's best and most valuable act. But a married man must learn how to treat his wife in a way that she turns into an angel-like character.

For this, a man must find out about his wife's behaviour and her desires. He must programme his life according to her wishes and righteous requests. He can, through his own manners and attitude, influence her in a way that interests her in both him and his house.

Be Loving towards Her

A woman is a centre of kindness and a being that is completely emotional. Her existence depends on compassion and affection. She longs to be loved by others and the more the better. She sacrifices herself a great deal in order to seek popularity. This character is so strong in her that if she realizes nobody loves her, then she regards herself as a failure. She becomes disappointed in herself and feels dejected. Therefore, certainly one can claim that the secret of a successful man in a happy marital life is his expression of love towards his wife.

Dear Sir! Your wife before marrying you was enjoying her parents' love and kindness. Now that she has entered into marriage agreement with you and now that she has chosen to live with you for the rest of her life, she expects you to fulfil her desires for love and affection. She expects you to show more love to her than she received from her parents and friends. She has trusted

you extremely and that is why she has entrusted you with her existence.

The secret to a happy marriage is the expression of your affection to your wife.

If you want to conquer her heart, if you want to make her obedient with regard to your demands, if you want to strengthen your marriage, make her love you, or remain faithful to you, or..., then you must always show your affection to her and express your love.

If you deprive your wife of kindness, then she would lose interest in her house, children and, above all, in you. Your house would always be in a messy condition. She would not be prepared to make efforts for a person who does not love her. A house, in which there is no affection, resembles a burning hell, even though it may be very tidy and full of luxurious goods.

Your wife may become ill or have a nervous breakdown. She may seek popularity with others if she is not satisfied with you. She may grow so cold towards you and the house that she may even seek for a divorce.

You are responsible for all this because you have failed to keep her content. It is certainly true that some divorce procedures take place as a result of unkindness.

Your attention is drawn to the following statistics. The psychological requirements of affection, the carelessness of husbands with regard to their wives' wishes and the overlooking of the importance of the mental status of women, have been responsible for many divorce cases.

"In the year 1969, out of a total of 10372 separations, 1203 women expressed the reason for their divorce as losing heart in life, feeling

worthless, and the lack of care of their husband with regard to their wives' desires and emotional feelings.

"A woman said in court that 'She was prepared to abandon her dowry and even pay her husband a sum of money to make him agree to a divorce. She said her husband was more interested in his parrots and that was why she did not want to live with him any longer'.

Family love and friendship is more precious than anything else and that is why Allah has regarded it as one of the signs of power and a great blessing which mankind has been endowed with. Holy Qur'an says: *"And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them and He put between you love and compassion: most surely there*

are signs in this for a people who reflect (30:21)."

Love and affection must of course be genuine to appeal to another's heart, but even so loving for someone is not enough, as it is vital to express one's affection. By showing your feelings through your words and actions, the love you have shown will be returned to you and your hearts will strengthen their bonds of love.

Be frank and do not be discrete in expressing your love towards your wife. In her absence or presence, you should make compliments for her. Write to her while travelling and inform her that you miss her. Occasionally buy something for her. Phone her when you are at work and ask how she is.

One of the important things on a woman's mind is these kinds of expressions of love.

Album

Mo'mineen attending majlis at S. I. Education Society, London.



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